

HISTORIC SITES AND CELEBRATIONS

The following information is provided in chronological order so that the reader may follow the sequence of events of the Revolutionary War battles as they developed in The Southern Campaign. Except for the discussion on Kettle Creek and Ramsour's Mill, all other material is used with permission from the author, A. Mims Wilkinson, Jr., member of the Atlanta Chapter, Georgia Society Sons of the American Revolution

THE END OF WAR IN THE NORTH

On October 7, 1777, in the Hudson River Country of Upper New York State, an American Army under the Command of General Horatio Gates defeated the British Army of General John Burgoyne in the Second Battle of Freeman's Farm also called "Saratoga." Thereafter, while American Regular Continental Army troops and militiamen continued to arrive, the British withdrew to another position nearby and on October 17, 1777, the British Army of approximately 5,500 men found itself surrounded by an American force of 15,200, mostly fresh and well supplied with food and ammunition. The army of "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne with all its stores, arms and equipment, surrendered and General Gates was given credit for the victory. But he provided little leadership and the heroes of the battle were General Benjamin Lincoln, Colonel Daniel Morgan and General Benedict Arnold.

In those days, armies in the North did not fight in winter, and in December 1777, General Washington ordered the Army into winter quarters at Valley Forge, near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The hardships at Valley Forge are well known, but one of the principal compensating factors was the drill instruction and organizational skill of the German patriot, Baron Von Steuben, who occupied the soldiers' time in military exercises, close order drill formations and musket and bayonet drill. He brought about by military discipline a change in the troops from raw, unskilled, incompetent farmers to dependable, steadfast, self-confident soldiers, a match for the professionals of Britain and their Hessian mercenaries.

After Valley Forge, the last major battle of the war in the North was fought at Monmouth, New Jersey, with indecisive results, and both sides entitled to claim victory. The American Commanders were LaFayette, Nathaniel Greene, Anthony Wayne and Stirling, facing the British troops under Lord Charles Cornwallis, who subsequently was ordered South by the British Commander in Chief, Sir Henry Clinton, and again faced Nathaniel Greene in the Southern Campaign.

So, on June 28, 1778, the war ended in the North.

THE WAR IN GEORGIA AND THE SIEGE OF SAVANNAH

The two major seaports in the Southern States were Savannah and Charleston. The United States held Charleston until 1780, but Savannah fell to British attack in December 1778, and remained in British hands throughout the war. British forces also held Augusta and virtually the entire State of Georgia which was the only state of the Union after the Declaration of Independence, where a legislative body was convened under the authority of the King. Other than the fighting at Savannah, the Battles of Kettle Creek and Brier Creek, primarily militia engagements between Americans and Tories, were the major engagements in Georgia. American leaders in those battles were Colonel Andrew Pickens of South Carolina, General John Ashe of North Carolina and Colonel Samuel Elbert, Captain John Dooley and General Elijah Clarke, all of Georgia.

In the summer of 1779, Governor Rutledge and General Moultrie of South Carolina decided to attempt to capture British-held Savannah. With that in mind, they sent messages to French Admiral d'Estaing, whose fleet was in the West Indies, asking his aid. He accepted the invitation and sent messages to Charleston to announce the coming of his fleet, bringing with him twenty large warships, thirteen smaller warships and troop transports carrying approximately 6,000 soldiers. On September 8, he arrived off Tybee Island, near Savannah. An American Army commanded by General Benjamin Lincoln marched sixty miles south from Charleston and arrived at Savannah on September 16th, joining the French forces. If Savannah had been attacked immediately, there is little doubt that it could have been taken without difficulty for at that time there were not more than twenty-three cannon mounted on its incomplete defenses. By the time of the final attack by American forces, the British defenses had been completed and more than one hundred cannon were in position to defend the city. In early October 1779, the American siege of Savannah culminated in a frontal assault on the fortified city. It failed. Count Casimir Pulaski, a Polish officer leading the American cavalry detachment, was killed, with nearly eight hundred other officers and men. "It had been the most severe fight of the war since Bunker's Hill - a magnificent attack and a superb defense."

After the battle, General Lincoln wanted to continue the siege operations, but French Admiral d'Estaing would remain no longer and sailed away, forcing Lincoln's army to return to Charleston. The South was sadly disheartened by this defeat and much feeling against the French was aroused. Confidence in their value as allies was severely shaken. Throughout the country, there was a great depression of spirits and a corresponding depression in the already nearly worthless Continental paper currency. Among the British and their American friends there was much elation. The Southern Tories were emboldened to become more openly active against the American cause and never again was there a major attempt to take Savannah from the British.

