



#4 1996

## JAMES CRAWFORD    ULSTER~SCOT ~ AMERICAN PATRIOT

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September a grave dedication ceremony was held at the Hollidaysburg Presbyterian Cemetery to honor the memory of James Crawford Sr, a Patriot of the American Revolutionary War. James Crawford was an Ulster-Scot by birth, a weaver by profession, and a Patriot by choice.

Although his exact birthplace is not known, we can be fairly certain that James Crawford was born in the province of Ulster in northern Ireland. Since the Crawford line can be traced to a Scottish origin as a sept of Clan Lindsay, and also in view of the fact that James Crawford was a Presbyterian by faith, he would have been an Ulster-Scot.

In the year 1610, King James I of England initiated a colonization project in the northern Irish province of Ulster. The "plantation" of Ulster was settled by English and Scots from the region known as the Scottish Lowlands. The Scots who moved to Ireland were, by and large, Presbyterian in religious faith. As time passed and the colony grew, it became predominantly Scottish in ethnic makeup. The Ulster colonists took on some of the manners and customs of the native Irish because of casual contact, but retained many of their ancestral Scottish traditions. For that reason, the people of the settlement became known as Ulster-Scots. Over the years, despite occasional wars with the native Irish and their English landlords, the Ulster colony thrived. When drought and failing economic conditions became to unbearable, large numbers of Ulster-Scots made the decision to emigrate from Ireland. Between 1717 and 1775 it has been estimated that approximately 200,000 Ulster-Scots journeyed to America. The primary destination was the province of Pennsylvania, which welcomed the Ulster-Scots and their Presbyterian religious beliefs more readily than the other colonies.

James Crawford was born circa 1747. His parents' names are not known at this time, and his early life is still a mystery. But there are certain things that we can assume about the life of this Patriot. His birthdate of 1747 tells us that he was born between the time of the third and fourth of the five major waves of emigration from northern Ireland which have become known as the Great Migration. The third wave, which took place in 1740 and 1741, was the result of a major famine that struck Ulster. The fourth wave, taking place in 1754 and 1755 was occasioned partly by a major drought and partly by an effort on the part of the governor of the province of North Carolina to attract more of his fellow Ulster-Scots to settle in his colony. Those were hard times in Ireland due to natural conditions such as the drought, and also due to man-made conditions which included restrictions on trade imposed by the English government. At the time of the fourth major wave of migration, James Crawford would have been only eight or nine years old. The Crawford family no doubt experienced the hardships along with everyone else in Ulster and James probably grew up hearing his parents and neighbors discussing their conditions and the recent emigrations. It is not difficult to understand why James would have made the decision to emigrate also.

We do not know the name of the ship on which Mr. Crawford sailed to America, nor do we know the date that he arrived on these shores, but we can assume that his port of entry was Philadelphia. Although some Ulster-Scots landed at ports in other colonies, the majority of them came through Philadelphia. The last major wave of emigration from Ulster took place between 1771 and 1775. James Crawford probably made the journey across the Atlantic during that time period.

If they were fortunate enough to find property in the southeastern part of the province of

Pennsylvania, the new immigrants traveled no further. But much of the good property in the east was already taken up by German and other Ulster-Scot immigrants. As that region filled up, the newer arrivals moved southward into Maryland and then either on southward into Virginia's Shenandoah Valley or North Carolina's Piedmont. The Appalachian Mountains kept them from going too far west at first. There were gaps here and there in the Appalachian Mountains and some of the immigrant families made their way through those gaps and then up and down the lengths of the valleys they encountered. Those valleys included the ones that lay between the Allegheny and the Tussey mountain ranges.

Certain of the accounts of James Crawford's life in America claim that he resided for a short time after his arrival in the eastern part of the province, and then moved to this region that was part of Bedford County. James married Eleanor Jordan, it is believed, during his residence in the east. The Crawford family's first appearance on Bedford County's public records was in the year 1779 when James' name was recorded on the Franksstown Township Tax assessment. That return showed that he owned three acres of cleared land. Now it should be noted that the tax assessment returns were usually written out during the year previous to the dated copy. The families listed might have come into the area at least a year or two before the year they first appeared on the tax returns, during which time they would have cleared the land of trees and built their houses. So it might be assumed that James Crawford had made his way to this region circa 1776 or 1777. He received his commission to the position of Ensign of the Second Company of the Third Battalion of the Bedford County Militia on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 1777, so he most definitely was a resident of Bedford County prior to that date.

During James Crawford's time, much as is often the case today, the popular press looks for the story that is sensational rather than the one that deals with the mundane. We so often hear the complaint that the press reports only the bad news. While that might be a valid complaint, it also is true that most people are fascinated by the sensational, rather than the ordinary, news. It was not really much different in the 1700s. An unfair circumstance for many of the pioneer settlers of this region, but one that was unfortunately the case, was that the only way to be included in the history books was to have some disaster happen to them. If a family was attacked by Indians and massacred they were guaranteed a spot in the history books. Those families which merely survived and went about their daily lives without incident have been forgotten. The family of James Crawford was one such family that contributed to the existence of Bedford County by simply residing here, but whose sojourn here was not necessarily remarkable or punctuated by a disaster and therefore not "newsworthy".

