

Lincoln County Men at Kings Mountain

Men who contributed to the Kings Mountain victory, 7 October 1780.

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Synopsis

The Battle of Kings Mountain was a decisive Patriot victory during the American Revolution. Its story usually focuses on the extraordinary trek of the Overmountain Men from Virginia and what is now Tennessee. But about half the participants were from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Their stories are also compelling.

Lincoln County men contributed much to the Patriot victory at the Battle of Kings Mountain on 7 October 1780. They were a distinct military unit before and during the battle. Their strength was 60 to 80 men. Yet, their contribution and sacrifice was well out of proportion to their numbers. Important facts are:

- The American Revolution began on 19 April 1775 at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. This event caused widespread anger throughout the 13 colonies. On 14 August 1775, Whigs of Tryon County, North Carolina, met and composed the *Tryon County Resolves*. It asserted that they would take up arms to defend against “ministerial vengeance and despotism.” It stipulated that all residents were to sign an oath of allegiance to this new government. But Tryon County residents were very conflicted. Many influential men wanted to remain loyal to Great Britain. These Loyalists chafed at being excluded from government decisions from 1775 to 1780.
- Lincoln County was formed in April 1779 from Tryon County. It was named for the distinguished Major General Benjamin Lincoln who at that time commanded American forces opposite British occupied Savannah, Georgia. At that time, Lincoln County included present-day Lincoln, Gaston, and Cleveland Counties, with minor deviations.
- On 12 May 1780, British forces captured Charlestown and quickly controlled all of South Carolina. Lincoln County Loyalists saw their chance to reassert control. They assembled at Moses Moore’s plantation and soon afterwards at Ramsour’s Mill. But on 20 June 1780, they were defeated and dispersed by Patriot militia forces led by Colonel Francis Locke and Brigadier General Griffith Rutherford.
- In September 1780, Cornwallis’s army advanced towards North Carolina. In response, Lincoln County Patriots organized at Espey’s plantation. They then moved to Lincoln County Courthouse and Moses Moore’s plantation. They patrolled the county to prevent another Loyalist uprising.
- Beginning in late September, British Major Patrick Ferguson advanced his force of about 1100 Loyalists from South Carolina to near the Burke County Courthouse, present-day Morganton, North Carolina. This threat became untenable for the small number of Lincoln County Patriots, who withdrew to join Colonel Thomas Sumter’s men encamped at Tuckasegee Ford on the Catawba River. At this time, Cornwallis’s main army of 2000 redcoats occupied Charlotte, just 11 miles away, but on the opposite side of the river.
- Soon afterwards, Ferguson learned that a very large force of overmountain men Patriots were advancing on his position. He began to withdraw southward towards Gilbert Town, near present-day Rutherfordton, North Carolina. This gave the Patriots assembled at Tuckasegee Ford the opportunity to counterattack. They quickly marched to Ramsour’s Mill and then to Flint Hill, present-day Cherry Mountain.
- On the evening of 6 October 1780, these men joined the overmountain men at Cowpens. There 910 of the most able men and horses were selected for a forced march to find Ferguson’s troops. Beginning at 9:00 p.m., during a rain, they started marching to the east. Lincoln County men led the column. Since

they lived nearby, they could best interpret information gathered from the public. They were also known by the nickname *South Fork Boys*, a reference to the South Fork of the Catawba River.

- Lincoln County man Enoch Gilmer proceeded well in advance of everyone else. He risked his life by posing as a Loyalist trying to find Ferguson's camp. At Cherokee Ford on Broad River, he signaled that the opposite bank was clear. At dawn 7 October, the entire force forded the river. Lincoln County men continued to lead.
- At 4:00 p.m., after an 18-hour nonstop 33-mile march, they surrounded the British hilltop camp. Lincoln County men marched to the furthest side and blocked the only road escape.
- During the battle, Lincoln County men fought as a distinct military unit. Their first commander Colonel William Graham was called away, the second Major William Chronicle was killed, and the third Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Hambright was badly wounded. Nonetheless, they fought bravely. They withstood at least one bayonet charge. Out of about 60 to 80 men, 12 were killed or wounded. That is a higher proportion than any other military unit. Of the 66 names appearing on the 1909 United States monument, 12 were Lincoln County men.
- After the battle, the Lincoln County men returned to their nearby homes. Most were called up again within a few weeks.
- In 1815, the battleground's first monument was dedicated to 4 Lincoln County men.
- Fortunately, names of almost all Lincoln County men are known. Of these, 24, or their widows, lived long enough to describe their war-time activities in pension applications. This document lists their names with hyperlinks to their pension applications. It also links signers of the Tryon County Resolves to participants at Kings Mountain.

