



## Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission

204 East Academy St. ♦ P.O. Box 771 ♦ Asheboro, North Carolina 27204

March 26, 2013

The Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission (HLPC) met in the Meeting Room of the 1909 Historic Courthouse at 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, NC, and the meeting was called to order by Chairman Hal Johnson at 2:00 p.m.

Members present were Hal Johnson, Fran Andrews, Nan Kemp, Warren Dixon, Bill Johnson, Marsha Haithcock, Lynn Qualls, Bill Ivey and Mac Whatley. Alternate member Robyn Hankins was absent.

### Approval of Minutes

*On motion of Dixon, seconded by B. Johnson, the HLPC voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 27, 2012, as presented.*

### Request and Approval of Resolution Designating The McMasters Cemetery as a Cultural Heritage Site

Bill Kivett, historian for the Peter Kivett Family Association, along with the support of other Association members who were present, made the request and presented a slideshow for what is known as the McMasters Cemetery.



Mr. Kivett said that he hoped to show how the McMasters Cemetery does have local historical significance, and he hoped that information would be placed on the Commission's web site and made available to those interested in history and research about the site. Mr. Kivett stated that this site fulfills the Commission's published criteria as a private cemetery: well over 200 years old, and contains the remains of a DAR and SAR recognized American Revolutionary War Patriot, as well as those of a few others.

Mr. Kivett said that this old cemetery is a library of stone volumes with lasting historic value because of those who are buried or memorialized there. But also, the miracle that this quiet place of reflection still can be found in that far corner of Randolph County adds to its significance. He asked the Commission to consider its appearance as a noteworthy example of unheralded preservation efforts by generations of ordinary citizens who sought no recognition. It is only because of their loving attention that they have something of value to present for recognition.

No one knows exactly when the first person was laid to rest on this gently sloping hill side. One can only surmise that a McMasters family shared part of the land on which they settled with neighboring families as a place to bury their loved ones. There is a stone there with a carving chronicling a burial as far back as 1787. However, this may not have been the first to be laid to rest in what was becoming a community burying place in a wilderness not yet known as Randolph. In the late 1700's this was still a very new Country, and this part of North Carolina was sparsely settled by families with close ties back to Europe. After a bitter war, some felt betrayed and separated from the comforts of their British heritage. Others saw their struggles to preserve the freedoms for which they crossed an ocean to replant, as rewarded. Although the fighting had officially ended, neighbors with Quaker beliefs, German speech, Scots Irish determination, and British legal system ideals still quarreled among themselves. Times were not at all peaceful 200 years ago along Sandy Creek. Many with British ancestry chose to be buried at the historic Baptist Church named after this Sandy Creek, which has been recognized by this Commission. But others with a variety of surnames, mostly those who saw renewed hope to be truly free in a new America, decided to bury their dead in this field that was already being called the McMasters Cemetery.

McMasters Cemetery is located just off Soapstone Mountain Road with a Staley address. Quoted from a 1981 article published in the Courier Tribune: "More than half of the estimated 110 graves in McMasters Cemetery have markers, some with names and others without." Anyone who visits can tell that the markers without names are just weathered "Rocks of Randolph"— the identities of those beneath them, like that famous tomb in Arlington – now known but to God. Those stones with still readable names, like in most modern cemeteries, are generally grouped in different sections by the surname they still proclaim.



Among the surnames still readable, a few are etched on simple slabs, likely quarried from the nearby old Soapstone Mine. In places, modern identifying stones have been added. Most numerous of the yet readable old engraved surnames found there are McMasters – that of the believed original property owners. One can still see stones bearing the names Aldridge, York, Stout, Foust, Craven, Scotten – all names still familiar to Randolph County residents. There are other surnames seen, including Kivett. Records indicate that most of these earliest burials, and those who joined them later, thought of themselves as just ordinary folks.

Buried there are William Ezekial Aldridge and his wife, Elizabeth. The now barely legible 1787 death date on his stone puts him as the earliest identifiable burial at McMasters. Records show that his parents, of British ancestry, came from Maryland to settle near here around 1756 on lands granted by the Earl of Granville. We do not find William Ezekial Aldridge's signature among those present on Regulator Movement petitions, but he chose to be buried at McMasters among some whose names were. Some think, but cannot prove, it was because his wife's maiden name might have been McMasters. Their offspring were many and their contributions varied. This Aldridge family's greatest contribution may have been siring and raising generations of responsible offspring in a place which became free from British domination. This included his son, another William Aldridge, who would fight for the American cause in the Revolutionary War, but is not found buried with his parents. He is buried in Georgia, possibly on land received in the Land Lottery as payment for his War service.

