

The Candle in the Window

By Jeannette Holland Austin (2019)



Chapter 1

Angus Macdonald was muscular for his sixteen years. The boy was rather handsome with his motley freckled nose and a full head of wavy red hair, and his stocky body and complexion was the mark of Macdonald clan in the Isle of Skye. It was his grandmother, Flora Macdonald who'd gotten them kicked out of Scotland when she hid the bonny prince Charles in the basement of her own castle to prevent his being captured by the English soldiers. The restoration of a Stuart to the throne of England was paramount in the minds of all the clan who took great risks in the skirmishes surrounding their castle. In the end, they lost. Angus was only six years old when the

prince died in France and the clan was exiled. He could scarcely remember standing shivering in the great damp hall of the castle while his father told him to pack his clothes. The punishing realization of sudden confiscation and poverty shattered the disposition of every Macdonald in the province. And the desperate escape was on board a vessel headed for the American colonies.

When the captain steered near unto the shores of North Carolina, his grandfather hastened a petition to the Royal Governor for a land grant in the fledgling colony. For days they waited in the vessel while the Governor pondered the prospects of allowing the dissidents into the colony. Finally, he granted several thousand acres in far off Moore County, the raw backwoods of Indian territory. The first several years in the colony were peaceful until their neighbors began decrying independence from England. Once again the displaced clan was asked to fight a battle against the mother country.

"I want no part on this," Duncan Macdonald declared, commiserating how severely the country had punished his family. "How can this little Nation expect to win their freedom against so vast a Naval force?"

Nonetheless, the counties organized local militias which could ill afford to fight for more than three month intervals before the soldiers returned home to plant and harvest crops.

Chapter 2

One afternoon as Angus and his father worked in the field bailing hay, a patrol of American patriots approached on horseback. The officers in the party wore three-cornered hats and long-coats trimmed with gold braid and were followed by a rag-tag militia of local farmers with buckshot rifles strapped across their backs. Soldiers were a familiar sight to Duncan MacDonald. He could smell one a mile away. So now instinctively, he threw down his rake and did what he'd always done, ran and hid in the woods. But the boy, Angus continued raking his stack into one large pile until the soldiers drew near.

"We came to warn you that Major McLeod rides now into Moore County to recruit you highlanders. If you remain here, they will surely take you into their ranks. Where is your father?"

Angus figured that they seemed friendly enough for him to be neighborly. "Gone. My mother and sisters are at the house, sir. Ehre ye thirsty? Can I offer a sip of water from the well?"

"Sure thing." The soldiers followed Angus to the well where he drew up a bucket of clear cool water. "Lots of springs nearby acomin from the creek over yonder," he pointed.

What is your name?"

"Angus MacDonald."

"Are you kin to General MacDonald?" He asked, thinking of the well-known redcoat officer.

Angus nodded. "Probably."

"Which side to you take, boy?"

"Dunno."

"Would you be obliged to tell us if you hath seen any redcoats in these parts?"

"None that I know of."

"Well you should be watching because we were told that the army is marching towards that creek."

"That close?"

"When will your father return?"

Angus shrugged his shoulders. "Dunno."

"We could use another hand. You look strong. Why don't you join us and help prevent the redcoats from reaching the bridge?"

"Well, my father would whip me for it."

"Your father favors the General, does he?"

"He don't favor any army!"

"Well then, if he don't care either way, we could surely use a flag-bearer."

Angus examined his dirty hands, then scratched his head. He was thinking of yesterday's cold February morning when the shovel wore blisters into them as he dug a trench wide enough to plant a bucket of potato eyes. "How long would it take to whip the British?"

"Three months is all we ask. That will get you back home for planting time."

Chapter 3

The emblems of bravery were before him. He stared at flashy gold braid of the officers and the rebel flag and thought of his father's cowardice and fearful flight into the woods. Some of his neighbors had made a dangerous decision to go against the British. Yet his father was too afraid to pluck himself from the English Tree and taste the thrill of battle. A chill went down his spine

as he felt the sense of excitement and danger. Prince Charles could never win his throne, but the idea of fighting a larger battle for freedom against the crown tickled his nostrils.

"I'll speak to me ma," he said before pausing momentarily, then sauntered down the path to the farm house his father had built with his own hands. The soldiers waited while he went inside to speak to his mother.

"Duncan Macdonald will whip you good!" She warned.

"Pa is a coward," he said firmly, "and the British soldiers ehre almost to the bridge at Moore's Creek. How many times ehre we gonna run from them redcoats?"

"I suppose we have a lifetime of running to do."

"Why? Why can't we stand and fight? I am fifteen years old and fully grown. I want to fight!"

"Wait for your pa to come out of the woods to decide."

"There is no time for that. The British are almost to the bridge and the rebels ehre waiting for me to carry the flag into battle!"

"Take the squirrel knife and bow and arrow."

Angus heard the sound of neighing horses and ran outside. A tall, lanky lad riding a mule showed him the path which the patrol had taken into the woods. "I am obliged to go with ye, being as the redcoats ere so close," he said.

"You look familiar to me."

"Me name is Hoke Campbell and me farm is over yonder ridge," the boy said pointing eastwardly.

"Yes, the old Campbell place."

"We were here before the Macdonalds," Hoke said proudly.

Chapter 4

Before reaching Moore's Creek they met up with a militia company of about one hundred men.

"What ere we?" Angus asked. The answer came from Hoke.

"We ere militia."

"I thought I was gonna carry the flag?"

"Can you shoot a man with that bow and arrow?"

"I can shoot and skin," Angus bragged, showing the knife tucked inside his belt.

That night in camp Angus learned that they were waiting for news from General Caswell before moving on. The General was at Rockfish Creek on the Black River, a place he'd won from the British. The plan was to cut off General MacDonald at Moore's Creek and thus prevent him from raising a regiment from the badly needed Highlander families. But first, they would have to cross over a thirty foot plank bridge at Moore's Creek.

While General Caswell was still in the northern part of Carolina, he'd dispatched Colonel Lillington's regiment to ride ahead of the main army and obstruct the crossing. The word came that they were approaching and marching towards the bridge. The sorted regiment was but a straggly collection of farmers who had arrived in good time to help dig trenches and construct a low earthen works under the bridge. Angus and Hoke were added to the trench crew. Angus surmised that digging trenches was just like hoeing potato beds, but deeper. His thoughts were of General MacDonald's determination to break up the army at the creek and force the Highlanders into service, including his father. "What happens if the redcoats force the Highlanders into service?" He asked Hoke.

"If they do not sign an oath of allegiance and fight with the British, they are taken prisoners and thrown into a prison ship in New Jersey."

His fear was greater now, and his heart pounded with every shovelful, knowing full well that the stubborn nature of his father would prevent him from signing the oath. Angus and Hoke helped drag two cannon to the end of bridge where it would fire a stream of volleys into the approaching British. With the trenches dug and the cannon in place, they were ready.

Chapter 5

The sound of General Macdonald's cavalry breaking wooden branches and the neighing and hoofing of horses plowing through the forest alerted the patriots. And then suddenly they had the first glimpse of hundreds of mounted redcoats galloping through the forest waving English flags and taking positions in an open field. General Macdonald wore a long coat pinned with medals and lined with gold braid. He paced his distance and shouted orders. Then there was the beating of drums and sound of trumpets echoing across the meadow. No purple flowers or daffodils at their feet could display so grand a display of color and fanfare.

Meanwhile, the patriots, wearing their piece-meal farm clothes stood out from the trenches to observe British commanders wearing striking plumes in their hats and silver scabards around their waists prepared to move the troops.

"Which one is General MacDonald?" Hoke asked plaintively.

"I dunno, Angus answered, scratching his head,"but I figure that the redcoats have at least two thousand highlanders in that field!"

The numbers in the rebel army were so small that they seemed to go unnoticed by the British as they prepared to cross the bridge.

Colonel Lillington circled his troops on the bridge. He had managed to camouflage his cannon and his rebels hiding beneath the bridge. Perhaps this part of the rebel forces was invisible to the redcoats because but one company of infantry marched from the meadow and approached the country bridge. Angus and Hoke shivered under the bridge as the steel nerves of Colonel Lillington held his patience as the infantry stormed the bridge. Then he ordered the two cannons to be lit and fired.

A black cloud of smoke erupted and momentarily hid the rebels while they ran firing from the trenches. Suddenly, they were surrounded.

"Fix bayonet!" The colonel shouted.

The smoke of the cannon and the redcoats charging the bridge and the weight of dead bodies falling onto them woefully pinned Angus and Hoke under the bridge. While muskets discharged around him, Angus loaded his bow and shot wildly into the confusion.

Meanwhile, General Macdonald ordered his cavalry to attack but upon reaching the bridge, much of their infantry men lay dead before them.

Colonel Lillington ordered another discharge from the cannon and a thick black cloud hovered over the trenches. The rebels had the advantage.

The drama of firing muskets, cannon and trumpets sounding the charge dominated the stage for several hours, all while Colonel MacDonald sat proudly astride his steed watching as his infantry was struck down. The smoke prevented him from counting his militia.

From a long distance he saw the faint outline of another army approaching. It was General Caswell. He waved his sword into the air, giving the signal of "retreat".

In camp that night the troops were exhilarated and were still excited when they commenced the march to Charleston, South Carolina.

Chapter 6. The Battle of Sullivan's Island, near Charleston June 28, 1776.

While the patriot militia fought their battle at Moore's Creek, British Commodore Peter Parker was sailing from Boston into Cape Fear and then to Charleston where he planned an easy

capture of the city. He had onboard the infamous commander Sir Henry Clinton. The British Navy was the largest in the world, an intimidating force against the patriots.

John Rutledge, a member of the Continental Congress arrived ahead of him and began making preparations for the defense of Sullivan's Island. He appointed the forty-six year old Colonel William Moultrie, former militiaman and Indian fighter to the task. It was Moultrie who saw Sullivan's Island as the perfect place to build a make shift log fort of spongy palmetto logs to deflect cannon balls. But first, Commodore Parker would have to maneuver his vessels across a series of submerged sand banks about eight miles out. As he did so, the British fleet would be wholly visible to the city. But Parker had the benefit of observing Colonel Moultrie's second South Carolina regiment constructing a fort with two inch planks nailed with wooden spikes to facilitate gun platforms and ramparts. Parker lowered several scout boats to observe possible landing points on nearby Long Island, just a few hundred yards from Sullivan's Island. On June 8, most of the British fleet had crossed the Charleston bar and anchored in Five Fathom Hole. With the fort only half built, Parker was confident that his warships would blast the fort into pieces and sent a proclamation to Colonel Moultrie to lay down his arms.

