



Oral family history of the William Steen and Jacob Neely generations of Rankin County

Mississippi states that William Steen was wounded and taken prisoner in the battle of Kings Mountain October 7, 1780. He was soon afterward rescued from the British by a band of American soldiers among whom was Jacob Neely.

Nancy Lusk Steen said that when she heard about her husband's wound she left her dead two year old Mary "Polly" Steen unburied at the fort and rode 40 miles through the night to tend to William. The fort might have been Wofford's Fort west of Union near Fairforest Creek.

Nancy Lusk Steen took William's red bandanna and steeped it in herbs. Then she pushed it into the wound and pulled it through to the other side. This killed the infection. He survived but was never as strong again. Multiple grandchildren wrote of seeing the bandanna which Nancy kept in a chest with some coins. She told them the stories.

William Steen is not recognized on the 1910 battlefield obelisk plaque.

The statements have misleading details. The British (actually American loyalist Tories) in the Battle of Kings Mountain (BKM) were completely killed or captured. A small party which had left Ferguson before the battle to forage were captured a day later. The prisoners held by the Tories were liberated as a result of the battle. The patriots at BKM were not a band, but a force sufficient to wipe out the 1125 Tories. How might we reconcile this account of Steen from Union

County, South Carolina and Neely from Person (then Caswell or Orange) County, North Carolina?

Colonel James Williams at BKM commanded a mixture of militia with units from both remnants of Colonel Thomas Brandon's defeated Union County whigs and a newly recruited company under Captain John Douglass from Roxboro, North Carolina. Jacob Neely deposed under oath that he was part of the company under Captain Douglass. One scenario would be that Steen fell during the first charge and was captured by Patrick Ferguson's loyalists. Then at the end of the battle, Douglass' Roxboro company secured his release.

Another likelihood is that Steen was taken to a patriot home in the Union or York District area. A possibility would be the Wells or Patterson cabins north of the battlefield where the wounded were known to have stayed. Another possibility is the barracks which Colonel Edward Lacey had constructed to shelter the wounded (John Copeland S30966). Note that somebody was dispatched to notify Nancy Steen that her husband was wounded and where he was taken so that she could find him.

Note that SC county locations are stated as today's boundaries instead of historic acquisition from NC and use of the term "district" which was replaced by the term "county". Use the BKMNP/com OVT places tab, Kings Mountain link to see the New Acquisition District map. Union is due south of Gaffney. Wofford's Fort was west of Union, east of Fairforest Creek.



The Patterson cabin dismantled and reconstructed behind the Kings Mountain Museum (old zip code 28086 post office building). Photos courtesy of Ellen Abernathy. The plank covered Wells cabin stands in its original 1780 place.



South Carolina audited accounts hold further evidence about the service of William Steen.

William Steen was born in 1749 in Chester County, Pennsylvania, the son of John Steen and Jane Moore. He married Nancy Lusk in 1772 in Union County, South Carolina. Their part of Union County was south of Gaffney around Thicketty Creek which was divided to create Cherokee County. William was buried on the family farm where there is no surviving marker. The family erected a marker at Barr Springs Cemetery, Westport, TN, gps 35.9129, 88.3524 where several relatives are buried.

Nancy Agnes Lusk was born in 1753 in Union County, South Carolina, one of ten children born to Robert Lusk and Mary Vance of Augusta County, Virginia. The Lusk family moved to South Carolina in the 1750's. They owned a plantation and a ferry on the Broad River. Robert and Mary Vance Lusk moved to Kentucky in the 1790's are buried in the Carrsville Cemetery in Carrsville, Kentucky. Mississippi Reconstruction Governor James Lusk Alcorn is a great-grandson of Robert and Mary Lusk and Nancy Agnes Lusk is his great-aunt.

THE STEEN FAMILY in Europe and America, by The Rev. Moses D. A. Steen, D.D. of Worthington, Ohio, second edition, 1917, Montfort & Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, 740 pages. It is a genealogical historical and biographical

record of nearly three hundred years, extending from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

After an introduction, BOOK ONE begins on page 35. It tells about James Steen and his descendants. BOOK FOUR beginning on page 142 tells about William Steen and his descendants. From page 142:

"William Steen was a farmer by occupation, a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and was wounded and taken prisoner in the battle of Kings Mountain October 7, 1780. He was soon afterward rescued from the British by a band of American soldiers among whom was Jacob Neely, whose granddaughter, Margaret Ann Neely, afterward married his (William's) grandson, Carroll Jeffries Steen in Rankin, County, Mississippi."