Having a son to side against his British heritage may have been hard for this father to think about. Even more unthinkable for William Ezekial Aldridge was that his 4<sup>th</sup> great granddaughter might grow up, marry, and actually live in the residence of the President of this free Country. This 1946 Texas-born lady still is likely not aware that her early American ancestor's grave site is preserved by relatives she has never met at a place she has never seen in far off North Carolina. Former First Lady Laura Welch Bush may not know about any of this, but we do.

There is a row of three prominent markers near the woods in the western part of McMasters dedicated to the memory of Randolph men who died fighting for their beloved Confederacy. Mr. Kivett said he can find evidence of only one of these who made it back home to be buried there: the wounded Lewis F. McMasters, who died in 1866. Bodies of the other two, with Kivett names, died in places so far from Randolph that their bodies may have never made the journey back home. All the more modern design stones were probably placed there later as lasting tribute to these, and the other Randolph Hornets, who died in the early 1860's.

We can learn by reading these McMasters stones that burials were still taking place there into the late 1880's. One marks the grave of a lady buried there in 1885, whose birth name was Dolly Graves. Her identified father, Boston Graves, served as a private in the NC Militia during the War of 1812 – one of a very few from the South who is documented to have taken part in this lesser known war. Why is he not there beside his daughter? Like many others with roots in Randolph who left in search of a new life, he moved with most of his family to eastern Tennessee and later died there. This War of 1812 “Real Daughter” found reason to stay behind and end up being buried there by the man she married, Daniel

David Kivett. He joined her in McMasters Cemetery in 1892. Mr. Kivett said other Kivetts are buried there, too.

Numerous researchers have verified that a well marked grave in McMasters Cemetery identifies the burial place of the first known person by the Kivett surname in America. Even though he most likely spelled and pronounced his name another way, he is the Peter Kivett (Peter Kevit) from whom the organization gets its name and that Mr. Bill Kivett represents. There were eight children of Peter and his wife, Anna Barbara, that were named in his surviving will. That's one reason we know so much about this family. One of those children was named Jacob. He was the father of the Daniel David Kivett who married Dolly Graves. Extensive research has documented that almost all Americans bearing the Kivett surname have blood line connections through these children back to Peter and Anna. So do thousands more who were children of Kivett daughters who assumed the surnames of those they married – beginning with Peter and Anna's own grandchildren who bore the names Foust, Scotten and Wolfe. This family of Peter and Anna Kivett now extends into its 10<sup>th</sup> generation of life in the free land Peter helped create. Calculations estimate there are more that 200,000 of them with possibly 160,000 still living.



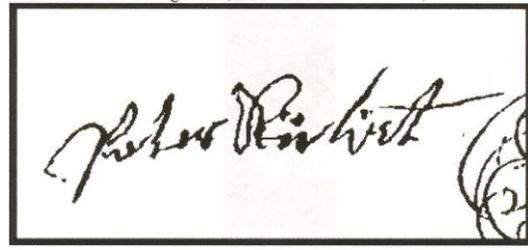
But that's not the only way he helped build America. Although he was too old to actually fight in the Revolutionary War, this first American Kivett farmer didn't just hunker down out there and till his land. For his other documented actions he is recognized by two National historic organizations as a true American Patriot. Peter Kivett's signature can be deciphered to be present on Regulator Advertisement No. 9, published about 1768. His signature is also there with many of his recognized neighbors on a 1779 petition to split then Guilford Co. in half, creating Randolph County. At least two of his sons, neither proven to be buried at McMasters, are recognized as taking part in the fighting against oppressive British rule. (Mr. Kivett said he had documentation to these facts.)

Try as so many have, including DNA testing, no one can yet prove where in Europe Peter came from. But, one ship log record may show when and how. The name of his wife is

shown on her McMasters soapstone monument just as Anna Barbara. Her birth surname and the when and where of their marriage remains just speculation. Although a champion of freedom, he believed in the rule of law, as judged by two separate records of him taking required oaths of allegiance to his Colonial Government. This immigrant is thought, by association with others taking these same oaths, to be of either German or Dutch origin. He was literate, and clever enough to obtain multiple land grants. Mr. Bill Kivett has records of several parcels he accumulated around McMasters cemetery, eventually totaling several hundred acres. He knew the importance of writing and signing a will – not with an “X”, but a script signature. This will signature closely matches one seen on a 15 September 1749 oath of abjuration of passengers from the ship Edinburg just after it landed at the port of Philadelphia, strongly suggesting his time and place of immigration. This fragile 218-year-old paper document is now safely stored among the North Carolina Archives in Raleigh.

A rectangular frame containing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Peter Kivett". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and somewhat slanted.

