

Russell's Fort

A fact-based investigation of George Russell of lower Cove Creek and rebuttal to the claim that the log structure inside the "Pumpkin Center of the South" was Russell's Fort.

by Timothy M. McClellan and Miles Philbeck

Introduction

In the spring of 2022 Rutherford County was abuzz as the Magnolia Network's 14th season of Barnwood Builders was airing two episodes on preserving "an important symbol of local history" in Rutherford County. The first episode provided an intriguing account of the history of "Russel's Fort" which supposedly later became the "Pumpkin Center of the South" southeast of Lake Lure in Rutherford County.

According to a local newspaper article (*The Daily Courier*, 22 March 2022) George Russell, second husband of Mary (Underwood) Whiteside, "settled along the banks of the Rocky Broad just South of Hickory Nut Gorge where Lake Lure Marine stands today." Lake Lure Marine is a boat repair and storage business. However, George Russell (Sr.) and his wife Mary actually lived on Cove Creek, east of what later became known as the Pumpkin Center. The article goes on to state that "in 1775, additional buildings were constructed on the high ground (Russell's Fort)." No evidence to support this assumed construction has been seen. In fact, the site later known as the Pumpkin Center was actually on low land near Main Broad River, as was most of George Russell's land on low land on Cove Creek. Land that was at higher elevations was among the least desired land sought by early settlers, and most of the land away from the main streams was taken up well after Revolutionary

War times.

Some have speculated that George Russell is Capt. Russell who listed taxes in his district, called his company, in the early 1780's in Rutherford County. However, this man was Jeremiah Russell.

Historical documentation sheds some light on George Russel Sr.'s role during the Revolutionary War, when sometimes it was neighbor against neighbor, there being both Patriots and Loyalists in Tryon and its successor counties, Rutherford and Lincoln.

Supposedly, after George Russell (Sr.)'s death his widow Mary (Underwood) Whiteside Russell continued to live in the log structure known as "Russel's Fort" later the "Pumpkin Center of the South."

As will be shown to the contrary, the Russell's never owned the land or the structure at that location. Following George's death Mary Russell was living on Cove Creek in 1785 when her son George Russell (Jr.) entered a claim for land joining land which George Russell (Sr.) had acquired in 1778 and where his widow was living at the time the claim was made. Mary never owned land on Main Broad River where the Pumpkin Center was located, proven by historical documented evidence.

I. Evidence That Russell's Fort Existed and its Location

Col. William Graham in his application (S8624) for a Revolutionary War pension included the following statement: "*I was the Oaldest Coln. on the frontier parts of North Carolina that much of the arrangements for the protection of the frontiers was devolved on me to select proper sites to erect forts and to have them fortified with a sufficient force there was **Waddletons fort Earles fort White Oak fort Russells fort and Potts fort** that was under my directions and superintendance ..."*

Thomas Dalton in his pension application (W6983) stated: "*Capt. McClain was beating up for volunteers to guard the frontiers I joined him and served 3 months we was kept on the out post and frontiers and had much difficulty with the Indians and Tories after our time was out we returned home Soon after my return I was a volunteer under Capt. McClain*

*and served 3 months at **Waddles and Russells Forts** and on the lines as an Indian spy." Also, in the same application he said "Captain McClain therefore under command of Col. James Miller was endeavoring to raise a company. I being young and ardent, and as in all my past service, disdaining to be called out by the compulsory process of a draft, and still more the loss of the freedom of my country, again volunteered for three months, a large portion of which time I spent in garrison at **Waddletons** (miscalled Waddles Fort in my original declaration) and **Russel's Stations**, and was once marched out to the line of So. Carolina ..."*

In the pension file (W4012) of Charles Lewis (and his widow Elizabeth Russell Lewis) is found an affidavit by William Dalton stating of Charles Lewis, "*We were boys together and but few years between us at the age of about 20 or 22 years in the early part of the*

month of July 1781 I think, Charles Lewis and myself volunteered our service in defence of our country in this county under the command of Captain John McLeain who raised a company of horse then called the scouting party to protect the frontiers of North Carolina from the invasions of the Cherokee Indians Charles Lewis was appointed by Capt. John McLeain first Sargent in our company Our service was on the line from Princes Station on the South Carolina line to **Nevels Station Waldens Station Russells Station Potts'es Station** in the extreem northern part of this county ..."

Alexander McFadden in his pension application (S8887), among many things stated "I then recd. the appointment of a Captain from Coln. Robert Porter and ordered to raise a Company for three months I then went in the different parts of the county to take any of the Tory party to a stand that was appointed cald. Little Brittain to have a trial ..." William Dalton made affidavit on behalf of Alexander McFadden stating "that during the latter part of the Revolutionary War say 1780 he became acquainted with Alexander McFadden that he believes he had the command of **Russells fort & White Oak fort** that he was at those forts on duty when the aforesaid Alexander McFadden had the command as Captain ..."

James Gray in his pension application (S8594)

stated "I was at the seige of 96 ... I was at that 4 or 5 weeks I was under Captn. Inman I came home from that place was appointed Captn. by Col. Hampton and ordered to guard for **Stations Russells, Waddletons, White Oak & Earlses ...**" Alexander McFadden made an affidavit on behalf of James Gray stating "that he was well acquainted with Captain James Gray during the Revolutionary War and have lived a neighbour to him from before the Revolution to the present day I served under him as Lieutenant in the year 1780 and 1781 I was with him at Waddeltons Station and at Earls Station and at **Russells Station on Broad River** under the command of Coln. Robert Porter ..."

James Ownbey in his pension application (and his widow Joanna Sims Ownbey) (W3712) stated "that he entered the service again as a substitute for Thomas Haslip in the County of Rutherford in the spring of 1782 in the company commanded by Capt. Hugh Beaty and was placed at a station known by the name of **Russells Station at the mouth of Cove Creek** in said county where he remained the space of three months and was discharged ..."

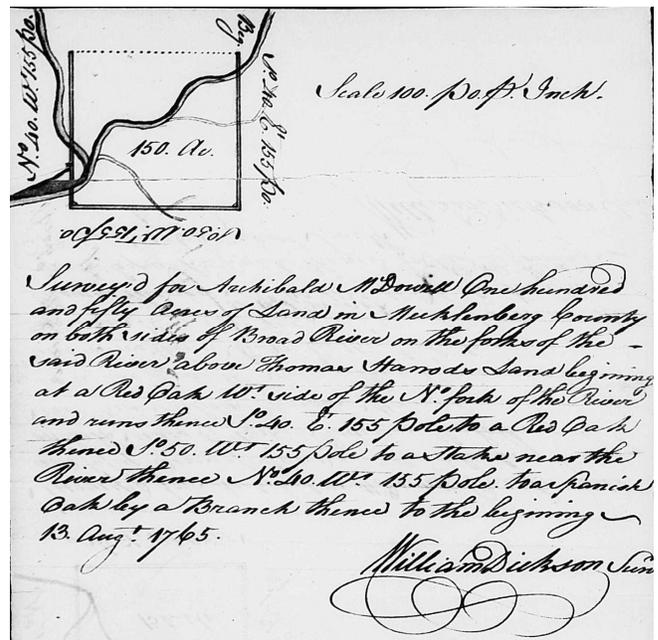
These statements leave absolutely no doubt that Russell's Fort / Station existed and that it was located near the mouth of Cove Creek of Broad River!

