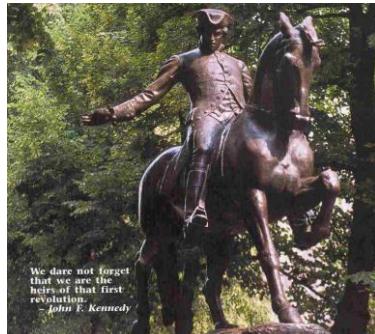


Brigadier General William Lee Davidson, American Hero

by Debbie Sorrels Mecca
Genrl. Davidson's 4th Great Granddaughter



Paul Revere

Frontier Youth, the Making of a Hero



Pioneer Travel

William Lee Davidson was the son of George Davison (later Davidson) who came from robust Scottish stock by way of [Ireland's Plantation of Ulster, Legacorry, County Armagh](#). By 1700 the flourishing Irish woolen trade had become a threat to the industry in England causing the crown to pass the Woolen Act to protect the textile industry at home. Before long, economic depression set in around Ulster. Rents went up and crops failed while disease destroyed numerous sheep. By 1718 the first group of Scotch-Irish immigrants had been forced to set out for America and further migrations followed.

George settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in the 1740's where son, William, was born in the year 1746. Different accounts show George as having settled near either Chestnut Level or East Nottingham Township. Scotch-Irish settlers were encouraged to move to the frontier in order to provide a buffer against possible French and Indian hostilities; as such, the Pennsylvania frontier was a precarious place to live.

High land prices, government dominance by the Quakers, and disputes pertaining to Indian ownership of the land likely inspired George to leave Pennsylvania and join the caravans on the Great Wagon Road to the South. Travel on this road on a good day might consist of 10 miles with many of the family walking behind a wagon much of the way. Most travelers fashioned their own wagon or cart as the great Conestoga wagons of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania were not

produced until after 1750 and the path further south prior to this time would not have been widened yet to support the larger wagons.

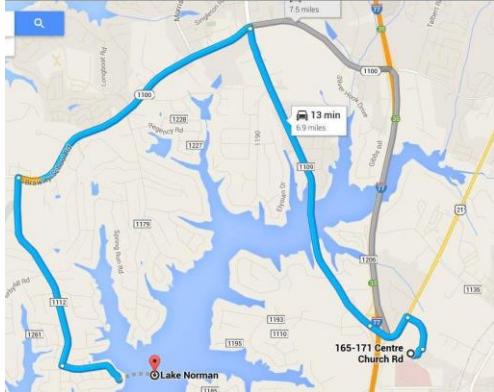


Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church where the family of John Davison worshiped

ding the smallest child, followed by other members of the family. Prior to the Davidson's travel, two Moravians had described their arduous journey in 1743 down the Great Warrior's Path which brought them five months later to Georgia.

A traveler was lucky to find one home a day where perhaps basic food could be purchased but most likely slept under the stars where they might be awakened early to the cry of wolves. The road was crude and at times still little more than a path barely wide enough for travel winding endlessly up and down steep hills. Traveling down that Great Wagon Road as a child of two or three, William survived the rough journey through the backwoods. This early passage surely opened his eyes at a very young age to new adventures and learning experiences which began an imprinting process beyond his years.

"Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762" describes Davidson's Creek as a rather lengthy stream that rises in the southern portion of present-day Iredell County and flows south-westward into the Catawba two miles south of the Granville line. The upper reaches of this creek became the center of a third accumulation of pioneers on the northwest Carolina frontier prior to the summer of 1749. Not only was the [Davidson's Creek settlement](#) the earliest to be established as far west as the Catawba River, but it also became the nucleus of the Centre Presbyterian Congregation, established sometime between 1752 and 1755. On November 26, 1748, a grant of 650 acres was surveyed for John Davidson (or Davison) chain carriers were James Templeton and George Davidson.

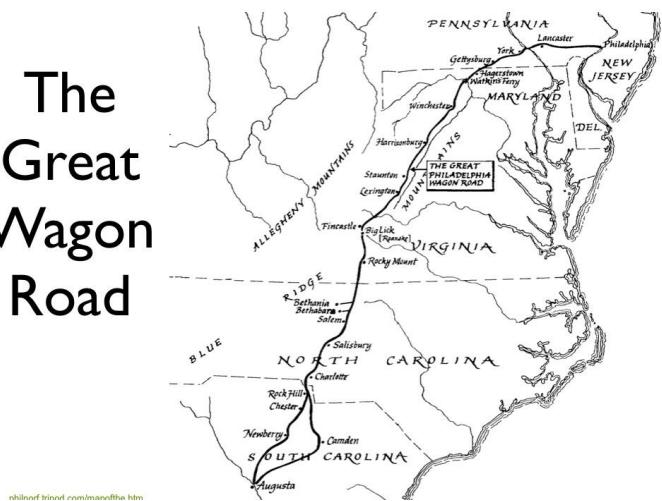


Location of Wm Lee's father's land.

It is suggested that George may have broken up the trip for a time with his brother, John, who had secured land in Beverly Manor on Christian Creek, May 1738. [Tinkling Springs Presbyterian](#) congregation area lay between Staunton and Waynesboro, in what was then Augusta County, Virginia. At that location, a Presbyterian Church was established in 1740, a log building measuring 24 by 50 feet. John Davidson must have travelled on with George and his former Pennsylvania neighbors who would have arrived at the same time in order to obtain land within a close proximity of each other in North Carolina.

Travel down the [Great Philadelphia Wagon Road](#), which had been known prior to 1744 as the Great Warriors' Path, provided no easy journey. At times a horse was led by a father with a mother hol

The Great Wagon Road



John Davidson died in 1749 on the headwaters of the creek bearing his name. His 650-acre survey was granted to his brother George, who also acquired additional tracts in 1752 and 1753. James and John Templeton were described as neighbors of George from East Nottingham Township and several other family and friends became settlers to the area and are mentioned along with them from Pennsylvania tax lists.

Within a decade after the first settlements, a "frontier" aristocracy of office-holders, including John Brevard and Alexander Osborn, who became prominent citizens in the area. As these friends became early justices and assemblymen, George would have been on the inside of the "courthouse ring" and comparatively safe from exploitation by land agents. I have [followed](#)

many clues to determine the location of the Davidson log cabin; tradition locates his home-place on the east side of Davison's Creek to the right of the Centre Church road, now a spur west of modern Statesville highway.

We may assume this home was in direct proximity to the Great Wagon Road, also known as the "Catawba Trading Path" or the "Georgia Road", as George was licensed to operate a tavern there by 1755, refreshing guests with standard fare such as cornmeal mush, hog, hominy, and wild game as well as "Home-Brewed Ale," "Loaf Sugar Punch," rum, whisky, wine and English beer.



Rural Hill Log House

If this combination log home/tavern/ordinary were the typical structure, it would have been built of sawed or hewn logs forming four sides with dovetail joints. On the inside, wooden pegs provided a substitute for metal in pinning puncheons and ceilings without nails but for the roof, iron spikes or homemade nails were used to fasten down clapboards. Usually there was but one large room about twenty feet square with privacy sometimes respected by partitions of curtain or plank. More than one window was a luxury and glass panes were almost nonexistent.

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Most houses faced south to let the sunlight in a single door and all were close to springs. The meals were cooked over an open hearth in cast iron pots.

One can imagine that these meetings with strangers provided young William with many of the skills that served him well as a citizen and later as a military leader. Listening to the astonishing news of Ben Franklin's experiments with lightning from northern travelers would have opened the household's eyes to happenings well beyond their frontier experience. As newspapers were not available, the Taverns became a place where locals gathered for outside news as well, creating a further bond with their community. Selling food and drink was a lucrative occupation until prices for services and shelter were set. This reasoning may explain why George failed to apply for a tavern license after 1756.



