



The Battle of Shallow Ford:

An exhibition of words & watercolors
Rick Jones / Marilyn Ingram

Beginning in the morning of October 14, 1780, the Battle of Shallow Ford was a turning point for Patriots during the American Revolution, impacting the people on both sides of the Yadkin River and along the Great Wagon Road to the early Moravian settlements. This story is a part of the true "Common Ground" on which We The People began...

The story, unfolding during a time where there were no cameras, cell phones, laptops or even a typewriter, is told through the eyes of artists - field correspondents who would paint, draw or write a journal. The artists humbly pose as these historic individuals to represent the story in the same historic manner - as Artists.

"The Battle of Shallow Ford: An Exhibition of Words and Watercolors" is an exhibit by master watercolor artist Rick Jones, accompanied by "words" from artist and writer, Marilyn Ingram.

1. **"The Shallow Ford"** is a bed of rock that has been used as a submerged, watery bridge to cross the **Yadkin River** for time immemorial. This iconic landmark played a tremendous role in the history of mankind. From the Indigenous people who lived and traversed within the area, to the arrival of Europeans traveling between destinations from Pennsylvania to Georgia, the Shallow Ford is quite literally, a Rock Star.
2. **"The Great Wagon Road at Shallow Ford"** - Due to constant travel up and down the Great Wagon Road, trade posts and encampments developed on both banks of the Yadkin River at the ford. The area was a hub of activity from 1749 until the building of the **West Bend Bridge** in 1920, thus ending the use of the Shallow Ford. The artist has depicted the Yadkin County bank at the ford as it looks today, much as it would have looked prior to settlers arriving in the area.
3. **"Crossing the Yadkin at Shallow Ford"** - In 2021, after years of negotiations, it was announced that NC would create a state park on the Forsyth County bank of the historic Shallow Ford. Both banks of the Shallow Ford have felt the footsteps of a myriad of people through the ages and have stories to tell. The Battle of Shallow Ford is one of them...
4. **"The Committee of Safety and Traugott Bagge collecting supplies at the Moravian Settlements"** - Artistic interpretation of a letter relaying a desperate need for 100 skins of leather, 3 sets of shoemaker's tools and protection during the collection and delivery is featured in this work. Here we see the local **Committee of Safety** meeting with the fabled Moravian merchant, **Traugott Bagge**, who is "credited by scholars as *"keeping Wachovia safe from reprisals and fairly prosperous in a time when many towns struggled to survive."* 1
5. **"The Mulberry Road"** - Early on the morning of October 14, 1780, a number of mounted Loyalist militia reported between 400 to 900 men, led by the brothers **Colonel Gideon and Captain Hezekiah Wright**, began crossing the Yadkin at the Shallow Ford near Mulberry Fields Road in Huntsville, NC... Headed to Charlotte as reinforcements, the Loyalists were met by **Major Joseph Cloyd's** Patriot (Whig) troops, waiting to ambush and delay the British efforts to secure reinforcements for **General Cornwallis**.
6. **"Tories, Tories, Tories!"** - Upon seeing the Loyalists enter onto the Mulberry Fields Road, the call went out from the Whigs to form a skirmish line. NC troops, together with four companies of Montgomery County VA Militia, some 300-350 men, stood ready. Captain Andrew Carson of Iredell County, NC, led 52 men, Captain Henry Francis led another VA company which included two of Francis's sons, Henry Jr. and John. Captain Pearis of VA lead a company. By the end of an intense battle, 14 Tories fell, including Captain James Bryan with a number wounded. Captain Henry Francis was the only Patriot Whig who fell.
7. **"We Are Whipped!"** - Large numbers of Tories, leisurely crossing the Shallow Ford, were met by others who had crossed and were now retreating from the Whig ambush. Confusion and chaos ensued as those crossing and those retreating met at the ford. The cry *"We are whipped!"* was said to be shouted by the retreating Tories as detailed in the pension request for Colonel Joseph Williams. 2. The battle was reported a decisive victory for the Whigs and one of the 3 conflicts in the Carolinas that changed the course of history. As it was fought in the southeast, entirely by militia with arguably no famous participants, the Battle of Shallow Ford drifted into obscurity in later years.
8. **"Wagons to Bethania"** - After being treated at the scene of the battle by Moravian doctors and assistants, the 4 wounded Whigs and a large number of Tories were taken to the Moravian Settlements of Bethania, Bethabara, and Salem to convalesce.
9. **"Jacob Loesch House in Bethania"** c.1775, underwent major restoration due to fire in 2006. Loesch worked as a gunsmith, clockmaker, pipe organ designer, silversmith, and water works engineer. 10. **"Johann Christian Loesch House in Bethania"** - c.1772. Enlarged in mid 19th century. Entrepreneur and merchant, Loesch was born in Bethabara in 1756. Loesch Street was named in his honor. Both houses are privately owned residences.
11. **"The "Cornwallis House" in Bethania"** - (Hauser-Reich-Butner House). This dwelling, known as The Cornwallis House due to oral tradition stating that during the February 1781 occupation of the **Town of Bethania**, the General spent a night there. This historic house was built c.1770 by George Hauser, Sr. and wife Anna Margaretha Elrod Hauser, who were among the original Bethania residents. The house has been continuously maintained and occupied as a private residence.
12. **"Bethabara Medicinal Garden"** - Bethabara's own **Dr. Kalberlahn** laid out the plan for the garden in October 1756, making it the first European medicinal garden ever planted in America. Plants were grown to treat stomach aches, headaches and other common problems for settlers and livestock during the eighteenth century. Dr. Kalberlahn was the first Doctor in the Moravian settlements and you can still visit his garden at **Historic Bethabara**.
13. **"Apple Trees"** and 14. **"Salem Garden"** are respectively scenes from the Moravian Settlements of Bethabara and Salem. Extensive amounts of food, supplies, services and other goods were constantly requested or "pressed" from the settlements for Military from all sides of the conflict. During the year 1780 well over 2,000 troops received services, goods, camped or passed through Wachovia's Moravian settlements.