II. Location of George and Mary (Underwood) Whiteside Russell's Land

George Russell is first documented in Tryon County, predecessor of Rutherford and Lincoln Counties, on 26 July 1775 when he was chosen from Capt. Hampton's Company along with Andrew Hampton and John Morris as a member of the newly-formed Tryon County Committee of Safety. His place of abode at that time within Tryon County is not known but Hampton and Morris both lived in the part of Tryon which later became Rutherford County. George Russell was also in attendance at the Committee of Safety's meeting on 14 September 1775 but he was not present on 14 August 1775 and did not sign a resolution made by Committee members and others to take up arms in defense of their freedom. He was also not recorded as being present at any later meetings of the Committee. (N. C. Archives, Secretary of State's Papers, S.S. 305).

The last "crown" survey warrants for vacant land in Tryon County were issued on 22 July 1774, the Colony of North Carolina ceasing to issue new ones thereafter. The State of North Carolina opened its own land office in 1778. In the interim many persons lived on vacant land awaiting an opportunity to enter claims for that land at a later date. This may have been the case with George Russell.

George Russell made his first appearance in other records of the part of Tryon County that became Rutherford County when on 19 January 1778 he purchased 150 acres at the lowest part of Cove Creek from Archibald McDowell (Tryon Co. Deed Book 9, p. 415).



Archibald McDowell had received the land as a land patent (grant) on 30 October 1765 when the land was part of Mecklenburg County (Mecklenburg Land Grant File **530**). The land had been surveyed for Archibald McDowell on 13 August 1765 based on a survey warrant issued for the same on 6 August 1765 (N. C. Auditor General's Lists of Warrants, N. C. Archives). At the time that the land was surveyed for McDowell it was described as being "on both sides of Broad River on the forks of the said River above Thomas Harrods land." In later years these forks of the river were referred to in land grants and deeds as the South Fork (Main, or Rocky, Broad River) and the North Fork (Cove Creek).

It is likely that Mary was present, living as the wife of George Russell, from the time he appeared in Tryon County until his death. Their daughter Elizabeth Russell had been born 21 May 1770 and married Charles Crawford Lewis with Rutherford marriage bond dated 25 October 1785. Charles Lewis was later a member of the North Carolina House of Commons from Rutherford County in 1798 and served as Rutherford County's Register of Deeds from 1803 to 1832. George and Mary's son George Russell (Jr.) was born about 1772 in Virginia according to his listing as age 78 on the 1850 census of Camden County, Missouri with his wife Rhoda age 81.

On the same date that George Russell purchased the Archibald McDowell tract the Tryon County land entry officer began recording entries of claims for land to be granted by the State of North Carolina (as opposed to those previously granted by the Colony of North Carolina). A year later George Russell continued his acquisition of land by seeking to purchase three state land grants from North Carolina. He entered Tryon County claims numbered 580, 581, and 582 for three tracts of land on Cove Creek on 22 January 1779 (N. C. Archives, Rutherford Co. Land Entries, 086.404.1).

580 George Russel claiming 100 acres of land in Tryon County on the no. fork of Main Broad River on both sides of sd. fork joining his own land and runing up Goffs branch for complement.

581 George Russel claiming 50 acres of land in Tryon County on the north fork of Main Broad River lying above his other entry including Shadrach Nettles improvement.

582 George Russel claiming 100 acres of land in Tryon County on Main Broad River lying between his own land and William Nettles on the north side of sd. river and runing up for complement.

By this time the General Assembly had already passed an act to abolish Tryon County by dividing it into Rutherford and Lincoln Counties but the act did not become effective until April of 1779. Claims for land that had not been fully processed continued to be recorded in the name of Tryon County after its abolishment. Consequently the survey warrants and surveys for the three claims above are filed with Tryon County land grant papers and were issued as Tryon County grants after Tryon County had been abolished.

The original survey warrant for entry 580 is found in Tryon Land Grant File **1662**, that for entry 581 in file **1616**, and that for entry 582 in file **1723**. All three are dated 6 December 1779. The survey plats and descriptions are in the same files and are all dated 11 November 1779. Clearly, either the warrant dates or the survey dates are in error since a survey could not be (or should not have been) done until a warrant had been issued. The surveyor found only 86 acres of the 100 acres that George Russell claimed in entry 582.

In January 1780 George Russell served on the grand jury for that term of the Rutherford County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions.

Nicholas Harvey entered a claim on 28 February 1780 for 100 acres "lying on the north side of George Russels land including the meeting house branch for Compt." (N. C. Archives, Rutherford Land Entries, S. S 965.1, entry 256), but Harvey did not receive a land grant based on his claim. The Revolutionary War pension application of John Sorrels (\$3953) residing in Butler Co., Kentucky on 8 October 1832 at age 76 states that Sorrels "volunteered about 1st Sept 1779 in a company of militia minute men in Rutherford County in the State of North Carolina, (which company was bound to military service) under Capt. John McLane & Lieut. Nicholas Harvey, and in the Regiment commanded by Col. James Miller."

A land grant survey for David Lewis on 16 March 1780 had chainbearers George Russel and Saml. King (Tryon Land Grant File 1756). George Russell and others were ordered at the April 1780 court term to appear at the July 1780 term as grand jurors. The July minutes show no grand jurors being present.

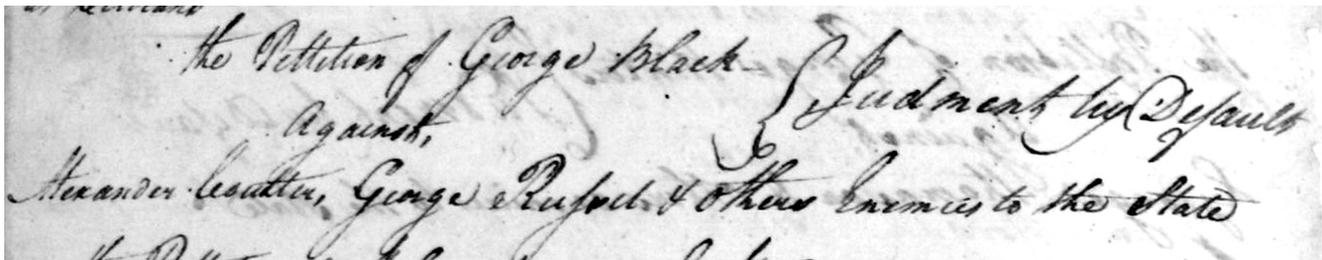
On 17 July 1781 a pay voucher was issued to Mary Russil of Rutherford County in the sum of twenty-four and one-half Spanish milled dollars for beef and corn which the Commissioner of the county Thomas Whiteside had purchased from her (N. C. Revolutionary War pay voucher 86). On the back side is wriiten "No 129 David Miller Widow Rusill for land" which seems to indicate that she used it to at least partially pay for a land grant. She did apply for one in March 1788 and received it later that year. This

Thomas Whiteside was from the Whiteside family which lived in Whiteside Settlement or what is now called Golden Valley in Rutherford County.

A list of persons killed and wounded by the Indians in Rutherford County, including the name of George Russele, was prepared by James Miller and is found in the General Assembly records for the April-May 1782 session. At the July 1782 Rutherford court Mary Russell, administrator on the estate of George Russell deceased, returned an inventory of his estate and asked for an order of sale. Land grants with numbers 209, 163, and 270 corresponding respectively to George Russell's three entries 580, 581, and 582 were issued to him on 28 October 1782. Unfortunately George Russell had been dead for at least six months. At the January 1783 court Mary Russell returned the amount of sale of George's estate to be 455 pounds and 90 shillings. During the time of

the Revolution inflation was rampant and that is reflected in this sale amount.

