

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Fight for Freedom

Bucklesberry was established in the mid-1700s by a handful of brave, fiercely independent families, including the Herrings, Rouses, and Suttons. Little did they know that, within a few decades, their immediate descendants would witness or participate in the greatest, most significant military event of all time.

The Revolutionary War (1775-1783) eventually enlisted or drafted many men from Lenoir County, then part of Dobbs County. In the extraordinary fight for freedom that secured our liberty and gave birth to America, Bucklesberry was well represented.

The Clellan Sutton Collection of Bucklesberry papers contains a letter from William Parrot Hardy of Bertie County to his sister, Sarah (Sally) Hardy Sutton, and her husband, Benjamin Sutton, Sr. (ca. 1752-1837). Transcribed below, the letter suggests that Benjamin was drafted to the War:

"Sally, you wrote to us that Ben was draughted but was not able [document torn at corner] march. I should be very glad to know whether he is gone or know [document torn at corner] have not heard nothing from you since. I expect to be draughted now soon but God only knows whether I shall or not. Sept. 22, 1780. This is to let you know that I remain your loving brother till death, Wm Parrot Hardy. NB. I have not the time to write anymore. Only I desire to be remembered to all friends [illegible words scratched out]."

Used in letters and documents, NB was the Latin abbreviation for *nota bene* that directed the reader to pay special attention to a note that was to follow.

The exchange of letters between Sally and her brother, William, was an apparent miscommunication about her husband's involvement in the War. In fact, official records indicate Benjamin was not drafted at all.

Rather, the roster of the Dobbs County Regiment of the Militia, 1767-1781, confirms that Benjamin and two other men, Bucklesberrian Jesse Rouse and Major Croom, Jr. of Falling Creek, enlisted as privates four months prior to the William Parrot Hardy letter. Assigned to Capt. John Creel's company under the command of Col. James Glasgow, the three men acknowledged the following on May 26, 1780:

"State of North Carolina. We the subscribers belonging to the Dobbs Regiment of Militia do acknowledge that we have severally voluntarily enlisted into the service of our country to serve

in the state of South Carolina for the space of three months after passing the limits of the State agreeable to the late Aud. Bill, and that we have received from the Colonel of the said Regiment the bounty of three hundred dollars each witness our hands the 26th day of May, 1780."

At first glance, the mention of military service in South Carolina instead of the home turf of North Carolina appears to have been a slip of the quill. Not so. The Dobbs Militia indeed saw action in several battles and skirmishes in South Carolina, including the Battle of Stono Ferry (June 20, 1779), the Siege of Charleston (March 28-May 12, 1780), the Battle of Cowpens (January 17, 1781), and the Battle of Hobkirk's Hill (April 25, 1781)

Under the leadership of Lt. Col. Richard Caswell, Jr., a unit from Dobbs Militia was involved in one other military conflict in SC. The Battle of Camden occurred on August 16, 1780 during the three-month period in which Benjamin and his two colleagues committed to serve.

Unfortunately, the number and names of soldiers who fought were never recorded. The battle resulted in significantly more American than British casualties, which led historian J. D. Lewis to conclude, "The loss of arms and equipment was devastating to the American cause for months."

The Dobbs County Militia roster identified other men with whom Benjamin Sutton, Sr. had business or family relationships. Mostly privates, they included Joshua Barwick, John Brown, Jr., Nathan Byrd, Spencer Caldwell, Isaac Croom, Joshua Croom, Major Croom, Sr., Henry Goodman (2nd Col.), John Herring, Simon Herring, Isaac Hines (Capt.), Thomas Pridgen, John Rouse, Benjamin Shepherd, John Sutton, Jr., and Bryan Whitfield.