

North Carolina in the American Revolution



An Exhibition by
The Society of the Cincinnati

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1783

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Text by Emily L. Schulz.

Cover illustrations, clockwise from top: Tea caddy, 1774 (see pages 6-7); Pocket compass and sundial, ca. 1770-1780 (see page 35); Five-dollar counterfeit note, late 1775 (see page 15); and *Joseph Hewes*, 1776 (see pages 12-13).

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I am induced to believe that there is not, in the United States, nor in any other country, a body of men who are more generally willing and desirous to discharge their social obligations; or a body of men who are more tractable and observant of the laws, than the citizens of North Carolina.

—Hugh Williamson,
The History of North Carolina, 1812



Herman Moll (d.1732). Carolina. London, 1736. The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection.

INTRODUCTION

North Carolina's story during the American Revolution is often overshadowed by better known events in its sister colonies, such as the Boston Tea Party and Virginia's calls for independence. But the Tar Heel State claims one of the earliest actions by American women in support of the Revolution, the Edenton Tea Party; the first official recommendation by an American colony for independence from Great Britain, the Halifax Resolves; and one of the earliest battles of the war, the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. As the fourth most populous American colony on the eve of the Revolution, and one of the most geographically and culturally isolated, North Carolina and its estimated 250,000 residents—80,000 of whom were slaves—took a distinct path through the American Revolution.

North Carolina was originally part of a larger province granted by King Charles I to a single proprietor in 1629. The province, named Carolina after the king, included land extending from northern Florida to Albermarle Sound. Carolina remained sparsely populated until 1663, when eight English lords proprietors purchased the colony and began advertising its virtues throughout Europe. The lords proprietors neglected their province's northern part, whose crops and other trade goods remained hidden behind the shifting inlets of the Outer Banks, in favor of Charleston's large port and mercantile economy. In the aftermath of wars with the Tuscarora and Yamassee Indians, the lords proprietors sold North Carolina, which had recently separated from South Carolina, to the Crown in 1729.

North Carolinians struggled with the rule of royal governors, who represented the distant authority of the Crown, almost as soon as the colony was settled. Culpeper's Rebellion, which raged in the Albermarle region in 1677 and 1678, is considered one of the earliest popular uprisings in the American colonies against government policies that residents believed to be unjust. Other protests, whether over the high cost of goods imported from Britain or unequal county representation in the colonial assembly, provided a glimpse of the unrest to come during the American Revolution.

THE COLONIAL CRISIS BEGINS

North Carolinians wholeheartedly joined the fervent protests taking place throughout the colonies in 1765 in response to the Stamp Act. The latest act from Parliament required stamps purchased from British agents placed on all documents, newspapers and even playing cards distributed in the colonies. Residents of the Lower Cape Fear area, which would become a hotbed of revolutionary activity in North Carolina, gathered in Wilmington several times that fall to protest the act.

In the midst of the Stamp Act controversy, William Tryon, North Carolina's recently appointed royal governor, arrived in the colony. His tenure was consumed by increasing unrest in the assembly over British policies and by the Regulation, a movement led by farmers in the North Carolina Piedmont that aimed to secure greater representation in government for the rural western counties and put an end to extortionate practices by local officials. Five years of escalating protests, including petitioning the governor and refusing to pay taxes, culminated in 1771 in the battle of Alamance, where Governor Tryon's colonial militia defeated the rebellion. Many of Tryon's soldiers, who were from the more prosperous eastern towns that the Regulators resented, later led North Carolina into the American Revolution. Tryon left North Carolina later that year to become royal governor of New York.

Josiah Martin, Tryon's successor, did not become the strong royal governor that the Crown needed. By August 1774 North Carolina patriots had begun to assume authority over the daily governance of the colony. Local committees of safety and an assembly dominated by patriots guided North Carolina's protests of British taxes and other perceived oppressions, controlled its judicial system, issued its currency, and prepared its military defenses, while Governor Martin zealously, but ineffectively, tried to halt the growing American rebellion.

John [Abraham] Collet (fl. 1756–1789).
***A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an actual Survey.* London: Publish'd ... by S. Hooper, 1770.**

Courtesy of Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens

(See illustration on pages 4-5.)

North Carolina was rapidly growing on the eve of the American Revolution as Scottish, Irish, English, German, Swiss and French settlers—as well as those moving into the colony from Virginia, Pennsylvania and South Carolina—explored the colony's frontiers in search of land and new communities. These settlers encountered Cherokee, Catawba, Coharie and Tuscarora Indians, whose towns appear on the western and southern fringes of the vast map. The roads and paths through North Carolina, shown as faint gray lines, could hardly keep pace with new settlements and homesteads, which also appear on the map.

Capt. John Collet, commandant of Fort Johnston at the mouth of the Cape Fear River from 1767 until the fort's destruction by John Ashe's patriots in 1775, dedicated the map to "His most Excellent Majesty George the III" in the cartouche in the lower right corner. Collet's map, engraved for printing by I. Bayly, was the most comprehensive map of North Carolina of the time and remained the definitive map of the region into the nineteenth century.

Handbell used at Tryon Palace. ca. 1770.
Iron and brass bell with oak handle.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Tryon Palace, built in New Bern in 1770, served as the home of North Carolina's royal governors William Tryon (1765–1771) and Josiah Martin (1771–1776). To North Carolina patriots, the palace became a symbol of British oppression and extravagance. Martin abandoned Tryon Palace in May 1775—becoming the first colonial governor to flee his office—one week after Abner Nash



John [Abraham] Collet (fl. 1756–1789). *A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an actual Survey*. London: Publish'd ... by S. Hooper, 1770.

and a band of patriots marched on the palace and seized its cannons. The bell rang at Tryon Palace during the royal governors' tenures, as well as during that of the first patriot governor, Richard Caswell, who led the newly independent state from 1776 until 1780.

Powder horn owned by Joel Lane. ca. 1770s?. Cow horn.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina

Influential planter Joel Lane (1740–1795) served twice as a delegate to the Provincial Congress. His one-thousand-acre Wake County home, which hosted meetings of the Council of Safety and the General Assembly during the war, became the beginning of the capital city of Raleigh when Lane sold it to the state in 1792. He also served on the first board of trustees for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Joel Lane served in the North Carolina militia twice—once from Halifax County in 1761 and once from Wake County between 1771 and 1773 to help put down the Regulation. He could have used the powder horn, which bears the name of his father, Joseph, during either occasion or simply kept it as a family memento.

