

WHITESELL'S MILL

"A Pretty Severe Conflict"

AMERICA
250
NC

GUILFORD COURTHOUSE CAMPAIGN

ON the morning of March 6, 1781 the ford in front of you erupted in chaos, as the men of Col. Otho Williams's Infantry hurriedly crossed. They only had a few moments to spare.

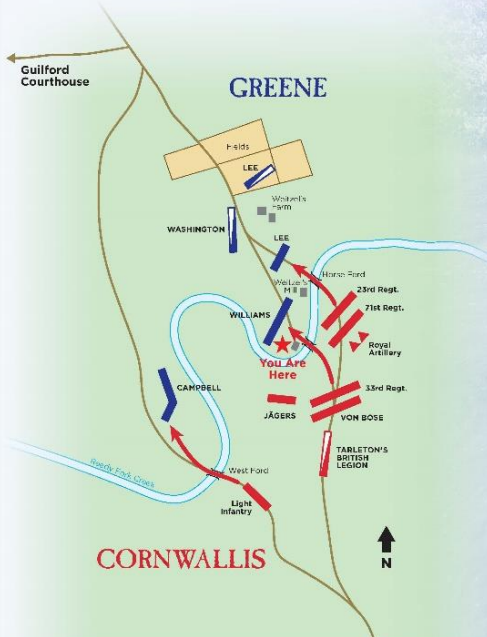
For days, Maj. Gen. Greene, commanding the American forces had been keeping just ahead of British Gen. Lord Cornwallis, waiting for reinforcements and the right opportunity to stop the British advance. To keep an eye on the British movements, Greene had deployed Williams and a detachment of cavalry under "Light-Horse" Harry Lee.

Through the thick fog on that morning, British Lt. Col. Tarleton, under orders from Cornwallis, hoped to surprise the approximately 700 American men at their camp here. The swift British advance was discovered and the Americans quickly reacted. Williams and his infantry had only a few moments to cross the creek and set up defenses. Soon Lee's cavalry hurried across the ford with the British at their heels.

The American forces held off the British for several hours but eventually Tarleton made headway across the fords, causing the American line to crack. After an initial pursuit, fading daylight forced Tarleton to fall back. Williams had eight soldiers killed and 12 wounded, while the British suffered a greater loss with around 30 killed and wounded.

"AT WHITESELL'S MILLS WE HAD A PRETTY SEVERE CONFLICT ... BUT BEING GREATLY OUT NUMBERED WE COULD ONLY DELAY THE ENEMY TIL OUR BAGGAGE GOT CLEAR."

ENSIGN, THOMAS MILES, VIRGINIAN



The 33rd Regt. charged across the ford here helping to route the American forces behind you.
COURTESY PAUL LUKS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The history of the mill ruins you see here involves multiple variations of its name: Weitzell, Weitzel, Whitesell, or Whitsall. In Henry Lee III's writings, he gave the name as "Wetzell." Henry Weitzell commanded a company of Guilford County militia during the Revolution, and owned the mill after the war. Eventually, the name was Anglicized to Whitesell.

Waysides will be 24" x 36" interpretive panels of UV resistant acrylic. They will include powder-coated, brown, dual leg pedestals constructed for installation in earth.