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The
Battle Field of Guilford
Court House

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In Exchange
Univ. of North Carolina
SEP 27 1933

THE BATTLE FIELD OF GUILFORD COURT HOUSE

The field on which the battle of Guilford Court House was fought is the only battlefield of the Revolution owned and preserved in its entirety in the United States



GENERAL GREENE

“This is the ground where Patriots bled;
Wide scattered here are Guilford’s dead,
Peace! come with slow and reverent tread,
And voices all subdued,
Break not their long, deep love engendered solitude.

Where silence reigns above this field,
Once wild the thundering squadrons wheeled,
Earth jarred, and armies swerved and reeled.

* * * * *
Dead is that soul that does not flame
At sight of Guilford’s deathless name.”

—Jerome Stockard, July 4, 1893.

THE Battle Ground Company is an association of patriotic gentlemen, incorporated by the Legislature of North Carolina in 1887. Its purpose is "the preservation, reclamation and adornment of the battlefield of Guilford Court House."

Judge David Schenck was the first to take steps towards reclaiming this historic site from its hundred years' sleep. The Battle Ground Company was organized by J. W. Scott, D. W. C. Benbow, Julius A. Gray, and Thos. B. Keogh, with Judge David Schenck, president, which office he filled until his death in 1902, leaving the patriotic citizens of the United States greatly indebted to him for his great services. Major Joseph M. Morehead was elected his successor and most worthy did he prove, spending all of his time during his years of office in erecting markers and monuments for the proper preservation of the history of the battle. His one unfulfilled desire was to see the erection of the monument to General Nathanael Greene, but to his successor, Mr. Paul Schenck, son of Judge David Schenck, and third President of the Battle Ground Company, was that duty given.

THE Battle of Guilford Court House was fought March 15, 1781. It was one of the decisive battles of the Revolution. (See Benton's *Thirty Years in U. S. Senate.*) The Commanding General of American forces was General Nathanael Greene. His army consisted of Huger's Brigade of Virginia Continentals, 778 men; Williams' Maryland and Delaware Brigade, 630 men; Continental Regulars, 1490; North Carolina militia, 1393; Virginia militia, 1693; "Light Horse Harry" Lee's Legion, 82; Col. William Washington's Dragoons, 86; Lee's Dragoons, 75; Cavalry, 161; about 4143 Americans.

The Commander of the British forces was Lord Cornwallis. His army, all well-trained warriors, consisted of the famous Twenty-first, or Frazer's Highlanders, and Second Battalion, 212 men; Twenty-third and Thirty-third Regiments, with 580 men; Regiment of Bose or Hessians, 313 men; the Yagers, 97 men; British Legion, 174 men; in all, 1376. This does not include the Grenadiers, or Guards, whose numbers are not given.

Cornwallis drove General Greene from the field, then fled precipitately from the field for fear of Greene's return. John Fox, then in the British Parliament, declared another such victory would mean the destruction of the British army in America. Cornwallis reached his ships in Wilmington, but feeling unsafe, retreated into Virginia, and on the 19th of October, 1781, surrendered to General George Washington at Yorktown. The victory was won at Guilford, but the surrender was at Yorktown.

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TO properly study this battle the visitor should begin at the extreme west where the sign shows the position of Singleton's Artillery—the American first line of battle lay in the edge of the woods behind a rail fence on either side of the road. Standing in the road on the brow of the hill, one is on the spot where Singleton's Artillery took its position to open on the British as they advanced up the hill, after having formed at the creek. From here can be seen where Tarleton's famous cavalry stood in the road awaiting orders, also where Cornwallis' Artillery was planted while the British formed their line of attack. A row of maple trees now mark the place of the old rail fence from behind which the militia (Eaton's Brigade on right, 500 men, and Butler's, 560, on the left of the road) fired their old flint and steel rifles upon the famous Highlanders. Captain Dugall Stuart declared about one-half of their number fell upon the spot.



Capt. James Tate

Through the forest some three hundred yards to our right is a neat marker to Captain Arthur Forbis, shot in the first assault. This stone stands where he was found twenty-eight hours later with two bullets in his body and a saber thrust through his leg, the last wound inflicted by a Tory of whom he had asked a drink of water. This inscription is on his monument:

Col. Arthur Forbis, of the North Carolina Troops, who fell at his post in the discharge of duty on this memorable field of battle March 15, 1781.