**Unknown Chinese maker.
Tea caddy. 1774. Porcelain.**

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina

On October 25, 1774, fifty-one women gathered in Edenton at the home of Elizabeth King to protest British taxation in the American colonies, most recently the Tea Act, which effectively granted a



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monopoly on the sale of tea in the colonies to the British East India Company. Penelope Barker, who owned a Chinese export porcelain tea caddy, presided over the meeting that became known as the Edenton Tea Party. The women pledged not to drink tea or wear clothes made in England “untill such time that all Acts which tend to Enslave this our Native Country shall be Repealed.”¹¹ A similar event took place the following March in Wilmington. The British responded by mocking the Edenton ladies in a political cartoon printed in London in early 1775.



COURTESY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE ARCHIVES

Attributed to Philip Dawe. “A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton, North Carolina.” London: Printed for R. Jay and J. Bennett, 1775.



Josiah Martin (1737–1786). “The Speech of His Excellency Josiah Martin, Esquire, His Majesty’s Captain-General, Governor, and Commander in Chief, in and over the Province of North-Carolina. To the General Assembly, Held at Newbern, the 4th Day of April, 1775.” April 7, 1775.

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina

One day after the Second Provincial Congress met in New Bern, Governor Martin issued a proclamation denouncing “this illegal Meeting” and urging members of the General Assembly to reject it. Martin warns that if the “violent and unjustifiable Proceedings in some of His

Majesty’s Colonies” are pursued, they “must inevitably precipitate these Colonies from their present unparalleled State of Prosperity into a Train of Miseries most dreadful to contemplate.” The governor’s proclamation had little effect on the assembly’s members, who joined with the delegates to the Provincial Congress to create the new body that Martin feared. The governor quickly dissolved the General Assembly in the hope of preventing the patriot cause from gaining support, but he had already lost his power over North Carolina’s legislature.

**Surry County Committee of Safety journal.
August 25–September 21, 1775.**

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina

Surry County, the northwestern-most county in North Carolina in 1775, established one of the colony’s most active committees of safety. The small group of leading citizens, led by Chairman Benjamin Cleaveland, took charge of the county’s preparations for the colonial crisis. The month of resolutions recorded in the journal kept by

William Lenoir, clerk of the committee, includes declarations of loyalty to the king but reveals hatred for his policies in America. The resolutions invoke the “Law of Nature,” the British Constitution and the colonists’ “Natural Rights” as



COURTESY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE ARCHIVES

British subjects to argue for their fair treatment and reconciliation with the Crown. At the same time they call for stockpiles of arms and ammunition in support of “the Common Cause of American Liberty.” The decorative motif at the beginning of the journal embodies this tension, with the words “Liberty or Death” printed in a circle surrounding “God Save the King.”

[Hugh Williamson (1735–1819)]. *The Plea of the Colonies, On the Charges brought against them by Lord Mansfield, and Others, in a letter to His Lordship*. London: Printed for J. Almon ..., 1775.

The Society of the Cincinnati,
The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

Hugh Williamson, an American physician and scholar, wrote a pamphlet in defense of the American colonies' protests of British taxation while living in London in 1775. Williamson specifically targeted the earl of Mansfield, England's chief justice, who argued that the colonists "do not wish for peace, they have long been aiming at absolute independence and will be satisfied with nothing less." As proof that Lord Mansfield's assertions were wrong, Williamson cites the North Carolina Provincial Congress's resolution in August 1775 that they most desired "a reconciliation with the parent State." "I am fully persuaded that the desire of independence was foreign from their hearts, but," Williamson warns, "your vigorous measures will drive them to that refuge, and will, if continued, compel them to remain an independent state."

Williamson's predictions soon came true. He sailed home to the colonies in December 1776, when he learned of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and in early 1777 moved to Edenton from his native Pennsylvania in search of better opportunities for his fledgling mercantile business and private medical practice. Williamson made an immediate impact on the state's war effort. He vaccinated North Carolina's troops against smallpox and, after being appointed the state's surgeon general, cared for its soldiers during the British army's 1780–1781 invasion of the state.

DECLARING INDEPENDENCE

Once word of the outbreak of hostilities at Lexington and Concord reached North Carolina, many of its patriots clamored for independence. On May 31, 1775, the Mecklenburg County Committee of Safety drafted a resolution known as the Mecklenburg Declaration—somewhat shrouded in mystery because no contemporary document survives—calling for an end to the king's authority over North Carolina. Almost one year later the Fourth Provincial Congress, meeting in Halifax on April 12, 1776, passed a resolution empowering North Carolina's delegates to the Continental Congress "to concur with the delegates of the other Colonies in declaring Independency, and forming foreign Alliances, reserving to this Colony the Sole and Exclusive right of forming a Constitution and Laws for this Colony."² The resolution, considered to be the first official action for independence by an American colony, became known as the Halifax Resolves.

On July 2 Continental Congress delegate Richard Henry Lee of Virginia proposed a resolution that the American colonies separate from Great Britain. North Carolina's delegates—Joseph Hewes, William Hooper and John Penn—wished to avoid war, but could not escape the desire and right of the citizens of North Carolina to be free. The delegates cast North Carolina's vote for independence as the Halifax Resolves had instructed and the resolution passed. News of the Declaration of Independence reached the North Carolina Council of Safety nearly three weeks later. On August 1 Cornelius Harnett, the council's president, read the Declaration to a crowd in Halifax—the first public reading of the document in North Carolina. By the end of the year, the Old North State had approved its first constitution and Declaration of Rights and called for a general assembly to meet under the new state government.

**Seven-dollars-and-an-half note.
[New Bern: James Davis?], 1776.**

On loan from William Polk Cheshire,
North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati

The Provincial Congress that gathered in April 1776, in addition to discussing independence, authorized an issue of paper currency in dozens of denominations. The note depicts the Continental or Grand Union flag—a combination of England’s Union Jack and thirteen stripes representing the thirteen American colonies—that became the first flag of the United States of America. Like the image printed on them, the notes in this issue convey the uneasy but bold steps that each colonial legislature made in early 1776 to establish control over their colony’s governance.

