

A Journal of the Motions  
of the Continental Army  
Commanded by the Honble.  
Griffith Rutherford Esqr.  
Brigadeair Generall  
Against the Cherokee Indians

Thursday Augst. 29, 1776

We left the camp near Cathey fort [*near the headwaters of the Catawba River in McDowell County, North Carolina*] and proceeded about 6 miles, our Generall very unwell.

Friday Augst. 30

at 10 AM marched at 4 PM camped 2 miles west of Buck Creek our former place of Rendezvous

Saturday 31

Lay by at Camp. Sent out Scouts to view the Mountains. at 2 they returned at 3 PM had a Sermon by Mr. Hall [*The Reverend James Hall*] upon the 10 verse, 2 Book, 1 Chapter Samuele.

Sunday Sepr. 1, 1776

At 9 AM Marched with our *Gerall* [General] at the head of 1970 Private men besides Officers to Pack men at 3 PM Gott all safe up the Mountain at the foot it is very Steap for 150 yd then Midlong [Midling ?] for a  $\frac{1}{4}$  So Risis and falls Untill You Gain the Summitt, in Going Down it is very Steap and Dangerous being a Very Narrow and a *Sideling* road at 6 PM Camped at Little *Swanano* [*Spelling difficult to make out, but most likely referring to the present day Swannanoa River to the east of Ashville.*] Dist 10 miles W. & W B N Course.

Monday Sepr. 2

At 8 AM Marched. at 11 had one Man Named Jonathan Huff accidently shott in crossing of a Creeke he Expired immediately. Bur[i]ed him in the Sand & Marched the men over the grave to prevent the Enemys Discovery at 6 PM Camped at big *Swanano*. Distance 12 Miles Course West, WSW & WBN

Tuesday Sepr 3

at 6 AM Sent of 500 Men under the Command of Colonel McDowell & Major *Thomas* Smith to take possession of the ford of French Broad River and at 7 Marched at 12 Crossed Said river which is Divided by an Island on the East Side it is 160 Yards over Graveley Bottom. at 6 PM Camped at Homoney [Hominy] Creek Dist. 10 Miles Course W  $\frac{1}{2}$  N.

Wednesday 3 [Sic] Sepr.

At 6 AM Marched over very bad roads *pond* Glades. but Baggey [Boggy?]. our speis Saw the fresh Sign of 2 horse tract and one foot Supposed to be Indians Great Care Taken by the Generall to protect our baggage and provisions. Distance 10 Miles Course W. WBS ½ S.

Thursday 4 [Sic] Sepr.

At 7 AM Marched. Severall of our men Sick Saw the Same Tract as Yesterday Going towards the Nations. pursued them some Miles and find by their proceedings they had not Discovered our Army. Saw on this Day *March* a Varitey of Good Land on this Side pigon [Pigeon] River which is a Small but Rapid Stream Rocky Bottom. at 6 PM Camped at Rich Land Creek Distance 12 Miles Course W ½ N

Friday Sepr. 6

At 7 AM Marched over Miserable road fine Glades. our Speis Discovered at 4 PM five Indians Comming towards them they fled upon the Sight of our people in such fright that they Dropped a smoth Boar Gun Very Indifferently fixed. Distance 12 Miles Course WBS ½ S. this Evening people Employed in Gitting provisions ready to go to the Cowee town. Captains Hardins & Barclays Companys, of Light horse with a Detachment of Foot was Sent under the Command of Colonell Alexander to one Scotts a Trader, one whom we Did Suspect to be a Grand Enemy to the Americans Liberty they surrounded the house and found he had fled same Day. before they came at 7 held a Council of Warr and it is Agreed to Go to the Cowee Towns tomorrow. the Generall much Better.

Saturday September 7, 1776

At 3 AM 1000 Men Departed from this Camp on their way to the Cowee Towns, under the Command of Colonel Lock [*most likely Colonel Francis Locke*] at 7 AM Marched and at 8 Crossed the Tuckesegee river which is 60 yd. over rocky bottom found here on the No. Side a Small Village. our party had burnt the Houses. we found here 16 Acres of Corn &c which was Destroy'd by our horses in a few hours.

