

"The Grit of Joseph Banks"



Battle of Moraviantown

For many years we search the records for our ancestors and learn the names of their children and other statistical details. Then, suddenly one day we begin asking ourselves who this person was. Perhaps the thought stems from a deep desire to learn more about ourselves. We know that relatives can be identified by DNA and that we also have a long stream of it inside ourselves being passed down.

Take Joseph Banks from Pasquotank County who one day in June of 1782 rode into town on his horse and enlisted for 18 months in the cause of the patriots during the American Revolution. It was a fight for free America. The common enlistment duration was three months and the reason was a good one. Farmers needed to return home to plant and harvest their crops. But in other times, they were out there on the battlefield fighting for their

families, neighbors and friends. With nothing to gain personally, he went.

Joseph kept his word and served until August of 1783 when he was discharged on James Island, South Carolina. And when the British army once again weighed anchor on the American shores in 1812, Joseph did not hesitate to once more join the fight at the Battle of Moraviantown in Canada. The injuries which he sustained during that battle disabled his hip for the rest of his life, yet despite the discomforts, he continued working, tilling the soil and harvesting crops. Joseph received no reward except the knowledge that he had helped free his country from the tyranny of a king. He did not live long enough to truly enjoy the fruits of freedom. Regardless, his fight was a gift engendered to future generations. We yearn to learn more about our Joseph. He left no photograph of himself. Yet a looking glass or mirror provides answers. We see Joseph in the shape of our face, nose and mouth and the expression in our eyes.

Perhaps the frown on our face and the distress in our gut is the same as his when he left his family and went off to war. Because his heath was a woody, wild land and he was busy working towards his dreams, Joseph did not realize the extent to which his sacrifice would be enjoyed by future generations. So now, as we examine our features more closely in the mirror we identify the grit of Joseph Banks in ourselves. This knowledge brings to fore the true meaning of the term "blood-kin."

There is one thing for sure. The effects of the work which we perform today will be realized in the future, good or bad. So now, who are we? Surely, we are working to make correct choices and do good in the world!