

Bill Ritchie, Member # 1070

William Parks
b. before 1745
d. May 1776

William Parks
My 5th great grandfather by NSDOAF member Bill Ritchie
American Farmer and Revolutionary War Patriot

William Parks was shot, killed, and scalped by Indians collaborating with the British in May of 1776. This is the story (paraphrased) from the unpublished manuscript, Indian Atrocities Along the Clinch, Powell and Holston Rivers, pages 37-38

In May 1776, General Martin returned home, (to Henry Co.) promising to return in four weeks. The four weeks expired and we heard nothing from General Martin. The settlers from Priest's and Mump's Forts had all left, and some of our men. Days rolled on and we could hear nothing from Martin or the settlement. We became alarmed at our situation. We knew that something of great moment had taken place or Martin would have returned or sent a messenger out to let us know why he did not come at the appointed time. As our number had decreased to about ten (men) and we could not hear from Martin, we held a council, determined to remain three days longer, and, if we could hear nothing from the settlement in that time, to start home.

The day we held our council, William Parks, one of our number, insisted on going some eight miles below the fort, and put up a few poles in the shape of a house, kill some trees, dig some holes in the ground, and plant some corn, so as to secure a "corn-right", and return the third morning time enough to start with us if we should leave for the settlement. We very reluctantly gave our consent. On the same evening, Parks, his nephew Thomas, and his Negro man set out to secure the corn-right. The third morning after Parks left, the day he promised to return to our great surprise young Parks came and informed us that his uncle had left the evening before to kill some meat. Shortly after his leaving he heard him (moving) about and had heard nothing from him since.

I (Matthews Brooks) and two others set out with young Parks, and, on arriving at his cabin, he showed us the way his uncle went. We found his track and followed it with great care. After going about one mile we came to where some Indians had been lying among some limestone rocks on the Kentucky Trace. About fifty yards from where the Indians had been, we saw old Parks lying dead on his face. On examining him we found he was shot through the heart. From his tracks he must have run some thirty yards from where he was shot. He was scalped, and a war club left sunk in his brain. We skinned some tough bark and with it lashed old Parks to a pole, and two of us, with an end of the pole on our shoulders, carried him to his cabin and buried him.

We know the death of Parks occurred prior to May 30, 1776, by the above letter written by Matthew Brooks to Major Anthony Bledsoe, under that date, in which he tells of the killing of William Parks, in Powell Valley. William Parks owned 400 acres of land on Indian Creek in Powell Valley by settlement right of 1773, and had an additional 1000 acres of preemption warrant, of which he had taken up 335 acres.

William Parks was declared a patriot of the American Revolutionary War as a defender of the frontier.