Sunday Sepr. 8

At 10 AM Marched Mountain Sides Many Glades and a Very Sideling Road. at 6 Camped at the foot of 7 mile Mountain was Joyned there by 150 of our former party who inform us that in Going over Seven Mile Mountain they was fired upon by the Indians without doing any other Damage then Shotting [Captain] William Alexander Through the Foot they took possession of Wartago [Watauga] Town this Morning without any Resistance. Distance 10 Miles Course West to WBS.

Monday Sepr. 9

At 7 AM Marched and at 11 Gott up & Over the Mountain at 2 PM Gott into Wartago [Watauga or Watoga], Situated upon little Tenesey [Tennessee] River 60 Yards over rocky Bottom. found here 160 Acres of Corn & 100 Houses Dist. 4 Miles WBS.

Tuesday 10 Sepr.

At 7 AM Sent 500 Men to Go to *Estitioaa* town 7 miles up the river to See if they Can Discover any Sign of the South Arme[y] *[from South Carolina commanded by Colonel Andrew Williamson]*, and to burn the plantations Belonging to the Enemy.

Wednesday 11

At 7 AM Some of our former party Arrived, and brings us word that they Saw no sign of the South Arme[y]. Sent 2 men with Letters to *Kuvee* ?AM. Marched at 4 PM Gott into Cowee found here 160 Acres of Corn 100 houses. Some few Horse & Cow Creatures. Distance 3 Miles Course W  $\frac{1}{2}$  N.

Thursday 12

At Camp. Scout Emp[lo]yed as Usall. Capt. Hardin's & Barclay's Companys of Light horse was sent to *Alijoy* Distance 7 Miles upon their Arrivall they Discovered a *Smoke* and some Indians who fled and [word indecipherable] they tract on to a Village Dist. 3 Miles where they found they had Left in a Great Hurry & fright leaving the Pott on the fire with Victuals in it and a hog newly Killed & partly Cleaned. we had one man Named [first name indecipherable] peck killed by the Enemy in *Allejoy* where he was Cutting Down some Corn. Burred him in one of the houses and sett it on fire to prevent the Enemy from Discovering the Grave.

Friday 13

At Camp. Scout as Usall Employ'd Searching the Valley And Mountains

Saturday Sepr. 14, 1776

At 11 AM Marched at 4 PM Gott into *Conucha* [or Nonucha] Some of our light horse Shott at 3 Indians they fled and Left 5 Horses which proved to belong to *Our Comp.* found here 70 houses 200 Acres of Corn Distance 7 Miles WBS  $\frac{1}{2}$  S.

Sunday 15

At Camp at 7 Called a Generall Counsell of Warr when it is Unamousley Agreed to Go to the Valeys. tomorrow with 1500 Men at 12 had a Sermon, at 1 PM our two Men arrive here from *Kuvee* they saw Nothing of the South Arme[y]

Monday Sepr. 16

At 10 AM our Generall Marched out [of] this Town with 1500 Men to go to the Valeys. the Remains at Camp. [Sic] Scouts as Usall Employ'd.

Tuesday Sepr. 17

At Camp Scouts Employ'd as Usall one Lieutenant Belonging to the Guildford Camp being Commanding Officer of a Scout came to a Town 6 Miles from here where upon seeing Some horse Men ran with his partey in Great fright and Drew after him by his Cowardly Proceedings a number of our Scouts he mett with Came and put the Camp in Great Confusion by saying that their was a very Considerable Number of Indians Comming Down upon us We posted an Advance Guard upon an Emminence. at 6 arrived here Capt. To???? Commandor of a Scout who bring us word that this Great

Bodey of Indians was Nothing more than 40 of our Light Horse had been Scouting Missed their way & was Following the Armeey.

Wednesday Sepr. 18

At 7 AM Marched. at 12 Gott into *Conucha* at 1 Was Supprised at Arrivall of the Light horse belonging to the South Armeey in this Town at 3 the Front Came in Sight. Drew upour Men under Arms in a Lane at ½ after 3. Colonell [Andrew] Williamson commander in Chief of 1730 [South Carolina] Men Marched through this Town on their way to the Valleys. they Seemed to be a fine Body of Men *Comptably* Armed *Accompayned* by 33 Catawba Indians.

