

= James Moore (Continental Army officer) =

James Moore (c . 1737 ? c . April 15 , 1777) was a Continental Army general during the American Revolutionary War . Born into a prominent political family in North Carolina , he was one of only five generals from the state to serve in the Continental Army . Moore spent much of his childhood and youth on his family 's estates in the lower Cape Fear River area , but soon became active in the colonial military structure in North Carolina .

Moore served in the colonial militia during the French and Indian War , and commanded the colonial governor 's artillery at the Battle of Alamance , which ended the War of the Regulation . In addition to his military involvement , he was active in the independence movement , despite having been a supporter of the colonial government during his early career . Moore played a prominent role in the local Sons of Liberty organizations , and assisted in organizing the colony @-@ wide extra @-@ legal Provincial Congress . In 1775 , he was elected the first commander of a Continental Line regiment in North Carolina , which had been raised pursuant to instructions of the Continental Congress .

After distinguishing himself in the campaign that led to the Patriot victory at the Battle of Moore 's Creek Bridge , and the battle 's aftermath on February 27 , 1776 , Moore was promoted to brigadier general in the Continental Army . He maintained his headquarters in North Carolina during early 1776 in order to thwart a threatened British invasion of the state but , in the latter part of the year , received orders to move his command to South Carolina . Moore briefly held de facto command of the Southern Department before his death due to illness in April 1777 . He is remembered as a competent military commander whose early death ended a promising career .

= = Early life and family = =

James Moore was born in New Hanover County in the Cape Fear region of the Carolinas in about 1737 . His family had extensive landholdings at Rocky Point , located at a bend in the Cape Fear River about 15 miles (24 km) north of Wilmington . He was the son of Maurice Moore and his second wife , Mary Porter . His older brother , also named Maurice Moore , would go on to become a Patriot political leader in North Carolina during the American Revolution . His sister , Rebecca Moore , would marry a Revolutionary War leader , militia General John Ashe .

Moore was , through his father 's side , a grandson of Governor James Moore , who was governor of the Province of Carolina when North and South Carolina were a single colony . Maurice Moore had championed settlement of the Cape Fear region under Governor George Burrington . Additionally , Moore 's uncle , Colonel James Moore , was a military leader during the Yamasee War . Moore 's nephew , Alfred Moore , served in the Continental Army under Moore 's command , and would go on to become an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court . Moore 's niece , Mary , would later marry Moore 's Continental Army colleague Francis Nash .

Moore 's extended relatives constituted the single most powerful family in the region , and were known by local settlers simply as " the Family " . His nine aunts and uncles , and seventeen siblings and cousins on his father 's side , married into other affluent families , developing a strong network in the region that perpetuated their wealth and influence , and increased their slaveholdings in each successive generation . By the time of the American Revolution , six of the ten largest slaveholders in the lower Cape Fear region were in some way related to Moore . The Moore family relied on the production of naval stores and lumber , as the lower Cape Fear was unsuited to mass cultivation of more profitable products and crops like rice and indigo .

One early description of Moore states that he spent his early years on his father 's plantation , until that tract sold in 1761 . In his adulthood , Moore married Anna Ivey , with whom he had two sons and two daughters , all of whom survived him at his death . One son , James Moore , Jr . , would serve in the American Revolutionary War as a lieutenant before being permanently disabled by wounds received at the Battle of Eutaw Springs .

= = Colonial political and military service = =

James Moore had experience as a military officer prior to the American Revolution . In 1758 , Governor Arthur Dobbs appointed him as the captain of a company of militia at Fort Johnston , and Moore remained in command of that unit during the French and Indian War . During that conflict , Moore was captain of a company he led to South Carolina to defend that colony against Cherokee attacks brought on by the Anglo @-@ Cherokee War . By 1759 , he was appointed a justice of the peace . In protest of the Stamp Act in 1766 , Moore led an armed mob that occupied the de facto capital town of Brunswick , North Carolina . The mob appointed Moore as its delegate to confront Governor William Tryon and the royal comptroller of customs , William Pennington , who had taken refuge at Tryon 's home . Pennington gave in to the demands of the mob , and resigned his post , swearing that he would not enforce the provisions of the Stamp Act .

Moore served as a colonel of an artillery company in the colonial militia during the War of the Regulation , a revolt by western settlers against perceived injustices in the colonial government of North Carolina in the decade immediately preceding the American Revolution . At the Battle of Alamance , Moore served as the commander of Governor Tryon 's artillery company . Moore 's orders in that engagement were to fire his cannons once Tryon had determined the Regulators would not surrender , thus signalling the beginning of the battle . During the conflict , however , the governor 's artillery functioned poorly , and the Regulators were able to gain an initial advantage by fighting in an irregular fashion . The governor 's forces eventually succeeded in crushing the armed farmers , thus ending the Regulator rebellion . Moore went on to serve in the North Carolina House of Commons from 1764 to 1771 and again in 1773 , representing his home county of New Hanover . In 1772 , he purchased a plantation of 500 acres (200 ha ; 0 @.@ 78 sq mi) on the Cape Fear River several miles upriver from Wilmington .