Possessed with 150 acres on Cove Creek and claims-in-process for 250 more acres, George Russell's life collided in its final years with the rebellion of many Americans against British rule. His ultimate allegiance is seemingly documented after his death in the minutes of the Rutherford County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for October 1782: "The Petition of George Black Against Alexander Coulter, George Russel & others Enemies to the State} Jud[g]ment by Default." George Russell, whether living or dead, had become subject to the widespread effort to confiscate the land and other property of those accused of having been supportive of the British in the colonies' struggle for independence. The full story of George Russell and others may never be told.



The case naming George Russell had likely been on the docket of the court at previous quarterly sessions and continued until this one since in April 1782 Mary Russell, having no intention of allowing her late husband's property to be taken, sought relief from the North Carolina General Assembly. The Journal of the North Carolina Senate includes the following on 29 April 1782: "Read a Petition from the Officers of Rutherford County in favour of the wife of George Russell, late of Rutherford County, praying, &c." The petition was sent on to the House of Commons and the Committee on Propositions and Grievances. The Journal of the North Carolina House of Commons on 15 May 1782 records the Committee and House's action "on the Petition from the Officers of Rutherford County and the petition of Mrs. Mary Russell: That it is the unanimous opinion of your Committee that **the property of George Russell, Deceased, taken into possession by the Commissioners of Confiscated Property for the County of Rutherford, be immediately restored to the said Mary Russell** for the Benefit and use of her Children, all which is submitted." Two days later the House Journal includes a message to the Senate, "the report of the Committee on Propositions and Grievances in favor of Mrs. Russell, relict of George Russell late of Rutherford County, deceased, we

return you severally concurred with." Mary Russell's petition would have been informative but has not been found if it still exists.

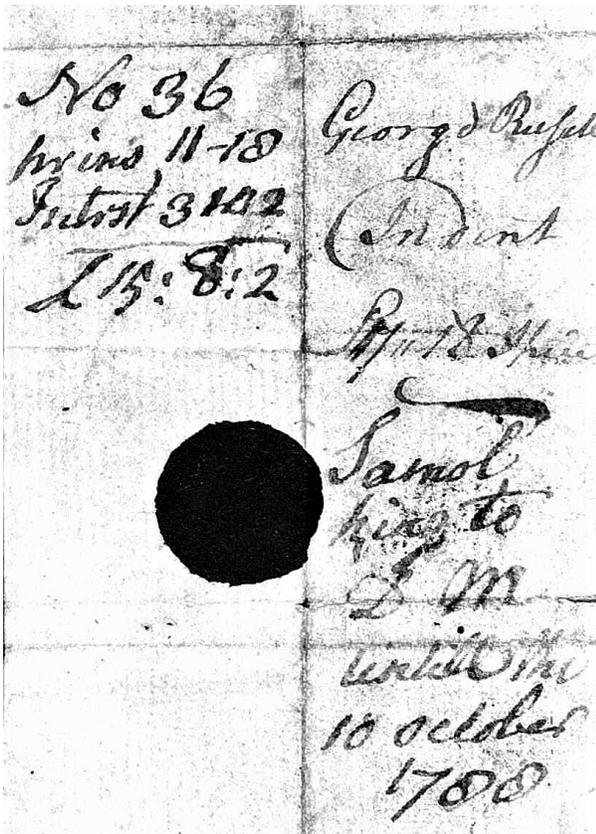
These documents call into question the widely accepted story written by George Russell's grandson William Terrill Lewis, born in 1811, youngest of thirteen children of Charles C. Lewis and Elizabeth Russell, in his book *Genealogy of the Lewis Family in America*, published in 1893 after Lewis's death on January 23rd of that year. He wrote that George Russell, Sr. "was an Irishman, who was killed by the Indians while on a bear-hunt soon after the close of the Revolutionary war." He wrote further,

George Russell, Sr., lived about ten miles west of Rutherfordton, N. C., on Broad river, where the Hickorynut Gap Road crosses said river, at a plantation which has since been owned by George Russell, Jr., John U. Whiteside, Elias Lynch and others. The first settlement was made on the west side of the river; at this place George Russell, Sr., was living during the Revolutionary war when Ferguson and his army marched as far west as his house, which they plundered and then returned to the East. What money the family had was in silver; when they saw the army

approaching the house they threw the bag of money in a little barrel of feathers that stood in the corner of the house. When the soldiers entered the house they commenced plundering and appropriating everything they saw proper to their own use; one of them ran his arm down into the barrel of feathers, grabbed the bag of money and left. All the bed clothes and wearing apparel that the family saved were such as they carried to the swamp and were stowed away in a hogshead before the arrival of the army.

The 1782 Rutherford County tax list shows Mary Russell's property as 250 acres, four enslaved persons, one horse, and eleven cattle.

On the reverse side of a North Carolina Revolutionary War pay voucher for George Russell dated 17 September 1783 (number 2329 shown below) is the name of Samuel King who was later in its possession. It is also numbered No. 36 and has the initials and familiar handwriting of David Miller, entry-taker of Rutherford County, to whom King had apparently transferred the voucher. Samuel King married Elizabeth Underwood, sister of Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell, as her second husband. This indicates that the voucher is for George Russell, Mary's late husband, but issued well after his death.



There is no indication on this pay voucher that it was for militia service. Rather, it was for a public claim. It seems likely that the voucher was for beef, pork, corn or similar items needed for support of the militia. There are similar ones on the same date for Samuel Stockton and Alexander Grant with the same reference to Samol King on the back sides and with notations No 37 and No 38. Stockton and Grant were both Rutherford County residents.

Mary Russell sold an enslaved boy Jack, nine years old, to James Miller on 27 March 1784 for 100 pounds (Rutherford Co. Will/Sale Book A, p. 56).

On 29 January 1785 "Gorge Russele Juner" made a claim for 50 acres "Lying on the North Side of Mean Broad River Joyiningen the South East Side of the tract of Land wheron the Widow Russel now Lives it Bing Surplos Land of orphans" (Rutherford Land Grant File 352). The survey warrant was issued on 10 May 1785 and the grant was issued 9 August 1787 as grant 313 recorded in Land Grant Book 65, page 333. George Russell was only twelve or thirteen years old which is rather extraordinary, but the entry does describe the land as surplus land for orphans.

Mary Russell sold an enslaved boy Isaac, three years old, to John Whiteside on 12 February 1786 for forty pounds (Rutherford Co. Original Deed Book 25, page 111). John Whiteside was one of her sons from her first marriage.

Mary Russell made a claim identified as entry 594 on 12 March 1788 for 100 acres "lying on the Meeting house branch & joining her East line of her own land the waters of Cove Creek the Waters of broad River." The survey warrant was issued 1 August 1788 and the land was surveyed on 10 October 1788 (Rutherford Land Grant File 433). The grant was issued 29 November 1788 as number 395 and recorded in Land Grant Book 70, page 25. The meeting house referred to in this claim and that of Nicholas Harvey in 1780 has not been identified, but it seems to have been active for at least eight years. Could it once have been a church that did not survive?