The only references that can be found in the history books about James Crawford and his family are brief mentions, usually as background information for one of his sons or grandsons. So in the absence of any public account, what can be said of this man?

The tax assessment returns revealed that James Crawford was a weaver by profession. Many people have the mistaken notion that every colonial period family made their own cloth. They make the mistake of thinking that spinning thread is the same thing as weaving cloth. It is true that most families spun their own thread. Estate inventories almost always show spinning wheels which were used for spinning thread, but weaving cloth was left to the professional weaver.

The weaver was an important craftsman in colonial America for a number of reasons. The first reason was that weaving was a time consuming and back-breaking job and not for just anyone. The actual process of weaving involved sitting, for hours on end, on a backless bench that was part of the structure of the loom, while continuously reaching forward to pass the shuttle back and forth between the warp threads and then pulling a bar forward to compact the weft threads tight.

The second reason was that the weaver's loom was a bulky piece of equipment that not everyone could either afford or find space in their homes for. The looms which were used by the colonial weavers were not the small looms people use today for hobby work. The width of cloth was dependent on the width of the loom. Since people in colonial days wanted large continuous pieces of cloth for things such as bedclothes, just as we do today, the loom had to be large. In most cases the weaver's loom took up about the same space as a large canopy bed. The weaver's family would have been inconvenienced by the invasion of the monstrous piece of equipment into their home, but if that was the head of the household's chosen profession, his family had to put up with it. Although it could be disassembled, the loom was not an easy thing to move and often was built right into the house.

Another reason that the weaver was a valued member of the community was because although the manufacture of cloth on a loom appears to be a simple job, the production of good cloth was a craft like any other and not everyone could do it. As with any craft, the weaver usually learned how to

manufacture cloth by working as an apprentice with an already established weaver.

With these things in mind, we can make a couple of assumptions about the life of James Crawford. He had cleared a portion of his property of its trees and may have engaged in some farming, but probably not on the same scale as others who did nothing but farming. His customers no doubt paid their bills by bartering produce and meat in exchange for his services. If any farming was done on the Crawford farmstead, it was probably by James' sons. Eleanor and the Crawford daughters probably spun their own thread for the cloth they required themselves and so the family probably raised a few sheep for that purpose. Some of the cleared land may have also been planted in flax, to eventually be spun and woven into linen cloth.

Although there are no pictures of James Crawford to let us know what his features were, we can hazzard a guess that he may have been a little bit bent over from the constant strain exerted on his back.

Another thing we can guess at would be his standing in the community. It was the normal custom for the weaver to travel around through the region to give his customers their finished cloth and to pick up any newly spun thread they had. There is no reason to assume otherwise in James Crawford's case; he was probably well acquainted with most of his neighbors through such routine visits to their homes.

Lastly, and the reason we gathered together to dedicate his gravesite, James Crawford joined with his fellow colonists in their effort to establish a new nation. The Ulster-Scots were well aware of England's tyranny; they had endured decades of hardship at England's hands while residing in Ireland, as had their ancestors in Scotland.

James Crawford enlisted in the local militia, which was the Bedford County Militia. He was assigned to Captain John Thompson's company which had been raised in Frankstown, Barree and Hopewell Townships. The officers of the local militias tended to be chosen out of the ranks that had enlisted. James Crawford's peers chose him to serve in the position of Ensign for the 2nd Company of the Third Battalion in 1778. He received his formal commission to that position on the 10th day of December, 1778. Very few of the muster rolls from Bedford County have been preserved, and so we cannot know how long Mr. Crawford served in Captain Thompson's Company. Tours of duty for the militia varied from a few days to a month or so. The length of the Patriot's service isn't all that important, though. The important thing is the fact that he embraced the Patriot Cause. Even if he had served only a single day, he deserves our praise and admiration. James Crawford's willingness to take up arms for what he and his fellow Bedford Countians believed was for the common good is one of the things that defines patriotism.

In the year 1779 a state of panic spread throughout the frontier county of Bedford. The Indians, who had been pushed to the west of the Allegheny Mountains and northward into the province of New York, began to increase the number and ferocity of their incursions into the Euro-American settlements. Many residents fled from this frontier region and established new homesteads in the counties to the east. The tax assessment return for Frankstown Township in 1779 is punctuated by the notation "absant", signifying that the family had moved out. Most of those families never returned. The entry for James Crawford showed that he had remained in this region during that period of Indian troubles, despite the claims made by earlier historians.

There were only ten or twelve men who might truly be considered Bedford County Patriots. Those men had come to this region prior to or just at the time that the American Revolutionary War commenced. They served in the local Bedford County Militia and then continued to reside here. Eventually they died here and their bodies were buried in Bedford County soil. James Crawford was one of those Bedford County Patriots.

