

## Editor's Note

In April 2003, this manuscript was sent to Frederick Siler of 889 Dante Court, Mantua, NJ 08051 by its author Mr. Reavis Dixon of 503 Palmas Avenue, Waycross, Georgia 31501.

The information included within this document was researched and created by Mr. Dixon. It was sent to me because it includes our mutual relations Michael Dickson my great-great-great-great grandfather and his brother my great granduncle William Dickson. The information on these two ancestors is but a small part of Mr. Dixon's work. As such I have chosen to entitle this document "Michael and William: sons of John Dickson".

It is because of the extraordinary efforts of individuals such as Reavis Dixon that we are able to obtain valuable knowledge regarding our ancestors. In an effort to maintain the integrity of the author's original document I have included a listing of all changes within Appendix A of this document. In addition I have added an index of the individuals contained herein. Otherwise I've made all attempts to preserve the author's original words. As a result it is my hope that I've taken a thoroughly research and well written story of my ancestors and made it a bit more accessible to future generations.

Frederick George Siler, Jr.  
June 22, 2003

## CHAPTER ONE

### MICHAEL DICKSON SON OF JOHN DICKSON

Michael Dickson was born June 17, 1731, {1} near Newery, County Down, Ireland. He was the first son of John Dickson. (1704-1774) Nothing is known of his mother. Most Genealogy Scholars believe that she died, either during the trip to America, or shortly after the family landed at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1736.

Five year old Michael, along with his younger brother John Jr. and their father settled first, in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Sometime prior to 1739, his father John Dickson remarried, {2} and after living in Pennsylvania, for a few years, the family migrated southward to Maryland, along with at least one other son William, who was born in 1739. It is likely that they also lived in Virginia, for a brief period.

By 1744, Michael's father had brought the family to New Hanover County, North Carolina. (Their portion of New Hanover, became Duplin Co., in 1749) Little more is known of Michael until his early manhood.

By early manhood, Michael Dickson had traveled extensively throughout the western frontier of North Carolina. It is unclear where he lived during his young manhood, but he ultimately settled back in Duplin County, where he owned land and pursued the occupation of farming. Little evidence can be found in the Duplin County records to support such a claim, but the best documentation is to be found in Duplin County, deed book 1, page 28, which was taken away to Sampson County, when it was formed, and was never returned to Duplin. The deed states thus; "7th Nov in the 7th year of the reign of George III (1767).....HENRY McCULLOCK TO JOHN DICKSON, PLANTER OF DUPLIN . 203 acres on Northeast (Cape Fear) and Black Rivers and Widow Evans' Branch below MICHAEL DICKSON'S old field." Further evidence of his Duplin residency comes from the records of Grove Presbyterian Church. Church records state: ..... "Major Michael Dickson was among the early Presbyterians of this settlement". It is probable that He also engaged in the profession of surveying. He likely visited with his Uncle William Dickson who lived near present day Chester, or York County, South Carolina, for he later received land grants in the same area. Some accounts place him in old Orange County, North Carolina, where he was supposedly a Captain of Militia, and Lunenburg County, Virginia, where he supposedly bought, owned and sold land, but the author found no evidence to substantiate such a claim. The man who was active in those counties, during the same period, was a different Michael Dickson altogether, though he was likely a distant cousin of our Michael.

Michael had become familiar with the procedure for obtaining land grants, and he received a number of parcels. They lay in several counties, among them Anson, and Mecklenburg, in North Carolina, and Camden, and Pendleton Districts, in South Carolina. After the 1772, North Carolina-South Carolina, border survey, Some of his holdings in Mecklenburg County, fell into South Carolina, within the Counties of York, and Craven. (Craven County became Chester County in 1785) These lands were re-granted by the Governor of South Carolina, after the permanent border had been established. Both Michael and his brother John Jr, obtained early land grants (1763) from Governor Thomas Boone, in Boonesborough Township, South Carolina. (Council Journal 29, page 13) The grants were located, "on waters of Long Cane", (Creek) which was in the Calhoun settlement of old Abbyville District, South Carolina, near the Savannah River. Michael received 200 acres, one hundred for each adult in the household, and John received 100 acres which almost certainly indicates that he was still unmarried in 1763. It is believed that John moved to his grant almost immediately, even though it was situated in what was still Indian Territory, until 1789. They were eligible to receive their grants under the Bounty Act of 1761. {3} The purpose of the act was to encourage the immigration of Protestants from Europe, to South Carolina.

Although they had been in America for some 25 years, both Michael and John were Irish born, of Presbyterian faith, and thus were qualified to receive their land. Floyd S. Bennett wrote the following account of the location of some of the Michael Dickson properties.

