



## Patriot vs Loyalist at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge



This is a quick description of the two forces that fought at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. They were all North Carolinians, and most were citizen soldiers in the militia, but the two sides differed in their reasons for fighting. Read along to discover who a Patriot was or what groups made up the Loyalist forces and see for yourself why this was considered a civil war, brother against brother, and neighbor against neighbor.

# What is a Patriot?

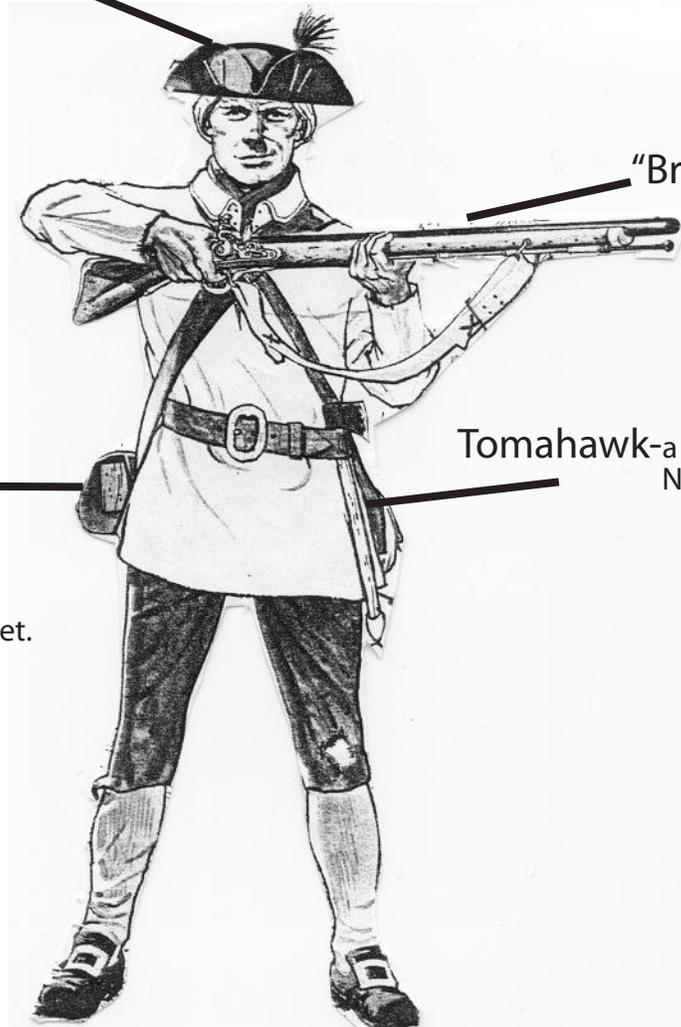
Patriots were those men and women who supported the growing rebellion against the Royal Crown, Great Britain. They sought independence, and shared a common unity with others around them that wanted to be free from British tyranny. They were regular citizen-soldiers. The Patriot forces that fought at Moores Creek Bridge can be broken into three categories:

1. Continental Soldiers- those who enlisted to serve at least one year, like The First Regiment commanded by Colonel James Moore
2. Regular Militia- Men from each county between the ages of 16 and 60 able to bear arms , like Colonel Richard Caswell's county militia from New Bern
3. Minute Men- select men from the militia trained to respond quickly, like Colonel Alexander Lillington of the Wilmington Minute Men

Militiamen were local bands of military groups formed for a common purpose- to fight and defend their land. They were made up of farmers, craftsmen, and local industrialists. They did not share a common uniform, or a common weapon. The few exceptions were the officers who received commissions in the state regiments. Some of those men accepted positions of a lower rank in order to participate with the militia units. Other than those few, the rest were simple North Carolina citizens who banded together to put down British repression on the colonies. They mustered, or trained, a few times a month. Many joined with limited military experience. The preferred weapon of choice was the "Brown Bess" musket, a nearly-five-foot-long weapon. A good marksman could get off four shots in a minute. These weapons were not that accurate, but when combined with hundreds, or even thousands of other muskets, they could bring down the largest of armies. They knew every creek, river, back road, and farm in the region, and in using their knowledge and experiences, a Patriot militia could beat even the most formidable British forces. They supplied the Continental Army, led by General George Washington, with reinforcements, and were ready to take up arms when needed.

# Patriot Militia

Tricorn Hat



"Brown Bess" Musket

-English firearm made between 1720 and 1840.

Tomahawk-a light ax first used by the North American Indians.

Cartridge Box

- a leather pouch to carry cartridges of gunpowder and shot used in a musket.

To be in the militia, you had to be sixteen or older. Militiamen were required to provide their own equipment, including a musket, gunpowder, clothes, food, cartridge box, and canteen. Patriot soldiers usually wore civilian or hunting clothes. Most of the clothing was tan or brown, the color of cloth that was produced in the colonies.