These notes were printed using copper plates likely engraved by Gabriel Lewyn, a goldsmith in Baltimore. No printer’s name appears on the note, but it is likely that James Davis, North Carolina’s official printer, printed it in New Bern. The four signatures that appear on it are those of William Williams, William Haywood, David Sumner and J. Webb.

Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827). Joseph Hewes (1730–1779). 1776. Oil on ivory in gold frame with garnets.

Courtesy of the U.S. Naval Academy Museum

Joseph Hewes, born into a Quaker family in New Jersey in 1730, was an early advocate of the need for a Continental navy as well as a signer of the Declaration of Independence for North Carolina. Hewes settled in Edenton in 1755 after moving from Philadelphia and, when the time came, supported American independence despite



its effects on his mercantile business and religion. (Hewes withdrew from the pacifist Society of Friends in early 1775.) He also championed John Paul Jones as an American naval officer and secured for him a lieutenant’s commission in December 1775.

This miniature portrait, the only known contemporary view of Hewes, was painted by Charles Willson Peale in Philadelphia in March 1776 during Hewes’s second term as a delegate to the Continental Congress. Hewes commissioned it for Helen Blair, a niece of his fiancée, who had died just a few days before they were to be married. After Peale completed the miniature, Hewes wrote home explaining that he commissioned the portrait for Helen, who he called “Miss Nelly,” because “she may never have an opportunity of seeing the original again.” Hewes died in Philadelphia three years later while serving another term as a delegate.

Joseph Hewes, Philadelphia. Letter to Samuel Johnston. January 6, 1776.

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Joseph Hewes frequently relayed news from the Continental Congress and the bustling city of Philadelphia to Samuel Johnston, one of the leaders of the North Carolina Provincial Congress. In a letter written just six months before the delegates approved the Declaration of Independence, he shares rumors that had alarmed some of the delegates of an army preparing to sail in the spring from England to Pennsylvania, considered by the British to be the most rebellious province. Hewes’s letter conveys his calm demeanor in the face of such threats, as he matter-of-factly reports that Congress has voted to increase the size of the Continental army regiments and urges Johnston to gather as much arms and ammunition in North Carolina as possible.

THE KING'S ALLIES IN NORTH CAROLINA

“The people in some parts of this Country begin to open their eyes and to see through the artifices and delusions by which they have been misled,” Gov. Josiah Martin wrote to British general Thomas Gage in March 1775 of his hope for loyalists to rise in North Carolina.⁴ In the coming months Martin devised a plan to restore royal authority in North Carolina, relying heavily on the loyalists in the colony—as many as twenty thousand, Martin claimed—taking up arms with the British troops. Martin expected these loyalist soldiers to come from two groups, Scottish Highlanders and former participants in the Regulator rebellion. Settlers from the highlands of northern Scotland began arriving in North Carolina in large numbers in the 1760s, when economic despair in their native land pushed them to seek a living in the New World. Many of these Highlanders had rebelled against England with “Bonnie” Prince Charlie, the Stuart pretender to the British throne, in the 1740s, but the aftermath of their defeated campaign made them both intensely loyal to Great Britain and fearful of British retribution. The Regulators, still living on the fringes of North Carolina politics, received royal pardons to encourage their loyalty.

Hostilities between patriots and loyalists in North Carolina intensified in 1776. On February 27, 1,400 Scottish loyalists—a far cry from Martin’s predictions—clashed with patriot troops at Moore’s Creek Bridge. Their defeat and capture at the hands of Richard Caswell and Alexander Lillington devastated their efforts for the next several years. When the British army occupied the region in 1780 and 1781, North Carolina loyalists reemerged and waged fierce battles with the state’s patriots such as the engagement at Ramsour’s Mill. But the loyalists’ efforts—even David Fanning’s brazen attack on Hillsborough in September 1781, during which his men captured Gov. Thomas Burke—could not change the course of the Revolution. Josiah Martin’s retreat from Wilmington to England the same year crushed loyalist hopes of restoring royal authority in North Carolina. Thousands of North Carolina

loyalists, faced with threats to their property and lives, had relocated to Nova Scotia or returned to Great Britain by the end of the war.

Five-dollar counterfeit note. Late 1775.

On loan from William Polk Cheshire,
North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati



North Carolina loyalists, supported by the British in their efforts to undermine the patriot economy, printed counterfeit North Carolina currency late in 1775, copied from the patriot note issued by the Provincial Congress on August 21. The purported signatures on the five-dollar note are those of Andrew Knox, Richard Cogdell, Richard Caswell and, in red, Samuel Johnston. The vignette of Tryon Palace in the lower left corner is the earliest known pictorial representation of the royal governor’s mansion—a symbol that North Carolina patriots resented. The palace burned in 1798.

“The Oath of Abjuration.” [1775.]

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Both sides employed oaths of allegiance to ensure and, in some cases, force the loyalties of North Carolina’s residents. North Carolinians who remained loyal to King George III swore the oath of abjuration, which reveals the British government’s concern over pretenders to the Crown and the American rebels: “I do swear that I will bear Faith and true Allegiance to his Majesty King George, and him will defend, to the utmost of my Power, against all traitorous Conspiracies and Attempts whatsoever, which shall be made against his Person, Crown, or Dignity.” Individuals also pledged in the oath to reveal “all Treasons and traitorous Conspiracies” of which they had knowledge.

“The Case, and Claim upon Government of Thomas MacKnight, late of *Belville* in *North Carolina*.” [London, 1781?].

The Society of the Cincinnati,
The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

Merchants, after Scottish settlers, formed the second largest group of North Carolina loyalists. Thomas MacKnight (fl. 1757–1787), a wealthy merchant and landowner in the Albermarle and Upper Cape Fear regions, believed he deserved compensation from the British government for his years of service to the king in the southern American colonies. He made his case publicly in a three-page broadside, in which he claims to be owed a total of £30,000 for the loss of land, ships, slaves and merchandise. MacKnight describes his unpaid efforts in “opposing the progress of the Rebellion,” which included raising men for service and taking up arms with the British army, despite attempts on his life and the seizure of his property and possessions by North Carolina patriots. On

the last page of the broadside appear excerpts from testimonials by Lord George Germain and the earl of Dartmouth “to shew that his case is entitled to attention.” The copy of MacKnight’s claim in this exhibition is from the papers of David Hartley, a British statesman and friend of Benjamin Franklin.

