



[Link to Bowen Family Cemetery](#)

Rees Bowen (b. 1737) was named for his grandmother Rebecca Rees Bowen. His name was spelled Reese in most public records, but 1st Lt Reece Bowen on the 1909 BKM plaque. He married Louisa Margaret SMITH b: 6 Oct 1745 d: 16 Feb 1834. In 1762 Rees received from his mother, 230 acres on Glade Creek of Roanoke. Bowen was a big man who often wore the championship boxer belt around Maiden Spring Fort which he erected in 1772 in current Tazewell County VA.

The OVTA places tab, muster ground entry, has maps. The Maiden Springs Fort link is to Bowen's Tazewell neighborhood. The Campbell's Corps muster link shows his regiment's Abingdon neighborhood. Click, drag, zoom, enjoy.

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Lieutenant Rees Bowen, also commanded one of the companies of the Virginia regiment was oft served while marching forward to attack the enemy, to make a hazardous and unnecessary exposure of his person. Some friend kindly remonstrated with him "Why, Bowen, do you not take a tree? Why rashly present yourself to the deliberate aim of the Provincial and Tory riflemen concealed behind every rock and bush before you? Death will inevitably result if you persist. Take to a tree.' He indignantly replied 'Ass hold"

Never shall it be said that I sought safety by hiding my person or dodging from a Briton or a Tory who opposed me in the field.' Well had it been for him and his country had he been more prudent, and, as his superiors had advised, taken shelter whenever it could be found, for he had scarcely concluded his brave utterance when a rifle ball struck him in the breast. He fell and expired.

Louisa Margaret Bowen and her husband were taking their newborn infant to show her relatives. Rees was a monster of a man who wore a fancy prize fighter champion belt. It was customary that the champion must take on all comers. On their way to see the folks, a challenger stopped them for a fight. Rees argued that he had a newborn and this just wasn't the right time for a fight. The challenger persisted and Rees continued to argue. Finally the young mother said "Rees, give me the child and get down. Slap that man's jaw."

When his brother Capt. William Bowen became sick at Maiden Fort, Rees took command of his company and led them to BKM. According to Bowen family tradition, Robert, Arthur, John, Charles and Rees's oldest son, John, were also at BKM.

Pension application of Charles Bowen S16055 fn40Va Transcribed by Will Graves rev'd 2/9/09: State of Tennessee, Knox County: Circuit Court On the first, August Term 1832 On the 16th day of August in the year 1832 personally appeared in open court before the Honorable Samuel Powell, a Judge of the Circuit Court in said State, and now presiding in the Circuit Court of said County, being a court of record having the power of fine & imprisonment, Charles Bowen, a resident of Blount County in the State of Tennessee, aged eighty two years in September last, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7th, 1832, -- that he entered the service of the United States during the revolutionary war and served as follows: the particular time he is unable to say but knows that he served under the command of Captain Bowen, a brother of Declarant, under the command of Captain John Campbell and was in the battle of Kings Mountain under the command of Captain William Edmondson who was there killed; that his brother Reese Bowen was also a Captain in the service at the time and was likewise killed in the battle of Kings Mountain, in this battle, Col. William Campbell commanded -- and Col Cleveland also was a commander -- during the action, by some means, declarant obtained information that Reese Bowen, his brother, was killed, and being much distressed and exasperated, proceeded in search of his brother hoping that he was only wounded -- in his search for his brother, he discovered his Captain William Edmondson dead or dying having been shot in the head. Declarant advanced without being sensible of his danger till within fifteen or twenty paces of the enemy --declarant stepped behind a tree, leveled his Gun and shot the first man who hoisted the flag among the enemy and immediately turned his back to the tree to reload his Gun when Col Cleveland advanced, called on declarant for the countersign, which declarant did not immediately recollect, nor could he give it. Col Cleveland instantly leveled his rifle at Declarant's breast and attempted to fire, but the Gun snapped. Declarant jumped at Cleveland seized him by the collar, drew his tomahawk, and would have sunk it in Cleveland's head if his arm had not been arrested by a soldier by the name of Buehannon who knew the parties. Declarant immediately recollected the countersign which was