Timeline Format and Citations

This document follows a strict timeline. That format describes the circumstance when a leader made an important decision or took decisive action. The reader can appreciate the drama of events and a leader's courage.

Citations are embedded in the text and appear in the form (author year written, series:volume:page) or some appropriate variation. For example, a quote within a reference is cited as (person quoted year quoted in author year published, series:volume:page). This technique helps evaluate authenticity. It also timestamps voices from the distance past. A list of all sources, articles, and books appears at the end. Place names and an individual's military rank are specified contemporaneous with the event described. For example, Charlestown was the contemporaneous name of present-day Charleston.

This timeline format with embedded citations creates a working document from which conjectured scenarios can be tested and into which new evidence can be inserted.

Veteran Pension Applications

On 7 June 1832, United States Congress passed a law awarding pensions to all living Revolutionary War veterans. Each applying veteran testified in court about his service, including details about time, place, battles, officers, units, commissions, and discharges. Collaborating witnesses testified. Excerpts from these applications appear throughout this document.

Tryon County in 1775

1775, Tryon County Resolves

Whigs in Tryon County, North Carolina established a *Committee of Safety* on 26 July 1775. It met on 14 August to write an *Association Oath*, sometimes called *Tryon County Resolves*. Like the Mecklenburg Resolves, it empowered an independent local militia. It was not a declaration of independence. Instead, it was conditional, "til a reconciliation shall take place between Great Britain and American." It was a test oath that all Tryon County inhabitants were to sign, in effect endorsing the legitimacy of the Committee of Safety.

Resolved, That this Association be signed by the inhabitants of Tryon County, viz:

An Association

The unprecedented, barbarous and bloody actions committed by the British troops on our American brethren near Boston, on the 19th of April and 20th of May, last, together with the hostile operations and traitorous designs now carrying on by the tools of ministerial vengeance and despotism for the subjugating of all British America, suggest to us the painful necessity of having recourse to arms for the preservation of those rights and liberties which the principles of our constitution and the Laws of God, Nature and Nations have made it our duty to defend.

We therefore, the subscribers, freeholders and inhabitants of Tryon County, do hereby faithfully unite ourselves under the most sacred ties of religion, honor and love to our country, firmly to resist force by force in defense of our natural freedom and constitutional rights against all invasions; and at the same time do solemnly engage to take up arms and risk our lives, and fortunes, in maintaining the freedom of our country whenever the wisdom and counsel of the Continental Congress or our Provincial Convention shall declare it necessary; and this engagement we will continue in and hold sacred till a reconciliation shall take place between Great Britain and America on Constitutional principles which we most ardently desire. And we do firmly agree to hold all such persons inimical to the liberties of America who shall refuse to subscribe to this association.

[Signed] John Walker, Charles McLean, Andrew Neel, Thomas Beatty, James Coburn, Frederick Hambright, Andrew Hampton, Benjamin Hardin, George Paris, William Graham, Robert Alexander, David Jenkins, Thomas Espey, Perrygreen Mackness (Magness), James McAfee, William Thompson, Jacob Forney, Davis Whitesides, John Beeman, John Morris, Joseph Hardin, John Robison, James McIntyre, Valentine Mauney, George Black, Jas. Logan, Jas. Baird, Christian Carpenter, Abel Beatty, Joab Turner, Jonathan Price, James Miller, John Dellinger, Peter Sides, William Whiteside, George Dellinger, Samuel Carpenter, Jacob Mooney, Jr., John Wells, Jacob Costner, Robert Hulclip, James Buchanan, Moses Moore, Joseph Kuykendall, Adam Simms, Richard Waffer, Samuel Smith, Joseph Neel, Samuel Loftin. (Griffin 1937, 17)

In 1919, a monument commemorating the Tryon County Resolves was erected at the site of the original Tryon County Courthouse. That location is on highway NC274 about 4 miles south of Cherryville, North Carolina. Before 1779, Tryon County included present-day Lincoln, Gaston, Cleveland and Rutherford Counties.



