

Fort Cathey of Turkey Cove

By Jeannette Holland Austin



William Cathey purchased land near Turkey Cove at the foot of the mountains where Cove Creek joined the north fork of the Catawba River and built a home there. During 1776, he built a fort in Burke County (now McDowell County) to protect the area from the Cherokee Indians.

For a long while it was the furthest military outpost in North Carolina during the Revolutionary War until Fort Davidson was constructed.

As Europeans encroached upon Cherokee lands, native hostilities erupted well before the Revolutionary War. Before that, mostly explorers and traders hunted the wilderness at the foot of the Blue Ridge mountains. By 1750, although only a few Cherokee villages remained, the natives claimed the territory. Among those sent to defend this fort was John Franklin of Burke County, who, during 1777, was sent to Fort Cathey for three months under the command of Captain Homer Watson. During his next service, he was sent to Fort Davidson under the command of Captain Charles McDowell. Reading the details of pension records is helpful to the researcher in gathering details.

For example, this John Franklin states that he was born at Ft. Stump, Virginia (now West Virginia).

The next step for the genealogists is to actually locate this site and research all of the surrounding counties.