Shoe buckles worn by Flora MacDonald. ca. 1770. Metal and glass.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Flora MacDonald (1722–1790) responded to economic hardships in her native Hebrides islands off the northeast coast of Scotland by sailing to North Carolina with her family in 1774. Her fame—won through her efforts to help “Bonnie” Prince Charlie escape from royal troops in 1746—followed her. Flora and her husband, Allan, became leaders of the sizeable Scottish community near Cross Creek (present-day Fayetteville), and the MacDonalds’ home, like those of other prominent Highlanders in North Carolina, was tended by servants and furnished with fine items brought from Scotland. The shoe buckles worn by Flora MacDonald were popular at the time among women of wealth and style in Britain and its American colonies. Allan MacDonald and two sons, James and Alexander, joined Gen. Donald MacDonald’s loyalist army early in 1776, while Flora is said to have hosted balls to encourage young Highlanders to fight for their king.

WAR COMES TO NORTH CAROLINA

Even before the colonies declared independence, North Carolina began preparing for the coming storm. Rumors of a loyalist army being raised by Governor Martin and the impending arrival of British ships on the North Carolina coast in 1775 and 1776 prompted North Carolina patriots to raise regiments of soldiers and gather supplies of weapons and ammunition in case the threats materialized. The first battle came in February 1776, when Scottish loyalists clashed with a combined force of North Carolina Continental and militia soldiers at Moore's Creek Bridge. In May British ships reached the mouth of the Cape Fear River—a presence that North Carolina patriots considered an invasion. But the British only sent a few raiding parties ashore before quickly moving on to attack Charleston. British troops would not reappear in North Carolina for another four years.

Much of the attention of the Provincial Congress in 1776 and 1777 focused on the intensifying conflicts with Indian nations, primarily the Cherokees. After the French and Indian War ended in 1763, colonists increasingly settled in North Carolina's western counties on the Cherokees' ancestral lands. As the American Revolution neared, British and American agents competed for Indian nations' allegiances or, at the very least, their neutrality. The Catawba, Tuscarora and Coharie Indians of southern North Carolina agreed to fight with the Americans, but the Cherokees remained hostile to the colonies throughout the Revolutionary War. The Cherokees battled North Carolina and other colonies primarily to rid their lands of settlers and reestablish their disrupted trading routes. But they would pay dearly for their alliance with the British. At least two thousand Cherokee warriors lost their lives during the war, and those who survived were forced to abandon their homes—located on land that North Carolina forced them to sell to the state—and rebuild their nation in Georgia and Mississippi.

Donald MacDonald, H.Quarters. Letter to the Whigs. February 26, 1776.

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives,
Raleigh, North Carolina

As the armed loyalists neared the bridge over the Black River at Widow Moore's creek, their Scottish-born leader, Donald MacDonald, sent a written warning to the patriots preparing to oppose them. MacDonald wrote that if the patriot troops would not lay down their arms and swear allegiance to the king, he "must consider you as traitors to the Constitution, and take the necessary steps to conquer and subdue you."

Broad sword. ca. 1740–1760. Steel blade with iron hilt and shagreen grip.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Eighty Highland Scots, screaming battle cries and wielding traditional broad swords, led the loyalist charge on Moore's Creek Bridge just after midnight on February 27, 1776. Almost all fell victim either to the piercing fire from Richard Caswell's patriot soldiers on the



opposite shore, the greased or missing planks on the bridge, or the icy water below. Those who managed to survive became prisoners of the North Carolina patriots.

The broad sword had been a traditional weapon of the Highlanders since the early seventeenth century. This example displays the typical decorative basket hilt around the handle and the wide, double-edged blade. Its handle is wrapped with shagreen, or cured sharkskin.

“A Talk to the Cherokee Indians.” April 15–May 1, 1776.

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives,
Raleigh, North Carolina

Five Indian commissioners representing the Continental Congress met with “Head Men and Warriors” from the Cherokee Indian nation at Fort Charlotte in South Carolina in April 1776. Robert Hamilton transcribed the talks that were conducted through interpreters and “half breed Indians.” The commissioners describe “the Quarrel betwixt the Counsellors of King George and the Inhabitants and Colonies of America,” hoping to persuade the Cherokees of the justice of the American cause and dissuade them from joining the British side. The meetings also included the exchanging of white wampum belts, the draping of deerskins on council seats, and the smoking of tobacco—ceremonies meant to reinforce the words of peace.

The Cherokees refused to support the American cause, explaining that “the people over the great Water [the British] and their Brothers here are of the same flesh and blood.” Several months later, North Carolina troops led by Gen. Griffith Rutherford marched onto Cherokee lands, burning dozens of towns and defeating the Indians in a brief battle. The Cherokee nation signed a treaty with North Carolina the following year, but some Cherokee warriors, under Dragging Canoe, continued to attack frontier settlements.

**Arthur Council (1755–1777), Cross Creek, [N.C.].
Letter to an unidentified officer. June 9, 1776.**

The Society of the Cincinnati,
The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

North Carolina patriots, still on edge from the loyalists’ aggression at Moore’s Creek Bridge in February and Sir Henry Clinton’s raids along the Lower Cape Fear in May, occupied themselves through the summer of 1776 with preparations for a feared British invasion of North Carolina. In a brief letter to an unnamed commanding officer, Arthur Council, a twenty-one-year-old captain in the Sixth North Carolina Continental Regiment, complains of too few weapons and soldiers. “My men is without arms and ... I am at a loss for want of a 2d Lieutenant,” he writes.

THE NORTH CAROLINA CONTINENTAL LINE

The North Carolina Continental line, which would ultimately include eleven regiments and six to seven thousand soldiers, was born in the summer of 1775. In June the Continental Congress issued quotas to each state, tasking North Carolina with recruiting one thousand men for service. In response the Provincial Congress, meeting in Hillsborough in August, authorized the creation of the first two North Carolina Continental regiments under the command of James Moore and Robert Howe. While the First and Second regiments served in North Carolina in 1776, the Provincial Congress raised another eight regiments, including the North Carolina Light Horse, to meet increased quotas from the Continental Congress. The state's last Continental regiment organized in April 1777, but suffered from weak enlistments and disbanded the following year.



Irving Wolfson (1899–?). James Moore (1737–1777). 20th century. Oil on canvas. Collection of Mrs. James Moore.

