

**A Revolutionary Kolb**

Hi KKC Extended Family,

I apologize for the tardiness of this Independence Day message, but I was tied up with several other matters, so am finally getting to this.

In last year's Independence Day message, I mentioned Revolutionary War Colonel Abel Kolb of South Carolina (thanks again to Frank Kolb for the reminder). Abel was a descendant of Johannes Kolb and tucked away in the back of Cassel's book on page 543 is the story about him. But I also found on Ancestry, a story by John L. Frierson, a descendant of Abel, which went into greater detail about him.

So, I decided to write a story about Abel in the format I use to remember the WWII Fallen for the Stories Behind the Stars Organization. The story is below.

Hope you had a wonderful celebration and are able to stay cool this summer!

**Jack Oberholtzer**  
**Secretary, Kolb, Kulp, Culp Family Association**

**Story: Colonel Abel Kolb (1750- 4/28/1781), Commander, Pee Dee Regiment, Colonel Marion's Brigade**

**Abel Kolb** was born circa 1750, in Pee Dee, South Carolina, one of five children born of his parents, Peter Kolb and Ann James.

Abel's grandfather, Johannes Kolb (1683-1759), arrived in Pennsylvania with three brothers in 1707, the first of many Kolbs to come to America from the Palatinate, now part of Germany. Around 1737, Johannes left his brothers in Skippack and settled on the south bank of the Great Pee Dee River, South Carolina. In South Carolina, he is often referred to as "Father Abraham" because he had nine children and many descendants.

Johannes' son, Abel's father, Peter Kolb (1732-1779), was born in Skippack, Pennsylvania, and moved south with his parents and siblings. Around 1750, Peter married Ann James, granddaughter of Rev. Philip James, who had also originally settled in Pennsylvania and also moved south.

Little is known of Abel's early life. He married Sarah James (1750-1785) in 1772 and they had three children; James, who died young, Ann and Sarah. Ann Kolb married Major James Pouncey and had many descendants.

When the revolution started, the British felt the strong loyalist following in the South would help them and they did have several military successes there. Meanwhile, Abel enlisted in the South Carolina Patriot Militia. He was first commissioned a Captain in the Cheraws District Militia around 1775. Later, he was promoted to Lt. Colonel in 1778 and was in Charleston when the British Army, commanded by General Henry Clinton, lay siege to the city in March 1780. The

American defenders finally surrendered on 12 May 1780, and Abel was later paroled on an unknown date.

Soon after his parole, he was appointed commandant over the Cheraws District Regiment and promoted to Colonel. In the Fall of 1780 and Winter of 1781, his regiment supported Colonel Francis Marion, the “Swamp Fox”, in his guerilla campaigns against the small outposts and forts of the British Army in South Carolina.

Meanwhile, back in Abel’s home in what is now Marlboro County, the Loyalists, emboldened in having a British army nearby, started to plunder Patriot homes in the Upper Pee Dee Region. On April 27, 1781, Col. Kolb learned of a gathering of Loyalists along Drowning Creek (now the Lumber River). He assembled as many men he could muster and attacked, surprising and routing them. Kolb then gathered still more men, and attacked another Loyalist group at Hulin’s Mill along Catfish Creek. Two Loyalist leaders were killed during these engagements. Kolb then returned home and dismissed his gathering of men, presuming all the Loyalists were dispersed and they would stop their raids on Patriot homes.

Unfortunately, on the night of April 28<sup>th</sup>, fifty North Carolina Loyalists, led by Captain Joseph Jones, captured Col. Abel Kolb at his home. As he exited his front door, he was shot and killed by one of the Jones’ men, in front of Abel’s family. The Loyalists then proceeded to plunder the house and burn it. Their actions were probably in retaliation to the killing of Loyalists John Deet and Caleb Williams a day earlier at Hulin’s Mill.

**Colonel Abel Kolb** gave his life in service to his country and should be remembered for his sacrifice and dedication to duty. Today, he rests in old Welsh Neck Cemetery, Marlboro County, South Carolina, in Colonel Kolb’s Tomb, with the inscription:

GRAVE OF  
COL. ABEL KOLB, BORN CA. 1750,  
COMMANDER OF PEE DEE REGIMENT OF  
GEN. FRANCIS MARION’S BRIGADE.  
COL. KOLB WAS MURDERED BY  
TORIES NEAR HERE APRIL 26, 1781

Additionally:

Abel Kolb was one of the founding members of the St. David’s Society on 31 December 1777, which lead to the founding of St. David’s Academy, an educational institution of learning for the youth of the region.

In the late 1770s, Abel Kolb was recognized as a leader in the upper Pee Dee region. He was a member of the Welsh Neck Baptist Church and was elected to the State House of Representatives for the Cheraws District in 1778.

A historical marker commemorating Col. Kolb was erected by the Marlboro County Historic Preservation Commission (Marker Number 35-17) in 1973.

Sources:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89061952909&view=1up&seq=605&skin=2021>

[The American Revolution in South Carolina - Colonel Abel Kolb - by John L. Frierson \(descendant of Abel Kolb\) July 2011, with edits by webpage author](#)

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/revolutionary-war/battles/charleston>

<https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/siege-of-charleston--1780/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis\\_Marion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Marion)

[The Historical Marker Database - Abel Kolb's Murder/Welsh Neck Cemetery](#)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/37938618/abel-kolb>

<https://www.newsandpress.net/st-davids-academy-on-this-day-in-history-from-the-darlington-county-historical-commission-st-davids-academy-organized-december-13-1777/>