Only the palmetto logs seawall was complete, filled with sand, and with a rise of ten feet above the wooden platforms. A hastily erected palisade of thick planks helped to guard the powder magazine and unfinished northern walls. 9 and 12 pounders and several English 18 pounders and French 26 pounders were rolled into place to dot the front and rear walls. All of this awaited the nine British man-o-war ships including the 50-gun flagship, "Bristol" .

Chapter 7.

Meanwhile, on June 2nd, Major General Lee arrived in Charleston. In his ranks were the new youthful recruits, Angus Macdonald and Hoke Campbell. As soon as he arrived he was quick to order that fortifications built in the city proper, thinking that Fort Sullivan was too rundown to defend, however was overruled. The garrison on the island counted 425 men and gunpowder was in short supply. Lee, thinking that the fort had little hope of surviving the British guns, limited the amount of gunpowder in the magazines. The remaining powder would be used for his planned desperate defense of the city. On the other hand, the Indian fighter, Colonel Moultrie, disagreed, and planned a strong offensive. Perhaps it was the combined agitation of the two commanders which caused the men to throw themselves into the preparation. Angus and Hoke worked almost around the clock to build the northern wall. But Commodore Peter Parker's flag ship was always visible to them, as a reminder of its hefty 50 guns.

"Are they pointed this way?" Angus asked.

"What?"

“The 50 guns.”

Hoke scratched his head. “Guess so.”

“When do you think they’ll come against us?”

“Dunno. Maybe they are waiting for us to finish all this building, so they can blow it up.”

Angus chuckled. “They want to shoot off the cannons more than once then.”

“Yes, that is it,” Hoke answered, thinking of the half-filled powder magazines. “Major General Lee thinks we’re goona lose.”

The boys stopped musing to consider some sobering thoughts. The flag ship was mounted with enough guns too shoot them out of the water, and they knew it.

Chapter 8

Sir Henry Clinton planned an attack on the morning of the 28th . Indeed, he would blow the pitiful palmetto fort into the rushes and be well ahead of the game. He would blockade the port of Charleston and seize the city as a trophy. Meanwhile, on the island, Major General Lee and Colonel Moultrie argued over tactical maneuvers. Lee decided to post his 2nd South Carolina at the cannon while Moultrie’s guerrillas scattered in the woods with their muskets and hatchets and prepare to ambush the British as soon as they put foot on Sullivan’s soil. Angus and John were assigned powder magazine duty. They would have the daunting job of running buckets of powder to the guns under fire.

But Sir Clinton had made a grievous error. He landed some 2200 seasoned troops on Long Island. The plan was for the troops to cross the shallows during the heat of battle and take possession of Sullivan Island. But no one had troubled themselves to confirm the depth of Breach Inlet. When it was discovered that it’s low water was not shallower than seven feet, Clinton was mortified. His only option was to transport his men across the passage by boat in a series of landings and assured the commodore that he would create a diversion. After several false starts, he sent his men into the inlet. Heavy fire poured down upon them and those who reached the island, found themselves stranded on the beach.

Colonel Moultrie had ridden to the northern part of the island dukey that morning to inspect defenses. Opposite the Breach Inlet, Colonel Danger Thomson had 780 men dug in behind earthworks as well as two cannon and a commanding view of the beach. When Moultrie’s saw the number of the enemy’s boats in motion at the back of Long Island he galloped back to the fort just as Parker’s ships loosed their mainsails. As he rode through the gate he called for the drummers to beat the long roll. Moultrie had 26 cannon at his disposal but only about 28 balls

for each. Major General Lee stood ready at the guns.

Chapter 9.

Clinton's man'o war with it's 14 guns came into full view and fired it's leeward cannon. The rumbling sound of the first cannon ball as it rolled across the sea and exploded in the shallows was deafening. A near miss. The 2nd prepared to fire its first volley. "Wait! She's out of range," Lee said.

The vessel moved into position to fire a full volley. "Now!" Lee gave the signal to fire a simultaneous volley from the six cannon's on the northern rampart. But the British needed to close in. When their cannonballs failed to penetrate the fort walls, the British fired from Long Island. The patriots were now in a position to take deliberate aim, and poured a relentless volley onto Long Island. Angus and John rushed along carrying a stream of powder to the cannon, until their buckets were empty.

"More, more," the Moultrie ordered. "Keep em coming!"

"Colonel Moultrie, we've no more powder!" Angus cried.

As the men realized there was no more powder, the fort fell deafening silent. The Colonel sent into town for more powder. An hour passed. The men were yet alert, telling one another to keep an eye on the British Commodore. "Watch out for the 50 guns!" They yelled. However, Major General Lee stepped forward, putting himself in full view of the British. But the flag crumbled to the ground.

"Oh my God, the flag fell!" Angus said watching a ball split its staff. "Colonel, don't let us fight without a flag!" He squeezed through an embrasure and amidst a storm of splitting metal, retrieved the fallen standard. Then he ran back to the fort where he attached the flag to a sponge staff and planted it atop the ramparts. While this was happening, the powder arrived. Now Colonel Lee could concentrate his fire on Parker's two 50-gun ships. The "Bristol" took heavy punishment and in late afternoon a cannon ball carried away her anchor chain, causing her to drift and expose her stem to the fort's batteries. "Hit her now!" Moultrie yelled. They sent a blast which killed every man standing on the quarterdeck. The mighty "Bristol" was afire!

The British officers begged Commodore Parker to leave the exposed deck, but he refused. The next volley fired into his backside and ripped off his pants. From then on, the British Commodore paid the price of bad decisions. First, he ordered a division of ships to flank the fort, but the vessels ran aground on the shoals.

The "Actaeon" collided with the "Sphynx" carrying away its bowsprit and damaging the rigging. The two vessels extricated themselves from the shoals after several hours but the "Actaeon"

was lost and the captain had to scuttle her. Then Sir Clinton attempted to transport his men across the inlet by boat but Colonel Thomson's eager men greeted them with a withering hail of musket and cannon fire. It was hopeless. Clinton ordered his men back to Long Island and withdrew his troops. And by later that evening, Commodore Parker had also had enough. He broke off the fight and sailed on the receding ebb tide, taking with him the former Royal Governor of South Carolina, Lord William Campbell. The patriots had only lost twelve men, with twenty five wounded.

"My compliments, sir. Well, I fondly admit that you did the impossible," Major General Lee said, saluting Moultrie.

"Today, we sank two English man o' war and sent the British running with their tail between their legs," Moultrie said to his cheering troops. "You fought like the Romans, in the third century,"

"What is his meaning?" asked Hoke Campbell.

"I dunno, but we are won," Angus said smiling.

Chapter 10.

In July word came of the Declaration of Independence having been signed for the colonists. They celebrated with fireworks and a keg of beer. Colonel Moultrie entertained the troops by telling stories of Indians coming against him with knives and how he'd taken scalps.

"Where is that kind of fighting?" Angus asked.

"Up along the Saluda and Tugaloo Rivers."

Angus was more than impressed. No more did he want to be a flag boy. The tales of Colonel Moultrie had won his heart. After the celebration, the boring work of constructing a long narrow rampart out into the harbor and digging earthen works commenced. In August when the end of his three months term, he decided to find Colonel Andrew Pickens. The word was that Pickens had amassed an army of about 2000 men. So Angus and Hoke said goodbye to their fellows at Sullivan's Island and journeyed inland towards the Tugaloo. Word came to them as they neared the river that Pickens had suffered an ambush by the Cherokees and was saved by a last minute mounted charge of the militia. They joined Pickens army which was entrenched along the banks of the river waiting for another sweep of the Cherokee. Angus and John took care not to be seen as they crawled on their bellies through a thicket of briars to reach the muddy bank.

"Colonel, there are two boys coming up on us!" Someone whispered.

Pickens squinted his eyes. "More Carolina militia coming to enlist. Give them each a musket and a horn of powder."

"Give it to me," Hoke said confidently.

As he spoke, Angus removed an arrow from his quiver and loaded his bow, avering "And I can hit a squirrel in the eye!"

"I'm going to load now," Hoke said, pouring gunpowder into the chamber. Then he dropped to his knees behind the lines. The boys stayed awake all night waiting for an attack. But the fight did not come until morning of August 10th just as the sun rose in a splendid array of streaming colors of pinks and yellows.

"There's something moving in the water," Angus said.

"Oh it's just a snake."

"No! I see white feathers," Angus said loading a arrow.

Chapter 11

Word spread down the line. Several painted warriors suddenly bobbed out of the water and lunged forward into the ranks stabbing wildly with their knives. Hoke took his shot, and missed. Meanwhile a larger force came rushing from behind a clump of trees launching a stream of arrows across the river killing a number of Pickens' men. Some of them wore British jackets.

"That's the British dressed up like Indians," Pickens said, loading and firing his pistol before ordering cannon fire into the woods into the scampering Cherokees. With that fight won under their belts, the small patriot army proceeded towards the Indian village of Tamassy finding camp in a patch of woods on the Oconee River emeshed by a thick brake of cane. Picken's orders were to prevent the British from enlisting more Cherokees and to destroy all of the villages along the South Carolina frontier. The experience gained by Angus and Hoke taught the Cherokee way of ambush. Sometimes they ambushed the Cherokee and and sometimes Pickens did the ambushing. Tamassy appeared to be remotely settled, yet their skirmishes on the Tugaloo doubtless included its warriors. Pickens attempted to calculate how many in the village were nursing wounds and how many were out regrouping for war.

"Watch our backside," he warned the South Carolina Militia as he stationed guards around the sugar cane. His answer came soon enough when he heard screams and the whizzing of a tomahawk beside his ear. Part of that same war party launched a stream of arrows and brought down the first line of defense and then ran towards them with open blades. "Fix bayonet!" Pickens cried. They were in the heat of it now. The bare-footed warriors lunged again and again with their knives, cutting deep wounds into the skin and taking scalps. They were amazingly swift

and could kill several men while running.

