

ROBERT ANDERSON REMARKS AT VAN'S CREEK Dec. 5, 2009

“Is Life so dear and peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Almighty God, forbid it! I know not what course others may take but as for me, give me Liberty or give me death!” (Patrick Henry)

Here we stand in this land of Liberty. Look around you. 230 years ago, my militia clashed and struggled near here over this fight for Liberty. I was a colonial Englishman. But now I am an American. At 20, I came to South Carolina as a surveyor, married my Virginia gal, Ann, and settled permanently in the Carolina backcountry. Long after the fights here on the Georgia side and the other side of the river, I would come to own 6587 acres of beloved land.

This land afforded much more opportunity to prosper for a man like me than in England. I acquired more lands to develop, deals to make, opening up the backcountry counties. I believe that a man, not noble-born or well-educated, can through ability, courage, determination, luck, fairness, and good common sense benefit his community and colony, as well as his own financial independence. Out of the end of the Cherokee uprising war came lawless renegades and bad men set on stealing instead of work. I argued with those public officials in Charles Town and in the Assembly that up here we needed improvements, more roads, jails and courts too. It was slow coming. Settlers increased too.

My lovely wife, Ann Thompson, birthed me 5 children: Robert, Elizabeth, Mary, Jane, and Ann. All good Christian names to upbringing them. She died in 1790, and I married two more times, each to an affable widow – good women.

I was an Englishman until the King wanted to make us wear political and financial chains fit for slavery. Charles Pratt, Lord Camden, bellowed in the House of Parliament, “Representation and taxation are inseparable!” Inseparable I say! After all, even Prime Minister Pitt declared further: “Where law ends, tyranny begins!” Remember John Wilkes, our county name in the Revolution and his support of us colonists.

The disaffected people are collecting in the backcountry. Some Loyalists and under Hamilton’s orders and Campbell’s commands had actually rose and attempted to possess themselves of powder from River Valley forts. If a speedy stop is not put to the Loyalists, they may soon become formidable. I took stands to stop them. I supposed it would be the British plan to bring down the Indians on our frontiers, to divert us, to terrify and keep at home the militia. We were much threatened here by the disaffected Loyalists. Families and friends suffer when war comes and sides are chosen in which to serve. Some of the disaffected chose the mother country and we all paid dearly for duty.

Van’s is our stand against tyranny, a loss to us and a hit to the Tory Loyalists. Why be here today? Gen. Pickens received word that Col. Boyd with 600 were crossing the Savannah and attempting to get into Wilkes County. Col. James or John Boyd: that “gentleman” from New York who on account of his influence among the backwoodsmen of NC and SC was dispatched by the Brits to collect those d... Loyalists. Pickens’ & Dooly’s boys under my command – over 100 strong – took a stand against the Brits at the mouth of Van Creek. We tried hard, bloodied them but failed to stop them. It is for our generation to save and interpret this sacred soil for our children and theirs. In 1779, I did

much to bring about the Patriot fight here, slow down Boyd before he got to Carr's Fort, and then his mess at Kettle Creek. 100 individuals made a big difference here. To what do we conduct our affairs?

Why be here today? We must do our part to preserve Liberty – in our institutions, in our minds, in our hearts, on this land. Have you actually read the Constitution? How about your GA constitution? Liberty requires our vigilance as much as our might. Gen. Pickens talks of conducting matters with good conduct. Do not fake it; reread it and the Declaration...our national faith. Would it not be interesting to have spirited discussions about these living creeds in your businesses and churches and taverns... than about just about your care of health or sport or what-do-you call those horse-powered things out there...

Our minds and hearts are still protected and produced in the ramparts and redoubts of our homes. Read a Revolutionary book... aloud... with your children and grands. Think about Liberty and what part you will play or produce to keep it alive. Today we stand near the interpretation of this militia battlefield. Look around. You would not know it. It is for our generation to bring much more of these bloody fields backto save and interpret this sacred soil for our children and theirs...alive as a special place for Liberty. In 1779, my boys gave the red of blood; let us add the white of historic interpretation and the blue of preservation. What is our conduct? To what do we intrepidly act? What are we doing for the common good of our Liberty?

In my late 40s, 50s and 60s, I continue to serve locally by establishing the Presbyterian Stone Church; commissioner for public accounts; public school and library trustee; roads and town commissioner; and delegate to the SC General Assembly for 25 years. I even served as Lt. Governor of South Carolina. I helped and voted to make these backcountry counties a land of commerce and prosperity. Always, I stand for Liberty. I love our land of Liberty and devise it to my four surviving children and to each of you.

Two thoughts I am pleased to leave with you. Thanks to SC for naming a county and town after me BUT I cannot believe that you flooded my homestead and favorite plantation, Seneca. And I take satisfaction in having done some good for our country. Daughter Elizabeth married Samuel Maverick, who would prominently fight for Texas independence; he allowed his cattle to roam w/o branding, and thus entered the term "maverick" into our language as a person who takes an independent stand, defined in part by my fight at Van's for the cause of independence & my family that sacrificed much for Liberty.

A Revolutionary best-seller titled *Common Sense* (Thomas Paine) said it thus: "Virtue is not hereditary, neither is it perpetual. There may not always be a body of reasonable men... We have every opportunity and every encouragement before us to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again." Good day!

David Paul Reuwer as Robert Anderson, Patriot
www.americanrevolutionassociation.com
803.425.8710 office 803.549.6710 cell