William's brother, Lieutenant Colonel James Steen, was stabbed to death in the summer of 1781 in Rowan County, North Carolina while endeavoring to arrest a Tory. Colonel Steen was highly respected and honored by South Carolina citizens. The Kings Mountain Battlefield monument of 1910 erroneously shows James Steen as killed at the battle. Joseph Kerr was the only patriot to name James Steen present at the Battle of Kings Mountain.

Nancy and William Steen had eleven children:

1. *John Steen* - (1774-1847 m. Margaret Vance)
2. *Mary Steen* (died in infancy)
3. *Elias Steen* (1779-1847 m. Elizabeth Smith)
4. *James Steen* (1781-1843 m. Sarah Collins)
5. *William Steen* (1783-1846 m. Mary Enochs)
6. *Nathaniel Steen* (1786-1827 m. Mary Collins)
7. *Robert Steen* (1787-1837 m. Malony Hollingsworth)
8. *Sarah Steen* (1790-1859 m. Thomas Enochs)
9. *Mary "Polly" Steen* (1794-1848 m. Judge John Rumley Enochs)
10. *Jane Steen* (c.1795-c.1858 m. Levi Noble)
11. *Silas Steen* (1804-1858 m. Hannah Myers)

About 1810, the Steen family began their move from South Carolina to Mississippi. They stopped for a time in what was Indian Territory (now Carroll County, Tennessee). One night, William Steen went out to investigate a disturbance. The next day, his family found his mutilated body and surmised that he was killed by a bear or by Indians. After his death, the Steen family, with the exception of John Steen, moved to Mississippi Territory (now Lawrence County, Mississippi), where they resided in 1814.

After the death of his father, John (1774) Steen returned to Union County, South Carolina where he was a planter and died in 1847 at "Steen City". After the division of his estate, his children settled in Lafayette, Tippah, and Yalobusha Counties, Mississippi in the late 1840's and early 1850's. John and Margaret Steen are buried in the Jefferies Family Cemetery near Gaffney, South Carolina.

In 1780, William Steen resided in Union County, South Carolina, whose patriot militia had been commanded by Colonel Thomas Brandon (defeated 08Jun1780). Torn apart and scattered, some of Brandon's re-organized men joined Colonel James Williams from the Little River District (Laurens/Newberry counties), South Carolina area as they retreated to Hillsborough, North Carolina where his brother John Williams, South Carolina Governor John Rutledge, and defeated General Horatio Gates among others had taken refuge.

Jacob Neely deposed (s7264):

He enlisted again as a volunteer militia man under the same Capt Douglass and his said brother [Thomas Neely] as Lieutenant and in a few days set off under the command of one Col. Williams [James Williams] for South Carolina and was in the battle of Kings Mountain in which the said Col. was killed and soon after said battle he returned home again in company with and in aid of some of his wounded fellow soldiers.

Joseph Neely, Jacob's brother, also under Captain John Douglas, deposed (s31879)

It was stated that 997 were killed, wounded and taken prisoner by us. Ferguson was killed. Colonel Williams rec'd a mortal wound and died [the] next morning. This declarant rec'd a wound and was conveyed home with another wounded from the same County, with two attendants.

Shadrach Gibbs <http://revwarapps.org/s10740.pdf> deposed:

till in the year 1779 in the month of March he commenced his 3rd Tour of service, as a substitute for William Steen.

South Carolina audited accounts stored documents which verified state payments to Revolutionary War patriots. One such document below was witnessed by William Steen. It was acknowledgment of payment to Moses Guyton, an influential resident of Union County SC. Richard Speake and John Lindsey were the Union County agents for soldiers to be paid in the Autumn of 1785. In another such document William Steen witnessed payment to Reyderus Clark for service in Captain John Montgomery's company of Colonel Thomas Brandon's regiment.

