

NORTH CAROLINA-SOUTH CAROLINA BOUNDARY LINE Sept 30, 1992, York Observer column

The first survey of the NC-SC boundary line was ordered by the Board of Trade in London in 1730 and given as instructions to the royal governors of the two provinces. It was 7 years before surveyors were chosen. None had any experience in surveying. The men were directed to follow a northwestern course until they reached the 35th parallel and then to go due west. After months of battling swamps and other hardships the surveyors quit 11 miles south of the 35th parallel.

In 1764, after the Catawba Indian's 15-miles-square reservation was agreed upon in the Treaty of Augusta, another surveying party was ordered to pick up where the earlier group had stopped. Instead of taking the boundary line 11 miles to the north, as originally instructed, the second party went due west for 62 miles before stopping at a place now known as Old North Corner, just south of Andrew Jackson Park in Lancaster County.

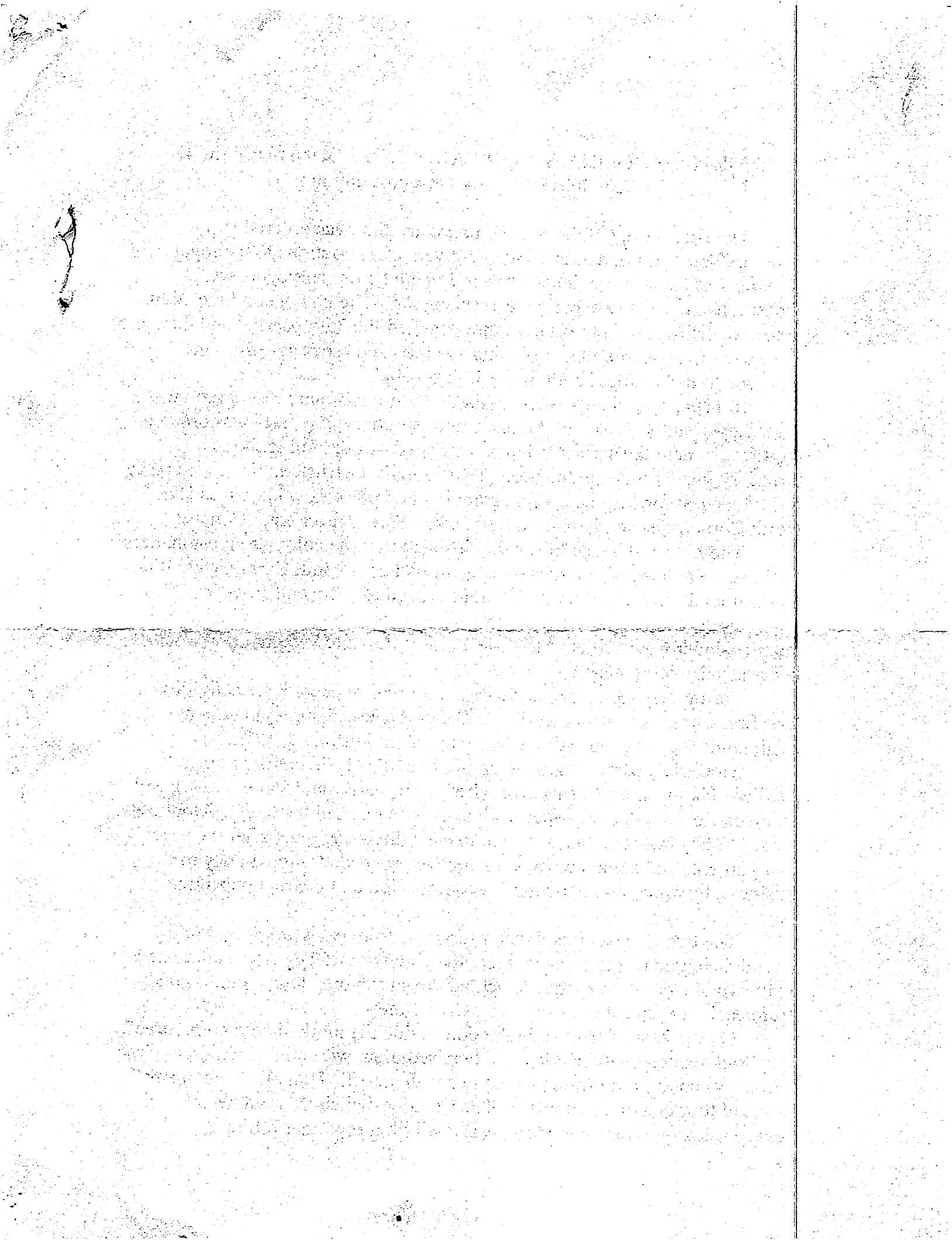
The Board of Trade in London insisted that the colonies adjust matters for it was obvious that the surveying error had cost South Carolina 422,000 acres of land. It was not until 1772 that commissioners and surveyors from both colonies were appointed to run a revised line. South Carolina's head commissioner was William Moultrie, a man who, a few years later, would become a Revolutionary War hero.

Fortunately for us, Moultrie kept a journal of each day's activities. The first entry was dated May 16, 1772 but the actual surveying did not begin until May 20. The survey was completed on June 2, 1772.

Moultrie's party was made up of himself as head commissioner, William Thompson, two surveyors (Benjamin Farrar and James Cook), and chain carriers and blazors (men with axes who marked the trees). Moultrie wrote, "They had tents and a wagon to carry their baggage; after the usual compliments and a glass or two of wine we proceeded immediately to business, by each party showing his commission and instructions to the other."

The two groups agreed that a surveyor from each province would attend the compass each day and that the chain would be carried alternately with two blazors from each side behind the surveyors. One commissioner from each province was to supervise at all times.

On the 21st of May, at high noon beside the marked "old corner tree", they took an observation. Nearly a hundred men, women and children of the Waxhaws community were present to see them off. That afternoon the party covered four and one-half miles. The Camden-Salisbury road, which had served as the previous boundary, was a winding road that followed old



Indian paths. Moultrie remarked, "We took the different courses along the Salisbury road, which made it very tedious."

On the second day the party ran into the old blazes from the laying off of the Catawba Indian boundary 8 years before and were able to cover 11 1/2 miles. The third day the party ran 8 miles and crossed Sugar Creek. The 4th day was Sunday so they rested. Moultrie's journal read, "Sunday halted from business; some of us took a ride to Charlotte Town in Meclinburgh County. The Town has a tolerable Court house of wood about 80 by 40 feet, and a Gaol [jail], a store, a Tavern, and several other houses say 5 or 6, but very ordinary built of logs. . . ."

Two days later Moultrie wrote that the parties "came to the North and South branch of Catawba River, waited to take an observation, Latitude 35 - 8, from here we were to begin our western course. We took all our Compasses, set them together, and fixed up one to carry the Line through with. . . ."

On the 27th of May the party ran ten miles and camped two miles from "Kings mount". Moultrie commented that "near this place a waggon road passes through to Charles Town about 180 miles."

Four miles on the west side of Kings Mountain the surveyors began to take up thousands of acres of land for themselves. They ended the survey at the Cherokee line, 65 miles from the west bank of the Catawba river.

The two survey parties were paid 1,700 pounds by S. C. and 255 pounds by N.C. All of the land they ran off for themselves was not calculated in their final payment.