We had hoped to have a Revolutionary War reenactment troop to serve as an honor guard for this ceremony, but the Cluggages Rangers cancelled out on it at the last moment, leaving no time to engage another troop. If they had been there, they would have fired a musketry salute across Mr. Crawford's grave in a symbolic gesture of respect for his war service. In place of that salute James Crawford's great<sup>4</sup>-grandson, William N. Crawford offered a prayer. Jack Linderman played a hymn on the bagpipes, an instrument which James Crawford no doubt heard played in his native Ulster in northern Ireland.



## 4<sup>th</sup> QUARTERLY MEETING

The 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting of the Blair County Chapter, SAR will be held on October 26 at the R-Waffle King Restaurant in Altoona. The meeting will begin at 12:00 noon. Quite a number of our members have been ill recently. We hope that you are well and that you will be able to come and join us for this meeting.

### 1996 ANNUAL MEETING

Because of the fact that the 1995 Annual Meeting had to be cancelled due to low attendance, the subject was discussed during the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Meeting in January. The decision was made to hold the 1996 Annual Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November. Please make a note of that date and plan on attending. The location and any other particulars pertaining to the Annual Meeting will be discussed at the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting.

### *History Of The Blair County Chapter, SAR Update*

Now that I have completed work on my book for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History of Blair County, and it is at the publishers (a project which almost totally consumed the last four years of my life), I am able to devote more time to the other book that I had started a year or so ago. I have now completed 177 pages of *The Blair County Chapter Sons Of The American Revolution ~ Being A History Of The Chapter and A View Of Bedford County In The American Revolutionary War*. I am currently working on the last section, *The Patriots' Final Resting Place*. My ongoing project as the chapter's Graves Registration Committee to identify and record all known gravesites of Patriots buried within our region and the completion of this section are going hand in hand. I do not agree with those who think it is important to rush ahead and register any and all names simply to get a large number registered quickly. For that reason, I have been taking time to verify the service of every individual claimed to have been a Patriot. The book will be fully footnoted and in this section the footnotes will refer to the source of the verification of service. I feel that to include the names of British and Hessian soldiers among those of our Patriot ancestors would be an act of dishonor to those Patriots; I will not publish a list which contains unverified information simply to be in a hurry to get it done.

The following list contains the names of men who have been claimed to have been Patriots, but for whom I cannot locate any reference in the public records (such as the published Pennsylvania Archives). If you can provide reference sources to me on any of the men listed, please send a letter or postcard to: Larry D. Smith, RR #1, Box 704-A, East Freedom, PA, 16637.

Buried In Bedford County: Nicholas Baader, Luther Banks, Michael Barndollar, Christopher Brant, George Burkholder, Daniel Byers, Thomas Croyle, Daniel Cypher, Jacob Dively, Jeremiah Duvall, Samuel Finley, Casper Fluck, John Fuhr, Jonas Hammer, Christopher Hardt, Jacob Keifer, William McDaniel, William Masters, Elias Miller, John Miller, John Mowra, George Myer, John Newcomer, Edward Northcraft, John Ober, Joshua Pierson, Levin Powell, John Rollins, Jacob Roth, James Sarvis, John Schell, Michael Shimer, John Shover, Frederick Simonton, William Slick, Casper Statler, George Steele, Samuel Ullery, Valentine Vondersmith, Samuel Way, Thomas White, Thomas Whitehead, Buried In Blair County: S.Miles Green, Jacob Hengst, Joseph Keely, James Marr, Joseph Martin, Douglas McCartney, Patrick McQuellen, Thomas McWilliams, Arthur Mooney, Thomas Price, Lemuel Root, Adam Souder, Timothy Van Scoyoc, John Ulrich Zeth, Buried in Fulton County: Abraham Leshner, John McKinley, Buried in Huntingdon County: H.P. Africa, Michael Africa, William Armstrong, Phillip Barnet, Alexander Blair, George Brewer, William Bunn, Alexander Campbell, John Cannon, Martin Claubaugh, John Dorland, Thomas Dorr, Casper Dull, James Dunlap, Henry Elias, John Frank, Martin Funk, Michael Funk, George Galbraith, John Geissinger, Samuel Glasgow, John Goheen, William Harrison, Andrew Herbits, Joseph Jacob, Jacob Jano, Thomas Ker, Conrad Frederick Kurtz, John Marshall, George Mattern, Robert McCormick, William Andrew McMannes, John S. Mills, Thomas Moreland, Alexander Myers, David Nicholson, John Oliver, Peter Ox, Hezekiah Ricketts, Peter Rickhabaugh, Jacob Robison, John Robison, Lawrence Shultz, George Simonton, John Simpson, Thomas Smith, Thomas Sollers, James Stackpole, Leonard Toops, George Vansant, George Waggoner, Alexander Wiley, John Yocum.