



# The Sons of the American Revolution Catawba Coalition



A monthly Newsletter for  
The Catawba Valley Chapter of  
The Sons of the American Revolution



On 13 November 2021, we held our regular bi-monthly meeting at Palermo's Family Italian & Greek Restaurant after struggling to begin the month with a strong fight with COVID.. We installed officers for the next two-year term, inducted a new member and presented a few awards to members. The first photo is NC SAR Sr Vice President and past Chapter President Jack Bowman installing Ben Setser, Chapter President; John J Cline, Vice President; Derrick Walker, Treasurer; and Roy C Lightfoot, Secretary. The second photo is our newest Compatriot, John Love. Third photo are four members that had earned the 250th Anniversary Recognition Bronze Medals and Certificates. We in fact had six of them to present, but two members could not be there. They were presented theirs a little later. Pictured are Larry Anderson, Rhod Reep, President Ben Setser, Roy C Lightfoot, and John J Cline. Our Chapter now has nine members who have earned the Bronze 250th Medal, and that means that more than 25% of Catawba Valley Chapter members have done the work to earn this medal. Last but not least, Past President and current NC SAR Sr Vice President, Jack Bowman was presented with the Chapter Distinguished Service Medal for helping to keep the Chapter up and running while I was trying to learn to be President. I called him three or four times per day some days. I don't bother him nearly as much these days.

We were able to catch up with the two compatriots that were unable to be at the meeting a bit later, the first being Will Barton at DEFY Hickory, and the second being Chris Stone at the second annual Thunder Over Carolina Inc Mini Rendezvous in Lincolnton NC. Our Chapter set up an information booth at the rendezvous and we had a great time there. If you weren't there, well, you just missed it. Hopefully, you will be at the next one. Here are a few good photos of the day for your enjoyment



Please join us at our next meeting, 8 January 2022 at Palermo's Family Italian & Greek Restaurant, 924 Conover Blvd W, Conover NC. This will be our first meeting of the new year and will be trying to plan our path for 2022. Hope to see you there.

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*Ben Setser*  
Chapter President



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Volume 2  
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## “Valley Forge – The Winter of 1777 – 1778”

Many books, and essays have been written about the subject of Valley Forge, and exactly how horrific it truly was the winter of 1777 – 1778. Most likely, nothing new or anything the reader did not already know will be written here. However, what the author intends to do is to offer an insight into the mind of the common soldier as he sees it.

Everyone knows that in December 1777, General George Washington had moved the 12,000 members of the Continental Army into winter quarters at Valley Forge after the victory in September at Saratoga, and the defeats at Brandywine, Paoli, and Germantown, Pennsylvania in October, and the Patriot capital, Philadelphia, had fallen into British hands. The army suffered from cold, hunger, and fatigue, but now the low morale of the troops played a factor after this disastrous campaign. Washington himself described Valley Forge as “a dreary kind of place and uncomfortably provided.” This location was only twenty miles from Philadelphia, and the British, and although it presented a strategic, defensible stronghold in eastern Pennsylvania, the army was ill-prepared for an encampment which would last for six long months. With the advantages of the access of clean water, and firewood, also came the disadvantages of their basic needs of food, and clothing, and the diseases which ran rampant throughout the camp. In addition to the main army, there were also smaller numbers of African American and Native American soldiers, and many women and children, including officers’ wives and families. While there, the soldiers built makeshift huts, however, shortages of food, clothing, and blankets as well as the unsanitary conditions all contributed to disease, exhaustion, and the spiraling of their morale. As many as 3,000 of the soldiers were unfit for service because of only a lack of clothing including shoes, socks, and coats.

What kept those people there in such deplorable conditions? What made them stay, and not run for home? Hope? Faith? A sense of duty? Washington begged the Continental Congress, and the state governors for assistance, and finally resorted to sending soldiers under General Nathanael Greene on foraging parties into the countryside. With all previously mentioned, and with Washington’s military authority being questioned, because of his steady leadership he was able to maintain control of the troops, and there was never a mass desertion or a mutiny.

Two men played pivotal roles with keeping the troops together and focused and not running for home. Even though the troops faced these horrible conditions, The Marquis de Lafayette, and Baron von Steuben ensured and encouraged the men to remember what they were there for. Lafayette had been with the troops from the beginning at Valley Forge. He engaged the men directly and became noted for enduring the same hardships with them. He was esteemed for his bravery for which he became popular with the Continentals, and was very well-known for his personal dedication to Washington, and the American Cause. Von Steuben arrived in February 1778, and was immediately appointed as unofficial Inspector General by Washington. He sought to bring a uniformity to the soldiers, and although these men had seen combat, they lacked the military training to pose an effective threat against the British. Through a system of drill he developed, he taught them maneuvers that furnished the skills to rival the well-trained British soldiers. Along with this, and his previous experience in the Seven Years War with the Prussian army, he oversaw the training of this “rag-tag” army so desperately needed. By the end of the Valley Forge encampment, the army had experienced a complete and significant transformation to an orderly and disciplined fighting force. Just a few weeks before leaving Valley Forge in June 1778, news reached the Americans of the French alliance in May. With the news, came a revitalization of this reorganized and uniformly trained army causing them to forge ahead, and display their professionalism, and discipline at the Battle of Monmouth, 28 June 1778. Without Valley Forge, and the reshaping of Washington’s Army, the Americans’ dedication, endurance, and resilience would not have been forged, and independence might not have been gained.

