

James Williams



No Picture Available
 Nov 1740 Hanover, VA
 Wallace

Born: 10
 Married: Mary
 Died: Kings Mountain, SC

Parents: Daniel Williams & Ursula Henderson

James Williams (1740–1780) was an American pioneer, farmer, and miller from the Ninety-Six district in South Carolina. During the Revolutionary War, he was Colonel of his area's regiment of militia. He was killed gaining the American victory at the Battle of King's Mountain (see page 5)

James was born in [Hanover County, Virginia](#) and orphaned before he was twelve. He moved into the home of his brother [John Williams in Granville County, North Carolina](#). John, being a lawyer, gave him a basic, yet good for those days, education before James set out on his own to settle on the Little River in [South Carolina](#).

By 1773 Williams had started a farm and built a mill, in what was then called the [Ninety Six District](#) on the Carolina frontier. (Today the area he settled in is in [Laurens County, South Carolina](#)). He had also become an officer in the local militia. As tensions rose before the revolution, and many of his neighbors took a [Loyalist](#) position, James supported the American cause. He joined the local *Committee of Safety*, and in 1775 and 1776 was elected to the state's provisional Assembly. (Note: He was also at the Battle of Ninety Six 19-20 Nov 1775. (see pg 2)

By 1776, the back-country militia was becoming split into [Loyalist](#) and [Rebel](#) factions. Williams was named Lt. Colonel of a regiment, but he had to identify, recruit, and (partially) train the men. He succeeded in organizing a militia group, but pressure from the other side meant that he always had to leave some at home for defense. Nevertheless, he led bodies of local men into action at [Briar Creek](#) (pg 3), and [Stono Ferry](#) (see page 4), and as far afield as the expedition against Savannah, Georgia.

On August 19, 1780 he led his detachment into the engagement of the [Battle of Musgrove Mill](#) (see page 5). Their success, even in that limited engagement, coming so soon after the disaster of Camden earned him a promotion to Colonel. His next action ([King's Mountain](#): see pg 6) was a much greater success, but cost him his life.

* Little River Church was located near the boundary line of Laurens and Newberry Districts near the Old Ninety Six Road on Little River from which it took its name, The congregation was established in 1764 by the Rev. James Creswell soon after his ordination. Its first Elders were [James Williams](#), Angus Camp-bell, and James Burnside.'

<http://www.cas.sc.edu/iss/SCNames/index.php?action=showPage&book=2&volume=16&page=49>



<http://www.nps.gov/history/seac/starfort.htm>

While camped along the Long Cane Creek in November of 1775, Maj. Andrew Williamson of the Ninety-Six District Regiment, learned that a Loyalist force of more than 1,800 men were en route to the town of Ninety-Six. Maj. Williamson sent word to all militia units west of the Congaree River and soon men began to rally with his small band of captains. He quickly moved this small Patriot force, numbering less than 600, to the town of Ninety-Six and rapidly built a crude fortification of fence rails - a square breastwork - in a field near the town.

Fighting broke out with Patriot and Loyalist forces reportedly firing "rifles and muskets, from behind houses, trees, logs, stumps, and fences." The battle would rage on from the 19th of November until the 21st. With Maj. Williamson dangerously short on gunpowder, and with Loyalist forces fearful that Patriot reinforcements may arrive at any moment, the warring commanders agreed to cease hostilities and disband.

Known Patriot Participants

Capt. James Williams with 28 men

http://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution_ninety_six_1775.html

Battle at Brier Creek 3 Mar 1779

After a well conducted flanking march, a British and Loyalist column of about 900 directed by Lt. Col. Mark Prevost surprised about 1,300 Continentals and militia under Gen. John Ashe encamped at the juncture of Brier Creek and the Savannah River. The Americans were routed, losing 150-200 killed and drowned as many tried to escape over the river. The British captured 170-220.

BATTLE OF BRIER CREEK - MAR. 3, 1779

In early February, 1779, the Southern Armies of the United States and Great Britain were facing across the Savannah River on a battle line reaching from Savannah to the Broad River above Augusta. The British controlled Georgia and the Americans South Carolina. A victory for the American forces meant an early end to the war. Each side, realizing the importance of the impending struggle, was carefully maneuvering troops for an opening blow.

Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, Commander of the American forces of six or seven thousand men, decided to flank the British above Augusta in an attempt to drive the Red Coats, under Gen. Augustine Prevost, into the malarial swamps of the Georgia coast. The first objective was accomplished when Col. Elijah Clarke and Col. Andrew Pickens overtook and defeated the forces of the Tory Gen. Boyd at Kettle Creek. Meantime, Gen. Lincoln, from his headquarters at Parysburg, ordered Gen. John Ashe to join Gen. Andrew Williamson opposite Augusta.

about 1,500 men, up the west side of Brier Creek. Travelling all night, he arrived on the west bank of the creek at Paris' Mill mid-morning of March 2. He found the bridge destroyed. Dispatching his Infantry and Light Horse across the creek, he soon encountered Col. Marbury's Dragoons (C), cutting them off from Ashe's forces. He captured some, while others succeeded in getting safely across Burton's Ferry. Col. Prevost built a

bridge and crossed the creek on the morning of the 3rd. Gen. Ashe returned midday of the 2nd. It was agreed, at the Council of War, that Ashe was to make secure his position and wait until joined by General Williamson, Rutherford, and Lincoln. Then a general offensive would be launched to drive the British seaward. On the morning of March 3rd, Ashe, unaware of the British movements, sent Maj. Ross, with his Light Horse of 300 men, to reconnoiter the position of Prevost at Heddon's Ferry. He soon encountered McPherson's men at Buck Creek (D). His failure to advise Gen. Ashe came near being the decisive blunder of the Revolution.



About 2:30 P. M. on March 3, Gen. Ashe received a message from Col. Smith, who was guarding the wagons and baggage left at Burton's Ferry, warning him of the approach of the British. Within a few minutes the British appeared, coming down the main road six abreast. They deployed right and left, forming a battle line from the position of this marker to the Savannah River swamp. Hastily, Generals Ashe, Samuel Elbert and Bryant reversed their front, prepared to meet the enemy by taking positions in battle line across the British front. Confusion and hysteria reigned among the American soldiers as their officers vainly tried to keep them in line while ammunition was being distributed. Gen. Elbert and Col. McIntosh's command formed on the American left next to the Creek. Gen. Bryant's command formed the center and Col. Young's the right.

The British opened on the American center with cannon. Gen. Bryant, still trying to get ammunition to his men, was unprepared. With dead and wounded falling on every side, the center broke and retreated in riot. The British poured through the hole in the American center and, within a few minutes, the right under Col. Young broke and ran into the swamps of the Savannah. Gen. Elbert and Col. McIntosh, with 60 Continentals and 150 Georgia Militia, made one of the valiant stands of military history. So fiercely did these Georgians fight that the British had to bring up reserves. Asking no quarter, they fought until nearly every man was dead or wounded. Gen. Elbert saved himself by giving a Masonic sign from the ground as he was about to be bayoneted. Gen. Elbert, Col. McIntosh and the rest of his command surrendered.

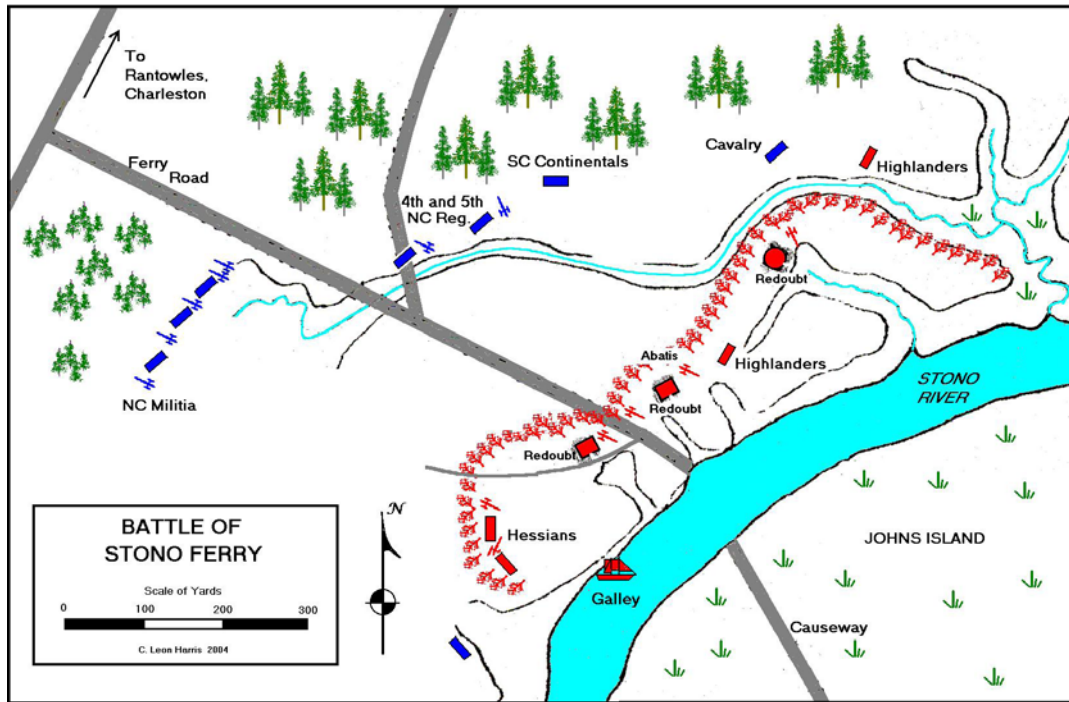
That ended, in disaster, the well laid plans to win control of the south and bring the war to an end. Only the matchless bravery of the Georgians in the last stand gave solace and inspiration in an almost hopeless situation.