“Blueford,” [Buford] named it and Cleveland dropped his gun and clasped Declarant in his arms. The persons who hoisted the flag were twice shot down, besides the time this declarant shot; but by whom he knows not. The affiant received a discharge from Col William Campbell, but on attempting to make it answer him some valuable purpose he failed and he threw it away as he thinks. This Declarant was afterwards commissioned a Captain by Governor Randolph in the State of Virginia on the 20th of July 1785, of 2nd Company of the 2nd Regiment of militia of the County of Washington, which commission is herewith sent. That after receiving this commission, he was engaged in various successive scouts as a spy after the Indians who were committing depredations on the Americans and with a detachment made a tour from his then residence, through Mackasin Gap through the Rye Coves, then on the head of Sandy and down that River, near to Tug River and after some time he does not recollect now how long returned home and was successively at periods engaged in similar services. That at the commencement of the revolutionary war, he was living at a place called the Crab Orchard at the head of Holston in Washington County, Virginia -- was then about between twenty six or seven years old having been born in the year 1749 on James River, Virginia. That his residence was in the same place, the Crab Orchard, for several years after the date of his commission and during all that time he was very often in service, in opposition to the Indians, and in scouts after them and he verily believes in all his services after his commission as Captain in active service would exceed two years. He further believes that during the revolutionary war he was in actual service for more than two years, although, the different periods of service are not recollected nor does he now believe he was in any other engagement or battle of consequence but the Battle of Kings Mountain --a portion of his services during the revolution were against the Tories, who were numerous in his section of country. When he first entered the service in the revolutionary war he was drafted but was a volunteer [illegible words] when out. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state.

S/ Charles Bowen

Sworn to & subscribed the day and year aforesaid thing the 16th

William Bowen, b. 1742; was a Capt. in the VA militia and was to have lead the Campbell riflemen on that fateful trip to King's Mountain in N.C., in Aug of 1780. But due to illness, he was delayed and his older brother, famed Indian fighter, Lt. Rees Bowen took over for him. Historically, the Battle of King's Mountain, Oct. 7th, 1780 was the decisive battle that finally turned the tide for the fledgling nation. The description can be found in "King's Mountain, and it's Heroes" by Draper.

These wonderful mountain men of VA., fresh from their battles with Indians, dressed in buckskin, hair long, feather's on the ends of their rifles, came whooping and hollering with a combination of Indian War whoops and Highland battle cries that scared the daylight's out of the British loyalist troops, waiting on King's mountain. They were routed so badly that they never did recoup.

Birth: Apr. 10, 1729
Rockingham County

Death: Virginia, USA
Oct. 7, 1780
North Carolina, USA

Husband of Margaret Louisa Smith — married 1756 in Rockingham Co, Virginia

Father of:

- John Bowen
- Margaret Lavisia Gillespie
- Rebecca Smith
- Lily Bowen
- Rees Bowen Jr
- Col Henry Bowen
- Arthur Bowen
- Louisa "Levisa" Thompson
- Nancy Ward

Son of John Bowen and Lillian McIlhaney

Brother of Nancy Ann Buchanan, Agnes Buchanan, John Bowen Jr, Henry Bowen, Jean Jane Looney, Captain Robert Pickens Bowen, Rebecca Schmidt, Captain William Bowen, Captain Arthur Bowen, Mary Porter, Charles Bowen and Moses Bowen

A History of The Middle New River Settlements and Contiguous Territory. By David E. Johnston (1906)

