

By an Act of the General Assembly of the Province of South Carolina ratified in 1769 the Platts family lands and those of their neighbors were officially transferred from Prince William Parish, Granville County, into the newly-created Orangeburg Judicial District, the southern boundary of which was a line drawn from Nelson's Ferry on Santee River westward to Matthews Bluff on Savannah River. It is doubtful that this development seriously affected the daily lives of these small farmers of modest means along the upper reaches of the Salkehatchie River any more than the 1765 Stamp Act or the Quartering Act, unpopular as they were in Charleston. They paid little, if any, taxes to the provincial government and were less represented therein. Certainly the newly-levied taxes on glass, paint, lead and tea drew few shillings from their or their neighbors' pockets. Nor did they participate in Charleston's "oblation to Neptune" when packets of tea were emptied into Cooper River. No Platts sought a seat in Carolina's 1775 Provincial Congress, membership therein, as that of the General Assembly, being restricted to white Christian males owning 500 or more acres and 20 or more slaves, or \$1000 chattels. If reports of the armed clash on Lexington Green actually reached their area, few were interested. Orangeburg District Germans remained contented and optimistic with the economic opportunities afforded them by generous grants of fertile land, supplies and protection from hostile Indians provided by the English king. Indeed, if they ever thought of him at all, it was in terms of gratitude. In twenty-five years they had not yet become thorough Englishmen, much less Americans.

The German Bible, read daily in every household and interpreted according to the precepts of their Lutheran forebears, kept them anchored in the hard truth of mankind's Fall in the Garden of Eden,

of original sin, of the ambiguous and flawed quality of human nature and reason, not to be quickly trusted without serious consideration of the consequences of hasty decisions. They remembered from the religious wars of Europe that unbridled liberty has a tragic, demonic and paradoxical character. The experience of a few decades of freedom was indeed precious, yet, being German, they were loyal to their new king as to their former rulers. They were particularly averse to taking up arms against him lest they lose their lands in the process.

The casualty-free but furious cannonade between the American schooner Defense and the British ships Tamar and Cherokee on 11/12 November 1775 in Charleston harbor was the opening battle, dividing Carolinians into loyalists and patriots, for shortly thereafter a rumor spread like wildfire that the Indians were being armed to attack loyalists who opposed revolutionary patriots. Rumor was given credence when a large shipment of gunpowder for the Cherokees was intercepted by loyalists at Ninety Six. Then a popular loyalist in nearby Augusta made the political mistake of ridiculing the revolutionary movement at a private dinner party, was shortly thereafter attacked by a patriot mob, stripped of his clothes, tarred and feathered and paraded before a jeering crowd.

Large numbers of recruits began flocking to join the loyal militia. Civil war was under way. But the Snow Campaign of December 1775 politically and militarily shattered loyalist forces whose leaders were captured and hurried into prison in Charleston. On 26 March 1776 the General Assembly declared South Carolina independent and elected John Rutledge its president. The stunning defeat of Sir Peter Parker's British fleet at Sullivan's Island 28 June 1776 inaugurated "Carolina Day", as well as $2\frac{1}{2}$ years of peace for Carolinians, except for the deadly hatchets and scalping knives of the loyalist Cherokees whom

the Carolina militia relentlessly pursued until the Indians sued for peace that October.

The situation was reversed by December 1778 when British Gen. Augustine Prevost marched his army up from Florida, captured Savannah and Beaufort. Within six weeks all Georgia was re-organized as a royal colony and remained so through^{out} the Revolution. The British marched through Beaufort District and on to Charleston, temporarily falling back to Beaufort only after the Battle of Stono. John Rutledge was re-called as Governor of Carolina, given dictatorial power and quickly established military headquarters at Orangeburg, commissioning three guerilla generals: Sumter, Marion and Pickens. Following the failure of the Carolinians' Seige of Savannah in October 1779, Charleston surrendered 12 May 1780. British forces held Beaufort, Orangeburg, Georgetown, Camden and Ninety Six. British naval power was unchallenged.

Among those Carolinians accepting British protection against rebel patriot violence were Captain Levi Youmans' Company of South Carolina Royal Militia recruited from Beaufort and Orangeburg Districts. A surviving Muster Roll dated 1 Dec. 1779 at Savannah shows Pvt. Jacob Platts a "prisoner with rebels", as were Pvt. Jesse Gross, Pvt. Henry Young and Pvt. Isaac Copeland. Pvt. Christopher Platts "died 20 May 1779", same day as Pvt. John Bishop. Killed in a skirmish? Wiggins Hill? Pvt. John Platts was reported "struck off 24 Aug. 1779", as were Pvt. Jacob Mold, Jr. and Pvt. Jacob Martin. This might be taken to mean that these three had "seen the light" and deserted to the patriots, except that a 60-day Muster, 24 Feb. - 24 April 1781, of Captain Alexander Campbell's Company of S.C. Royalists, Camden, S.C., lists Pvt. Jacob Mold, Sen. and Pvt. Jacob Mold, Jr. Loyalists never even con-

sidered the possibility that American rebel forces could operate against even the strongest British posts. Neither they nor the uncommitted ever imagined that an American victory was inevitable. The Revolutionary War was truly a civil war. In recollecting the Whig-Tory (patriot-loyalist) violence, one patriot minced no words: "The conduct of these two parties was a disgrace to human nature. It may safely be said that they destroyed more property and shed more American blood than the whole British army."

Again the wheel of fortune reversed itself. By the end of 1781 as a result of the unrelenting efforts of Gov. John Rutledge and his three guerilla generals, only Charleston remained occupied by the British, Cornwallis having left the Carolinas and surrendered to Washington 19 Oct. 1781 at Yorktown. That same year John Platts provided two beeves for Continental Army use in exchange for a note for £8/19/8 Sterling, which same was paid, plus £0/12/6 interest, 1 Aug. 1785 as shown by Stub Entry Book V-371 of the S.C. Auditor General. Again on 2 Oct. 1782 Col. William Harden signed a receipt for John Platts for two 4-yr old steers for the use of Maj. Gen. Greene's army, 700 pounds @ 25/8 totaling £8/19/8. Apparently John Platts encountered difficulty in collecting for these provisions for on 19 Jan. 1791 he assigned to Richard Creech, before W. Buford, J.P., "my Right, Title, Claim & Interest which I have against the public of South Carolina."

Despite his equivocation John Platts had pragmatically survived the Revolutionary War, for the State of South Carolina granted him an additional 100 acres on 22 Oct. 1784 (SC Grants Book 7, p. 114) and still another 100 acres 10 July 1786 (SC Grants Book 3, p. 388). The 1790 Census of Orangeburg District's South Part shows him with two sons under 16 yrs, seven females and one slave, a not inconsiderable family.

In 1798 the portion of Orangeburg District including John Platts' lands was transferred into newly-created Barnwell District. By 1800

John Platts had died, having made his Will dated 6 Nov. 1799. The 1800 Census of Barnwell District shows his family headed by his widow, Sophia Platts, born 1755/774, comprising four males under 10 yrs, one female under 10 yrs, five females 10/16 yrs and five slaves. A well-established family.