



# The Sons of the American Revolution Catawba Coalition



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

## President's Report



Catawba Valley Chapter got the new year off with a bang having our first Chapter meeting of the year on 8 January. I was not able to attend the meeting, but our Chapter Secretary, Roy Lightfoot did a great job in my absence. In that meeting we elected to move our next meeting forward one week to 19 March so as not to coincide with the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on 12 March. We joined in the Commemoration of the 241st Anniversary of the Battle of Cowpens in Gaffney, SC on 15 January, just ahead of a snowstorm. We had a great time and it was not as cold as some past commemorations at Cowpens, but plenty cold enough. Photos above.

New forms for recording Americanism are forthcoming. We got the first one last week, and even though some things have changed, I am sure that we will succeed just as we did last year.



Pictured at the left, on January 20, 2002, Chapter VP, John Jay Cline and Chapter President, Ben Setser conferred the Heroism Medal and Certificate to NC Highway Patrolman Kendall Huss, at the NC Highway Patrol Station, Conover, NC 28613. Huss saved a 5-year-old boy and his mother from a wreck that burst into flames on US HWY 321, Hickory, 23 November 2021. Thank you, Trooper Huss for being "On The Job".

Catawba Valley Chapter conducted a Compatriot Grave Marking for our past State President, William Alexander Graham III at Historic Machpelah Cemetery, along with replacing two markers that had been damaged or stolen for Gen. Joseph Graham and Capt. Alexander Brevard, in Iron Station NC for some time. We scheduled the service for Saturday morning, 22 January 2022, and of course, we get snow the Friday night before. Without the ability to move indoors or reschedule a later date, we went ahead with the service. It was also cold, but the job was done and we had a great time honoring our Patriots and Compatriot. There are photos below.



*Ben Setser*  
Chapter President

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10 February  
2022

Volume 3  
Issue 2

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### “The Battle of Cowan’s Ford”

The Battle of Cowan’s Ford was another of the little-known battles in our area, however, it was another very important Patriot moral victory and led to Cornwallis’ eventual defeat at Yorktown. Costly to the Patriots because of the loss of their leader, General William Lee Davidson, who was killed in battle. Fought on 1 February 1781, Cowen’s Ford was in the very northwestern part of present-day Mecklenburg County, which at the time was in Lincoln County. Fewer than one thousand American Patriots confronted a British force which numbered at five thousand, thus, attempting to slow their advance across the Catawba River.

A few things to remember are, Cornwallis had burned his wagons only a few weeks before, including some of his personal belongings, many of his supplies, including the rum ration at Ramsour’s Mill in central Lincoln County. He did this in late January (25-28), in an attempt to “lighten his load” in his pursuit of Generals Daniel Morgan and Nathanael Greene, after the British defeat at the Cowpens 17 January. Greene’s strategy after Camden, 16 August 1780, was to hit and run on the British forces, thus, slowing them, wearing them down, and demoralizing them.

On 28 January 1781, Greene and Morgan received word, at their camp at Sherrills Ford, that a British force was massing to cross the Catawba River. Morgan was rallying and gathering the local militia, and gave orders to General Davidson with a force of five hundred to Beatties Ford. Half of his force did not have flints for their rifles. Cornwallis was marching his forces toward Beatties Ford, and found it impassable because of a raging current, and encamped in Lincoln county for three days on Jacob Forney’s land. Forney’s wife, Maria, stopped him from killing Cornwallis while he occupied their land telling him he would be killed, and the family as well. Forney resisted, when his wife said to him, “Heaven’s last, best gift to man.” Cornwallis knew Forney to be a zealous supporter in the cause of freedom, as well as the fact that they had three sons in the “rebel army.”

Despite a heavy rainfall, Cornwallis began to move his army on 31 January, as any further delay would cause him to lose the chance of destroying Greene’s army. Cornwallis’ intent was to make it look like he was going to cross at Beatties Ford by having Lt Col Webster cannonade that area, when in reality, he moved his main force to Cowan’s Ford where there were two fords. One was shallow enough for horses although it was longer as it went at an angle across the river, while the deeper one was used for wagons and went straight across. Cornwallis disclosed this plan six weeks after the engagement in his journal.

Meanwhile, Greene had arrived, and ordered Davidson, who had already placed his men at various fords on the eastern bank, in order to slow the British troop movements. Greene and Morgan then left to accompany the bulk of the forces towards Salisbury. Thinking the British might attempt a night time crossing, Davidson sent a company of cavalry and infantry to Cowan’s Ford. He feared what remained of Tarleton’s troops might cross, and get behind him in the darkness. This would be devastating, and Davidson had the forethought to camp a half mile away from the river with pickets posted to watch Cowan’s Ford at the water’s edge. He expected the British to cross at the horse ford, and had deployed most of his men there.