Fort Dobbs, Salisbury
North Carolina

On a trip to the county seat in Salisbury, William may have witnessed culprits in the pillory and stocks near the jail or a public flogging—less gruesome, indeed, than a gouging match which deprived a belligerent of his eyes. William would have also enjoyed the 25-mile ride to [Fort Dobbs](#) and a visit with Captain Waddell at the garrison which protected the frontier from Indian raids.

Both war and worship obsessed the frontier Calvinists who were of extremely "high religious voltage". The most stabilizing event in the realm of religion during Davidson's youth was the coming of ministers to his area. As faith was at the core of the Presbyterian settlers, [Centre Presbyterian Church](#) was developed soon and ministers, some of which would later become "fighting parsons" during the Revolution, inspired the congregation greatly, one of these was [Alexander McWhorter](#), brother of Jane McWhorter Brevard, William's future mother-in-law. Family history and lessons from old-country experience were learned by listening to the patriarchs' reminiscences of Centre's elders relating chiefly to religious persecutions. The bible would have been the cornerstone of faith and the rule of conduct in the home with few other books being owned by a family. Of the book learning of William Lee, his earliest biographer, "Light-Horse Harry" Lee says he "was educated in the plain country manner at an academy in Charlotte..."

This academy of learning would not have been Queens College in Charlotte but was likely a boys' school at Sugaw Creek Church about three miles from Charlotte. Sugaw Creek Academy owed its reputation to "classical" curriculum though an "English education" was doubtless obtainable. Instruction was probably by Joseph Alexander and Joel Benedict, with the most potent back-country influence in intellect as well as in religion coming from the [Reverend Alexander Craighead](#).



Doris Sorrels visits
colonial lady in Rural Hill



Sugaw Creek Presbyterian

later known by Mecklenburg's patriotic historians as the "Father of Independence" in the Carolina Piedmont. Many of these leaders had been educated at the [Princeton College](#) in New Jersey which was founded in 1746 in order to train Presbyterian ministers (later Princeton University).

It was not an easy life and youth toiled alongside adults. Frolic and games were replaced with endless chores and duties which were the norm. Older boys were enrolled in captains' companies and showy musters were the envy of the young, enamoring them to the profession of arms.

George Davidson, Senior, died in 1759 or 1760 leaving William Lee fatherless at about age thirteen. George was hardly an old man for he left children young enough to require guardians, "my trusty and well beloved Friends Alexander Osburn and [John Brevard](#), Esqrs." If George were a contemporary of his friends, he had barely passed his prime: Brevard was about 45 and Osborn 50 in 1760. The fact that such prominent men were with whom George placed his confidence is the best testimony to his character and worth. The influence of such instruction would have instilled a passion for liberty for which son William, the future General, would dedicate his life.

In the frontier struggle for survival, thirteen was an age of responsibility and filial obligations and the passing of his father may well have shortened Davidson's boyhood; however, education was never slighted by our frontier Calvinists. To be a good shot was as obligatory as sitting a horse. Judging by William's future popularity, he was endowed with good humor and modesty, won friends easily and was influenced by the right people. A contemporary was later to comment on his "popular manners and pleasing address."

William lived for a time with his cousin, George Davidson, son of his uncle John, who was 18 years his senior.



The spring of 1767 found Lieutenant William Lee and (cousin) George Davidson escorting Governor William Tyron into the Cherokee country. A peaceful settlement was reached with the Indians over land disputes and His Excellency complimented the men of Rowan and Mecklenburg on "the closeness of their firing" which was a prelude to the cries of Cornwallis's Redcoats that the rebels of the piedmont were "the best marksmen of the world."

William returned to Centre as a veteran. If his newly acquired dignity impressed none other than Mary Brevard, it was worth the effort. Will had reached his majority and his guardians, Alexander Osborn and John Brevard were no longer custodians of his patrimony. On December 10, 1767, he was given permission to marry. The ceremony was likely performed by Justice Brevard, father of the bride and former guardian of the groom. A back-country wedding was typically full of lusty and bawdy good humor with guests riding in from twenty miles around bearing gifts of venison, bear meat, turkey

or pork. The day began with strength exhibitions by the men: races, wrestling matches and [gander pulling](#). The women exhibited their prowess at preparing a feast with much pride. During the ceremony the bride might feign an overwhelming modesty and have to be chased and dragged back by the maids. Rum, whisky, ale and beer were expected of the father of the bride and reels and Irish jigs lasted far into the night.

Mary Brevard had been reared in one of the half dozen locally accepted first families. The Brevards displayed an early inclination to intellectuality. Coming from French Huguenot stock, Mary was acquainted with so worldly a thing as an English novel and was to name a daughter "Pamela" several years before the Revolution.

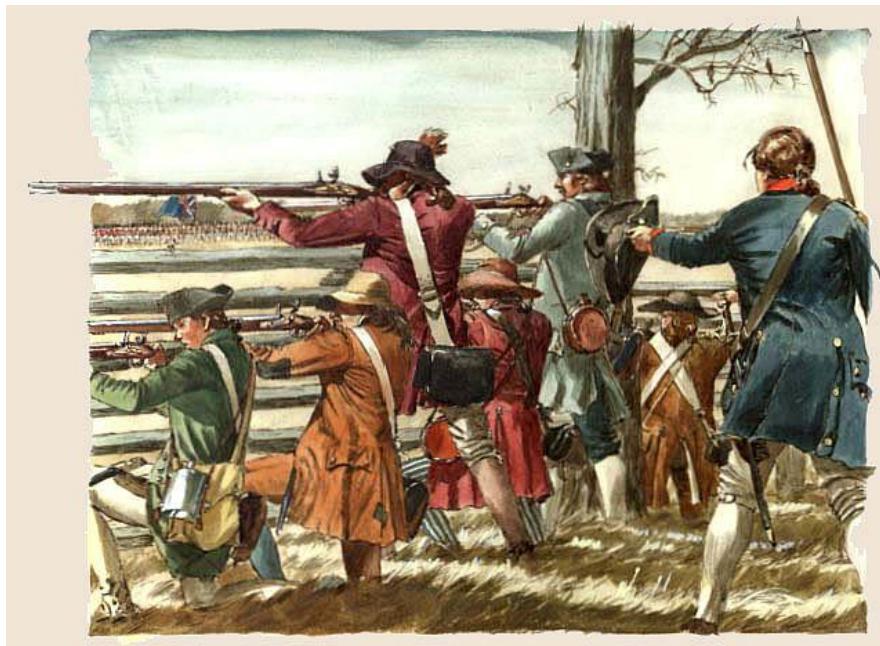
William and Mary continued to live within Centre congregation, their home on a small rising across Davidson's Creek from the meeting-house. Life would have been full of endless chores for the frontier wife. Will's preference was certainly soldiering but his hand was often put to the plow. One of the more congenial activities of a "plantation owner" would have involved raising, breaking and trading horses which provided a matter of pride of ownership as well as a medium of exchange in the piedmont.



Centre Presbyterian Church

Will identified himself with established forces of law and order as early as 1770 at which time he was appointed constable for his district. He would have been responsible for keeping peace and carrying out the decisions of the justices. In the capacity of taking census for taxable inhabitants, Will would have required a tactful approach and a genial disposition in order to have been invited into the homes of his neighbors.

Revolution!



Governor Tryon and the Regulators in one of their Stormy Meetings.

The seeds of the Revolution in the North Carolina back country were sown twenty years prior to the battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts. High court fees, excessive taxes and use of public money taken from the west for use in the east led to the revolt known as the [Regulator Movement](#). While Rowan County was vitally affected, the Presbyterian ministers early on were outspoken against the Regulators and led a force to Salisbury in 1768 to aid Governor Tryon against the uprising. Luckily, no clash occurred at the time.

