

The Mill Prong House **Carolina Scots and the Settlement of the Old Southwest**

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What makes the Mill Prong House, situated in Hoke County (formerly Robeson County), North Carolina, a significant historical site? Is it the house's one-of-a-kind architecture? Not really, although the evolution of architectural styles is clearly demonstrated in its modification over time. How about the unique insights the house and nearby cemetery provide into plantation life in the American South during the Early National Period? Again, no. What great Revolutionary War events were planned in this house? None, whatsoever, considering the house was not built until 1795. One might be forgiven for assuming that the Mill Prong House is of nothing more than local historical significance; that assumption would be in error.

The significance of the Mill Prong House lies not merely in its *intrinsic* value as one of the few remaining intact structures from the Early National Period in the Sandhills Region of North Carolina, but in its *extrinsic* value as a site representative of the Highland Scots immigrant community that flourished here from the 1740's well into the 19th Century. These "Carolina Scots" played a key role in the settlement of North Carolina, in the brutal civil war that occurred in the Carolinas during the American War of Independence, and, upon the war's conclusion, in the American settlement of the Deep South (then referred to as the "Southwest") and Texas.

This paper outlines some of the contributions of three families closely associated with the Mill Prong House, and its surrounding community, to the conquest of the "Old Southwest." The Gilchrist, McPhaul and McLaughlin families will serve as case studies to demonstrate the influence of the Carolina Scots on the expansion of American power and territory. This paper is not designed as a comprehensive genealogy or history; rather it is intended to connect the Highland Scots immigrants of North Carolina to the wider current of American history. English language rendering of Highland Scots names was not uniform until the 19th Century. The spellings of the names of the subject families that were current at the time of the events described will be given when different from the modern spelling. Readers of this paper, living in the Deep South or Texas, having names like Buie, Campbell, Gilchrist, Lamont, McCallum, McDonald, McKeithan, McLaughlin, McLean, McLeod, McNeill, McPhaul, Ray, Stewart, or any of a host of other West Highland or Hebridean names, could most likely trace their own family narratives back to the Mill Prong House environs.

Push Factors for Emigration

The Highland Scots began emigrating to the Carolinas in the early 1700's, but the first major influx was in September 1739, when the famed "Argyll Colony," approximately 350 Highlanders, led by gentlemen from prominent families of Argyll and the Isles, arrived to settle the Upper Cape Fear Valley. These immigrants settled up and down the river on land grants endorsed by the royal governor, Gabriel Johnston (Murdoch 1990). Upon filing a claim on the land and swearing an oath of loyalty to the King, each claimant was provided a grant of land, its size determined by the number of immigrants the claimant had sponsored.

The abortive Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 brought about the final demise of the clan system in Scotland. Highlanders no longer occupied lands based upon a presumed bond of kinship and

military service to the clan chief. The tenant-landlord relationship became a financial one, instead. As landlords sought greater efficiency, holdings were consolidated and tenants evicted. The waves of Highland emigration were closely correlated with economic conditions in Scotland. Recurring barley crop failures brought new immigrants. The impact on the price of food for common Highlanders was dramatic. Even distillation of whisky was periodically



The Last of the Clan – Thomas Faed, oil on canvas

outlawed, as it siphoned off grain needed to feed the hungry. As Gibson (173) states, “...in the period down to 1780, there was upward pressure on prices in 1751-52, 1756-57, 1762, 1765-66 and 1770-73.” Twenty thousand Highlanders and Islanders left Scotland for North America between 1763 and 1775 alone (Hudson 2012).

The McPhauls (McFoile, McFall, McPhail, etc.) were the first of the families examined in this paper to emigrate. The McPhauls are

believed to have come from the Hebrides, where a significant number of the name lived on the Isle of Mull. A deed for the purchase of 100 acres on Rockfish Creek by John “McPhoile” from Archibald McKissock, for fourteen pounds sterling, was recorded in 1754 (Cumberland County Register of Deeds 1754, Book 2, Page 45). A lapse of a year or two could occur between the actual sale and the time that the parties involved could go to the courthouse to have it recorded. This makes it possible that the McPhauls arrived in North Carolina *at least* as early as 1751. John McPhaul made his mark on the deed, rather than leaving his signature, which indicates that he was illiterate. The immigration of the McPhauls coincides nicely with one of the grain shortages mentioned above. John McPhaul, and his son Neill, settled on the Mill Prong of Raft Swamp between 1767-1770, where John erected a mill. They found a tavern located near the mill site operated by a widow, Ann Perkins, and her daughter, Mary “Pretty Molly” Perkins. It was a serendipitous move for the McPhaul men, since John soon married Ann, and Neill married Molly (Kelly 1998, 295). Apparently, even in the 18th Century, taverns were good places to meet women.

The Gilchrist family emigrated to the Cape Fear region in 1770, from Kintyre. Again, this coincides with another of the crop failures mentioned by Hudson (2012). John Gilchrist was well educated and moderately wealthy. His wife, Effie Gilchrist (nee McMillan) was of good family. John brought a tutor for his sons, and the Gilchrist family were instrumental in laying the educational foundation for the local area. John Gilchrist, Sr., who built the Mill Prong House, was influential in state and local politics (McLean 1942, 465-466).

The McLaughlin (McLauchlin, McLachlan) family that became associated with the McPhauls and Gilchrists was the last of the three families to emigrate, and, consequently, did not achieve the level of local prominence of the McPhauls or Gilchrists prior to moving west. Dugald McLaughlin and his wife Katherine (nee McCallum) emigrated from Campeltown, Kintyre no later than 1771, which, as with the other two families, corresponds to a period of scarcity and high prices in the grain market (Hudson 2012). Dugald recorded his first deed, on a 100-acre parcel of land near modern-day Rockfish, in November 1771 (Cumberland County 1771;1775). Dugald, also, had to make his mark when filing the deed, as did his wife, Katherine (Cumberland County 1771;1775).

Along with the push factors that drove emigration, the Highlanders were subject to pull factors that led to their concentration in specific areas of North Carolina, more specifically, the Cape Fear and Lumber River Valleys. Two of these pull factors were language and religion. Highland elites were literate, and tended to speak both English and Scots Gaelic; the poorer immigrants, however, were often illiterate and spoke only Gaelic. Presbyterian ministers from the Philadelphia Synod visiting the Highland Scots churches were frustrated by the inability of Gaelic speaking parishioners to understand their sermons in English. Reverend Hugh McAden wrote in 1756 that he had, "...preached to a number of Highlanders, some of them scarcely knew one word that I said, the poorest singers I ever heard in all my life" (Foote 1846, 1209). The Presbyterian faith of the Highland immigrants was another factor in their concentration. They viewed Presbyterianism as a more evolved form of religious and social order, and disdained the rustic, pedestrian ways of the lay denominations emerging at the time. Ordained Presbyterian clergy were in short supply in North Carolina, so immigrants tended to settle in locations that had churches in existence.