Tryon County Resolves Historical Marker

Lincoln County in 1780

In 1780, the American Revolutionary War was over 5 years old. Patriots, called Whigs, controlled governments in almost all towns and state governments. They required all residents to sign oaths of allegiance. New state government constitutions were in effect. State legislatures and governors held office. Those residents who wish to remain loyal to the British royal government could not hold public office or expect the Whig governments to protect them. Deep resentments simmered for 5 years and exploded when the British Army invaded the South. In 1778, the British captured Savannah, Georgia.

In April 1779, Major General Benjamin Lincoln and Colonel Griffith Rutherford were heroes among the Whigs. Both were opposing British forces within Savannah, Georgia. In North Carolina, the local Tryon County Whig government split and renamed their new counties Lincoln and Rutherford.



Major General Benjamin Lincoln
Painted by Charles Willson Peale, 1781–1783.

On 12 May 1780, after a 6-week siege, the British captured Charlestown, South Carolina. All North Carolina and South Carolina Continental Army regiments were captured and removed from the war. The British Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Charles Lord Cornwallis, immediately extended its control into the Carolina upcountry, establishing strong forts at Augusta, Ninety Six, Camden, and Georgetown. The British strategy was to encourage local Loyalists to rise up, fight the Whigs, and reestablish loyal governments.



Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis
Painted by Thomas Gainsborough, 1783,
National Portrait Gallery, London.

September–October 1780, Ferguson, Overmountain Men, Kings Mountain

In September 1780, the patriot situation was desperate. During the previous May, Charlestown fell with many Continental soldiers taken prisoner, including all active North and South Carolina Continental Army regiments. In late May, 260 Virginia Continentals were brutally killed or wounded at Buford's massacre. Tories proved they could assemble in large numbers as at Ramsour's Mill on 20 June. On 16 August, 1050 soldiers, including many Continentals, were killed or captured at Camden. American Major General Horatio Gates was discredited. Two days later, 150 of Colonel Thomas Sumter's soldiers were killed at Fishing Creek. Finally, Charlotte was occupied. It appeared that Cornwallis would soon subdue North Carolina. It is remarkable that rebel resistance continued.

By late September, Major Patrick Ferguson had recruited over 1100 Loyalists, about half from upstate South Carolina and half from North Carolina (Draper 1881, 293). In addition, he had a cadre of uniformed provincial troops, mostly New Yorkers, from four regiments: *King's American Regiment* commanded by Captain Abraham DePeyster, *Loyal American Regiment* commanded by Major Main, *New Jersey Volunteers* commanded by Captain Samuel Ryerson, and *Prince of Wales American Regiment* led by Sergeant Townsend.

Ferguson sent a threatening verbal message to rebels in western North Carolina, which at that time included present-day Tennessee, saying he would "march over the mountains, hang leaders, and lay waste the country with fire and sword." This threat was certainly counterproductive since among the addressees it provoked a determination to destroy Ferguson before he destroyed them. More than 400 Scotch-Irish rebels, some called *overmountain men*, assembled and pursued Ferguson. On 30 September, they camped at Quaker Meadows, the wide bottomland just north of present-day Morganton, North Carolina. There an equal number of Scotch-Irish from Wilkes and Surry County joined. That evening, the six militia leaders planned tactics under a large tree, later known as *Council Oak*.



Colonel Charles McDowell House, built in 1812
Quaker Meadows, Morganton, North Carolina

On 1 October, this group moved to Bedford Hill. On 3 October, they marched to Gilbert Town, near present-day Rutherfordton, North Carolina. On 4 October, at Probit's Place on Broad River, Major Chronicle and about 20 Lincoln County men from the South Fork River joined (Draper 1881, 214).