By 1771, the Rowan militia had become converts of the Regulators to such an extent that the militia was dismissed rather than having their loyalty to Tryon put to the test. Talk of American liberties began when Presbyterian leaders, who reasonably expected consideration in return for their rout of the Regulators, were instead deprived of their

previous habit of pocketing fees honestly earned in performing marriages. Scots economy was outraged and filial affection was at an end. In 1772 King George disallowed the chartering of [Queens College](#) in Charlotte for the reason that its trustees were Presbyterian dissenters. This was a deeply felt stab at all the Scots-Irish cherished—undermining the supremacy of the Presbyterians, their church and their schools was too much for even the most conservative.

Ranks of armed men such as the world had rarely seen were soon to fill Mecklenburg and Rowan Counties which were seething with revolt. Behind the rebels were their ministers who saw service as fighting parsons and voiced an attack from their pulpits that made captains and colonels of deacons and elders. Presbyterianism and patriotism were inextricably interwoven throughout the colonies.

In Wilmington, North Carolina, July 21, 1774, “resolves” were declared and in September 1774 William Davidson and other trusted citizens were appointed to serve on a Committee of Safety which determined the loyalty of area citizens. By May of ’75 the Mecklenburg Committee of Safety organized an independent local government with all loyalty to King George declared null and void. By June of ’75 the battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts set the Colonies in motion with a resolve that one thousand volunteers be “immediately embodied” and ready at the shortest

notice to "march out to action." The first company of volunteers to report was headed by Captain Will Davidson whose men passed muster and were soon in service. The North Carolinians set out early in December to face off against a group of South Carolina loyalists in what is remembered as the "[Snow Campaign](#)" due to a rare heavy snow fall. This campaign drew the first bloodshed in the Revolution in South Carolina.

The North Carolina Provincial Congress, mid-April 1776, passed resolutions reorganizing the Continental line for North Carolina consisting of six battalions, or regiments, of eight companies each. Of the 4th Regiment, William Davidson was listed as Major under Brigadier General Griffith Rutherford.

Will Davidson could be counted on to join up with the patriot army, even though it meant separation from Mary Brevard and his family which had grown annually. At age thirty, he was entering upon the uninterrupted career at arms that brought him fame. The patriotic backwoodsman made the most of times which in turn made the most of him. The cause of freedom was the cause of God on Davidson's Creek, and Davidson was in fundamental agreement with the local interpretation of both.

By March of 1777 the Tar-heels, led by Brigadier General Nash, set out from Wilmington to prepare for the march to reinforce the "Grand Army" of General Washington. As would happen many times, William Lee, who had made a reputation for himself mustering minutemen, was left behind to recruit in order to enable depleted regiments to amass the necessary 300 members each. While constable he had become a familiar figure over a considerable area and farmers, artisans, and trades people alike had great confidence in this leader who would approach them directly, giving him a great deal of frontier respect. To a commander of frontier soldiery, the lack of funds was acute; for the love of hard cash and impatience of restraint were peculiar distinctions of the Scots-Irishmen. Loyalty from his men was earned by his ability to provide sufficient distractions for pay arrears and compromises for discipline to hold this force intact. Davidson left Salisbury on July 18th, 1777 and arrived at Quankey Creek near Halifax, Virginia on the 29th.

There is a tradition that William Lee was with the North Carolina brigade in time to reach the battle at Brandywine, September 1777; however, Nash's troops were virtual spectators at Brandywine as they were ordered from a position between the two wings to reinforce one of them just at the time the British charged the center. Less than a month later, Washington planned a vigorous offensive against Howe at [Germantown](#). Nash's brigade participated in this engagement on October 4th. Fog, mistaken identity and lack of ammunition snatched victory from the Americans, but despite the heavy losses and retreat, Congress and the people were cheered by the army's valor so soon after Brandywine. A North Carolina congressman wrote the governor of the state that "Our men are in high spirits on finding they can make the Enemy's best Troops run by attacking them with courage."



Battle of Germantown

Francis Nash fell in action and died a few days afterward. In this crucial encounter, Davidson fought with and against officers whose future careers were very materially to affect his own. Second to General Washington in command at the Battle of Germantown was Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island. Second to Lord Howe of the British was Charles, Earl Cornwallis. Four years later the hopes and fears of the South hung on these two figures, peering across a river. And it was to keep them apart that Davidson would put his life on the line on the banks of the Catawba.

There were vacancies to be filled in the North Carolina regiments. Major Wm. Lee Davidson of the Fourth Btn. was promoted to the rank of Lieut. Col. Of the Fifth. Davidson, though eldest major, was but a few years past his twenties.

By the time Washington was facing the difficult task of closing the winter campaign, opposition from within was brewing. Insubordination resulted in a court martial, presided by Davidson. A lieutenant was found guilty of offenses and discharged, with the approval of the Commander-in-chief. Washington's problem now was to keep an army without tents and supplies together through a cold winter. His experience as a surveyor led him to winter his Army at Valley Forge on the Schuylkill River which was well suited for defense or escape; a forest providing convenient logs for cabin barracks.

No less a spirit than Washington's could have successfully braved the impending days of starvation and freezing as well as the rage of the elements and of maddened men who were without warm clothes, shoes or tents. Hundreds were too sparsely clothed to be fit for duty. On the 19th of December the army [arrived in the valley](#) and long lines of log cabins



General Griffith Rutherford

began to cover the hillsides. Forgotten by their own Congress and in want of every supply, troops were forced to sit up all night by fires for lack of blankets. [No one suffered more than the brigade of North Carolinians](#), especially the officers whose clothes and rations were not provided by the state and national governments—officers being expected to purchase both from their non-existent pay. Probably the only compensation that the officers received was the excellent training, military maneuvers and discipline from Baron von Steuben, a skillful old German who had served as aide to Frederick the Great.



"Light Horse" Harry Lee

transfer to the 3rd Regiment as Lt. Colonel. Between the dates of 23 April to 29 October, eight hundred and thirty five and 30/90 dollars was reported to congress as being owed to Col. William Davidson for extra services which are supposed to have consisted of the business of recruiting.

After his return North it is uncertain where his services were directed until December 19, 1778 when Washington sent orders to Lt. Col. Davidson who was found stationed near Smith's Cove, New York. Davidson was to march immediately to Philadelphia by way of Trenton, New Jersey where he was to leave 50 of his men to guard stores. Once in Philadelphia Davidson was to report to Benedict Arnold and take directions from him. Davidson was found to have presided on April 2, 1779 at a general court martial. While at the capital city Davidson had the pleasure of seeing William Sharpe who took his seat as a North Carolina delegate to the Continental Congress on April 5th. Sharpe would have surely brought news of Davidson's third son, Ephraim Brevard, born in January.



Ephraim Brevard Davidson, Debbie Mecca's 3rd Great Grandfather, in his prime. While no image of William Lee remains, I like to imagine that I glimpse the father when looking at this image of his son.

fought out in the South. On November 19th, Clark at West Point received orders to march and began the long tramp back to Carolina. Many obstacles hindered the Tar-healers return having only reached Baltimore by January 1st and arriving in Charlestown, S. C. by March 3rd. Davidson obtained a well-deserved leave of absence to visit his family in December or January with a promise of rejoining his regiment in Charlestown on the first of May. For two years, with but one summer in Carolina, he had

Beyond the ordeals of the icy winter, William Lee gained acquaintanceships of enduring value with the likes of ["Light-Horse Harry" Lee](#), the tide-water Virginian who found the backwoods Carolinian "a man of popular manners, pleasing address, active and indefatigable". Davidson, though ten years senior to his blue-blooded companion, must have regarded the dashing young cavalryman as the exemplar of martial virtues. To the minds of both, nothing became a man like his sword and spurs. Another Virginian, [Daniel Morgan](#), was also a fellow officer. Unlike Lee, Morgan had worked with his hands in the earthy piedmont and would later win renown in the South as the victor at Cowpens.

