

Biography  
Of  
Reuben McLeroy  
1759-1820

Prior to the Declaration of Independence being drafted or the Constitution ratified, America was simply a vast land with gaping boundaries, a land whose shores were permeated with a universal vision of hope and optimism for the future. Guiding this vision was a deeply rooted faith in God, a moral fabric of the highest quality, controlled ambition, and the willingness to sacrifice self to achieve the goals of a nation. America would climb to its pinnacle through acts of ordinary men performing extraordinary feats. These exercises in valor would ultimately quell the tyrannous regime in the Atlantic as well as all others to follow. In the years to come this nation would be challenged by many conflicts of different varieties. Not once did its sons and daughters not live up to the challenge. Webster defines a patriot as "a person who loves his country and will do All he can for it." Many have been willing to throw themselves on the sword to protect or achieve liberty. That is an act deserving the most dignified of reverence. Reuben McLeroy was one of America's earliest patriots and is most worthy of being honored for his acts of selflessness and loyalty.

Reuben McLeroy was born in Wake County, North Carolina in the year 1759. Reuben was the fourth of seven children born to William and Ghasky. His father William was the son of John Muckelroy, a Scottish immigrant that came to America in 1716. Reuben's lineage can be traced as far back as the Macgillivray clan of Scotland. It can be noted that Reuben's father William also achieved patriot status as he provided food and aid to the militia during wartime.

Reuben would marry Christiana Johnson in April 1776 and they would proceed to have fourteen children. Their son James (also a patriot) was a private in the Georgia Militia during the war of 1812. Until the discovery of Reuben's grave, James McLeroy's gravesite was the oldest McLeroy burial site known in the United States.

At the time of Reuben's marriage this nation was in a state of unrest. Reuben would leave his new bride to adhere to his patriotic sympathies. Reuben enlisted as a private in the North Carolina Militia. The North Carolina Militia would go on to perform gallantly during the course of the war and General Washington stated that the militia, commanded by Generals Marion, Pickens, and Colonel Malmady had answered his most sanguine expectations.

Reuben's unit was engaged in skirmishes around Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina but their truest test would come on September 8, 1781 at the battle of Eutaw Springs. At Eutaw Springs Reuben fought directly under Col. Malmady. An interesting tidbit is that Malmady believed the rank of Colonel was beneath his merit. During this battle the North Carolina Militia occupied the front line of the continental forces. Reuben's unit was posted directly at the center. General Nathanael Greene stated that at Eutaw Springs "the militia conducted themselves with great gallantry, and fought with a degree of spirit and firmness that reflects the highest honor on this class of soldiers." One Hundred and Forty Six militia were killed or wounded at Eutaw Springs. After the battle, Congress would state, "The men of the militia, formed the front line in the order of battle, and sustained their post with honor, propriety, and a resolution worthy of men determined to be free". The patriot blood shed at Eutaw Springs was not in vain as this battle broke the British hold in the South. Six weeks later Yorktown fell and independence was realized.

Three years after Eutaw Springs, Reuben would move his family to Georgia. Because of his loyal service Reuben received sizeable land grants in Oglethorpe and Wilkes Counties.

At this stage of Reuben's life he would follow yet another call to service. However, this time there were no muskets or battles, just the order to assemble and serve the Lord. Reuben was ordained a Baptist minister in September of 1804 at Mars Hill Baptist Church in Clarke County. His work in the church would eventually lead him to his final destination, Jones County, Georgia. It was in Jones County that Reuben would come to pastor Walnut Creek Baptist Church which was located at the current site of Mount Pleasant Primitive Baptist Church.

Reuben McLeroy died on February 12, 1820 at the early age of sixty-one. His wife Christiana would apply for and receive forty dollars per annum widows pension in 1851. She was ninety-two at the time. Reuben's life was one dedicated to ministry. First, service to his colony and the aspirations of freedom, and finally his service to God almighty. Reuben McLeroy is buried on the grounds of the old church that called on him to answer. His grave is now marked for future generations to pay reverence to, and yield to, his ultimate commitment. God bless Reuben McLeroy, God bless the American soldier, and God bless The United States of America. ....