

Exerpt from

The Monuments at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, North Carolina,
by Thomas E. Baker (1979)

Joseph Winston Monument

Joseph Winston Grave

Jesse Franklin Grave

Joseph L. Winston was born in Louisa County, Virginia, on June 17, 1746. As a young man he moved to Surry County, North Carolina. In 1775 he represented that county in the North Carolina Provincial Congress, and was appointed major of the Surry militia. This unit was part of the American force which destroyed the Loyalist army of Colonel Patrick Ferguson at King's Mountain in October 1780. For his conspicuous gallantry in this engagement, the North Carolina legislature voted to present Winston a sword.

The Surry County contingent was part of the large force of North Carolina militia which served with Greene's army at Guilford Courthouse. In this engagement Winston's men were initially stationed on the far left of the American first line. The accurate fire from this segment of the patriot line inflicted heavy casualties on the oncoming British. As the center of this position gave way, Winston's men were compelled to fall back. Attaching themselves to "Lighthouse Harry" Lee's force of cavalry and riflemen, the "Surry County Boys" withdrew to a hilltop about one mile southeast of their first position. On this rise Lee's and Winston's men turned to face their pursuers — the First Battalion of Guards and the Hessian Regiment von Bose — in a desperate secondary battle, isolated from the main action of the day. These hardy Americans could not be budged from their hilltop position until General Greene ordered a general retreat.

Among Winston's "Surry County Boys" were Richard Taliaferro and Jesse Franklin. Both had ridden horses to Guilford Courthouse, tying their mounts behind the area of the battle. As Winston's men fell back, Franklin and Taliaferro tried to reach their horses. Franklin made good his escape, but Taliaferro was killed by pursuing British cavalry. Traditionally, Taliaferro is said to have been the last American soldier killed in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Franklin later returned to the battlefield and buried his fallen comrade.

The Winston monument was unveiled on July 4, 1895. The remains of Joseph Winston and Jesse Franklin were moved to Guilford Courthouse in 1906. The Winston Monument is inscribed:

West face:
IN MEMORY
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA TROOPS
UNDER
MAJOR JOSEPH WINSTON
WHO WERE FIGHTING THE
HESSIANS
AND TARLETON'S CAVALRY
NEAR THIS SPOT
AFTER THE CONTINENTAL LINE
HAD RETREATED
FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE
MARCH 15TH, 1781

North face:
ERECTED BY
GOVERNOR THOMAS M. HOLT
1893

East face:
MAJOR JOSEPH WINSTON
CAPTAIN JESSE FRANKLIN
RICHARD TALIAFERRO
PALAMAN QUI MERUIT FERAT*
*LET HIM WHO HAS WON
THE PALM BEAR IT.