

All That Dare Oppose Them

The Whig Victory at Mobley's Meeting House, June 1780

Being a history of the victory of the Whigs over
the Tories at the Battle of Mobley's Meeting
House on Little River, Fairfield District South
Carolina in June 1780

by Kenneth A. Shelton
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by the South Carolina Legislature as one of the “private frontier forts” for which the legislature had taken maintenance responsibility.¹⁰⁴

Burr Harrison

A neighbor on the road passing in front of Mobley’s Meeting House at the 16 August 1786 session of the County Court, Harrison is on record as a Justice of the Peace in Fairfield County after the Revolutionary War. At the 23 July 1795 session, a road order cited Joseph Chapman and Edward Moberly overseers for the road from Gladney’s Old Place by Burr Harrison to the Chester County line.¹⁰⁵ This would be the northbound road to Chester Court House that passed in front of Mobley’s Meeting House.

Perhaps a relative of Burr is one Reuben Harrison. Lyman Draper was interested in this particular question and wrote to individuals trying to determine who Colonel Reuben Harrison was. A letter from James Aiken to Lyman Draper in 1874, in discussing Fairfield County soldiers, noted that Benjamin May died in 1826, Arromanus Lyles in 1831, and that Reuben Harrison was regarded as a Tory. Draper then makes annotations that he thinks this is in error and calls him Colonel Reuben Harrison. The letter said that Harrison lived 12 miles east of Winnsboro.¹⁰⁶ A letter he received from Silas Johnson in 1874 stating that Johnson had been mistaken in an earlier letter to Draper, that Johnson knew of a granddaughter of Captain Burr Harrison, not Colonel Reuben Harrison. He provided a transcript of Burr’s obituary which noted that Harrison moved from Virginia to South Carolina 38 years before his death (August 1822), or ca 1784. Thus, he had only been at his residence a couple years at the time of the 1786 county court road order. As will be discussed later, a Harrison family also intermarried to the Hampton family, which plays a key role in this study. Whether these are all a single Harrison family or separate families simply sharing a common surname was not examined by this author. The commonality of the Harrison surname in prominent Whig settings, though, is interesting.

The Hamptons

The Hamptons descend from Anthony Hampton, who came to South Carolina from Rowan County, North Carolina. Anthony is in Rowan County as early as 8 October 1754 and was a Captain in the local militia.¹⁰⁷ It has been written in many sources with varying details, but it seems clear that on 30 June 1776, a group of Cherokees and Tories murdered Anthony Hampton, his wife, his son Preston, and apparently his grandson by daughter Elizabeth Hampton Harrison.¹⁰⁸ Landrum’s book on Upper South Carolina, in discussing the Hampton massacre, noted that Edward and Preston Hampton were representatives for a mission to the Cherokees in early 1776, and the later attackers were comprised of the men with whom the Hamptons had met earlier. Interestingly, he stated

¹⁰⁴ Cooper, Dr. Thomas, ‘The Statutes at Large of South Carolina’, 1838, Statute #935, appropriations bill for 1764, for the “private frontier forts”, for “Waggenger’s Fort”, John Halsey, Jeremiah Rent and Susannah Kersey allowed for provisions.

¹⁰⁵ Holcomb, Brent, ‘Fairfield County South Carolina Minutes of the County Court 1785-1799’, 1981

¹⁰⁶ Draper, Lyman C. Manuscripts vol. 3VV

¹⁰⁷ Linn, Jo White, ‘Abstracts of the Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753-1762’, 1977

¹⁰⁸ Meynard, Virginia G., ‘The Venturers: The Hampton, Harrison and Earle Families of Virginia, South Carolina and Texas’, 1981

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of turning them over to the British commander when they reached Mobley's Meeting house, they camped for the night. Genl. Mearns having been informed of the capture, went immediately in pursuit and finding them encamped, made a charge, firing a few guns, and the men fled in all directions, leaving the prisoners in the meeting house; one poor fellow started to run down a very steep place, fell & broke his back, do not know his name; I understood that one poor Negro was accidentally shot & killed in the house.

Figure 27D : Extract of Hampton Letter from Draper Manuscript Collection

Under these circumstances, we find the Mobley family involved with the Hampton brothers. In the years after Mobley's Meeting House, starting no later than 7 October 1782, a series of lawsuits arose in the district equity court of John, Richard, Henry and Wade Hampton vs:

- 1) Edward Mobley, Clement Mobley, Benjamin Mobley, William Mobley, Moses Hendricks, William Chapman and Charles Sutton ←
- 2) Benjamin Mobley SR, Benjamin Mobley JR and John Hill
- 3) John Phillips, George Alcorn, James Alcorn, Job Meadows [Meador(s)]²⁹⁹ and George Nicks [Nix]
- 4) Charles Coleman and Francis Coleman

