

James Harris

I, Victor G. McMurry – NSSAR Number 138899, am the Seventh Great Grandson of James Harris.

James Harris was born 06 April 1763 in Granville County, North Carolina. James married Priscilla Lundy Gilliam on 20 June 1783 in Granville County, North Carolina. James died on 23 September 1804 in Spartanburg, South Carolina. James Harris was the son of Isham Harris and Martha Mabel Green.

Following the British victory at the Battle of Camden in August 1780, a detachment of Loyalists under Major Patrick Ferguson was dispatched by Lord Cornwallis to suppress Patriot activity in the mountains. Ferguson sent a message to the Overmountain settlements, warning them that if they refused to lay down their arms, he would march over the mountains and "lay waste the country with fire and sword." North Carolina militia Colonel's John Sevier and Colonel Isaac Shelby agreed to raise armies and march across the mountains to engage Ferguson.

On September 25, 1780, the Overmountain Men, as they came to be called, gathered at Sycamore Shoals to prepare for the march.

The Overmountain Men were American frontiersmen from west of the Appalachian Mountains who took part in the American Revolutionary War. The term "overmountain" refers to the fact that their settlements were west of, or "over", the Appalachians —the range being the primary geographical boundary dividing the 13 American colonies from the western frontier. The Overmountain Men hailed from parts of Virginia, North Carolina, and what is now Tennessee.

These backwoods Patriots fought "Indian style," striking from ambush with war whoops and yells. They attacked and then retreated, forcing the British to pursue them into the woods in a running skirmish. Ferguson detested these ruffian militiamen whom he regarded as "backwater men," "barbarians," and "the dregs of mankind."

On October 7, 1780 the Overmountain Men caught up with and surrounded Ferguson, whose Loyalist forces were atop Kings Mountain, near the present-day North Carolina-South Carolina border. Sevier's men, which included my ancestor **James Harris** who was 17 years old, comprised part of the south flank, along with the forces of Campbell and McDowell. Patriot forces initially failed to break through the Loyalist lines, but the frontier sharpshooters gradually decimated the American Loyalist ranks. At the height of the battle, Sevier and Campbell charged the high point of the Loyalist position, giving the Overmountain men a foothold atop the mountain. Ferguson was eventually killed trying to break through Sevier's line, and the Loyalists surrendered shortly afterward.