



The Halifax Dispatch

HALIFAX RESOLVES CHAPTER, NCSSAR

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HALIFAX, NORTH CAROLINA

October, 2004

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Comp. Joe E. Harris, Jr.

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Chapter Meeting Scheduled for October 13, 2004

The October, 2004 meeting of the Halifax Resolves Chapter will be held at Ralph's BBQ in Weldon, on Wednesday, 10/13/2004. **Please note the change of day.** We are going to try a weekday meeting, in response to several members of the chapter who indicated that a meeting held during the week would be more convenient for them than a Saturday meeting. It will begin at 6:00 p.m. and is expected to end around 7:30 pm. On the agenda:

- * a talk by Professor Wayne Grimsley, of Halifax Community College, on British dragoon LTC Banastre Tarleton.

Members, guests and interested parties are cordially invited. The cost is \$12.00 per person, payable by cash or check only. Please RSVP to Steve Avent by 10/10/2004 at 252-459-9427 or by email at savent@mindspring.com or by the US mail at P.O. Box 221, Red Oak, NC 27868. If you are unable to RSVP or just forget, please come out anyway.

Halifax Day, 2004

On Monday, April 12, 2004 the town of Halifax celebrated the 228th anniversary of the signing of the Halifax Resolves with its "Halifax Day" event. This was an all day celebration, with tours of historic buildings throughout the day, a commemorative ceremony at 2:00 pm, and a reception and 50th birthday party at 3:00 (this was the 50th Halifax Day celebration).

At 1:00 the Halifax Resolves Chapter sponsored a wreath laying at the site of the old colonial courthouse (the likely site of the first reading of the Halifax Resolves), followed by the unveiling of a SAR Patriot grave marker at the grave of the Hon. John Sitgreaves, who was an aide to Gen. Richard Caswell at the battle of Camden and was also active in the NC militia. Chapter VP Rod Williams represented the Chapter at the wreath laying. In spite of a rainy morning, attendance by SAR and DAR chapters was excellent, with attendees coming from as far away as GA and MD to participate. The rain stopped just long enough for our ceremony, which featured talks by Compatriots Larry Guzy, VP General, South Atlantic District, NSSAR and Grady Hall, President, NCSSAR. The keynote talk was given by Prof. David Ballew, of Chowan College, who spoke on the significance of the Halifax Resolves.

The American's Creed

I believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; a sovereign nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.

I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to love it, to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag; and to defend it against all enemies.

Recent Activities of the Halifax Resolves Chapter

On Sunday, June 6, 2004, the Halifax Resolves Chapter participated in the annual celebration of the Battle of Ramseur's Mill, held in Lincolnton, NC. The wreath from the Halifax Resolves Chapter was presented by Comp. Steve Avent. The Chapter will also be participating in the 224th Anniversary Celebration of the Battle of King's Mountain, which will be held on October 7th, 2004 and is sponsored by the Marquis de Lafayette Chapter, Fayetteville, NC.

On Saturday, October 2nd the NCSSAR Board of Managers meeting was held at the NC State University Club, in Raleigh. Here's a summary:

-ROTC Committee: NCSSAR chapters will be presenting 163 Jr. and Sr. ROTC awards to outstanding cadets in 2005. The Halifax Resolves Chapter will be presenting 8 of these, to cadets at the following schools:

- Greene Central HS, Snow Hill, NC
- John A. Holmes HS, Edenton, NC
- Northeastern HS, Elizabeth City, NC
- N. Nash HS, Rocky Mount, NC
- NW Halifax HS, Littleton, NC
- Rocky Mount SHS, Rocky Mount, NC
- S. Nash HS, Bailey, NC
- Tarboro HS, Tarboro, NC

The Chapter is required to present these medals in person, so any member of the Chapter that would like to present a medal at one or more of these schools, please let Steve Avent know.

-Patriotic Education Committee: President Grady Hall reported that the National Americanism Committee of the SAR has developed professional quality American heritage lesson plans for distribution to teachers of students from K-12th grade. These have been endorsed by the NC Department of Public Instruction, and Comp. Avent has several copies of these plans (which are on CD disks). If you know of a local teacher that can make use of one of these, please see him.

-NCSSAR Secretary: Frank Horton, NCSSAR Secretary, reported that the NCSSAR has 675 members, 53 of which are new members who joined this year. He also reported that there are 20 applications pending approval by National, two of which are for prospective Halifax Resolves Chapter members. He also has a third application from the Halifax Chapter that he will be submitting to National soon.

-NCSSAR Treasurer: Harry Goodman, NCSSAR Treasurer, reported that the NCSSAR has total assets of \$27,068.40.

-President Hall announced that it was the turn of the NCSSAR to nominate the NCSSAR South Atlantic Regional VP, and Comp. C. D. Williams was nominated and unanimously accepted as our nominee.

-Past NCSSAR President Randy Steele announced that he is working on starting a new NCSSAR chapter in Boone, NC.

-Comp. Bob Owens announced that the 2005 State convention will be held in Asheville, NC April 8-10, 2005.

-Comp. Steve Avent, current President of the Halifax Resolves Chapter was appointed NCSSAR Webmaster by President Hall. Check out the site at <http://www.ncssar.com> and pass along any comments or suggestions to Comp. Avent,

The Battle of King's Mountain, October 7, 1780. (From *Frontier Battles of the Revolution*, By James Pierce)

The Battle of King's Mountain took place in October, 1780. It was a culminating battle of what was actually a bitter civil war that had raged in the Southern colonies throughout the Revolutionary War. Loyalist American Tories raided, burned, pillaged and hanged rebel American Whigs who, in their turn visited the same on the Tories with a vengeance. Thanks to the energies, talent and leadership of a British regular officer, Major Patrick Ferguson, the Tories had become dominant by 1780. Ferguson made a fatal mistake, though, when he threatened to cross the Appalachians to lay waste to the Watauga settlements along the headwaters of the Tennessee River if the "over the mountain men" did not declare for the crown.