²⁹⁹ Job Meador [Meadows], born ca1721 in Virginia, was married to a daughter of Edward Moberley SR. He died Oct 1822 at 'age of 101 years of age' [Mill, Robert, 'Statistics of South Carolina', 1826]

Charles Coleman – He appears to be the Charles Coleman that served with the Light Dragoons under Captain Samuel Martin, Colonel Polk and General Sumter in 1781.³²⁴ He likely is the Charles Coleman married to Mary “Polly” Moberley, by whom his first son was Isaiah Moberley, alias Coleman. His estate record is package 1, folio 43. His will, dated 31 December 1787, proven 12 May 1788, in it he leaves a significant portion of his estate to Amelia Gwin, namely 100 acres on Beaver Creek as well as furniture, beds, a cotton wheel, linen wheel, large chest, other household items, and livestock. No indication is made of relationship, but he does make it clear that she is not a daughter. Also, he makes the provision that the land goes to Amelia's son Jesse Gwin after her death. More importantly, he also directs his home plantation to be rented out for four years and the money to go to the support of Amelia Gwin and her children. He then makes a legacy to "my son Isaiah Moberly, alias Coleman" in the amount of 200 acres of land on Welches Fork of Sandy River, noting that he does not have heirs at this time. He also makes it clear that he has 3 daughters, and they are sisters to Isaiah. On the administrator bond, Francis Coleman signed (Fra. Coleman) as did his sureties Robert Coleman and William Chapman.³²⁵

A second Charles Coleman served 365 days as an armorer for Lieutenant Colonel David Hopkins and Colonel Winn in 1780 and 1781 and was at Gates Defeat (Battle of Camden).³²⁶ This Charles was a pensioner, son of Kader (Cader) Coleman, another member of the Robert Coleman family, and was married to Ruth Gibson, daughter of Abraham Gibson, in 1797. The claim, which was filed by his children as the parents were both dead, states that Charles was a blacksmith who was in Gates' army. After the battle, Charles escaped in a wagon and team belonging to his father Cader Coleman, and that Ruth's father Abraham Gibson and four of Abraham's brothers were in the war.³²⁷ Cader Coleman relocated to Fairfield County from North Carolina.³²⁸

Francis Coleman – He served under Captain Arromanous Lyles and Colonel Winn at Russell's Ferry and under Colonel Bratton at Four Holes Bridge.³²⁹

Moses Hendricks – He enlisted in the Third Regiment of South Carolina on 1 December 1776³³⁰ and an audited account exists showing service of 104 days in 1781 and 1782 under Captain Hughes and Colonel Winn.³³¹ However, this does not establish any service during the year 1780.

John Hill – No apparent matches to any service records.

³²⁴ Salley, Alexander S., "Documents Relating to the History of South Carolina in the Revolution",

³²⁵ Coleman, Charles, Estate Record, Fairfield County Estate Records package 1, folio 43

³²⁶ Coleman, Charles, South Carolina Revolutionary War Indent Record

³²⁷ Coleman, Charles, Revolutionary War Pension Application file

³²⁸ e.g. see South Carolina Plat Records v.27, p.234, plat for 640 acres for Robert Craig, 1791, on Dutchman's Creek in Camden District, bound by John Winn, Cader Coleman & others.

³²⁹ Coleman, Francis, South Carolina Revolutionary War Indent Record

³³⁰ Moss, Bobby Gilmer, "Roster of South Carolina Patriots in the American Revolution", 1983

³³¹ Hendricks, Moses, South Carolina Revolutionary War Indent Record

of this Robert, 100 acres situated on the branch of Beaver Creek at Broad Rover. David Roe Coleman, another son of Robert, and Andrew Feaster were witnesses.⁴²⁹

Robert Coleman made out his will on 30 September 1809 and it was probated in June 1811. Given the delays to get to probate for those times, he could have died at any point in between. His estate records show that his daughter Sarah married Reuben Moberley, son of Edward Moberley JR.⁴³⁰ The recollections of John, son of Samuel Moberley and grandson of Edward Moberley SR, were that Robert's son Francis Coleman married Margaret Moberley, daughter of Benjamin Moberley SR and granddaughter of Edward Moberley SR.⁴³¹ This was not the Francis Coleman of the Hampton lawsuit, as he was born in 1786, but the lawsuit Francis and Charles Coleman are supposed as Robert's brothers.⁴³²

→ Charles Coleman's (d.1788) executor was Francis Coleman and his will was witnessed by Robert Coleman. Francis Coleman's bondsmen were Robert Coleman and William Chapman, another defendant in the suits, and the justices were Richard and John Winn.⁴³³ From Richard Winn's notes, however, the General named the leader at Moberley's as "Ch. Coleman", which could mean Charles or Christopher, but it is likely Charles.⁴³⁴