Meanwhile, about 60 Lincoln County men congregated at Espey's plantation (Hunter 1877, 265) under the leadership of Colonel William Graham and Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Hambright (Forney, Abraham, pension application 1832). They moved to the Lincoln County Courthouse and to Moses Moore's plantation (Forney, Abraham, pension application 1832). Their show of force prevented Loyalists from assembling. On 2 October, because of the threat posed by Ferguson, these men moved east to join Colonel Thomas Sumter's 340 South Carolina militiamen camped on the Catawba River west bank at Tuckasee Ford (Draper, King's Mountain and Its Heroes 1881, 214). Sumter was away and leadership fell to Lieutenant Colonel James Hawthorne, Colonel Edward Lacey, and Colonel James Williams. On 3 October, they marched to Ramsour's Mill. On 4 October, they marched to Flint Hill, now called Cherry Mountain, in eastern Rutherford County, North Carolina. In 1832, Abraham Forney [testified](#):

That sometime in June 1780, there was a call upon the Militia, he [Abraham Forney] volunteered and served as a private in Captain John Baldrige's Company and a part embodied at the time first mentioned at Ramsour's Mills, from thence we marched to Espey's, where we joined more troops and lay there about three weeks collecting men. At this place Colonel Graham & Lt. Col. Hambright took the command of us. From thence we marched to Lincoln old Court House, to old Moses Moore's, the father of Colonel John Moore the Tory and marched and counter marched through all that section of Country & hearing that [Patrick] Ferguson was coming on in considerable force, it was concluded to retreat across the Catawba River at the Tuckaseegee Ford and arriving at that point we then met with some South Carolina troops retreating before Cornwallis, whom they informed us was then in Charlotte, we united with these forces under the command of a Colonel [James] Williams and marched up the West side of the Catawba River and then towards South Carolina in the rear of Ferguson and fell in with the over mountain troops under the command of [William] Campbell, [Benjamin] Cleveland, [Issac] Shelby & [John] Sevier at the Cowpens, from thence we united in the pursuit of Ferguson and came up with him at King's Mountain on the 7 day of October 1780. After this battle that he was dismissed and he returned home. (Forney, Abraham, pension application 1832)

On 6 October, the two groups marched separately to Cowpens, a well-known crossroad in South Carolina. Both groups arrived about sundown. Lincoln County men were supplemented by about 20 fellow Lincoln County men under Major William Chronicle who had joined the overmountain men two days previously. At Cowpens, officers selected their ablest men with good horses for the final pursuit. At 9:00 p.m., during a rain, 910 men departed. Lincoln County men led since they knew the terrain and could properly interpret intelligence gathered from local residents. Enoch Gilmer proceeded well in advance of everyone else. He risked his life by posing as a Loyalist trying to find Ferguson's camp (Draper, King's Mountain and Its Heroes 1881, 226). At Cherokee Ford on Broad River, he signaled that the opposite bank was clear (Draper, King's Mountain and Its Heroes 1881, 228). At dawn 7 October, the entire force forded the river.

Cherokee Ford is immediately upstream of present-day Cherokee Falls, South Carolina. Lincoln County men continued to lead. Colonel Isaac Shelby insisted that the troops press on without rest (Draper, King's Mountain and Its Heroes 1881, 229).



Cherokee Ford over Broad River

Actual ford with rock bottom is 200 yards downstream of access road (Moss 1990).

Word was passed that the acknowledgement password was “Buford,” an ominous reminder of Buford's massacre and symbolic of their resentful motivation. Rain continued until noon. They learned of Ferguson's exact position on a ridge top near Kings Mountain. It had been a deer hunting camp of Major William Chronicle and Captain Charles Mattox (Draper, King's Mountain and Its Heroes 1881, 231). At 4:00 p.m., after a nonstop 18-hour, 33-mile, horseback pursuit, Patriots surrounded Loyalists and defeated them within an hour. Many rebels observed that Loyalists consistently overshot their targets. Present-day marksmen call this effect *terrestrial refraction*. It is an optical allusion. When the battle ended, rebels suffered 28 killed and 62 wounded. Loyalists suffered 157 killed, 163 wounded, and 698 captured. Ferguson was killed. He was an officer in the 71st Highland Regiment. In prior years, he was a leading developer of breech loading firearms and held a patent on a threading design that reduced fouling.



Major Patrick Ferguson, wax bust, about 1775, artist unknown.
Burial rock carn. Monument erected 7 October 1930.