The Bowens, of Tazewell. This family is of Welch extraction, and the immediate ancestors of those that came hither were, long prior to the American Revolution, located and settled about Fredericktown, in western Maryland. Restive in disposition and fond of adventure, like all of their blood, they sought, fairly early after the first white settlements were made in the Valley of Virginia, to look for homes in that direction. How early, or the exact date, that Reece Bowen, the progenitor of the Tazewell family of that name, came in to the Virginia Valley from his western Maryland home, cannot be named with certainty; doubtless he came as early as 1765, for it is known that for a few years prior to 1772, when he located at Maiden Spring, he was living on the Roanoke River, close by where the city of Roanoke is now situated, then in Augusta County, he married Miss Louisa Smith, who proved to him not only a loving and faithful wife, but a great helpmeet in his border life. She was evidently a woman of more than ordinary intelligence and cultivation for one of her day and opportunity. She was a small, neat and trim woman, weighing only about one hundred pounds, while her husband was a giant in size and strength. It is told as a fact that she could step into her husband's hand and that he could stand and extend his arm, holding her at right angle to his body.

Prize fighting was quite common in the early days of the settlements, by which men tested their manhood and prowess. The man who could demolish all who chose to undertake him was the champion, and wore the belt until some man flogged him, and then he had to surrender it. At some period after Reece Bowen had settled on the Roanoke, and after the first child came into the home, Mrs. Bowen desiring to pay a visit to her people in the Valley, she and her babe and husband set out on horse-back along the narrow bridle way that then led through the valley, and on the way they met a man clad in the usual garb of the day--that is, buck-skin trousers, moccasins, and hunting shirt, or wampus. The stranger inquired of Mr. Bowen his

name, which he gave him; proposed a fight for the belt. Bowen tried to beg off, stating that he was taking his wife and child, the latter then in his arms, to her people. The man would take no excuse; finally Mrs. Bowen said to her husband; "Reece, give me the child and get down and slap that man's jaws." Mr. Bowen alighted from his horse, took the man by the lapel of his hunting shirt, gave him a few quick, heavy jerks, when the man called out to let him go, he had enough.

It is also related of Mr. Bowen, that in a later prize fight, at Maiden Spring, with a celebrated prize fighter who had, with his seconds, come from South Carolina to fight Bowen, and when he reached Bowen's home and made known to him his business, he, Mr. Bowen, did what he could in an honorable way to excuse himself from engaging in a fight; but the man was persistent and Bowen concluded to accommodate him and sent for his seconds--a Mr. Smith and a Mr. Clendenin. The fight took place and the gentleman from South Carolina came off second best.

Notes for Rees Bowen:

Source: Pendleton's History of Tazewell County, Virginia (pages 407 - 410):

Rees married Louisa Smith, whose parents then lived in that section of Augusta now known as Rockingham County. It is said that, after his marriage, he took up his abode on the Roanoke River close to where the city of Roanoke is now situated.

In some way Rees Bowen learned of the fertile lands and abundance of game that could be found in the Upper Clinch Valley; and he concluded to abandon his home on the Roanoke River and settle in this region, where he could locate and occupy, without cost, a large boundary of fine unoccupied land. It is known from tradition that when he arrived with his family in the vicinity of the great spring, to which he gave a peculiar name, he had not then selected the boundary of land upon which he would settle. After they went into camp, on the evening of the day he reached the place that has since been the home of the Bowens, he went out to find and kill a deer to get a supply of fresh meat. While thus engaged he discovered the spring. Bickley thus tells of the discovery of the immense fountain and what followed:

"When Mr. Bowen first saw the spring, he discovered a fine young female deer, feeding on the moss within the orifice from which gushes the spring. He shot it, and when he went to get his deer, saw a pair of elk horns standing on their points, and leaning against the rocks. Mr. Bowen was a very large and tall man, yet he had no difficulty in walking upright under the horns. He chose this place for his, and the spring and river have since been known as Maiden Spring and Fork."

The first four years after he and his family located at Maiden Spring were free from any hostile demonstrations by the Indians against the Clinch settlements. He was possessed of great physical strength and was very industrious, and in the four years he erected a large and strong log house, extended his clearings into the forests and added considerably to the number of horses and cattle he brought with him from his home on the Roanoke. Then came trouble with the Ohio Indians, in 1773, when the whole frontier of Virginia was threatened by the red men; and Rees Bowen built a heavy stockade around his dwelling, converting it into an excellent neighborhood fort.

