

JAMES MEEK'S ADVENTURES

A good deal of the information known about Revolutionary War soldiers who fought in this area comes from the work of Lyman Draper of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. In the 1870s and 1880s Draper planned two books. He completed one-"King's Mountain and Its Heroes." Draper thought the battle of Kings Mountain was the turning point of the Revolution, rather than Saratoga as many historians thought.

A second book, intended to be a biography of Gen. Thomas Sumter was never completed. However, he did extensive interviews of descendants and others and the papers are preserved at the Historical Society and are also on microfilm.

An example of Draper's research is found in Vol. 15 of the Sumter Papers. His correspondent was Lucinda (Meek) McKinney, widow of Chesterfield McKinney. She was the only surviving child of James Meek of Bullocks Creek, York county.

McKinney wrote that her father was born near Annapolis, Md. and immigrated to York county with his mother as a small boy. He married Susan Byers and joined Sumter's forces with Susan's brother.

Meek was captured by Tories who had a problem of getting him across a river (probably the Broad river). The only means they found was to tie Meek and place him in a large hog trough which they ferried across the river. Safely across the Tory soldiers took Meek to the house of a Capt. Mayfield, a Tory. While they were eating dinner a sentinel called out that Sumter's men were approaching.

One of Meek's neighbors, John Swan, who was both a friend and a Tory, knew of Meek's capture and had informed Sumter's men of Meek's location. McKinney was vague about the details but it seems that "Hood, of Union, cut the cords that bound him." And it was Swan who took him back to Sumter's camp.

Long after the war, in 1819, two of Hood's sons, Abner and Sylvanus Hood, were living in Winston Co., Alabama. There was a land sale in Catawba , Alabama and Meek set out for it and was to stay with the Hoods. He got as far as the Seneca river in northwest S.C. His body was found in the river lodged against some driftwood. It is believed that he was murdered for his money and his body thrown into the river.

There is a great deal of drama in the Draper Papers. And the unexpected pops up frequently. A few things that caught my attention while browsing through the papers:

*Alexander Lewis, son of William Lewis a soldier in General Sumter's forces, came down with smallpox which he passed on to a group of marauding Tories. Young Lewis was remembered as making as much or more of a contribution to the cause as many of the soldiers carrying guns.

*John Linn of Chester county wrote a letter to his wife from Augusta, Ga. where he was sent as a member of a scouting party. Linn reported that his troop had scalped Indians and white men.

*The Rev. William Martin, a fiery orator and fighter, who had brought a whole Covenanter congregation to Chester, was so intemperate that the congregation dismissed him. However, Martin continued to preach at a school kept by Edward McDaniel and at William Hicklin's, etc.

*Alexander Haynes, who lived at the mouth of Steel Creek in present-day Fort Mill township, told his mother he was going to Sumter's camp on Clems Branch in upper Lancaster County to join the Patriots. His mother told him to "fight like a man, and don't be a coward."

About two weeks later David was brought home from battle badly wounded in the face (he lost an eye). Daniel Stinson told Mrs. Elizabeth Ellet that Mrs. Haynes at the sight of her son showed no weakness or undue alarm. In fact, she was proud that he had fought bravely and that "his wound was in front."