

Isaac White
“On the Fall Branch of Horse Creek”

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One of the most beautiful places in Washington County is Fall Branch. It spreads over three county lines, with properties in Washington County, Sullivan County and Greene County. It is a quiet, small community with a two-lane road running through the center of “town.”

The “Fall Branch” refers to a little-known waterfall in the area, which surprisingly is around 75 feet high. Seven springs form the branch that goes over the waterfalls, located off the Baileyton Highway. During the winter months, you might catch a glimpse of the falls, but they are otherwise hidden by foliage.

I visited the falls more than 18 years ago, when one could still walk across the field and picnic at the base. The owner graciously allowed this, only asking that one not leave trash at the site. Of course, eventually visitors left trash, and the owner was forced to forbid entrance. This is such a shame, as it is one of the most beautiful sites in the county.



In the early 1800s, Gabriel Morgan built a grist mill on the cliff at the head of the falls. The Morgan family lived on the property and operated the mill for over 100 years. It was torn down in the 1930s.



Photo taken by the author, circa 2007.

Isaac White must have also seen the beauty in this area, because he moved his family there from Guilford County, North Carolina in 1781. This record is validated by the 1781 Washington County, Tennessee tax list, showing him to be a resident there. As the crow flies, he lived just a few miles from the Fall Branch Falls.

White was born in Kent County, Delaware, in 1752. His father, William White of Murderkill Hundred, Kent County, Delaware died when Isaac was a boy of ten years in 1762. Isaac moved into what was then Guilford County, North Carolina and in 1775 married Sarah Vaughn, daughter of David and Susannah Vaughn.

Isaac served in the Revolutionary War in Captain William Bethell's regiment of the Guilford County Militia. The unit was known to have participated in the Siege of Charleston, the First Battle of Monck's Corner, and the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, one of the last significant battles of the war. There is also speculation and much disagreement on whether he had taken part in the Battle of Kings Mountain. He is not the same "Isaac White" who was at the battle; this man was another by the same name who lived in Lincon County, North Carolina during the war.



Battle of Guilford Court House by H. Charles McBarron

In late March 1781, Isaac told his commanding officer, Captain Bethell that he wished to leave the area. This was the captain's reply:

"Whereas Mr. Isaac White hath a mind to remove himself out of this State I desire he may be permitted to pass and repass unmolested He behaving himself accordingly I believe him to be a good honest intelligible gentleman and hope he may be received as such he is been very active and stood in the 1st division in my company.

State No. Carolina William Bethell, Capt., March 31, 1781"

Isaac White came into Washington County (then North Carolina) sometime after March 1781, as he was listed on the tax roll for that year. He was listed with no acreage, five horses, three cattle, one slave, and 18£ in cash on hand. He and wife, Sarah were the parents of several children.

On Aug 7, 1782, he purchased 315 acres on Horse Creek from William Magbee, Sr. for 160 pounds. [Likely the property was sold by William McBee, who was not found on the tax lists after 1787.] The deed states that this is "the place where the said Isaac White now lives on..." His neighbors on this property were John Duncan, Thomas Titsworth and George Vincent.

For his Revolutionary War service, he received a land grant (#1161) for land in Washington County, North Carolina, "400 acres on the Fall Branch of Horse Creek." The grant was dated 5 December 1794. [Shown below]



By 1797, the Washington County tax list for Captain Joseph Duncan's Company listed White as owning two slaves and having 420 acres of land.

Name	White	Black	Land	Studs	Acres
Lyones Timpel	1	1			
John Berry	1	1			
Robert Ellison	1	4	702		
John McGarity	1				
John Bowman	1				
Isaac White	1	2	420		

In 1816, there were two incidents filed in Circuit Court (only one case) involving Isaac White and Marmaduke Daniel. According to the documents, Isaac White (a Justice of the Peace) sold some Brandy to Nathan Job on 19 Sep 1815. He was charged with selling liquor without a license but refused to pay. Marmaduke Daniel, a constable attempted to serve a warrant on White for the payment of the fine. White didn't respond to that request in a friendly manner...he met him in the road and beat Daniel with sticks, clubs and dirks! White finally paid the debt in March of 1819, just a few months before his death.



Isaac White house - Fall Branch, TN

This photo of the Isaac White house was shared with the Watauga Association of Genealogists for their *History of Washington County, Tennessee 1988*. The photo was said to be taken circa 1942, before the home was torn down.



The photo above, also the home of Isaac White was shared with us by James Dykes.

His will was written on May 5, 1819 and the original can be seen at the Washington County Archives. The will mentions his “beloved wife Sarah” to whom he bequeaths a negro woman named Beck. After Sarah’s death, Beck was to go to White’s son, Terry, who was also bequeathed two slaves, “Sam” and “Ned.” Also listed in the will are other children, William, Stephen Richard, Mary (wife of Thomas Gibson), Susanna (wife of Daniel Denton), and Anna (wife of Elijah Keen). There were other sons, not named, as noted by this paragraph in the will: “And as I have herefore given and conveyd [sic] to my other sons their portion in land, I hereby bequeath the several sums given as their part of my Estate.”

Isaac White died on August 18, 1819, and is buried in a cemetery located on his property. The cemetery is near where his home once stood.



The Isaac White Cemetery, located near 139 Jearoldstown Road in the Fall Branch area of Washington County.



The marker at left was placed many years after his death and incorrectly states that White participated in the Battle of Kings Mountain, and his birth/death dates are incorrect.

Isaac White

1755 - 1821

His wife Sarah Vaughn

Lieutenant in the Revolutionary War

Participated in the Battle of Kings Mountain



A marker in the White Cemetery for the graves of Sam and Ned, both mentioned in Isaac White's will.

Signature of Isaac White on his will

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