

Who was Joshua Gordon? We know he was crushed

*Man who left behind
little traces of his life
was out of the ordinary*

EDITOR'S NOTE: A version of this column appeared in the Observer in 1988.

Joshua Gordon, who first showed up in this area as a Revolutionary War soldier, was undoubtedly a colorful character, for he left little traces and scattered pieces of evidence that show him to be a little out of the ordinary.

The York District's 1790 census shows a Joshua Gordon, but we cannot be sure it's the same Gordon who settled in Lancaster District's Indian Land on Tar Kiln Branch near the Six Mile Creek Meeting House (a Presbyterian church).

The Lancaster District Census of 1800 shows Gordon in the same neighborhood as families named Morrow, Patton, Spratt, Hagins, Potts, etc.

It was said that Gordon was a boyhood friend of Andrew Jackson.

However, there is no evidence of a Gordon family living in the Waxhaws at that time.

More than that, at the March 15, 1962, celebration of Andrew Jackson's birthday, the Jackson State Park museum had a scarf pin on display that had been handed down from a Joshua Gordon descendant to his favorite doctor, S.H. Ezzell, of Van Wyck. The pin had the name "Jackson" inscribed on it in a semicircle and the figure

"8," indicating the eight years Jackson was president. A diamond had once been set into the pin.

The story was that Gordon attended a celebration in which Jackson was the main speaker and that Jackson was so delighted to see Gordon that he took off the scarf pin and gave it to him as a memento of the past. "Where?" and "When?" are questions still unanswered.

N.C. Revolutionary War pension lists show that a Joshua Gordon applied for a disability pension in 1801, testifying that he was wounded in the right thigh in "Sumpter's Defeat" and that he enlisted in Franklin County, N.C.

William Solomon, Joshua Richards and Isaac Gordon also testified that Gordon was living in Franklin County and had seven children.

The family Bible shows seven children - John, Hannah, Ester, James, Catheran, Isaac and Ann - were born before 1801, presumably bearing out the Franklin County testimony.

Marey and Jane were born after 1801. Vouchers were issued, and from 1805 to 1808 the vouchers gave Rutherford County, N.C., as the address. There is no way to know if this was the same Joshua Gordon as the one in Lancaster District, but there was no Joshua Gordon in the 1800 or 1810 N.C. censuses.

In 1811, the state of South Carolina ordered that there be a survey of all land holdings in the Ca-

tawba Indian Land.

Two surveys carry Gordon's name. One, on May 17, 1811, shows him having 640 acres on Six Mile Creek and Tar Kiln Branch in the Indian Land of Lancaster County. There is a second survey made Sept. 6, 1811, for 800 acres which is most likely an enlargement of the 640 acre survey. He paid an annual rent of 50 cents for the first seven years of a 99-year-lease. After the seven years passed, the rent was increased to \$13, annually.

Gordon married Hannah Dunbar. It is told that she memorized a poem as a child in England. The poem carried either of two titles, "The Pilgrim" or "Jacob's Dream."

The York County Library has a transcript of an original manuscript that is in the South Carolina Library in Columbia. The small book was written by Joshua Gordon. On the inside, his name is signed along with the date 1783. The book is a compilation of "recipes" for breaking spells, curing sores, remedying cattle afflictions, etc.

This is one of Joshua Gordon's recipes: "A cuar for an Old Soar: Let pashent tak a peic of pickeled beaf and cut it thin and lay it on the soar which must be dun three times and each peic Stay on twent four ours and then aploy save [salve] to it which will cuar it sound in a short time."

In 1844, Gordon was crushed to death when a tree, being cut down by his slaves, toppled on him.

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