The new immigrants landed in a region of tall, longleaf pine forests that provided a sought-after commodity to the mother country. Britain had the largest navy in the world. The Royal Navy was the means the British Government used to influence military and commercial affairs all over the world. From 1705 onward, to supply the navy with turpentine, pine pitch and tar, the British Government paid a handsome bounty to farmers in the Sandhills who could produce these naval stores; without them, a navy of the Age of Sail could not be properly maintained. This lucrative trade engendered a strong support among the Carolina Scots for their continued inclusion in the British Empire (Walbert n.d.).

When the War of the Regulation broke out in 1768 between western subsistence farmers and the colonial legislature, the Carolina Scots were either neutral or favored the colonial government. The issue at stake was the domination of the colonial government by the wealthy tobacco plantation owners living on the coastal lowlands—specifically their appointment of local magistrates, and the imposition of unfair taxes. Farmers from the Piedmont Region united to "regulate" the powers of the colonial legislature, but did not intend to rebel against royal authority. Nonetheless, Governor William Tryon mobilized the North Carolina Militia and put the rebellion down. The Highlanders supported the royal governor. As historian John Spencer Bassett writes:

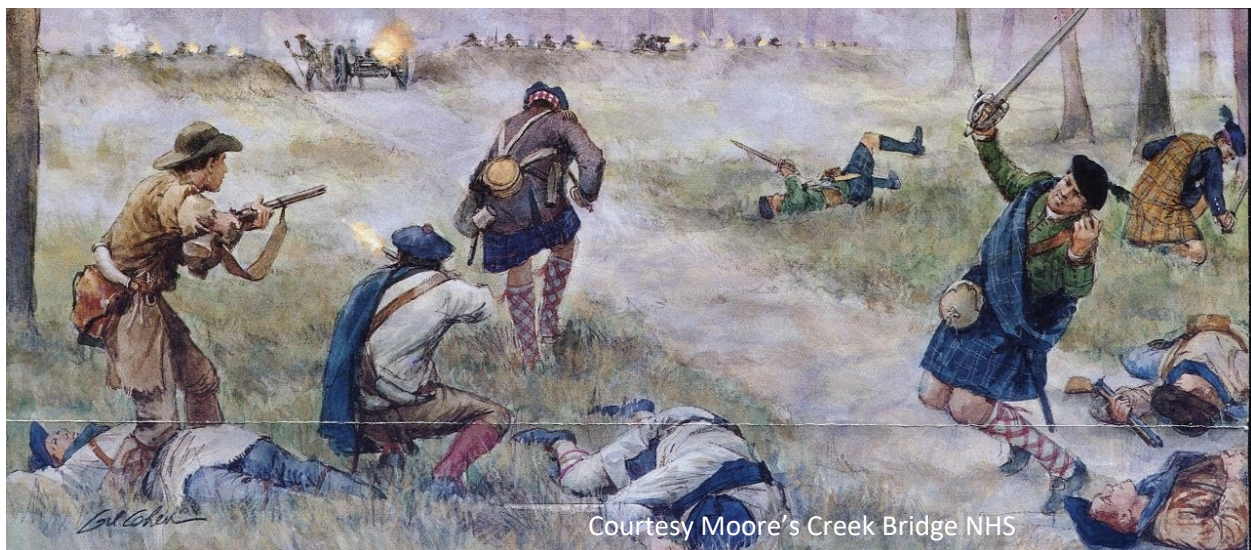
The Presbyterian pastors united in a letter to the governor, in which they assured him of their "abhorrence of the present turbulent and disorderly spirit that shows itself in some parts of this Province." They also wrote a circular letter enjoining all good Presbyterians to have nothing to do with the Regulation. This letter was read at a muster in the Presbyterian county of Rowan, and perhaps in Mecklenburg, and was of good service in securing volunteers to march against the Regulators in 1768 (143).

The aforementioned Reverend McAden was one of the signatories of this letter. With the preservation of public order and the profitability of the naval stores trade at stake, it is little wonder that the Carolina Scots were predominantly Loyalist in sympathy and action during the impending War of Independence.

The War of Independence Begins

A rational person, when presented with a choice, will choose that option which is perceived to be in his best interest. Which side one chose to support during the War of Independence depended largely upon practical considerations of self-interest. Wealthy tobacco planters in the coastal lowlands wanted access to world markets denied them under the British mercantilist system. They, therefore, had an economic interest in independence. Scots immigrants in the Cape Fear region, dependent upon the sale of naval stores to the British Government for their livelihood, saw the situation differently. Abstract concepts of unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and the creation of a nation that was, in 1776, still a figment of the imagination of one third of the population, paled in comparison with the need to make a living. Additionally, the devout Scots took the loyalty oath they had sworn to the Crown extremely seriously. The Carolina Scots were overwhelmingly Loyalist in sympathies. The stage was set for a vicious civil war in North Carolina.

The first major action in the war in North Carolina occurred in February 1776. The royal governor of North Carolina, Josiah Martin, called upon the Highland immigrant community in the Cape Fear region to provide 5,000 Loyalist militia for service with the British Army.



Courtesy Moore's Creek Bridge NHS

Accordingly, the Scots assembled at Campelltown (modern-day Fayetteville). The Highlanders outmaneuvered the Whig militia blocking them behind Rockfish Creek, crossed the Cape Fear River and proceeded downriver towards Wilmington, to link up with British forces there. Of the 1600 Loyalist militia assembled, only about 500 had firearms; the rest were armed with swords, if at all (Smith 2014).

The route to Wilmington was blocked by Whig militia, who had thrown up fortifications behind Moore's Creek Bridge. The Whigs had removed the planking from the bridge, making it impossible for the Loyalists to cross in numbers. With more Whig militia approaching from the rear, the Highlanders had no choice but to attempt to force a crossing. They were soundly defeated, and those who were not killed or captured were dispersed and sent racing for home. Reverend E.W. Caruthers, author of the first comprehensive history of the war in North Carolina, states, "The civil war may be considered as having fairly commenced with the battle on Mooris [sic] creek; and it continued with more or less violence until independence was obtained" (212).