Francis Coleman (d.1823), executed a deed in Fairfield County on March 16, 1801. He was then called Francis Coleman, SR and was of Jefferson County, Georgia. The land he sold was 410 acres of land in Fairfield County on the Sandy Fork of Beaver Creek, originally obtained by Francis on January 23, 1771 and February 11, 1773, bounded by the lands of Liles and Hampton. Robert Coleman, Sr. was one of the subscribing witnesses. Later, on April 23, 1803, Francis Coleman and Margaret, his wife, still of Jefferson County, Georgia, sold 266 acres of land described as being part of the tracts sold by John Marlin to Francis Coleman on January 23, 1772, and granted to Francis Coleman on February 11, 1773. It was further recited in 1803, that the land adjoined Ephraim Lyles, Hampton, and Thomas Means. He later ends up in Washington County, Alabama.⁴³⁵

The correspondence from Colonel John Hampton's grandson Edward H. Herbert to Lyman Draper says that:

'This Bob Coleman is the Tory I alluded to in a former letter as having visited my father's house long after the war closed and related to my mother [John Hampton's daughter] the manner in which he had treated her father and the kind treatment he had received from her father after the close of the war, & Bob Coleman & his brother Frank were

⁴²⁹ Coleman, J.P., 'The Robert Coleman Family From Virginia to Texas 1652-1965', 1965

⁴³⁰ Fairfield County, South Carolina Loose Estate Records, package 11, folio 83

⁴³¹ Dixon, William Woodward, 'The Moberleys and Their Connections', 1915

⁴³² Coleman, J.P., 'The Robert Coleman Family From Virginia to Texas 1652-1965', 1965

⁴³³ Coleman, J.P., 'The Robert Coleman Family From Virginia to Texas 1652-1965', 1965

⁴³⁴ Williams, Samuel C., 'General Richard Winn's Notes - 1780', South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, vol.43, 1942

⁴³⁵ Coleman, J.P., 'The Robert Coleman Family From Virginia to Texas 1652-1965', 1965

retreated across Broad River and did not stop until they reached their camp on the western side of the Enoree River. Col. Brandon happened to be in Chester at the time of these outrages. He accordingly rapidly pursued the fugitive Tories, and early one morning came on their camp. The Tories were engaged in cooking their breakfast and did not even have a sentinel post. Brandon charged their camp and killed and wounded many and completely routed their entire band. Among the wounded Tories was a man named John Houston whose left eye Brandon struck out with a blow of his broad sword which he bent by the glancing blow to Houston's head and had it straightened before he could strike another blow. Houston lived to an extreme old age, dying about 1838 on Noxapater(?) Creek in Winston Co., Miss. I get the above from Thos. Humphries of our county, he from his father whose uncle Thos. Humphries fought the Eutaw Spring."

This puts Colonel Flewquinon (Fuiquinon, etc.) in the lower Union District area, although it isn't necessary that he lived there prior to, during or after the war – simply that his area of operations for his unit was there. Colonel Winn's list contains, in addition to Fuiquinon, the names of John Moberly, Sela Delashmet, John Halsey, Robert Love, James Martin, James Moore, Robert McCown, Francis Niel (sic), Captain William Nullerville (Netterville), (Colonel) John and Thomas Phillips, George Rogers, and John Sadler. Colonel William Bratton's list contains 46 names that include Nathaniel Harrison, Samuel Hunter, James Morrow, and William Walker.⁴⁴⁰ A South Carolina petition from state Tory leaders to the King dated 19 April 1782 was signed by Colonel Thomas Fletchell of the Forks of Broad and Saluda, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Plummer of Tyger River, Colonel John Phillips of the Winnsboro and Camden Militia, and at the end they list Loyalists who are dead. On this list of interest are Colonel Flukwynnin (sic), John Chapman (two men of this name), John Holsey (sic), Christopher Funderburg, Robert Love 'killed while asleep', William McCluer, John Pearson, Thomas Pearson, Lieutenant David Phillips, Laurence Phillips, Captain John Weir, and William Nichols.⁴⁴¹

Hardy H. Herbert (mentioned before – grandson of Colonel John Hampton and brother of Edward H. Herbert) finished out a letter of 1874 with the notation that 'with the Coleman party, the Weirs, Nettervilles, & & whose names I have forgotten'.⁴⁴² This provides two surnames of Tories in the Coleman party, and interestingly they are somewhat consistent with the casualty list cited in the previous paragraph that names Captain William Netterville and Captain John Weir as documented Tories and would seem to indicate that these two men were at Mobley's Meeting House with Colonel Bob Coleman. Although the Netterville name is here associated as Tory, they were not driven from the area after the war as one William Netterville bounded on the land of Benjamin May, the already

⁴⁴⁰ the lists are held in the South Carolina Archives in Miscellaneous Papers on Forfeited Estates, file S126170, box 4. See http://sc_tories.tripod.com/lists_of_the_backcountry_militia_captains.htm

⁴⁴¹ Clark, Murtie June, 'Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War', 1981

⁴⁴² Draper, Lyman C.. The Draper Manuscript Collection, volumes 12VV

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