They were losing. Pickens called for the cane brake to be set afire. The blaze caused a deafening cracking sound, like guns which gave the illusion that backup troops had arrived. In the confusion, the Indians retreated into the woods and Pickens' torched the village. Angus' heart beat wildly as the flames spit red and yellow daggers into the sky and enveloped the whole village, reducing it to ashes in a few minutes. He'd never seen anything so magnificent. He had stumbled along barely escaping the fiercesome arrows as his own bow had accomplished little, yet thrilled to the dangerous onslaught and Colonel Pickens rapid response.

During the next several months he would learn how to shoot the bow while running, like the Cherokee. And because of his skill and small size, he was sent into the brush with Hoke to spy on campsites.

Chapter 12.

The South Carolina Militia was alerted that Colonel Williamson, was camped along the Coweecho River in North Carolina and that Colonel Pickens was needed to help him clear the gorge of Cherokees cutting off supplies to the white settlement of Franklin. And always there was the nagging apprehension that Commodore Parker's fleet was laying off Cape Fear. When they arrived at Black Hole, as the pass was called, Colonel's Williamson's patriots had been ambushed and were under sniper attack from the Natives shooting who were perched in the cavity of a large boulder shooting down arrows.

"They hath the advantage....our musket balls cannot reach them," Williamson complained to Pickens.

Colonel Pickens surveyed the situation and then sent ten of his best bowmen to climb the backside of the mountain . The small agile bodies of Angus and Hoke made the climb without much difficulty and signaled the others to follow them into the sharp rocks of the gorge. From that perch they shot a steady stream of arrows and killed a goodly number of Cherokees. With this steady diversion in progress, Williamson moved his regulars into the gorge to climb the rocks into a position near enough to fire with their rifles. All afternoon the Indian fighters engineered the defeat of the redskins and when it was over had few casualties.

During the next several months the armies camped on the Coweecho assuring safe passage through the gorge. The dusty hot August days passed into a chilly November. Soon a blanket of white snowy ice would cover the gorge and the little town of Franklin would be snowed in for the winter. By January, Angus and Hoke had finished their term, and considered their options.

"I want to go home to Moore County." Hoke said. "What about you?"

Angus thought long before he answered. "I cannot go. My father will beat me within an inch of me life when he learns that I am an Indian fighter. I am different now and will ne'er be a farmer. Besides, I do not want to get rusty with the bow."

"Me neither. Where shall we go then?"

"The real fighting is in New York, against the Iroquois."

Angus was correct. The campaign had been taken into the northern colonies of New York and Jersey. Lord Cornwallis had captured Fort Lee in New Jersey forcing the patriot commander General Nathaniel Greene to abandon his position. And in January, General Washington defeated a British brigade at Princeton, driving them into Iroquois country.

"We are obliged to help whip the Iroquois!"

But not before they went into town and purchased two wool coats and pairs of boots with the mustering-out pay.

"Where will you be, sir?" Angus asked Colonel Pickens.

"Wherever the cause takes me, son."

The boys set out on a course to find General Greene. It was bitterly cold, and the further north they traveled, deeper the snow. But they were confident that they could shot any game that got in their sights and avoid mischief.

Chapter 13.

By the winter of 1777 the armies were camped in the blizzard regions of Germantown and Valley Forge. Finding the Iroquois in New York was not going to be easy. The British General was busy detaching Hessians and Iroquois to attack the American militia and heading towards Oriskany. Angus and Hoke were intent upon finding the militia and joining up with it. They were on foot and traversing the deep mountainous snow was an unhappy event. Somehow they reached the frozen waterfall in Richmond, Georgetown just before a blizzard blew another thick bed of freezing ice and found refuge inside a barn. They had not shot much game on the long journey and were starving. As soon as Hoke bolted the doors, he noticed a milch cow chewing on some loose straw., probably not fed in days. Her tits were leaking.

"I favor some warm milk," Hoke said drawing up a stool and squeezing warm milk into two large containers. Shivering, Angus ran his cold fingers over his thin ribs and rattled a cough. The skin around his eyes had a gray hue and cast daunting shadows across his hollowed cheeks. Suddenly he felt wheezy and fell limply to the ground.

“Angus! What is wrong? Get up!”

“I cannot,” he said, beginning a long ugly coughing spell. “Oh mother,” he whispered, “oh mother, how I need to your loving care.” Then he fainted.

Hoke tried frantically to revive him, first feeling of his pulse, then wiped his feverish forehead. After awhile, with Angus clumped up in a little ball, he decided to venture outside the barn for help. But the door was held fast by the wind, and as he struggled to break it open from the ice sickles, feared that the blizzard would carry them off. So he gave up. The night was very long. Hoke, all too aware that he must stay awake to care for Angus, could not sleep. He found an old horse saddle to prop under his head and placed a thin ragged blanket smelling of manure over his crumpled body. Then he laid beside Angus and hugged his arms around the thin frame. Angus must be no more than sixteen years, he surmised, judging by his height, and the freckles on his nose. And despite all the fighting, he still had the thin arms of a boy.

Chapter 14.

The blustery wind blew hard all night against the barn, but seemed to subside at daylight, and somewhere in a hollowed distance Hoke heard the eerie howling of a pack of wolves. Then his sensitive nose smelled burning wood. He cracked the ice off the door and pushing it open, sniffed the morning air. A thin trail of smoke came puffing out the chimney of a nearby house. Lord! There is a house! “I shall return,” he told the trembling Angus, “there is a house, a house.” He ran towards it. A large hill of snow was stacked around it, but he dug with his hands until he reached the door.

“Please! Please! I have a sick boy!” He called out, while scooping snow from around the door, that it might open.

After awhile, it was free. A girl peeked outside. “Well where is the sick boy?”

“I will fetch him, ma’am. He is in the barn. I will fetch him now.”

She watched him as he made his way back to the barn and carried Angus in his arms across slippery ice, intermittently stumbling and taking deep gulping breaths of determination. By now, the girl’s parents were also observing the treacherous maneuver. As soon as he was inside, he dragged Angus in front of the fire.

“What’s wrong with him?” The girl asked.

“Methinks pneumonia,” Hoke answered while bending over the hearth to warm his hands over hot coals.

"What kind of talk is that?" She asked.

"We are Moore County boys," he said proudly.

"I am Mother Grubbs, a woman said. "And this is my girl, Jenny Yours is a peculiar accent."

"Aye. We came from Skye."

"Skye?"

"Scotland. We are Scottish. That's Angus Macdonald and I am Hoke Campbell.

"Well I never heard of such a name as Hoke Campbell!" The girl mimicked.

"Have you had a meal, boy?" Mrs. Grubbs asked.

"No, I cannot remember our last meal. The woman was kind. She prepared a bowl of chicken soup and encouraged Angus to eat.

"Thank you kindly, Mrs. Grubbs. I suppose the blizzard has kept you away from your barn. That is where we slept last night, and finding your cow wanting, milched two gallons from her. When the snow lets up, I will fetch it for you. And if you will oblige by allowing us to sleep inside tonight, I will also cut a mess of firewood."

The girl snickered. "What is your name, miss?" Angus asked from across the room. He nose was clogged up and his voice hoarse.

"Jenny," she answered proudly.

"We can make do the night in front of your fireplace, should you allow it."

Chapter 15.

After that the Grubbs discontinued their part of the conversation, going about the work inside the house.

Mr. Grubbs took a shovel to the snow in front of the door and his wife, washed dishes in a pan of dirty water. "Shall I fetch water?" Hoke asked.

"No, tis all froze up."

"We have not bathed in days," Jenny said giggling. Hoke took a good look at her. She was a lanky girl with a waistline so narrow that she twice tied her apron around it. Thick brown eyelashes curled around her soft eyes accentuating the full dimples in her cheeks. He supposed she was about his age. Then he noticed one freckle on the tip of her nose. She noticed. He blushed.

“What are you doing so far from Moore County?” She asked.

“Looking for the Iroquois Indians. Have you seen any?”

“Hmph!” She grunted disbelievingly.

“We are Indian fighters,” he insisted.

With that piece of wisdom, Mr. Grubbs stopped his shoveling and confronted Hoke. “No one in their right mind hunts Indians in winter. And what for? They ain’t no good except to take scalps for the British!”

“Well it ain't been too long since we cleared some from Franklin pass, before the British got a hold of them,” Hoke said defensively. “We were with General Pickens.”

Mrs. Grubbs paused to eyeball Hoke. “Well, I suppose the army is taking boys.”

“Yes ma’am!” Hoke said, casting a piercing look at the skeptical Jenny.

Jenny examined the bow Hoke had laid aside. Jenny quit snickering and examined Hoke's bow. “Where are you going from here?”

“To Oriskany, New York, to find General Washington so he can put us with the militia. We heard that he recently won a battle near here, so we expect to find him soon.”

It stopped snowing the next day and Hoke kept his word, sawing and cutting wood. After an hour or so, Jenny came outside to gather the frozen eggs in the hen house and sneaked a peep at him from the barn.

“Jenny’s sweet on you,” Angus said.

“I hanker to stay here for the winter and get better acquainted,” Hoke admitted. “If it is agreeable with you, we can work for the Grubbs until spring.”

Angus smiled to himself. He did not relish another icy stiffening of his woolen coat nor the prospect of getting lost in the snow. “I am agreeable.”

Chapter 16.

By spring the two youngsters were demonstrating a familiar attachment, so much so that Jennie hinted an engagement and Mr. Grubbs asked Hoke's intentions.

The embarrassed Hoke had no intention of staying on, and made excuses to Mrs. Grubbs. “Angus and me ehre needed in the war,” he said firmly. “Colonel Pickens taught us how to

pierce the heart of an Indian whilst he runs and take his scalp too!"

Mrs. Grubbs was satisfied. All too soon the snow melted and the creek flowed. It was time to go. After Hoke cut his last stack of wood, Jenny followed him into the barn to further pursue the matter of his intentions. "Will you come back for me after the war?" She asked.

"Dunno."

"Would you , if I give you a kiss?"

He blushed. Her presence made him nervous as she slithered up to him and embracing his shoulders pulled his face close to her. "Like this," she whispered, puckering her moist lips, pressed her lips to his mouth. It was his first kiss. He dared not move. She gently pulled his mouth closer and playfully teased him with her kisses.

"What do you say now?" She whispered into his ear, while kissing that also.

