

There are so many conflicting stories regarding The Clouds Creek Massacre that have passed down from generation to generation in many descendants families. The massacre was by Tory Major Cunningham was said to have occurred in Carter's Field between current Hwy. 378 and Hwy. 178, about 7 miles east of the Town of Saluda, S.C and west of the current town of Batesburg-Leesville on SC - 491.

There is a historical marker to locate the site. The men killed were buried in mass graves. The massacre was a result of a Tory/Whig clash between Patriots and Loyalists. The story of the massacre told in part by John Abney Chapman of Edgefield and Henry Arthur Fort of Edgefield District and Lexington Dist. (by Letter (Oct. 8, 1872, "The Draper Manuscripts"). Abney and Fort both had ties to the Patriots and the S.C. Militia and skirmishes with Indian conflicts and the Tories. The following is extracted from the above sources.

Henry Arthur Holmes Fort was born in the Edgefield District and was the son of Drury Fort, a member of Capt. William Butler's Co. H.A. Fort was the husband of Phebe (Phoebe) Corley, daughter of Catlett Corley, Sr. and niece of Nathaniel Corley killed in the massacre. Capt. William Butler was the son of Capt. James Butler, Sr. and brother of James Butler, Jr. The confrontation by "Bloody Bill" Cunningham occurred after the fall of Charlestown (Charleston) in 1780. Capt. Bill Cunningham, a Tory and Loyalist was dispatched to conduct confiscations/raids through the countryside. James C. Fort description of these times and his ancestor Arthur Fort and Corley family members was described in an article for the Newberry Observer.

Capt. Sterling Turner and some of his Ninety-Six District Militia (thought to be abt. 28 men) were encamped near Clouds Creek. They were attacked at night by Cunningham's men in a cattle field with little cover but a recently built cabin with no door or windows. The S.C. men from Ninety-Six included Burdette Eskridge, Benjamin Bell, Smallwood Smith, Matthew Jones, Capt. James Butler, Sr. , James Butler, Jr., William Sisson, John Bland,

Gideon Nicholson, Peter Foy, Berryman Bledson and a "man named Sullivan".

Abney in the "History of Edgefield" includes Henry Etheridge, Sgt in the Ninety-Six Brigade militia from a company raised from Mt. Willing as having his life spared in an encounter with a Captain Sterling at Mine Creek when Josiah Allen was killed in early Spring of 1781. The implication by author, Abney was marriage of one of his children or other relationship. There is none that has been found.

Fort described in an article for a Newberry paper in 1872, identifying Nathaniel Corley, Esquire (of Sardis/Mt. Willing community) as being his uncle. He stated Nathaniel Corley, brother of Catlett Corley, Sr. was killed in Fall of 1781 while trying to escape by horse from the massacre of some of Capt. Solomon Pope's men in Turner's field (also known as the Clouds' Creek Massacre). Tory Major "Bill" Cunningham had known Capt. James Butler, Sr. having fought in the Indian Wars. Bill Cunningham from near what is now known as Laurens Co., S.C. was once under the command of Capt. James Gilliam in a militia and was punished for committing an unknown act. In retaliation, Cunningham had killed him and others in an earlier encounter. Also a Patriot/Whig called Sterling had earlier killed a Tory and friend of Cunningham known as Ratcliffe and James Butler, Jr. was said to have been a party in the killing.

Capt. Cunningham refused a surrender attempt or exchange offered by Capt. James Butler, Sr. for his young son who had accompanied his father in a Tory expedition and were on the way home resting in a field near Clouds Creek. They found themselves surrounded, surrendered but Cunningham's men ignored their surrender and massacred most of those men but two, according to Fort. He recalled the "tale" of the name of a man Benjamin Hughes having also survived the attack and survived to "tell the tale."

Traditionally in our "story" Sarah Mayson Etheredge, wife of Samuel and sister of Mary Mayson Butler accompanied Sarah

Butler Smith and other kinfolk and related neighbors to gather the remains of the dead in Nov. 1781 for burial. This included Nathaniel, brother of Catlett Corley, Sr.

Benjmamin Hughes, mentioned above was listed on the 1850 Coweta County, Georgia census as age 90 and is said to have lived until the age of 100.

Note: Peter Foy's descendants list his name as being killed in the massacre. Foy received a grant in 1772 near Red Bank Creek and Penn Creek (vacant of 4 sides). This would be land near John Smedley, Sr., Samuel Etheredge, Thomas Deloache, Jabob Smith, Sr., Robert Russell and others according to 1774 and 1776 surveys and grants of Samuel and Thomas Deloach.