Historical Marker



Replica of cannon used at Battle of Brier Creek

Battle at Stono Ferry June 20, 1779



American Patriot Forces

Commanding Officer Major General Benjamin Lincoln

Colonel James Williams - Brigade of North and South Carolina militia

THE BATTLE OF STONO FERRY

Shortly after midnight on June 20, Lincoln and most of his troops left camp, dragging several pieces of field artillery, probably three-pounders, nicknamed “grasshoppers” because of their recoil. Lincoln mistakenly formed the lines three-quarters of a mile away from the enemy with little knowledge of the land they would have to march through. He placed the North Carolina militia on the right, contrary to the usual practice of putting the most able men in the place of honor. (See the Order of Battle in the appendix.) In the middle were the 4th and 5th regiments of North Carolina Continentals, each with about 250 militiamen whose nine-months terms were about to expire. North Carolina regulars were probably with them. Gen. Jethro Sumner was in command of these North Carolinians, as well as North Carolina militia. The South Carolina Continentals under Gen. Isaac Huger were on the left. A reserve of cavalry and Virginia militiamen was behind. Gen. Moultrie was to cross from Charleston and James Island to divert the British there.

At about seven in the morning the Patriots started advancing, with the North Carolina militia on the right slowed by a pine thicket. Soon they joined light infantrymen, who had been harassing the British for several days. After engaging some Highlander pickets, the battle began in earnest on the Patriot right and quickly spread to the left, where about half the Highlanders were killed. The Patriots were then stopped by an unexpected creek and marsh. In a letter to Moultrie written on the day of the battle, Lincoln noted that “it proved the bravery of our men, who marched to the very brink of the creek, and there remained exposed to the fire of the enemy, who were under cover, by their works.” (Further description by Lincoln and others may be found in the appendix.) The Patriots on the right and left apparently got to within 60 yards of the abatis. The militia on the right came close to overrunning the Hessians until driven back by a large cannon on the galley. The Patriots’ small cannons proved useless against the redoubts, from which the British could not be drawn out for open battle. Lincoln explained in his letter to Moultrie that he ordered retreat after seeing that “the causeway, which is three fourths of a mile long, and twenty-eight feet wide, leading from John’s Island (and which you might clearly discern from our right), was completely covered, from the woods down to the river, with British reinforcements.” When Highlanders pursued the retreating Patriots on their right, the cavalry beat them back.

The retreat was orderly, with the casualties being carried off the field. Gen. Moultrie had failed to arrive in time because of wind and a shortage of boats, he said, but others said it was because he partied too late the night before and missed the tide. In little under an hour more than 30 Patriot soldiers died, including Andrew Jackson’s older brother, who succumbed to heat exhaustion. 8

Approximately 115 Patriot soldiers were wounded, and 155 were missing. In spite of the defeat, the survivors left the field in good spirits, convinced they would have been victorious had the British come out for open combat. Although the British were victorious on the field, they soon left Stono Ferry.

Information from online research at: <http://www.southerncampaign.org/newsletter/v1n4.pdf>

Battle at Musgrove’s Mill 18 August 1780



Battle field marker

Picture of battlefield. James Williams commanded this section

Colonel Isaac Shelby, with a Patriot army of about 200 men, was sent to Musgrove Mill to break-up a British campsite there. When he arrived, he found that he was greatly outnumbered facing about 500 British regulars and Loyalist militiamen. To attack the camp would have been suicide.

Instead Shelby devised a scheme to lead the British into an ambush. He divided his army into three commands. On the right wing, he chose Lieutenant Colonel Elijah Clark and his Patriot militia from Georgia. At the center, he chose **Lieutenant Colonel James Williams**

To draw the British into the ambush, Captain Shadrick Inman, also from Georgia, and sixteen sharpshooters advanced on the British camp and started shooting. The British responded, formed ranks and followed Inman and his men into the ambush where they received deadly fire at point-blank range.

The British retreated and regrouped for another attack. During the second attack, their commander was killed by a Patriot sharpshooter and the British made a final retreat leaving behind over 200 casualties. There were only about 10 Patriot casualties, one of which, however, was Captain Shadrick Inman, who was killed during the final pursuit

<http://www.revolutionaryday.com/usroute221/musgrovemill/default.htm>

Battle of King's Mountain October 7, 1780.

Main article: [Battle of Kings Mountain](#)

Williams led a 100 man detachment from his regiment to meet other militia detachments in pursuit of Cornwallis' western force, led by Major Patrick Ferguson. He joined the other units at the Cowpens on October 6. The next day he joined them in the major victory at the Battle of King's mountain. The Americans overwhelmed an 1,100 man force, losing only twenty eight killed, one of whom was Colonel James Williams, killed in action, October 7, 1780.

Memorials

William's original hasty grave was replaced with a more prestigious memorial, and he was re-interred. He is buried on the lawn in front of the Cherokee County Administration building, on Limestone street in Gaffney, South Carolina.