Suddenly he grabbed her waist and hugged her tight. The experience was so pleasant that he heard himself say, "I will come back for you."

Chapter 17.

The boys followed the path of hoof prints to search for the army. They heard that in January General Washington had defeated a British brigade near Princeton, New Jersey. After that, they figured that the British, needing more troops, went into Iroquois country to enlist more warriors. Despite their winter layover, no skirmish had occurred, so they found the patriot militia where predicted, near Oswego.

The long winter passed with incident and the troops spent the summer sharpening flints, tightening bows and training. During August, a column of British Iroquois viciously attacked the camp and cleverly pushed it into a retreat towards British-occupied Fort Stanwix. The plan would have worked too had not the Indians and loyalists inside the fort deserted a few hours earlier. And when the dwindling British detachment left at the fort caught sight of the patriots, they fled.

Then, bad news came. General Washington was defeated at Brandywine. The war had moved into Pennsylvania. In September, Angus and Hoke were made part of a detachment which was sent to Paoli. It was here that they experienced another bitter defeat when the British caught them by surprise and massacred many Americans with their bayonets. Scarcely escaping with their lives, the boys were driven with the rag-tag militia into Germantown where they failed again to upset British positions. Angus and Hoke were despondent. Their enthusiasm waned, and the memory of their first win at Moore's Creek began to be sucked from their bones. The thrill was only a vague memory , a numbness lost inside the head.

"I miss Jenny terribly," Hoke said pitifully. "I wish she were here to rub the pain from my neck and shoulders."

"Would you go to her if you could?"

"How can I? The respect that we gained there is lost."

"The war is not ended. We might yet emerge as heroes?"

"Yes," he said solemnly, shaking his head doubtfully, wondering if that were at all possible.

Chapter 18.

Another brutal winter . This one heaved deep piles of blinding white snow onto the mountains and into the northern valleys below. The army made camp at a place called Valley Forge while General Washington took the main encampment of the Continental army into Morristown. The bedraggled patriots were courting defeat. They desperately needed troops, ships and supplies. Finally in February of 1778, news came that France had signed an agreement with General Washington to provide the needed troops and supplies. With the arrival of French ships, the British abandoned Philadelphia and moved their operations into New York. By June, Hoke and Angus found themselves in an open field near Monmouth, New Jersey facing the enemy with muskets and bayonets. Throughout the afternoon a scattered retreat began trickling into the woods with the boys lagging behind to deplete their quiver of arrows. They remained in the territory another year working their way towards the main encampment in Morristown where General Washington was laying plans to move the war to the south. The British had already taken Savannah and intended to lay a siege on Charleston. General Washington personally addressed the troops who'd served with him at Valley Forge and crossed the Delaware River in an ice storm. Their faces were stone cold and their bodies weary from battle. Washington spoke for a long while, trying to convince the lot of them to continue the fight. They had won very few battles and now the energized British, fat and fed, brought more ships. And it was wide knowledge that the infamous Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton had scattered the American militia with the mere swoop of his hand. The Colonel did not possess the stern arrogance of Sir Henry Clinton or Commodore Parker, but he had something better. Determination. After his long delivery of the news, General Washington pleaded for a new muster.

"At this moment General Henry Clinton's fleet of 90 troopships and 14 warships prepares to sail for Charleston. His force is more than 13,000 men. Word has come that he has been delayed in New York due to stormy seas. But the storms are passing, and he should be off the Carolina coast by February. Major General Lincoln defends the city. We cannot lose Charleston," he said passionately.

Angus blinked. His happy boyhood memories of the battle on Sullivan's Island gave him a

panoramic view of Commodore Parker's fleet anchored in the harbor, expecting a quick victory. And then the blundering mistakes of the Commodore when he landed his infantry on Long Island without first testing the shallows. How easy that victory seemed now. "I will sign the muster," he said suddenly. "That means we would be Continentals," Hoke whispered.

"I know."

"You are just gonna forget about the massacre at Newtown?"

"Aye. I don't want to burn any more Indian villages. I just want to help fight the British head-on. I am a grown man now."

Hoke stared at him. Angus was no longer the boy. He had wide muscled shoulders and his lean skinny body towered near six feet. "Well, I suppose that you are too tall to disguise your movements, or to push through crevices."

"Do you care so much that we'd be Continentals?"

"No," he said thinking of Jenny, "Where else can a soldier go except into the heart of battle?"

Chapter 19.

The next three years were a hapless pursuit of skirmishes in the bitter cold of the Indian villages and backwoods. The cause had been removed to near Charleston where Admiral Sir Peter Parker was expected to make another direct sea approach. This time he convinced General Clinton to land his fleet some thirty miles south of the city and make an overland approach. On February 11, 1780, Clinton's troops were put ashore on the southern tip of John's Island where for two months they would plan to lay a siege on the city. It was a vital step. The British needed a southern stronghold. Hoke and Angus did not delude themselves into thinking that the British would err again in a big way. The days of wearing the war like a fancy coat was over. Every soldier on both sides had gotten smarter just trying to stay alive. If anyone was a hero, it was General Washington's troops who crossed the frozen Delaware River one night wrapped in rags and somehow defeated the enemy.

Hoke and Angus had signed up to defend Charleston. They were no longer the boys from Moore County. No one called them that any more. They were men grown to be nigh unto six feet tall who wore long coats and three-corner hats, looking every bit the infantrymen. Instead of the quiver and bow, they carried rifles slung over their large muscular shoulders. Angus tied his wavy red hair with a thin ribbon to the nape of his neck. His thick eyelashes curled around his clear green eyes and accentuated a mouth of smiling white teeth. Hoke had a knotted head of sandy hair and his chest was covered in a thick bed of curls. They reached Charleston just hours before General Clinton's troops surrounded the town. They tried to seek out the commander,

but the assaulting forces threw them into the battle. They ran to the city wall, loaded and fired. Just as they had been skilled in the quiver and bow, both men were also expert sharpshooters. But it did not make any difference. For two weeks the British cannonaded from land and sea, destroying brick walls and wooden stockade fences until thick clouds of smoke covered their charge, one after another, into the town. Hoke and Angus were taken prisoners in the first riveting sweep and dispatched to a prison ship in the harbor more prisoners were cast into the dark dirty hole and clapped into chains until the hole was crowded, sweaty and stinky. Every few days a taskmaster came crawling down the stairs and beat bloody whelps across their backs with his whip; a chore he seemed to enjoy. After awhile, as the beatings came in a daily regime and the prisoners suffered from fever and starvation, they lost track of time.

But one day, Angus heard someone whisper. "If ye ehre get loose, remember the night room. "

"What? What is this?" Angus probed.

"Go to the battery and look upward for the upper room of a warehouse what keeps a candle burning in the window all night."

"Is this real, what you are telling me?"

"It has to be real," the soldier swore, "twas a hushed message passed through the ranks."

"What's the difference," a soldier groaned, "We will all be dead by morning."

"Hoke! Hoke! Ehre ye gonna die?" Hoke's sickly face lifted revealing a pasty complexion and hollowed out cheek bones . The whites of his eyes were yellow and stared blankly at Angus.

"I'm gonna escape," Angus said.

Hoke's lifted his head to answer his friend, but instead started a coughing spell. Finally, he squinted his eyes and said bravely, "Tis a long dark night, but the moon is high."

Hoke did not answer. Instead, he buried his head in his sleeve and cried. "Go on," he sobbed, "if the good Lord be willing, I shall come later."

Chapter 21.

Twass the illness of his friend and the inevitable hopelessness and despair which caused Angus to act. That evening the taskmaster was careless. After administering a good beating to the prisoners, he left the ladder standing propped against the trap door. Angus wasted no time in climbing it and sliding out of the hole and onto the deck. For a moment, he paused to inhale a breath of fresh air and feel a whiffy breeze caress his skin. It awoke him to the prospect of his escape. The sky was dark and the moon high, just as Hoke had predicted. He hid in the folds of a

sail until 3 bells, then slithered across the deck and dropped lithely into the bustling waves spilling over the hull of the ship. For a moment, he wondered if the British came too far into the shallows like they'd done before. The answer was no. Lucky for him the prison ship was anchored on the Ashley River near the swamp. He would have to swim between beaver traps and take his chance with alligators and snakes. Heck! A trifling chore for Moore County lads. But once he felt his body slide into the warm seaweed water, he paused before taking the swim. A spell of weakness overtook him. Short rattling breaths gasped from his lungs. He could not recall when he'd last eaten. There was some satisfaction in realizing that he need not feel guilt because Hoke would have never made it. Perhaps it was this thought or the prospect of the night room which propelled him into action, but suddenly the breathing got louder as he flailed his thin arms across the waves and pointed his pitiful body towards shore.

The next thing that Angus remembered was scratching blood to the mosquito whelps on his arms and realizing that he had slept the night amidst some river brush thick with flies and mosquitoes. Part of his body was emerged under the white blooms of water lilies pads and as he lifted himself out of the river bed, spied a covey of ducks and geese ominously rising through a thin layer of fog. The lights of a lit two-storied brick manor house could be seen on the other side of the swamp and a vague outline of a dock stacked high with cotton bales. He took inventory of his ragged clothes and dirty skin. He would have to meander away from the area, finding his way to the battery, staying close to the river bank and out of sight until nightfall. Then he would search for the night room.

Chapter 22.

The Ashley River was his guide; it's swampy courses and beaver traps led to the harbor and the sight of the British fleet anchored far from shore. Several soldiers on watch sat sleepily on the dock, sipping a tankard of beer. Angus followed his nose through the unlit markets and a row of brick warehouses, watching for a light.

There it was! One thin candle lit in the upper room of a warehouse. He approached the building cautiously, peering around corners, dragging himself up the wooden stairs to the second floor. Finally, he knocked. The door opened. An older rather pudgy gentleman stood before him wearing a white wig. "Come inside. Step lively now, son," he whispered. Once inside the room, the gentleman latched the door and observed Angus. He poured water into a large china bowl from a china ewer which Angus recognized as the bathing ritual from a time long since passed, his childhood. "Wash up son," the gentleman said kindly, while he assembled a shirt and trousers, and a pair of clean gray stockings. "There is no need to worry. Your ordeal is over; you are safe here."

"Do ye have food?" Angus asked.

"The remains of my supper plate."

"I shall gladly eat it , sir, and thank ye for it."