In response to the willingness of the Carolina Scots to come out for the king, the North Carolina Provincial Congress enacted the following resolution:

Resolved, That any person, inhabitant of this colony, who shall hereafter take arms against America within the said colony, or shall give intelligence, or aid to the enemies thereof, and shall be convicted of the facts by vote of Congress, or by any judicial power, hereafter to be appointed, shall forfeit all his goods and chattels, lands and tenements, to the people of said colony, to be disposed of by the Congress, or other general representation thereof... (Caruthers 1856, 214)

After Moore's Creek Bridge, and the British abandonment of Wilmington, the Loyalists were forced to keep a low profile. When the British, stymied by Washington and his Continental Army in the North, decided upon a new "Southern Strategy," all of this would change.

Loyalist Militia and Irregular Warfare

The British Southern Strategy began with the capture of Savannah, Georgia, in on December 29, 1779. This was followed by the capture of Charleston, South Carolina in May 1780, and the reoccupation of Wilmington, North Carolina on January 28, 1781. Loyalist militiamen, who had gone underground after Moore's Creek Bridge were heartened by the presence of British regulars so close to their homes. When Major Craig, the British commander in Wilmington sent out a call for the Loyalist militia to mobilize in the spring of 1781, they did so. This precipitated a guerrilla war between neighbors with conflicting loyalties. Neill McPhaul was the captain of a militia company, and Dugald McLaughlin was one of his subordinates (Clark 1981, 349).

Once McPhaul's company mobilized, in March, McPhaul's Mill became a rallying point for the Loyalist forces in the region. The brave, but notorious, Loyalist militia leader, David Fanning, was at McPhaul's Mill when he resolved to ambush Whig forces advancing to attack the Bladen County Loyalist Militia. The resulting Battle of McPhaul's Mill (or Beatty's Bridge), was a serious defeat for the Whig's under General Wade, and could have been decisive if the Loyalists

had prevented a Whig retreat. When Fanning returned from his famous raid on Hillsborough, where he, along with the Bladen and Cumberland Counties' Loyalist Militia, captured the state governor, Burke, his council, and a number of Continental officers. On his way back to deliver the prisoners to Major Craig in Wilmington, following the Battle of Lindley's Mill, Fanning stopped at McPhaul's Mill to reorganize (Fanning [1790] 1861, *passim*). The Battle of Raft Swamp, on October 15, 1781, where the Whigs got revenge against the Highlanders, and finally broke the back of Loyalist resistance in the region occurred within a few miles of the mill.

The organization of Loyalist militia at this time is a bit opaque. Both Cumberland and Bladen Counties had their own regiments, each under its own colonel. Both sides fought as mounted infantry, riding to the battle on horseback, then dismounting to fight on foot; the idea of kilted Loyalists waving broadswords, at this stage of the war, may be a bit fanciful. Fanning lists both regiments as being present at Hillsborough and Lindley's Mill, but makes no mention of McPhaul's company. If it was present, it may have been subsumed by one of these regiments (Fanning [1790] 1861, 39). While the militia regiments seem to be organized by county, Neill "McFall's" company contained Dugald McLaughlin, who lived north of Rockfish Creek in Cumberland County. Perhaps McPhaul recruited an independent company from among his own acquaintances. Perhaps the residency requirements were not set in stone. Perhaps militiamen went with the unit that had the nearest muster location to their homes. Who knows? After the debacle at Raft Swamp, McPhaul and his company left the Upper Cape Fear and marched to Wilmington to join the British garrison there.

Dugald McLaughlin (1797), in his deposition during John Gilchrist's impeachment hearings, states that he travelled to Wilmington after the Loyalist defeat by Rutherford's dragoons at Campbell's Bridge (aka Battle of Raft Swamp), in the northern part of the county. Neill McPhaul's company was, therefore, at the Raft Swamp battle. Afterwards, in company with thirty men, Captain McPhaul moved to join the British garrison at Wilmington (McNeill 1797). Neill McPhaul's daughter, Catherine, stated that her father was wounded in the head with a sabre by one of Rutherford's dragoons during the battle for the Brick House, on November 15, 1781. The Brick House controlled the Cape Fear river bank and ferry crossing opposite downtown Wilmington, in the vicinity of the modern USS North Carolina Memorial parking lot (McArthur 1844). When Major Craig evacuated Wilmington, three days later, Neill McPhaul and Dugald McLaughlin went with him to Charleston. Captain McPhaul subsequently died of his wounds, and Dugald McLaughlin was paid off on December 3, 1781 for 276 days of service, commencing on March 1, 1781 (Clark 1981, 349). This proves that Captain McPhaul's company was on active service from that time, making it possible that it participated in any number of the skirmishes and battles during that time. Both John McPhaul (McPhail) and John McLaughlan, members of Hector McNeill's Regiment of Bladen County Loyalist Militia, were paid off in January 1782 for service beginning on March 1, 1781. John McPhaul stated that he was in Neill McPhaul's company at the Raft Swamp engagement, and accompanied him to Wilmington, afterward. This indicates that McPhaul's company was a subordinate element of McNeill's Regiment of Bladen County Militia (McPhaul 1797). It could, therefore, have participated in any of the actions for which the Bladen County militia were credited.

The Rip Van Winkle State

Upon the end of the war, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the Act of Pardon and Oblivion. The act pardoned the actions of Loyalists during the War of Independence, with the



<http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/civilwar>

exception of “...any person or persons guilty of deliberate and wilful murder, robbery, rape, or house burning, or any of them...” (General Assembly 1783). Common soldiers who had fought in the Loyalist Militia were pardoned, but not those who had accepted commissions in the king’s service. Loyalist officers were forced to leave their homes. Some went to British-occupied Florida, then moved to the Maritime Provinces of Canada, as did David Fanning (Fanning [1790] 1861, xxii). Another feature of the new act was the denial of any former Loyalist of the right to “be received, to elect or be elected, to any office or trust in this state, or to hold any office civil or military” (General Assembly 1783). Former Loyalists, therefore, largely excluded from participation in their own government.

In 1787, Robeson County was formed from Bladen County. In 1797, John Gilchrist, Sr., now the owner of the new Mill Prong House, ran for a seat in the North Carolina Senate against a man named John Willis. A former Whig soldier during the war, commissioner at the formation of Robeson County, politician and land speculator, Willis was a man of influence. He had actually provided the land upon which Lumberton, the new county seat, was built.