Before June of 1778, Davidson had returned to North Carolina and was supervising recruiting before the reorganization of the units which resulted in his transfer to the 3rd Regiment as Lt. Colonel. Between the dates of 23 April to 29 October, eight hundred and thirty five and 30/90 dollars was reported to congress as being owed to Col. William Davidson for extra services which are supposed to have consisted of the business of recruiting.



Benedict Arnold

Exact service in this time is sketchy; however, a "Roll of Lt. Col. W. L. Davidson's Company" dated April 23, 1779 lists only thirty-five effective men. Many were left at hospitals and eight had died at New Windsor Hospital, one at West Point, two at "Roberdson's" Hospital and eight at Philadelphia. These conditions left Lt. Col. Davidson without an army though he remained in service. In May he joined his state regiments (1st and 2nd) under Col. Thomas Clark at Paramus, New Jersey. June of 1779 found Clark's regiments in West Point in service to General Alexander McDougall's command of the Highlands of the Hudson. On June 24th, he served as president of a general brigade court martial at or near New Windsor which dismissed a North Carolina wagon-master from service for selling property belonging to the brigade as his own. Davidson's main duties at this time seem to be presiding over Court Martials, one of which resulted in a sentence of capital punishment—his opinion is not known in the matter.



Valley Forge

served the Grand Army of Washington. He returned to Centre with the laurels of northern campaigns and to popular acclaim as the favorite native son. He had associated familiarly with the foremost military leaders of America, a privilege in itself worth many sacrifices. He had taken orders from the brilliant and flashy Benedict Arnold and from many others of note. It goes without saying that being in the presence of Washington could not but send a thrill of elation down the spine of the frontiersman.

The spring of 1780 he devoted to his growing family and diminishing estate. For the soldier of the Revolution, absence from home meant depreciation of property. The "Colonel's lady" on Davidson's Creek was hardly in actual want or danger but doubtless well aware that the Colonel had responsibilities in addition to fighting the King. There were now half a dozen children, the oldest not over twelve—three sons, George Lee, John Alexander, and Ephraim Brevard, and three daughters, Jean, Pamela and Margaret.

When his furlough ended, Davidson rode to Charlestown to join his regiment, finding the city so closely blockaded that he was unable to get through requiring his return to Centre. By so doing Davidson saved North Carolina one regular officer for on May 12, 1780 General Lincoln surrendered the Southern Army to Sir Henry Clinton. At one sweep, North Carolina lost practically her entire Continental line. Davidson was again without a command.

Though Col. Davidson had lost his regiment with Lincoln's surrender, war in the piedmont was soon to absorb his energies. The fall of Charlestown and the terms forced on the prostrate state released many a "Huzza for King George" from the long repressed Tories. In the meantime, Sir Henry Clinton left Lord Cornwallis in control of Charlestown and the Continental prisoners. The Earl decided to wait until fall when the weather was pleasanter and the harvests in, to

subjugate North Carolina. He established a strong post at Camden, eighty miles below Charlotte. Had the Tar-heels needed rousing, Colonel Banastre Tarleton of Cornwallis's cavalry was their agent. On May 29th, this daring and ambitious young officer, having slipped out from Camden, fell upon an American detachment near the Mecklenburg line and slaughtered them without mercy. Tarleton gave no quarter even though Whig accounts claimed the defeated forces threw down their arms and surrendered. From that time forth, the rallying cry for upcountry patriots was "Tarleton's Quarter".

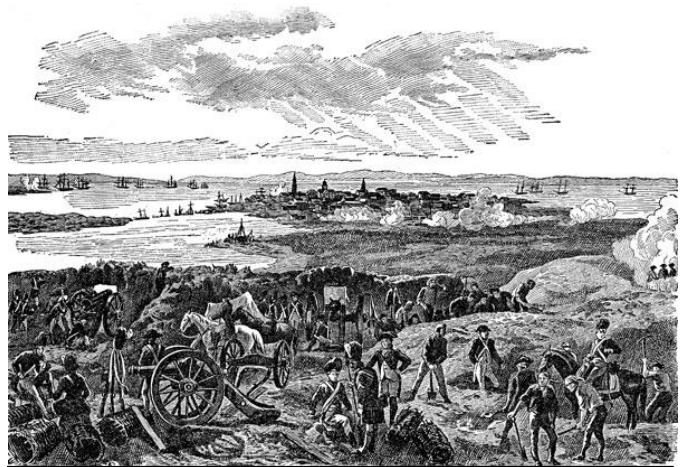
Militia was called out en masse by Griffith Rutherford and by June 3rd 800 men appeared. William Lee Davidson volunteered to serve as subordinate to his former militia commander. The Lieutenant-Commander was irresistible to the backwoodsmen in his blue and white regimental and familiar accounts of service with General Washington.

American General Griffith Rutherford ordered his adjutant, Colonel William Lee Davidson, and about 200 men to pursue the Tories, and a race ensued down the Yadkin River Valley.

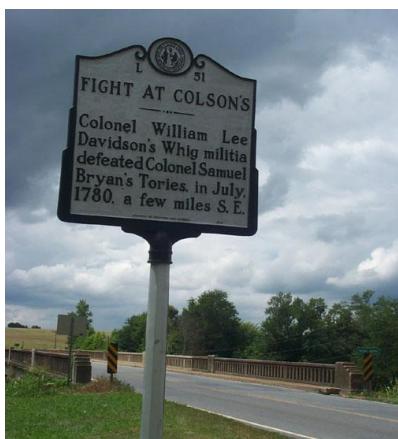
Davidson was in the process of patrolling against a local Tory by the name of Col. Bryan who had begun to march against Cornwallis' orders. Believing themselves to be out of harm's way and close enough to Cornwallis' headquarters to prevent attack, Bryan's Tories pitched camp near an inn and a mill on the Cheraw Road called Colson's.

Colonel Davidson arrived in the neighborhood of [Colson's Mill](#) near the junction of Rocky River with the Pee Dee, dividing his men so as to attack both the front and on the flank of the Tories. Davidson had no intention of letting the loyalists escape, and on the morning of July 21 he surprised the enemy and drove the loyalists into the woods – and back to their homes. Davidson thus denied Cornwallis an addition of nearly 1,000 troops and effectively broke any remaining loyalist sympathies along the Yadkin River Valley.

Leading the front party, however, Davidson's uniform made a glittering target and the Tory marksmen singled him out. The plan had been so well laid out that his party drove on at full charge and though outnumbered attacked simultaneously. While Davidson's wound was not fatal, the ball having entered the umbilical region and passed through the body near the kidneys. For over a month a wrestles Davidson was kept in his bed. Mary Brevard Davidson had her hands full with six children and another one on the way.

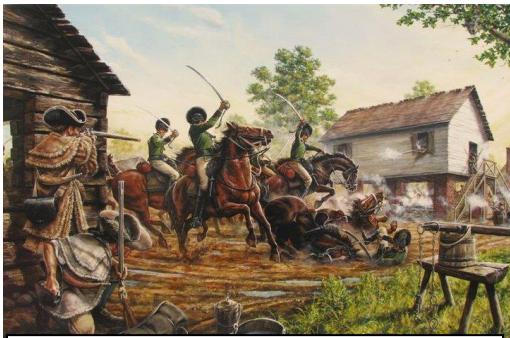


Siege of Charleston



Davidson's recovery was remarkable owing, no doubt, to the natural vigor of an out-of-door man of thirty-four. By end of August he was up and about and being considered by Gen. Jethro Sumner for the command of the horse.