"We will converse when you are finished, or if you are too weary, you may sleep first."

Angus gobbled up his food.

"My watch is ended for tonight. I will go now and return again tomorrow evening. If another one comes, allow him inside. But first, follow me to the door and secure the latch."

"Thank you, sir," Angus said. Afterwards, he fell fast asleep on a small cot in the corner of the room and passed the night without incident. The next morning, he heard a light knock on the door, and peeping outside saw only a plate of biscuits and jelly on the ledge.

Chapter 23.

The gentleman returned the next evening and introduced himself as Charles Drayton of Drayton Plantation.

Angus nodded, wondering if that was the plantation he saw on the river. "I am Angus Macdonald from Moore County, sir."

"What is your rank, soldier?"

"Private in the Continental Army. You see, my friend and I were reporting up for another three months when we decided to reup and fight Colonel Parker again but were captured just as the redcoats took possession of the town."

"You were at Sullivan's Island?"

"Yes sir, we fought that battle."

"And were taken to the prison ship in the Ashley swamp?"

"Yes sir."

Drayton nodded. That was the swamp on his plantation, and the prison ship could be seen from Drayton Hall, his palladian home. If the truth be known, certain patriot sympathizers took turns in the night room.

"Not long were you in the ship, eh?"

"I do not know recall, sir. You see, I was put inside a dark hole, and there was no way of discerning day from night, except when the taskmaster who came to administer the beatings.

After the first several days of being beaten, the days just seem to fade into oblivion. I tried to remember things, because all that was left was the memories.”

“The memories?”

“Of my childhood, sir. I pondered a great deal on my father’s avoiding the war. He hid in the woods that day when the patriots rode up and inspired me to enlist. I ne’er saw my father again, and spent many thoughts wondering if the redcoats e’re caught up with him and forced him into that army.”

“What did you decide?”

“Well, I remembered afterwards fighting the battle of Moore Creek, when the British came a-looking for Scots to enlist and instead met our regiment. We bloody beat them, sir. So, I surmised that they ne’er caught up with him. After that, I became an Indian fighter and scout. For three years my friend and I fought the Iroquois Indians. I can remember their feathered headbands and war paint, but I cannot remember my father’s face. Is that strange? The strange thing is, up until I was taken prisoner, I thought of my father as a coward!”

Drayton ‘s expression became solemn. Members of his own family sympathized with the British and did their bidding. "You changed your mind?"

"Yes sir. We left Scotland because the clan hid the bonnie Prince Charles. And he did not care to fight another battle against the British. The beatings taught me the true meaning of fear. My father is nought cowardly, only bone-weary. I yearn to see him now, and apologize."

“Many prisoners have found their way to this room and I was able to get them back to their homes, but circumstances are such that I cannot help you. However, you can help me.”

Angus raised his eye brows as Drayton told him the truth. “After hearing your tales of fighting the Iroquois, it is as though God himself hath delivered a person of your skilled maneuvers into my hands. We need you to help smuggle rifles and stores to the continentals and militia. Lately, we hath not been able to squeeze past the blockade. I need an experienced soldier, like yourself, but you will have to reside in Charleston and pretend to be a loyalist.”

“Is that what you do?”

“Yes. I shall pass you off as a nephew. You sort of resemble the Draytons with your red hair and green eyes. The Drayton family seat is in Inverness, you know so many of my relatives still speak the gaelic. Yes, I think that is believable that you could be a nephew. You will travel under the guise of a factor representing the Draytons. That will give you unquestionable access to all of my affairs and good reason to oversee the inventories and to hide contraband. You will reside inconspicuously inside my town home on Bay Street. But you must sleep here, in this room. The

reason is to receive contraband, and any soldiers who find their way from the enemy lines, just as you did. The job is dangerous. Will you do it?"

"Yes sir."

Chapter 24

The following morning Angus dressed in a fashionable suit of clothes which Drayton left him, and took a brisk walk to Bay Street. He kept his eyes down and avoided the mulling crowd in the markets, arriving at Colonel Drayton's home in time for breakfast. He glanced upwards to a steep pitch roof and a set of dormer windows set in the attic. The house was an elegant three-storied edifice with white columned porches landscaped with floral bushes and a narrow wrought-iron gate leading to a rear garden. The garden afforded clandestine access to a private room. Once inside the main hall, its high ceilings, columns and lavish appointments accentuated the Drayton wealth and influence. He was led to the drawing room. An oil painting of Colonel Drayton hung over large mantle at the far end of the room framed by two windows brandishing dark red velvet curtains tied with gold braids. Its splendor was unlike anything he had ever seen, and he waited patiently for whomsoever would greet him. Eventually he was greeted by a short chubby woman with neatly coffered hair and a rose-decorated fan. He supposed that she would be one of his contacts, but changed his mind when she introduced herself as Colonel Drayton's auntie.

"I am told them that you are a nephew visiting from the Isle of Skye," she whispered.

Angus kept his eyes down as he spoke. "Yes ma'am."

"I am told that your business in this country will require irregular hours. How long do you expect to be in Charleston?"

"Dunno, the blockade...."

"After breakfast, I shall take you to your room. Everything is laid out for your comfort, including dualing pistols and sword."

The household had been briefed. He was inconspicuously received by the servants. Auntie led him to a table set with twelve china plates and tea cups. He was told that the household knew frequent guests, mostly old friends who purported to be loyalists and occasionally ranking soldiers assigned to the British fleet. Once the celebrated Sir Henry Clinton had taken tea and crumpets at the Drayton's austere table.

Colonel Drayton sat at the far end of the table. Angus was seated between Josh Smith and Lucas Fricks, two rather plainly dressed persons introduced to him as the overseers of the Drayton plantation. Their presence signaled Angus' duty to acquaint himself into their affairs. Both of

them cast a rather suspicious expression upon Angus. Neither seemed to appreciate the Scotsman. In the forthcoming months Angus would learn as much as he could from them about local affairs and citizens. There could be no surprises as he prepared to sneak through a well-fortified blockade. Nevertheless, his snooping antagonized the overseers, and they avoided him. One afternoon as he approached a barn being stuffed with cotton bales, he overheard them jesting.

“He is nought a Drayton as far as I can see, with that ragged head of red hair and green eyes. No Drayton ere had green eyes that I know of.”

“His brogue is that of a country lad.”

“What do ye know of me?” Angus said, stepping into the barn quite suddenly.

“Why master Macdonald,” one of them said blushing. “We were just musing.”

“Answer my question. What do you know of me?”

“Why nothing, nothing at all. I suppose that is the reason, because you do not appear to be one of the Drayton aristocrats.”

“No. Nonetheless, twas the Macdonald Clan which entertained Charles Stuart, the Scottish pretender to the throne of England. ”

"That was a before King George III?"

“Yes, a long time before.”

Chapter 25

Angus was a quick study. He delved deeply into the Drayton affairs. By the end of the hot Charleston summer, he was more familiar with the operations of the plantation than Colonel Drayton. Josh and Lucas eventually fell in line. They appreciated his plain truthful manner and forthright approach to issues and especially because he treated them as friends. Josh and Lucas clarified their political positions by complaining of the meddling British soldiers who frequented the home as guests and while preventing rice and cotton shipments

Ultimately, they became his most trusted connections, and were chosen to accompany him on a sloop which would smuggle a long overdue shipment of rifles and muskets to Georgetown. To Josh and Lucas, the idea of sneaking a shipment through the blockade was exciting.

On evening in August, they pushed a weighted sloop out on the first tide while Angus unfurled the main mask to catch a strong wind. The sloop was swept into the churning sea a far distance from the anchored British fleet. Once they left the harbor, the journey would involve several

check points through the blockade which Angus had charted. During the journey he taught Josh and Lucas how to manage the sails while he steered the course towards Georgetown and into the channel which led to the Pee Dee River. Colonel Drayton had arranged a long visit to one of his relatives who lived on the river and had brought wagons and horses to transport the goods to Georgetown. The sealed packet of introduction to Mrs. Clements was secret information.

Angus wore a tam on his head and one of the red and green plaids from the Drayton chest in his room, loosely draped across his shoulders. He had the appearance of a common Scotsman. He removed the tam and ran his fingers through his red hair while giving the plaid a good shaking. Mrs. Clements greeted him solemnly on the dock. She had a lantern in his hand which swung rhythmically as she stepped lightly across the dock.

"Angus Macdonald," she said, "bring your friends inside. A cold supper has been laid on the table."

While they ate their supper and explained the strangulation of Charleston, Mrs. Clements had workers unload the cargo and replace it with a disguise of fruits and delicacies from Georgetown. He learned that she was widowed, having lost her husband at Waxhaws. She cried and laughed as she spoke of the sad events which led up to how the heartless Colonel Banastre Tarleton gave no quarter. The militia knew that they were beaten and although a white flag signaled surrender, Colonel Tarleton ordered his regiment to cut them down with their swords.

"Ma'am, we are familiar with the massacre at Waxhaws and the Loyalist force led by Colonel Banastre Tarleton," Angus confided. "We shall never forget Waxhaws."

"Mr. Clements was a proud militia man, one of the first to enlist from the Pee Dee district." As she told the story of their life in the backwoods, Angus began to doubt that the Clements were true relatives of the Draytons.

"You were too friendly with Mrs. Clements," Josh said as they geared up for the Pee Dee. "You should be leery of strangers in this man's war!"

Chapter 26

Sneaking back through the blockade was more difficult than anticipated. When the Drayton sloop reached the back waters of the Ashley River, a British 16-gunner awaited them in the shoals. As soon as it spotted the little sloop, it fired a near miss. Josh made a fast turn of the wheel and dashed towards one of the coves.

"We wait here until dark, then sneak behind her into the swamp." Josh and Lucas were adept at navigating the swamp and planned to drop anchor at the cotton loading dock. When darkness came, the sloop caught a good wind which swung them past the British war ship into the murky

regions of the swamp.

“That’s gator island over there,” Josh pointed to an infestation of riveted tails sithering along the bank. A spray of moonlight sprinkled through a clump of pine trees and sprawling oaks and the sound of a hoot owl echoed through its hollows.

Josh and Lucas poked the oars through murky creeks and navigated through a scary pitch black night.

“I can’t see ole nanny, but I knows she be there on yonder bank.”

“What?”

“She’s a gator fourteen feet long. Weighs more than 500 pounds, I’d say. This is her territory.”