Gilchrist won the race, at which time Willis accused him of having been a Loyalist during the war, and, hence, ineligible to assume the Senate seat. Gilchrist was impeached but exonerated based on the character depositions of many local notables, most of whom had been *actual* Loyalists. The State Committee of Privileges and Elections ruled that he should retain his seat (Tyner 2014, 7-8).

Clearly, the social and political environment in North Carolina at the time was not friendly towards the Carolina Scots. North Carolina, languishing in the past, was presumed to be napping while other states progressed towards modernity; thus, she earned the moniker “The Rip Van Winkle State.” The same conflicts between the planters in the coastal lowlands and the inland farmers that had generated the War of the Regulation, and contributed to the internecine violence during the War of Independence, continued to play out in state politics. The eastern planters, most of whom had been Whigs during the War of Independence, continued to reap the benefits

of being on the right side of history. They dominated the General Assembly and were able to focus state expenditures on their part of the state.

The development of the inland parts of the state was largely neglected. The Dismal Swamp Canal, completed in 1805, connected the Albemarle Sound region of North Carolina with the Chesapeake Bay; it ran from Elizabeth City, North Carolina to near Portsmouth and Norfolk, Virginia. This made it easier for tobacco plantation owners in the coastal areas to export their crops. A network of smaller, supporting canals was constructed over the following decades (Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center n.d.). The chartering of the University of North Carolina in 1789 was one of the few progressive measures of the era (General Assembly, North Carolina 1789). Roads in the interior of the state remained primitive. Even as late as 1819, observer Archibald Murphey writes of the Cape Fear region:

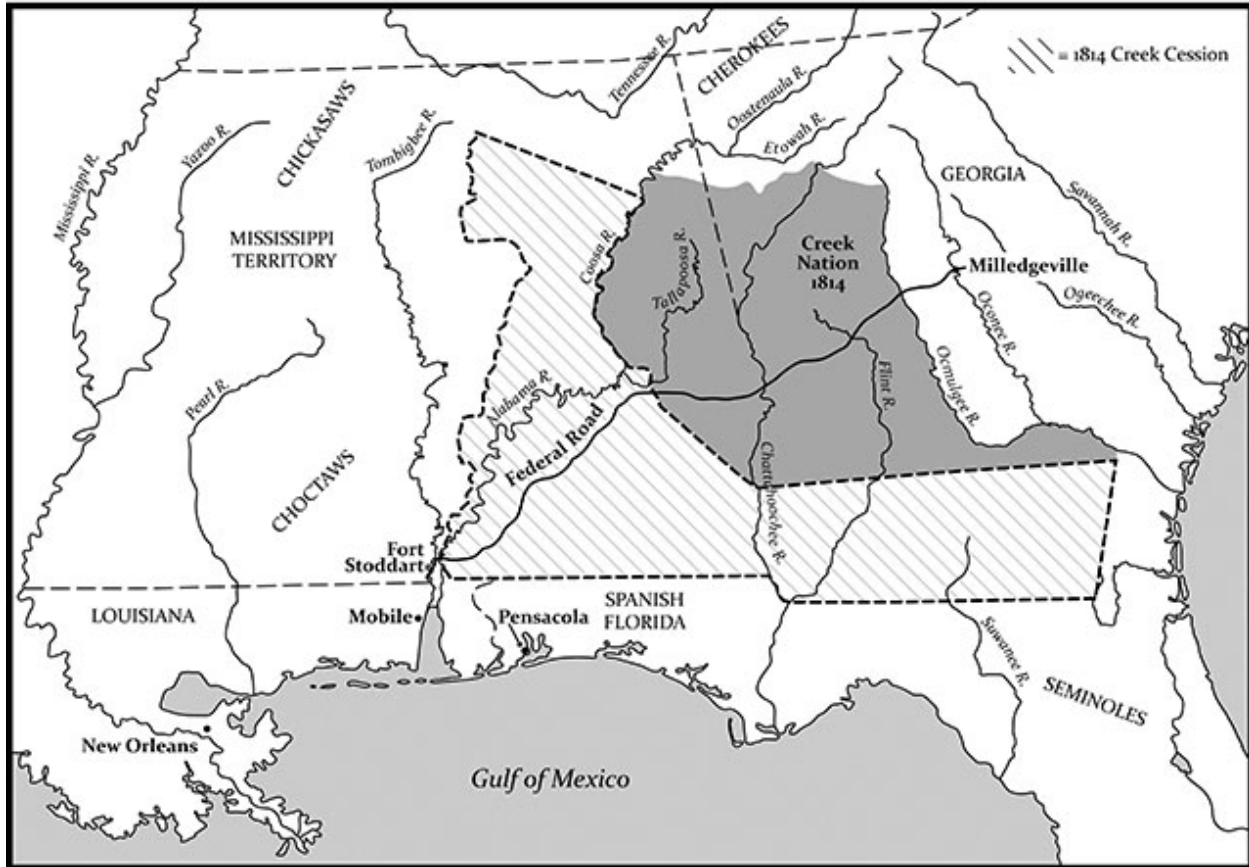
I had no Idea that we had such a poor, ignorant, squalid Population, as I have seen. Who that sees these People, and those of the Centre and the West...the Mass of the Common People in the Country are lazy, sickly, poor, dirty and ignorant. Yet this is a Section of the State, upon which the Hand of Industry would soon impress a fine Character.

Only one newspaper existed in North Carolina in 1790. Virginia had nine newspapers being published, and even South Carolina, a much smaller and less populous state, had three (United States Census Bureau 1909, 36).

By 1800, the cotton gin had made the cultivation of short-staple cotton profitable. The lands suitable for its cultivation were already owned by the wealthy plantation owners on the coast. The inland parts of North Carolina became an economic backwater. The first generation after the War of Independence realized that, to gain access to new lands suitable for commercial cotton farming, they would have to move west to Tennessee and Kentucky, or to the new territories of the “Southwest.” North Carolinians began moving west soon after the War of Independence. Some moved across the Appalachian Mountains to Tennessee, using the Nashville Road.

Others moved down the Great Wagon Road that ran from Philadelphia to Georgia, where they picked up one of the old horse trails leading to the Mississippi Territory or Louisiana, or the new mail route, opened in 1806, connecting central Georgia with Mobile, the former capital of French Louisiana. By 1813, this route was expanded and improved into a military road that allowed the United States to rapidly move men and materiel from Georgia to Fort Stoddard/Stoddert, Mississippi Territory, at the confluence of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers, north of Mobile, then onward to New Orleans (Southerland 1989, 1-2).

