

CAPTAIN JAMES COLLIER

James Collier was born in Dauphin County, Pa., April 20th, 1752, (old style), which became May 1st after the calendar was reformed, in that year.

He was twenty-four years old at the outbreak of the Revolution and he espoused the cause of the Colonists with all the ardor of his impetuous youth.

He began his service as a lieutenant in Captain Reed's company, Lancaster County Militia. He belonged to the "Flying Camp" and was with Gen. Washington in the retreat across New Jersey and shared the hardships of Valley Forge. He fought in the battles of Long Island, White Plains, Trenton and Brandywine. He was twice complimented for bravery on the field of battle. At Long Island, where he received a Captain's commission, and at Brandywine, where Gen. LaFayette presented him with a sword and epaulets. This sword is now in the possession of a great-grandson, Frank E. Crawford, of Cincinnati. One of Short Stories of Ohio, related by J. H. Galbraith in a Columbus paper, is this Story of the Sword given by LaFayette.

"It is a source of pride to the people of Greenfield, Highland county, that in the early history of the village, there were included among its inhabitants, two revolutionary soldiers. One of them, James Collier, had the distinction of possessing a sword, which was presented to him by LaFayette, in token of his brave services. He was a captain in a unit known as a "Flying Camp"—a kind of fast moving troops which were used to make sudden and unexpected attacks upon the enemy—shock troops, as it were.

"Captain Collier had many interesting stories to tell of his service most of it having been with General Washington. He was with him in New Jersey, at White Plains, at Long Island, at Trenton, at Brandywine, and in camp at Valley Forge. He lived to January 30, 1844, and preserved to the last his old hatred of the Tories.

"The other revolutionary soldier, who Greenfield delighted to honor, was of quite another type. This hero, Charles White, was a devout Methodist and for nearly half a century he held the position of class leader in his neighborhood. His farm home was for year's headquarters for itinerant preachers traveling through that part of the state. He lived to the age of 93.

"His companion in arms, Captain Collier preceded him in death by several years, and when the work was begun in the construction of the M & C Railroad at Greenfield on May 2, 1851, the honor of being permitted to throw the first shovelful of earth was given to Charles White, then in the ninetieth year of his age.

"He did not live to see the first train run into the village over this railroad, which did not take place until three years later, May 1, 1854.

James Collier's older brother had removed to North Carolina and, being a staunch supporter of the Colonists, he drew upon himself the hatred of the Tories, who were strong in that state. Four times they burned his house and he was hunted for his life.

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The leader of a Tory band, who also lived in Pennsylvania, in the vicinity of Harrisburg, came back to his native state with a drove of horses to sell. Captain Collier heard of the man's return and, to his surprise, the first person he saw on Sunday morning when he went to Paxton church, was the Tory. After the service he provided himself with a tough grape vine and soaked it all the afternoon in the waters of a great spring nearby.

At the close of the evening service, when they mounted their horses, the Captain rode up to the Tory and said. "Are you from Randolph County, North Carolina?" The Tory answered. "Yes." "So you know John Collier there?" "Yes." "Then, I will make you acquainted with his brother," and proceeded to use the grape vine on him. Up the road, for possibly half a mile, they clattered, the non-combatants parting to give way for this unusual occurrence.

On hearing of the occurrence, Parson Elder said, "I am sorry it happened on the Lord's day, but I believe that if I had been there, I would have said, "lay on."

That ended the Tory's trading in those parts of the state, as he discovered he was unpopular with the people who knew of his dealings with the patriots in Carolina.

Captain James Collier married Martha Rutherford April 23, 1787. Eleven children were born to them:

Susanna Dugan Collier	born	Feb. 21, 1788
Margaret Parke Collier	born	Aug. 5, 1789
Samuel Rutherford Collier	born	Dec. 4, 1790
Eleanor Murray Collier	born	Oct. 1, 1792
Thomas Collier	born	Sep. 21, 1795
Mary Collier	born	Oct. 26, 1797
John Rutherford Collier	born	Mar. 30, 1799
James Collier	born	Oct. 31, 1801
William Gray Collier	born	Nov. 8, 1803
William Collier	born	Apr. 25, 1806
Rutherford Collier	born	Feb. 7, 1810

In 1814 Captain Collier, with his wife and their ten living children, immigrated to Ohio. They were accompanied on the journey by William Boyd and family.

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They were six weeks on the way, delayed by bad roads and swollen streams. They arrived at their new home July 9, 1814, settling on the farm just east of Greenfield, which was in the Collier family until March, 1940, 126 years.

One of the stories that has come down in the family concerning the long and toilsome trek over the mountains to the new home is the manner in which the travelers were supplied with fresh butter each day. A cow was a part of the little caravan and her milk was swung from the wagon pole in a covered pail. The constant swaying of the pail as the wagon bumped along the rough road churned the milk, and when the weary travelers camped at night, they found a fresh pat of butter in the pail.

Captain Collier lived to the age of ninety, portly and erect, he maintained his soldierly bearing to the end of this long life.