Moses Guiton order. September 30th 1785.
Then received of Richard Speake and John
Lindsey in Co full Satisfaction for my account
against the State of South Carolina and do
request that a Treasury Indent with the
Inventary will be delivered by the Commissioner
of the Treasury to said Speake and Lindsay
as witness my hand "Moses Guiton"

Test "W^m Steen"

To Mrs Edward Blakes }
Peter Boquet Esq }
Union } Personally appeared William Steen and
County } made oath that he did see, Moses Guiton
sign the above Instrument of writing and did
acknowledge the same. "W^m Steen"
Sworn to the 4th day of Octobr 1785.

"John Henderson J.P."
Moses Guiton £82.11.5.

Recd 4th March 1786. full Satisfaction for
the within in an Indent No 1792. A. pr Order
15 Feb. 1786. "John Lindsay"

No 1906. } Issued the 17th March 1786. to Mr
Book R } Moses Guiton for one Pound two Shil-
lings and ten pence Sterling for duty done
in the militia in 1778. as pr account audit-
ed. No 106. Principal £1. 2. 10^{1/4} Annual Interest £0. 1. 7

A likely Steen scenario:

Patrick Ferguson was sweeping through the Carolinas in his new job as General of the South Carolina Tory militia. He was reduced in his second job as army colonel to major of the British Army in that he had given up his red coat command to lead a professional provincial company of soldiers. They were organizing and training recruits for loyalist militia and for Lord Cornwallis' army. Whig families were being uprooted from their homes and taking refuge in settlements of likeminded patriots. Men were being forced to join the tide of British control or to flee. In one community after another, patriot militia units were being defeated.

One such community was Union, South Carolina, the home of William Steen, a patriot in Colonel Thomas Brandon's scattered Whig militia. Between Union and Fairforest Creek, Wofford's Fort was a place where patriots could gather for refuge and mutual protection from being taken in the night. It was the probable place where Nancy Lusk Steen took her three young children while William Steen was away with remnants of Colonel Brandon's militia. Mary Steen was a sick infant whose condition worsened while taken from her own home.

Leading up to 07Oct1780, Colonel James Williams of the Little River District, South Carolina militia was with exiled governor Rutledge and defeated General Horatio Gates in Hillsborough, NC frantically trying to reorganize the South Carolina upland patriots. North Carolina patriots were mobilizing to defend their state. Captain John Douglass raised a company around Roxboro among which were two Neely brothers. These fresh troops joined Colonel Williams' worn troops and headed toward Charlotte to stop Cornwallis before he raided their own neighborhood.

On Saturday afternoon 07Oct1780, four columns each of about 230 patriot militia encircled Kings Mountain and caught Patrick Ferguson's regiment off guard in the sunshine after weeks of rain and drizzle. The first battle action was to dislodge the provincial guards from their commanding perch atop Indian Knob, the southwest end of the ridge. William Steen and Jacob Neely were among the patriots who next charged up the northeast face of Kings Mountain. The provincial professionals evacuated Indian Knob to organize a thousand Tories. The loyalists repulsed the charge of the Whig patriots (whom they called rebels) and drove them off the mountain. We surmise that in this charge, William Steen was wounded and captured, perhaps by a turncoat neighbor from his own district.

The battle see sawed with charges from the south then the north being driven back until the confused loyalist regiment was huddled atop the northeast end of their sprawling camp. Jacob Neely was part of Captain Douglass' company of fresh North Carolina troops who forced the surrender of the camp, the wagons, and 1200 stands of arms. His wounded compatriot, William Steen, was freed from his brief captivity.

Joseph Neely was one of two Roxboro area soldiers wounded and escorted home. Jacob Neely was one of the escorts for the wounded. William Steen stayed around Kings Mountain in a patriot's care. None of these were part of the regiment which removed the surviving Ferguson regiment from the camp from which "only God almighty could remove them." As the prisoners were herded west and ultimately north to Bethabara, the York District was left with hastily buried dead and many wounded from both sides.

We surmise that a Sunday evening express to Union told Nancy Lusk Steen about the battle of Kings Mountain and obviously where to find her wounded husband. Nancy left her deceased infant child Mary “on the cooling board” to rush through the night to William Steen. She soaked the red bandana with herbs to disinfect the wound. She succeeded in saving William’s life, but not in preventing some disability. The bandana followed the family to Mississippi and was among the relics which the patriot widow left to her grandchildren.