Under the South Carolina Provincial Congress, Williams was to be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General but succumbed to his battle wounds before the commission could be delivered. In 2005 the South Carolina General Assembly confirmed the rank originally bestowed upon him 225 years before. In the Same act, General James Williams was further honored by renaming the Little River Bridge, "James Williams Memorial Bridge", marking the Northeast corner of his plantation.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Williams_\(Colonel\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Williams_(Colonel))

James Henderson Williams, b. 10 Nov 1740. near Old Fork Church, Hanover Co., VA, died 8 Oct 1780, Battle of Kings Mt., Gaston Co., NC. Married Mary Wallace in 1762. Left Granville Co., NC in 1772. Was living along the Little River in Laurens Co., SC in 1773. He was a farmer, ran a mill, and a merchant. In physical appearance, he was a man of five feet, 9 inches. His complexion dark with black hair, eyes brown. Spiritually, he was an elder in the Little River Presbyterian Church* of the Laurens District. In the Revolutionary war he served in the 1775-1776 1st and 2nd South Carolina Provincial Congress. In 1775 he became the Captain of Militia. At the Siege of Ninety-Six, Capt. James H. Williams watched the loyalist forces surrender under a white flag. Promoted to Lt. Col. of Militia in 1776, during the campaign against the pro-British Cherokees, his unit withstood being encircled and suffered deadly fire. A bayonet charge broke the Cherokees force and they took flight. His unit was then ordered to Florida to fight a Tory force there. The Army suffered from heat, hunger, thirst, not to mention disease and had to turn back. His time in the Army was not without controversy. He had to improvise unorthodox ways to obtain supplies, meet the needs of his men, as well as to provide support for the civilian population often defenseless in times of local crisis. Much of the wartime criticism Williams received was based upon individuals who only knew part of the story of the danger that Williams' militia faced. In spite of this Lt. Col. Williams led his men the Battle of Stono Ferry, Briar Creek, Siege of Savannah, Battle of Musgrove's Mill. For his victory at Musgrove Mill, he was awarded the rank of Brigadier General of South Carolina Militia by the Governor. At the Battle of Kings Mountain, James was mortally wounded and died the next day. According to eyewitnesses he was shot after the enemy raised the white flag. Before dying, Williams was carried by horse 12 miles before dying on the banks of the Broad River near the mouth of Buffalo Creek. He was initially buried at this location but in 1917, his remains were transferred to an vault at the Carnegie Library in Gaffney, SC. Today there is a large monument erected for him at Kings Mountain National Battlefield. (Sources: "Commanders At Kings Mountain", by J. D. Bailey, A Press, Inc., Greenville, SC; 1992. Article by Isabell Witherspoon Foster.)

<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/mo/county/stlouis/williams/>

WILLIAMS, JAMES, LETTER TO ANDREW WILLIAMSON RELAYING THAT HE HAS SELECTED A DETACHMENT TO GUARD AGAINST PLUNDERING, AS ORDERED, THE WANT OF SALT IN TOWN AND REQUESTING PAY FOR CAPT. GRAYS COMPANY (2 PAGES; PRINTED, GIBBES, DOCUMENTARY HISTORY, 1776-1782, PP. 123-24

Dear Sir
 Mount Pleasant January 4 1780

I recd your favor by Messrs Goringe, & have
 carefully observ'd the contents. I have had a list
 of 100 men & 8 picked men out in the upper part
 of the ridge and for some time, in order to prevent
 these fellows from plundering the good people & to
 prevent them taken & brought to quarters. I am a sent to
 to S. M. D. a part of the ridge to send to town
 how they will turn out - I don't tell, but I fear but
 little. I have made it as publick in this part as
 the Governor's commission, to get salt for the back part
 as per bel, and it is given some satisfaction to the
 people, but all the while it is bad for many here
 Man is oblig'd to turn out his horse for the want
 of salt, to my knowledge some people that
 Judge Gwentz. I have sent a bag full of salt
 to Sir Goringe with Mr. M. D. to get the money & when
 take is as a single glass if it can be got. The salt
 is wanted here & the more is like to be here -
 Money, & I am oblig'd to be a greatly Lamer by it my
 self. I have a advance great part of the Money to them
 my self. If I had got the Money I am a guinea to
 to that part of the ridge & will my self take
 with every man my self. In perbel I should be
 glad to get the Money as I am a guinea to that part
 of the ridge. The date is End of this Week

I am Dear Sir your most
 respectfull & Obedient
 Servant
 J. Williams

Above letter transcribed on next page

DEAR SIR :

I received your favor by master George, and have carefully observed the contents. I have had a Captain, one Sergeant, and 8 picked men out in the upper part of my regiment for some time, in order to prevent those fellows from plundering the good people, and to have them taken and brought to justice. I am about to try to embody a part of the regiment to send to town ; how they will turn out I can't tell, but I fear but poorly. I have made it as public in these parts, as possible, about the Governor promising to get salt for the back country ; and it has given some satisfaction to the people but at present it is bad, for many a poor man is obliged to turn out his hogs for the want of salt. To my knowledge some people must suffer greatly. I have sent a pay bill of Capt. I. Gray's with Mr. McNear to get the money, and should take it as a singular favor if it could be got. The Captain deserted his country, and the men will probably lose their money, and I am likely to be a great loser by it myself. I have advanced a great part of their

wages to them myself. If I could get the money, I am going to that part of the regiment, and will settle with every man myself. If it is possible, I should be glad to get the money, as I am going to that part of the regiment the latter end of this week.