KETTLE CREEK*

February 14, 1779

During the American Revolution, Georgia was the youngest of the thirteen colonies and was sparsely populated. There were an estimated 25,000 Georgians in the colony and they were located principally in the Savannah River corridor from the coastal settlement of Savannah through Wilkes County to Augusta. The majority of the population were Tories (Loyalists), with sympathies for the Crown.

The Tory leader during the engagement was Colonel Boyd in command of some 700 North and South Carolina Tories. Patriot leaders were Colonels Andrew Pickens, John Dooly and Elijah Clarke. Pickens, who assumed overall command, had some 250 South Carolina militia, Dooly and Clarke a hundred or more Georgia troops.

Encouraged by the British Lt. Col. Campbell's capture of Savannah and a subsequent advance on Augusta, Colonel Boyd raised a force of Tories in Anson County, North Carolina, near the South Carolina border, and marched to join Lt. Col. John Hamilton in Georgia. Hamilton was a North Carolina Tory and a veteran of the Scot battle of Culloden, respected by Whigs and Tories alike. He had organized a regiment of Tory partisans, mainly in Florida, and was directed by Campbell to rally Tories in the backcountry.

As Boyd crossed South Carolina other Loyalists who swelled his ranks to about 700 joined him. It was early in February 1779 when South Carolina and Georgia militia joined forces to pursue Hamilton. The latter, however, became besieged by rebels at Carr's Fort and was in bad straits when Pickens learned of Boyd's approach. The rebels considered Boyd bigger game than Hamilton, and started after him in South Carolina. Oblivious of his danger, Boyd crossed the Broad River near its junction with the Savannah the morning of February 13, 1779 and camped that night on the north side of Kettle Creek. Pickens recrossed the Savannah, and followed Boyd into Georgia.

On Sunday, the 14th outnumbered more than two to one, the rebels attacked in line of battle with the right commanded by Dooly, the center by Pickens and the left by Elijah Clarke. The Tory pickets fired and fell back into camp. Attacking forces had great difficulty traversing through the dense canebrakes and frigid waters of the swollen creek. Colonel Boyd on the other hand did not have any idea that he was in danger and was completely surprised by the attack. His horses were turned out to graze and men were slaughtering cattle. But they soon rallied and the fighting became very intense. The battle raged for one to two hours – the evidence conflicts – and seemed to be going to the British, when Clarke, with fifty of his Georgians, slipped through an obscure brushwood and came onto Boyd's rear. The fighting continued hot and bloody and, when Boyd fell wounded, the tide began to turn. The Tories were finally routed with losses of 40 killed, according to most authorities, and 70 captured. Boyd's wounds were mortal, and he died a few hours after the battle. The attackers listed nine killed and 23 wounded. Five of the Tories were tried and convicted of high treason, and hanged; the rest were pardoned.

The battle was less significant than Kings Mountain and Cowpens, but its importance lay in being early in the war, almost two years before those victories. The Patriot victory at Kettle Creek prevented a serious rallying of Tories in the South at a crucial early time. It served to open up the backcountry and encouraged Lord Cornwallis, overall Commander of the occupying forces, to evacuate Augusta.

*By Robert F Galer, with extracts from Herman R Tovey Jr, SAR Magazine, Spring, 1998 and Mark M Boatner, III, Encyclopedia of the American Revolution, 1994.

THE SIEGE OF CHARLESTON AND CIVIL WAR IN THE SOUTH

"When (the British Commander) Sir Henry Clinton heard of d'Estaing's arrival at the mouth of the Savannah River in September 1779, he recalled to New York the 3,000 men that had been uselessly stationed at Newport for three years. When the French and Americans were defeated in their attempt upon Savannah and d'Estaing sailed away, leaving Georgia in the hands of the British, it seemed to Clinton that the time had arrived to attempt a subjugation of the Southern states by a campaign that should begin in South Carolina and move through North Carolina into Virginia. He hoped that he could arouse the numerous Loyalists in the Carolinas, that they would flock to the King's standard and so reinforce him that he would be irresistible in his march to complete victory over the Rebel forces in the South and that thus that great section would be restored to the crown. His plan was first to capture that most important city, Charleston, and establish a base there and then to proceed inland."

On December 26, 1779, General Clinton turned over the command in New York to the Commander of the German mercenary troops fighting with the British and sailed south with Lord Charles Cornwallis as second in command. His fleet of ninety transports carried eight British Infantry Regiments, five German Regiments and five Corps of Tory Militia, besides detachments of artillery and cavalry: 8,500 rank and file soldiers in all. It was convoyed by five large warships and nine smaller ships with a total of six hundred fifty naval guns. The crews of all these vessels numbered about 5,000 men. In addition, the British forces called on to join the attack on Charleston from other Southern areas, brought the total force up to some fifteen thousand men.

