

AAR for Blackstock's Plantation/Cross Keys

November 4th, 2022

Dragoons, Fire-goddess, and friends,

The first ever Battle of Blackstock's Plantation commemoration at Historic Cross Keys (SC) was held last month, October 14th, 15th, and 16th, and a great time was had by all who attended, except for poor General Sumpter (more on him later).

FRIDAY - The event included a school day on Friday that hosted, from what I could tell, groups from three area schools. Ron Crawley, Jesse Tarver, and young Jensen Tarver thrilled the crowd with our impressions of a mounted British Legion trooper and two members of McCalls militia (dismounted). The day started early with BoJangle's biscuits and coffee but finished quickly which gave us plenty of time for a provided pizza lunch. We did NOT go hungry at this event! The remainder of the afternoon was spent setting up a proper camp for the rest of the weekend. And yes, they fed us once more, a chicken stew dinner! Stacy Brogden arrived about this time and soon afterwards we received unexpected but welcomed news that globe-trotting Dean Withers was now available and on his way. Dean arrived before nightfall and now we had three mounted troopers for the next day

SATURDAY - Once more we were treated to a Bojangle's breakfast. A side note about these organizers, the Union County Historical Association went out of their way to make sure they could accommodate us. Water troughs were purchased and filled for the horses, running water and bathrooms (as well as a few port-o-lets) were nearby, firewood was plentiful, and we had free run of all the buildings and property. These folks own the home, outbuildings, and over 20 acres of adjoining property, mostly cleared but with numerous shade trees around the home, and a small wood lot across the road. There was no lunch served but a food truck was on hand. We opted to dine on sword-roasted ham sandwiches (see images). We enjoyed talking to folks at the picket line, and our only real planned activity was the "battle" that afternoon. With very small numbers on all sides, we were in danger of looking silly, but I think it was performed in good order. As the patriot militia ranks (portrayed in part by our 2d SC friends) defended the hill top, loyalist troops and BL cavalry assaulted but were cut down by a murderous fire .. or at least that is what I now recall. As the loyalist retreated, a lucky shot managed to strike the rebel commander (Erick Nason) and he was taken from the field to be attended to in front of the crowd. After the battle, Stacy changed into 17th Light attire as we learned they were at the original battle. We presented ourselves to a very welcoming audience and answered numerous questions. That evening, a BBQ dinner was served by Midway BBQ in Buffalo, SC, excellent fare. Then Stacy regrettably left us but Dean more than made up for him as the host of the dragoon party that evening, moving the party from the 2d camp to our picket line, and serving up delicious and nutritious Bloody Marys and other drinks from his cooler! Thanks, Dean!

SUNDAY - I cannot recall breakfast, but I am sure it was Bojangles again (no complaints), a brief devotional service was held, and we got back to the business of talking with the spectators. Given the remoteness of the location, it was pleasantly surprising that we had pretty good crowds each day. In the afternoon, Dean and Ron once again lead the BL charge on the patriot line, a little more silly this time since Calhoun apparently had had enough by this time and was stubborn about charging into the fray, but Dean represented us well. The rebel general got cut down again, would have thought he learned from last time, and both sides retired. A special thanks now to Dean who insisted that Ron leave in time for Liz Crawley's solo performance at the Community Band concert in Spartanburg later that afternoon. Dean got me out of there in short order, helping to get my truck loaded up. I got there in time and she sounded great!

Conclusion

Thanks to the troops for allowing me serve as your point of contact and "*de facto commander*" at this event. It was an honor and a pleasure. This is a site that is hard to beat for friendly organizers, great accommodations, and actually a pretty good spectator turnout. I strongly recommend we consider supporting them again on 13-15 October 2023!

Final numbers in attendance,

Total:

- 3 Dragoons
- 3 Horses
- 2 Militia
- 0 Distaff

Breakdown:

- Jesse Tarver (*McCall's Militia, dismounted*)
- Ron Crawley (*POC, British Legion*)
- Stacy Brogden (*British Legion and 17th Light Dragoons*)
- Dean Withers (*British Legion*)
- Jensen Tarver (*McCall's Militia, dismounted*)

I remain Your Most Humble Servant,
Ron Crawley