I am, dear sir, your most respectful and humble servant,

[JAS. WILLIAMS.](#)

<http://familytales.org/results.php?year=1780>

Epigraph

The General has the pleasure to congratulate the army on an important advantage lately gained in North Carolina (sic, South Carolina) over a corps of fourteen hundred men, British troops and new levies, commanded by Col. Ferguson.

The militia of the neighboring Country, under Cols. Williams, Shelby and others, having assembled to the number of about three thousand men, a detachment of about sixteen hundred was sent on horseback to fall in with Ferguson's party on its march to Charlotte. They came up with the enemy at a place called King's Mountain, advantageously posted, and gave him a total defeat, in which Col. Ferguson and a hundred and fifty of his men were killed, eight hundred made prisoners, and fifteen hundred stand of arms taken. We have only to regret that the brave Col. Williams is mortally wounded.

These advantages will, in all probability, have a very happy influence on operations in that quarter, and are a proof of the spirit and resources of the country.

General Order issued October 27, 1780, by General George Washington from his headquarters at Totoway.

Petition of James Williams' Little River Regiment

Manuscript, 3 September 1779, petition of the officers and men of James Williams' Little River Regiment, is a significant find that fills a gap in South Carolina political history.

The first elections held under the South Carolina Constitution of 1778 caused a political upset in the middle election district between Broad and Saluda rivers called the "Little River District." The voting population included many Crown sympathizers who were unhappy that the colonies had declared independence, and when they gathered at Hammond's Old Store, the district polling place southwest of present-day Clinton, they sent some new faces to Charleston.

Seats in the lower house formerly held by the staunch patriot Col. James Williams and his brother John went to Jacob Bowman and Henry O'Neill, who had been jailed by the patriots only three years previously for hijacking a Council of Safety powder shipment to the Cherokee Indians. In the first senatorial election ever held in the Palmetto State, James Williams stood for the district's single seat, only to be thrashed by opposition party candidate Robert Cunningham.

In fact, the thrashing extended to more than Williams's election returns. Area historian John Belton O'Neill later related an incident at a political stump meeting when Williams, preparing to speak to the voters, decided that Cunningham was crowding too closely at his elbow. "You stand too near me," he growled. "I stand very well where I am," Cunningham replied. Cunningham won the fist fight that ensued and went on to win the election.

The following year, the British invaded the South, and Williams' duties as commander of the district militia regiment took him away from the arena of politics and legislation. Still, his name appeared in the House of Representatives journal, this time as petitioner. On 3 September 1779, the house received "the Representation, Remonstrance and humble Petition of James Williams, Colonel, and the rest of the field officers, Captains and subalterns of the regiment of Militia commonly called the Little River Regiment in Ninety Six District, also of divers of the privates living within the boundaries of the regimental district whose names are thereunto subscribed, setting forth, as in the said Representation &c."

The journal gives no indication of what the petition was about. During the period leading up to the Revolution, South Carolina's house clerks had fallen into the unfortunate habit of omitting the texts of petitions. And although the South Carolina Department of Archives and History published the journal in 1970, the editors were unable to supply the missing text. Sometime in the past, the original manuscripts of legislative petitions from the Revolutionary period that should have ended up in the Archives's "Green Files" had disappeared from state custody.

One further procedural note appeared in the journal. According to the minutes of 10 September 1779, "A motion being made and seconded that Col. James Williams have leave to withdraw the Representation... presented to this House the 3d Instant and then referred to a Committee, a debate arose thereon. And the question being put, it passed in the negative. Ordered, That a Committee do report thereon at the next sitting of the House." The next session made no mention of any such committee report, and shortly thereafter, Charleston fell into British hands.

But the South Caroliniana Library has recently acquired a document that may be the missing petition. The manuscript is clearly a "representation, remonstrance, and petition" addressed to the General Assembly. It consists of two documents attached by wax seals, with text on the upper portion and signatures on the lower. The subscribers are Capt. Thomas Dugan, Lt. Levi Casey, Lt. Robert Dugan, and sixty-one rank and file.