Capt. Arthur Forbis

THE BATTLE FIELD OF GUILFORD COURT HOUSE



Nathaniel Macon

The position of Lee's cavalry was also near this spot. Returning by the speaker's pavilion to our starting point, on our left as we approach the station, are three tombs, the first a rough granite boulder with bronze tablet to Nathaniel Macon, removed here from Warren County in 1902. He was North Carolina's peerless statesman and soldier, famed for purity, simplicity of habit, and spartan virtues, called by Jefferson, "The noblest Roman of them all." The tablet bears this inscription:

Nathaniel Macon willed that his memorial should consist of only rude stones:
Here they are.

Next is the tomb of Brigadier General Jethro Sumner. The Legislature of North Carolina had his remains removed to this park in 1891, from Warren County, together with this tomb which has been erected over his grave. The original inscription was:

To the memory of General Jethro Sumner, one of the heroes of '76.



Jethro Sumner

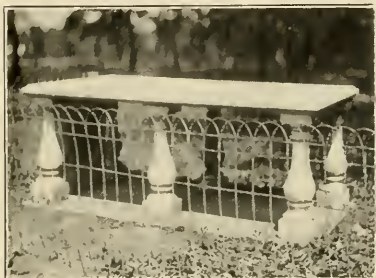
On the east side the Battle Ground Company has inserted another tablet bearing the following history:

Brigadier General Jethro Sumner,
Born in the year 1733
Died March 18, 1785

Colonel of the 3rd North Carolina Continental Troops, April 15, 1776—Charleston June 23, 1776, Brandywine Sept. 11, 1777, Germantown Oct. 4, 1777, Monmouth June 20, 1778, Stone Ferry June 20, 1779, Eutaw Springs Sept. 8, 1781. "Spotless in character, pure in patriotism, the most eminent soldier among the N. C. troops."

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On the third tomb, a most picturesque slab on four pillars, all of white marble, is found the following:



Major John Daves

Here are deposited the remains of Major John Daves, one of the well-tried patriots of our Revolutionary War, who departed this life Oct. 12, 1804, aged 56 years. Captain in the North Carolina Continental Line; served throughout the War of the Revolution. Distinguished at Germantown and at Stony Point, where he was severely wounded. Promoted Captain at Eutaw Springs. Original member of the N. C. Society of Cincinnati. Buried in New Bern, Oct., 1804; removed to Guilford Battle Field, June, 1893.

To our right is a granite tent bearing a bronze tablet which says:

Capt. James Morehead,
of the 10th Regiment,
North Carolina Continental line.

Battle of Stono, June 20, 1779

Elizabethtown, July, 1781

Born 1753

Died 1815



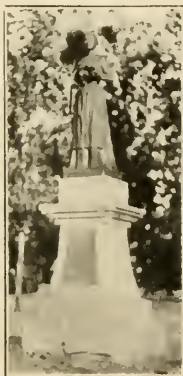
Capt. James Morehead

Close to this stands a beautiful bronze woman on high granite base, said to be the only monument to a woman ever erected on a battle field for her services in nursing the wounded. The tablet reads:

1781-1902 — A heroine of '76

Kerenhappuch Turner, mother of Elizabeth Morehead, wife of Joseph Morehead of North Carolina, grandmother of James and John Morehead, N. C. soldiers under Greene.

She rode horseback from her home in Maryland and at Guilford Court House nursed to health a badly wounded son.



Kerenhappuch
Turner

THE BATTLE FIELD OF GUILFORD COURT HOUSE



Gillies' Monument

To the south of this, amid the splendid oaks, is a monument to Gillies, bugle boy to Light Horse Harry Lee and his Legion. He was only about 15 years old when he was literally hacked to pieces by Tarleton's Dragoons on Feb. 12, 1781, a few miles from this field and near Oak Ridge. This monument was erected by the students of Oak Ridge Institute in 1898.



"No North"
"No South"



Brig. Gen'l Wm. Lee Davidson

tablets on each base, the one on the right side reading:

The massive arch spanning the road is of solid granite blocks, its measurements are 33 feet in height, 28 feet in width, 7 feet thick, with carriage drive of 20 by 12 feet. This arch together with one across the road were erected by the United States Government at a cost of \$10,000.00. The arch to General Davidson bears a large bronze

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Brigadier General William Lee Davidson,
Born 1746, killed in the Battle of Cowan's Ford,
North Carolina, February 1, 1781.
Major, April 15, 1776; Lieut. Colonel, Oct. 4, 1777; Brigadier General,
August 31, 1778.
"On Fame's eternal Camping Ground."

On the left base is the following:

"To the memory of the late Brigadier General Davidson, who commanded the militia of the district of Salisbury in the State of North Carolina, and was killed on the 1st day of February last, fighting gallantly in defense of the liberty and independence of the States."—
Extract from resolution of Congress, Sept. 20th, 1781.