The American Commander, General Benjamin Lincoln, with General Isaac Huger, commanded about 2,650 Continental Army regular troops and an equal number of militia to hold some three miles of fortified lines defending the city.

The siege of Charleston began with the British forces moving toward the town on March 20, 1780. In the ensuing siege and battle, the British forces consisting of 15,000 British soldiers and sailors, supported by naval vessels, won the unconditional surrender of General Lincoln and his troops on May 12, 1780. The American loss of Charleston, with troops, arms, ammunition and equipment was one of the greatest disasters suffered during the entire war.

Charleston having been captured, the British General Clinton's next object was to attack the interior parts of North and South Carolina and subject them to British Control, as Georgia had been subjected. He sent out a series of detachments composed almost wholly of Tory Militia and for the next three months the Carolinas were the scene of the most furious and ferocious partisan warfare. Within that period, there were five engagements between American Militia and their Tory opponents. British Regulars had little part in any of them. It was civil war and it was marked by bitterness, violence, hatred and malevolence such as only civil wars can engender, with brother fighting against brother, father fighting against son, and brutality on both sides. British troops were stationed in Charleston, Beaufort and Savannah. From Cheraw, South Carolina, a strongly held line of British outposts ran across the northern part of the state through Camden to Ninety-Six. This unopposed occupation of such an extensive territory is eloquent evidence of the complete subjugation of South Carolina at the time. After General Lincoln's army had been captured at Charleston, there were no organized troops left in the state to oppose the enemy. The few small bodies of patriot militia coming to the relief of the besieged town had hastily retreated to their homes to melt into the civil population as inconspicuously as possible.

When Charleston surrendered, a regiment of three hundred fifty Virginia Continental troops with a small party of Colonel William Washington's cavalry, led by Colonel Abraham Buford, had retreated some forty miles from Charleston toward Hillsboro, North Carolina. Cornwallis sent Colonel Banastre Tarleton after them with two hundred seventy mounted troops and overtook the retreating Americans on May 29 at the Waxhaws, near the North Carolina border. Colonel Buford was surprised by the attack and in the ensuing battle was defeated and ordered his troops to lay down their arms and surrender. The British Colonel refused to accept their surrender and ordered his troops to kill the defenseless Americans, resulting in a massacre of almost all. From that time on, "Tarleton's Quarter" became the by-word to describe the relentless slaughter of surrendered and helpless men. That affair extinguished the last flickering flame of resistance in South Carolina at the time. British power throughout the state was thoroughly established. General Clinton went back to New York with about one-third of his troops, leaving Lord Charles Cornwallis and a mixed force of British, German and Tory troops, about 8,300 rank and file, in the South.

With South Carolina and Georgia well under control, North Carolina was Cornwallis' next goal. The North Carolina Loyalists gave glowing accounts of their strength and urged Cornwallis to come and conquer, but the summer heat and scarcity of provisions inclined him to remain in camp until later in the year. The Tories decided not to wait.

In the meantime, North Carolina Patriots were preparing to resist invasion by the British. General Griffith Rutherford called on the militia who mustered near Charlotte with Major William R. Davie, Colonel William L. Davidson, and Colonel Francis Locke. The Tory and Patriot Militia met at Ramsour's Mills resulting in a bloody encounter in which there were some three hundred casualties on both sides. "The fight . . . was a desperate hand to hand struggle, the crudity of the weapons equaled by the ferocity with which they were employed. The result was the crushing of the Tory element in that part of North Carolina."

The other Patriot leaders were beginning to recover from the defeat at Charleston. A party of Tories near Winnsboro was defeated and dispersed and a similar Tory body of militia near Fishing Creek was similarly defeated, but Patriot militia under General Thomas Sumter lost a small engagement with the Tories at Rocky Mount. A short time later, at Hanging Rock, North Carolina, a large body of Patriots engaged in a battle with Tory militia, not a single British officer being present and in a battle lasting nearly four hours, fought with determination on both sides, the Tories were severely defeated, losing some two hundred killed or wounded out of five hundred engaged, a decisive American victory.

BATTLE OF RAMSOUR'S MILL
Lincoln County, North Carolina
June 20, 1780

On Tuesday, June 20, 1780, the bloodiest partisan battle of the American Revolutionary War was fought in the foothills of North Carolina between neighbors and friends. The two-hour pitched battle resulted in more than seventy dead on both sides, including five Patriot and four Loyalist captains. Another two hundred were wounded, some of whom later died.