The 1790 Rutherford census lists Mary Russell with a household consisting of herself and one male at least sixteen years old. There is little doubt that the male was her son George who was about eighteen years old. Mary also owned five enslaved persons in 1790. The following year her son George Russell married Rhoda Reavis with Rutherford County marriage bond dated 23 February 1791.

On 12 May 1796 George Russell made a claim (entry number 956) for 100 acres "Lying Joyining the old track whear my mother now Lives & Jouiningin ouer on Land on Gafes Brench & Shed Neteles old

pleace & all of thear old Lines Down my field on the waters of Cove Creek." No land grant was issued based on this land entry.

On 6 June 1797 Mary Russell sold an enslaved boy Jeff, seven years old, to Thomas Whiteside for 50 pounds (Rutherford Will/Sale Book B, p. 113). Thomas was probably the same person as her son with that name from her first marriage. On 20 December 1805 she gave her daughter Mary Kelly an enslaved girl Lydia aged nine years (Rutherford Deed Book 23, p. 436). Mary Kelly, wife of Henry Kelly, was Mary Russell's daughter from her first marriage.

The 1808 map of North Carolina by Jona. Price and John Strother (below) shows "Russel" at a marked location or structure on the west side of Cove Creek north of its mouth on Main Broad River. While it is obvious from the land records of George and Mary Russell that they lived on the Cove Creek property and did not own the property which later became the Pumpkin Center, this map just makes this fact all that much clearer.



1808 Price-Strother Map

On 19 June 1812 George Russell made a claim for 50 acres "on both sides of Cove Creek joining lines of David Boys and his own" (entry 1098). The survey warrant was issued on 30 October 1813, and the land was surveyed as forty-seven acres on 6 November 1813. The land was granted as grant 2894 on 10 December 1814 and recorded in Land Grant Book 129, page 28 (Rutherford Land Grant File 2929).

Approaching 80 years of age, Mary Russell sold her 100 acres that she had been granted on Meeting House Branch to George Russell on 14 July 1812 for 60 dollars (Rutherford Deed Book 26, p. 669). The following year on 19 November 1813 Mary Russell gave her children various enslaved persons. To her son George Russell she gave Nance age eight years, Adam age six years, and Phibe age two years (Rutherford Deed Book 27, p. 136). To her son Thomas Whiteside she gave Bob age four years (Rutherford Deed Book 27, p. 137). To John Whiteside she gave Pegga about twenty-five years old, Lucy four years old, and Susan two years old (Rutherford Will/Sale Book C, p. 18). To Mary Kelly she gave Let age twenty-two years and Jack age three months (Rutherford Will/Sale Book C, p. 19). It is curious that there is no record of Mary Russell either selling or giving enslaved persons to her daughter Elizabeth Russell Lewis, and neither did Elizabeth receive any of the Russell land.

On 9 June 1825 George Russell entered three claims to land (entries 2671, 2672, and 2673) and survey warrants were issued on 25 October 1825. Entry 2671 was for 50 acres "on the No side of Main Broad River lying between his own land & Joseph Stinsons land." The land was surveyed on 2 March 1826, was granted on 28 July 1826 and recorded in Land Grant Book 136, p. 428 as grant 3366 (Rutherford Land Grant File 3402). Entry 2672 was for 50 acres "on the North fork of Main Broad River between my own lines on both sides of said fork." The land was surveyed on 8 December 1826, was granted on 29 December 1827, recorded in Land Grant Book 137, p. 282 as grant 3426 (Rutherford Land Grant File 3462). It's southwestern corner is called "a pine on the house tract" and that turns out to be the Archibald McDowell grant. Entry 2673 was for 50 acres "lying between his old survey & Lunsford Bagwells land on the So. side of his own land." The land was surveyed 8 December 1825, granted on 29 December 1827 and recorded in Land Grant Book 137 p. 280 as grant 3421 (Rutherford Land Grant File 3457).

Mary Russell died on 20 June 1828 at age 94 according to her original tombstone in Bufflalo cemetery near Lake Lure.

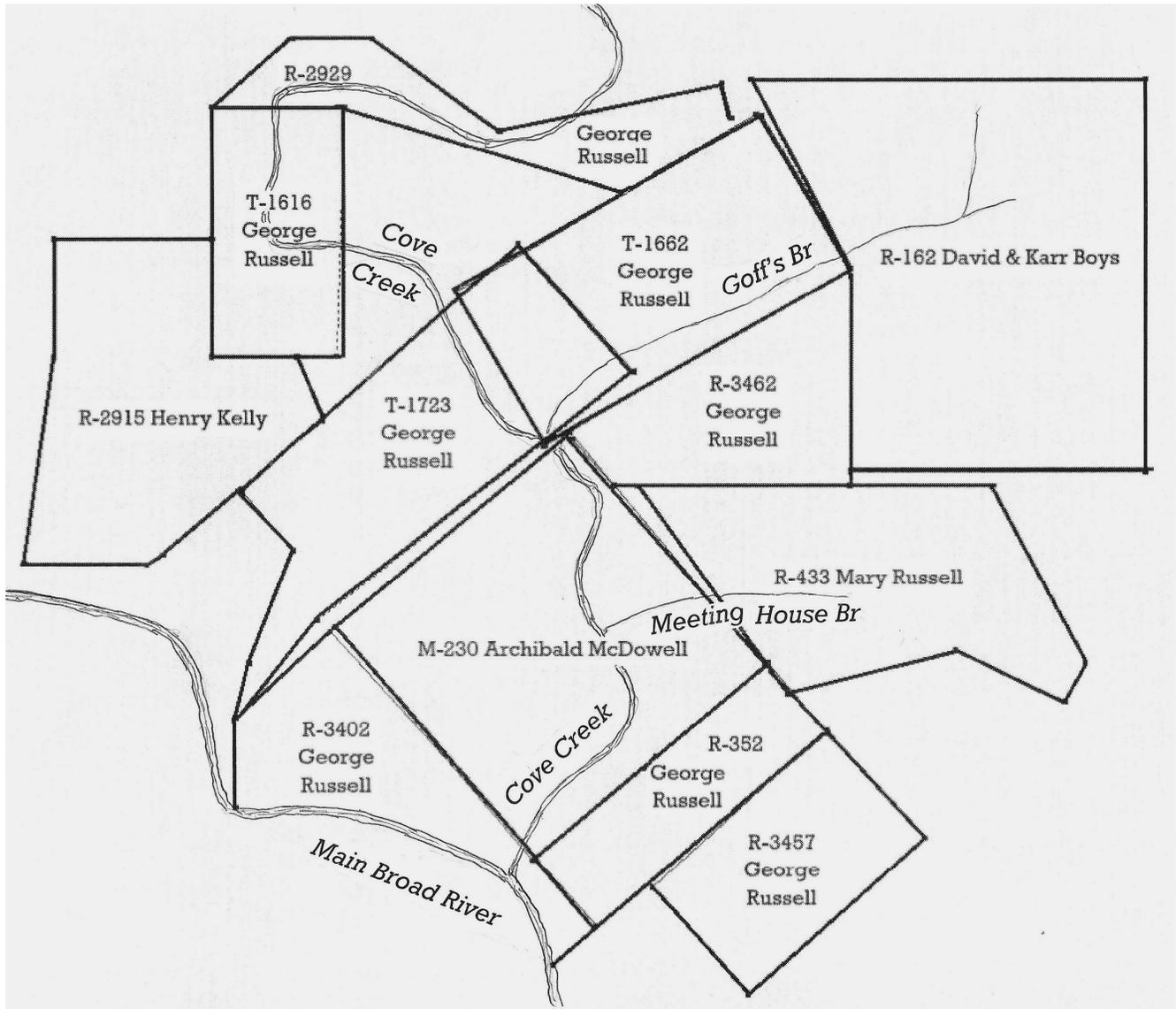
III. Plat Map and Subsequent Ownership of the Russell Lands

The acquisition of lands on and around Cove Creek clearly demonstrates that the Russell's lived on Cove Creek which is well east of what later became the Pumpkin Center. George Russell never owned Pumpkin-Center-to-be land.