The allure of the new lands and “King Cotton” caused a veritable hemorrhage of North Carolinians. Yeoman farmers who competed for limited lands in North Carolina could move west, secure new lands, and establish themselves as “planters” (farmers who owned and employed twenty or more slaves). While the population of North Carolina continued to increase



<https://www.nps.gov/articles/treaty-of-f-1>

during this time, the rate of increase was greatly reduced by the concurrent outflow of migrants to new lands. By 1850, almost 120,000 of the residents of Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi had been born in North Carolina (LearnNC n.d.).

Malcolm Gilchrist, presumed brother of John Gilchrist, emigrated from Scotland with John, and resided with him for a time. He married Catharine Buie, with whom he had sons Malcolm and Daniel. Malcolm, Sr. left the Cape Fear for Maury County, Tennessee in 1809. His sons eventually found their way to North Alabama. Of the two sons, Malcolm had the more eventful life. As a surveyor, he was well positioned to profit from the development and apportionment of new lands in the territory. Malcolm became a very successful land speculator by buying lands as they came up for public auction, and then selling them to prospective planters (Saunders 1899, 227).

Malcolm's other pursuit was that of cotton freighter. He would purchase flatboats to run from modern-day Muscle Shoals, Alabama, on the Tennessee River, all the way down to the Ohio River, then to the Mississippi and down to New Orleans. The river voyage, while much longer in distance, took much less time and money than overland transport. Gilchrist charged cotton planters one dollar per hundred pounds to ship their cotton. He made a handsome profit, and left a substantial inheritance to his brother, Daniel (Saunders 1899, 227-228). McLean (1942) states

only that he moved to Jefferson County, Mississippi, on the Mississippi River north of Natchez, in 1811.

Edward McLauchlin, son of Dugald, left his father's home in Robeson County, North Carolina in 1809. He, and his wife, Elinor (nee McDonald), moved south to connect with the Great Wagon Road and the Federal Horse Path to the Mississippi Territory. Their son, John, was born in South Carolina, en route. They settled on Buckatunna Creek, near Shiloh, Mississippi, and built a substantial house (pictured left). The house was largely intact up until the 1980's, but, due to lack of preservation, has now fallen to ruin.

Edward must have gone west at least once before bringing his family to Buckatunna Creek,



Edward McLauchlin House

because, in 1806, he had filed a claim for 400 acres in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana (Wier 1988, 39). Given some of Edward's later activities, it makes sense that he would possess land in the Neutral Ground, between the Red and Sabine Rivers. This was a buffer zone between the new Louisiana Territory and Spanish Texas.

Edward's brother, Dugald, Jr., also came west to Mississippi. He and his wife, Elizabeth (nee Stevens) settled in Marion County Mississippi prior to 1817, however, since he represented Marion County at the Mississippi Constitutional Conventions of 1817 and 1832 (Rowland 1908, 1161,1164).

There is a diary account of Dugald, Jr.

traveling from Fayetteville, North Carolina to Natchez, Mississippi with some friends. The 939-mile journey followed the Federal Road from Georgia to Mississippi. The entire journey took seven weeks (McIntire 1986).

Indian Wars and Exploration

Soon after the arrival of the Gilchrists, McPhauls and McLauchlins in the Mississippi Territory, war broke out in the Gulf Coast area. In October 1811, the Shawnee leader, Tecumseh, arrived in the lands of the Creek Tribe, in modern-day Georgia and Alabama. He preached a warlike message encouraging all Indian tribes between the Appalachians and the Mississippi to unite against the intrusions of the White Man.

The policy of assimilation advocated by the United States Indian Agent, Benjamin Hawkins, had proven attractive to the Lower Creeks, living in the lowlands of Georgia and modern day East Alabama. This branch of the tribe became more Europeanized, and began to adopt many of the trappings of white society. Not so the Upper Creeks, living in the uplands of modern-day Alabama. They deeply resented the abandonment by the Lower Creeks of the traditional Creek culture. The stage was set for a civil war between the Creek factions. Spanish and British agents

in Florida, still a Spanish possession, fed the disaffection of the Creeks and Seminoles. When the War of 1812 broke out, between the United States and Britain, these agents actively sought to incite the tribes against the United States (Owsley [1981] 2000, 11)



<http://www.knowsouthernhistory.org/2017/1>

While some raiding and skirmishing took place in 1812 and 1813, the event that touched off a full-scale war was the attack on Fort Mims by the Red Sticks, the war faction of the Creeks. On August 30, 1813, a band of friendly Creeks, along with families of white settlers, had fled to the fort for protection against a feared outbreak of hostilities. The fort's commander, Major Beasley, with a garrison of 120 men, felt the fort was adequately defended so that an attack was unlikely. Beasley had received several false alarms recently, and refused to give credence to warnings of impending attack; he even left the fort's gate open. At noontime, Red Sticks, hidden in a ravine outside the gate, attacked while the occupants were eating lunch. The fighting was fierce, with heavy casualties on both sides. No more than 40 of the fort's occupants escaped; the rest were killed or taken captive. Estimates of losses range from 400-600. A detail dispatched to the fort several weeks later reported burying the bodies of 247 whites, of all ages (Owsley [1981] 2000, 39). The panic that ensued after the "Fort Mims Massacre" led to a general mobilization of the Mississippi territorial militia.

Malcolm Gilchrist (nephew of John Gilchrist, Sr.) had settled in Jefferson County, Mississippi. He enlisted in Nixon's Regiment of Militia in October 1813, and served until April 1814. Malcolm must have been well respected, since he became sergeant major of the regiment. In militia units, these positions were usually filled by election by the men of the unit (United States War Department 1814). Nixon's regiment, in concert with the 39th US Infantry, a Regular regiment, scoured the swamps along the rivers looking for hostile Creeks. The regiment, while on the Perdido River, killed and captured many hostiles (Mississippi Historical Society 1921, 56-57).

A few weeks after the massacre, Edward McLauchlin joined Major Smoot's battalion of militia, which became part of Governor Claiborne's expedition against the Creeks (United States War Department 1813). He served for two months, participating in the Battle of the Holy Ground, or *Econochaca*, in Creek.

The Creek prophet "Francis" claimed that the Creek camp on the Alabama River was made sacred by the Great Spirit. Additionally, according to the prophet, the site was for Indians only, and was impervious to the power of the White Man. Governor Claiborne attacked the camp, on

December 23, 1813, using a three-pronged attack consisting of Regular infantry and mounted and dismounted militia.