"The grants in Old Anson, ....and Mecklenburg Counties which were subject to later division into numerous new counties, have not all been definitely located into present counties. Some fell within the bounds of South Carolina when the boundary line was

extended in 1772, among these being lands on Rocky Creek, (Chester Co., S.C.) Bush River, (Not located) and Bullock's Creek (York Co., S.C.) The 120 acres on Crowder's Creek might also have been in York County, but was sold by Michael and Sarah Dickson to David Davis May 7, 1769, while still in the supposed area of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. (This is on record in Mecklenburg Co. Deed book 4 page 865) Crowders Creek was a branch of Catawba River, below Charlotte, which runs from Gaston Co. North Carolina, across the Northwest corner of York County where it joined Beaverdam Creek, before confluence with the Catawba River, now on the western edge of the reservoir."

Sometime around 1750-55, probably in Anson County North Carolina, Michael Dickson chose Sarah Neeley, (Feb. 1735- Feb 17,1815) for his wife. The place of her birth remains a question. It is known that the Neeleys lived for some time, in Nantmeal Township, near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as did Michael's family. It is entirely possible that the two families were acquainted as early as 1736, long before either migrated to the Carolinas.

After much deliberation, I am content to state that Sarah was the daughter of Samuel Henry Neeley, (c.1695- c.1779) and his wife Elizabeth, who died October 25, 1785, in the 91st year of her age. Thus, she was born in 1694. Elizabeth and Samuel Henry are buried in Bethesda Church Graveyard in present day York County, South Carolina. This Cemetery is located at the original site of Bethesda Presbyterian Church, and is about one mile from the present location. According to an article by William Boyce White Jr., Both were likely born in Scotland, but Northern Ireland is also a possibility. {5}

From the same footnoted article we draw information from Mr. White, as well as Mrs. Maud Ann Paulus, of Houston, Texas, whom White credits in his article. They refer to Henry Neeley , with no mention of a first name of Samuel. Both present several of the same children for Henry and Elizabeth, with White presenting the more complete list of the two. Following is the list with a "W" beside those names from White's List, and a "P" beside Paulus' list. "WP" appears beside names which both presented:

"WP" John Neeley 1722- October 17, 1793.

"WP" Thomas Neeley 1724-After Feb.3 1774.

"W " Samuel Neeley 1726-Sept. 9 1803.

"WP" William Neeley c.1727-Dec. 8 1778.

"WP" James Neeley c.1729-1792.

"WP" Robert Neeley c.1730-1804.

"WP" Margaret Neeley 1736-1772.

"W " Jane Neeley 1742-Died 1816.

One will readily note that there is no child recorded in 1735, the known year of the birth of Sarah Neeley Dickson.

From the publication of the Lillie Ann Poage Chapter D.A.R., comes an almost identical list of children fathered by Samuel Neeley Sr., differing only in the birth order of some children whose birth years are uncertain. Thus, it follows that the Patriarch of the Neeley family carried the full name of Samuel Henry Neeley . From that publication comes the following list of his children:

John Neeley 1722-Oct 11 1783. (Day differs)

Samuel Neeley Jr. 1726-Sep. 9 1803.

William Neeley c.1730-1780.

Thomas Neeley Came to S.C. 1752, died 1815.

Robert Neeley c.1734-1793.

Margaret Neeley 1736-1772.

James Neeley c.1735-1793.

In this account we note that James Neeley was born About 1735 , whereas both White and Paulus suggest c.1729. All three are merely projecting Possible years , leaving open the probability that he was born in some other year, and that Sarah Neeley Dickson, with a known birth year , was a member of this family.

Last, we compare the known family of Sarah Neeley Dickson to the names of the above family:

NUMBER NAME D.O.B.

111 Robert Dickson c1750-c1783.

112 John Dickson Dates unknown

113 James Dickson c1763-Oct. 31 1805

114 William Dickson Dates unknown

115 Hugh Dickson Oct. 15 1772-Jul 9 1853.

116 Samuel Henry Dickson

117 Jane Dickson 1758-Aug. 17 1842

118 Elizabeth Dickson Dates unknown.

119 Nancy Dickson Died Sep. 6 1807.

Others died before their fathers estate was settled

Note the two children likely named for Samuel Henry Neeley, and Elizabeth Neeley, the parents of Sarah Neeley. One cannot overlook the many other names of Dickson Children which were the same as siblings of Sarah Neeley. One should also note that Elizabeth was possibly the name of the Mother of Michael Dickson. Likewise, Nancy was the name of his grandmother, Nancy Campbell Dickson, Robert was the name of Michael's younger brother with whom he shared a special relationship, as well as the name of a brother of Sarah.

