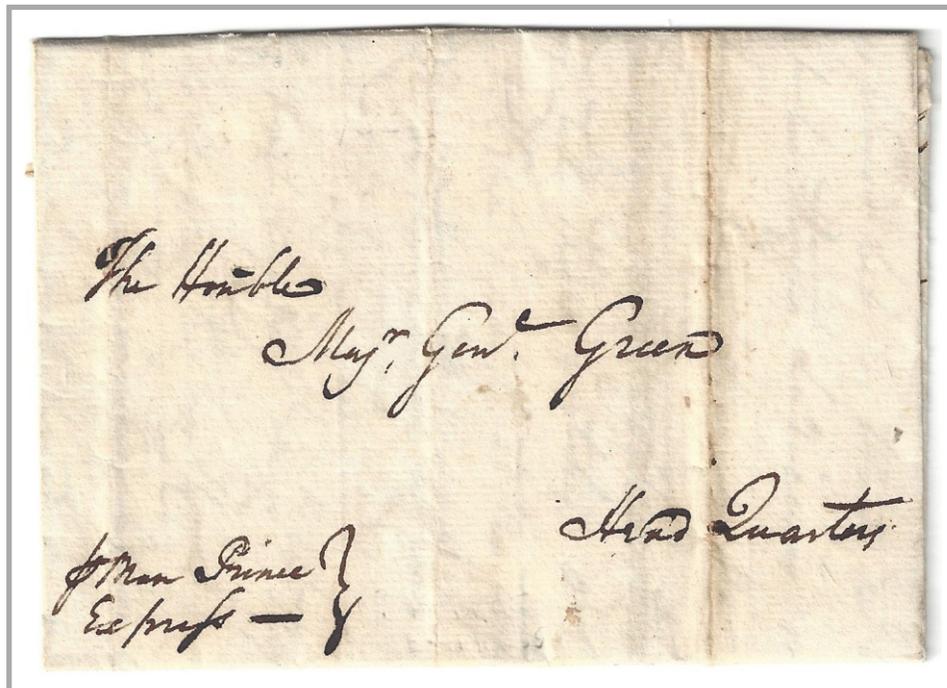


Mails of the Revolutionary War

By "Prince Express" to Major General Greene Five Days Before End of War Plantation Owner Pleas for Protection from British "Black Dragons"

The Evacuation of Charleston by the British on Saturday, December 14, 1782 marked the end of the Revolutionary War. In the months leading up to the evacuation British General Leslie recruited self-liberated ex-slaves as uniformed and armed combatants in his "Black Dragons" to rob and plunder provisions needed in Charleston. In early December, this mounted force terrorized several plantations along Goose Creek just north of Charleston including the Hayes plantation of John Parker (delegate to the Constitutional Congress from SC, 1786 to 1788). Many of these dragoons were among the 4,266 Blacks that were evacuated to Jamaica or East Florida and served in the British army in the West Indies well into the 1790s.



9 December 1782 Goose Creek, SC "Per Prince Express" from a plantation owner, J. Parker, seeking help addressed to Maj. Genl. Greene at Headquarters on the west side of the Ashley River, north of Charleston

Saturday, December 9, 1782 letter of John Parker written from Hayes Plantation on Goose Creek:

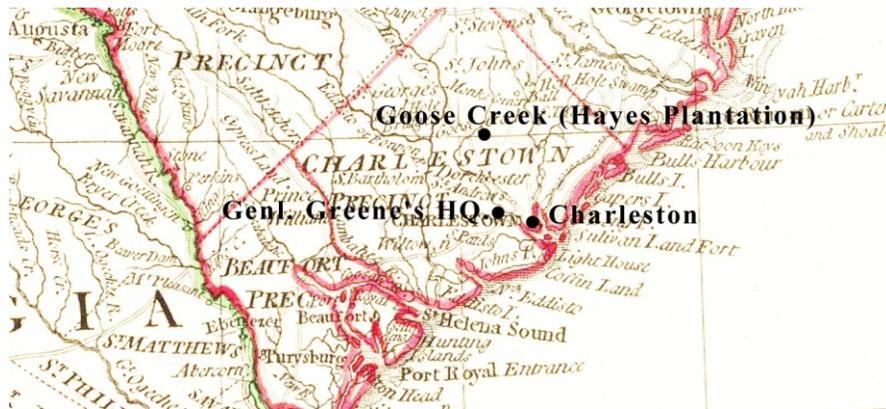
I am under the necessity of applying to you for some assistance or shall probably not only be robbed & plundered of the little I've left but be murdered also. Several black partys have for some time (since the discontinuance of your light Horse patrolling in the neighborhood) plundered the inhabitants, but till the last night their partys were small seldom exceeding Twenty and the Mischief they did inconsiderable to what happened last night, When upwards of one hundred of these black devils came up to a Widow Ladys, Mrs Godin, .. and plundered her not only of the few cattle & sheep she had left carryd off the best part of her provisions and even iron potts & their kitchen utensils with all the poultry etc, etc, etc and threatened to be up again this or tomorrow night to my House To robb me in like manner & to take my life.... I hope therefore any fears may not be thought Ludicrous or without reason and that your known humanity will occasion such relief being sent (as you may judge proper) to stay till these wretches are all embarked

P.S. Where the blacks were last night is not above one mile & half from my House - they were all Mounted - -

Parker's fears were not unfounded. Two days later, while defending his house, he killed their leader, Robins.