The compliment was an honor, but Davidson was destined for a higher command. The Salisbury District which then comprised almost the entire western third of North Carolina, including in 1780 the counties of Mecklenburg, Rowan, Anson, Surry, Guilford, Burke, Wilkes, Washington, Lincoln, Montgomery, Rutherford, Sullivan and Richmond, petitioned the General Assembly on August 31, 1780 for an officer whom they could trust to be appointed Brigadier General until General Rutherford be released (from confinement by the British after his capture at Charles Town). The Resolution was met by the House of Commons and the Senate on the same day. Such a commission was exceptional and flattering, for not only was Davidson hardly well of his wound but it had been the rule of the House never to place militia under a Continental officer.



Tarleton "The Butcher" in North Carolina

Cornwallis left Camden on Sept. 7, 1780 and upon nearing Mecklenburg, her borders began to hum. It was the warning of the "Hornet's Nest" which his Lordship might well have heeded. The area surrounding Charlotte was fortified with the forces of Davie and Davidson who received at that time their appointments from Governor Nash: Davidson as brigadier-general and Davie as colonel of the cavalry. It is said that no two men did more to put the sting in the hornet. According to Joseph Graham: "the General arrived in camp the next day after he received his commission and assumed command to the great satisfaction of all parties."

Davidson could count on the instinct of the frontiersmen he led to fight but knew not to expect reliable discipline. If he seriously offended them, they would go home; if he left them unchecked, they would become fractious.

It was a nice predicament from which only such leaders as Morgan, Sumter, and himself extricated a fighting force.

The back-country had, however, one unique advantage in arms. Hunts and Indian wars had led to the importation of the rifle and practice in its use several years prior to the Revolution. The frontiersmen of Mecklenburg and Rowan were particularly adept in the use of the long-barreled, small-bored piece, and Charlotte was said to have had one of the few rifle factories in the colonies in 1775.

It was Davidson's belief that Mecklenburgers deserved protection: they had "fought bravely and bled freely." If they were overrun, the Americans would "lose the services of the best and most valuable part of this Country," a part, incidentally, which included Davidson's own plantation and the holdings of his friends and kin.

Charlotte, having been occupied by the British, hung like a hive of yellow jackets--it was helpless but venomous. The locals set about to skirmish with and retard the enemy with light parties. At the [Battle of Charlotte](#) the whole British army was kept at bay for some minutes by a few mounted Americans not exceeding twenty in number. This was a sample of the steady diet from Mecklenburg. Before they left it, the Redcoats swore that the woods about Charlotte swarmed with America's most rebellious citizens. His lordship soon discovered that he was in an enemy's country, without provisions, without forage, without friends, without intelligence.

Redcoats and Loyalists numbered nearly 2,500 strong while Davidson's force fluctuated violently, doing well if he had one third of that number. However, by October 10th news came to Davidson at Camp [Rocky River](#) that Ferguson had been overwhelmingly defeated at King's Mountain three days before. It was one of the momentous victories of the war, not only in cutting off Cornwallis's Tory support and forcing him from North Carolina, but in proving to the frontiersmen that their own troops could win triumphs as complete as the Continentals. After King's Mountain the Loyalists of the upcountry were content to profess their good will to the king and practice staying at home.

Davidson's report of the Battle of King's Mountain via a letter to Sumner is his only literary composition which attained widespread historical significance and found its way into numerous publications from his own century to the present. Its importance derives from the fact that it was the first written account of the battle which turned the tide of the Revolution in the South. When news of King's Mountain finally filtered through to Cornwallis in Charlotte he understood the proof of the venom of the uplanders and realized it was suicide to remain longer in the area. No provisions or local reinforcements, on which the Earl had fondly counted, were to be received. Shortly after noon on the 12th of October, the British began leaving Charlotte Town.

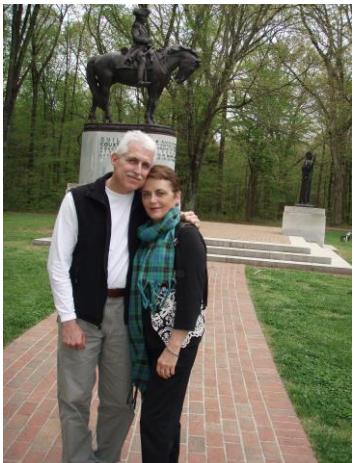


"Hornet's Nest"

Thus Cornwallis had failed to place the Old North State beside her sister to the South; instead of marching on the heels of a fleeing foe, the Earl was on his toes to get away. Davidson's policy had met with entire success and it was to him and his militia that the Whig newspapers gave the credit for Cornwallis's failure. In their haste to escape the area, the fugitives abandoned twenty wagons five miles below Charlotte supplying Davidson's men with tents, camp furniture and seventy stand of arms as well as most of the clothes belonging to Tarleton's legion.

Seeing that Cornwallis' army was cut off from Tarleton and having difficulty advancing in the area, Davidson's sent an express concerning the enemy's situation to General Sumter. Despite the fact that the Americans had five separate forces in the close vicinity of the bedraggled British, Cornwallis did not meet the fate of Burgoyne due to the fact that Morgan and the others were awaiting orders to move from General Smallwood who was on his way south.

The British army made its way 70 miles south of Charlotte to Winnsboro, South Carolina for winter quarters where Cornwallis recuperated from Carolina fever while resting and recruiting his army. During a stalemate in planning strategies by officers Smallwood and Gates, Davidson settled into winter at [Camp New Providence](#) southeast of Charlotte on Hwy 16. He busied himself improving the morale of the militia, securing an exchange of prisoners. A great scarcity of provision, owing largely to the lack of money in the Whig treasury, became a constant battle. Under these conditions, the best of combatants made the most restless campers for any stretch of time. Though terms of service began to expire December 5, many began to depart by late November. Eager for action, Davidson wrote to Sumter that "I am possessed of all the patience necessary to my profession but I assure you it is nearly exhausted." This statement was directed to the fact that his area of command was controlled by nearly half a dozen authorities: among them Governor Abner Nash, William Smallwood, Commander-in-chief Horatio Gates, with the new Commander-in-chief Nathanael Greene ready to take command.



Mike & Debbie Mecca at N.
Greene Monument

Davidson, on November 27th, being convinced that nothing would be done by the officers above him submitted a plan of combat to Colonel Alexander Martin of the Board of War, stating in his plan he raise militia to send Genl. Morgan to the Westward with his Light Troops & Rifle men, 1,000 volunteer Militia and Refugees from South Carolina and Georgia, to join which will make a formidable Body of Desperadoes the whole to be under Morgan's Direction and proceed immediately to 96...at the Same time the main Army to move down to the Waxhaws which will oblige the Enemy to divide (which will put them quite in our power) ..."

In light of British conditions as now known, Davidson's plan seems entirely feasible. Cornwallis had received no reinforcements, Tarleton was on detachment and the Tory militia had been browbeaten into sullen passivity. There is no evidence that Martin endeavored to promote the plan—it is said that had fate decreed otherwise, as will it might, Winnsboro and not Yorktown would have marked the end of the Revolution. All activity awaited the advent of Gates's successor—in the meantime the British were recuperating and reinforcements were on the way. On December 2, 1780, Nathanael Greene arrived in Camp Charlotte to take charge of the Southern Army. Green brought no soldiers

besides the Baron and had selected "Light-Horse Harry" Lee for his Southern staff.

By December 5th, rains returned—for eleven bleak days sheets of icy water deluged the Catawba valley. There was nothing to do but sit still in an effort to endure the hunger and cold. Meantime, Davidson travelled home to Centre to be with his family, where an addition to his household was shortly expected. In the meantime the Board wrote Greene that the army could "maneuver on the Enemy" in the western country as Greene pleased. On December 16th, Davidson, with volunteers collected from Ramsour's Battleground, was ordered to unite with Morgan as soon as possible. The force was ordered to act either defensively or offensively, to cut off supplies to the enemy and to revive the spirits of the inhabitants.