What Lafayette and von Steuben showed the Continental army, and still show us today, is this: leaders must lead from within. If you want your “troops” to follow you, you must experience what they experience. Good leaders are not born, they are made. Sometimes, nay, ALL the time, you must “suit up, and show up” in order to be successful, and it takes all of us to achieve our goals. These two “foreigners” showed the troops that, and show us that.

**Roy C Lightfoot**

The Catawba Valley Chapter  
of the  
Sons of the American Revolution

### More Chapter Happenings

It has been a strange and difficult month for the Chapter President to recover from COVID. It seems as though after the virus is over, the brain fog and fatigue stayed for almost another month. He was able to get out and on December 8th, 2021, two days before publication of this newsletter, presented Robby Bennett of Bennett Funeral Service, Newton, NC, the SAR Flag Certificate in recognition of their Exemplary Patriotism in the proper display of the Flag of the United States of America. Thank you, Robby Bennett.

There are several projects and events in the near future that we need to address, so here is a breakdown of what they are.



**Wreaths Across America** is pending. December 18, 2021, Wreaths Across America, along with many associated groups attempt to acquire and place a wreath on every American veteran's grave during the Holidays. This is a near impossible task, but the numbers of people who sponsor a wreath grows each year. The time to purchase a wreath for this year has passed, and we sold more than double this year than last. Placement of wreaths this year is December 18th. Our Chapter sponsors Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery, 962 Old US Hwy 70, Black Mountain, NC 28711 and we will be there placing wreaths. Come join us if you can. We will meet on site at 9:30 am and place wreaths until they run out.

The **Battle of Cowpens** commemoration will take place on Sunday, January 16, 2022 in Cowpens National Park, 4001 Chesnee Hwy, Gaffney, SC 29341, with the commemoration beginning at noon and if participating, one should be on site and ready by 11:00 am. This is a great function to participate in. The National Park wants to limit the number of people there, and have stated that masks "May Be Needed" so bring one with you just in case. There is a registration form for those who want to serve in Color Guard, [National Society SAR Color Guard: Cowpens Commemoration - 16 January 2022 \(signupgenius.com\)](#) Please keep in mind, this may be one of the colder events that we attend, please dress accordingly. We would love for you to join us.

The **Battle of Cowan's Ford** Commemoration and our NC SAR **Winter BOM** will take place Saturday, January 29, will take place at Hopewell Presbyterian Church, 10500 Beatties Ford Rd Huntersville, NC, NC 28078, register on the State website, Commemoration beginning at 10:00 am, lunch at the church afterward and the winter NC SAR Board Of Managers meeting just after lunch. If you have never attended a BOM, this will be a treat for you. Please come be with us.

February is a little crowded and some events are a lot further away. **Heroes of the Hornet's Nest** on February 11th at 2959 McCormick Highway, Lincolnton, GA 30817, about 140 miles away, and **Battle of Kettle Creek** on February 12th at 299 War Hill Rd, Washington, GA 30673, about 210 miles away. Both events begin at 9:00 am. I hope some may be able to go to these. **George Washington's Birthday** will be celebrated as a holiday on Monday, February 21st, 2022, but his birthday is in fact February 22nd, events will happen both days. The **Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge**, 200 Moores Creek Dr, Currie, NC, starting at 10:00 am. If participating in Color Guard be on site by 9:00 am. Register online.

The **Battle of Guilford Court House** Commemoration, March 12th, 2332 New Garden Rd, Greensboro, NC 27410, is the only confirmed event in March and origination registration for this not complete at this time.

We are planning several Patriot Grave Markings in the near future, and knowledge of future events along with everyone's schedule will dictate the dates. March 5th, 19th and 26th appear to be good dates. These grave markings are Machpelah Presbyterian Church, 226 Brevard Place Rd, Lincolnton, NC; Old St Paul's Lutheran Church, 2035 Old Conover-Startown Rd, Newton, NC; and Littlejohn United Methodist Church, 4120 Littlejohn Church Rd, Lenoir, NC. The stones are ready for Machpelah and we are trying to get together for a date, the stone and bronze for Littlejohn is almost finished and the very large stone for Old St Paul's has been ordered and should be ready around the end of March or first of April. Please, if there is a conflict with these three dates, let me know.