Thursday, Sepr. 19

*[The Battle at Black Hole at the Coweecho River]* At Camp our Scouts Empl'y'd as Usall some of which arrives and bring us word that they heard a very heavey Fire of Guns to the Westward. sent 1200 Men to the Assistance of the South Armeey who we hear is Attacked by the Ennemey on some of their return we hear the South Armeey was Attack'd by the Ennemey at 1 PM the enemy had posted themselves in the form of a half moon on two spurs of a Mountain the road heading through a large Glade between the Hills the Enemy had possession of the Good Warrior [*Good Warrior, a name*] of Seneca [*Esseneca, a Cherokee town, is apparently one of the names associated with this ambush*] a Cherokee Indian was Appointed to fire the Signall Gun as Soone as he found our people all in the Glade but Lieutenant Hampton of the first Redgement of Riffle Men Crossing of a Branch & seeing the fresh sign of Enemeys in this Journey Marched up a hill and Discovered an Enemy and Fired, by that Means frustrated their Design for they Expected it to be the Signall Gun as Soone as he found all our people in the Glade when only 200 of our Men Crossing of a branch during the fresh Stood the whole Fire. Colonell Hammond [*probably Samuel Hammond, brother-in-law to the commander of this South Carolina force, Colonel Andrew Williamson.*] Ordered his redgiment to Advance force their way & Dislodge the Enemy from an Advanagous hill they Occupied which they Did by Suffering a very Considerable fire of Guns but by Firing of our Swivills the enemy Gave Back tho they made Sevrall Stands Afterwards Supposed to be to protect their killed & wounded we had 9 Men Killed 19 wounded. we Took 160 Budgetts [*leather bags ?*] Some Ammunition some Guns. we Gott 9 Scalps and supposed we Killed a Number of the Ennemey but never saw any but 7. they was Supposed to be 500 Men.

Friday Sepr. 20, 1776

At 11 Marched at 12 Gott into N????? Distance 4 Miles at 2 PM Sent of[f] 200 Men to Go and Guard the Wounded Men of the South Armeey into this Camp at 3 they Arrived as Viz

Thomas Ha??ry. Shott in the Small back

Wm. Hammond. Tomahawked Scalped and his Left Thigh Broke

James Hooper. shott about 4 Inches above the pap of the left Breast the ball Cutt out under the Shoulder blade

Zachariah Taylor. in the Left Shoulder ranging to the Right Armpitt

Mosses Landon in both Thighs

The Filson Historical Society  
Arthur Campbell Papers Mss. A C187 26  
William Dells Military Journal  
Robert Harper in the Left arm  
Morgan C???? in the Shoulder  
Saml. *Mahoons* in the Shoulder  
Willm. McCracon in the rist

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Saturday 21, 22, & 23

At Camp Scout as Usall Emroy'd

Tuesday 24

At 10 Marched at 3 Camped about 2 Miles to the No[rth]ward of Nucasaey [*Naquasse?*  
*At present-day Franklin, NC*] at 6 PM Arrives here Wm. Avery from Salsbury with  
Letters to our Generall we had One Joseph Christey shott through the Leg but not  
Dangerous.

Wednesday 25

Moved our Camp 2 Miles over Tenesey River no Sign of the Enemy.

Thursday 26

At Camp sent out Scouts to burn the houses And bring away the Corn from C????? Town  
one of the Guilford Scouts Shott one Indian Fellow near *Neawea*.