= = American Revolution = =

= = = Revolutionary activities = = =

Moore participated in the Wilmington chapter of the Sons of Liberty beginning in 1770 , and through them organized a boycott of imported British goods on the Cape Fear River . On July 21 , 1774 , Moore was elected to a Wilmington @-@ based committee tasked with organizing the First North Carolina Provincial Congress with other counties . Moore also participated in the New Hanover Committee of Safety , and worked with other local citizens to raise supplies for Boston , whose port had been closed to all commerce in 1774 by the Boston Port Act . In August 1775 he was elected to the Third Provincial Congress , which organized the colonial militia and placed Moore in command of the first regiment raised to be trained as regular soldiers . At the time , Loyalist @-@ sympathizer and Cape Fear @-@ area diarist Janet Schaw described her fear of Moore as the commander of the Patriot militia , stating :

He is a man of free property and a most unblemished character , has amiable manners , and a virtuous life has gained him the love of everybody , and his popularity is such that I am assured he will have more followers than any other man in the province . He acts from a steady tho ' mistaken principle , and I am certain has no view or design , but what he thinks right and for the good of the country . He urges not war of words , and when my brother told him he would not join him , for he did not approve the cause , ' Then do not , ' said he , ' let every man be directed by his own ideas of right or wrong . ' If this man commands , be assured , he will find his enemies work .

Moore 's appointment as commander of the first regiment of what would become the North Carolina Line came at the expense of his brother @-@ in @-@ law , John Ashe , who actively sought the appointment . Moore bested Ashe by only a single vote in the Provincial Congress .

= = = Moore 's Creek Bridge campaign = = =

On February 15 , 1776 , Moore was given command of the 1st North Carolina Regiment raised at

the direction of the Second Continental Congress , and placed in charge of the defense of the Cape Fear region . At the same time , the colonial government in New Bern organized militia units under Colonel Richard Caswell , and sent this force south to meet up with Moore 's regiment of regulars and several other units of militia . A force of approximately 1 @, @ 400 Highland Scots denizens of North Carolina who remained loyal to Britain was organized shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in 1775 . This force , concentrated around the Loyalist hotbed of Cross Creek (near modern @- @ day Fayetteville , North Carolina) , alarmed the Patriot government , who dispatched Moore and Caswell to contain the growing army .

The British Army and Royal Navy , in cooperation with the Loyalist elements of the colonial government under Governor Josiah Martin , planned an invasion of North Carolina near Wilmington , a burgeoning and strategically located seaport in the Cape Fear region . The Highlander units at Cross Creek were directed to join up with British Army units , which General Thomas Gage intended to land in North Carolina . Moore led his command upriver along the south bank of the Cape Fear , and fortified a river crossing at Rockfish Creek , which would have been the Loyalists ' most direct path to Wilmington . At this site , Moore continued to gather reinforcements , eventually commanding approximately 1 @, @ 100 men . Brigadier General Donald MacDonald , who commanded the militia of approximately 1 @, @ 500 Highlanders , sent an envoy to Moore , demanding that he join the Loyalist cause or be faced with an attack . Moore , delaying in his reply in order to buy time , eventually declined that demand , essentially calling MacDonald 's bluff . MacDonald , whose men lacked the morale for an immediate confrontation , received word that Caswell 's militia had been ordered to join with Moore . Sensing that time was of the essence , MacDonald withdrew , and led the Loyalist contingent away from Moore toward a crossing further downriver .

Moore next set about devising a trap for MacDonald 's Loyalist contingent . He positioned a detachment of men at Cross Creek , and ordered the regiments of Colonels Caswell and Alexander Lillington to a location downriver in the path of the Loyalist militia . The Loyalist force managed to slip past Caswell , at which point Moore ordered Caswell to join up with Lillington at a location known as Moore 's Creek Bridge . Simultaneously with Caswell 's corrective maneuver , Moore floated his troops 60 miles (97 km) downriver , where they disembarked and joined in the pursuit of MacDonald 's force . In the Battle of Moore 's Creek Bridge , the Loyalists attempted to cross over the creek in the early morning hours of February 27 , 1776 , where they were met with fierce resistance from Caswell and Lillington 's united forces . The Patriots routed the Loyalists in less than three minutes , inflicting severe casualties on MacDonald 's men and capturing 850 loyalist soldiers and officers , while themselves suffering only a single casualty .