The signatures account for only one or two companies, and they do not include Williams himself or any of his staff officers. It can reasonably be assumed that the petition originally existed in several copies, with different signatures attached to the various copies. The text discloses that even in his military role, Williams was getting some political heat from his district's Tory constituency. The document reads as follows:

To his Excellency John Rutledge, Esqr., Governor & Commander in chief in & over the State of So. Carolina; the Honourable the Senate & House of Representatives in General Assembly.

Whereas we (the zealous Friends to our Country, & to all who love & distinguish themselves in her Cause) do understand & are exceeding sorry to hear, that there are false & evilly designing Accusations either lying or about to be shortly laid against James Williams, present Colonel in & over Little River Regiment, of which we are a Part; representing him as distressing & very injurious to the Regiment, & designed (as we believe) by the private Enimies of our Country, to deprive us of so worthy a Friend to his Country in general, & good Officer to us in particular; & thereby do a very singular Piece of Service to the common Enimies of America: We do briefly & anxiously remonstrate thus; that we do experimentally know Colo. James Williams to have been a zealous Patriot from the Commencement of the american Contest with Britain; & to have always stood foremost in every Occasion when called upon to the Defence of his Country. We do further declare, that we have never known said Colo. Jas. Williams to distress any Individual in the Regiment, who voluntarily & judiciously, when legally called upon & commanded to the Field, have turned out in the Defence of their native Rights & Priviledges together with that of their Country; & we do avow it from our Knowledge, that whensoever Colo. Jas. Williams either directly or indirectly, executed any distressing Things, it was upon the stubborn & refractory, whose Practises & Obstinacy declare them inimical to their Country; & that this he did, as being the last promising Effort to reduce them to the dutiful Obedience of loyal & fellow Citizens. Without delaying you; We your humble Petitioners do earnestly beg, that you will hear this our faithful Remonstrance, & proceed with our respected Colo. Jas. Williams, & all such unjust & disaffected Clamours as may come before you against him, as your superior Judgements may direct; only beging leave to conclude with this one Remark, that doubtless you know, that such Clamours are frequently the necessary Effect of Disaffection to the Country."

Appendix Item #6: Williams' Last Will and Testament of James Williams dated June 12, 1780

In the Name of god, Amen. I James Williams of the State of So Carolina & of Ninty (sic, Ninety) Six District but Now in the State of North Carolina as a refuge [sic—refugee] & at [blank space]. I being at present in My proper health (spelled “hilth”) & of sound memory (spelled “Mommomary”) but considering that it is appointed (spelled “appointed”) for all Men once to die [?], I Done ordain this to be My Last Will & Testament. First, I with great since [sic—sense] of humility, give my sole [sic—soul] to god that gave it [to] me that first in & through the [?] of Christ the Savior of Man [?] & then My body to be Decently (?) buried at the [Direction?] of My Executors here after to be Mentioned.

Item the first: it is My Will & Desire that all My Just debts be paid (spelled “pad”).

Item the Second: I lend to My beloved Wife, Mary Williams, During her Natural Life, a part of the track [sic—tract] of Land that I [farmed or lived ?] on Little River in Ninety Six District bounded as follows, that is to say, on the south side of the river beginning on the river below the Mill Where the Line crosses the river & from thence along the Line of the Land bout [sic, bought] of John Caldwell to a great branch thence with the branch to the Ninety Six Road from thence along the road to Where it intersex [sic., intersects] the aforementioned Line & so along the Line to [?] the Land bought of John Caldwell & ? Daniel Simson....& I give an [sic, and] bequeath to My beloved Wife, Mary Williams, a child's part of My Moveable estate to be equally divided by Lot at the direction [?] of My Executors and betwixt My beloved Wife and My Children then Living.

Item 3: I give & bequeath to My Son Daniel Williams the following tract of Land as follows: The Land bought of William containing 250 [?—something interlined but not legible] Land bought of Robin

Johnston Estate 900 acres, Land bought of William Brison 75 acres and all that part of tract of Land that was bought of William Johnston below the ? [Milling?] house that lays on the North side of the Charlestown road thought to be about 80 acres & a Child's part of all My Moveable estate When he arrive to the age of Twenty One years of age.

Item 4: I give & bequeath to My Son Joseph Williams ? [could be a fraction] following tracts of Land, the tract of Land I bought of L? Lenard (?) 250 Acres tract bought of Seamore (?) 100 Acres & a ? that part of the Land bought of Caldwell (?) that lays below the still house branch Except 100 Acres that is to be ? for the Mill that Joins the Mill below the branch & that part of the Land I bought of William Johnston that lays the south side of the ? town road & a Child's part of all My Moveable Estate to be given up to him at his arriving (?) at 21 years of age.

Item 5: I give & bequeath to My Son John Williams all of that tract of Land that I bought of Cladwell that lays below the ? road & the great branch & that bought of Peter Stroshar (?) by ? 600 Acres & a Child's part of My Moveable estate at his arrival to the age of 21 years.

