

Scene at the Cowpens by Benson Lossing

battle ended within a quarter of a mile of Scruggs's, where is now a cleared field, on the northeast side of the Mill-Gap [Green River] Road, in the center of which was a log-house, as seen in the annexed engraving. The field was covered with blasted pines, stumps, and stocks [sic] of Indian corn, and had a most dreary appearance."

In 1898, a reporter from the *Gaffney Ledger*, reacting to interest generated by the proposal to create a National Military Park at the Cowpens battleground, stopped at the house, visited with the family, and went with them to see the battlefield.



Scruggs House, April 1928

Thirty years later, in response to a request by Congressman William F. Stevenson, who was trying to pass another bill to create a national military park at the site of the Cowpens battle, Lieutenant Colonel H.L. Landers of the Army War College surveyed the battlefield. In the process, he visited with the Scruggs family and took a picture of their house, which he published in his *Historical Statements Concerning the Battle of Kings Mountain and the Battle of Cowpens, South Carolina*.

Up until the National Park Service acquired the property in the 1970s, students of the battle would stop at the house to get directions to the battlefield and to discuss the battle. Therefore, the Robert Scruggs House became the unofficial first Visitor Center of Cowpens National Battlefield.

As you reflect on the life and times of the Robert Scruggs family, take a few minutes to think about the pioneer spirit of the people of the Carolina backcountry and of those who fought for our freedom.

For more information, visit our webpage at www.nps.gov/cowp/.



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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

The Robert Scruggs House



U. S. Department of the Interior
Cowpens National Battlefield

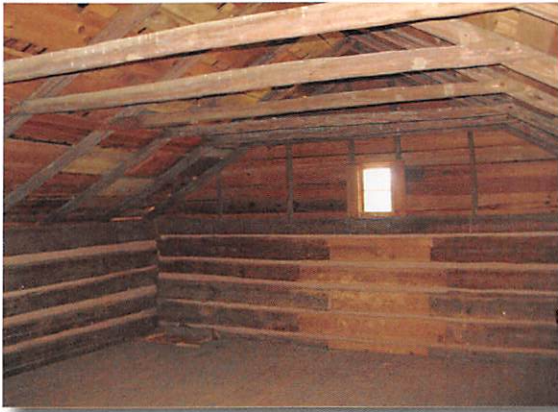


The Robert Scruggs House, Today

From the earliest days of settlement through the 1800s, log cabins such as this one provided homes for yeoman (rural middleclass) farmers in the South Carolina backcountry. Typically built with the help of neighbors as a one-room structure, owners added onto their homes as their families grew.

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,



Scruggs House Loft

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 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

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.



Before NPS Restoration

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,

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. Arriving at the house about 4:00 p.m., Lossing wrote, "The