1749 - passenger oath of abjuration

A rectangular frame containing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Peter Kivett". The signature is more formal and includes a large, decorative flourish at the end. To the right of the signature, there is a circular stamp or seal, partially visible.

1793 – His will

Although some critical facts about Peter Kivett remain unknown, much about this McMasters Cemetery resident’s descendants is documented in the PKFA archives Mr. Bill Kivett maintains.

Census records show that some of the 64 children of Peter and Anna’s eight named children began to spread out with their families to other states, although most remained to help build Randolph and surrounding North Carolina counties. Those who stayed soon overpopulated their small inherited parts of grandpa Peter’s farmland. Continuing to tend their patches of rocky soil became a struggle. Grandson Henry Kivett, along with an Allen neighbor, saw his future in the power of the Fall Line of nearby Deep River. Applying building skills, in 1840, young Henry became a successful corporate partner in Randolph Manufacturing Co., a water powered textile mill in the little village of Franklinsville. Undoubtedly inspired by the 1836 news that an earlier mill near Cedar Falls had begun turning out cotton cloth, this Henry Kivett was the first in his family to expand from farming into industry. In 1850, Henry also partnered to open the fifth such mill near Columbia, as Ramseur was then known. Taking its name from the town, it was the beginning of the long enduring Columbia Manufacturing Co. All this is well documented in publications about this era of Randolph County, including his fathering with one wife, 16 children.

Henry’s unmarried son, David Lawrence Kivett, moved to Manchester, NC, which is near Fayetteville, around 1845 to manage a new cotton mill and bobbin factory there. Almost upon arrival, this second Kivett family industrialist married a Hendricks lady and began having children, which was always a high priority for Kivetts. Their first born was taken prisoner at the battle of Gettysburg, and still only 17 years of age, died at Pt. Lookout, MD of smallpox. But this great war was followed in the south by the harsh period of reconstruction. Then in his 70’s, Henry Kivett was forced to abandon his now worthless interests in these once profitable mills. Undaunted, he and wife Sarah Vestal moved downriver to apply his

building skills on a bridge across the Cape Fear near Fayetteville. Another of his sons, Andrew Jackson Kivett, and his family, went there to help him. For a time only a ferry operated by a McNeil family crossed this wide river there. This major project restored the bridge, which had been purposely burned to slow the advance of General Sherman's army. Too young to go off to war, David Lawrence Kivett's second son, Henry's grandson, named Zachary Taylor Kivett, who was in his late teens, worked on this bridge project as a water boy, learning the trades of building from his grandfather and uncle. After this huge new wooden bridge was completed, Henry and son Andrew Jackson brought their families back to Randolph Co. Henry was buried in 1882 in the graveyard of a new church he and Andrew Jackson had built ten years earlier. Because of Henry and his sons, it was then called Kivett's Church. A modern building now thrives on the original site near McMasters Cemetery now known as Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. At this site the PKFA still holds its annual meetings, where their cemetery probably contains the most "Kivett" stones in the world.

Henry Lawrence Kivett traveled around out West after his bobbin factory burned during the war, but his "water boy" son stayed on after the bridge was completed. He grew up and married a Scots-Irish daughter of the man who had operated the ferry. Known in adulthood as "Mr. Z. T." Kivett, with wife Lillian McNeil, fathered 13 children. This prolific 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandson of the McMasters, Peter Kivett also came to be known as quite a builder and industrialist. He started Harnett County's first telephone company and the first of many Kivetts to dabble with electricity. He built the Harnett County courthouse, but he is most remembered for leading four of his sons and a daughter to resurrect a burned down local private school. Exhibiting unique design and construction features, Campbell University's iconic Kivett Hall endures today as testimonial to Kivett building skills and service to their community.

At any time in the history of our country there was always a Kivett to be found in military service. One of particular note was born far from Randolph County, but had solid roots back there. His NC born father, Walter Raleigh Kivett, had been inspired by his own grandfather Henry Kivett's success in industry. He found his place in the lumber industry of the Pacific Northwest. It was there in Idaho that a future Naval aviator was born. He rose through the ranks to retire in 1961 as Vice Admiral Frederick Norman Sr. Kivette. The last four of his 36 years in the Navy was spent as Commander of the 125 ship and 60,000 man US Navy's 7th fleet.

Yet another of Peter's descendants, born in Burlington in 1935, was there in that 1963 Dallas motorcade as a Secret Service Agent in a car speeding toward Parkland Hospital behind the one carrying the dying President Kennedy. Agent Jerry David Kivett was then assigned for several years to protect Lady Bird Johnson. He confessed of his great pride, but an aching back, which lingered with him long after having personally planted so many flowers with her at her beloved LBJ ranch. Mr. Kivett joked that true to his pledge, this was about the only secret of his service he ever shared with him, adding that Jerry's and his father were first cousins who grew up together east of Ramseur.