Item 6: I give & bequeath to My Daughter Elizabeth Williams that tract of Land bought of Capt. Towls (?) Late (?) Hutchersons (?) & a Child's part of all My Moveable estate to be Delivered to her on her marriage (spelled "marge"), if the Marriage agreeable to the Desires of the Executors.

Item 7: I give an[d] bequeath to My Daughter Mary Williams that tract of Land in bush (?) river bought of Coll. Hammons with the old store Containing 150 Acres & a child's part of all My Moveable estate to be Delivered on her marriage (spelled this time "Marige") if agreeable to Executors.

Item 8: I give an[d] bequeath to my Daughter Sary Williams as Much [spelled "Mutch"] Cash out of My estate before the Distribution (?) is made as Will purchase (spelled "purch") her a tract of Land Equal in Value to Either of her Sisters' Land Mentioned above & a Child's part of

all My Moveable estate to be Delivered on her Marriage if agreeable to the Executors.

Item 9: I give and bequeath to My son Washington Williams at that tract of Land Loaned to My beloved Wife During her Natural Life & the Land bought of James Cook by Computation (?) 600 Acres & a Child's part of all My Moveable estate to be Delivered at his arrival at 21 years of age.

It is My Will and Desire that as soon (spelled "sone") as convenient (spelled "conivent") after My Death that all My Lands that is not Willed a Way, that is to say, old James Johnston & the Land I bought of William Johnston on the River Dam & my Stalons (stallions?) & Still & Wagon & horses & ?? Should be sold with ? sale & the ?? & the bonds & Notes & other accounts collected, the Money arising therefrom is to Discharge my Debts & the balance to be divided among My beloved Wife & My Eight Children or such (spelled "Sutch") of them as is then alive, as to My Wagons, there is one ? Wagon & 8 Work Horses to be reserved (?) for the use (spelled "youes") of My family & My beloved Wife is to have a ? & the ? for Caring for Negroes (?) of the family & each (spelled "Eatch") of My Children to be furnish[ed] With a good riding horse & or (?) a breeding (spelled "breading") Mare as the Executors May think proper. My Mill & the 100 Acres of Land Joining it on the North side of the river is to be kept (spelled "capt") for the use of the family During My beloved Wife['s] Widowhood (spelled "WiderWhood") or till the Washington Williams comes of age & then she is to be Sold at the highest bides among (spelled "a Monge") My Sons then alive, & it is my Will that ?? of My Children should Die Without an heir (?) before they arrive at 21 years of age that there (sic, their) part of this Shall be equally (spelled "Equale") Divided among My Children then alive.

It is My Will that My beloved Wife Mary Williams & My Son Daniel Williams, & My Brother Henry Williams & Joseph Hays, be appointed by the My Executors to carry this my Last Will & Testament in to Excution Said Will My hand & Sealed With My Seal this 12 Day of June 1780.

Monument below found at King's Mountain





Col James Williams listed as commander Ninety Six District Militia



Col James Williams, first name on plaque under "killed"

Another monument at King's Mountain





James Williams' grave is on the front lawn of the Carnegie Library in Gaffney, SC



Chapter 5: Williams' Death

Contemporary accounts of Williams' death are given in the memoirs and pension applications of those who claimed either to have served under him at the Battle of King's Mountain or to have opposed him there. Thomas Young gave the most vivid and, perhaps, accurate description of Williams' demise. He wrote:

On the top of the mountain, in the thickest of the fight, I saw Col. Williams fall, and a braver or a better man never died upon the field of battle. I had seen him once before that day; it was in the beginning of the action, as he charged by me full speed around the mountain; toward the summit a ball struck his horse under the jaw when he commenced stamping as if he were in a nest of yellow jackets. Col. W. threw the reins over the animal's neck—sprang to the ground, and dashed onward. The moment I heard the cry that Col. Williams was shot, I ran to his assistance, for I loved him as a father, he had ever been so kind to me and his little son, Joseph. They carried him into a tent, and sprinkled some water in his face. He revived, and his first words were, "For God's sake boys, don't give up the hill!" I remember it as well as if it had occurred yesterday. I left him in the arms of his son, Daniel, and returned to the field to avenge his fall. Col. Williams died next day, and was buried not far from the field of his glory.¹³¹

South Carolina General Assembly
116th Session, 2005-2006

Concurrent Resolution
Sponsors: Senator Verdin
Introduced in the Senate on January 13, 2005
Introduced in the House on February 8, 2005
Adopted by the General Assembly on February 24, 2005

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

TO REQUEST THE GOVERNOR BY PROCLAMATION TO CONFIRM THE RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES WILLIAMS BESTOWED UPON HIM BY ACT OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA PROVINCIAL CONGRESS DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND TO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO NAME THE LITTLE RIVER BRIDGE ON SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHWAY 560 IN LAURENS COUNTY AS THE "JAMES WILLIAMS MEMORIAL BRIDGE" TO HONOR THIS REVOLUTIONARY WAR HERO.