Davidson travelled to Salisbury himself to make sure that ammunition was hauled properly. With the approaching campaign, his thoughts turned inward. He had seen many men die in the past three years and been seriously wounded himself. There would be seven children, the oldest not yet twelve, to be educated and provided for. He was still due army pay which would be issued to his wife should he not be spared to enjoy it. He owned land enough to give each of the boys a start: three lots in Charlotte, several tracts in Rowan and Burke Counties, and the promise of more for his military services. The girls, also, would have an inheritance. Brevard.



Debbie's daughter,
Katherine, at grave
of John and Jane
Brevard.

About a mile and a half from his home, Davidson passed the log meeting-house of Centre with its growing burying-ground. In this red clay, he too might expect to sleep till judgment alongside his kith and kin. Upon reaching Salisbury, he went to the court house and codified his thoughts in the form of his last will and testament.

Appointment with Destiny – the Battle of Cowan's Ford



By December 20th, Greene had moved his camp from Charlotte. Upon reaching Ramsour's Davidson found less than ninety volunteers. The Cherokee Indians, encouraged by Cornwallis, had chosen this particular moment to perpetrate a massacre on the frontier, and the western militia had gone after them, thus delaying Davidson's expected departure until December 26th. Greene then appointed Colonel William R. Davie to Commissary-general, much against the wishes of the active young officer who had killed more enemies single-handed than any other man in the army. The transfer left Davidson without a cavalry officer and ended that picturesque partnership which had immortalized the "Hornet's Nest."

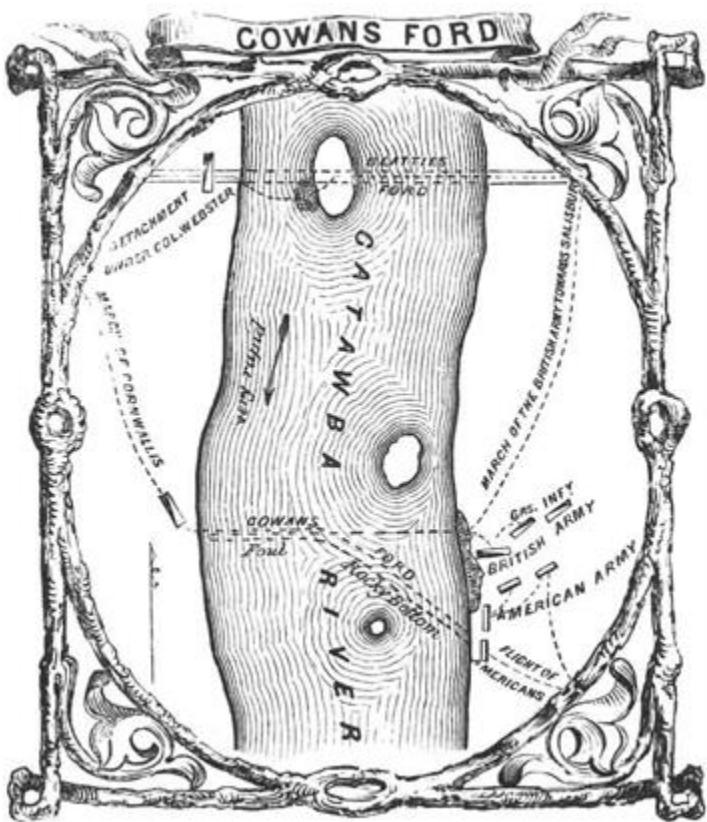
It was to Joseph Graham that Davidson now turned, offering him the command of the cavalry if he would raise it. In two or three weeks, Graham had collected upwards of fifty youth of his acquaintance, all of whom managed to acquire rifles and about fifteen had pistols. As true dragoons, they could act as infantry or cavalry as emergency required. Mounted generally on strong and durable horses, with a pair of saddle bags for the rider and a portion of food for the mount, they were ready for service.

By December 25th, Davidson had crossed the Catawba, supplying Morgan with 120 men then returning to bring forward a draft of 500 more. Davidson, in Charlotte, was then using all his powers of persuasion to bring in the militia. It was the time that tried men's souls and many chose family over country after having already having served repeatedly and with scant remuneration while leaving their farms neglected and exposed. Both Greene and Morgan counted heavily on Davidson's influence. There was no busier man in the state than the Brigadier-general of Salisbury District; however, on January 2nd he may have cantered up to Centre, for on that date his namesake and last child was born.

American maneuvers convinced Cornwallis that winter quarters at Winnsboro were untenable with Marion marauding below him and Morgan and Greene menacing his flanks, the Earl's surest defense was offensive action and the army began to move toward the Catawba. Tarelton was dispatched to move with his legion to ride ahead and embroil Daniel Morgan. Despite Morgan's apprehension of being attacked by Tarelton's superior forces, on the 17th of January, Morgan achieved a great victory at the Battle of Cowpens. The whole country praised the heroes of Cowpens, in some respects Morgan had achieved the most brilliant coup of the Revolution.



Jim Davidson, resident of Australia, at King's Mountain battle site. Jim has explored America with Mike and Debbie Mecca annually since they met at the International Clan Davidson Gathering in Kansas City



Raw militia (many of them Davidson's troops) had miraculously stood their ground against the elite of the British Army. At King's Mountain, the frontiersmen had silenced the Tories, at Cowpens they conquered a Royal legion.

The Brigadier's disappointment was keen at having missed another such battle while building the army man by man, but he gave Morgan his wholehearted applause. Meanwhile, Charlotte, deserving a celebration, had a Feu de joie at the news of the conquest. Few American towns had borne the war as long and remained as rebellious. The militia were now coming in fast and he wrote Morgan on January 21st that he thought he would have at least 600 men shortly to march "where ever it may be proper." Despite his optimism, the farmers' planting time was approaching, and the families would depend on their being at home. Furthermore, it was common rumor that the British would burn every house in their way if its owner were not at home.

In the meantime, Cornwallis continued to circle northwesterly toward the Catawba. Morgan took post at Sherrill's Ford as it seemed certain that the British would attempt to cross at one of the fords in the vicinity. From Sherrill's downward were five fords and all needed to be covered. On the 25th of January, Cornwallis brought his army. Morgan was again hard pressed with an ailment in

his hip which gave him great pain. Even though he realized the hurt his retiring would be to the service, he was unable to preserver while having every confidence in the ability of Gen. Davidson, Col. Pickens and Gen. Sumter to manage the militia better than he could. He had informed Greene that he had received intelligence of the enemy's rapid approach and that his numbers at this time were too weak to fight them. His intention was to move towards Salisbury in order to get near the main army along with General Davidson.

Cornwallis and Tarleton had been reported to be forty miles northwest of Charlotte. General Greene would not send Davidson on an expedition to destroy a mill that would provide provisions for the British army, but instead was ordered to stop Cornwallis – an end to which the disappointed young Brigadier must devote his every effort.

By the afternoon of January 28th, Cornwallis had reached Beattie's Ford, which was known to be the best. In the meantime, Davidson continued to bring in fresh support. Couriers were dispatched to public gatherings to rally the reluctant en masse. One of the riders arrived during a church service of the Reverend James Hall of Fourth Creek. Parson Hall was a dependable Whig who after a hasty glance at the paper, brought his sermon to a close, descended from the pulpit, and issued a call for volunteers, placing his own name at the head of the list. By January 29th, the Parson's company joined Davidson on the Catawba.

Davidson's recruiting strategy accomplished its aims. Over 300 men flocked to augment the camp at Beattie's. Parson Thomas McCaule of Centre Church, and John Dickey captained a company from the same congregation. For liberty or death, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon was drawn.

Morgan came down from Sherrill's on the 29th to view the post. He wrote to Greene, "General Davidson is here with eight hundred men...the enemy is within ten miles of the place in force; their advance is in sight..." To guard the most important fords, Davidson reorganized his forces, placing his men along the way with 25 to guard Cowan's with Lt. Thomas Davidson of Mecklenburg. General Davidson remained at Beattie's with about five hundred men, among them the cavalry of Joseph Graham.

