



The Robert Scruggs House

The Scruggs Family

Robert Scruggs, the builder of this cabin was born just across the state line in North Carolina in 1800. Around 1805, his family moved to South Carolina near the Cowpens Battlefield and began farming. In the mid-1820s, he married Catharine Connel, and to help the couple establish a household, Robert's father, Richard Scruggs II, gave them 200 acres of land. Around 1828, they built their home, and began the hard work of clearing, planting and harvesting. The sounds of children filled the cabin because the couple had three young boys by 1830 and eventually a total of eleven children.

The Scruggs family raised horses, mules, hogs, cattle and sheep, and planted grain (corn, wheat, rye, and oats) to feed the livestock. In addition, they had a fruit orchard and grew peas, beans, and potatoes. They churned butter for their consumption and for sale. Although the farm was the main source of income for Robert Scruggs, he also ran a country store, which stood on the other side of the Green River Road, in front of this cabin. The couple had eleven children, and as Restoration in the Southeast, many organizations preserve plantation structures. Although wealthy planters were influential people on the coast, it was yeoman farmers such as Robert Scruggs who were influential in the Carolina backcountry. Therefore the National Park Service chose to preserve and protect his house, so that this type of 19th century yeoman farmhouse architecture would not totally disappear.

To return the house to its 1828 appearance, the National Park Service removed the additions and modern improvements, Scruggs House Loft before NPS Restoration repairing the chimney and replacing the porches, the chinking between the logs, and the modern shingles. Today, the house, in its original location along the Green River Road at Cowpens National Battlefield, serves as an example of a typical 1830s era backcountry homestead. The reproduction furnishings in the cabin are indicative of the meager belongings that were typical of the early to mid-nineteenth century.

The First Visitors to the Battlefield

Throughout the years, people have taken trips to the site of the Cowpens battle to honor the men who fought here and to study the terrain. On January 11, 1849, Benson Lossing, a noted engraver and author, who was best known for his Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, stopped at the Scruggs house and asked directions to the site of the Cowpens battle. He arrived at the house about 4:00 p.m., Lossing wrote, "As the family grew, they added rooms onto the house and covered the log walls with paneling. In doing so, they preserved the original walls of the cabin within the additions. Robert Scruggs died in 1890 at the age of ninety, and Catharine died less than two years later at the age of eighty seven. The cabin remained in the family until the mid-1970s, when the National Park Service purchased the property from their granddaughter, Rosa.