The participants knew they achieved an important victory, but could not have appreciated its full importance. The bronze plaque on the obelisk south side states the importance concisely:

TO COMMEMORATE THE VICTORY
OF
KING'S MOUNTAIN
OCTOBER 7, 1780
ERECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE
UNITED STATES
TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WHICH
THE HEROISM AND PATRIOTISM OF
THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS
BATTLE SO LARGELY CONTRIBUTED.



Kings Mountain Battleground Obelisk
Constructed by United States Government in 1909.



Killed and wounded Patriots
Of the 66 names, 25 were Virginians and 12 were Lincoln County men.

While approaching the battleground, Lincoln County commander Colonel William Graham was called away (Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes* 1881, 232). Command was reassigned to Major William Chronicle. Lincoln County men marched to the furthest side where they blocked the only road escape. Historian Lyman Draper wrote about the Lincoln County men, nicknamed the “South Fork Boys.”

Major [William] Chronicle and Lieutenant Colonel [Frederick] Hambright led their little band of South Fork boys up the north-east end of the mountain, where the ascent was more abrupt than elsewhere, save where Campbell’s men made their attack. As they reached the base of the ridge, with Chronicle some ten paces in advance of his men, he raised his military hat, crying out—“Face to the hill!” He had scarcely uttered his command, when a ball struck him, and he fell; and William Rabb, within some six feet of Chronicle, was killed almost instantly thereafter. The men steadily pressed on, under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Hambright, Major Joseph Dickson, and Captains Mattocks, Johnson, White, Espey and Martin—a formidable list of officers for so small a body of men; but they all took their places in the line, and fought with determined heroism. Before they reached the crest of the mountain, the enemy charged bayonet—said to have been led by DePeyster—first firing off their guns, by which, Robert Henry supposed that Captain Mattocks and John Boyd were killed, and William Gilmer, a brother of the noted scout, and John Chittim wounded—the latter of Captain Martin’s company, was shot in his side, making an orifice, through which, according to tradition, a silk handkerchief could be drawn, and yet he recovered, living to a good old age. (Draper 1881, 257).



Location of “Face to the hill!” command.

Photo taken during winter. In 1780, trees were bigger and widely spaced.

Many years later, Robert Henry, a Lincoln County man, wrote about the action during a bayonet charge.

I was preparing to fire when one of the British advancing, I stepped back and was in the act of cocking my gun when his bayonet was running along by the barrel of my gun, and gave me a thrust through my hand and into my thigh. My antagonist and I both fell. The Fork boys retreated and loaded their guns. I was then lying under the smoke and it appeared that some of them were not more than a gun’s length in front of the bayonets, and the farthest could not have been more than 20 feet in front when they discharged their rifles. It was said that every one dropped his man. The British then retreated in great haste, and were pursued by the Fork boys.

William Caldwell saw my condition, and pulled the bayonet out of my thigh, but it hung to my hand; he gave my hand a kick and it went out. The thrust gave me much pain, but the pulling of it was much more severe. With my well hand I picked up my gun and found her discharged. I suppose that when the soldier made the thrust, I gripped the

trigger and discharged her; the load must have passed through his bladder and cut a main artery at his back, as he bled profusely. (Henry 1850).

About casualties, Draper wrote:

The Lincoln County men, considering their small number, suffered considerably in the engagement—Major Chronicle, Captain Mattocks, William Rabb, John Boyd, and Arthur Patterson, killed, and Moses Henry mortally wounded; Lieutenant-Colonel Hambright, Captain Espey, Robert Henry, William Gilmer, John Chittim, and William Bradley, wounded. There must have been other losses; for of Captain Samuel Martin's company of about twenty men, he relates in his pension statement, that four were killed, and two mortally wounded. (Draper 1881, 302).

In 1815, Doctor William McLean purchased and erected the battlefield's first commemorative marker. It honors Lincoln County men killed and is located where that military unit approached the steep hill. Today, it is on the hiking trail beside a modern copy. The marker reads, "Sacred to the memory of Major William Chronicle, Captain John Mattocks, William Robb, and John Boyd who were killed at this place on the 7th of October, 1780, fighting in defense of America."



1815 Lincoln County Men Marker and modern copy

On 7 October 1930, United States President Herbert Hoover spoke at the 150-year commemoration ceremony that included other dignitaries and 75,000 attendees.

