

# In 1776, every white male over 16 had to join militia

*Many people back in 1933 remember day the pork rolled into town*

When South Carolina declared its independence from Great Britain in 1776, the legislature passed a law setting up a state militia and has had one ever since.

In 1776, every white male over age 16 was ordered to take an oath of allegiance and to join the militia. If the order was refused, then the draftee would be banished from the state forever, and if he tried to return, it was a capital offense.

In the state as a whole, about one-third remained loyal to the Crown.

However, in our area, with its dominance of Scots-Irish immigrants, there were few Loyalists. But those few were able to join up with Loyalists from other parts of the state and we suffered what has been called a Civil War within the Revolution.

After the Revolution, the militia was used mainly against Indians (but not against Catawbas, who had fought alongside the Patriots against the British).

By 1789, the first year under the U.S. Constitution, a count of S.C. militiamen showed a total of 20,900. Of this number, Lancaster County had 868 in the militia under Lt. Col. John Marshall, York

NEARBY HISTORY



Louise Pettus

County had 652 under Lt. Col. William Bratton of Brattonsville and Chester County 697 under Lt. Col. Edward Lacey.

By 1789, all the militia came from able-bodied men ages 18-45 except for "Negroes, Moors, Mulattos, Mestizos & Indians except those of Nations friendly to the State." Thus, Catawbas were exempt along with clergymen, physicians, surgeons, schoolmasters, ferrymen, grist mill operators and overseers.

## New Deal and the local scene

On May 12, 1933, Congress created the Agricultural Adjustment Administration as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. The act's purpose was to help farmers by reducing production of staple crops, thus raising prices and encouraging more diversified

farming. Locally, the major staple crop was cotton, and farmers were paid to plant fewer acres.

There was another program under the direction of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which employed workers who needed jobs. This was before passage of the Social Security Act or workers' compensation.

Here's how the two acts worked in the town of York in the summer and fall of 1933: The needy worker who signed up with the RFC was put to work. Some did repair work on city or county buildings. Many of the men worked in a community garden.

The women were mostly assigned work in the courthouse. The RFC also financed the work of two teachers, one white teacher and one "colored," to in-

struct on "Household Economics" in each county of the state. The teachers were not required to have teaching certificates, but they did have to pass a test of the state department of education. The pupils had to be at least 16 years old in each class.

In October of 1933, the paymaster, A.Y. Cartwright Jr., drove into York with more than 600 pounds of "excellent pork for roasting or pork chops, by their Uncle Samuel, after proof that they were unemployed, but willing to work if given a job." There were 103 people on the York rolls who needed food. The unusual scene was described as worth seeing. "Pedestrians stopped on the sidewalk to look, and county officers came out on the courthouse porch to witness a scene never imagined here before."

By November, each worker was getting 2 pounds of turnip greens that were raised in the community garden and was also receiving surplus pork from Iowa each week. Also, the RFC employees were promised that soon there would be apples from Oregon or Washington and butter from Wisconsin, which were surplus from those states.

The program seemed to work well, but in 1936, the Supreme Court, which was far more conservative than Roosevelt and the Congress, declared the Agricultural Adjustment Act unconstitutional. The shipments of pork, apples, butter and other surpluses stopped.

Louise Pettus is a retired Winthrop University history professor. Her column appears Sundays.