

House in the Horseshoe Virtual Field Trip

The Skirmish

Elementary School

Standards

- 3.H.1.1 Explain key historical events that occurred in the local community and regions over time.
- 3.H.1.2 Analyze the impact of contributions made by diverse historical figures.
- 3.H.1.3 Exemplify the ideas that were significant in the development of local communities and regions.
- 3.H.2.2 Explain how multiple perspectives are portrayed through historical narratives.
- 4.H.1.3 Explain how people, events and developments brought about changes to communities in various regions of North Carolina.
- 4.H.1.4 Analyze North Carolina's role in major conflicts and wars from the Pre-Colonial period through Reconstruction.
- 5.H.1.2 Summarize the political, economic and social aspects of colonial life in the thirteen colonies.

Vocabulary

Loyalist/Tory - a person who believed in following England's laws made by King George

Memoir – a historical account written by someone who has personal knowledge of what happened

Militia – an army formed by every day people to help out soldiers during times of war

Militiamen – someone who is a part of the militia

Patriot/Whig – a person who believed in America's freedom from England

Skirmish – a short fight

Slave/enslaved person – a person who is owned by another person and has no control over their own life. Slaves/enslaved people were generally black or Indigenous people who were forced to work for the people who owned them.

- **Teacher's Note:** The choice to say "enslaved person" instead of "slave" is based on the reframing of slavery as acknowledging that the people who experienced slavery were not *things*. By adhering to this line of thought, we erase the idea of viewing them as just slaves but rather as people who were enslaved.

Characters

Patriots

Philip Alston – A Patriot who owned the House in the Horseshoe

Temperance Alston – Philip's wife who saved the house and her family by surrendering in the fight

James Alston – Philip and Temperance's son, 16 years old

John Alston – Philip and Temperance's son, 14 years old

Elizabeth Alston – Philip and Temperance's daughter, 11 years old

Temperance Alston (II) - Philip and Temperance's daughter, 6 years old

Philip Alston, Jr. - Philip and Temperance's son, 3 years old

Winnifred Alston – Philip and Temperance's daughter, 6 months old

An unknown number of enslaved people – People owned by Philip Alston

Elijah Fooshee – One of Philip Alston's militiamen, 18 years old

John Spears – One of Philip Alston's militiamen, age unknown

Stephen Collins – One of Philip Alston's militiamen, 18 years old

William Smith – One of Philip Alston's militiamen, age unknown

Stephen Morris – One of Philip Alston's militiamen, 16 years old

Loyalists

David Fanning – A Loyalist who was angry at Philip Alston for killing Kenneth Black

Kenneth Black – A Loyalist militiamen and friend of David Fanning

McKay – One of David Fanning's militiamen, a lieutenant, age unknown

Did you know that the American Revolution also happened in North Carolina? It did! One of the things that happened took place at a house in Moore County, North Carolina: The House in the Horseshoe. At the time of the American Revolution, Philip Alston and his family lived in the house. Philip was very well known across Moore County, and anyone who had heard of him knew that he was a Patriot or Whig. A Patriot was someone during the American Revolution who believed in America's independence from England. On the opposite side of the Revolution were Loyalists or Tories, and they believed in following King George's laws. North Carolina was full of Patriots and Loyalists, oftentimes being neighbors and friends who found themselves torn apart from each other by their strong, different beliefs.

David Fanning was a Loyalist in North Carolina who had started a militia of other Loyalists. They went around North Carolina attempting to capture Patriots, and they were known for being particularly violent towards those who did not agree with King George. One of David Fanning's friends and fellow militiamen was a man named Kenneth Black. Philip Alston heard that David Fanning and his militia were around the area, so he and his own militia of Patriots decided to follow them in secret. At some point, Kenneth Black separated from the rest of David Fanning's militia, and Philip Alston's men attacked him and killed him.

When David Fanning heard that his friend had been killed by Philip Alston's men, he was angry and decided to attack Philip and his militia in return. He made his way to the House in the Horseshoe, Philip Alston's home and where his militia was resting for a while. On July 29, 1781 at dawn, David Fanning and his men attacked. Watch the video to see what happened!

[The Skirmish](#)

When the skirmish between Philip Alston and David Fanning broke out at House in the Horseshoe, many people were involved. The video you just watched showed both Philip Alston and David Fanning, but it also showed more people who were involved in the fight with them. Philip Alston and David Fanning had men following their command who supported their causes and helped fight at the house, but they were not the only ones who had a part to play in the fight. Philip Alston had a wife named Temperance and six children who lived in the house, as well as a number of enslaved people who were owned by the Alstons, and suddenly, they were all under attack, too.