Mails of the Revolutionary War

By "Prince Express" to Major General Greene Five Days Before End of War
Plantation Owner Pleas for Protection from "Black Dragoons"



December 9, 1782 letter reads (in full):

"I am under the necessity of applying to you for some assistance or shall probably not only be robbed & plundered of the little I've left but be murdered also. Several black partys have for some time (since the discontinuance of your light Horse patrolling in the neighborhood) plundered the inhabitants, but till the last night their partys were small seldom exceeding Twenty and the Mischief they did inconsiderable to what happened last night, When upwards of one hundred of these black devils, from the best intelligence I can get, came up to a Widow Ladys, Mrs Godin, for whose late husbands estate I am Exect(utor), and plundered her not only of the few cattle & sheep she had left but broke open every out house, carryd off the best part of her provisions and even iron potts & their kitchen utensils with all the poultry etc,etc, etc and threatened to be up again this or tomorrow night to my House To robb me in like manner & to take my life, they had threatened the same (the latter part excepted) to the above mentioned Lady, when they were in the neighborhood last Thursday night but it not being thought likely or reasonable that they would give out a thing of that kind if they really intended to do, so little notice was taken of it though it alarmed the Lady and she was under apprehensions for the event which has proved too true. I hope therefore any fears may not be thought Ludicrous or without reason and that your known humanity will occasion such relief being sent (as you may judge proper) to stay till these wretches are all embarked as they may not come exactly to the time given out as was the case in the above affairs as from what they said they were to have been up Friday or Saturday Evening & not Sunday on which they Came. I flatter my self you will excuse the trouble I give you or of any impropriety that may be in the letter as it is written in great haste & I am exceedingly indisposed, I am with Complete and due respect,

Sir, yr most obedt Servt, J. Parker, Hayes (Plantation), Monday Mornng. 9th Novbr 1782
(actual date was December 9, 1782 as correctly noted in the docket, and a Monday)

P.S. Where the blacks were last night is not above one mile & half from my House - they were all Mounted- -"

Mails of the Revolutionary War

By "Prince Express" to Major General Greene Five Days Before End of War [The Hayes Plantation]

The Hayes Plantation was named after the Parker family's ancestral home in England, Hay-on-Wye. In 1716, Sarah Barker gave 600 acres to her son, John Parker II who developed the site as a rice plantation (this letter was written by John Parker IV). Hayes Plantation would be passed down to the eldest Parker male for over 160 years. In 1793 the plantation was 932 acres and had expanded to 1,282 acres by 1802. The "Marion Oak" tree shown in the painting plow was a tourist attraction until the first decade of the 1900s.



General Francis Marion Inviting a British Officer to Share his Meal at Hayes Plantation by John Blake White (ca. 1820). This version at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. An earlier version, ca. 1810) hangs in the U.S. Capitol.

The event portrayed occurred in 1780 at the Hayes Plantation. Both of the artist's parents served in the Revolutionary War in South Carolina. His mother as a spy for Francis Marion ("The Swamp Fox").

Online Resources:

1. Hayes Plantation:

<https://south-carolina-plantations.com/charleston/hayes.html>

2. The Swamp Fox at Hayes Plantation:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-swamp-fox-157330429/>

Mails of the Revolutionary War

By "Prince Express" to Major General Greene Five Days Before End of War
[The writer, John Parker and the recipient, Major General Nathanael Green]

John Parker (IV), the author of this letter, was born in South Carolina in 1759. He was born to John Parker III and Mary Daniell, granddaughter of Governor Robert Daniell. He attended school in Charleston and London before returning to his plantation in St. James Parish, Goose Creek, near Charleston, SC. He was admitted to the bar in 1785 and served as a Member of the Continental Congress 1786-1788.

He married Susannah Middleton, daughter of Henry Middleton and sister of Arthur Middleton. He died in 1832 and is buried in the family plot on the Hayes Plantation.



Major General Nathanael Greene by Charles Wilson Peale, 1783.

Nathanael Greene, was a major general of the Continental Army who gained a reputation as General George Washington's most gifted and dependable officer. He is known for his successful command in the southern theater of the war .

He was born in Warwick, Rhode Island in 1742. In 1775, he was appointed to command the Rhode Island army before being appointed as a general in the Continental Army.

In October 1780, General Washington appointed Greene as the commander of the Continental Army in the southern theater. After taking command, Greene engaged in a successful campaign of guerrilla warfare against the numerically superior force of General Charles Cornwallis. He inflicted major losses on British forces at Battle of Guilford Court House, the Battle of Hobkirk's Hill, and the Battle of Eutaw Springs, eroding British control of the American South. Although major fighting on land came to an end following the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in October 1781, Greene continued to his push against the British still entrenched in Savannah and Charleston. He eventually forced the British army into Charleston forcing them to evacuate the city on December 14, 1783.

Greene died at his Mulberry Grove Plantation in Chatham County, Georgia in 1786.