The Westerners' reaction was immediate and aggressive. Isaac Shelby, leader of the Watauga settlements' militia was first to hear of these threats from Whig refugees coming west. He immediately contacted John Sevier, leader of the settlements and together they organized a force to go east over the mountains and strike Ferguson before he had a chance to get to them. Quick to join them were Colonel Charles McDowell, leader of 160 North Carolina Whigs who had retreated into the mountains, and Colonel William Campbell, commander of some 400 along the east side mountain headwaters in Virginia. They also attracted a number of lesser local leaders who were able to rally the ever temperamental and cantankerous backwoodsmen to their cause.

More than 1000 riflemen met at the appointed gathering place, Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River, on September 26th. They took three days crossing the Blue Ridge and descending down into the Catawba watershed. At Quaker Meadows they were joined by an additional 350 North Carolina Whigs under Colonel Benjamin Cleveland. Their numbers had risen to 1400. But now troubles began to emerge. Tory spies (scouts) were beginning to track their movements while the backwoodsmen still had only a vague idea of the Tories' whereabouts. Squabbling among the leaders--backwoods leaders were notorious for their jealousy and contentiousness--threatened to dissolve the force into regional quarreling mobs. Shelby saved the day through a generous gesture; he proposed that Campbell, leader of the largest contingent, be given overall command. Cleveland, McDowell and Sevier agreed. They pushed on.

Whig spies now began reporting on Ferguson's movements; he had become aware of "a swarm of backwoodsmen" and had turned east back toward the protection of Cornwallis and the British regulars.

The small backwoods Whig army was so tired by now that it was no longer capable of hot pursuit in full force. Until now, they had lived on nothing but grass they found along the way for the horses and the small sack of corn that each backwoodsman had brought with him. They pushed on to Cowpens, where they conveniently found a Tory farmer's cow herd, which they slaughtered, roasted and feasted on. The officers also learned that Ferguson was camped to the east on a narrow flat-topped ridge of King's Mountain.

Leaving their most weakened members behind, the backwoodsmen, now reduced to 900 strong including their Carolina and Virginia allies, set off in rainy darkness after finishing their meal. There were several score among them without horses, who swore to keep up with their mounted compatriots on foot. They halted next day, when outriders captured a pair of Tories who described the lay of the land around the Tory camp exactly. They also described the multicolored hunting shirt Ferguson wore to make himself distinguishable to his men.

The frontiersmen reached the western side of the mountain about noon. They tied their horses to trees and started out on foot, each band under its own leader, to form a line along the base of the ridge.

Ferguson had about 900 men in camp, among whom there were 100 American volunteer Loyalist Regulars who were thoroughly trained as British soldiers. The others ranged from Tory militia to simple cut throats and barn burners looking for loot. 200 more of his men were out foraging. At the sound of the alarm from the pickets, Ferguson ordered drums beaten, mounted his horse, and used his advantage of being at the top of the hill looking down to lead bayonet charges as the backwoodsmen scrambled upwards.

The backwoodsmen, operating as small groups under their own local leaders, were repulsed again and again by the Tories' massed charges and musket volleys until they came to realize that the Tories, shooting downhill, were almost always overshooting them. The frontiersmen had been ordered to "give them Indian play"--scatter, then rally and strike back. Each was also exhorted to be "his own officer". Thus, they gave way only to seek cover behind rocks and trees from where they began to snipe at their adversaries with their customary deadly accuracy. At every chance, they would slip from rock to tree, climbing ever higher up the mountain toward the Tories.

Ferguson lost two horses charging downhill into the very midst of the frontiersmen; he broke his sword hacking at some he had ridden down, but even he could not stop disaster. As he charged Campbell's men on one side of the mountain, Shelby's cohorts would swarm up the other, screaming their war whoops the whole while. Sevier's men, nearing the summit, shot Ferguson off his horse and killed him. Resistance continued. Sevier's forces swarmed over one side of the summit; Campbell and Shelby circled around and led more men over the other side.

The Tories had lost one third of their force when they began running back toward their tents and baggage wagons. They tied handkerchiefs on their gun barrels and ramrods. Shelby rode among them calling them to lay down their weapons. Campbell, his horse killed, ran among his men shouting at them until he persuaded them to stop killing their beaten enemy. The battle was over; it had lasted an hour.

Vengeance followed. The frontiersmen lost the loose military discipline that had held them together up to and through the battle. They shot a considerable number of their prisoners and hanged some captured officers. They looted the surrounding farms of Tory landowners. Then they vanished back over the mountains to the West as quickly as they had appeared.



HALIFAX RESOLVES CHAPTER, NCSSAR

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The Sons of the American Revolution is a patriotic organization formed in 1889 and chartered by the United States Congress in 1906, with more than 25,000 living members from all 50 states and 23 foreign countries. Throughout its 115-year history, the SAR has admitted more than 155,000 members. Among them are 16 Presidents of the United States, including George W. Bush and his father George H. W. Bush, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Harry Truman and Theodore Roosevelt. The SAR also has had among its members Sir Winston Churchill and King Juan Carlos I of Spain, both of whom trace their ancestry to Revolutionary War patriots. Membership requires proof of descent from a person who aided in the Patriot cause. Some of the activities we engage in are:

- * commemoration of patriot graves and monuments
- * educational programs in the schools and elsewhere on the ideals of our Patriot ancestors and the American Revolution
- * recognition of outstanding law enforcement officers and JROTC cadets
- * sponsorship of Boy Scout troops



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