Most of the Creeks, perceiving that the power of the site had failed to protect them, fled. William Weatherford, mixed blood leader of the Red Sticks, held out for a while with about 30 warriors, but was compelled to flee. Over thirty Red Sticks were killed in the battle (Owsley [1981] 2000, 47). Weatherford, seeing the situation was hopeless, determined to make his escape. Legend has it, he rode his horse off of a 60-foot cliff, and then swam the Alabama River to escape. Thomas Woodward, who interviewed Weatherford, got a different story. As Woodward relates:

...the Indians, losing a few men, gave way in every direction. Weatherford was among the last to quit the place. He made an attempt to go down the river...but found that the soldiers would intercept his passage, and he turned up, keeping on the bluff near the river, until he reached the ravine or little branch that makes into the river above where the town used to be. There was a small foot-path that crossed the ravine near the river, he carried his horse down that path, and instead of going out of the ravine at the usual crossing, he kept up it towards its head, until he passed the lines of the whites (100)

John McPhail served twice in the militia. He served, first, in Burrus's Regiment of Mississippi Militia during the First Creek War. During the Second Creek War (1837-38) he served in Colonel William Wellborn's Regiment of Alabama Mounted Volunteers (United States War Department 1814). Wellborn was appointed brigadier general of militia. He was the principle commander who led Alabama troops against the Creeks at Hobdy's Bridge (Pea River) on March 24, 1837; the battle resulted in fierce hand-to-hand fighting that left 23 Creek warriors dead on the field (Barry 1837). The Creeks who survived, along with their families, fled downriver and crossed into Florida, where many of them continued to resist (Explore Southern History n.d.).

While Malcolm Gilchrist, Jr., took up residence in Jefferson County, Mississippi, his cousin Angus Gilchrist, son of John Gilchrist, Sr., also made an appearance in the territory. In 1816, Angus met Thomas Woodward, sometime surveyor, sailor, explorer and militia officer, in New Orleans. What was Angus doing in New Orleans? Perhaps visiting his cousin upriver. Perhaps trying to assuage some wanderlust. Regardless, he agreed to escort Woodward to Nacogdoches, in Spanish Texas, to meet Edward McLauchlin. Angus and Edward must have kept in touch, since Angus knew where to find him. Woodward claims that McLauchlin was one of the best Indian interpreters he ever knew. From Nacogdoches, Woodward, Gilchrist and McLauchlin followed the Coushatta Trace down to the Koasati (Coushatta) Indian village on the Trinity River led by Chief Red Shoes, or *Stillapikachatta* (Woodward 1859, 13, 153). The two main Spanish roads went around the dense woodlands known as the "Big Thicket."

The Coushatta Trace (not pictured on the adjacent map) was a trail that ran from the east bank of the Sabine River, crossed the Trinity River (East of the Brazos) and led down to the region southwest of modern-day Houston. It ran right through the Big Thicket, and was a narrow, difficult trail. It was favored by Indian traders and smugglers, since it was not patrolled by Spanish troops. A branch, called the Upper Coushatta Trace, ran southwest from Nacogdoches

and crossed the Trinity River before intersecting the main Trace (Texas State Handbook Online n.d.). Red Shoes' village was on the banks of the Trinity River; the site of the village is now covered by Lake Livingston.



All of this begs the question—what were these three *Anglos* doing in Spanish Texas *five years before Stephen F. Austin and his colony arrived*? Why was Angus Gilchrist not at home in North Carolina? He was an exceptionally well-educated man; he was an accomplished mathematician, recited fluently in Latin, and quoted Shakespeare. Angus was appointed deputy surveyor for Robeson County at an early age. His fine home, near modern-day Wagram, was a grand house that sat beside the New York to New Orleans stage road. The Gilchrist home was considered the finest stop between Richmond and

Charleston. Angus eventually returned home to Richmond County after his adventures in Texas. He died there in 1834 (McLean 1942, 488-491).

What business kept Edward McLauchlin in Nacogdoches? How did he learn to speak the Koasati language, which is related to Muscogee, or Creek? Why did he keep houses in both Mississippi *and* the Neutral Ground of Louisiana? Was he a smuggler or trader? Was he an agent for the United States Government? Perhaps further research will tell.

Finally, what motivated Thomas Woodward? Was he just curious? Was he an agent for the Army or the Office of Indian Affairs? He and Angus Gilchrist were both trained surveyors; were they trying to get a lead on new lands to acquire, or surveying a route for the US Army to use in the event of a war with Spain? Woodward is conspicuously vague. He only states that the party had an eventful year, and that he ran out of money and had to return to the States (Woodward 1859, 153). Both Woodward and McLauchlin eventually made it to Florida, by 1817, to fight in the militia during the First Seminole War (United States War Department 1817-1818). The mobility that all three of these men demonstrated is astounding.

The Civil War

The children and grandchildren of the Carolina Scots prospered in the new lands of the Deep South. When the Civil War broke out, following the bombardment of Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, in April 1861, they rushed to the colors to defend what they perceived as their social and

economic interests. As with their forebears in the Jacobite Wars and the American War of Independence, the descendants of the Carolina Scots, once again, found themselves on the wrong side of history. The valor and sacrifice they displayed on the field of battle is diminished only by the unworthiness of their cause.