“Do you think ole nanny would mind if we slept on top of these here cotton bales?” Angus asked, as he stepped onto the dock. The warm moist bog would emit smells of algae, fungus and decaying animal matter during the night.

The next morning after sleeping in the swamp, they made their way to Drayton Hall, the Colonel's plantation house. The mansion was situated near the river and overlooked a panoramic scene of rows of a maze of English boxwood and rose gardens in a setting of sprawling angel oaks. The two-story palladian brick featured a double portico and pedimented chimneypieces. The mansion stood eerily statuesque in the early morning light while the river sprayed a wet dew across the meadow. A number of horses were coraled nearby as the redcoats had taken possession of the house.

Angus borrowed one of the Colonel's horses and rode into town. No one noticed him; he wore found an old hat over in the barn and a ragged shirt which lent the appearance of an inconsequential farm hand. The journey to town was fifteen miles from Drayton Hall. As he rode, his thoughts were on Hoke.

He was in a hurry to get to the warehouse and light the candle. But first he went to Bay Street and passed unnoticed through the rear entrance. He stripped off his shirt and pouring a basin of water lathered himself all over with a bar of lye soap. His arms and legs were badly mosquito bitten and blood seeped from scratched skin.

Then he laid on his cot and allowed the warm air to dry his skin. He napped for an unknown period of time. When he awoke, the muscles in his arms and legs were inordinately sore. He dressed in the clothes left set aside by Auntie, and set about combing prickly briars from his long red hair before taking the scissors to the tangled clump. Finally, he tied the uneven clump with a ribbon behind his ears. There were other issues. The sun had tanned his cheeks and neck. He tied the cravat so that it completely concealed his neck, but the cheeks were a conspicuous

telltale sign of exposure. Colonel Drayton would be anxious to hear his report. He found him inside a small parlor.

As was his custom, he gave three short knocks. "Enter, sir," the Colonel shouted.

Colonel sat at a rectangular planked oak desk specific to the task of large stacks of paper, and thick accounting books. "How are you, dear boy?"

Angus was anxious to provide details, but the Colonel signaled for him not to speak until after he'd shut the windows and closed the doors. "Now you can tell me about Mrs. Clements. Is she well?"

"Mrs. Clements is well and strong. She was waiting for us on the dock and secreted the contraband. We were treated kindly, sir. She fed us a fine supper."

"Indeed! Indeed, sir!" He said smiling. "Noteworthy is the fact that your face is sunburned. There is a bit of starch powder in your room; brush it over your face and cover the sun blisters. Also, a suit of evening clothes shall be laid out for this evening when you will meet certain distinguished persons. You must be convincing as my nephew this evening. The conversation will be politically repugnant to you, owing your circumstances. Say very little and keep a low profile. We are expecting the Governor and his contemporaries as well as officers of the military occupation."

Chapter 27

Angus attempted to powder the sun-tanned skin, but it did not conceal the freckles on his nose and cheeks and instead left a pasty residue. Also, the sun had bleached strands of his red hair around the ears. No matter how fancy his costume, he still had the dreggy appearance of the Scottish population. However, he was a full grown man with flashing good looks. In the evening he accompanied Colonel Drayton in the grand hall where he was presented to the the arriving guests. Not something he particularly enjoyed as he'd been raised as a farm boy, yet he was pressed to settle their curiosity about his sudden presence in Charleston. The Colonel explained it simply.

"My sister sent him to me as an apprentice factoring agent. Goodness knows, I need the dear boy during these trying times."

"Are you able to ship to London?" Someone asked.

"No sir," Angus answered, "not during the occupation."

"We are redirecting all of our cotton to London," Colonel Drayton said quickly. "We procured an auction house and the Governor issued his permit."

Angus greeted a lovely girl being escorted by an distinguishable gentleman with a square jaw and gray side burns. She was the daughter of a staunch loyalist whose social life had been cut off by the occupation. The local boys were members of the continental forces or prisoners of the British. All that remained in Charleston was an awkward supply of penniless British sailors. Although a rather startling number of British soldiers were attracted to her, ignoring them was her first priority as she was of the proper age to be courted and a proper husband selected, a process with which the presence of the army prevented.

Her face must have had a crust of wax on it, because little ridges broke off from the lips. Angus represented the possibility of a suitor, but she did not smile. Instead, she covered her face with a tiny ornamental fan. He observed her as she stepped away, a long red silk cape billowing across the ridge of the popular farthingale girdle accentuating her gown. The wide skirt demanded a carefully executed turn, which she did artfully, lifting her dress in such a fashion that the tail of the silk cape flowed behind her. Angus watched her as she crossed the room and engaged the attention of a small group of neighbors.

Suddenly he felt someone watching him! His eyes searched the room and fell on a redcoat standing guard at the front door. The redcoat stared directly into his eyes . His bushy eyebrows and slender face seemed familiar. The taunting blue eyes stared unmercifully. Then, like a haunting dream it all came back. Hoke! He was not dead. Hoke was a redcoat! The bushy eyebrows raised and dropped with an easy grin. His face pointed westward. Angus understood.

As the evening progressed and the Colonel was engaged in a stringent discussion with the Governor concerning his cotton shipments, Angus slipped unnoticed into the garden. After several moments, Hoke appeared.

"How did you escape?" Angus asked.

"It is simple. I signed the oath."

Angus was shocked. "After all the fighting against the British, you join them?"

"If you will recall, I was quite ill, near death, actually. They agreed to put me in the hospital if I signed the oath. I was taken to one of the hospitals here in Charleston. My injuries healed and the fever disappeared."

Angus shook his head warily. Someone was approaching.

"It was my only chance, so I took it! Am I to be blamed for that? Please believe me, I am not a redcoat. I want to join up with the Continentals. Help me break through the lines, if you can, Angus," he whispered before slipping away in the shadows of a row blooming myrtle trees.

Chapter 28

Later that evening as Angus walked briskly to the battery, his thoughts were on his new identity, the arrogant British officers who expected a certain sympathy which Colonel Drayton could not provide, the Governor's refusal to allow cotton shipments, and all of the events of the evening which combined to deliver one Hoke Campbell. He argued with himself whether to tell Colonel Drayton about Hoke. As of yet he knew very little concerning the depth of the Colonel's loyalty towards the patriots. He seemed to oblige the wishes of the redcoats at every turn, but the wheedling seemed to interfere with plantation business. He climbed the unpainted wooden stairs to the warehouse. The room had lay in the dark shadows of night all while he partied on Bay Street. He lit a small candle and placed it in the window. He undressed to his night shirt and climbed in bed. A succession of emotions interspersed with confrontational images played a strange drama in his sleep, some of which he remembered upon waking. The analysis which followed served him not, for it was replete with strange images of his escaping the prison ship and running into a thickly tangled forest of brush and briars, with Hoke following closely behind.

By morning he had resolved not to tell the Colonel about Hoke. At first light he returned to the Drayton house and ate a hearty breakfast of eggs, sausage and spoon biscuits. There was much to do today. His instructions were to ride the fifteen miles north and visit the Drayton plantation and observe the cotton crop while it was being baled. Also, he was to present Sir Clinton's note to port authorities. The Colonel had previously secured a vague promise from Sir Clinton that he could make a shipment to his London factoring house, and decided to act upon it, while ignoring the Governor's refusal. After all, the standing army carried more weight than civil authority.

Angus walked to the blacksmith shop and saddled Colonel Drayton's sorrel mare. His experience during the war taught him a keen eye for horse flesh. He took the reins with his gloved hands and mounted, tipping his hat to several neighbors as the horse pranced along the swamp road which led to the cotton dock.

Lucas was wrestling with a bundle of baling wire and instructing some young bucks on how to wrap the cotton. A steady stream of sweat dripped down his face and cheeks onto his neck. His plump muscled arms were bare and flexing in the hot sun under the strain of lifting finished bales. He had a certain hardiness about him; a perennial worker of infinite strength and energy.

"Ah, Mr. Angus, come to inspect the cotton, 'ave ye?"

Angus slipped off his horse and observed the operation. "When will the cotton be finished picking?"

"I figure in a day or so. Then the baling will use up the better part of a week."

Angus inspected the bales and scratched his head. "Colonel Drayton wants a shipment to go out

today. The Cotton Queen is shipping out to London with the evening tide. Before that, we need to get pass the port authority and get it loaded."

Lucas hesitated.

"Why ehre ye troubled?"

"How about the crop not harvested?"

Angus shrugged. 'Dunno."

All day the farm hands helped bale and load hay. Angus led the way with his horse. Following was a team of Colonel Drayton's team, harnassed and dragging large bales. All afternoon the mules delivered the cotton for to the Drayton dock. Angus decided to test-run one flat boat, to see if it could get through to the "Cotton Queen" anchored in the Charleston harbor.

Angus and Josh boarded the sloop which was to take the lead down river, first navigating around the prison ship anchored in front of Drayton Hall, and then float down stream to the shipping wharf in Charleston. Awaiting them were the inspectors and port authority.

"No cotton ships ehre allowed out of Charleston!"

Angus removed Sir Clinton's letter from his vest pocket and casually presented it to the inspector. The reluctant inspector grunted and waved them through, but not before Angus informed them that they would be loading all afternoon.

Later that evening before returning to Bay Street, Angus watched the Cotton Queen as it cleared the harbor to go asea. The carriages in front signaled another gathering and sound of laughter echoing into the street. Angus walked beneath a cluster of crepe myrtles which led to the rear entrance and quietly let himself inside a room. As usual, he was expected to attend the gathering, and a wash basin of freshly poured water and towels awaited him. Auntie had laid out a satin vest and waistcoat. Also, a silver stickpin for his cravat and several gold finger rings. There was little doubt but what the Colonel was trying to impress a special guest. He dressed carefully, as Auntie's keen eyes would be searching for flaws. And more importantly, Colonel Drayton was waiting to hear whether or not his cotton shipped.

The special guest was Sir George Manigault from London, a friend of the Governor, who was in Charleston to dispose of a land grant of some thousand acres his family had received to settle a "swamp" as he described, it. Yet after dinner, when the gentlemen retired to the parlor to smoke their pipes, Manigault started the conversation himself.

"Why should you want that swamp? The colonists will soon lose the war,, and King George will

recover his investment by taxing the land of the colonists," Manigault said pompously.