The British arrived at the river’s edge and Cowan’s Ford near daybreak. Without hesitation, they began crossing the swollen river straight across the aforementioned wagon ford causing the horses to struggle as the water was soon over their heads. The sound of the water splashing alerted Davidson’s forces immediately and they began to target the Redcoats as they fought to reach the far bank. As the first of the British began to reach the other side, they formed a firing line and began to fire a volley at the now retreating militia. In addition, the British had managed to get some cannon across, and seeing this Davidson ordered his men to fall back to the woods to regroup in the dense underbrush. However, soon after arriving, and while trying to rally a particularly hesitant unit, Davidson was struck by a rifle ball through his heart, knocked from his horse, and killing him instantly. Seeing their general had fallen, the Patriots broke ranks, and fled, thus turning the battle into a rout for the British. According to research discovered in 2001, his naked corpse was found, and had been robbed by British soldiers. General Davidson was buried in the Hopewell Church cemetery in Mecklenburg County.

Greene had hoped to impede Cornwallis at Cowan’s Ford, and put a comfortable distance between the two armies, however, with the swift British victory, his plan was disrupted, forcing him to make the uncertain race to the Dan River in order to cross into Virginia. Here, Greene rested the weary troops, and was able to procure reinforcements, as well as much needed supplies.

The resulting casualties included four killed and twenty-six wounded Americans, and thirty-one killed and thirty-five wounded British.



**The Catawba Valley Chapter**  
of the  
**Sons of the American Revolution**

**“The Patriot’s Corner”**

The next installment of “The Patriot’s Corner” comes from Catawba Valley Chapter President Ben Setser, Compatriot Sherrill Watkins and Compatriot Hugh Barnes with their ancestor, Samuel Oxford (1735 – 1811).

Samuel Oxford was born in Virginia around 1735 and moved to North Carolina around 1755. He settled into what was Rowan County, later Burke County, and Lincoln County, and what is now Catawba County. At this time, there were fewer than a dozen families living west of the Catawba River in this region.

Jonathan Barrett, which it is said to have “lived like an Indian” with no neighbors for many miles was Oxford’s nearest neighbor. He lived on the east side of the Catawba River at the foot of a small mountain which is still known as Barrett’s Mountain, which is located in Alexander County. Barrett was married to Jarman, the daughter of Chief Nopkehee or King Haigler as he was known to the Europeans, who was one of the greatest chiefs of the Catawba Indian Nation.

Oxford settled on the west side of the Catawba River opposite Barrett’s Mountain, and applied for a land grant to the Governor, who was located 250 miles away in New Bern. Many of the first settlers did not receive their grants for several years after settling in. Oxford’s first grant was for three hundred acres on the south (or west) side of the Catawba River, and eventually purchased land on the north (or east) side of the river from John Perviance, which adjoined lands with Jonathan Barrett.

Oxford was known to have served briefly as a soldier in the American Revolution, as he received \$1315 on 10 June 1781 “for Rev War service” according to Treasurers and Controllers records, Rev Army, Vol 1, p. 53, folio 4, cert. 112 in the NC State Archives. He was listed as a soldier. Colonial records reflect that Samuel Oxford provided food for the families of the Catawba Indians that fought for the English in the French and Indian War. During the American Revolution, it was reported that at one time he had to flee with his family to his old home in Virginia to escape the British and Tories.

Oxford began courting Jonathan Barrett’s daughter, Barsheba, and it was said would take a long pole with him when he crossed the river so in case a heavy rain while he was there and the water level would rise, he could pole vault from rock to rock back across the river. Samuel Oxford, and Barsheba eventually married, and raised a fairly large family. They made their home on the brow of a small ridge that ran down to a river. At his place, he found a place where horses could cross the river if the level was normal, however, he later built a rough “skow” or flatboat which he used as a ferry when rains caused the river to swell, and become impassable. He operated this ferry on the Catawba River for more than half a century which became heavily used as settlers moved further west. This was the time of “hard money” and was difficult to come by. The County Court fixed the rates of the ferry: two pence for a man or single animal, one shilling for a wagon and team. The fees, although small, were almost always paid in coin or “hard money”. Rumor had it that Oxford accumulated a considerable amount of hard money, and had buried it somewhere on his property. Treasure seekers have dug dozens of holes in the hillside in search of the fortune to no avail.

Samuel died 24 March 1811 and was buried a short distance from his cabin on the brow of a hill overlooking the Catawba River, now Lake Hickory near today’s Oxford Dam. Vandals have dug into his grave, hoping to find the buried money and never replaced the thrown-out earth. The loot has never been found.

Samuel left a will in which proceeds from the sale of his goods, chattels lands and tenements were to be distributed among his children. Oxford’s wife, Barsheba (Bathsheba) died earlier as she was not named in his will.

Samuel Oxford’s land became known as Oxford’s Ford and Oxford Ferry until 1928 when the Duke Power Company built the Oxford Dam and a hydroelectric power plant creating Lake Hickory, or as some call it, Lake Oxford.