While the skirmish took place, Mrs. Alston wanted to protect her children. It is unknown whether James and John were involved with the actual fighting at the house, but it *is* known that in order to keep Elizabeth, little Temperance, and little Philip safe from the gunfire, she put them in the chimney! She pulled a table over to the fireplace for them to stand on, and it was that action of bravery that kept them out of the way of the bullets that were hitting the house. At the time, Winnifred Alston was the youngest child at only six months old, and Mrs. Alston held the baby to protect her as she curled up with her in bed.

Many years later, David Fanning wrote about what the skirmish was like, but we do not know what it was like for anyone else. We do not even know the names of all of the people who were involved with the fight because their names were not written down. The men who fought, however, are not the only ones whose names remain unknown. The enslaved workers who were owned by the Alstons remain unnamed as no one wrote their names down, either. Since very few people wrote about their experiences at the skirmish, we have very little idea of what it was like for everyone who was there that day. David Fanning wrote a memoir, but some people back then kept diaries and letters, which have survived throughout the years and give us a lot of information. Read the following diary entry from *Love Thy Neighbor: The Tory Diary of Prudence Emerson, 1774* by Ann Turner:

Love Thy Neighbor: The Tory Diary of Prudence Emerson, 1774 Diary Entry

While Prudence did not live through the skirmish at the House in the Horseshoe and even had very different beliefs from those of the Alston family, she lived through an attack on her house that was similar to the Alston and Fanning skirmish. Think about how Prudence felt when her family was attacked, and then think about how the Alstons would have felt. How would Mrs. Alston have felt knowing her family was in danger? How would Elizabeth Alston have felt about being put inside a chimney so she wouldn't be harmed by the bullets? How would the enslaved people who worked for the Alstons have felt about not knowing if they were going to be safe? How would James Alston have felt about being only 16 years old and involved in his father's fight? Would Philip Alston's men feel the same way? Choose Elizabeth Alston (Philip's 11 year old daughter), Stephen Morris (one of Philip's militiamen, 16 years old), or one of the Alston's enslaved workers (Since the names of the enslaved are unknown, use your imagination and give them a name!), and write a diary entry from their point of view about what the fight was like as if they were the one writing about it. Use your imagination!

Questions to Consider

- Who is writing the diary?
- What is the person you chose writing about?
- Who was involved in the event?
- Why would they want to write about it?
- What did they hear during the fight?
- What did they smell?
- What did they taste?
- What did they see?
- How did they feel? Were they afraid?
- What were they thinking while the skirmish was happening?

Additional Resources

Free/Online Resources

Liberty's Kids

An animated series focusing on three young teenagers during the American Revolution. "Conflict in the South" is an episode that specifically features the southern campaign led by Nathanael Greene in 1781, around the time of the skirmish that took place at the House in the Horseshoe.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2VHw0ghwhU>

Teaching Tolerance

An online resource for teaching about slavery and integrating diverse history while using developmentally appropriate practices.

<https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/k-5-framework#essential-knowledge>

Purchasable Resources

Love Thy Neighbor: The Tory Diary of Prudence Emerson by Ann Turner

An elementary level book written in diary form that is from the perspective of a young British Loyalist during the time of the American Revolution.

https://www.amazon.com/Love-Thy-Neighbor-Prudence-Emerson/dp/0439153085/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=love+thy+neighbor+dear+america&qid=1596639972&sr=8-2

Excerpt from *Love Thy Neighbor: The Tory Diary of Prudence Emerson, 1774*, Ann Turner, 2003

February 25, 1775

My fingers are trembling, and I know not if from anger or fear. Though it is late, I must write this down. Tonight, as we sat around the table eating, I thought there was a sound outside. Suddenly, the glass shattered, and a rock hurled onto our table and smashed the pumpkin bowl! Shards flew everywhere, and Mama jumped up with a cry. Blood ran down her cheek, and I rushed over to press my handkerchief to it. Papa leaped out of his chair, fetched his gun, and raced outside, with Walter right behind.

“Has it come to this?” Tears streaked Mama’s cheeks. “It is not that I am hurt” -- she waved my hand away -- “but these are the people we knew, once our neighbors . . . now this!”

Verity and I swept up the glass, collected the clay pieces, and dumped them in the waste basket. Mama told Jacob to go out to the barn and fetch a cowhide Papa was saving for cobbling shoes. Seizing his sharpened stick, Jacob ran out to the barn and returned quickly. How much courage it took for him to go out there, alone in the darkness.

Mama and I stretched the cowhide over the broken window with the wind freezing our fingers while Jacob hammered nails into the window frame. Then we heard thumping sounds outside the kitchen, and Verity cried out. Mama reassured her that enemies would not come in that way. Papa and Walter entered the dining room, followed by Mr. Strong and Mr. Pratt.

“Our friends have come to protect us, Martha,” Papa announced. The two men had rifles in hand. All four sat down, laying their weapons across their knees.

Mama hurried the rest of us upstairs and tucked us into bed, for we should be in the way. I wished to be there with them, watching at the windows, defending our family.

I doubt I shall sleep this night, nor Verity.