Mr. Bennett was convinced that the Craven County, (Now Chester County) South Carolina, home of Michael and Sarah Dickson, was situated upon a 48 acre tract, received by grant, from Governor Tryon, on October 24, 1767, while it was yet in Mecklenburg Co., N.C., and I join him in that belief. It joined some of their other land holdings, and lay, "between the Broad and Catawba rivers on both sides of Rocky Creek, at the ford of the "Saludy (Saluda) road". The South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, cites Robert Mills' 1825, Atlas to locate the point where "The Saludy Road crosses Rocky Creek". The Saluda Road, from the time of Michael and Sarah Dickson, evolved to be present day Route 72, and crosses Rocky Creek some three and one half miles north east of Present day Chester, South Carolina.

It is my opinion that Michael and Sarah Were living there, before, and during the Revolution, until they moved, about 1789, to Pendleton County, (later Pendleton District) South Carolina. Other Evidence that they lived along the Saluda Road comes from the 1786, Chester County Court Minutes. In appointing road maintenance overseer's, Richard Evans was appointed to oversee maintenance from, "Tim's old place to Michael Dickson's, with the usual hands that formerly labored on that Boundary". Christopher Streight (Street) was assigned to oversee the section, "from Major Michael Dickson's, along Saludy road, (as) far as Chester County extends, with the hands that formerly Labored on that boundary".

From the Chester County Court Records of 1785, order book "A" comes the following statement; "Michael Dickson (is) permitted to keep tavern in his house, John Mills and Christopher Street, securities for 100 pounds". Knowing the religious convictions of Michael and Sarah Dickson, it is certain that "Tavern" referred to it's definition as an Inn for the overnight keeping of travelers along the Saluda Road, as opposed to it's present day definition as a place where alcoholic beverages are served. Evidence in support of this claim comes from page 4 of the order book. "....Said Michael Dickson shall keep good Wholsom diet Cleanly Lodgings Stables pasturage & provide as Also keep up in his House the rates of everything necessary to supply the public...."

On May 31, 1994, the author visited the place where the Old Saluda Road crossed Rocky Creek. I walked up and down the creek in search of gentle slopes which would have suggested an old ford, but none were found. A thorough inspection of the area revealed an old roadbed, on the southeast side of the present road, which began about 50 feet south of the bridge, and meandered around the edge of a hill, and on toward Chester. It was cut into the bank on the high side so as to allow vehicles to ride level up the hill. This search led me to believe that today's bridge is built exactly where the old ford was located. Remains of another old bridge were found on the west side of the current bridge, but it was clearly built after the fording days. The narrow construction, along with the absence of asphalt or gravel paving suggested that it was probably built in the mid to late 1800's.

In 1777, Michael was a Captain, under Colonel Samuel Jack, in the regiment of Minute Men serving the state of Georgia. Many of his kinsmen also served in Georgia, including Cousin David Dickson, son of William Dickson, who later became a General, and Nephew Nathaniel Dickson, the minor son of Michael's brother John Jr. According to John Jr's recorded statement in the Georgia Archives, Nathaniel was, "Only doing my (John Jr.'s) service".

Along with other researchers, the author believes that John Jr. was a frail man, physically unable to serve. The proposed purpose of the South Carolina Militia's service in Georgia was to defend against Indian attack. But, this was the first year after the signing of The Declaration of Independence, and the service was likely twofold. Upon his return to South Carolina, Michael was promoted to the rank of Major.

On September 2, 1937, An article in *The Duplin Times* entitled, "Our Yesterdays", by A.T. Outlaw, stated "Michael Dickson was, an outstanding Patriot during the Revolutionary War, and served as an officer in South Carolina and Georgia". Outlaw's article erroneously states that "the Dickson's moved to Pendleton District, South Carolina about 1765". It is true that they left Duplin County about 1760, but they moved to an area south of present day Charlotte, North Carolina, which was likely Anson County, at that time. Part of Anson later became Craven County, South Carolina, and is now York County, South Carolina. They lived there, and in Craven County, (Now Chester) for almost 30 years.

About 1789, Michael and Sarah Dickson moved westward to Pendleton District, (Now Anderson County) South Carolina, where they lived out the balance of their lives. Sarah Dickson preceded her husband in death on February 17, 1815. {6} Michael Dickson died in what is present day Anderson County, South Carolina, on July 19, 1825. {6} He is buried at Pickens Cemetery, in present day Anderson County, South Carolina. {7} The author visited the grave of Michael Dickson on May 31, 1994, and I hereby confirm that Pickens Cemetery is his resting place. The tombstone bears his name, and the words "S.C. Militia, Rev. War". At the base of his tombstone is another pillow style marker bearing his name, dates of birth and death, and in parentheses, "Wife Sarah Neeley". No statement of Sarah's resting place has been revealed, but it is the educated guess of the author that she lies beside her husband.