Hooper—Penn
"The Signers"

Turning toward the railroad to our right will be seen the monument to the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, William Hooper, John Penn, and Joseph Hewes. The remains of Hooper and Penn rest beneath the monument; the grave of Joseph Hewes is in Christ's Church yard, Philadelphia, but being unmarked, could not be identified. This monument was erected by the Government in 1897. It is inscribed as follows:

In memoriam
William Hooper and John Penn
Delegates from North Carolina, 1776, to the Continental Congress and Signers of the Declaration of Independence. Their remains were reinterred here in 1897.

Joseph Hewes' grave is lost; he was the 3rd signer.

"Lee, Henry, and Hooper were the Orators of the Congress."—John Adams' diary, Vol. 2, page 396, 1774.

Across the road, near the keeper's cottage, is a monument to Colonel Hal Dixon, of Caswell County, N. C., which tells us he was the "embodiment of chivalry and the idol of his soldiers". Thrice wounded in battle, from which he died in 1782.



Hal. Dixon



Battle Ground
Monument

Across the road on other side of station is a pyramid of eight rows of granite blocks, surmounted by a cannon ball and bearing the words, "Guilford Battle Ground".

The fireproof brick museum has many interesting relics picked up from the battle field, also handsome portraits and autographs of Revolutionary officers.

The great arch spanning the road is to General Francis Nash and bears the following on its tablets:

Brigadier General Francis Nash, born 1742; fatally wounded in battle of Germantown Oct. 4th, 1777; member of Provincial Congress of N. C., 1775; Lieutenant Colonel Sept. 10, 1775; Colonel April 10th, 1776; Brigadier General Feb. 5, 1777.

"Ever since the dawn of the Revolution, I have stood for the cause of liberty and my country."

In honor of the memory of Brig. General Francis Nash, who fell in the battle of Germantown on the 4th day of Oct., 1777, bravely contending for the independence of his country.—Extract from resolution of Continental Congress, Nov. 4, 1777.



Brig. Gen'l Francis Nash

To our right of the road is the handsome monument to Nathanael Greene, erected by the United States government at a cost of \$30,000.

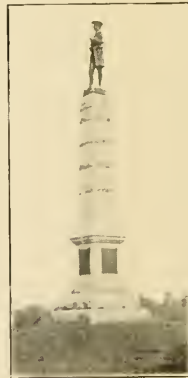


Clio

Amid the magnolias and spruce is a graceful female figure in bronze, on granite base, representing Clio, the muse of history. The beautiful lines on the tablet were written by Major Morehead while President of the Guilford Battle Ground Co.

As sinking silently to night
Noon fades insensibly,
So truth's fair phase assumes the
haze
And hush of history.
But lesser lights relieve the dark,
Dumb dreariness of night,
And o'er the past historians cast
At least a stellar light.

The tall shaft of successive blocks of granite, with a bronze soldier on top, is known as the Colonial Column. Each of its four tablets relate some phase of the doings of North Carolinians from 1771 to 1776. One tablet has, "Battle of Alamance". The first battle of the Revolutionary War was fought in Orange County, N. C., May 16th, 1771. One tablet is to James Hunter, leader of the Regulators. Another bears a bas-relief of James Pugh under the gallows at Hillsboro, N. C., when he said, "Our blood will be as good seed in good ground." The fourth tablet celebrates the first victory of the Americans in the Revolutionary War, Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, February, 1776. This colonial column is 20 feet high up to the bronze statue, which is 7 feet tall.



Colonial Shaft



King's Mountain

Next to this on a high turfed mound stands the monument to Judge David Schenck, 1835-1902, projector of the reclamation of this battlefield, author of "North Carolina 1780-81", and first President of the Guilford Battle Ground Company. The company had this monument modeled after the one erected to General A. P. Hill, in Richmond, Va.



David Schenck



Joseph Morehead

Next in line is a black Cherokee marble monument, presented to the Battle Ground Company by the National Marble Company of Cherokee County, bearing this inscription:

1780-1903

The Battle of King's Mountain, fought Oct. 7th, 1780, was "The turn in the tide of success that terminated the Revolution". "There's nothing finer in the romance of war."

Neighbor to this stands another granite monument, with bronze portrait statue on top, in life size, of Major Joseph Motley Morehead, second President of the Battle Ground Company. This was erected by the company, but as a tribute of appreciation of his valuable services to the history of the State, each Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in North Carolina sent in contributions towards its erection.



