

# Some Revolutionary Heroes of Rutherford

## Incidents of The Revolutionary Period in Rutherford County and Sketches of Some of the Participants.

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PART ELEVEN

Felix Walker.

Felix Walker, eldest son of Col. John Walker, was born on the south branch of the Potomac River, in Hampshire county, Va., (now West Virginia), July 19, 1753. He attended a country school on the Congaree River, near Columbia, S. C., and in Burke county, N. C. He moved with his father to what became Lincoln county, N. C., and then in 1768 to what became Rutherford county. He was apprenticed as a merchant's clerk at Charleston, S. C., in 1769; also engaged in agricultural pursuits after his return to Rutherford county. He, in company with Henderson and Boone and others founded the settlement of Boonsboro, Ky., in 1775; was clerk of the court of Washington District, (most of which is now in the state of Tennessee) in 1775 and 1776, and of the county court of Washington county, (now in Tennessee) in 1777 and 1778. Fought in the Revolutionary and Indian wars; lieutenant in Capt. Richardson's company in the Rifle Regiment commanded by James Stuger, from Mecklenburg county, N. C., in 1776; and was captain of a company of light dragoons on the Nolachucky River in 1776, and part of 1777; went as private on several tours of few weeks each in 1778-1779. He was appointed clerk of the court of Pleas and Quarter sessions of Rutherford county, N. C., in October 1779, a position which he held until 1787. Was a member of the State House of Commons six times, serving in 1792, 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 and 1806; resumed agricultural and trading pursuits and was also a land speculator in Haywood county, where he removed in 1808. He was elected to the United States Congress, as a representative from the western district in 1817 and served three terms, or until 1823. He was an unsuccessful candidate for re-election in 1822, being defeated by only a few votes. He moved to Mississippi about 1824, and engaged in agricultural pursuits and trading, and died in Clinton, Hinds county, Mississippi, about 1828. (The above sketch is condensed from Walker's "Autobiography," with occasional notes from other sources.)

The following interesting incident regarding Felix Walker is taken from Arthur's "Western North Carolina, a History, 1730-1913," (Felix Walker) "was a man of great suavity of manner, a fine electioneer, inasmuch that he was called "Old Oil Jug..... When the Missouri Question was under discussion Mr. Walker secured the floor, when

some impatient member asked him to sit down and let a vote be taken. He refused, saying that he must "make a speech for Buncombe," that is, for his constituents. Thus, "Buncombe" as it is usually spelled, has become a part of our vocabulary."

This biography of Felix Walker is purposely made brief, as he gives a detailed account of his activities through life in his memoirs, which appear elsewhere in connection with this work.

Heitman's "Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army, 1775-1783," 1914 revision, page 565, gives the following:

"Walker, Felix, (N. C.) Lieutenant-Colonel North Carolina Militia at Kings Mountain, October, 1780."

No references on Kings Mountain battle show that Walker participated either as an officer or private. He says, "the war was now raging in its utmost violence (1779-80). I was occasionally with the Whig or Liberal party, though took no commission as I might have had." Speaking of the battle of Kings Mountain Walker says: "a battle was fought on Kings Mountain 7th of October, 1780, where a complete victory was obtained by the Americans, being all militia, over the British regulars and Tories, commanded by Major Ferguson, who was shot from his horse, bravely exhorting his men. Seven bullets went through his body, it is said. He was a brave and meritorious officer from Scotland, and it was well he was killed to prevent his doing more mischief." No other reference is made by him to that battle, which would lead to the opinion that he did not participate in that engagement.

John Walker, Jr.

John Walker, Jr., the second son of Col. John Walker, was born in 1755, in Virginia. He removed to North Carolina with his father and continued to reside with him until after the Revolution.

His first service in the Revolution came when he was appointed a second lieutenant in one of the ten companies of Minute Men, ordered raised in the Salisbury district, by the Third Provincial Congress in August, 1775. At the same time two regiments of Continental troops were ordered raised in North Carolina for service, and his father, John Walker, was appointed a captain in the First Regiment. (Schenck's "North Carolina, 1780-81," page 22; Wheeler's "Historical Sketches", page 80).

John Walker, Jr., was appointed a second lieutenant in one of the four additional regiments of Continental troops ordered raised by Congress April 16, 1776. (Colonial Records, Vol. X, page 519).

James Reuben Walker.