Actually, only part of the tract was situated inside a swamp, while the major portion of it was ideal for growing rice. Before the war, certain planters in Carolina had made their fortune on the crop. Not only had Drayton had offered a fair price for the land but he was a powerful advocate against the king's politics. Not only did he believe that the colonists could win the war, but that he could also make his fortune in rice. But he seemed to be anxious to learn about his cotton. The sudden presence of Angus in the parlor alerted his senses moreso. Angus sensed the thrill of momentum as he engaged himself in trivial conversation. The approach to Drayton must be skillfully executed, and without a word, gave his answer with a slight smile. The relieved Colonel proceed with the negotiations.

Chapter 29

The British officers did not come to Bay Street again until after they'd had a major victory in Camden where Lord Cornwallis had routed the American forcces of Major General Horatio Gates. The victory was devastating news to the patriots as it meant that the British would hold Charleston. However, it was a humiliating defeat for General Gates who had defeated the British at Saratoga. Afterwards, Gates would lose command of the southern army. His miserable failure would be the major subject at the dinner table and laughter at the North Carolinians and Virginians throwing their weapons upon the ground and running after Gates routed his troops. As usual, the officers were accompanied with guards at the front and back doors of the house. Angus searched for Hoke, but did not find him until later in the evening when he relieved another guard.

Sir Manigault was still a guest of Colonel Drayton. His eyes rolled with delight upon hearing news of the victory. The news only served to affirm his belief that the war was fast drawing to a close and he would gladly sell the land to Drayton. The celebrating British officers drank too much rum at dinner that evening and were obnoxiously demanding. Auntie and the other ladies excused themselves to gather on the porch in search of a breeze, but the hot gusty August evening bore no mercy. The conversation veered away from the humiliation of General Gates and turned its attention to the mysterious figure of Sir Manigault. The scent of his thickly talcumed peruke and proudly arrogant smile was the subject of gossip, however, when Auntie stated that he was a friend of the Governor and would soon return to London, the ladies grew restless. Auntie returned inside only to find several officers in a drunken coma, while the sober Sir Manigault and Colonel Drayton sat sipping a cup of tea. Auntie asked how to minimize the embarrassment of the officers and escort the ladies to their respective homes.

"Is my nephew in his room?" The Colonel asked. Auntie nodded. "Prepare him to be the escort whilst I summon the carriage."

"And the British officers?"

"Leave them be."

Angus planned to wait until the wee hours of the morning before embarking upon the fifteen mile-ride to Drayton Hall to assist Josh and Lucas in running guns up the Pee Dee River. The interruption meant an hour off his clock to deliver the ladies to their individual homes. He performed his duty politely and without comment. When the chore ended, he returned to Bay Street to change into farmhand attire. But as he tread the path of crepe myrtles to the back door, saw a thin shadow slink across the door. He halted, and drew his sword.

"It's me, Angus," a familiar voice uttered, before stepping into the moonlight. It was Hoke. "I am one of the guards."

"You won't be escorting the British officers anywhere this evening," Angus said disgustedly, "the drunken pigs ehre stretched across the parlor floor!"

"I was ruefully disappointed to hear how General Gates gave the battle to the British. I mean, I was looking to sneak away and rejoin the militia, but now that they ehre moved further north...."

"Listen Hoke, if ye wish to shuck that uniform and meet up with the militia, I can help ye."

"You do not think we 'ave lost the war like the British say?"

"Colonel Drayton does not think so, else why would he have just this evening purchased a thousand acres of land to grow rice? And there is no better time than now, whilst they ehre drunk."

Hoke followed him inside the room where they changed clothes. Then saddled two horses from the Bay Street stables and road hard and fast up the north road. The moon was waning crescent with a dark shadowry illumination. But a few hours were left on the night stage.

Chapter 30

Josh and Lucas stood pensively on the dock. They were just two farm hands not skilled in much else, just obeying their master. The remainder of the cotton crop was harvested and wire bales were stacked nearby. But their attention was upon a small flat boat loaded with rifles maneuvering itself through the barrier islands. Today they would go on a dangerous mission for the Colonel.

The crooked limbs of the tall live oak trees cast their shadows across the river as the late afternoon sun flickered along the river. Finally, the boat made it move, crossing the deep and

finally navigating the shallows. It docked quickly and the men sprang into action unloading the cargo onto the same sloop they'd previously used to run guns up the Pee Dee.

All night they waited for Angus, but the sun was in the sky several hours before he appeared. They had accompanied Angus Macdonald on such a mission earlier in the year, only to deliver the ammo to Mrs. Clements and then returned to Drayton Hall. This time they would go searching in the woods for the rebels. So when Angus introduced his friend Hoke, they were glad to have another sharp shooter and did not question his motives. Once the crew of the float boat loaded the guns onto the schooner, they were off.

The Great Pee Dee River served as an important trade route from the low country to the Cheraw with a sprinkling of settlers. The isolated farm of Mrs. Clements was easily accessible from a stream off of Winyah Bay. She was known for sheltering rebels and sending supplies through to broken lines of the militia. South Carolinians typically left their homes after harvest and joined up with the scattered militia. This time they left early in September. The traumatic news of the slaughter of General Gates' army at Camden had sent shock-waves into the low country and the farmers were trolling the woods around Kings Mountain.

Mrs. Clements greeted them with a sense of urgency and took them to the barn and gave them a wagon and two old plow nags.

"But those old nags ehre used for plowing," Angus protested. "If we take ye nags, Mr. Clements' land will go wild."

"Mr. Clements built this wagon with his own hands," she lamented, "but the usefulness of the nags is gone out of them. They may not survive the long trek to Kings Mountain."

"Mrs. Clements," Angus said sincerely, "after the war I shall return and plow up the fields for ye, just like I used to do for pa."

"What is the news?" Lucas asked.

"The word came yesterday that after we lost Camden that the over the mountain men retired to their homes in North Carolina. that left General Ferguson free to send 150 men into North Carolina to gather support for the British and to cut off our supply trains. Ferguson is encamped at Gilbert Town and threatens "to lay the country waste with fire and sword!" You can probably catch up with some of troops near the Watauga River."

Chapter 31

One of the nags dropped dead before they reached the Watauga River. There were sounds of gun fire in the words, and a debate ensued whether or not to bury the mare, or leave her be.

"Somehow I'll repay Mrs. Clements," Angus swore, as he loaded his rifle and took cover behind a rock. "We 've come to join up with the Over Mountain Men and 'ave supplies," he called out to the rebels.

A straggly bunch came swarming around the wagon examining an assortment of breech rifles and Brown Bess which had come to Drayton Hall all the way from Kentucky. When Angus observed the tattered uniforms of the Over the Mountain men of Colonel Shelby's army and the great need for ammunition, he had a certain appreciation for Colonel Drayton's behind-the-scenes war game of shadows, and his clever finesse and ingenuity.

The plan was to intercept the British at Gilbert Town, an important trading center consisting of one house, one barn, store, tavern and a blacksmith shop. Colonel Ferguson had arrived there on the first day of September. The town had served as a camp for both Patriot and Loyalist forces. With the loss of Camden, the patriots seemed to understand that Lord Cornwallis planned to capture the Carolina backwoods. The British troops camped on the high hill behind the home of William Gilbert, which Ferguson used as his headquarters. Gilbert would later be charged with treason, the close encampment suggesting that Gilbert was sympathetic with the British. As Cornwallis invaded North Carolina, his final objective was to march into Virginia. To protect his troops from guerilla attack, he ordered Ferguson to move northwards into North Carolina before joining the main British Army in Charlotte. Colonel Ferguson sent a message to Colonel Isaac Shelby, whom he considered to be the "backwater men." The message said that if Shelby and his men did not stop their opposition to the British that Ferguson would march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders and "lay the country waste with fire and sword!"

The fury of the backwoods was determination. Towards the end of the month, the armies of Colonels McDowell, Sevier, Isaac Shelby and William Campbell met at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River and marched five days over the snow covered mountains to the Quaker Meadows Plantation owned by the McDowell family where they were joined by more frontiersmen. But while they proceeded to march towards Gilbert Town, spies told Ferguson that the Patriots were en route, and began marching towards Charlotte where they planned to intercept Lord Cornwallis. In the process, he sent an appeal to the Loyalists in North Carolina to "save themselves" from the "backwater men, a set of mongrels." Then he received word that the Patriots were closing in. He requested three or four hundred good soldiers from Cornwallis to finish the business with the rebels. When the Patriots realized that Ferguson was no longer at Gilbert Town, they were joined by some four hundred emerging South Carolinian woodsmen determined to pursue and fight.

The battleground lay ahead, in an outlying portion of the Blue Ridge Mountains, a heavily rocky and wooded terrain, known as King's Mountain. Ferguson made his camp on a plateau six hundred yards long and seventy feet wide at one end and one hundred and twenty feet wide at the other. Ferguson, thinking was that the summit was too steep to be scaled and that the

attackers would expose themselves to musket fire if they attempted it. But he did not realize this his own men could not fire unless they went out into the open.

Chapter 32.

Oct 7th, 1780. Kings Mountain.

The patriot Colonels approached Kings Mountain, shaped like a footprint with the highest point at the heel, and discussed strategy. Ferguson's rantings concerning the backwater mongrels had served to devise a plan of the utter annihilation of his command. The soldiers moved through the woods in four columns, while the militia slipped around the mountain and surrounded Ferguson's position on the high rocks. Meanwhile, the forces of Sevier and Campbell the heel, the remaining militia moved forward.

The patriot soldiers dismounted and tied up their horses, then formed a horseshoe around the base of the mountain behind their leaders, who remained on horseback. The attack occurred around 3:00 in the afternoon when the patriots opened fire with their handy breech rifles from behind a brushy cover and caught Ferguson by surprise. Most of the "Over the Mountain Men" were skilled hunters who routinely killed fast moving animals with their breech-loading rifles. In the middle of the afternoon some of Ferguson's men noticed the Patriot soldiers surrounding the mountain. Firing commenced, but the Patriots were protected by the heavily wooded area. Colonels Shelby and Campbell marched towards Ferguson, but were driven back twice by Loyalist fire. Lucas and Josh were killed in the first run. With Colonel Ferguson trapped, Hoke and Angus were not to be deterred, and as one regiment was driven back and another one appeared, they were consumed with a fierce energy to return again and again. As they charged, they heard the shrill sound of Colonel Ferguson's silver whistle over the sound of rifle fire.