Whereas, there is not and has not been a South Carolina state monument to Laurens County's Brigadier General James Williams; and
Whereas, his family cemetery and his plantation known as "Mount Pleasant" are located at the southwest corner of the Little River Bridge on South Carolina Highway 560 in Laurens County. This sizeable parcel was also his home and the site of two Revolutionary battles, the Battles of Fort Williams and Mud Lick Creek; and

Whereas, General Williams was a Revolutionary War hero who gave his life to ensure the liberty and freedom of the United States of America. He led the victorious forces from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia at the battle of Musgrove's Mill; and

Whereas, he was promoted by act of the South Carolina Provincial Congress, which was signed by Governor Rutledge and South Carolina Chief Justice Drayton, to the rank of Brigadier General but died of battle wounds just hours before the orders and commission arrived. Some observers maintain that the promotion was not official because he never received it; and

Whereas, during the course of the American Revolution, he gave to South Carolina: (1) the equipment and supplies for a regiment of the Little River Mounted Rifles Regiment, which he also commanded until his heroic death; and

(2) two month's pay for his regiment, food supplies, generous amounts of shot and powder, plus one hundred fifty gallons of whiskey for the foragers to use to pay for hams, chickens, and fodder from local farmers; and

(3) his life, having been mortally wounded leading the local men up the seemingly impossible sides of King's Mountain, in the movement that ultimately won the battle for both Carolinas and indeed for all thirteen of the original colonies; and

Whereas, after his death, local Tories, before departing for the Caribbean, also killed his two older sons, ages fourteen and seventeen, and burned his plantation house, leaving his wife and small children to live in the barns and cribs of the farmyard; and

Whereas, this brave and courageous hero of the American Revolution deserves to be honored by his beloved South Carolina in order to recognize and remember his contributions to and sacrifices for his State and country. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

That the members of the General Assembly, by this resolution, request the Governor by proclamation to confirm the rank of Brigadier General James Williams bestowed upon him by act of the South Carolina Provincial Congress during the American Revolution.

Be it further resolved that the members of the General Assembly further request the Department of Transportation to name the Little River Bridge on South Carolina Highway 560 in Laurens County as the "James Williams Memorial Bridge" in his honor and bestow appropriate markers to reflect this name.

Be it further resolved that the Department of Transportation is requested to plan and conduct an appropriate ceremony to celebrate the naming of this bridge for Brigadier General Williams and to coordinate the ceremony with members of the Henry Laurens Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Clinton High School JROTC, and local clergy and civic leaders.

South Carolina General Assembly
118th Session, 2009-2010

House Resolution
Sponsors: Rep. D.C. Moss

Introduced in the House on June 16, 2009

Adopted by the House on June 16, 2009

A HOUSE RESOLUTION

TO POSTHUMOUSLY RECOGNIZE JAMES WILLIAMS OF LAURENS COUNTY, REVOLUTIONARY WAR HERO, WHO WAS AWARDED THE RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL AFTER HIS DEATH AND TO HONOR HIS VALIANT SERVICE TO THE STATE AND NATION.

Whereas, General Williams was a Revolutionary War hero who gave his life to ensure the liberty and freedom of the United States of America. He led the victorious forces from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia at the battle of Musgrove's Mill; and

Whereas, his family cemetery and his plantation known as "Mount Pleasant" are located at the southwest corner of the Little River Bridge on South Carolina Highway 560 in Laurens County. This sizeable parcel was also his home and the site of two Revolutionary battles, the Battles of Fort Williams and Mud Lick Creek; and

Whereas, he was promoted by act of the South Carolina Provincial Congress, which was signed by Governor Rutledge and South Carolina Chief Justice Drayton, to the rank of Brigadier General but died of battle wounds just hours before the orders and commission arrived; and

Whereas, during the course of the American Revolution, he gave the equipment and supplies for a regiment of the Little River Mounted Rifles Regiment which he commanded; and

Whereas, he also generously gave two months' pay for his regiment, food supplies, large amounts of shot and powder, plus one hundred fifty gallons of whiskey for the foragers to use to pay for hams, chickens, and fodder from local farmers; and

Whereas, in the end this remarkable patriot gave the last full measure of devotion to his country, his life, having been mortally wounded leading the local men up the seemingly impossible sides of King's Mountain, in the movement that ultimately won the battle for both Carolinas and indeed for all thirteen of the original colonies; and

Whereas, after his death, local Tories, before departing for the Caribbean, also killed his two older sons, ages fourteen and seventeen, and burned his plantation house, leaving his wife and small children to live in the barns and cribs of the farmyard; and

Whereas, this brave and courageous hero of the American Revolution deserves to be honored by his beloved South Carolina in order to recognize and remember his contributions to, and sacrifices for, his State and country. Certainly, James Williams truly earned the rank of Brigadier General. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, posthumously recognize James Williams, Revolutionary War hero, who was awarded the rank of Brigadier General after his death and honor his valiant service to the State and nation.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Henry Laurens Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.