Using DeedMapper 4.2 software and images of the original land grant surveys your editor has constructed a plat map showing the grants that George Russell (Sr.), Mary Russell, and George Russell (Jr.) received. The plats on this new map

shown below are labeled with the land grant file numbers and the names of the persons receiving the grants. Mecklenburg file numbers are preceded with

“M-“, Tryon file numbers with “T-“, and Rutherford file numbers with “R-“. Stream locations are very approximate.

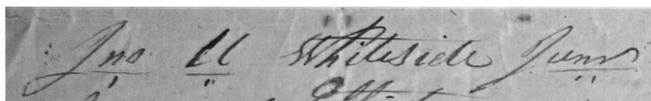


On 1 November 1826 George Russell sold to John U. Whiteside, Jun. for 4000 dollars eight of the tracts of land that he then owned. In the order listed in the deed along with their land grant file numbers, they are (1) the Archibald McDowell grant M-230, (2) George Russell Sr.'s grant T-1723, (3) George Russell Sr.'s grant T-1662, (4) an unidentified tract joining and west of T-1662 possibly part of Speculation patent 1039, (5) George Russell Sr.'s grant T-1616, (6) George Russell Jr.'s grant R-352, (7) Mary Russell's grant R-433, and (8) George Russell Jr.'s grant R-2929 or some variation thereof. Witnesses to the deed were George W. Conner and John Whiteside. (Rutherford Co. Deed Book 36, p. 81).

On 12 October 1828, four months after his mother's death, George Russel conveyed to John U. Whiteside Junr. three tracts of fifty acres each, "part of the premises which was not conveyed in his other deed" with witness John Crawford. The tracts are (1) George Russell Jr.'s grant R-3457, (2) George Russell, Jr.'s grant R-3462, and (3) George Russell Jr.'s grant R-3402 (Rutherford Co. Deed Book 36, p. 375). The 4000 dollars amount referred to in this deed was probably the same 4000 dollars referred to in the first deed, and this deed made the transaction complete.

A petition by Charles Lewis to the N. C. General Assembly at the 1829-30 session has the signature of

Jno. U. Whiteside, Junr. Was his father also named John Underwood Whiteside?



Having sold all of his land, George Russell (Jr.) departed North Carolina and moved to what became Camden Co., Missouri. William Terrill Lewis listed George's children (his own first cousins) as David (m. Rachel Bagwell), Polly (m. Joseph Dial), William (m. Hannah Reavis), Elizabeth (m. James Dial), Sarah (m. Robert Neely), John, and Matilda (m. ---- Brittain).

Lewis then wrote, "George Russell, Jr., finally emigrated from Rutherford County, North Carolina, to Missouri, and has never been heard of since."

On 24 November 1836 John U. Whiteside sold the eleven tracts he purchased from George Russell to Elias Lynch for 4,600 dollars. Witnesses to the deed were Noah Whiteside and Elias M. Lynch. (Rutherford Deed Book 43, p. 127). Elias Lynch also owned land on Knob Creek, the next major tributary of Main Broad River southeast of Cove Creek.

IV. Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell and Her Whiteside Husband

In the 1893 genealogy of the Lewis family, William Terrill Lewis wrote a small amount about his grandmother Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell's family. He wrote,

She was a descendant of Molly Brown, the widow of John Brown, who emigrated from Ireland to Virginia. John Brown died shortly after his arrival in Virginia, leaving an only son, Richard.

His widow afterward married, in Virginia, Joseph Underwood by whom she had four more children, viz.: 1, Elisabeth; 2, Letty; 3, Joseph, and 4, Molly.

1. Elizabeth Underwood, first married Matthew Deavenport, by whom she had two sons, Glover and John, of Rutherford county, North Carolina. After the death of her first husband she married Samuel King, by whom she had five children ...

2. Letty Underwood, married Mr. Guffy and emigrated to Missouri.

3. Joseph Underwood died a bachelor in Buncombe county, North Carolina, aged one hundred and six years.

4. Molly Underwood, was born in 1734, and died in Rutherford county, North Carolina, in 1828. She first married John Whiteside, Sr., by whom she had three children, viz.: 1, Thomas; 2, Mary, and 3, John, Jr. John Jr. was twice married, first to Eleanor Kelly, by whom he raised ten children ...

Mary Whiteside, daughter of John, Sr., married Henry Kelly and had eight children, viz.: 1, William; 2, John; 3, George; 4, Jacob; 5, Elisha; 6, Mary; 7, Eleanor, and 8, Sarah.

After the death of Eleanor Kelly, the wife of John Whiteside, Jr., he married a Miss Sarah

Cook, by whom he raised two children ...

After the death of John Whiteside, Sr., his widow (Molly Underwood) married George Russell, Sr., ...

Persons searching for John Whiteside "Sr." have repeatedly failed to find any records for him and have *assumed, reported, and written* that he died in 1760. The likely reason that nothing can be found for him is that John was not his name!

The Augusta Co., Virginia Surveyor's Records, Book 1, pp. 86 and 87, contains two survey plats for land on the waters of James River for William Whiteside and John Underwood. The two tracts adjoined each other and were for 104 and 160 acres respectively with both surveys dated 14 May 1755.

In Augusta Co., Virginia on 17 March 1756 the court recorded, "On the Petition of Mary Whiteside setting forth that she was ill used by husband William Whiteside and praying a separate maintenance it is ordered that he be summoned to appear at the next court to answer the sd. complaint." (Augusta Co., VA Court Order Book 5, p. 32).

At the next Augusta court, on 19 August 1756, it was recorded, "On the complaint of Mary Whiteside agst. her husband William Whiteside the court having heard the parties and several witnesses touching the same are of opinion that her complaint is groundless. But it appearing to the court that John Underwood & Mary his wife, Richard Burton, Joseph Underwood and Elizabeth Underwood relations of the sd Mary had stired up differences between her and her husband and that they had threatned the life of the sd William it is ordered that the sherif take them into custody there to remain untill they give security in the sum of fifty pounds each & with two securitys in the sum of twenty five pounds each for their personal appearance at the next court and for being in the mean time of good behaviour." (Augusta Co., VA Court Order Book 5, p.

189).

Finally, on 22 November 1756 the Augusta court recorded, "William Whitesides Plt agst John Underwood Deft } In Case This suit being agreed is dismissed." (Augusta Co., VA Court Order Book 5, p. 260).