Following is the obituary of Michael Dickson, from *The Pendleton Messenger* , Volume 19, Number 3, dated August 17, 1825.

"Died on the 19th ultimo (Preceding month,[July]) at his residence in Pendleton District, after a short and painful illness, Major Michael Dickson, in the 95th year of his age. Major Dickson was a Native of Ireland, and came to America with his father at the age of 5 years, to the state of Pennsylvania. Previous to his settling in South Carolina, he had been one of the opposers of the Stamp Act, and amongst the foremost to resent his country's wrongs. In the year 1777, he accepted a Captaincy in the service of Georgia, and on his return to South Carolina, was promoted to Majority. He was in a number of battles, and had several shots pass through his clothes, but never received a wound. Major Dickson was a humble Christian, a member of the Presbyterian Church, in full communion about seventy years, and a ruling elder sixty years. His character through life was exemplary, and he died hoping for a glorious resurrection".

The "Old Stone Church", located on the Anderson Road, about two miles south of Clemson, South Carolina, is one of the oldest Churches in South Carolina. The cornerstone bears the inscription "1797". Major Michael Dickson, General Andrew Pickens, and General Robert Anderson were the founding Trustees of the Church. Jane Dickson Bishop, the daughter of Michael and Sarah, and her husband Nicholas, are buried here, along with at least two of their daughters, Jane and Dorcus, who never married.

Footnotes:

{1} Bible record of Michael's son Hugh Dickson.

{2} There is no known proof that Michael's mother died and that his father married a second time. This is simply the best opinion of all genealogists whose work I have studied concerning the family. Until proven, there remains a possibility that all of the children of John Dickson were born to the same mother.

{3} *Early Dickson History*, by Harriet Dickson Reynolds, South Carolina Library, University of S.C.

Records of Floyd S. Bennett.

Records of Douglas Wickman.

{4} Dickson Family Manuscripts, Georgia Dept. of Archives, Atlanta, Ga. Researched by Douglas Wickman.

{5} Article by William Boyce White Jr. in, *The Bulletin* , Vol. XV, Number 4, Chester District Genealogical Society, December 1991.

{6} From the bible record of their son Reverend Hugh Dickson.

Michael Dickson file, Duplin Co. Historical Society, Rose Hill, North Carolina.

{7} Pickens Cemetery is located on the East side of Three and Twenty road, (County road 485) in the Northeastern quadrant of present day Anderson County, S.C., about two miles North of S.C. 88. Three and Twenty road departs S.C. 88 at Old Slabtown, S.C., now only a name, on a little country restaurant.

LINEAGE:

Simon Dickson

Joseph Dickson I

Joseph Dickson II

Michael Dickson

John Dickson No. 1

## CHAPTER TWO

### WILLIAM DICKSON SON OF JOHN DICKSON

No. 13

William Dickson, the third born child of John Dickson. Was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, January 10 1739, and died January 29 1820. He was the first child of John Dickson and his second wife Ann, whose maiden name is unknown. Like the other Dickson children, little is known of William Dickson until he reached early manhood.

From The Dickson Letters, by his direct descendant James O. Carr, we learn that William Dickson had only about three months of formal schooling. Carr was entirely justified in saying, "He was a man of broad ideas, mature judgment, and profound wisdom; and he discussed political affairs with an intuitive knowledge and foresight that was remarkable".

On October 29 1767, William Dickson married Mary Williams, the daughter of Captain Joseph Williams and Mary Hicks Williams. The Dicksons made their home in the Goshen Settlement of Duplin County, North Carolina. William and Mary Williams Dickson were the parents of the following children:

NUMBER NAME D.O.B.

131 Ann Dickson Sep. 6, 1768

132 William Dickson May 5, 1770

133 James W. Dickson Apr 20, 1772

134 Joseph Dickson Jan 28, 1775

135 Mary Dickson Oct 20 1775

136 Lewis Dickson Mar 4, 1778

137 Frances Dickson Apr 20, 1780

138 Susana Dickson Feb 11, 1784

139 Elizabeth Dickson May 1, 1788

William Dickson was a prominent resident of his county and state. He served in the First North Carolina Provincial Congress at Newbern, on August 25, 1774, the Second North Carolina Provincial Congress in Halifax, on April 3, 1775, the Third North Carolina Provincial Congress at Hillsboro, on August 21, 1775, and the Fourth North Carolina Provincial Congress at Halifax, on November 12, 1776. He served in the North Carolina Militia under the command of Colonel John Kenan during the Revolution, and wrote fluently of Lord Cornwallis' sweep through North Carolina, in his letters to his cousin Reverend Robert Dickson back in Ireland. There are four known letters of William Dickson to his cousin Robert, all of which are now in the North Carolina Archives, in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Because of the John Dickson family history contained in the first letter, the detailed account

of the Revolutionary war in Duplin county, and its effect upon our ancestors, we will present it in its entirety. It should be noted, that the second son, John Dickson Jr. is not mentioned in the letter. It is dated November 30, 1784. The other three letters may be seen in a publication titled

