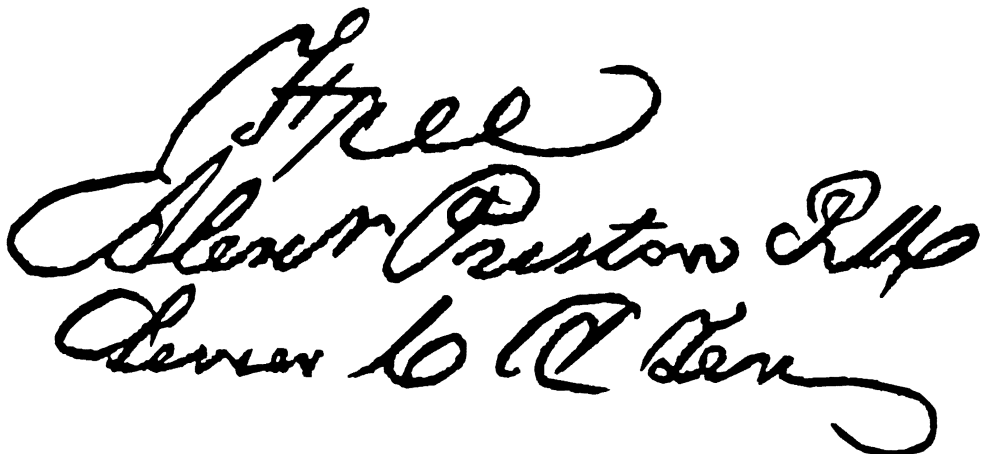


Comments About Andrew Creswell's King's Mountain Letter*

Jim Glanville

In Volume 10 of the *Smithfield Review*, the present writer and his coauthor Hubert Gilliam presented an article describing a previously unpublished eyewitness account by Andrew Creswell of the Battle of King's Mountain.¹ This brief note amplifies and updates that article.

In a helpful email communication, Mary Kegley of Wytheville, a well-known regional historian who has been a student of early handwriting for more than forty years, clarified the return address in the upper right corner of the Creswell letter envelope. We reproduced the envelope as Figure 1 in our paper and commented that we did not understand the notations in the return address, which is reproduced below in freely enhanced form.



Free
New Preston Rd
New to Albany

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Ms. Kegley transcribes the above as “Free; Alex[ander] Preston, PM; Sevier CH, Ten[nessee];” with the explanation that PM stands for post master (he was Alexander Preston, who would be entitled to free mail), and CH for court house. She noted that Creswell’s letter was apparently mailed before the days of postage stamps or fees charged to whoever received the letter.

Kegley speculated that the letter was probably used again ten years later to claim a pension for Andrew Creswell’s war-time service under an act of 1832 that allowed him to obtain his pension. She suggested that such an application would no doubt have recited basically the same facts as stated in his letter to John Preston.

Andrew Creswell remains obscure. The original published article mentioned that he is absent from the index of Lyman Draper’s monumental book about the Battle of King’s Mountain.² A further search of the Lyman Draper archives has revealed that Andrew Creswell is absent both from the index of Draper’s Preston and Virginia papers,³ and from the index to the Draper manuscripts.⁴ Thus, the previous conclusion that Andrew Creswell had escaped the attention of the prolific Lyman Draper seems accurate.

Further investigations have yielded one additional documentary reference to Andrew Creswell. He paid taxes in 1787 in Fayette County (then Virginia and now Kentucky).⁵ Other persons paying taxes in Fayette County that year were Robert Creswell, Hugh Cresswell [*sic*], and Samuel Cresswell [*sic*]. A compilation of Virginia colonial soldiers lists Michael J. Creswell and Robert Creswell; however, Andrew Creswell is not listed.⁶ If this Fayette County resident is our Andrew Creswell, as seems probable based on these references, then in addition to living at his Tennessee home, Andrew spent some time in the future state of Kentucky.

Recent investigations bring into better focus the recipient of Creswell’s letter: John Preston (1781–1864) of Walnut Grove.⁷ He was a graduate of Dickenson College and a student of law at the College of William and Mary. Later, he was a justice of the Washington County Court, and became Colonel of the 105th regiment of the Virginia militia in 1805.

The Walnut Grove branch of the Prestons were descended from Scots-Irish Prestons unrelated to the Smithfield Prestons. The two families with a shared name were joined in 1802 when Colonel John

Preston of Walnut Grove married Margaret Brown Preston of Smithfield at the Smithfield Plantation. She was the youngest child of William and Susanna Smith Preston.

On the subject of the Battle of King's Mountain, the article neglected to mention an excellent "general-interest" article published in *Virginia Cavalcade* in 1981.⁸ Additionally, following the publication of the article, an interesting Appalachian storytelling version of the battle has appeared.⁹ Although this version of what happened at King's Mountain is most unconventional, it is still quite compelling.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Mary Kegley for making several clarifications to the article and to the *Smithfield Review* for this opportunity to amplify the original article. Thanks to Hugh Campbell, who once again has rescued the author from genealogical confusion. Thanks also to the staff of Newman Library at Virginia Tech.

Endnotes

1. Hubert Gilliam and Jim Glanville, "An Unexpected Enemy and the Turn of the Tide: Andrew Creswell's King's Mountain Letter," *The Smithfield Review*, vol. 10 (2006): 5–20.
2. Lyman C. Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain and the Events Which Led to It* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1881; reprint 1983).
3. Mabel Clare Weaks and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *The Preston and Virginia Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1915).
4. Josephine L. Harper, *Guide to the Draper Manuscripts* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1983).
5. Augusta B. Fothergill and John Mark Naugle, *Virginia tax payers, 1782-87, other than those published by the United States Census Bureau* (Richmond?, Virginia: self-published, 1940).
6. H. J. Eckenrode, *List of the Colonial Soldiers of Virginia: Special Report of the Department of Archives and History, of the Virginia State Library for 1913* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., reprint, 1978), p. 32.
7. John Frederick Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia* (Louisville: The Filson Club, 1982), pp. 72–3.
8. E. T. Crowson, "Colonel William Campbell and the Battle of King's Mountain," *Virginia Cavalcade*, vol. 30 (1981), pp. 22–9.
9. Jo Carson, *Teller Tales: What Sweet Lips Can Do [The Battle of King's Mountain]* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).