By the 31st, Cornwallis had secured sufficient information regarding the Americans to make further delay in crossing both useless and dangerous. Rains falling then appeared likely to swell the river even higher. Morgan had determined to head to Salisbury then Guilford Courthouse with Greene headed in that direction but called for a



Charles Cornwallis, 1st
Marquess Cornwallis

consultation between Greene, Morgan, Davidson and Colonel Washington. The men retired from the camp and, seating themselves on a log, held a conversation of about twenty minutes. While the details of this meeting have not survived, certainly neither Greene nor Morgan felt any confidence that the Catawba could be held against a British crossing, their hopes lie in causing interference to slow the advance.



Lake Norman's Dam now covers the location where Cowan's Ford crossed the Catawba.

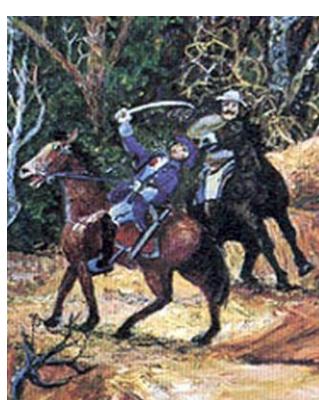
Shown here, the author took her family by Pontoon Boat to explore this historic area.

swamp. Determined by that time to move forward despite the flooded condition of the river, he and Brigadier O'Hara and the Brigade of Guards under his command, were ordered to march on. In order to prevent confusion, the army was ordered not to fire until they gained the opposite bank.

The Redcoats were compelled to hold to each other even to stand against the current. At the order to advance, Lord Cornwallis dashed first into the river mounted on a very fine spirited horse. They were piloted by Frederick Hager, a Tory of the neighborhood, who took them along the wagon ford.

The pickets on the eastern bank were asleep, according to the story related years later by one of them, Robert Henry, a boy of sixteen at the time. But the noise of the Redcoats crossing awakened them and their firing brought General Davidson and his men racing toward the wagon ford. Unaware that the enemy had landed, Davidson dashed down to the water's edge.

For a few minutes the action was lively; the militiamen were picking off many British who were struggling in the water. The return fire was heavy, and hardly had Davidson arrived when he was struck from his horse.



The General is mortally wounded.

General Davidson gave orders to the cavalry under Graham and about 250 infantry under Col William Polk to march down the river to Cowan's Ford, four miles below Beattie's, leaving nearly the same number at the latter place with Col Thomas Farmer. Davidson then told Graham that it was Greene's opinion that the enemy were determined to cross the river immediately and would probably send their cavalry over in the night by some private ford. In the morning when the infantry attempted to force a passage the horsemen would fall upon the American rear on its way to Salisbury. The Brigadier therefore ordered Graham to have mounted patrols pass up and down the river all night. Davidson's party arrived at Cowan's Ford about dusk and encamped three-fourths of a mile to the south and rear of Lt. Thomas Davidson's picket stationed on the water's edge.

There were two fords at Cowan's—a horse ford and a wagon ford; and Davidson's disposition placed protection at each. As he had reason to fear for a rear attack from Tarleton's cavalry, he stationed the men with him on a hill about half a mile back from the horse ford, leaving the picket on the bank at the other egress.

On the same night, January 31st, Cornwallis got ready to move. According to the words of Cornwallis himself, General Davidson was supposed to be posted six miles above Mc-Cowan's with 500 militia and Lt. Col. Webster was detached with all the baggage to Beattie's Ford where he was to make every possible demonstration by cannonading and otherwise of an intention to force a passage there. Cornwallis himself marched at one in the morning towards Cowan's Ford through mud and



The General's Pistol

Polk wheeled in his saddle and to rally the men—Davidson did not turn to follow. For a moment he stared in the direction of the man with the smoking gun. Then, without a sound, he fell from his horse. Within a few minutes, several other Americans were killed. The British loss was greater, but the skirmish proved a defeat for the Americans.

February 1, 1781, was a dark day in Mecklenburg. General Davidson, an amazingly successful organizer, had been the driving force of the area's resistance. His death, as General Washington and the Congress would testify, was a great blow.

Davidson's wife, Mary Elizabeth Brevard Davidson, who had given birth to a son only a short time before this fateful night was brought to his burial. His body had been defiled by the British and he was taken to Hopewell Presbyterian Church to bury—a few miles south of his home church, Centre Presbyterian. He was buried under the cloak of darkness to prevent the possibility of further desecration. His wife who had endured extended absences by her husband would bravely raise their children without their father. And to add to her pain, her [parent's home was burned the](#) next day by British soldiers--some historical accounts say that "Bloody" Tarleton was commanding this action. As her elderly

mother Jane MacWhorter Brevard tried to rescue precious items from the burning home, she was roughed up and the items thrown back in to burn with the soldiers exclaiming "...she had 8 sons fighting for the damned Rebels..."

General Davidson had been killed by a rifle ball through the heart. Frederick Hager's rifle, said the neighbors, shot such a ball. Hager went west, and died in Arkansas in 1814. Tradition persists in naming the Tory as Davidson's slayer.

General Davidson was dead but the day was not done. The British were on the march and within an hour the whole country was in motion. Terrified women, old men, and children despoiled their homes of treasure and drove their wagons in all directions. Teams were goaded through the miry clay with loads of beds, babies, and chicken coops.

About ten miles from Cowan's Ford, on the road to Salisbury, was Torrence's Tavern, which had been selected as an American rendezvous for February 1st. Cornwallis learned of the location and dispatched Tarleton to rout those there. At the tavern bedlam reigned. Soldiers from all around were massed on the road. Suddenly someone shouted, "Tarleton is coming!" The militia formed as best they could but the dock-tailed British cavalry, the nightmare of the helpless, put all to flight. Beds were ripped up and feathers covered the lane. Furniture was battered to pieces and innocent chickens beheaded. Ten dead Americans, several of them old and unarmed, were left on the ground by the dragoons of "bloody Tarleton." Not satisfied, the British on the day after burned the tavern of the Widow Torrence, whose husband had fallen at Ramsour's Mill.

Years prior to his appointment with destiny William Lee Davidson had befriended Light Horse Harry Lee while enduring the bitter cold winter at Valley Forge. Lee stated in his memoirs:

"The loss of Brigadier Davidson would have been always felt in any state of the war. It was particularly detrimental in its effects at this period, as he was the chief instrument relied upon by (Gen. Nathaniel) Greene for the assembly of the militia, an event all important at this crisis and anxiously desired by the American general. The ball passed through his breast and he instantly fell dead. This promising soldier was thus lost to his country in the meridian of life and at a moment when his services would have been highly beneficial to her. He was a man of popular manner, pleasing address, active and indefatigable; devoted to the profession of arms and to the great cause for which he fought. His future usefulness may be inferred from his former conduct. The Congress of the United States in gratitude for his services and in commemoration of their sense of his worth passed suitable resolutions."

With Davidson dead, Greene's prospects of the "fine field and great glory" which he had confidently predicted with militia aid became difficult. When the news of his friend's death reached William Sharpe in Congress, he wrote to Washington, "You may rely upon it that the fall of General Davidson has left the people without a head in whom they have confidence as an officer..."



General Greene wrote to Sumter on February 3rd, "We have been obliged to retire over the Yadkin . . . The loss of General Davidson is a great misfortune at this time. I stayed at one of the places of rendezvous the night after the enemy crossed until midnight, but not a man appeared, nor has there a single man joined us except a few belonging to South Carolina..." And Cornwallis, close behind, reported to the colonial Secretary of State in Britain that the events of February 1st had "so effectually dispirited the Militia that we met with no further opposition in our march to the Yadkin, through one of the most rebellious tracts in America."