The British continued to take heavy losses. Then Colonels Shelby, Sevier and Campbell gained a foothold on the heights, and Ferguson, finding himself surrounded on the rocky plateau, attempted to rally his men for a break out, but as he lead a group of men he suddenly fell from his horse, one foot hanging in the stirrup before he hit the ground.

Ferguson's men, realizing their leader was dead commenced attempting to surrender. But, the South Carolina militia shouted "Remember Waxhaws" and "Tarleton's Quarter" as they continued to fire.

After the battle, the victorious patriots made camp but the during the night were awakened from the cries of the wounded Loyalists. The battlements had dispelled black soot throughout the mountain ridge and smells of saltpeter and sulphur. The next morning sunlight stream throughout the trees and brought a new day for certain patriots to leave for their homes while a contingent of patriots moved British prisoners north to Hillsboro. The resentment against "No Quarter" Tarleton at Waxhaws and the insults of Ferguson demanded justice. So many

backwoods militia and over the mountain men had emerged from their woodland homes to exact revenge from the British! During the trek, prisoners were brutally beaten and some hacked down with swords.

The emotions were high, so when they reached Hillsborough, a committee of patriots were appointed a jury to try certain Loyalists. Thirty six of their number were found guilty of breaking into and burning homes and killing citizens. Nine were hanged.

With justice satisfied amongst the militiamen, the thrust of the army was determined to seek Lord Cornwallis.

Meanwhile, Lord Cornwallis was shaken when the news of Ferguson's defeat reached his headquarters in Charlotte that he withdrew his troops back into South Carolina.

Chapter 33.

The First Link of a Chain of Evils.

When General Henry Clinton learned of the defeat at Kings Mountain, he feared the collapse of British plans to quash the patriot rebellion, and declared it "the first link of a chain of evils."

During January, Angus and Hoke followed the South Carolina Militia companies across the Blue Ridge Mountains to combine with General Daniel Morgan in confronting the fiercely infamous British Colonel Banastre Tarleton in Cowpens. Tarleton delivered one thousand British of the King's Army into the open cow pastures and pea fields of Cowpens. They had the unfortunate intelligence that Morgan planned an attack on a fort held by American Loyalists at Ninety Six. Lord Cornwallis dispatched Tarleton to defeat Morgan, however, upon learning that Morgan was not at Ninety Six, Tarleton, set off in hot pursuit of the American detachment. Morgan, thinking that Tarleton would make a headlong assault without pausing to devise a more intricate plan, resolved to make a stand near the Broad River and choose a position on two low hills in open woodland. Tarleton's army reached the field malnourished and heavily fatigued. Morgan, having deployed his army in three main lines, launched an immediate attack. The victory at Cowpens culminated when the armies went into Virginia and cornered Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown. A blockade from the French arrived in timely fashion and pinned in the British fleet. The surrender was brutal for Cornwallis as he was too ashamed to properly surrender his sword to the Americans. Instead, he waited inside the Moore home while eight thousand British soldiers queued and passed in a line to present their individual swords.

Chapter 34.

Late October 1781.

Angus and Hoke, suffering their injuries, hobbled along the road which would take them home

to Moore County. As for so many others, their steeds had long since fallen in battle and all that was left was the personal determination to get home. They had crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains and trekked west into North Carolina. The vision of desolation was before them, a countryside stripped of its farm animals, horses, mules, wagons and crops. The British had taken everything in sight. The devastation of war was brutal in its aftermath because every farmer was left to rebuild his place and generate a crop without a proper plow or mule.

"This is where it all started for us," Angus said, as his eyes searched for the evidence of battle on the planks of a little bridge in the Moore County.

"This is where the cannon was, in this hole," Hoke said, "but I don't see how we fit in this space alongside the cannon."

If the lads were disappointed in the optics, their mouths would gape in utter shock at the sight of the high weeds choking out many empty houses. The Scottish settlement had all but vanished.

"That's your house over yonder," Hoke said pointing to an old broken-down house and fallen barn.

A fearful lump came into Angus' throat. Where is my pa, he wondered, as he rushed inside. A table, chair and old bed was all that was left. His heart sank. There was a letter on the table enmeshed in layers of dust. He opened it, and after carefully reading it, sobbed.

"Where ehre they?" Hoke asked.

The tears on his cheeks stung sorely, but he answered. "The clan went back to Skye. It says here that the constable warned that all Loyalists were to be hanged."

"The Campbells also?"

"All the clans what came to this settlement."

"Tis a bitter seed to swallow, fighting to save them, only to send them back to the persecution of the British."

"I want to find Jennie," Hoke said. "I promised to marry her."

The old Grubbs place stood off the road which crossed the line into South Carolina. Hoke remembered it well. They were greeted by tall stalks of dried sun-shrunken corn husks which had suffered drought before maturity. There were no chickens on the place, and the mules were gone from the barn. Nevertheless, a sandy yard leading to the house and barn was swept clear of pine cones, giving evidence of a family who had survived the worst of times. The face of

Mother Grubbs greeted them through a crack in the door.

"I am happy to find you well, Mrs. Grubbs," Hoke said. "Is Jennie at home?"

She opened the door a little wider and suspiciously observed the soiled clothes of the two bestraggled soldiers in their blighted state of economy. They had no goods except a breech rifle slung over the shoulder.

"You need not coming begging around here!"

"Mrs. Grubbs," Hoke said before she slammed the door, "We ehre are friends. I am Hope Campbell and this here is Angus Macdonald."

Moments later, the door reopened and Jennie emerged wearing a mob cap and a pinafore over a plain work dress. The lads had both grown in height and size. Hoke, as it turns out, was more handsome with a head full of black curly hair and penetrating eyes.

"Hoke? You ehre Hoke Campbell, the lad who visited us at the beginning of the war?" He nodded.

"But I promised to come back here after the war. Remember?"

"I do not remember you!" She said emphatically. "And besides, I am soon to be betrothed to a cousin just returned from the war."

"He fought in the war, did he?"

"Yes, but he is from a good family."

Hoke hung his head low and stepped backwards as though ashamed of himself. The door closed.

"I am sorry that she did not remember you, Hoke, but she is a spiteful girl anyhow."

"Yes," Hoke repeated, "spiteful. "What ehre we gonna do now?"

"Go back East. We left Colonel Drayton's schooner in Winyah Bay."

Chapter 35.

Winyah Bay.

The lads continued to see neglected fields and run-down farms through the Carolinas. The stars in the night sky led them eastward to the familiar Winyah Bay and the sight of Colonel Drayton's schooner dangling by a rope of unraveling threads to an old dilapidated dock. The Clements

house, overshadowed with straggly live-oak trees and tall weeds was scarcely visible from the dock. They searched the rooms of the house for Mrs. Clements, finding a smelly iron kettle hanging over the ashes of burnt firewood in the fireplace, scraps of broken furniture, and other evidence of British occupation.

"Mrs. Clements must 'ave seem them coming and got away," Angus surmised. "I wonder where she went?"

After finding the barn stripped bare of its plank boards, they walked around the place. There was still an impression in the ground where Mr. Clements had long since plowed. "I was gonna help Mrs. Clements plow her garden," Angus said, "for her sacrifice of the horses. After all, her husband died at the Waxhaws, and I felt she was owed something."

"Yeah, and I was gonna marry Jennie," Hoke murmured.

The schooner had suffered several storms and the main sail was torn. The lads took to scrubbing the vessel and preparing it for a voyage to Charleston but did not have her seaworthy until the cool winds of November.

They both figured that they would find Charleston wrecked and torn up from the British evacuation, yet decided to drop anchor there and search for Colonel Drayton before going to the Drayton plantation. What they did not realize was that there an ongoing trial being held in the city square for certain Loyalist traitors who had failed to take passage with the exiting British fleet. A mood for punishing the traitors prevailed throughout the region.

The lads were surprised when they found Sir George Manigault still occupying the Bay Street house as a guest of Colonel Drayton. The funds which Drayton owed him for the land had been frozen by the Royal Governor and used to import the Ferguson rifles and bayonets to Sir Henry Clinton into North Carolina. Although Drayton's trusted cohorts had not returned with the sloop used for contraband, he attempted to gain access to the cargo, but it was circumvented instead to Sir Henry Clinton in North Carolina. When the news arrived of the British losses, particularly at Cowpens and Kings Mountain, Sir Manigault was exceedingly nervous when the Royal Governor sailed from Charleston. Although there were British mercantile ships in the harbor, without the money from the sale of his land, he could no longer secure passage to London.

Meanwhile, with the uncertainty of the outcome of the war so close at hand, Colonel Drayton dare not venture along the north road to Drayton Hall. And he was correct, for when the dismal news of defeat arrived, the enraged British soldiers took revenge in unexpected quarters. A division was quickly discerned between the identify Loyalists sympathizers and Patriots.

A cool galing wind blew across the square during the day of trial. Manigault sat on a bench with the other Loyalist citizens, awaiting his fate. He wore his well-talcomed wig, a lacy cravat, satin

vest and long coat. Perhaps he appeared as he chose, as an acknowledged and privileged gentleman of Great Britain, having rank and wealth. Manigault, maintaining that he was a friend of Colonel Drayton, begged the court for special consideration.

"All that I ever wanted to do was to return to London," he testified pitifully. "I am a subject of King George, yet not a warrior, and thus hath no stake in this fight."

"If you had a stake, what would it have been?" The prosecutor asked.

"Why, the American cause, of course! Why else would I have remained when there was ample opportunity to take passage?"

Colonel Drayton coughed. He did not wish to see Manigault hang and after awhile stood to his feet and said: "Tis true that Sir Manigault is my friend. He was good enough to pass title to his back water acreage to me, although I was prevented access to my wealth by the Royal Governor."

"Not guilty!" The judge ruled with his gavel. But thirteen Loyalists seated on the bench were hanged in the city square.

The courtroom had been too crowded for two old soldiers such as Angus and Hoke to enter, so they had waited outside and observed the hanging. Colonel Drayton did not recognize the scuffed up soldiers as he passed by. A frightened frown was on the lips of Sir Manigault and his eyes were unable to focus as Colonel Drayton escorted him to the pier where he promised his turncoat friend to secure passage to London.

THE END

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