Mr. Bill Kivett's father, Everett Kivett, was one of several of Peter Kivett's descendants who became builders. As monuments to this 7<sup>th</sup> grade educated quiet man, numerous private homes around this region, and even the gymnasium he built at old Ramseur High, still stand.

McMasters Cemetery has long been a kind of silent museum, waiting patiently for so many of the descendants of those buried there to even learn that it exists. Over several generations, an unheralded few have succeeded in preventing it from being lost to nature or modern development. Many have tried to keep stories about the legacy of its residents from being forgotten. Mr. Kivett stated that with the wider recognition of the Commission it could be transformed into a teaching laboratory for generations to come. Whether they be descendants of those buried there or not, more from far and near may find another reason to come to Randolph for a first visit, to discover the charm of this site, actually walk among the stones, touch them, and try to make out the names and dates etched into them, ask who they were, and what they did. They might even wonder if and how they were related to them and then go back home determined to find answers to these questions. Mr. Kivett said the Peter Kivett Family Association is willing help answer some of those questions.

Mr. Ivey stated that he was once part of the Peter Kivett Family Association because his grandmother was a Kivett. He said that there could be an argument made that the people buried there, and their descendents, all did good things or served in the military, but every other graveyard in Randolph County could boast the same statements and arguments. Therefore, the Commission has to base recognition as a Cultural Heritage Site on a unique situation or the historical value of a person or people buried in a specific cemetery. All cemeteries have people who have contributed in some way. But because Peter Kivett is the first record of a Kivett in America and is buried in this location, it does have significance. Mr. Ivey asked how anyone would know that Peter Kivett is the first. Bill Kivett replied that the signature at the 1749 oath of abjuration of passengers from the ship Edinburg, strongly suggests his time and place of immigration.

Mr. Kivett added that Peter was also recognized by the DAR and SAR for his contributions of aid and comfort during the Revolutionary War and paid 45 pounds and a certain number of pence for his contribution of goods.

Chairman Johnson stated that one of the benefits of being recognized as a Cultural Heritage Site or any designation made by the HLPC is that all the data is maintained by the County and there will always be a record of the information presented by Mr. Kivett, not only today, but in the back-up material he has given to the HLPC. It will be added to the HLPC web page and will be available to those doing research. It is an educational process that gets information out to a wider community. Mr. Kivett asked to go on record that he and Commission member Marsha Haithcock, keeper of the Randolph Room at the Public Library, have had conversations about this information being stored in the Randolph Room because he is getting older and someone needs to maintain and store the information that has been collected.

Ms. Qualls agreed with Mr. Ivey that the summarizing comments in the presentation about the history that those families and the traits that have been passed down to their heirs could be said about a lot of people in a lot of cemeteries.

Mr. Ivey added that it is also important that many gravestones in this cemetery were carved out of Soapstone Mountain that sits near the site. There are also people buried there who made contributions to the Revolutionary War. And the primary fact that it is believed that Peter Kivett is the first Kivett in the US and is buried in McMasters Cemetery allows it to meet the criteria for designation.

Chairman Johnson read the proposed Resolution of Recognition.

*On motion of Ivey, seconded by Qualls, the HLPC voted unanimously to approve a Resolution of Recognition for the McMasters Cemetery, as follows:*

**WHEREAS**, *The Randolph County Historic Landmark Preservation Commission desires to recognize those Cultural Heritage Sites that provide a tangible link to the past, with the people and events that have made significant contributions to Randolph County history, and thus shaped our present; and*

**WHEREAS**, *Cultural Heritage Site recognition helps give Randolph County individual character and our people a sense of place, pride, and historic connection; and*

**WHEREAS**, *the history of McMasters Cemetery can be dated as beginning circa 1787, and contains the estimated 110 graves of Randolph County citizens and recognized American patriots who lived during the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War; and*

**WHEREAS**, *a well marked grave in McMasters Cemetery identifies the burial place of Peter Kivett, who is the first known person by that surname historically documented in America.*

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, *that official recognition as a Randolph County Cultural Heritage Site, as approved in public meeting by the Historic Landmark Preservation Commission, be given to :*

***MCMASTERS CEMETERY, ca. 1787***

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, *that this Resolution is approved by the Historic Landmark Preservation Commission and recorded in its minutes, appropriate history and photographs placed on the Commission's historical website, and a suitable copy presented to the recipient.*

**Adjournment**

*At 3:06 p.m., on motion of Whatley, seconded by Dixon, the HLPC voted unanimously to adjourn.*

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Hal Johnson, Chairman

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Amanda Varner, Clerk to the HLPC