The Dickson Letters, by honorable James O. Carr. It is generally available in eastern North Carolina libraries. The first letter is as follows. (No changes to spelling or punctuation)

"Dear Cousin Robert:

About two months ago I received a very long letter from you, dated September, 1783, which afforded me much pleasure and satisfaction in the perusal, as it contained a historical account of the political proceedings of the Irish Nation during the continuance of the late American war. I much admire and applaud the determined resolution of the volunteers in claiming a redress of public national grievances, &c. I understand by that

letter that you wrote me in May 1783, by ship Congress, Capt. Chenen, bound for Philadelphia; that letter never came to hand. I received another letter from you dated 19th of July 1784, which was handed to me by my Cousin, Joseph Dickson, from Dromore, (Ireland) who arrived in Virginia the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October last and came to my house about the 20th of the same month with his wife and little son, all in good health. He and his family remain with me yet. He is not provided with any settlement or place of employment. Since his arrival here he has visited his friends, that is, my brothers and sister, and he has been to Bladen County, about 60 miles from here, to inquire after his Uncle Maturine Covill's affairs; he finds that estate is much wasted and embezzled; there are only the lands and some part of the slaves found remaining, which are now in the possession of Mr. Patrick Neil, who came over last year in quest of said estate. Joseph is now gone to Wilmington to see Archibald Maclaine, Esq., who is attorney for some of Colvill's heirs, and as soon as he can be informed concerning his uncle's affairs he will write to his father on that subject. Your letter by Colvill Dickson has never come to hand.

Your friend and relation Mr. Josie, who came over with Joseph, stayed in Virginia; he had the offer of a good school and did not come to Carolina. In both your letters which I have received you requested I would give you some account of the present circumstances and situations of our families since the war, also the present state of our civil government, also concerning religious matters and how ministers were supported in this country, and also concerning the price of plantations and whether any new settlements were about to be made on the Western waters over the Appalachian Mountains, &c. Dear Cousin, in answer to those requests I wrote you a very long letter about a month ago which was a few days after the arrival of my Cousin Joseph. That letter sent at random by a person going to Virginia, where, I was informed there was a vessel which would sail in about three weeks for Belfast. The letter is a very long one, but written in such haste that it will appear a perfect scrawl. The person who carried it, waiting with impatience while I wrote. I had not the opportunity to review or correct it. However, if it ever comes to hand I make no doubt but you'll be able to digest it's contents. In it you'll find I have attempted to give you some account of our civil government and mode of legislation &c. Also of the different sects of religious people most prevalent amongst us in the lower counties of this State, and that the Presbyterian settlements are chiefly with upper counties of the State, where there are many large and able congregations and some of them are frequently vacant.

I also gave you my opinion that a good sound preacher of a good moral character scarcely ever wanted good encouragement. I also wrote you concerning the price of lands and plantations in

this part of the country. I also in that letter began a historical account of the war as far as concerned us and our families in the vicinity of Carolina which I have found from the commencement of the war down to the battle of Guilford in North Carolina, which happened in the spring of the year 1781, from which Lord Cornwallis returned to Wilmington to recruit and

repair his damages, &c., before he could proceed to Virginia; and General Greene marched his army to South Carolina to dispute the dominion of that State with Lord Rowden who then commanded the garrison at Cambden: then I concluded my last letter in which you'll find none of our families concerned except my oldest brother Michael, who had his share of both good and ill fortune. I can give you no account of his present situation. The last account I had from him he was about moving his family to Georgia. (Note: there is no evidence that Michael ever made the planned move to Georgia) Having thus brought the war to our door, I shall now give you some account of its operation here and how much it affects us and our families. About the 25th of January, 1781, Major Craig arrived in the Cape Fear River, landed at Wilmington with about 450 veteran troops with which he garrisoned the town and detached a party up the North East River to the great bridge about 12 miles above the town, and then demolished the bridge, seized and burned some public store ships and their contents which had been run up the river for safety, and