Joseph Underwood purchased 100 acres on Gills Creek in Bedford Co., Virginia from Nathan Richardson on 26 June 1764 (Bedford Deed Bk. 2, p. 386). John Underwood purchased five acres on the same creek from David Clarkson on 18 April 1770. One of the witnesses to the deed was Thomas Whitesides (Bedford Deed Bk. 3, p. 478). On 1 August 1772 Joseph Underwood received a Virginia land patent in Bedford County for 222 acres on Maggotty [Maggodee] Creek (Virginia Land Patents, Vol. 40, p. 82). Gill's Creek and Maggodee Creek are in present Franklin Co., Virginia.

A man named George Russell served on two juries in Bedford County on 28 November 1770 (Bedford Order Book 3, pp. 688-689). On 15 January 1774 a case was recorded, "Russell ads Burks Exors. on the motion of the Df. by his attorney an injo. is granted him to stay proceedings on a judgment agt. him on filing his bill and giving bond and security at next court." (Bedford Order Book 5A, p. 254). Russell, the defendant in the case, was asking for an injunction, or stay, of the proceedings for the judgment of Burk's executors against him. On 29 March 1774 the case was recorded, "George Russell agt. John Buck & Charles Buck exors. &c. of Charles Buck dec'd } Defs. } On an injo. This day came the parties by their attornies and the complainant agreeable to the order of last January Court filed his bill and bond with security conditioned according to law." (Bedford Order Book 5B, p. 63). Charles Buck's will dated 4 February 1771 is found among the wills of Frederick Co., Virginia. Charles Buck was twice married, first to a daughter of Samuel Earle and second to her niece. Samuel Earle was also the father of Col. John Earle who was associated with Earle's fort. This *could* be the same George Russell who later lived on Cove Creek in Rutherford County but additional information is needed to confirm or deny this.

It is documented that two men named Joseph Underwood lived in Rutherford County, North Carolina and this is consistent with William Terrill Lewis's statement about the father Joseph and the brother Joseph of his grandmother Molly Underwood Whiteside Russell. It is difficult to distinguish between them until the father died but it can be done with some certainty.

On 3 May 1779 Joseph "Ondrwod" entered a claim for 640 acres in Rutherford County "on both sides of Buflow creek of broad river begining at the lower end of his own improvment & runing up the creek for compliment." In the margin of the land entry it is noted that the entry was discontinued. (N. C. Archives, Secretary of State Land Entries, S.S. 965.1, Entry 8). Nevertheless, a survey warrant was issued on 26 October 1779 and a survey was made for 380 acres on Buffalo Creek of Main Broad River on 29 October 1779 with chainbearers Joseph Underwood and John Whitesides. (Rutherford Land Grant Files 0162 and 0318). The "0" as the first character of the file number indicates the file papers could not be matched with any land grant in the land grant books when the file system was set up in the twentieth century. There is a copy of the plat in file 0162 as well as in file 0318. If the land had been granted to Joseph Underwood one of these copies would have been returned to him along with the land-granting document. His grant was denied due to other persons having claims for the land.

Among the North Carolina Revolutionary War pay vouchers is one that reads, "State of North Carolina, Rutherford County This may certify that as Commissioner of the County aforesd. I have purchased from Joseph Underwood nineteen bushels of corn and three hundred & seventy two pounds of pork at the prices ascertained in [punched out] milled dollars by a [punched out] Congress dated the 25th of Feb[punched out] amounting in the [punched out] forty & one fourth Spanish milled dollars which same is to bear interest at ... until paid agreeable to an act of General Assembly in such case made. ... Given under my hand in March 1781. Thos. Whiteside." On the reverse is the notation "paid into the Entry Takers office by James Weatherow." This Thomas Whiteside was Commissioner of the county and was a member of the Whiteside family of Whiteside Settlement (present Golden Valley).

The October 1782 Rutherford court minutes show a case of Joseph Underwood against Sam. Spencer, James Miller, and Geo. Davidson for caveat of land. This case likely resulted from Joseph Underwood's effort to obtain a grant for his survey of 380 acres on Buffalo Creek. On 8 July 1778 Samuel Spencer had entered a claim (Tryon entry 195) for 400 acres "on both sides of Upper Buffeloe Creek of Main Broad River near the foot of the Bald Mountain above and joining William Bassets survey and runing up for complement to Jonas Bedfords land and including a black oak marked S.S." The tract was surveyed 23 March 1780 with chainbearers James Miller and Willis Bradley and granted to Spencer on 11 October 1783

(Rutherford Land Grant File 4). Samuel Spencer of Anson County eventually deeded the 400 acres to James Miller of Rutherford County and Joseph Henry of Lincoln County on 9 September 1785 (Rutherford Deed Book D, no. 445). There is also a second survey for Samuel Spencer for 300 acres with the same chainbearers on 23 March 1780 on "both sides of upper Buffeloe Creek of Main Broad River near the foot of the Bald Mountain above and joining George Davis survey." (Tryon Land Grant File 015). A caveat against the 300 acres was entered by Charles Medlock on 21 October 1778. (Tryon Land Entry 195). Medlock's caveat seems to have succeeded since Spencer's survey of 300 acres did not ripen into a land grant.

On 23 May 1778 James Miller entered a claim for 100 acres "on Buffeloe on the south fork of Main Broad River Lying Between Meedlock & Jas. Miller land runing round two squares of Jas. Millers land." (Tryon Land Entry 182). The survey warrant dated 24 August 1778 however is for land for George Davis. This land was also surveyed for Davis on 23 March 1780 with chainbearers James Miller and Willis Bradley. The land was granted to Davis on 13 October 1783 (Tryon Land Grant File 1802). It is clear that the name George Davidson on the minute docket item for Joseph Underwood's caveat for land is an error and should have been George Davis. It is not indicated in the court minutes, but Joseph Underwood's caveat seems to have failed, and he was soon dead.

Joseph Underwood, the father, was dead by January 1783 when the Rutherford court minutes state "On application it is ordered & determined by the court that Elisabeth Underwood widow of Joseph Underwood deceased be given and granted & to be possessed of the following part of her late husbands estate that is to say one negroe woman named lett & two negroe children named lucy and Jenny agreeable to an act of Assembly made for the provision of wives and widows." At the same session of court "The court give & granted unto Elisabeth Underwood a negro boy named Jem as being part of the estate of Joseph Underwood deceased, according to law &c." No other information about Joseph Underwood (Sr.)'s estate has been found, nor that of his widow Elizabeth. William Terrill Lewis had identified Joseph's wife as a widow Molly Brown when she married Joseph, and that may be questioned as to accuracy. It is worthwhile noting that Joseph Underwood's daughter Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell and her son John Whiteside are buried in Buffalo cemetery near Lake Lure. One wonders if that was also where Joseph Underwood and his wife were buried, particularly since Joseph had claimed land on Buffalo Creek.

Since no deed or land grant, only an unripened land grant survey, has been located for Joseph Underwood in Rutherford County, where did he house his slaves, grow his corn, and raise his pigs? Did he live until his death on the ungranted 380 acres surveyed for him? When the estate of John Whiteside was settled in 1836, his son Moses Whiteside's share included thirty-five acres on Bill's Creek joining Underwood's Mountain (Rutherford Deed Book 42, p. 431). Perhaps it was named for Joseph Underwood.