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## “The Patriot’s Corner”

The third installment of “The Patriot’s Corner” comes from North Carolina Vice President and former Chapter President Jack Bowman with his ancestor, Samuel Asay (1750 – 1833).

Samuel Asay was born in Burlington County, New Jersey on 9 June 1750 to unknown parents. In March 1776, he enlisted in the 3rd New Jersey Regiment in Northampton, Burlington County, New Jersey. This unit, which became known as one of the New Jersey Continental Regiments, were called the New Jersey Grays at that time. After its formation, they were sent north to reinforce the ill-fated invasion of Canada, and at Albany, New York, were diverted to the Mohawk Valley to arrest Sir John Johnson. Later that same year, they constructed Fort Dayton at German Flats, rebuilt Fort Stanwix at Rome, New York, and then, wintered at Fort Ticonderoga.

In some accounts, Asay is listed as a deserter before the unit returned to New Jersey. At the time of being marched north, there was a great deal of dissension in the ranks of the 3rd. Upon arriving, the unit received word the British had invaded New Jersey, and their towns and home were being destroyed. Many members of the unit deserted immediately, and returned home to defend their homes, and families. Asay appears on the payroll lists for the 3rd and 4th Regiments at Fort Ticonderoga, and then, at Fort Independence. In addition, he was shown to be sick, and had been sent to Albany. However, in a “Pay Abstract of Captain Abraham Lyons company of the 4th Jersey Regt”, he is noted as deserted for the month of May 1777, but this was the month the regiment had left Fort Independence, and returned to New Jersey, while he was listed as sick in Albany. In the final muster of the 3rd Regiment, known as “A Muster Roll of Captain Richard Cox’s Company of the 3rd New Jersey Regiment of Foot in the Service of the United States, Commanded by Colonel Elias Daton, This muster is taken from the time of Enlistment to 31st May inclusive,” dated 3 June 1777, each of the members are listed with their disposition. This document clearly shows the names, and their dispositions, including those who deserted, were sick, absent, on duty, and discharged. In the list is clearly written, “38. Samuel Acy Inlisted Febr 8th Descar’d May 20.”

In a letter written by his daughter, Susannah (and Jack’s 4th great grandmother), she states her father just showed up one day at the family home. He shared that he had been sick, and when he was released from the hospital’s care, he returned to the fort, only to be told the unit had left and marched back to New Jersey. At that point, he decided to return home. A friend from the Regiment came by his home, and told him he needed to go to Morristown immediately in order to sign out, which he did, and received his discharge papers, which he later lost.

In November and December 1777, Asay served with the Burlington County Militia. During that time, the British were preparing their attack on Fort Mercer on the Delaware River. While they sent out scouting parties to clear the roads leading to Philadelphia, the Patriot militia moved towards the Delaware to take up positions there. On 20 November, they happened upon a party of British soldiers on the Timber Creek Bridge, and a skirmish ensued, where the Patriots fired upon the British. Asay was wounded during this skirmish.

Asay married Sarah Atkinson in Monmouth County, New Jersey, 3 August 1779, and had at least two children. Mary, born 1818, married Samuel L. Pancoast, and Susannah, born 21 April 1791, married John G. Zelle on 9 October 1813.

Samuel Asay died 13 March 1833, probably in Northampton, and unfortunately, his grave site is unknown.

*Jack Bowman is the current Sr Vice President of the North Carolina Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, and the former Chapter President of the Catawba Valley Chapter.*

## Upcoming SAR events

<b>Dec 18</b> . . . Wreaths Across America	<b>Jan 17</b> . . . Battle of Cowpens
<b>Jan 29</b> . . . Battle of Cowan’s Ford & Winter BOM	<b>Feb 12</b> . . . Battle of Kettle Creek
<b>Feb 22</b> . . . Washington’s Birthday	<b>Mar 12</b> . . . Battle of Guilford Courthouse

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The Catawba Coalition welcomes submissions, comments and/or suggestions. Please send them to

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## Did You Know?

**James Monroe Said:**

“While, then, the constituent body (our government) retains its present sound and healthful state everything will be safe. They will choose competent and faithful representatives for every department. It is only when the people become ignorant and corrupt, when they degenerate into a populace, that they are incapable of exercising the sovereignty. Usurpation is then an easy attainment, and an usurper soon found. The people themselves become the willing instruments of their own debasement and ruin. Let us, then, look to the great cause, and endeavor to preserve it in full force. Let us by all wise and constitutional measures promote intelligence among the people as the best means of preserving our liberties.”

Monroe, our 5th President, was only 18 years old when he began his service in 1776.