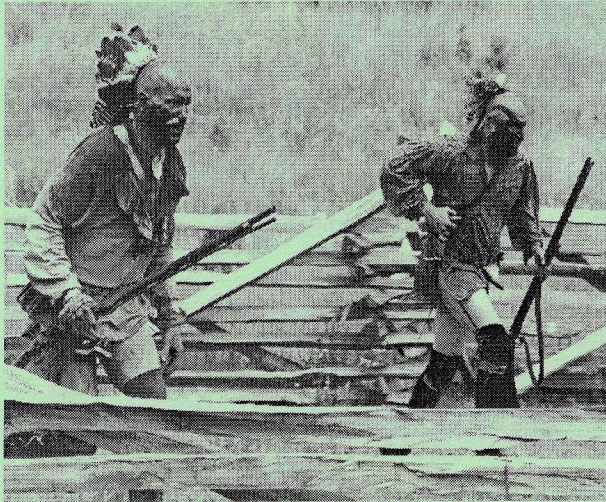


Siege of Fort Watauga!



On the morning of **July 21, 1776**, nearly three hundred Cherokee warriors attacked Fort Watauga. The attack was fierce for about three hours, and random attacks lasted for about two weeks. At one point during this time, approximately 150 people took shelter inside the fort. Living conditions were no doubt crowded and miserable. Under the command of Captain James Robertson, and Lieutenant John Sevier, the fort was successfully defended with minimal casualties among the settlers.

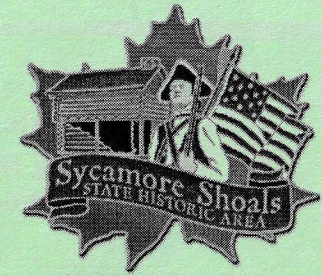
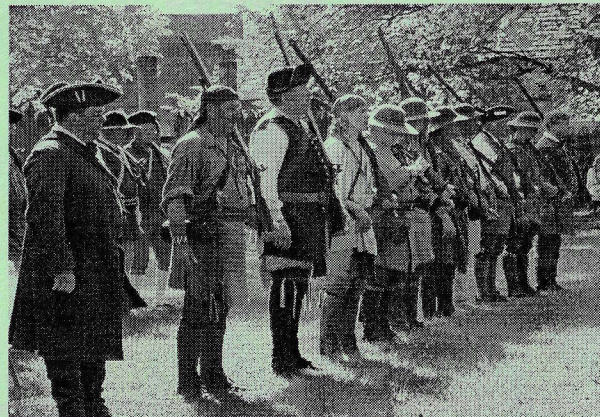
After devastating defeats, the Cherokee warriors led by Dragging Canoe, fled further south. With no looming threat of attack, the Talbot family was once more left at peace. It is uncertain how long the fort remained in operation. The last written record of the fort was in 1777. In the mid 1780's, Mathew Talbot's family moved to Georgia after his wife died in 1785.

The Muster of the Overmountain Men at Sycamore Shoals...

The grounds upon which you now stand is the very site where *over 1,000 men* gathered to protect their homes once again! Talbot's sons were also among these men. On **September 25, 1780**, the Overmountain Men assembled here at Sycamore Shoals under the leadership of Colonel William Campbell, Colonel Isaac Shelby, and Lieutenant-Colonel John Sevier.

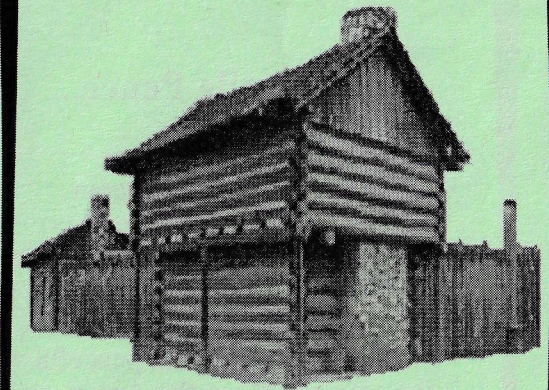
The Loyalist Army led by British Major Patrick Ferguson threatened to cross over the mountains and destroy the settler's homes. Unwilling to wait for the attack, the brave frontiersman took the fight to the Loyalist Army.