The leaders of the Loyalists were Lt. Col. John Moore and Maj. Nicholas Welch. Col. Moore's father came to this section of North Carolina from Carlyle, England as a pioneer and developed significant land holdings along Indian Creek, located eight miles from Ramsour's Mill. Maj. Welch's father was also a pioneer of the area and the next-door neighbor of the Moore family. John Moore and Nicholas Welch were good friends from an early age. These officers left the victorious British forces as they began their march from Charleston, SC and returned home to Lincoln County to raise a Loyalist company with the expectation of uniting with Lord Cornwallis as he moved through the uplands of South Carolina. They bore English commissions, were arrayed in splendid uniforms, and brought with them much gold to help raise troops for the Loyalist cause.

On June 10, 1780, Col. Moore called a meeting of Loyalists leaders at his father's home, where about 40 men gathered. Those in attendance were directed to gather their forces and meet at Derick Ramsour's Mill on June 13th in preparation for battle. Two hundred men were present at the mill on June 13th and they began grinding grain for march provisions. By June 19th, over 1300 Loyalists had gathered at Ramsour's Mill and were actively engaged in their organization and drill preparatory to marching to join with Lord Cornwallis. Over three hundred of the number lacked weapons. They occupied a well-chosen and advantageous position on a high ridge that slopes three hundred yards to the mill.

Col. Francis Locke commanded the Patriot forces, composed of men from the Rowan County and Mecklenburg County militias, including about one hundred mounted troopers. The four hundred Patriot troops met at Mountain Creek, sixteen miles from Ramsour's Mill, on Monday, June 19th. They determined that the best chance for success, considering their inferior numbers, was to make a surprise attack with the one hundred mounted troops followed by the foot soldiers. That evening they began their march toward the mill.

At dawn on Tuesday, June 20th, Adam Reep, a noted scout, along with 20 Patriots, met Col. Locke and his forces about two miles from Ramsour's Mill. Reep detailed to Col., Locke the position of the enemy and a plan of attack was formed. The mounted troops under Captains McDowell, Brandon, and Falls would follow the road due west to the Loyalist camp and would not attack until Col. Locke and his foot soldiers could detour to the south and reach the base of the hill along the Tuckaseegee Road. A simultaneous assault would then be mounted.

The initial contact between forces occurred when the mounted Patriots surprised a Loyalist picket placed six hundred yards in an advanced position. The picket fired and retreated to the camp. Due to thick fog, the mounted Patriots were then able to advance within about one hundred feet of the Loyalist camp, where they opened fire with great results. The Loyalists were thrown into confusion and those without weapons immediately deserted the battle scene. As the Loyalists began to form a battle line, they discovered a force of only about one hundred Patriot horsemen and quickly covered the Patriots with heavy gunfire. The mounted troops were forced to retreat back through the Patriot infantry that had advanced six hundred yards up the hill to engage. Some of the Patriot infantry also took this opportunity to retreat and never return to the battle.

The Loyalists noted the disorganization in the Patriot line and charged from the hilltop in superior numbers. The fighting was spontaneous and thick for over an hour. The superior marksmanship of the Patriots gradually forced the Loyalists to retreat back to the hilltop and a little beyond, where they could renew the battle from cover. This advantageous position allowed the Loyalists to rain deadly fire into the Patriots on the open slope and force them back to the glade at the bottom of the hill.

The Loyalists then left their protected position and advanced part way down the hill to pursue the battle. At that moment, Captain Hardin led a Patriot company onto the ridge from the south and poured a galling fire into the right flank of the Loyalists. The Loyalists again began a retreat up the hill, but this time found part of the summit occupied by Patriots. A fierce hand-to-hand battle ensued for almost another hour. Patriot Captain Sharpe led a few men beyond the crest of the ridge and began to pick off the Loyalist officers and men. None of the combatants had bayonets and so beat each other with the butt of their guns between rounds. Many men in each group recognized men in the opposing force, and as they battled, instigated exchanges of heated oaths and banter. There were no uniforms on the combatants, so the Loyalists wore green pine twigs in their hats. The Patriots were not as wise and had opted for a white piece of cloth in the hat. This white badge proved to be an excellent bull's eye target as many Patriots were found shot in the head.

The Loyalists, fired upon from front and flank, and engaged in heavy hand-to-hand combat, eventually broke and fled down the backside of the hill toward the millpond. The Patriots regrouped on the summit of the ridge for another attack with only 110 men out of the original 400 available for combat. Fortunately, Col. Moore did not press the battle a third time and the Loyalists dispersed. The Patriot victory was secure and broke the Loyalist resistance in the area. Col. Moore eventually joined Lord Cornwallis with only 30 men. Cornwallis put Moore under arrest and threatened to court-martial him for disobedience of orders, but eventually released him.