Like her sister Mary, Elizabeth Underwood Davenport King lived a long life, being born 15 September 1739 and having died in March 1827. She is buried in the Samuel King family cemetery in Henderson County, North Carolina. By her first husband Matthew Davenport she had two sons Glover and John according to William Terrill Lewis. The Rutherford County court minutes support this. At the April 1787 session "John Underwood & Mary Russel proved John Devenport to be the lawful heir of Matthew Devenport decd. and was certifd. from under the county seal." At the same session "William Williams comes into open court and proves the death of Glover Devenport & orderd to be certifd. from under the county seal." In Rutherford County Will/Sale Book A, page 55 is an item dated 11 April 1791 reading "... I John Davenport of North Carolina Planter for divers goods causes and considerations have hereunto by these presence constituted appointed and made my trusty and well beloved father Saml King Senr. of Rutherford County of North Carolina my true and lawful attorney for me and in my name to act & do every thing touching and consearning parcel of land granted to me under the Great Seal signed and surveyed by (blank) lying Virginia Bedford County both sides of maggotty Creek and on both sides of land said Samuel King lived on ..." Samuel King was Elizabeth Underwood's second husband and actually John Davenport's stepfather. Joseph Underwood's 1772 land patent was also on Maggotty [Maggoodee] Creek..

Joseph Underwood (Jr.) lived even longer than his sister Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell. A July 1782 Rutherford County grand jury's inquisition into confiscating the property of Joseph Underwood, Thomas Whiteside (names listed consecutively) and others for joining the King's army under Major Ferguson against the State on 1 October 1780 is found in the Salisbury District Court records (N. C. Archives, D.S.C.R. 205.928.2). The October 1782 Rutherford County court minutes list a case "The petition of Martha Dickey against Joseph Underwood and others Enemies to the State: Judgement by Default." Joseph also appears on a long list in January 1783, "William

Gilbert on petition vs. ... Joseph Underwood ... Judgmt. by default." A jury was summoned and damages were assessed against the group for £ 1206. Joseph and many others were then given notice by the sheriff "to appear and answer an inquisition of treason, felony & forfeiture found against them by the grand jury ... and now being solemnly caled to shew cause why their property should not be confiscated failed to appear or shew any cause. It is therefore considered by the court that their property be adjudged forfeited." Joseph Underwood had no land, but on 26 August 1784 John Lewis, sheriff, per an execution against Joseph Underwood, John Goodbread, John Ashworth, Thomas Townsend, John Camp, Thomas Camp, and Richard Ledbetter from the Rutherford court against them in April 1784, sold for thirty pounds an enslaved woman Lett and one boy child Manuel, the property of Joseph Underwood (Rutherford Original Deed Book C, p. 46). One wonders if the slave woman "Lett" was the same "Lett" that Joseph Underwood (Sr.)'s widow Elizabeth Underwood had been allowed from her husband's estate.

At the January 1785 Rutherford court a motion was made for a writ of error in the proceeding against Joseph Underwood and the others and it was referred to the Morgan District Superior Court. Among that court's civil action papers at the N. C. Archives are found (1) the order to the sheriff to recover of Joseph Underwood and the others the sum of 743 pounds, nineteen shillings damages and five pounds, fifteen shillings, seven pence costs and charges, (2) the notice to William Gilbert of their intentions to file for a writ of error dated 15 October 1784, and (3) the prosecution bond entered into on 13 January 1785 by John Goodbread, James Miller, John Smith, John Camp, John McKeney, Samuel Hunter, and Thomas Camp in the sum of £ 1500 to prosecute the writ of error in the Morgan Superior Court. On 12 September 1787 the Morgan Superior Court issued a writ of restitution against William Gilbert, restoring their properties to Joseph Underwood and the others (Morgan District Superior Court, Land Records, N. C. Archives).

Joseph Underwood appears on the 1800, 1810, and 1820 censuses of Buncombe County. In 1830 he is listed on the Pickens County, South Carolina census as the sole person in his household and aged 90-99 years. He died sometime before 19 October 1833 in then-Pickens County when notice was given that an application was to be made for appointment of an administrator of his estate. The reverse side of the notice indicates that it was read at Long Creek Meeting House on 3 November 1833. An

administrator was appointed the following day. The Pickens County estate file of Joseph Underwood does not name any heirs. A bound volume shows that he owned 500 acres of land. Long Creek Meeting House appears to be Long Creek Baptist Church in what is now Oconee County, South Carolina. The Long Creek community is between Westminster, S. C. and the Georgia - South Carolina line.

John Underwood who appeared in court with Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell in April 1787 to prove John Davenport as heir of Matthew Davenport was likely her brother but William Terrill Lewis did not mention him. It is highly probable that he is the same John Underwood who in 1756 with his wife Mary, Richard Burton, Joseph Underwood, and Elizabeth Underwood had threatened the life of William Whiteside after William, according to them, had ill-used his wife Mary Whiteside. He would also be the John Underwood whose land survey in Augusta County, Virginia joined that of William Whiteside in 1755. He would also be the same John Underwood who bought land on Gills Creek in Bedford County, Virginia with deed witnessed by Thomas Whiteside in 1770 almost six years after Joseph Underwood also bought land on Gills Creek. This Thomas Whiteside may in fact be Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell's son Thomas. John Underwood is listed on the 1790 Rutherford County census immediately after Mary Russell.

The inevitable conclusion is that Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell's first husband was not John Whiteside "Sr." but rather William Whiteside. How their marriage ended is unknown, but it was in trouble already in 1756. Two years later their third known and last child John Whiteside was born.

The oldest child, Thomas Whiteside, was probably born around 1752. Strangely, William Terrill Lewis provided no details about his mother's half-brother. Thomas can be easily confused with other men named Thomas Whiteside who were members of the Whiteside family of Whiteside Settlement in what is now known as Golden Valley in northeastern Rutherford County. No association or kinship between that Whiteside family and the Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell family has been observed. On 11 February 1778 Thomas Whitesides entered a claim for 100 acres "on both sides of Main Broad River below Twittys land" (Rutherford Land Entries, N. C. Archives, 086.404.1, entry 98). A survey warrant was issued on 30 July 1778 and the land was surveyed on 1 July 1779 with chainbearers James Miller and Samuel King. The grant was issued 25 March 1780. (Tryon Land Grant File 1560). Thomas Whiteside and Joseph Underwood were

chainbearers for a land grant survey for Henry Kelly on 26 June 1779 (Tryon Land Grant File 1565).

On 19 January 1799 David Dickey was in possession of Thomas Whiteside's 1780 grant, the description of which had come into question. James Holland made affidavit that he had examined the plat and land grant book in the Secretary of State's office and that the land was stated to be on both sides of Main Broad River. Thomas Whiteside made affidavit that he believed that the entry-taker David Miller had changed the word "both" to "south" [on the plat and land grant sent to the entry-taker after it was awarded]. (N. C. Archives, Morgan District Superior Court Land Records). No deed showing when Thomas Whiteside sold this land or when David Dickey bought it has been found. A man Thomas Whiteside was again in possession of it when on 23 May 1804 he sold it to Richard Searcy (Rutherford Deed Book 22, p. 104). Most of this grant is now beneath Lake Lure east of the Chimney Rock community.

From 1795 to 1800 Thomas Whiteside purchased four tracts of land on Bullin's Creek of Green River from Daniel Brown, Andrew and David Miller, Samuel Hunter, and Robert Hunter (Rutherford Deed Books Q, p. 191; 6, p. 279; 16, p. 176; and 16, p. 177). On 17 August 1796 ten acres were surveyed for Thomas Whiteside on Bullin's Creek of Green River. Henry

Kelly and David Dickey were the chainbearers. The survey warrant had been issued to Daniel Brown and was transferred to "Tamos Whitesides" on 1 August 1796. (Rutherford Land Grant File 1227).