The men traveled through the unforgiving mountain conditions and found Ferguson and his men at King's Mountain in South Carolina. In a battle that lasted little more than one hour, the courageous frontier militia was victorious! This battle was a decisive Patriot victory which helped win the American Revolution.



Self-guided Tour

Fort Watauga!



Park grounds and trails open
at daylight and close at dark.

Visitor Center Hours of Operation:
Mon.—Sat., 9:00am—4:00pm
Closed daily for lunch
Sundays 1:00pm—4:30pm

A Frontier Settlement forms along the Watauga River...

During the eighteenth century, as land became more scarce in the colonies, people began to push beyond the colonial borders and onto Cherokee lands. The Watauga settlement, formed here beside the Watauga River, was one of the first permanent American settlements outside the original thirteen colonies. The new settlers began leasing their land from the Cherokees in 1772.

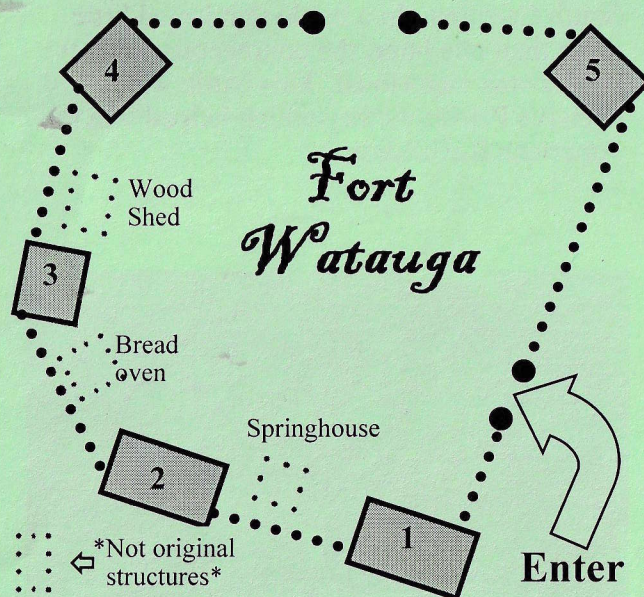
A Fragile Peace...

In 1775, the Transylvania Purchase took place here at Sycamore Shoals, and divided the Cherokee who were devoted to protecting their lands from those who wished to remain peaceful with the settlers. When the American Revolution began, peace became fragile on the frontier as the British Army began providing guns and ammunition to their Cherokee allies. The settlers knew that an attack was now unavoidable.

A Farm Becomes a Fort...

The reconstructed fort that you see here was not built to be a permanent military outpost. The original fort in 1776 was located about a mile down river from here, and was the farm homestead of Mathew Talbot. Talbot operated the first gristmill in the Watauga settlement (1775).

His place was chosen to be the site of the fort perhaps because the location of the mill was so well known. The settlers knew that an attack could come at any moment. The settlers hastily constructed a palisade wall between the closely grouped buildings on Talbot's farm and created the fort.



According to the archeological dig at the original site, this is the approximate size and dimension of the fort in 1776. These are the buildings in clockwise order as you enter the fort from the sidewalk:

1) Barn

- For programming purposes we have displayed this building as a frontier tavern, much like one that was located in the area during the late eighteenth century.

2) The Talbot Family Cabin

- Mathew and his wife Mary had 7 children, and moved to the settlement from Virginia.

3) This was probably the grain shed or corn crib.

4) and 5)

- There was not enough evidence to accurately determine what these two buildings were used for.

***Other interesting notes -** Talbot founded the Sinking Creek Baptist church and was the first preacher. His primary business interest was ranching, and he supplied beef to the militia on their march to King's Mountain in 1780.