North Carolina's Continental line joined George Washington's main army near Philadelphia in August 1777 and participated in the defense of the city that fall. After surviving Valley Forge, the soldiers took part in the campaign through New Jersey in 1778 that culminated in the battle of Monmouth Courthouse. The North Carolina regiments—reduced to three units—moved south as the theater of war shifted, only to be captured by the British after the failed defense of Charleston in May 1780. New recruits failed to enlist in large numbers until June 1781, after the American success at Guilford Courthouse had inspired more men to serve. The

state's Continental line limped through the rest of the war with Gen. Nathanael Greene's army in the Carolinas and began 1783 with only one unit comprising two hundred soldiers.

Sword used by James Moore. Late 18th century. Steel blade with silver hilt and wood grip.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina

Col. James Moore (1737–1777) commanded the First North Carolina Regiment from its inception in 1775 until his death in 1777. Moore directed the patriots' strategy in the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, although he was not present for the fighting. He went on to assume command of the Southern department briefly in 1777 after the departure of Maj. Gen. Charles Lee. Moore died of a fever while on route with the First North Carolina Regiment to meet George Washington's troops outside of Philadelphia. The colonel was succeeded by another ill-fated commander, Col. Francis Nash, who was killed just a few months later during the battle of

Germantown. Colonel Moore's sword, used during the Revolutionary War, bears a "target-eyed" eagle at the end of its handle, common on both American- and British-made swords of the period. The sword descended to Moore's son, Capt. James Moore, a U.S. Army officer who carried it during the War of 1812.



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**Orderly book of the Third North Carolina Regiment.
July 5–August 26, 1777.**

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives,
Raleigh, North Carolina

The Continental army's commanders required all units to record their orders in bound books. The Third North Carolina Regiment's orderly book, kept primarily by Capt. Jacob Turner (ca. 1754–1777), covers the period from July 5 to August 26, 1777, and serves as an official record of the regiment's orders during that period, when it served in Morristown and Trenton, N.J.; Germantown and Philadelphia, Pa.; Wilmington, Del; and White Plains, N.Y. According to Turner's entry for August 2, for example, the regiment was ordered to "hold themselves in Readiness to March at a Moments warning." Two days later, all camp followers—soldiers' wives, merchants and other hangers-on who were not absolutely necessary to the army—were ordered to leave camp because, "In the Present Marching States of the Army," they "Are a Clog upon Every Movement."

In addition to troop movements, Turner's orderly book also chronicles court martials, food and supplies and "advertisements" for lost or stolen goods such as letter bags and horses. Turner was killed during the battle of Germantown in October 1777. After his death another North Carolina soldier continued the orderly book.

**"A Return of the Continental Soldiers together with the
New Levies from Hillsborough and Salisbury Districts in
North Carolina Commanded by Colo. Jethro Sumner."
January 29, 1779.**

On loan from the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati

In order to maintain information on the strength of its forces, the Continental army required officers to submit periodic lists, known as returns, of the soldiers in their command. This list of the nine companies in Col. Jethro

Sumner's North Carolina brigade tallies 438 men. The return was prepared at Camp Purisburgh, N.C., near present-day Halifax, while the brigade was attempting to recruit additional soldiers.

**Jethro Sumner, Warren [County, N.C.].
Letter to Horatio Gates. July 20, 1780.**

The Society of the Cincinnati, Library Purchase with the generous assistance of St. Julien Ravenel Marshall Jr., 2006

In 1780, as the British army under Lt. Gen. Charles Cornwallis made its way north through South Carolina, recruiting soldiers for the three North Carolina Continental regiments that were charged with defending the state took on greater urgency. Two months earlier, the entire North Carolina line had been captured by the British at Charleston and, according to Jethro Sumner in a letter to Horatio Gates, the state's regiments "were intirely without men." Sumner writes that "little can be done in the recruiting way, just now in the Country," due to a lack of money and support from the Provincial Congress and the "Amazing premiums" that the state militia was offering to encourage enlistments in those units. Sumner expresses hope that men from Edenton, Halifax, New Bern and Wilmington will join the Continental regiments at the general rendezvous he ordered to take place in Hillsborough in August 1780, but his tone reveals the grave concern he had for the future of the defense of North Carolina and the possibility of an American victory.



John Massey (1758–1835). Sketch of a Continental army soldier. 1778. Pen on paper.

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives,
Raleigh, North Carolina

John Massey, a private in Capt. Kedar Ballard's company of Jethro Sumner's North Carolina regiment, drew a sketch of a Continental army soldier in 1778, perhaps during the winter Massey spent at Valley Forge. Massey submitted the drawing to the North Carolina General Assembly in 1806 to support his petition for a pension based on his Revolutionary War service.

THE BRITISH INVADE NORTH CAROLINA

War returned to North Carolina when the British army's focus shifted to the southern colonies in 1779. Lt. Gen. Charles Cornwallis aimed to subdue the South and started by seizing Savannah and Charleston. In June 1780 his army marched north out of Charleston, beginning a campaign that would wind through three states over the next year and a half. The Continental army, led in the South by Gen. Horatio Gates and, later, by Gen. Nathanael Greene, met the British threat. The two armies followed each other's movements and clashed in some of the war's most ferocious battles, including Camden and Cowpens in South Carolina and Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina. Soldiers from both sides ravaged the countryside for food and supplies and incited the local residents. After concluding that "North Carolina is of all the provinces in America the most difficult to attack," Cornwallis marched on to Virginia in September 1781.⁵ His army dug in at the coastal town of Yorktown, where a combined force of French and American army and navy troops forced Cornwallis's surrender on October 19, signaling the end of the Revolutionary War and the beginning of the independent American nation.

William Faden (1750?–1836). *The Marches of Lord Cornwallis in the Southern Provinces, now States of North America; Comprehending the Two Carolinas, with Virginia and Maryland, and The Delaware Counties.* London: Published ... by Wm. Faden, Geographer to the King ... Feby. 3, 1787.

The Society of the Cincinnati,
The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

The routes chronicled on Faden's map pass through many of the battles sites of the southern campaign, including Camden, Charlotte, Kings Mountain, Cowpens, Guilford Courthouse and Yorktown. Published in Banastre

Tarleton's *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, in the Southern Provinces of North America*, the map features the British paths through the South taken by Cornwallis, Gen. Charles O'Hara and Tarleton, marked in red, blue and yellow, respectively. William Faden first printed copies of the map, which lacked Tarleton's route, in August 1785.