Friday 27 & 28

At Camp nothing *Materall*

Sunday 29

Moved our Camp about 1 Mile Examened Our Flour & find we have enough for 10 Days.  
at 12 our Light horse arrived and bring us word of our Army being less than a few Miles  
at 4 PM our worthy Generall and Officers & Men arrived here to our Great Joy and Gives  
us their prodeedings as Viz

Monday Sepr 16

Left Neucasey [*Naquasse ?*]. Marched 6 Miles & Camped on a Creek the waters  
of Tenesey

Tuesday the 17

Marched 16 Miles Course W & NW Camped Sent out Scouts to View the  
Mountains

Wednesday 18

Marched & Crossed the head No. Branch of highewasse [*Hiawasse*] river.  
Course WSW and took the Mountains, which is hardly Any rise in Going up but  
when up You See a Most Delightfull prospect As Ever Your Eyes Beheld. you  
may See as far as your Eyes will Lett You. The Valleys Looks very Pleasent but  
the Mountains is Impregnable. Sent out Scouts of foot & horse to *range* who took  
from the Enemy 60 wt.[weight] Powder 24 horses *Kettles* & Other [word(s)  
indecipherable].

Thursday 19 Sepr.

Marched early and Surround *Quaminiseys* as Viz Rowan on the Left Meclenburg [Mecklenburg] & Tryon on the right [*i.e., units from these three counties*]. we Gott round the Town Kill'd 6 wounded 2 took an Old Fellow & a Lad prisoners Camped Their Sent a party of 23 Men to the Creek Town Some Horses *Kettles* and other Plunder.

Friday 20

Some of party Came in and brings us Word of a Great Discovery of Indians Driving Hourses & Cattles they sent for more Aid Sent 140 Light Horse to their Assistance the remains at Camp cutting Down Corn

Saturday 21

At Camp Scouts Employ'd as Usall.

Sunday Sepr. 22

At Camp Our party Comes in and Brings with them 46 Prisoners. One Hicks one Sctott [Scott] their Squaws and Children, 4 Wite men, 4 Negroes and 80 head of Cattle 70 Horses and 30 Loads of Dear Skins and other Rich plunder.

Monday 23

At Camp had sale of Horses Negroes & Cattle

Tuesday 25

Sent a party to Meet the South Armeý. they did not return Our Light Horse and foot surrounded Tall???, Killed 2 one a Young Fellow who Spook good English they Took a Squaw and 2 Male Children prisoners.

Wednesday 26

At Camp. Employ'd cutting and Destroying Corn.

Thursday 27

At 10 Marched about 1 ½ Miles over Highways & Camped the Generall & A Number of Officers Escorted by 100 Light Horse went to meet the South Armeý. they Moved up & camped on the West side of the river and Saluted us with 13 Swivell Guns in Honour of the 13 United Colonies.

*[The meeting of the two armies, Rutherford's North Carolinians, and Colonel Andrew Williamson's South Carolinians, took place at present-day Murphy, NC.]*

Friday 28

Turned to Join our Camp and Crossed the Head of Highwasse [Hiwassee]  
Marched 10 Miles & Camped

Saturday

Marched with Great Speed & hurry passed by *Hicks* Plantation. Took the  
Mountains And proceeded.

Sunday

At 7 Marched. Passed Con???? Nuckesy at 1 PM Crossed Little Tenesey, and at  
4 PM Joined the remains of our Armeey, to their Great Joy & Satisfaction

Monday

At 6 AM *W* Sharp *W* Hall and 60 men Left this Camp to Go to Cathey Fort to  
Carry the Intelligenge [sic] of our being upon the return at 8 Marc[h]ed with the  
remains of our Armeey at 6 PM Crossed Tuckesag [Tuskasegee] River and  
Camped Nothing remarkable.

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The whole kept by  
Wm Dells  
Living in Bryant Settlement at Fork of the Yakdin river  
Near the Shallow Ford

The Filson Historical Society  
Arthur Campbell Papers Mss. A C187 26  
William Dells Military Journal  
Sir

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I have made bold to Send this my Weak Endeavor to your Honour, upon the Expedition against the Cherookes, and Hope it will meet your Favourable reception, and if Worthey hope You'll Say it before Your Hon. Congress and in so Doing you'll Lay a Great Obligation on one who begs [word(s) indecipherable] Submission to [word(s) indecipherable]

Your [abbreviation indecipherable]

Obseques

and very hble. Servt.

Wm Dells

To  
William Christey Esq.  
Colonell in Virginia

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[On inside back cover:]

Wm Dells Journal