Greene at the tavern

Cornwallis met Greene at Guilford Court-House and heavy losses were reported on both sides, with the British holding the field then eventually marching into Virginia. But Washington soon returned to his native state, acquiring surrender from Cornwallis at Yorktown on October 19, 1781. Thus came the end of Revolution and birth to a new Nation, provided by the sacrifice of those great patriots who were willing to sacrifice "our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honor."

A PARTISAN'S CONTRIBUTION



It took a great personality of the Revolution to rally the Americans. Underfed, ill clad, and unpaid veterans took heart from one whose sacrifice was greater than their own—a man would be hard put to discover a more commendable example of patriotism. Scarcely out of his twenties and with half a dozen dependents, Davidson had claims to exemption which few could better. Yet he was in the vanguard of active patriots, a leader among those in Mecklenburg and Rowan who made their counties conspicuous for rebellion. Davidson could not have “sold” his convictions so convincingly had there been any doubt in his own mind as to their validity. He was one of those fortunate individuals whose faith in his cause was never enfeebled by skepticism.



: The author visits the office of Bob Morgan, President/CEO Charlotte Chamber of Commerce. Bob commissioned a work of art on the Battle of Cowan's Ford and another of Tarleton's attack on Charlotte – both by artist, Dan Nance

One sentimental, elderly, lady came closest to an explanation of the true value of the man to the Revolution:

“We have become almost too selfish to understand the agony which ran through the hearts of the people when the news flew from house to house that brave, good Richard Barry and his comrades were bringing the blood-stained corpse of General William Davidson from Cowan’s Ford to the house of his aged friend, Mrs. Samuel Wilson. We cannot understand how it was that women who were no kin to him wrung their hands and wept and why sixty years afterwards the tragic tale was told in hushed and saddened tones.”

That he was personable and likable is obvious, but his influence was based on a way of life and an attitude of mind with which contemporaries had been familiar for thirty years. They knew him for what he was. The Scots-Irish were singularly “responsive to leadership.” Their clannish forbears for generations had acknowledged a chieftain. They required a personification of their cause around which to rally. Imported generals had proved disappointments and the backwoodsmen turned to a product of their own environment.

North Carolina did not overlook Davidson’s widow and orphans. William Sharpe, John Dickey and Griffith Rutherford were responsible for a settlement of 1,033 pounds from the state to Davidson’s dependents in 1783. In 1786, North Carolina granted the heirs 5,750 acres in Davidson County (Tennessee) and the family removed to that location. The national government added 450 acres in Ohio in 1792. Davidson County was created by North Carolina in 1783, later becoming Tennessee and in 1822 another county in North Carolina, appropriately cut off from Rowan, was named for the Brigadier in his own locality.

Fifty years later the memory of the Brigadier was commemorated when the Presbyterians of his native heath created Davidson College in North Carolina. Of all the memorials to the young Brigadier of Salisbury District, the College which bears his name today is perhaps the most fitting, symbolizing as it does the perennial hopes of the future. The brief day of the Piedmont Partisan closed on the hope of a better tomorrow. What talents he possessed were devoted with unstinted loyalty to the advancement of a great cause.

Reference materials:

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“Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762” by Robert W. Ramsey

“Great Wagon Road: From Philadelphia to the South” by Parke Rouse

“Davison/Davidson Family: The Descendants of William and Elizabeth Davison of County Armagh, Ireland” By Robert Stephens Hand”

Internet links:

[“The Way We Lived in North Carolina”](http://www.waywelivednc.com/before-1770/wagon-road.htm) [<http://www.waywelivednc.com/before-1770/wagon-road.htm>]

[“Learning North Carolina”](http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2030) and [“The Scots-Irish From Ulster and The Great Wagon Road”](http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2030)

[<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2030>]

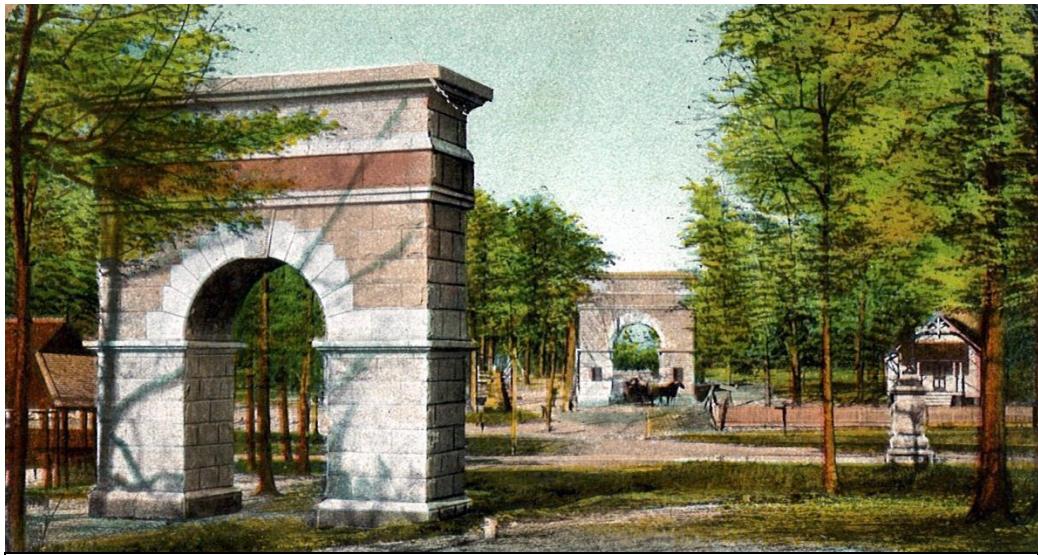
[“General William Lee Davidson”](http://sites.davidson.edu/archives/encyclopedia/general-william-lee-davidson) [<http://sites.davidson.edu/archives/encyclopedia/general-william-lee-davidson>]

Note from the author: It has been an honor to share my 4th Great Grandfather’s story with people who are interested in Davidson history. As in all writing of historical events, facts have been gleaned from many sources to find an acceptable path to what is hoped to be an accurate picture of a time in history and the persons being depicted.



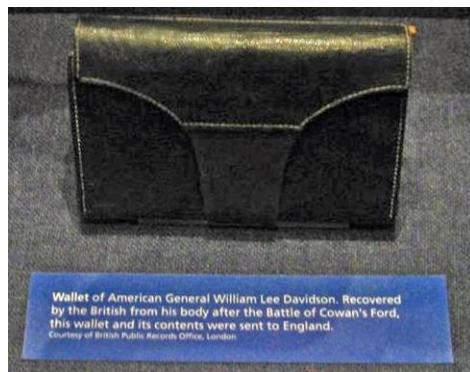
Learn more about:

Monuments to Davidson and Nash were constructed in the form of two arches at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Greensboro, NC. Davidson's arch was constructed of granite in at the cost of \$10,000 and dedicated July 4, 1905. The monument stood 33 feet high with a width of 28 feet and spanned New Garden Road allowing one-way traffic to pass through its span. The arch later underwent controversy from persons wishing the battlefield to appear more in its original appearance and was dismantled in 1937—the pieces of the destroyed monument were used along the park roads. Both arches to Davidson and Nash suffered the same fate. What a travesty. These granite monuments to such gallant patriots were not allowed to stand for half a century.



Arches to Davidson and Nash were constructed at Guilford Courthouse Battleground. These monuments were destroyed within decades in order to widen a road and to restore the look of the battleground to its original appearance. While the destruction of these monuments to North Carolina's heroes, Nash and Davidson, is difficult to understand, Nashville, in Davidson County, Tennessee stands as a living testament to their memories.

William Lee's wallet: Amazing efforts to bring General Davidson's wallet home from England.



Davidson quest in North Carolina: Four generations of Davidson descendants travel to North Carolina.
May 20th Society: <http://www.may20thsociety.org/>

Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence
Charlotte's Liberty Walk