**This section of the Newsletter is designed to highlight Patriot Relatives of our Chapter members. Let us know about your Patriot so that we may publish it here. Send your Patriot biographical information to [lennon\\_0102@yahoo.com](mailto:lennon_0102@yahoo.com) or [capn\\_roy@hotmail.com](mailto:capn_roy@hotmail.com) Thank you!**

**Please join us at our next meeting, 19 March 2022 at Palermo’s Family Italian & Greek Restaurant,  
924 Conover Blvd W, Conover NC. A meal may be ordered at 11:00, the meeting begins at Noon.  
Hope to see you there.**



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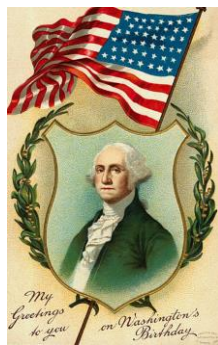
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## Chapter Happenings



George Washington's 290th birthday is February 22nd and there are many celebrations around SAR and DAR. We will be involved with 2 again this year. Catawba Valley will be joining Jacob Forney DAR in a **George Washington Birthday Afternoon Tea**. This will take place Sunday, February 20th, 2:00 pm at Lincoln Cultural Center, 403 East Main Street, Lincolnton, N.C. 28092. Of course, There will be Tea, horderves (savories, scones and a sweet) and a speaker. We are asking for donations to offset the cost of food and venue. Catawba will also be presenting Maiden High School JROTC with a framed copy of the Declaration of Independence on Wednesday, February 23rd, 1:30 pm at Maiden High School. Please join us at either or both if you can.

**Heroes of the Hornet's Nest** on **February 11th** at 2959 McCormick Highway, Lincolnton, GA 30817 and **Battle of Kettle Creek** on **February 12th** at 299 War Hill Rd, Washington, GA 30673. Both events begin at 9:00 am.

**Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge** on **February 26th**, 200 Moore's Creek Dr, Currie, NC, starting at 10:00 am. If participating in Color Guard be on site by 9:00 am. Register online at [ncsar.org/event/battle-moores-creek-2/](https://ncsar.org/event/battle-moores-creek-2/)

**Battle of Guilford Court House** Commemoration, **March 12th, 2022**, 2332 New Garden Rd, Greensboro, NC 27410, starting at 10:00 am. If participating in Color Guard be on site by 9:00 am. Register online at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRwd9eqI1M\\_bGgLiI6OjQGUDSOanMSjWAbazw2k8t5ehYF9w/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRwd9eqI1M_bGgLiI6OjQGUDSOanMSjWAbazw2k8t5ehYF9w/viewform)

**Adoption of the Halifax Resolves** Commemoration, **Tuesday, April 12, 2022**, 10:30 am, Market Street, Historic Halifax, NC. RSVP's MUST arrive NLT Wednesday, April 7th in order to be listed in the program and to be included in the meal reservations, if desired. [2022 Halifax Resolves RSVP](#)

**Patriot's Day**, is Monday, **April 18, 2022**. As is our usual mode of recognition, several members will place flags on Patriot Graves around our region. If you would like to join in on this great event, Catawba Valley Chapter has flags in hand for this purpose. Please let Chapter President Ben Setser know how many flags you need and where you will be using them.

The grave marking at Machpelah was a huge success, even with the cold and snow. There are 2 more upcoming grave markings that we have planned. The stone for the 11 patriots at Old St Paul's Cemetery has been ordered. The monument company called last week and told me that they had to start again because the stone cracked, so there may be a bit of a delay. The stone for Littlejohn's Cemetery is also on order. I am hoping that this one will take place in late may or early June in order to have more of the Patriot's family members in attendance,

## Upcoming SAR events

<b>Feb 12</b> . . . Battle of Kettle Creek	<b>Feb 20</b> . . . Washington's Birthday Tea Service
<b>Feb 22</b> . . . Washington's Birthday	<b>Feb 26</b> . . . Battle of Moore's Creek
<b>Mar 12</b> . . . Battle of Guilford Courthouse	<b>Apr 12</b> . . . Halifax Resolves
<b>Apr 18</b> . . . Patriots Day	<b>Apr 22/23</b> . . . NCSAR Annual Meeting

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

[lennon\\_0102@yahoo.com](mailto:lennon_0102@yahoo.com)

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## Did You Know?

**In 1776, shortly before the Declaration of Independence was signed, a secret committee uncovered a plot to kill the future first president. The committee was appointed by Washington himself after he arrived in New York to prepare for a British attack. The most shocking part of the plan was that it was led by none other than his own personal bodyguard, Thomas Hickey. Several other prominent people were involved, including the New York governor and the city's mayor. However, since Hickey was closest to Washington and was believed to be the one who would have carried out the killing, he was the only one executed. The committee whose information saved Washington's life would go on to lay the groundwork for the modern-day CIA.**