also destroyed some private property and returned to the town, and Major Craig immediately fortified the garrison. The militia of three counties were immediately ordered down to take post at the great bridge, and that pass was fortified by us in order to prevent the enemy from making excursions into the country. We had been there about three weeks with about 700 militia when Major Craig marched out upon us in the night with his main force and some field pieces, surprised and dispersed our piquet guard and displayed his artillery across the river upon our dirt works, but without any effect. The enemy, finding their attempt entirely fruitless, after staying and viewing us across the river for two days, returned in the night to Wilmington. About two weeks after this we received intelligence from Guildford County in the upper part of the State that a general engagement had ensued between Lord Cornwall is and General Greene; there the conflict was long and obstinate and the victory had been in favor of the Americans had it not been for mis-conduct of the North Carolina militia, who broke and left our part of the line exposed, which the enemy seeing, and being about to make use of the advantage, General Greene ordered a retreat and brought off the whole without any confusion. The enemy remained upon the ground. General Greene finding his troops still in high spirits and not so much diminished as might be expected, made all the necessary preparations to attack the enemy the next day, but was disappointed by Cornwall is precipitately decamping in the night; he carried off some of his wounded and left about two hundred of his wounded at the place of action with an officer and two surgeons whom he recommended to the compassion and humanity of the American general. Cornwall is made his retreat good to Wilmington and General Greene after pursuing him two days without any prospect of coming up with him turned his course and marched into South Carolina where I shall leave him for the present. Cornwall is arrived in Wilmington and General Greene being gone to South Carolina, seemed to strike terror on our militia then at their post. General Lillington, who then commanded the post at the great bridge, ordered our retreat from that to Kinston on the Neuse River, about 30 miles above Newbern, where, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April, he discharged all the militia except one company to guard the artillery and stores. The militia thus discharged, we had not the name of an army in North Carolina. Every man was now to look to himself. The next day after being discharged we returned home. Cornwall is' army was then in the middle of our county, encamped at my brother Robt.

Dickson's plantation. The whole country was struck with terror, almost every man quit his habitation and fled, leaving his family and property to the mercy of merciless enemies. Horses, cattle and sheep and every kind of stock were driven off from every plantation, corn and forage taken for the supply of the army and no compensation given, houses plundered and robbed, chests, trunks etc. broke, women and children's clothes, etc., as well as men's wearing apparel and every kind of household furniture taken away. The outrages were committed mostly by a train of loyal refugees, as they termed themselves whose business it was to follow the camps and under the protection of the army enrich themselves on the plunder they took from the distressed inhabitants who were not able to defend it. We were also distressed by another swarm of beings (Not better than harpies). These were women who followed the army in the character of officers' and soldier's wives. They were generally considered by the inhabitants to be more insolent than the soldiers. They were generally mounted on the best horses and side saddles, dressed in the finest and best clothes that could be taken from the inhabitants as the army marched through the country.

Our family are all obnoxious to the enemy, although none of the brothers except myself have actually taken arms and joined the army. I will now give you some account of how we all fared while the enemy were in our neighborhood. My brother Robert has left his place and removed his family and property. The enemy encamped one day and night at his plantation and destroyed some of his stock which he had not got off. The same day my brother Joseph was surprised in his own house by the dragoons, but being determined not to surrender, fled into a thicket or swamp, and although pursued made good his escape. The enemy plundered his house, took all his corn, his horses and his wife's clothes, side saddle etc. The same day another party went to my brother James' house, and not finding him at home, plundered his house of everything they could find in it, took off two of his

slaves and all his corn etc., and compelled his wife and a neighbor woman, who was there to deliver

them the rings off their fingers and the buckles off their shoes. The same day my sister's husband, William McGowan, was found driving some stock out of their way; he was made a prisoner and after being some time under guard was compelled to pilot their Light Horse to his own and several of his neighbors, houses where they took all the corn and forage, all the horses and cattle etc., they could get. The night following they detained him under guard and went and plundered his house of everything they found in it worth carrying away, broke every lock, ransacked every chest and trunk, took away all bedding, etc., all the apparel, even the baby's clothes, stripped the rings off my sister's fingers and the shoes and buckles off her feet, choked the children to make them confess if their father had not hid his money, and to tell where it was, etc., and many of the neighbors were

treated in the same brutish manner. The day following the army encamped near my house. Sundry portions of their Light Horse called on my house, and notwithstanding I was not at home, they went away peaceably and took nothing from me, which I thought

very strange, for sundry of my neighbors were plundered of almost everything they had. The enemy being destined for Virginia, made but a very short stay in our neighborhood, but immediately after they were gone came on our greatest troubles; for the Loyalists, or as we term them Tories, began to assemble and hold councils in every part of the State, and thinking the country already conquered, because the enemy had gone through us without being checked, they were audacious enough to apprehend and take several of our principal leading men prisoners and carry them down to Wilmington and deliver them to the guards. There were numbers of our good citizens thus betrayed, perished on board prison-ship and in their

power. This so alarmed the inhabitants that none of us dared to sleep in our houses or beds that night for fear of being surprised by those blood-suckers and carried off to certain destruction. In the meantime the Governor of the State, and several others of the first character were surprised in this manner, by some who had been personally acquainted with him, and carried and delivered to the guards in Wilmington, notwithstanding the attempt of sundry parties of the militia to rescue him.