Moore did not participate directly in the battle , but arrived shortly after it was decided , and pursued the remaining Loyalist units . Moore 's Creek Bridge stopped the British plan for the conquest of North Carolina , and was celebrated by Patriots throughout the colonies . The British press of the time downplayed the victory as a defeat of Loyalist forces rather than of regular British Army units . On March 4 , 1776 , the Provincial Congress in New Bern passed a resolution thanking Moore for his service in suppressing the Loyalists .

= = = Continental Army general = = =

On March 1 , 1776 , the Continental Congress voted to give Moore a commission as a brigadier general in the Continental Army , and placed him in command of all of the regular army forces in North Carolina . Moore was one of only five North Carolinians to achieve the rank of brigadier general or higher in the Continental Army . As a brigadier , he served under General Charles Lee , commander of the army 's Southern Department , and was tasked with guarding Wilmington from attacks by British ships lurking in the Cape Fear area after the Battle of Moore 's Creek Bridge . In that capacity , Moore alternately harassed and observed the British and their Loyalist auxiliaries while simultaneously improving Wilmington 's defenses by erecting two new coastal batteries , and by sinking ships in the main channel of the Cape Fear River south of the city to bar passage by larger vessels . In April and May 1776 , some British units from the approximately 7 @, @ 000 @- @

strong force of General Henry Clinton disembarked near Wilmington , and threatened to confront Moore 's garrison of 1 @, @ 847 men . Clinton soon decided that North Carolina was not an ideal objective , and the majority of the British fleet and army made its way south to Charleston on May 30 , 1776 .

After the near @-@ engagement at Wilmington , Moore devised a plan by which the Provincial Congress raised five additional companies of men to defend North Carolina 's coast . He saw this as necessary because the Continental Army units in North Carolina could be ordered out of the state , which would have left North Carolina relatively defenseless . Lee was recalled to the north to aid in the defense of New York in September 1776 and Moore was placed in command of the Southern Department . Initially , the Continental Congress ordered Moore to join General George Washington in the north , but owing to the continued threat of a British attack in North or South Carolina , Congress suspended Moore 's orders and gave North Carolina 's Provincial Council discretion over his disposition . On October 23 , 1776 , the Council ordered Moore to remain in North Carolina and winter his troops in New Bern and Wilmington . This order was confirmed by the Continental Congress on November 16 , along with instructions for Moore to assist in repelling any invasion attempts in South Carolina or Georgia , if necessary .

Moore then led his command of about 2 @, @ 035 men south to Charleston , South Carolina , in November to assist the Patriot forces there after the attempted British assault at Sullivan 's Island . Moore 's brigade arrived in January , but Moore spent most of his time traveling between Charleston and North Carolina , lobbying for funds and clothing for his poorly equipped soldiers , and recruiting more men . He went so far as to obtain a private loan from Thomas Polk , a planter in Mecklenburg County , for \$ 6 @, @ 250 in South Carolina currency to pay for rations for his command . Moore 's unit engaged in daily drills under his supervision and that of Colonel Francis Nash . Despite these efforts , the North Carolinians suffered from rampant colds and pneumonia , and many of the enlisted men deserted in order to join the South Carolina line because of the high bounty being offered by that state for service .

In February 1777 , the Continental Congress commanded Moore to bring North Carolina 's Continental Army troops north to aid Washington , but a lack of supplies and provisions stalled that plan . Moore himself had returned to North Carolina on January 8 , 1777 , in an attempt to alleviate the poor conditions in which his soldiers found themselves , and to raise funds to pay his men , leaving the Southern Department under the command of Brigadier General Robert Howe . Howe countermanded Moore 's instructions to bring the Continental Army units north by refusing to permit the North Carolina brigade to leave Charleston out of fear of a British attack in the south . Because of Moore 's failing health , Francis Nash was promoted to brigadier general , and assumed command of the brigade on its march north .

= = Death and legacy = =

While preparing to march north in the spring of 1777 , Moore became ill . He died of what was called " a fit of gout in his stomach " on about April 15 , 1777 . Oral tradition holds that Moore died on the same day and in the same house as his brother , Maurice . Anne , Moore 's wife , died a few months thereafter .

Moore , who had not been directly involved in any military engagement , was nonetheless able to construct a working military force out of the disparate parts provided for him by North Carolina . Samuel A 'Court Ashe , an early North Carolina historian , described Moore as " perhaps the most masterful military man furnished by North Carolina to the war of independence . " Another historian speculated that Moore 's " actions had held the promise of greatness . " Moore 's strategic command before and during the Battle of Moore 's Creek Bridge has been acclaimed as a major factor in the Patriot victory there .

The Wake Forest , North Carolina chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and a U.S. Army battery at the now defunct Fort Casey in Washington state were named in his honor . In 1940 , the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources erected a North Carolina highway historical marker in Pender County near Moore 's former home at Rocky Point commemorating his life and

Revolutionary War service .