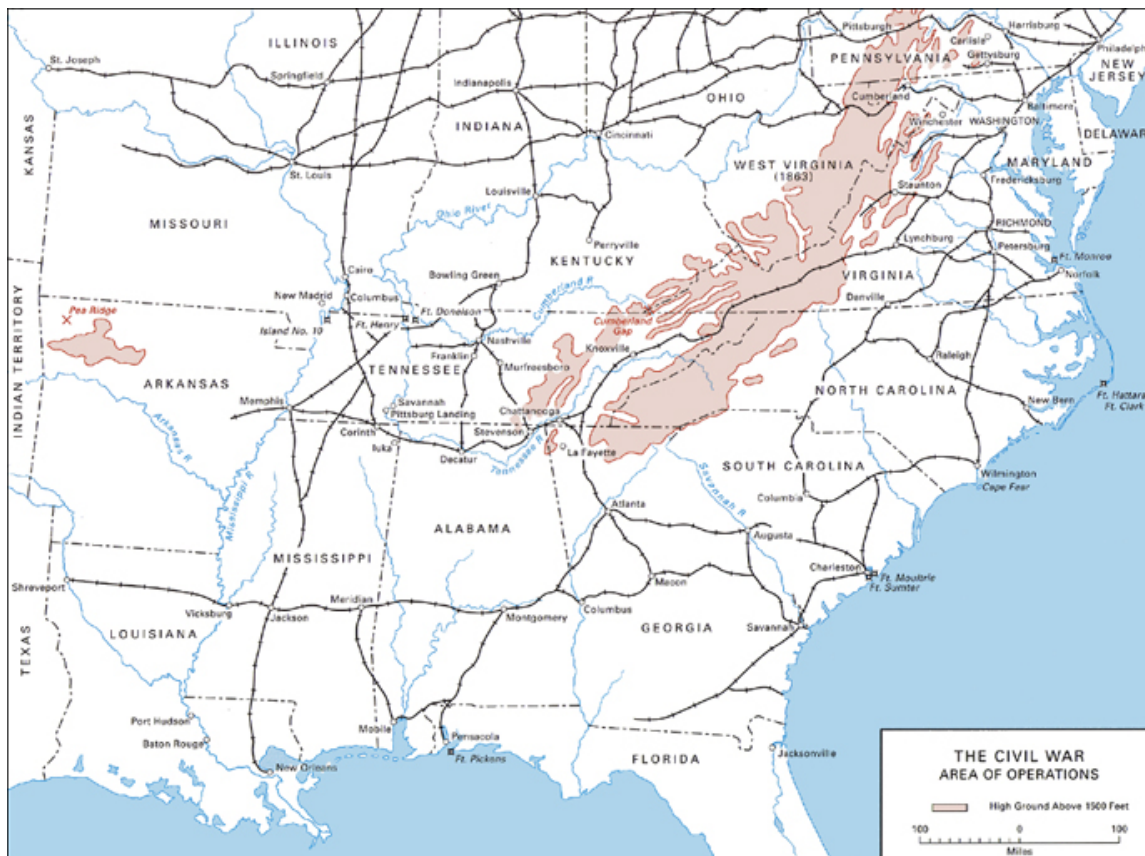
Soon after Fort Sumter fell, the United States put out a call to the states to raise troops to crush the rebellion. The Confederate States raised an army to defend their new capital, Richmond, Virginia, against invasion from the north. The southern states sent their best militia units, those with the longest histories, best equipment, best leadership and training, to join the army defending Richmond. This army would become the Army of Northern Virginia. Subsequent armies raised to defend the western Confederacy would have to be raised from scratch; while their human material was excellent, their training, equipment and leadership were often second rate (McMurry 1989, *passim*). The Gilchrists, McPhauls and McLauchlins in the Deep South all sent family members to the Confederate Army. Most of them, eventually, ended up serving in the Army of Tennessee.

Of the two main Confederate armies, the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee, the latter had the much more difficult mission. The Army of Northern Virginia was tasked with defending an 80-mile wide corridor between Richmond and Washington, D.C. The two capitals were only one hundred miles apart, but this corridor was bounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley to the west, and the estuaries emptying into Chesapeake Bay, most notably the Rappahannock, on the east. The rivers in this corridor flow, generally, west to east, providing excellent defensive positions from which to repel invasion from the north.

The Army of Tennessee, the principal army between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, was tasked with defending a 1000-mile wide front, bounded by the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, that gave ample access for Union armies to Confederate territory. Once the Confederacy, due to military incompetence, lost Kentucky, the Union gained unimpeded use of the Ohio River as a lateral line of communications. More importantly, it gained access to the Upper Mississippi River, along with the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Eventual Union control of the Mississippi River gave the Federals access to the western Confederate states on both sides of the river. The Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers were brown water highways into the heart of the Confederacy. The Union had a critical asset at its disposal that made the Confederate loss of these rivers an existential threat—the United States Navy.

Daniel Gilchrist, son of Malcolm, joined the 1st Mississippi Light Artillery in May of 1862 at Port Gibson, not far from his home in Jefferson County (United States War Department n.d.). The 1st Mississippi Light Artillery performed well in the Vicksburg Campaign, beginning in December, 1862. The regiment was a critical factor in defeating several Federal attacks. When the Confederate commander, Lieutenant General Pemberton, sallied forth from Vicksburg in an attempt to beat the approaching Union armies in detail, before they could join forces to overwhelm him, the Mississippi artillerymen, including Daniel Gilchrist, in Company A, accompanied him.

The resulting Battle of Baker's Creek (aka Champion Hill) was a defeat for the Confederates. The Mississippi gunners, holding the Confederate left, in support of Barton's Brigade, fought bravely defending their guns, until they were overwhelmed by Grant's forces. The death of the Confederate artillery horses doomed the cannoners to a last stand that resulted in many of them being killed or captured. Daniel Gilchrist, wounded in action, was one of the captured. He was



<https://history.army.mil/books/AMH-V1/ch 1>

later paroled and exchanged, whereupon he was sent home on a Surgeon's Certificate. Upon recovery from his wounds, he joined the 4th Mississippi Cavalry for the last year of the war (United States War Department n.d.). The 4th Mississippi Cavalry was engaged at Tupelo, in June 1864, where it lost 52 men (National Park Service n.d.).

The McPhauls settled in Gadsden County, in the Florida Panhandle, before the war. Five McPhaul men joined the two companies of the 6th Florida Infantry raised in their county—Companies A and B. John, Hamilton and C.C. McPhaul served in Company A, while Archibald and Evander McPhaul (father and son) served in Company B (United States War Department n.d.).

Florida was a relatively poor, less populated, state that had a hard time equipping its units well. Nonetheless, the Floridians fought gallantly in numerous campaigns. The 6th Florida was sent to join the campaign in Kentucky in 1862, but was diverted to guard the strategic Cumberland Gap

in the Appalachians. The winter of 1862 was a miserable one for the lightly clad, poorly equipped Floridians. The Florida legislature had the carpet removed from the capitol building so that it could be cut up to make blankets for the troops (Museum of Florida History n.d.). Archibald McPhaul did not survive the winter (United States War Department n.d.).

The 6th Florida went on to serve with distinction from Chickamauga to Atlanta. It participated in Hood's Tennessee Campaign in the winter of 1864-65, before moving back to North Carolina with the Army of Tennessee. The 6th Florida Infantry, Finley's Brigade, participated in the last grand charge of the Army of Tennessee at Bentonville, in March 1865. When the Army of Tennessee surrendered on April 26, 1865, only a remnant of the regiment remained (National Park Service n.d.).