In the meantime, his four brothers, John, Arthur, William and Moses had moved out from Augusta to find homes in the country west of New River. When Dunmore's War

came on the three brothers, Rees, William and Moses, went with Captain William Russell's company on the Lewis expedition to the mouth of the Kanawha River; and were prominent figures in the eventful battle at Point Pleasant. Moses Bowen was then only twenty years old; and on the return march from the Kanawha he was stricken with smallpox, from which frightful malady he died in the wilderness.

After his return from Point Pleasant, for two years Rees Bowen, like all the pioneer settlers, was actively engaged in clearing up fields from the forest and increasing the comforts of his new home. While thus occupied the war between the colonies and Great Britain began; and the British Government turned the Western Indians loose on the Virginia frontiers. This caused the organization of a company of militia, expert Indian fighters, in the Clinch Valley. The two Bowen brothers were members of the company, William being captain, and Rees, Lieutenant. This company, composed of pioneers, did effective service for the protection of the settlers in the Clinch and the Holston valleys.

Rees was killed at the Battle of Kings Mountain, North Carolina/South Carolina border

When it was known that Lord Cornwallis' Army was marching northward through the Carolinas, and that Colonel Ferguson, who commanded the left wing of his Army, had sent a threat to the "Over Mountain Men" that if they did not cross the mountains and take the oath of allegiance to the King, that he would cross over and destroy with fire and sword, Evan Shelby, John Sevier, and William Campbell determined to checkmate Colonel Ferguson by crossing the mountains and destroying him and his army. Colonel Campbell commanded the Washington County Military Force, and William Bowen a company that belonged to Campbell's Command, though a part of his company lived on the Montgomery County side of the line. In this company Rees Bowen was a First Lieutenant, his son John a Private, and James Moore a Junior Lieutenant. When the order came for Bowen's company to join the regiment it found its Captain, William Bowen, sick of a fever, and this situation devolved the command of the company upon Lieutenant Rees Bowen, who led it into the battle of King's Mountain, and there, together with several of his men, was killed and buried on the field. His remains were never removed, for the reason that when opportunity was offered for their removal the spot in which he was buried could not be identified. Campbell's Regiment lost in this battle 35 killed and wounded; among the killed, other than Lieutenant Rees Bowen, were Captain William Edmondson, Robert Edmondson, Andrew Edmondson, and Henry Henninger, and among the wounded, Charles Kilgore and John Peery, the two latter and Henninger from the Upper Clinch Waters.

Scouts on the Clinch River

William Bowen, James Fowler, Thomas Maxwell, Rees Bowen, David Ward, John Kingkeid, William Priest, John Sharp, William Crabtree, Samuel Hays, Robert Davis, Robert Moffett

Family links:

Parents:

[John Bowen \(1696 - 1761\)](#)

[Lillian *McIlhaney* Bowen \(1709 - 1780\)](#)

Spouse:

Margaret Louisa *Smith* Bowen (1737 - 1812)*

Children:

John Bowen (1760 - 1789)*

Rees Bowen (1767 - 1828)*

Siblings:

Rees Tate Bowen (1729 - 1780)

Nancy Ann *Bowen* Buchanan (1732 - 1759)*

Agnes *Bowen* Buchanan (1735 - 1801)*

Agnes *Bowen* Buchanan (1735 - 1801)**

Henry Bowen (1738 - 1808)*

Jean Jane *Bowen* Looney (1739 - 1780)*

Robert Pickens Bowen (1740 - 1817)*

Robert Pickens Bowen (1740 - 1817)**

William Bowen (1742 - 1804)**

Arthur Bowen (1744 - 1816)*

Mary *Bowen* Porter (1748 - 1820)*

Charles Bowen (1749 - 1833)*

Moses Bowen (1753 - 1773)*

*[Calculated relationship](#)

**Half-sibling

Burial:

Unknown

Created by: [Marie Mills](#)

Record added: May 16, 2012

Find A Grave Memorial# 90242808