

Colonial and Revolutionary History of Upper South Carolina by Dr. J. B. O.

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Chapter XVI, page 114

During the summer of 1780 two of the most important outposts in our up-country were Prince's and Thickety Forts. The construction and location of the former (Prince's Fort) has been described in a former chapter of this work. It was at the time garrisoned by Tories and Loyalists under the command of Colonel Innes, who was in command of a regiment called by some writers the "Queen's Rangers" by others the "Queen's American Regiment." Prominent among the officers of this regiment was Major Dunlap whose character whose career as a soldier will claim further attention. Also among the officers of the garrison was Col. Ambrose Mills who commanded Loyalists at this place. Thickety Fort was in command of Col. Patrick Moore. Between the forts and other points that were garrisoned, the British were constantly plying, committing their acts of pillage and marauding.

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These different commands having come together under brave partisan leaders, it was impossible for military operations to remain still. The next event of importance after this union of their forces was the capture of Fort Thickety or Anderson, under the command of Capt. Patrick Moore, a noted Loyalist, who was born within a few miles of the present town of Lincolnton, North Carolina. He was the son of another noted Loyalist of that region and a brother of Lieutenant Colonel John Moore of Colonel Hampton's North Carolina regiment of Loyalists, whose behavior at the battle of Ramsour's Mill on the 20th of June 1780, was such, that, when, after the battle, he returned to Cornwallis' camp near Camden, he was threatened with court martial for disobedience of orders and was treated with disrespect by the British officers which placed him in a disagreeable suspense. (Landrum lists Wheeler's History of North Carolina—Lincoln County, page 231 as a reference.)

It is said that Capt. Patrick Moore escaped from the slaughter of Ramsour's Mill when his brother and a few men retired to Cornwallis' camp. Among the Whigs there was a great anxiety to capture Moore, whose influence and mischief was damaging the American cause. Major Joseph Dickson, Captain William Johnson, and the veteran William Martin, who had served in the French and Indian wars, was sent with a party to capture him. On Lawson's fork, near Wofford's old iron works (now Glendale), the parties met and a skirmish ensued, in which Capts. Johnson and Moore had a (p130 starts) person encounter. Moore was finally overpowered and captured. It was, however, a desperate contest, in which Johnson received several sword wounds in the head, and one on the thumb of his right hand. While conducting his prisoner towards Whig lines, a short distance away, he saw several British troops approaching him. He

attempted to fire his loaded musket at them, but the blood from his bleeding thumb wet his priming. This misfortune on his part enabled the prisoner to escape, and perceiving his own danger, he fled to a thicket near by, and thus eluding the grasp of his pursuers. Shortly afterwards he joined this command. It was soon after this that Moore had command of Thickety Fort. This fort is situated near Goucher Creek, and about two and half miles above this water course which enters into Thickety Creek, being a western prong of said creek and uniting with a few miles above its junction with Broad River.

It is reported to have been a strong fortress, built a few years before as a defense against the Cherokees, and was surrounded by strong breast timbers well fitted for a vigorous and successful resistance. Draper states that among the spoils taken at King's Mountain was a fragment of a letter without date or signature, probably a dispatch from Ferguson to Cornwallis, in which this account is given of the construction of Thickety Fort. "It had an upper line of loop holes and was surrounded by a strong abates, with only a small wicket to enter by. It has been put in thorough repair at the request of the garrison, which consisted of the neighboring militia that had come to the fort, and was defended by eighty men, against two or three hundred banditti without cannon, and each man was of the opinion that it was impossible for the rebels to take it."

It was from Thickety Fort that Moore and his Tory associates would sally forth to plunder Whig families in the surrounding country. Women and children were often left without clothing, shoes, bread, meat, and salt. We find in Mrs. Ellett's "Women of the Revolution" some particulars recorded of their depredations. Says an author, "In the absence of Capt. Nathaniel Jeffries of that region, one of the plundering parties visited his house, appropriated such articles as they chose, built a fire on the floor, abused Mrs. Jeffries as the meanest of all rebels, and drove off the horses and cattle. On another occasion, the house of Samuel McJunkin, in Union district, a warm patriot, but too old for active military service was visited by a party under Patrick Moore. The staid all night, and when about to depart, stripped the family of bed clothes and wearing apparel. A noted Tory, Bill Haynsworth, seized a bed quilt and placed it upon his horse, when McJunkin's sturdy daughter Jane snatched it and a struggle ensued for the possession. The soldiers amused themselves by exclaiming, "Well done woman!" "Well done Bill!" For once Moore's gallantry predominated over his love of plunder and he swore roundly if Jane could take the quilt from Haynsworth she should have it. Presently, in the fierce contest, Bill's feet came in contact with some dirty slime in the yard and slipped from under him, and he lay prostrate and panting on the ground. Jane, quick as thought, placed one foot on his breast and wrestling the quilt from his grasp, retired in triumph, while poor Bill sneaked off defeated and crestfallen. This brave women was a sister of Major McJunkin."

The same author states that the Tories visited the Irish settlement on Fair Forest and that Miss Nancy Jackson kicked a Tory down the steps as he was descending loaded with plunder.

Returning to Moore we will state that the inroads of this noted character and his Tory associates, reaching the ears of Sumter, this officer directed Colonel Clarke and his Georgians to gather together such persons in his camp as resided in that region and desired to aid in its protection against the outrages of the Tories. Among those who availed themselves of this privilege was Capt. William Smith and his company. Arriving at Cherokee Ford, they met Colonel McDowell just as he was, with Colonels Shelby, Clarke, Andrew Hampton and Major Robinson of Sevier's regiment, organizing a force of six hundred men to surprise and capture Thickety Fort not many miles away. They took up their line of march about sunset on the evening of the 25th of July, 1780, and surrounded the fort the next morning at daybreak. Colonel Shelby sent in Col. William Cocke to make a peremptory demand for the surrender of the garrison. Moore replied that he would defend the place to the last extremity. Shelby then drew his lines within musket shot of the enemy all around and to avoid what appeared to be an unnecessary effusion of blood on both sides, made a second demand of Moore to surrender. Shelby's gallant "six hundred" presented such a formidable array that Moore relented. He doubtless had in his mind the recent onslaught against the Tories at Ramsour's Mill. He agreed to surrender the fort on condition that the that the garrison be paroled, not to serve again during the war unless exchanged; which was agreed to very willingly on the part of the Americans, as they did not care to be encumbered with prisoners.

Moore surrendered ninety-three Loyalists and one British Sergeant-Major, who had been sent to this place to drill and discipline them. Not a gun was fired. Among the trophies of victory were two hundred stand of (page 134 starts) arms, all loaded with ball and buckshot and so arranged at the port holes that they could have resisted double their number had the besieged party been headed by a brave commander such as Ferguson or DePeyster.

Moore was greatly censured by the British authorities in South Carolina for not defending Thickety Fort. In the same fragment of letter already referred to in this chapter were these words: "The officer next in command and all the others gave their opinion for defending it, and agree in their account that Patrick Moore after proposing a surrender, acquiesced in their opinion and offered to go and signify as much to the rebels, but returned with some rebel officers whom he put in possession of the gate and place, who were instantly followed their men, to the surprise of the garrison. He pleaded cowardice I understand."

Shelby and his men, loaded with the spoils of victory, returned at once to McDowell's camp near Cherokee Ford.