Each year on 7 October, a commemoration service is held. An invited speaker discusses a historical aspect. A small group of hikers retrace the overmountain victory trail from Sycamore Shoals, Tennessee.



Commemoration Day, 7 October 2001. 38 floral wreaths.

On 8 October 1780, Brigadier General William Davidson moved his 600 troops from Phyfer's plantation to Rocky River on Salisbury Road, present-day highway US29 near Lowes Motor Speedway (Davidson 1780 in NCSR 1896, XIV:677). That was 16 miles from Charlotte. When news got to Davidson, he hurriedly wrote Major General Jethro Sumner:

Camp Rocky River, October 10, 1780

Sir — I have the Pleasure of handing you very agreeable Intelligence from the West. Ferguson, the Great Partizan, has miscarried. This we are assured of by Mr. [Samuel] Tate, Brigade Major in General Sumpter's Brigade. The particulars from that Gentleman's Mouth stand thus: that Colonels Campbell, Cleveland, Shelby, Sevier, Williams, Brandon, Lacey, Etc., formed a Conjoint Body near Gilbert Town consisting of 3000 — From this Body were selected 1600 good Horse, who immediately went in search of Colonel Ferguson, who was making his way to Charlotte — Our people overtook him well posted on King's Mountain, and on the evening of the 7th Instant at 4 o'clock, began the attack which lasted forty seven minutes, Colonel Ferguson fell in the action, besides 150 of his men — 810 were made prisoner, including the British — 150 of the prisoners are wounded — 1500 Stands of arms fell into our Hands. the enemy surrendered. We lost about 20 men among whom is Major Chronicle of Lincoln County, Colonel Williams is mortally wounded, the number of our wounded cannot be ascertained. This blow will certainly affect the British very considerably. The designs of our conquering Friends near King's Mountain not certainly known, it is most probable that they will secure their prisoners in or over the Mountains and proceed toward Charlotte — The Brigade Major who gives us this was in action. The above is true. The Blow is great and I give you Joy upon the Occasion.

I am, Etc.,

Wm. Davidson (Davidson 1780 in Davidson 1951, 86)

Davidson's letter was forwarded from Sumner to Gates, to Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson, to Continental Congress in Philadelphia. It was published in newspapers across the country.

The degree of American resistance surprised the British. On 24 October, Cornwallis's second in command, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Lord Rawdon, reported, that Gates's army "unveiled to us a fund of Disaffection in this Province of which we could have formed no Idea And even the dispersion of that Force [at Camden] did not extinguish the Ferment which the hope of its support had raised." (Borick 2003, 240). Later, British commander-in-chief Major General Henry Clinton wrote about Kings Mountain:

And, surely, never was the trite apothegm that the greatest events often proceed from little causes more fatally confirmed than by the present check [at Kings Mountain]— which, though in itself confessedly trifling, overset in a moment all the happy effects of our successes at Charlestown and His Lordship's glorious victory at Camden, and so encouraged that spirit of rebellion in both Carolinas that it never could be after humbled. For no sooner had the news of it spread through the country than multitudes of disaffected flew to arms all parts, and menaced every British post on both frontiers, carrying terror even to the gates of Charlestown. (Morrill 1993, 112)

During the 1700s and 1800s, battles were often represented in verse. A Kings Mountain ballad by an unknown author appears in reference (Draper 1881, 591).

As an enemy, Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton is often maligned in American history. But his book is balanced and perceptive. Only 7 years after these events, he wrote:

It was now evident, beyond contradiction, that the British general [Cornwallis] had not adopted the most eligible plan for the invasion of North Carolina. The route by Charlotte town, through the most hostile quarter of the province, on many accounts, was not advisable. Its distance likewise from Ferguson allowed the enemy to direct their attention and force against that officer, which ultimately proved his destruction. A movement on the west of the Catawba, towards Tryon county, would have been better calculated either to cover the frontier of South Carolina or to protect detachments from the army. Another operation might also have been attempted, which, in all probability, would have had a beneficial effect. Considering the force of the King's troops at this period, a march to Cross Creek [present-day Fayetteville] would have been the most rational manoeuvre that could have been adopted; where the inhabitants were acknowledged to be almost universally loyal: Upon this move Ferguson would have been undoubtedly ordered to

retire, and to remain upon the defensive to the westward; and Earl Cornwallis would have had a favourable and convenient opportunity to try the fidelity of the King's friends, and to discover whether the water communication between that place and Wilmington could be opened; a point which should necessarily have been ascertained before the Royal army proceeded to the interior parts of North Carolina. (Tarleton 1787, 168)