15. **"Remembering Captain Henry Francis"** The only Whig casualty of the Battle of Shallow Ford, Captain Francis was interred at the sight of the battle. Francis's sword, which was valuable, "was given to Captain Pearis, considered the best marksman in the engagement and who had been wounded." [3] It has been said that Captain Francis's gravesite was maintained by Colonel Joseph Williams of nearby Panther Creek and later by the Clingman family in Huntsville. In 1994 descendants of Francis and the Yadkin County Historical Society dedicated a new marker as is depicted in this composition.



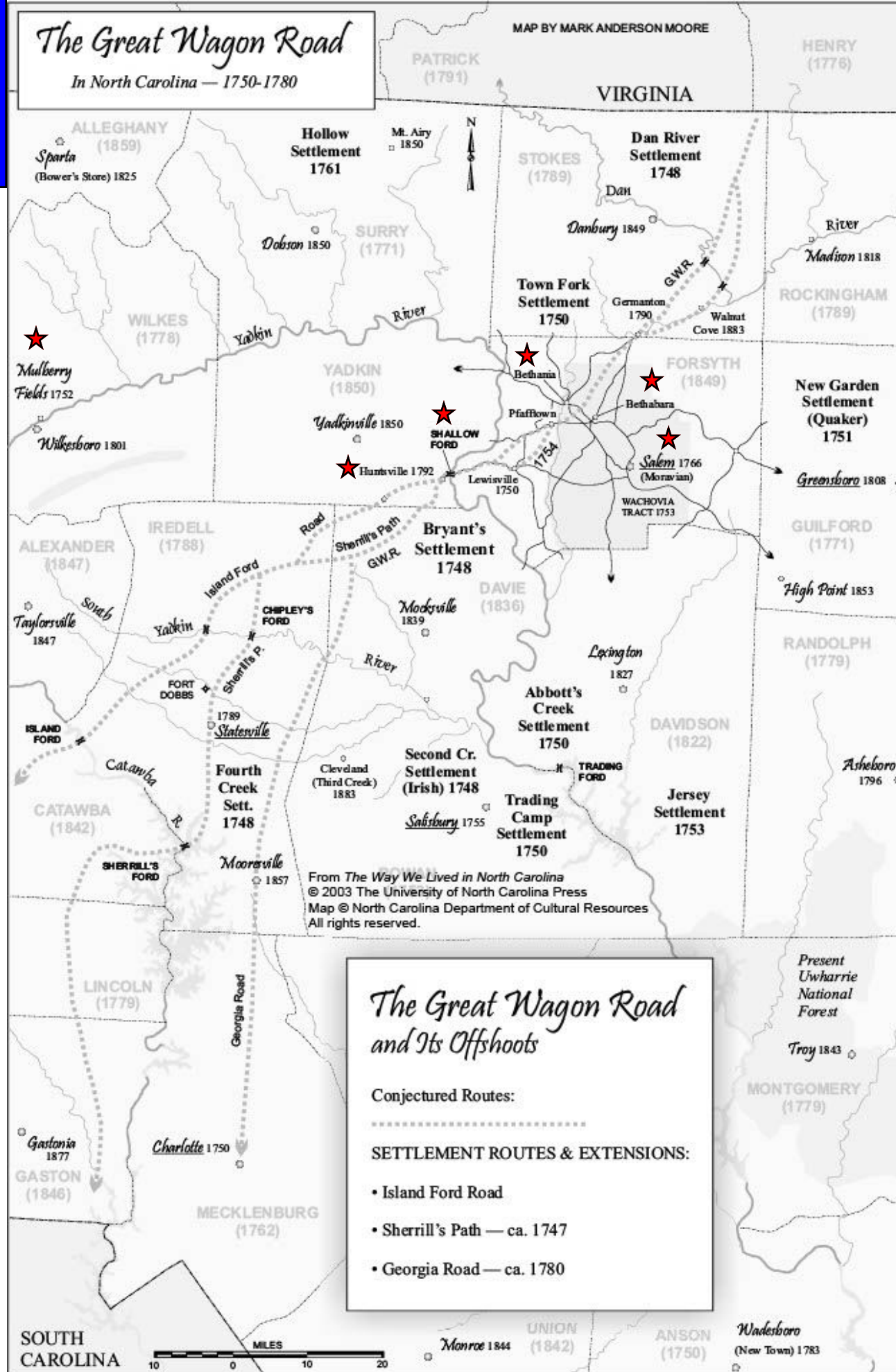
16. **"Commemoration of the Battle of Shallow Ford at Huntsville Methodist Church"** is an annual observation in **Huntsville, NC**, begun in 2014 by the **Bethabara Chapter, National Society Sons of the American Revolution**. Daughters from **Battle of Shallow Ford Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution** join them in this artistic tribute.

17. **"The Witness Tree"** is the ancient *"Big Poplar Tree"* which stands as the silent, living testament to the Battle of Shallow Ford. Depicted in this final scene, the artists imagine those who visit and follow the tradition of "circling the tree" by holding hands, being joined by those who fell, defending their beliefs, at the Battle of Shallow Ford.