Unknown Chinese maker. Plate owned by Patrick Ferguson. ca. 1730–1780. Porcelain.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina

As the British army neared North Carolina, Cornwallis dispatched Maj. Patrick Ferguson (1744–1780) to protect the British army's left flank. Less than two miles from the North Carolina border in the mountainous western Carolinas, Ferguson proclaimed that if the frontier patriots did not lay down their arms, he would march into their towns, set fire to their homes, and hang their leaders. In response, patriots from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and what would later become Tennessee joined forces and attacked Ferguson's camp at Kings Mountain, S.C., on October 7, 1780.

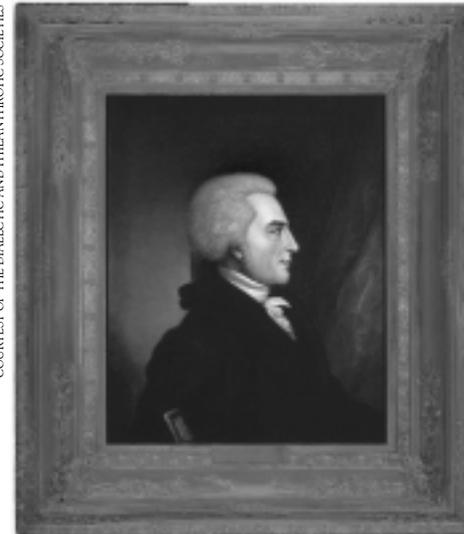
One of the patriot leaders, Maj. Joseph McDowell (1758–1795), is said to have taken a Chinese export porcelain plate from Ferguson's baggage during the battle, in which Ferguson was killed. The untrained, undisciplined American militia soldiers—including the first governor of Kentucky, Isaac Shelby, and the first governor of Tennessee, John Sevier—inflicted heavy casualties on the British troops and forced Cornwallis to retreat into South Carolina, saving North Carolina from invasion for several more months.

Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) after Gilles Louis Chrétien (1754–1811). William Richardson Davie (1754–1820). 1826. Oil on canvas.

On loan from the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Col. William Richardson Davie, an English-born cavalry officer in the Continental army, was integral to the defense of North Carolina in 1780 and 1781. His

COURTESY OF THE DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETIES



cavalry forces, based in the Waxhaws region along the border with South Carolina, raided and harassed the advancing British army, buying time for the state's defenses and providing intelligence on troop movements. After the war Davie opened a law practice in Halifax, helped found the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill, and served as governor of North Carolina (1798–1799). Davie also became a member of the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati.

For the portrait of Davie commissioned posthumously by the Dialectic Society, a literary fraternity at the University of North Carolina, Charles Willson Peale referenced an image of Davie engraved from Gilles Louis Chrétien's profile drawing completed in Paris in 1800. After finishing his oil portrait, Peale proclaimed, "it is so good that I am proud of it. And it cost me very little trouble to paint it."⁶

William Richardson Davie (1756–1820), Camp Waxhaws, [S.C.]. Letter to William Smallwood, [New] Providence, [N.C.]. November 10, 1780.

The Society of the Cincinnati,
Library Acquisitions Fund Purchase, 1999

As the British army regrouped in South Carolina after the battle of Kings Mountain, Colonel Davie and his cavalry continued to shadow and skirmish with the retreating enemy. One month of constant engagements took its toll on Davie and his men, as he reveals in this letter to Maj. Gen. William Smallwood of Maryland: “My party being so weak, and so far advanced of the Army,” he vows to proceed with caution when nearing Tarleton’s cavalry. Davie’s strength and confidence had been further weakened by the expiring enlistments of his soldiers, many of whom returned home rather than rejoin the army. “This morning the company of rifle men leave me, in that very moment when I need them most,” he despairs.

William Read (1754–1845), Salisbury, [N.C.]. Letter to Lewis Morris Jr., Head Quarters. January 27, 1781.

The Society of the Cincinnati,
The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

As Greene’s troops moved through North Carolina, the Continental army’s hospital moved with them. Dr. William Read, director of the hospital at Salisbury, writes in a letter to Col. Lewis Morris Jr., aide-de-camp to General Greene, of plans to relocate the hospital to “the Moravian Towns” in North Carolina to ensure its safety as Greene retreats north through the state. The hospital and its almost one hundred patients had moved from Charlotte to Salisbury just one month earlier. The letter, written ten days after the American victory at the battle of Cowpens in South Carolina, includes reports on the soldiers Read and his colleagues treated, including several of the British

wounded. Read also complains of hardships at the hospital, which has “no more than one day’s provisions” and “not an atom” of supplies.

William Read remained director of the Continental army’s general hospital in the Southern department until November 1782. At the war’s end, Read settled in Charleston and became an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati of the State of South Carolina.

Henry Bryan Hall (fl. 1850–1900), engraver, after Alonzo Chappel (1828–1887), artist. *Female Patriotism—Mrs. Steele & Genl. Green.* New York: Martin, Johnson & Co., 1858.

The Society of the Cincinnati,
The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

Nathanael Greene, retreating from the battle at Cowan’s Ford on the Catawba River in February 1781, is said to have stopped to rest at Mrs. Steele’s tavern in Salisbury. A despondent Greene grieved over the death



of Brig. Gen. William Lee Davidson at the recent battle as depicted in a nineteenth-century hand-colored engraving. Upon hearing Greene say that he was “tired out, hungry and penniless,” Mrs. Steele offered him two small bags of coins, saying, “take it, you will need it, and I can do without it.” Alonzo Chappel painted the scene—a tribute to “the patriotism of the women of the Revolution”—in 1858 for Jesse Ames Spencer’s *History of the United States*.⁷

Griffin & Tow, London. Flintlock musket. ca. 1777–1781. Wood stock, steel ramrod and brass furniture.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina

Neill McAlpine (b. 1760), a Scottish-born officer, served during the Revolution with the British army’s 71st Regiment of Foot, also known as Fraser’s Highlanders. After participating in the battle of Guilford Courthouse in March 1781, McAlpine took up a post with the British garrison at Wilmington. He remained in America after the war, settling in Robeson County, N.C.