James Reuben Walker, third son of Col. John Walker, was born within the bounds of the present county of Lincoln, N. C., in 1757. He married Sarah McHerd (born in South Carolina in 1758) in 1784. He removed with his father in 1768 to the plantation located one-half mile above the mouth of Cane Creek and about one mile from Brittain church in Rutherford county. He was the only member of this family of six patriots who served throughout the War of Independence in the capacity of a private soldier. Sometime after the war he removed from Rutherford and settled in Burke county, N. C.

On October 24, 1832, he applied for a pension for his Revolutionary services. He was allowed a pension on his claim No. S. 3447, while a resident of Burke county. His declaration follows:

"In 1776 three months with Capt. John Hardin's Company; Col. Bateman's Regiment, and went to Cross Creek against the Scotch-Tories a little later. Three months in Captain Thomas Lytle's Company, and was out against the Indians.

In 1777 Captain Hardin's company was out against the Indians, and burned some of their towns, and took prisoners; length of service not stated. Three months in Captain Joseph McDowell's Company.

"In 1781 three months in Captain McFarland's Company, Col. Charles McDowell's Regiment.

"On his return home from service he was arrested by the Tories and his discharge was taken from him."

In 1836 he moved to Knox county, Tennessee, where he died. He had eleven children, and among his descendants of today are numbered the Pattons, of Buncombe; the Foxes; The Dorseys of Cleveland and Rutherford; Coopers, Bettis, Hennessee and Erwins, of McDowell, Burke and Buncombe, and Clays of Rutherford and McDowell, also the Walkers, Russels, Foxes, Wardells, and Smiths, of Tennessee; Walkers of Kentucky; Walkers, Adkins, Bogers and Collins, of District of Columbia; Walkers and Taylors, of Texas; Jones, Coons, Sturgeons, and Brewers, of Illinois; Reeves of California.

Essential facts of the above sketch are gathered from "Genealogy of John Walker, from Ireland, 1720, and Some of His Descendants" compiled by Robert Walton Walker, of Fort Worth, Texas.

William Walker.

William Walker, the fourth son of Colonel John Walker, was born in 1758 in that portion of Tryon county which has since been formed into Lincoln county, N. C. Heitman's "Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army, 1775-83", 1914 Revision, page 566, states that he was a lieutenant in a company in the Second Regiment of Continental Troops raised in North Carolina; was taken prisoner at Charleston, S. C., 12 May 1780; exchanged 14th June, 1781. No date of commission is given. The Roster of Continental Troops from North Carolina, appearing in Volume 16, North Carolina State Records, page 1189, shows a William Walker as private in Captain Blount's Company of the 10th Regiment, enlisted August 3, 1779. It is probable that this was the same person as Lieutenant Walker, and

that he enlisted first as a private, and later became lieutenant, as a number of Continental officers were promoted from the ranks.

"On his return home from service he was arrested by the Tories and his discharge was taken from him."

Thomas Walker.

Thomas Walker, fifth son of Col. John Walker was born in 1759 in the present bounds of Lincoln county, N. C. He removed to Rutherford county with his father, and was residing with him at the time of the Revolution. He enlisted in the First Regiment of Continental Troops, probably in his father's company, on 5th April, 1777; commissioned D. W. M. Gt., same date and omitted Sept. 1777. His enlistment period was "For Duration of War". (State Records, Vol. 16, page 1180).

The author has been unable to find any other reference to him after his commission expired, however, it is likely that he served out his enlistment period.

At the July 1810, session of the Rutherford county court of pleas and Quarter sessions a guardian was appointed for his minor son. This would indicate that Thomas Walker died sometime between April and July, 1810.

Joseph Walker.

Joseph Walker, sixth son of Col. John Walker, was born in what is now Lincoln county, N. C., in 1760, and removed with his father to Rutherford county, where he was residing when the storm of the Revolution broke.

His first service in the war for independence was in 1776. He was appointed a first lieutenant in one of the independent companies authorized by Congress on April 29, 1776, for defense of the coastal towns of North Carolina (Colonial Records, Vol. 10, page 546).

His record in the Revolution is given by Heitman, in his "Historical

Register of Officers of the Continental Army, 1775-1783," page 565, as follows:

"Captain, 7th N. C., 28th November, 1776; omitted 1st January 1778."

Volume 16, page 1185, State Records, gives identically the same information as is contained in Heitman's statement. The same record appears again in the Colonial Records, Vol. 10, page 949.

While Joseph Walker was extremely young to hold a position of such trust and responsibility, it was doubtless through the influence of his father that he secured the commission.

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