**General Joseph Martin Chapter**

**Cumberland Gap, TN**

***Cumberland Gap Patriot***

**Joseph Greer**

Joseph Greer an American patriot nicknamed the King Mountain messenger because he was the first one to deliver the message of an unknown victory to a down hearted Congress that turned the tide of the war of Independence against the British. He was also one of the first to explore the region of present day Anderson county TN.

 Greer was born in Philadelphia PA on August 8, 1754, after his family moved from Londonberry Ireland. In 1776 His father moved his family to the Watauga Region around present day Elizabethton TN. In 1779 Greer helped his father defend Fort Watauga against Indian attacks.

 On October 7, 1780, Greer participated in the battle of Kings Mountain where Ferguson, the British commander was defeated. Col. John Sevier sent Greer to deliver the news of the battle to Congress assembled in Philadelphia Pa. Twenty year old Greer left Kings Mountain armed with only a musket and compass. Sevier chose Greer because of his knowledge of Indians and his ability to plot his way through the woods and Tory encampments.

 During the journey, Greer had several horses shot out from under him by Indians. One night Greer hid in a log while hiding from a group of Indians chasing him. One account said the Indians even sat on the same log resting their feet while Greer remained immobile inside the log. Greer also had to cross several streams some covered with ice and walk through deep snow along the trip.

On November 7, 1780, after being on the road for one month, Greer finally arrived in Philadelphia PA. When Greer finally made his way to where the Continental Congress was meeting, A Continental soldier guard refused to let Greer enter the meeting. This didn’t stop Greer. He had already been through too much to be stopped now.  If Indians or the weather couldn’t stop him no soldier was about to keep him from his mission. One account says Greer hit the guard with his bare fist knocking him out and then Greer picked him up over his head and slammed him to the ground. Greer then kicked the door down where the Continental Congress was meeting.  A Stunned Congress looked in awe at Greer, a big man standing six feet seven inches tall while he gave his account of the battle on how Ferguson was defeated. Greer told of Col. Shelby’s regiment taking the brunt of a ferocious fire of the British during the first 10 minutes of the battle. Greer also told of the three bayonet charges by Ferguson that were repulsed each time by the Overmountain men. Greer told of the British trying to surrender by placing white shirts on their swords and waving them as a white flag, but only to have them cut down by Ferguson who refused to surrender.  The battle lasted one hour and ended only after Ferguson was killed.  One account says a delegate stood up and shouted” With men his size and strength, No wonder we won the battle.

Between 1790- 1792, Greer explored the Clinch River region around present day Anderson county TN. Later that year he moved to Knoxville TN. In 1804, Greer received over 3000 acres in Lincoln County TN a bounty land grant for his service at Kings Mountain.

 While living in Lincoln county Greer met Mary Harmon. They were soon married and had 11 children.  At the age of 76, Greer fathered his eleventh child. On February 23 1831 at the age of 77, Greer died of pneumonia while traveling through a blizzard to get back to his cabin after being on a journey. Greer was buried in Petersburg TN.

 Greer was a truly an American hero of the American Revolutionary war. His message helped revitalized a down hearted Congress who was still upset and down hearted over the defeat at Camden SC in August 1780 while Kings Mountain would revitalize the Southern campaign by becoming a turning point in the war.

***All Contents Copyright © 2004 – 2006 - The General Joseph Martin Chapter TNSSAR – All Rights Reserved.   No part of this material may be reprinted or utilized in any manner without express written consent from The General Joseph Martin Chapter TNSSAR.***