Griffin & Tow, a firm that produced weapons for commercial sale as well as for the British army, made the military-style musket that McAlpine carried during the war. It would not have been issued to an officer, so McAlpine likely purchased it before he sailed to America. The flintlock musket closely resembles a British short land pattern musket, also known as the Brown Bess.

THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

More than one year of cat and mouse through the Carolinas culminated in the clash of Greene’s and Cornwallis’s troops on March 15, 1781, at the battle of Guilford Courthouse. Greene chose a hillside along the main road from Hillsborough where he positioned his four thousand men. The North Carolina, Maryland and Virginia militias—many of which had never before seen battle—made up the front lines. Cornwallis reported, “I never saw such fighting ... the Americans fought like demons,” but after two hours of bayonet charges, artillery fire and heavy musket rounds, the battle ended with an American retreat.⁸

Cornwallis was quick to claim victory for the British. His army took control of the coastal town of Wilmington in early April, but it remained one of only three British strongholds in the South, besides Charleston and Savannah. Cornwallis’s proclaimed victory came at the expense of such high casualties that many at home questioned the good news. Charles James Fox, a member of Parliament, believed “another such victory would destroy the British Army.”⁹ Fox’s prediction seems to forecast Cornwallis’s fate. The toll that the battle of Guilford Courthouse took on the British army strengthened the American campaign toward Yorktown and helped to bring Cornwallis’s surrender in October 1781.

Unknown American engraver after Alonzo Chappel (1828–1887). *Lee’s Cavalry Skirmishing at the Battle of Guilford*. New York: Johnson, Fry & Co., 1857.

The Society of the Cincinnati,
The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection

When Greene decided that he had enough reinforcements to engage the British in battle, he sent Lt. Col. Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee and his cavalry ahead of the main American army to observe and harass the British troops. Lee’s legion consisted of nearly



William Faden (1750?–1836). Battle of Guilford, Fought on the 15th of March 1781. London: Published March 1st, 1787. *The Society of the Cincinnati, The Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson Collection.*

three hundred cavalymen and infantry soldiers, depicted in a nineteenth-century engraving wearing their signature plumed leather helmets. The American horsemen skirmished with Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton’s cavalry as the enemy marched toward Guilford Courthouse, then protected the left flank of Greene’s army during the battle. The imagined nineteenth-century view of Lee’s soldiers at Guilford Courthouse, originally painted by Alonzo Chappel, was engraved for John Frederick Schroeder’s *Life and Times of Washington* published in 1857.

Nathanael Greene, Head Quarters, Speedwell Furnis, [N.C.]. “Maj. Genl. Greene’s orders the 16th of March.” March 16, 1781.

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina

Greene anticipated another British attack in the cold rain the day following the battle. He issued written orders to his men, now entrenched at the Speedwell Iron Works near present-day Reidsville, to account for the killed and wounded and secure arms and ammunition. Greene also commends lieutenant colonels William Washington and “Light Horse Harry” Lee and the Virginia and Maryland militias for their “gallant behaviour” at Guilford Courthouse. The British attack never materialized and Greene decided not to pursue Cornwallis’s army.

Unknown English maker. Pocket compass and sundial carried by Gabriel du Brutz. ca. 1770–1780. Brass and glass.

Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina

The British army occupied Wilmington for one month before marching out of North Carolina on April 25, 1781, bound for Virginia. That fall, Cornwallis surrendered to a combined force of American and French army and navy troops at Yorktown, among them French ensign Gabriel du Brutz, who carried a pocket compass and sundial during the siege. After the war, du Brutz made his home near Fayetteville, N.C.



COURTESY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF HISTORY

THE NORTH CAROLINA SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

In May 1783 the remnants of the Continental army were encamped along the Hudson River at Newburgh, N.Y., waiting to hear news of a peace treaty to put an official end to the war. At the encampment, a small group of George Washington's senior officers finalized plans for establishing a veterans' organization for the officers. The organization, named the Society of the Cincinnati, would promote the ideals of the American Revolution, preserve the union that the victory forged, and support the soldiers who had fought for eight long years. They named the Society after ancient Roman hero Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus and penned its principles in the Society's founding document, the Institution, on May 13. Over the coming months, veteran officers of the Continental army and navy established branches of the Society in the original thirteen states as well as in France.

The North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati was the eleventh constituent society to organize. A modest sixty former officers, scattered throughout what was one of the most rural states in the South and the only one without an established capital city, attended the first meeting in Hillsborough on October 23, 1783. They elected Jethro Sumner, president; Thomas Clark, vice president; Adam Boyd, secretary; and Hardy Murfree, treasurer. They also elected eight honorary members to represent North Carolina's civilian patriots, among them past and future governors Richard Caswell, Alexander Martin and Richard Dobbs Spaight. The North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati met regularly for several years, but quickly lost members and had disappeared from the historical record by 1800. Descendents of the original members would not revive the dormant society until 1896.

**Adam Boyd, Wilmington, Cape Fear, [N.C.].
Letter to Henry Knox. December 29, 1783.**

The Society of the Cincinnati Archives

“In October a few officers of this state met at Hillsborough & laid the foundation of a society upon the plan of the Cincinnati,” writes Adam Boyd, the secretary of the new society, in a letter to Henry Knox, secretary general of the General Society. The men who would become original members of the North Carolina Society gathered at James Hogg's cabin in Hillsborough on or around October 23, 1783, less than one month before the Treaty of Paris formally ended the American Revolution, and subscribed to the Society's “Immutable Principles.”

**Bylaws of the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati.
July 4, 1785.**

On loan from the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati

The North Carolina Society's bylaws, titled “Rules and regulations for governing this State Meeting,” serves as a guide for the election and subsequent duties of officers. It also allows for making donations “for charitable or other purposes,” consistent with the General Society's emphasis on benevolent support for widows and families of Revolutionary War soldiers. It is among the North Carolina Society's most important founding documents.

Secretary Boyd sent a copy, dated on the ninth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, to Gen. Otho Holland Williams, former secretary of the Maryland branch of the Society. In the accompanying letter, Boyd explains that he has been unable to obtain parchment for the Society's Institution because “the gentleman appointed for that purpose, has not sent me the parchment, neither is the role of names by any means compleat.” There is no evidence that the North Carolina Society ever finished a “parchment roll” with signatures of its original members.

Credential of delegates. March 2, 1787.