Marilyn M. Ingram - March 2025

The Great Wagon Road

In North Carolina — 1750-1780



The Great Wagon Road and Its Offshoots

Conjectured Routes:

SETTLEMENT ROUTES & EXTENSIONS:

- Island Ford Road
- Sherrill's Path — ca. 1747
- Georgia Road — ca. 1780

Map Locations by number listed on ART WORK

The Shallow Ford
1, 2, 3

Mulberry Fields Road
(private property)
5, 6, 15, 17

Huntsville, NC
7, 8, 16

The Town of Bethania, NC
4, 8, 9, 10, 11

Historic Bethabara Park
4, 12, 13

Old Salem
4, 14

Footnotes:

1. History Makers: Traugott Bagge, Kate Rauhauser-Smith, W-S Journal, April 27, 2015
2. Draper Manuscript Collection. Wisconsin Historical Society, Series C Vol 8 P42
3. Captain George Pearis, Kegley Militia of Montgomery Co., VA 1777-1790, P35

Sources:

Records of the Moravians, Adelaide Fries, Vol IV
 Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Vol 14, page 790
 Colonial and State Records of North Carolina: Declarations concerning Military Service in the Revolutionary War: Private Andrew Carson S8173, Private Henry Trolinger S*W4087
 Captain Henry Francis, Clark State Records of NC, Vol. 14 P 790
 Documenting the American South, University Library of UNC CH

Joe A Mobly, The University of North Carolina Press,
 North Carolina Office of Archives and History,
 Map: Mark Anderson Moore



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