Lincoln County Patriot names

Between 60 to 80 Lincoln County men participated at Kings Mountain. Fortunately, most of their names are known. Many were from what is now Gaston County (Carpenter 2006–2009). At the battle, they blocked the only road escape, and thus engaged in severe fighting. Of these men, 5 died at Kings Mountain, 1 was mortally wounded, and 6 were wounded. Thus, about 1 in 5 was a casualty. That was the highest casualty proportion of any military unit. Of the 400 Virginians (Draper 1881, 214) under Colonel William Campbell, about 200 participated in the battle. Of these, 25 suffered casualties, the second highest casualty proportion.

At least 24 Lincoln County men, or their widows, lived long enough to describe their war-time activities in pension applications. Those pension applications can be read from hyperlinks below.

[James Alexander](#), wounded

Matthew Armstrong

[Robert Barkley](#)

Andrew Barry

John Boyd, killed

William Bradley, wounded

[Samuel Caldwell](#)

John Chittam, wounded

William Chronicle, Major, killed

[James Conn](#)

John Dellinger

David Dickey

Joseph Dickson, Major

[James Espey](#)

[Samuel Espey](#), Captain, wounded

Hugh Ewin?

[Andrew Floyd](#)

[Abraham Forney](#)

[James Furgason](#)

Enoch Gilmer

William M. Gilmer, wounded

[James Glenn](#)

[William Graham](#), Colonel

Frederick Hambright, Lt. Col., wounded

John Hardin Hambright, Captain

[Charles Hamilton](#)

James Henry

Joseph Henry

[Malcolm Henry](#)

Moses Henry, mortally wounded

Robert Henry, wounded

[James Hill](#), Lieutenant

[Thomas Hill](#)

[George Hofstalar](#)

James Johnson, Captain

William Johnson, Captain

[Matthew Leeper](#)

[Thomas Lofton](#), Captain

[William Logan](#)

[Jacob Martin](#)

[Samuel Martin](#), Captain

Charles Mattocks

John Mattocks, Captain, killed

[Alexander McLaen](#)

Charles McLean

William McLean?

[William Newton](#)

Arthur Patterson Sr., killed [possible error]

Arthur Patterson, Jr.

Thomas Patterson

William Patterson

William Rabb, killed

Philip Sailors

Robert Shannon

[John Tubb](#)

William Twitty

John Weir, Captain

Isaac White, Captain

Joseph White, Captain, wounded

Thomas White, Lieutenant

(Moss 1990)

Linking Tryon County Resolves signers to Kings Mountain participants

It is interesting to link Tryon County Resolves signers to Kings Mountain participants. Five years separated to two events. Many signers became Whigs. Others became Loyalists. In particular, it appears that 4 of the 49 signers fought at Kings Mountain. They were Frederick Hambright, William Graham (although called away immediately before the battle), John Dellinger, and Charles McLean. All of these were Patriots (Moss 1990). Other signers had sons who fought at Kings Mountain. They were Thomas Espey's sons Samuel

Espey and James Espey; and Jacob Forney's son Abraham Forney. Interesting, James Logan sons chose opposite sides. William and Joseph Logan fought as Patriots. John and Thomas Logan fought as Loyalists (Moss 1998, 50). Other possible relationships exist between signer Charles McLean and fighter William McLean; signer Andrew Hamilton and fighter Charles Hamilton; signer Robert Alexander and fighter James Alexander; and signer George Dellinger and signer/fighter John Dellinger. It is possible that fathers and sons with the same first name are confused. Signer Moses Moore's sons John and Patrick were staunch Loyalists.

Conclusion

Lincoln County men played an important role before and during the Battle of Kings Mountain. In September, 1780, they prevented a second Loyalists uprising in Lincoln County. They led the overmountain men on their forced march from Cowpens to the Kings Mountain battleground. During the battle, they fought bravely and suffered casualties higher than any other military unit. Fortunately, almost all their names are known.

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