

Stokes committed to nation's freedom

March 20 will be the 250th birthday of John Stokes. He was born March 20, 1756, in Lunenburg County, Va.

Why should we pause and take note of this gentleman from Virginia?

Capt. John Stokes was in Col. Abraham Buford's 400-man detachment, which found itself on May 29, 1780, on a lonely Carolina road now known as Rocky River Road, located east of the city of Lancaster in Lancaster County.

This May day would be known in future history as a day of honored dead as Col. Banastre Tarleton and his British Calvary and Infantry carried out their vengeance as British soldiers shooting and bayoneting to death 113 Americans and wounding another 150 or more at what is called Buford Crossroads.

Stokes would live that day but surely as he lay on the ground, death hovered over all who laid wounded on soil soaked with blood.

Stokes, a 24-year-old lawyer, in the frightening hand-to-hand combat, had lost his right hand, the forefinger on his left hand and had a deep wound which had laid his head open to his eyebrows. As he lay on the ground with many other wounded and dying souls, a British soldier said to Stokes, "Do you expect quar-



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ter?" Stokes replied no and was then stabbed twice more through his body. Another British soldier repeated the same deed.

Incredibly Stokes lived through the ordeal with, it has been said, a total of 23 bayonet wounds at the Battle of Buford.

As an attorney, Stokes lived and practiced law in Rowan County, N.C., where he would know the young lawyer Andrew Jackson of the Waxhaws. President George Washington appointed Stokes the first United States judge of North Carolina. Stokes County, N.C., was named after him.

We, as a free people, should remember his name this March 20, 2006, as Stokes died Oct. 12, 1790, and was buried in a now unknown grave. He was buried in Fayetteville, N.C.

His commitment to duty for the cause of

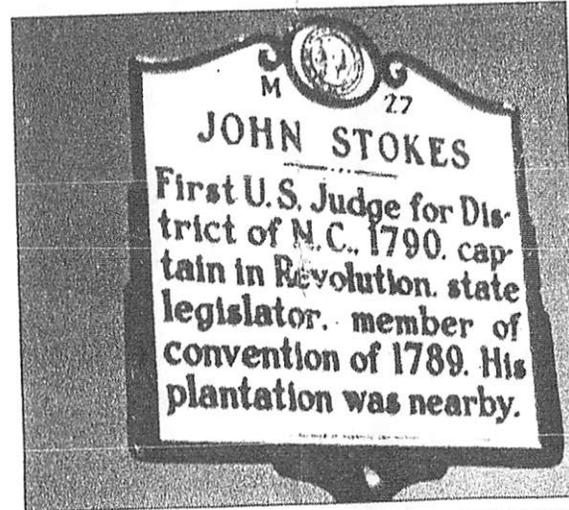


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The historical marker noting John Stokes achievements is located in Davie County, N.C.

freedom should remain known to all Americans 226 years later, after the Battle of Buford defeat.

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