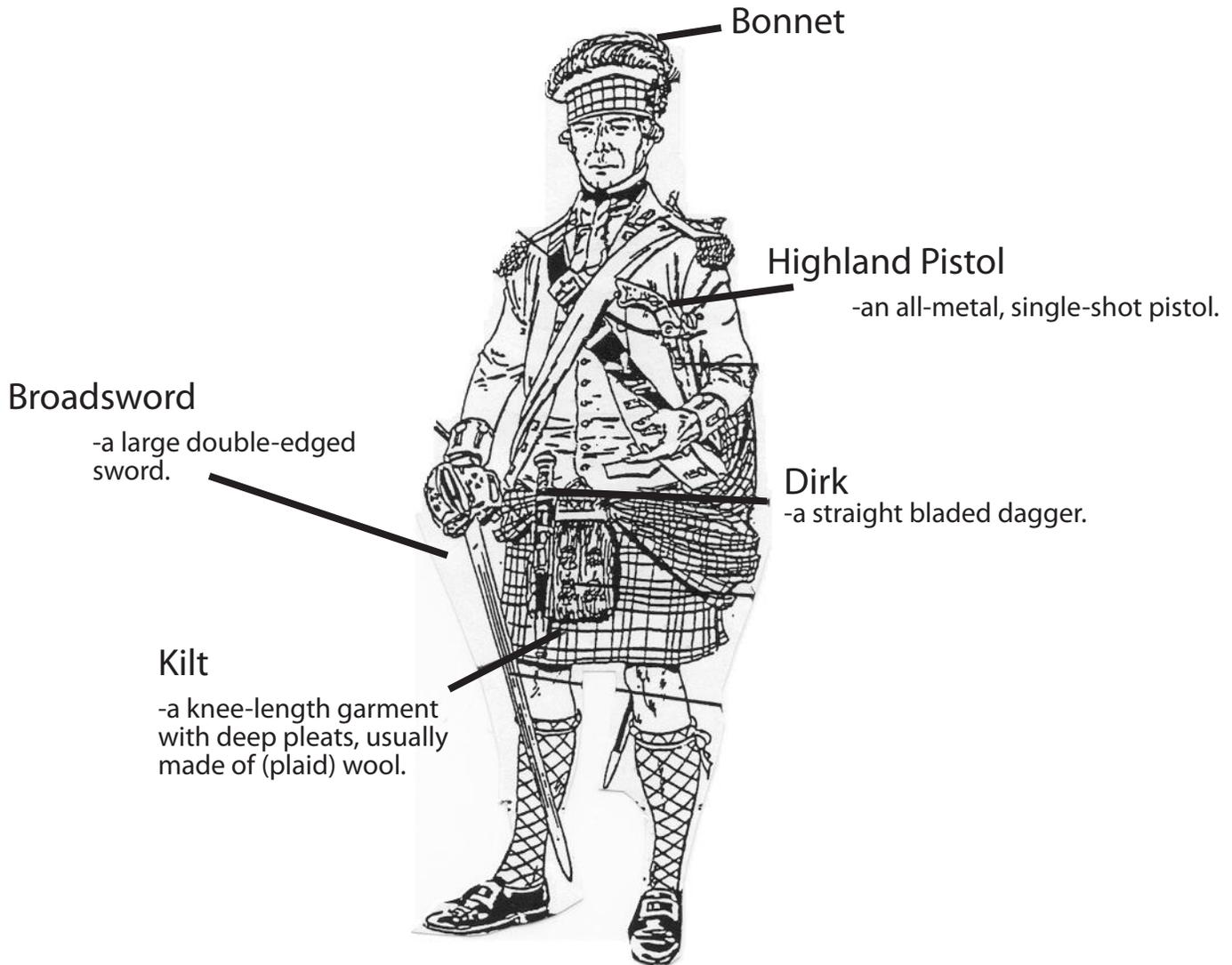
# What is a Loyalist?

A Loyalist was one who sought to protect British rule in the colonies, and supported the King. They were regular citizens in the Royal Colony of North Carolina who were struggling to help maintain British law and policies against a rebellious group of Patriots. The Loyalists who fought at the Battle of Moores Creek were trying to meet up with the recently-ousted Royal Governor Josiah Martin, who was located near Brunswick Town.

These Loyalists were a diverse group of North Carolinians. Nearly half of the Loyalist force were Scottish Highlanders, a group of settlers who had emigrated to North Carolina just a few years before the battle took place. They had taken up an oath to fight for the British cause, and to never take up arms against England again. Upon taking up the oath, the Scots Highlanders lost their right to have a weapon in their possession. This would affect the outcome of the battle as many of the Scots Highlanders were left to fight the muskets and fowlers of the Patriots using only their traditional weapon of choice- the Broadsword.

The Leader of the Loyalist forces at Moores Creek Bridge was General Donald MacDonald, a Scottish Highlander who fought at the Battle of Culloden (Scots versus British) and at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Some of the non-Scottish Loyalists were Regulators, a band of backwoods farmers from the Western part of the colony. Just five years before the Battle at Moores Creek Bridge, the Regulators were fighting against the British Crown. Another group that made up the Loyalist force were members of the Loyal Militia, a group of local farmers, craftsmen, and industrialists who supported the King. They sought protection from the Crown in return for their oath and allegiance to take up arms against the rebels. The Loyalists were severely punished by the local citizens leading up to and after this battle. Their homes were raided and pillaged, and some Loyalists had their land confiscated. Many Loyalists fled North Carolina, heading to British safe havens, such as Nova Scotia, England, and the Caribbean Sea.

# Loyalist Militia



The majority of the Loyalists who fought at Moores Creek were Scottish Highlanders. They liked to fight close up (hand to hand combat). It has been said that the Scots greased themselves, cut their hair, and shaved their beards so the enemy would be unable to hold onto them in battle. They would have worn their traditional plaids, if they had them, while other Loyalists wore English-style clothing.