The McLauchlin family had spread out on both sides of the Mississippi-Alabama border by the time the war started. Of six McLauchlin/McLaughlin men, and one brother-in-law, who joined the Confederate Army, only four survived the war. Along with the McPhauls, Edward McLaughlin, of a Mississippi company in the 36th Alabama Infantry Regiment, participated in Hood's disastrous Tennessee campaign of the winter of 1864-65. The following verse from the "Yellow Rose of Texas" describes the Southern soldiers' reaction to the cold, deprivation and colossal waste of life from senseless frontal assaults:

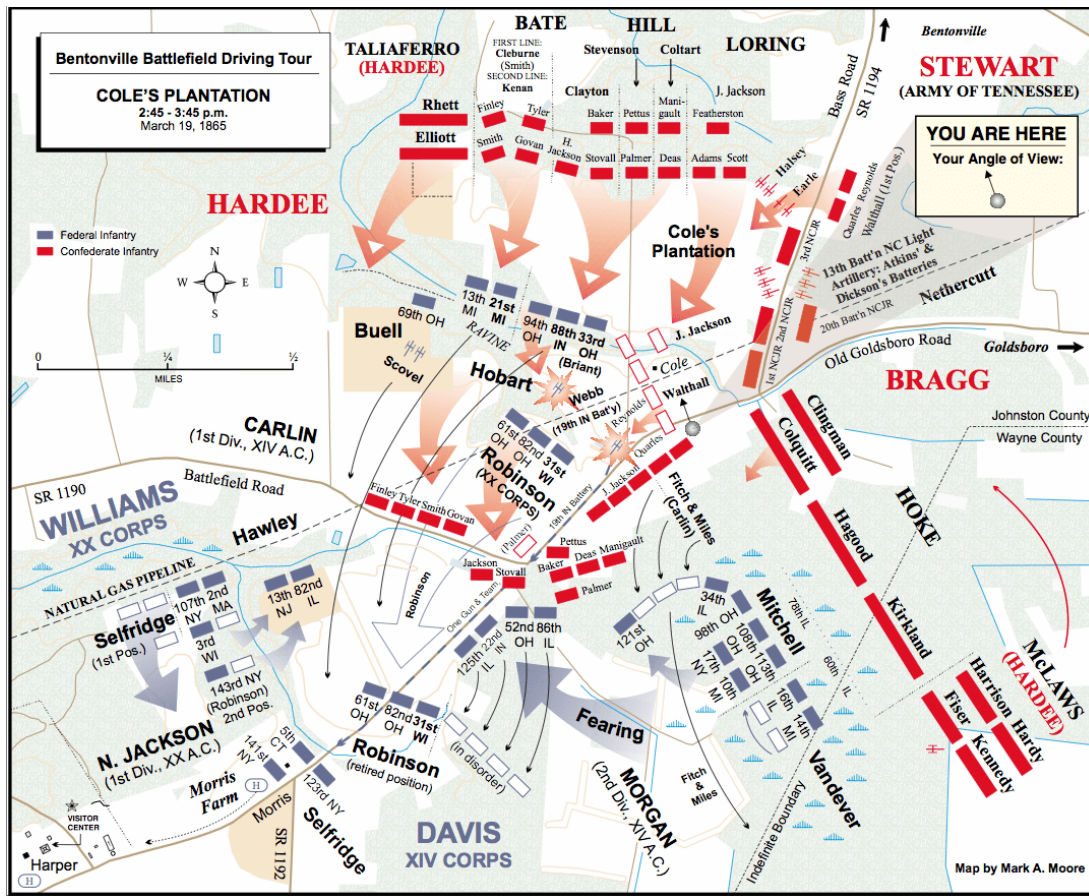
Oh my feet are torn and bloody, and my heart is full of woe,
I'm going back to Georgia, to find my Uncle Joe,
You may talk about your Beauregard, and sing of Bobby Lee,
But the gallant Hood of Texas, he played hell in Tennessee.

Edward was captured at the Battle of Nashville, in December, 1864. He died of pneumonia in the prison camp at Camp Chase, Ohio, the following February.

In October 1861, brothers Gilbert, William and Dugald McLauchlin enlisted in an Alabama company, from Choctaw County, that became part of the 1st Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi Infantry Regiment. The brothers were captured at Island Number Ten, in the Mississippi River, in April, 1862. Upon being paroled and exchanged, their company, Company F, became part of the 54th Alabama Infantry Regiment. The regiment fought at Vicksburg, and at Baker's Creek (although on the opposite end of the line from where Daniel Gilchrist fought), the Siege of Jackson, and all throughout the Atlanta Campaign.

As with the McPhauls, the McLauchlins participated in the last charge of the Army of Tennessee at Bentonville. Their brigade, Baker's Brigade, actually penetrated the Union lines before being cut off by Union reinforcements. When the 54th Alabama Infantry was surrendered in April 26, 1865, only 100 men, about the size of one of the original companies, remained. Between October 1862 and April 1865, the regiment lost over 1200 men killed, wounded, missing or sick (Hadaway 1913, 261).

It is ironic that the McPhaul and McLauchlin families, who had not fought together since the War of Independence, should fight their last battle of the war at Bentonville, only about 70 miles from Mill Prong House. Moreover, the McPhauls, in Finley's Brigade, and the McLauchlins, in Baker's Brigade, both pictured below as they penetrated the Union line), culminated, in the last major battle of the war (after a 1000-mile fighting withdrawal) only a few hundred yards apart.



Were they aware of these facts? Were they even aware of one another's existence? Who can know?

The Final Chapter: Gone to Texas

The Civil War was an unmitigated disaster for the South. Prosperous planters in the Antebellum Period had been bled dry in both human and economic terms. The South had bankrupted itself in its attempt to maintain its slave economy. Hard money was almost unobtainable. The Federal blockade of Southern ports had caused the export-driven Southern economy to implode. The free labor that had driven the plantation system was no longer available following emancipation.

The planter elite were land rich, but cash poor; the common man was simply poor. This brought on another problem. The United States Government wanted the revenue it had lost during the

war when the people in the seceded states were paying taxes to the Confederate government. Upon re-entry into the Union, property owners were required to pay back-taxes, but lacked the cash needed to do so. Farms and plantations were confiscated and sold at auction to pay off the debts.

Once again, the Carolina Scots in the Deep South prepared to move in search of economic opportunity; Texas beckoned. Members of all three of the families examined in this paper eventually found their way to Texas, although others remained behind in the Gulf states. This hegira resulted in the current state of affairs, wherein each of these families is now spread in an arc from North Carolina, all across the South and into Texas. The descendants of the Carolina Scots have continued to be leading members of their communities, through the Great Depression, two world wars, and a host of other important events. Presumably, this is true of most of the families who chose to migrate two centuries ago. The Mill Prong House environs is where it all began.

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