Matters being thus in confusion, there was no subordination amongst men; but every proprietor or leading man raised and commanded his own little party and defended themselves as they could.

At length we got collected about 400 men under Colonel Kenan in Duplin and about 200 under Colonel Brown in Bladen, the adjacent county. Colonel Kenan's militia had not made a stand more than ten days when Major Craig marched his main force, with field pieces, defeated and drove us out of our works, and made some of our men prisoners (here I narrowly escaped being taken or cut down by the dragoons). The enemy stayed several days in Duplin County (this being the first week in August, 1781). The Royalists gathered together very fast, and we were now reduced again to the utmost extremity. The enemy were now more cruel to the distressed inhabitants than Cornwallis's army had been before. Some men collected and formed a little flying camp and moved near the enemy's lines and made frequent sallies on their rear flanks while others fled from their homes and kept out of the enemy's reach. Major Craig marched from Duplin to Newbern, plundered the town, destroyed the public stores, and then immediately marched back to Wilmington to secure the garrison.

The Loyalists, or Tories in Duplin and other counties, now thinking the day entirely their own, became more insolent than ever; but Craig having again returned to Wilmington the Whigs again

resumed their courage and determined to be revenged on the Loyalists, our neighbors, or hazard all; accordingly we collected about eighty light horsemen and equipped them as well as we could; marched straight into the neighborhood where the Tories were embodied, surprised them, they fled, our men pursued them, cut many of them to pieces, took several and put them instantly to death. This action struck such terror on the Tories in our county that they never attempted to embody again and many of them in short time came in and submitted and were pardoned. (I was not in this action nor any afterward

during this whole season of the war) I never received a wound but one, which was a shot through my right leg, though I had three narrow escapes when I was in danger of being killed or taken.

In Bladen County the Tories were more numerous and more insolent than in our county; one McNeil, a Scotchman, was made Colonel of the Loyalists, and was very active against Whigs. He was one of the principal commanders in carrying off the governor to Wilmington, but did not live to get there himself; for being attacked by a party of militia, who attempted to rescue the prisoners, Colonel McNeil and several men of his party were slain, although none of the prisoners were retaken. Immediately after this a commission was sent to your friend and countryman, Maturine Colvill, to take command of the Loyalists in Bladen County, which he accepted. Some of the leading men of the Whig party in that county and Mr. Colvill having been formerly obnoxious to each other, occasioned by some dispute among themselves, and they dreaded his courage and intrepidity and the impetuosity of his temper, which some of them very well knew would be fatal to some as soon as he came to the head of his troops, it was so contrived that he was soon taken off by a party who slew him in his own house the morning of the same day in which he was to have

headed his loyal troops. He was succeeded in command by Col. John Slingsby, who headed the troops embodied, about 400 at Bladen Court House. Colonel Brown with about 150 of the Whigs, surprised him in the night, slew Colonel Slingsby and two of his captains and some of

his men, and retreated without loss, and returned in the morning where he found only the slain and some of the wounded, the rest having fled and made their escape. This put an end to the disturbances in Bladen County; the Tories never embodied there any more, so by this time our two distressed counties of Duplin and Bladen began to get the upper hand of their enemies. Col. Slingsby was succeeded in the command of Royalists in Bladen by your countryman, Faithful Graham, but before he had the opportunity of doing his majesty any service he had suffered the fate of his predecessors had he not made his escape through a swamp and got into Wilmington.

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About this time being, the middle of October, General Rutherford and General Butler, with 1,500 militia from the back counties of the State, came down to our assistance. Their troops began by distressing the Royalists with a view thereby of drawing the troops out of Wilmington to an

engagement. Immediately upon their coming down we received the agreeable and long-expected news of Lord Cornwallis and the British army being captured at York in Virginia, upon which our troops marched down immediately to lay siege to the town. The same day that our troops encamped in the village of Wilmington, Major Craig demolished the works of the fort, spiked all the guns, destroyed all the public stores he could not carry off with him, got his troops on board and sailed for Charleston, and our

troops were in possession of the town the same hour the enemy went out. Thus ended the war in North Carolina, and General Greene's successes in South Carolina during the summer campaign had by this time reduced that State to the obedience of their own Legislature. Every out-post was now driven into the principal garrison at Charleston, which was then the only post they held in any of the Southern States, where they remained until they were withdrawn from there by the articles of the Definitive Treaty.