Letters of administration on Thomas Whiteside's estate were granted at the January 1814 Rutherford Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions to his widow Mary Whiteside and to Jonathan H. Whiteside. They entered into bond in the sum of 1000 dollars with securities John Ledbetter and George Russell.

The second child of Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell, Mary Whiteside, was born, it is supposed, about 1755 and married Henry Kelly. Henry Kelly died 13 June 1832 at age 90 according to his tombstone in the Kelly family cemetery in Sangamon Co., Illinois. His widow Mary Whiteside Kelly then moved to Missouri, died 19 December 1838, and is buried in the Kelly family cemetery in Polk Co., Missouri.

The third child of Mary Underwood Whiteside Russell, John [?Underwood] Whiteside (Sr.), was born 18 May 1758 based on his age at his death on 18 March 1835. His tombstone in Buffalo cemetery near Lake Lure in Rutherford County states that he was a loving husband, an affectionate father, a good master, a true republican, a supporter of the Gospel, and "--hope a Christian."

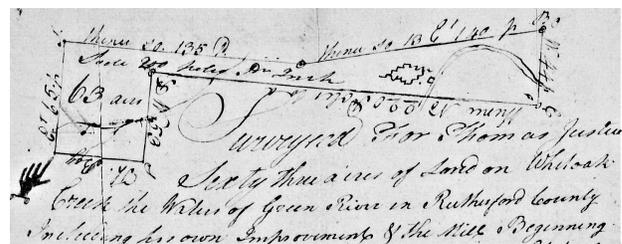
V. Col. William Graham's Other Forts

Of the five forts that Col. William Graham superintended Waddleton's Fort is as obscure as Russell's Fort. The only name similar to Waddleton in the area is Wadlington. In the 1790's a man "Ferdinand Waddleton" and "Fardenand Wadlington" witnessed deeds for land on Walnut Creek of Green River. Thomas Wadlington had purchased 200 acres on Walnut Creek on 29 September 1779 from William Mills (Rutherford Original Deed Book C, p. 90). He appears as Thomas Waddleton on two later land grants. In his pension application John Jones (W373) stated that he "... was stationed at Thomas Waddletons in Rutherford County to guard the frontiers against the Indians and Tories for three months ..."

The location of Earle's Fort is identified by John H. Jameson, Jr. of the National Park Service as being in present Polk County on the west side of Hunting Country Road, west of Red Fox Country Club and northeast of the intersection of Hunting Country Road with Interstate 26. Earle's Fort would be the most southern of the forts superintended by Col. Graham.

At the July 1777 Tryon County court Alexander Coulter was appointed overseer of "the road leading

from James Adears to White Oak Fort crossing Broad River at Twittys Ford." White Oak Fort is also documented in Rutherford County deeds. On 12 February 1787 Thomas Justice sold William Capshaw forty acres on the north fork of White Oak Creek including "the place where the fort was built" part of 63 acres granted to Thomas Justice 27 October 1784. The deed reserved a half acre for a burial place at the north side of the old fort (Rutherford Deed Book R, p. 22). The survey plat (below) dated 19 January 1783 for Justice's grant indicates it included a mill and shows some sort of structure (Rutherford Land Grant File 91). Was it the fort?



The survey warrant indicates it joined Capshaw's line. The Revolutionary War pension file of Charles Mullins (S30610) of Calloway County, Kentucky

indicates that he moved to Rutherford County, North Carolina during the Revolution and that "For seven months and a half or from the middle of May till the end of the year 1780 I served as a private under Lieut McMinn who joined some forces under Major or Colonel Grant (I do not recollect which) for the purpose of guarding the frontier against the indians during which time we staid at and ranged the adjacent country to Hampton & Capshaws fort and Mills Station." Since Thomas Justice's 1787 grant adjoined Capshaw's line it is possible that Capshaw's Fort and White Oak Fort are the same. The pension application of Joseph Hardin (S13322) states that "... during the time of his service his head quarters were at White Oak fort at Capshaws Mill in Rutherford County North Carolina from which he and his associates in arms ranged the whole country round about in quest of the Indian enemy ..."

Potts Fort is documented in road records in the Rutherford court minutes. In October 1783 the court ordered "that a road be laid out and marked the nighest and best way from Rutherford Court House to Potts Fort in the Cove and that Andrew Hampton, Thomas Rowlen, Benjamin Hyder, Jonathan Hampton, Jones Williams, George Williams, Richard Bradley, John Elms, Alexander McDaniel, William Grant, John Bradly, and Thomas Morris is hereby appointed a jury to mark & lay off said road." At the same court "Alexander McDaniel, James McDaniel, Mary Potts, Alexr. Grant, Isham Yerley (Yerby?), John Elms, John Bradly, Jones Williams, Thomas Williams, George Williams, Richard Bradly, James Morris, William Grant, Charles Lewis, & Andrew Hampton" were exempted "from working on the road that leads from the Court House to Ledbetter's mills" and were ordered to "work on the last mentioned to Potts Fort." William Grant was appointed overseer of the new road. Mary Potts was the widow of John Potts and was appointed administrator of his estate before April 1784. Potts Fort seems to have been named for John Potts.

In April 1784 the court appointed overseers for two separate sections of this Cove Road. Benjamin Hyder was appointed overseer of the part from the "Court House to Mountain Creek the ford in Hampton's land." Alexander McDaniel was appointed overseer of that part from "the said ford on Mountain Creek to Potts Fort in the Cove" with "hands of Alexander Grant & as low as widow Russel's" to work on the road. These items show that Potts Fort was located in the Cove and therefore on some branch of Cove Creek.

Lee W. Lynch's 1905 map of Rutherford County land owners (at right) identifies "OLD FORT" on

Cedar Creek a branch of Cove Creek. This makes sense for the location of Potts Fort and it would have been the most northern of the forts that Col. Graham superintended. A historical marker for Potts Fort was erected on Bills Creek Road in 1988. The marker reads, "Potts Fort -1775- Named for Captain John Potts who was killed by Indians during the Revolutionary War. This Fort protected early settlers living in the cove near the Indian boundary line." The source for the statement that John Potts was killed by Indians is not known. Capt. John Potts was killed on 8 August 1780 in the battle at Wofford's Ironworks near Cedar Springs, not by Indians, according to the pension applications of Col. William Graham (S8624) and Elijah Smith (W10504).



In 1989 a historical marker for "Russel's Fort" was erected on the Hickory Nut Gap Road (U. S. Hwy 64 / 74 Alt) near the location of what was called "Pumpkin Center of the South" although as this article documents, Russell's Fort was located at the mouth of Cove Creek well east of the Pumpkin Center. The marker reads, "Russel's Fort - Named for George Russel, Sr. from Ireland. Major Ferguson marched West as far as Russel's Fort. George Russel, Sr. was killed by Indians while on a bear hunt after the Revolutionary War."

Conclusion

Well-intended as they may be, espoused notions about the early forts on the frontier of present Rutherford and Polk Counties lack clarity until actual documentation is pursued about them. Historical markers erected based on such notions may mislead passersby with the result that even more false notions

get proliferated. Hopefully this article will end some of the misconceptions. Whether in history or genealogy it is important to stop and ask the question “How do I know this is true?” You may learn lots of things you never thought you would know by trying to answer that question.