Caldwell Monument

Next in line is a dignified granite stone to Dr. David Caldwell, pioneer Presbyterian preacher in Guilford County and this part of North Carolina. His influence was great and the British crown offered 100 pounds for his head. Nevertheless, he was on this battlefield the next day after the battle, relieving the wounded and minister-

ing to the dying. This monument was erected by the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church and the descendants of Dr. Caldwell.

At the intersection of the roads stands a small pink shaft upon a blue-veined base, all of marble, marking the position of the Delaware division. Underneath the stone lie the bones of three soldiers accidentally found by Judge Schenek July 12, 1888. The "U. S. A." buttons and the location marked them Delaware men.



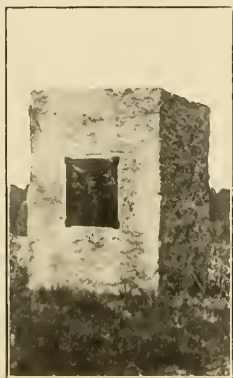
Delaware

To the side of this is a heavy gray granite monolith, bearing in bronze the coat of arms of the State of Maryland, with tablet inscription as follows:

Maryland's tribute to her heroic dead. Erected by members of the Maryland Historical Society in memory of the soldiers of the Maryland line.

1771 — 1892

Non omnis moriar.



Maryland Monument

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Last Stand
Greene's Regulars

Between this pillar and the spring dale is a small white marble stone with the following inscription:

Hon. Lieut. Colonel Stuart, of the 2nd Battalion of the Queen's Guards, was killed at this spot by Capt. John Smith, of the First Maryland Regiment. Erected by the Guilford Battle Ground Company in honor of a brave foe-man, 1895. Colonel Stuart's sword was exhumed here in 1866.



Lt. Col. Stuart
2nd British Guards



To
Peter Francisco
Col. Wm. Washington
Marquis Bretigny

Drive along spring dale and on the side of the hill beyond the spring is a tall monument of granite blocks marking the place where Peter Francisco, a giant of incredible strength, killed eleven of the British with his own broad sword, and though badly wounded by bayonet, made good his escape. This monument was erected by Peter Francisco Pescud, a native of Raleigh, N. C., and a grandson of this Revolutionary hero. This monument was unveiled July 4th, 1904. On the same monument will be found a handsome bronze tablet to Colonel William Washington and Marquis Bretigny, whose brave North Carolina and Virginia cavalry charged from this spot the Scotch Highlanders.



Joseph Winston

On the crest of the hill beyond Lake Wilfong is a monument erected by Governor Thomas M. Holt in 1893. This is surmounted by a portrait statue of Major Joseph Winston giving his order to charge. The tablet reads:

In memory of the North Carolina troops under Major Joseph Winston who were fighting the Hessian and Tarleton's cavalry near this spot after the Continental line had retreated from the field of battle, March 15th, 1781.

On the side of the stone are inscribed the names:

Major Joseph Winston
Captain Jesse Franklin
Richard Talliaferro
Palmam qui meruit ferat.

The graves of Ex-Governor Jesse Franklin and Joseph Winston are beside this monument, the former having been removed from Surry County. The headstone says: Born 1724, Died 1824. Joseph Winston's remains were removed from Forsyth County. The old standstone headstone, so moss grown it can scarcely be deciphered, bears the dates: Born June, 1740, Died April, 1815.

Lord Cornwallis had three horses killed from under him during the battle; the first, a large iron grey, killed near the Ross house on southwest portion of grounds. The second, a dragoon's horse improvised for the occasion, shot near the Battle Ground line north of present restaurant; the third, a celebrated stallion named "Roundhead", which Tarleton had stolen from the farm of Judge Moore in Chatham County.

Beyond the hill by the Winston monument lies the old site of the Court House. All traces of the town are not yet obliterated. One handsome oak stands sentinel there, known as Battle Ground Oak. Tradition says General Greene tied his horse to it during the battle. Slight indentations of the old roads known as Adams Street, Greene Street and Battle Street can be seen. Andrew Jackson lived at this village for awhile and there was admitted to the practice of law in the county court.

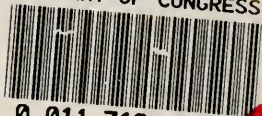
Those who desire to study the Battle of Guilford Court House should read Schenck's History, "North Carolina 1780-81", chapters seven and eight, as it is the most comprehensive description ever attempted.

1915

This guide was prepared by Mrs. Charles Van Noppen
for the Guilford Battle Chapter of Daughters
of the American Revolution.

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