The Society of the Cincinnati Archives

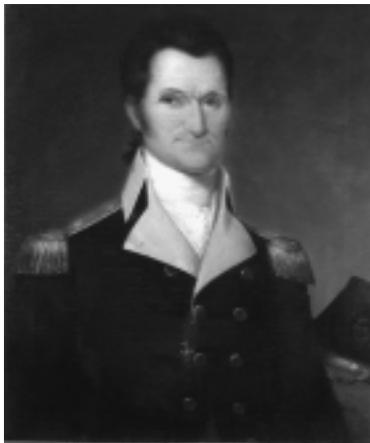
In March 1787 the North Carolina Society elected Maj. Reading Blount, Col. William Polk and Maj. Robert Fenner as its delegates to the General Society triennial meeting held in Philadelphia in May. The credential of delegates, which attests to their election, bears the signature of John B. Ashe (1748–1802), president of the North Carolina Society after the 1785 death of its first president, Jethro Sumner. The North Carolina Society only participated in one more triennial meeting in 1790 before dissolving. In 1812 the Massachusetts branch of the Society noted that “very few persons (except now and then a veteran officer of the Revolutionary Army) seem even to know that such a society either does, or ever did exist” in North Carolina.¹⁰

W. B. Cooper. *William Polk* (1758–1834).

Early 19th century. Oil on canvas.

On loan from Milbry C. Polk and William R. Polk

William Polk became one of the leaders of the fledgling North Carolina branch of the Society of the Cincinnati. Born in Mecklenburg County, Polk grew up surrounded by the revolutionary spirit that created the Mecklenburg Declaration. In 1775, when Polk was seventeen, he joined a South Carolina regiment and saw his first action in skirmishes against loyalists. He went on to attain the rank of major in the Continental army, serving



at Brandywine and Germantown in Pennsylvania—where a British musket ball shattered his jaw—and Camden, Guilford Courthouse and Eutaw Springs in the Carolinas. Polk settled down after the war as a leading citizen of the new state capital city of Raleigh, serving as president of the state bank and trustee of the University of North Carolina.

William Polk’s son Lucius likely commissioned a portrait showing the major dressed in his Continental army uniform and wearing a Society of the Cincinnati eagle—the insignia of the Society designed by Pierre Charles L’Enfant. The portrait was painted by either Washington Bogart Cooper (1802–1889) or his younger brother William Brown Cooper (1811–1900), Tennessee-born artists who often signed their works with just their initials or last name.

Jean-Jacques Le Veau (1729–1786) and Robert Scot (1744?–1823), engravers, after Pierre Charles L’Enfant (1754–1825) and Augustin-Louis La Belle (1757–1841), artists. Society of the Cincinnati membership certificate of Edward Yarborough. 1787.

Courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina

Original members of the Society of the Cincinnati could purchase a patriotically decorated certificate attesting to their membership. Pierre Charles L’Enfant designed the certificate, also known as a diploma, which was printed on parchment from a copperplate made in Paris in 1784. The Society’s president general, George Washington, and secretary general, Henry Knox, signed each original diploma. The design features a male figure, representing American liberty, on the left side holding a sword and a flag. He steps on the British flag while an American eagle at his side shoots lightning bolts at a cowering British lion and a female figure, who represents Brittania. An angel on the right side trumpets the American victory.



Edward Yarborough (b. ca. 1760), who served with the Third North Carolina Regiment for more than six years, received this diploma in 1787. During Pres. George Washington's southern tour of the country in 1791, Yarborough hosted his former commander in chief at his tavern in Salisbury. Yarborough's diploma is one of only four given to original members of the North Carolina Society that are known to exist.

END NOTES

- ¹ Facsimile of "A Society of Patriotic Ladies, at Edenton, North Carolina" (London: Printed for R. Sayer & J. Bennett, 1775), North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.
- ² Halifax Resolves, 12 April 1776, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.
- ³ *The Magazine Antiques* 51 (1947): 385.
- ⁴ Josiah Martin, New Bern, N.C., to General Gage, 16 March 1775, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, ed. William L. Saunders (Raleigh, N.C.: Josephus Daniels, 1890; Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1993), 1166–1167.
- ⁵ Earl Cornwallis, Camp near Wilmington, to Sir Henry Clinton, 10 April 1781, in *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, vol. I (London: John Murray, 1859), 88.
- ⁶ Charles Coleman Sellers, *Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Willson Peale* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952), 62.
- ⁷ J. A. Spencer, *History of the United States, from the Earliest Period to the Administration of President Johnson*, vol. II (New York: Johnson, Fry and Company, 1866), 120–121.
- ⁸ A. A. Gunby, *Colonel John Gunby of the Maryland Line: Being Some Account of his Contribution to American Liberty* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke Company, 1902), 48.
- ⁹ Hugh F. Rankin, *North Carolina in the American Revolution*, 5th printing (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1982), 59.
- ¹⁰ Edward Graham Daves, "The North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati, 1783," *North Carolina University Magazine* 13, no. 4 (January 1894): 179.

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THE ROBERT CHARLES LAWRENCE FERGUSSON COLLECTION

Established in 1988, the Fergusson Collection honors the memory of Lt. Robert Charles Lawrence Fergusson (1943–1967), a member of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia who died of wounds sustained in combat in Vietnam. Lieutenant Fergusson was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Purple Heart. The growing collection that bears his name includes rare books, broadsides, manuscripts, maps, works of art and artifacts pertaining to the military history of the American Revolution and the art of war in the eighteenth century.

I cannot sufficiently express the difficulty of
situation, pressed on, from the duty I owe my
to the fatal necessity of shedding blood; while
from principles of humanity, to wish the event
reverted by a timely submission on your part to
and Constitution of your Country - I have there-
fore a copy of the Governours Proclamation, and
is published by my Command: hoping that you
will impartially and deliberately, consider their contents,
that regard to them, which their importance justify
on every friend to the human species - I
in his Majesties name, offer you, and the officers
under your Command, full pardon and
for all past transgressions, on your laying down
arms, and swearing allegiance to the King -
at the same time must inform you, that unless these
are complied with, I must consider you as traitors to
your Country, and take the necessary steps to conquer and
subdue you - I refer particulars to the bearer of this
letter - I expect you'll show every civility -

I have the honour to be

Your most obedient
Servant
Dewald Fort