Thus, sir, I have amused you with a long and tedious relation of the war in Carolina and its effects on our families, but as it is in compliance with your request I hope the amusement will not be altogether disagreeable to you. I shall now give you some account of the present circumstances and situation of each of our families, which I flatter myself will be very agreeable amusement to you. I shall take the family in rotation and begin with myself as the oldest. (The reader should be reminded that both Michael and John Jr. Were older than William, but were now living in South Carolina)

I find myself at this time in as good a situation as I was when the war began, but perhaps I would have been better off had the war never commenced, for during the war I was obliged to contract some debts for necessaries to support my family, and being in service I could not improve my plantation nor raise anything to discharge my debts; but since the war has ended I have got over all those difficulties and am now in a more prosperous way than ever I was before. I have a very good plantation where I live, a good stock of cattle, etc., eight working slaves and some young ones growing up. I hold the clerk's office of Duplin County court, which I esteem as good as fifty pounds sterling yearly, which with my other industry and care of my plantation etc., enables me to live very plentifully and to maintain my family in credit and decency. My oldest daughter Ann is about 16 years of age; my oldest son William is a little upwards of 14; the rest of my children are James, Lewis, Fanny, and Susana; the youngest is nine months old.

Robert moved his property into the back parts of Virginia when Cornwall is went through us and returned in July to move his family there also, but his wife died the very day of his return and left him an infant but a few days old, which he put to nurse and returned to Virginia again; but not liking to settle there he returned home as soon as the enemy left Wilmington and being resettled again he married another wife. He is a very frugal, industrious man, has about as many working slaves as I have, he lives well and plentifully, is in as good credit as any man in the county, his oldest son, John, is about eighteen years of age, his oldest daughter Ann is about sixteen, the rest are Pearsall, Edward, Catherine, Mary (dead) and Elizabeth, the youngest by his first wife, and Susana by his present wife.

Joseph Dickson was very much distressed and plundered by the enemy, first by Cornwall is and afterwards by Craig. He was much discouraged, had thoughts of moving away, went to view the waters over the western mountains, but did not like the country when he saw it, returned and contented himself with little he had left to begin the world as it were, anew. He has a good plantation, four or five slaves and some stock, he is surveyor for the county, which is as good as thirty pounds sterling a year, he lives as comfortably and decently as any man in the county, is one of the first in repute, has a fine promising

family of young children, his oldest daughter Anna, is about nine years old, the rest are Michael, Hugh, David and Moulton, the youngest, who is named for his wife's father.

Alexander Dickson, upon Cornwall is' approach removed himself and property into Virginia and Maryland, and never returned with his property till a few days ago. He has a good plantation and four or five slaves and no family but himself. I do not know what course of life he intends to fix himself in since his return.

Edward Dickson didn't suffer much by the enemy. He never moved from his plantation, and the enemy never called on him: he has nine or ten good slaves, two good plantations and a very fine stock of cattle: he lives very plentifully, is in good credit, has three children, Rebecca, Elizabeth and Ann, the oldest is about six years old.

James Dickson , the youngest brother, inherits his father's plantation, he was very much distressed and plundered by the enemy, he has a very good plantation, some stock, has good slaves, he is a laborious industrious man, a very good hunter, he supports a good honest character, lives plentifully and well. His oldest son, Edward, is about nine years old, the rest are Elenor, Margaret,

William and Alexander. My sister Mary is the youngest child of the family. She was married at eighteen years of age to Wm. McGowan, a very worthy man, a fine prudent husband; they were much distressed and plundered by the enemy and lost something considerable each time, but is now in a good way of living again; they have a good plantation, a good stock, six or seven good slaves, and some young ones growing up. They have seven sons: John, the oldest, William, Edward, Robert, James, Michael, and Joseph, all fine children. My father died on Christmas day in the year 1774. My mother had been dead about ten months before. My uncle William Dickson died at his plantation in the back of North Carolina on New Years day, 1775, just seven days after my father. I made some mention of his family in my former letters though I have heard nothing of them since the commencement of the war.

Dear Cousin, I have much more to write to you which I will make the subject of my next letter, in which I purpose to entertain you with some description of this country, also the prospects of settling the western waters beyond the Appalachian Mountains, etc. In the meantime I shall conclude this letter with my best wishes to you and your family, desiring also to be remembered to all my relations of your acquaintance who may inquire for me. My wife also joins me in respects to you and Mrs. Dickson. I remain, Dear

Sir,

Your Affectionate Cousin.

W. Dickson

Duplin County, 30 Nov. 1784.

William Dickson served for forty four, or forty five years as clerk of Court in Duplin County, North Carolina. When the British swept through in August, 1781, he packed the court records into an iron kettle, took them to his home, and hid them in Goshen Swamp until the threat from the British had passed. He was a militia officer, and one of the organizers and strong supporters of the Presbyterian church in his community. He was also instrumental in the founding of Grove Academy, the first institution of learning in Duplin County.