(Editorial Note: The battle account was written by Compatriot Claude H. Snow, Jr, Charter Member and first Secretary of the Piedmont Chapter. The Battle of Ramsour's Mill has recently been added to the list of nationally observed battle celebrations by NSSAR. The celebration will be held June 8-9, 2002 near Lincolnton, North Carolina.)

THE BATTLE OF CAMDEN

August 16,1780

One of the most disastrous defeats ever suffered by an American army.

In April 1780, Washington learned that Lord Rawdon was about to take 2,500 troops to join Clinton's army in South Carolina and he decided to "put the Maryland Line and the Delaware Regiments with the first artillery of eighteen field pieces under marching orders immediately" to give "further succor to the Southern States." Of the Maryland and Delaware troops, a military historian has written, "It is just here that one fact in the struggle for American independence should have specific notice. From 1776 before Boston and through the entire war, the states of Maryland and Delaware were represented on nearly every battlefield. Although their troops were few in numbers, they were distinguished for valor." The Baron de Kalb was placed in command of the force of Maryland and Delaware troops sent south. DeKalb County, Georgia, is named for him.

Major General the Baron deKalb was like General Von Stueben, also a soldier of fortune. Like Stueben, deKalb had availed himself of fiction to support his pretensions to command in the American army. He called himself "Baron deKalb" but he was not a baron nor did he have a right to use the aristocratic "de". His name was simply Johann or Hans Kalb, the son of a Bavarian peasant. After leaving home at an early age, he changed his name to Jean deKalb, joined the French army and later became a lieutenant in an Infantry Regiment. In European armies of that day, no commoner might hope

for a commission, all such advancements being reserved for the aristocracy. Hans Kalb's merit as a soldier would have availed him nothing. Jean deKalb might and did rise through the ranks to become a commissioned officer. He worked his way up through merit and leadership ability to become Lt. Colonel and married the daughter of a wealthy French manufacturer who inherited a tidy fortune. In 1767, deKalb was sent to America by a French diplomat to "inquire into the intentions of the inhabitants," to report on their resources, their plan of revolt, their strength and leadership: all, of course, to determine whether France should assist them to the injury of her enemy, Great Britain. deKalb made an extended tour of the colonies and brought back a full report but thereafter remained in civil life until 1776, when it became clear that a real war was on in America and that there was a field for military activity. He was recommended by his superiors to the American agent in Paris, Silas Deane, who engaged him with the promise of a major general's commission. He came to America with the Marquis de LaFayette and got his commission.

In person, deKalb was an outstanding individual. His physical endurance was extraordinary and he was a man of great physical strength, shrewdness and charm, coupled with outstanding leadership ability as well as "temperance, sobriety and prudence." He would rise before day, work until nine, then take a slice of dry bread with a glass of water. After performing his morning duties, he took some soup and a bit of meat, washed down with water, his only drink. His supper was as frugal as his breakfast. He bore the hardships of war with patience, long suffering, strength of constitution, endurance of hunger and thirst and a cheerful submission to every inconvenience. He would arrange his baggage as a pillow and wrapping his horseman's cloak around him, stretch himself before the fire and sleep soundly. Though ambitious for advancement in his calling, he was single hearted and honest, energetic and enterprising, yet he tempered his actions with caution and common sense. Brave to the point of temerity, he was an ideal leader of a combat force in action.

At the time, General Lincoln, formerly in command of the Southern department, had been in captivity since the fall of Charleston. As deKalb was the senior officer in the department, that command had devolved upon him and although he was an able commander, political considerations decreed that he would not continue in chief command. Washington's choice for commander in the South was Nathaniel Greene, undoubtedly the ablest of his major generals, but the Congress had its own man in view, none other than Horatio Gates, the victor at Saratoga, about whose head hung an aureole of glory. Congress loved him. So "with almost unbecoming haste" and without asking Washington's advice, "though not ignorant of his opinion," it ordered Gates "to repair and take command of the Southern department." Thereafter, Gates arrived at deKalb's camp on Deep River on July 25, 1780. He found "an army without strength, a military chest without money." Of the population around him, the Patriots were depressed, the Tories elated and swarming everywhere. He faced a victorious enemy, strongly posted, and planning to spread its conquests wider and wider. Although he might have been dismayed by the situation, he took hold at once with all the vigor and decision to be expected of a great military genius. It had been deKalb's intention to move southwest around Camden, but the forthright Gates would have none of that. The "Grand Army" must go at once, by the most direct road, to Camden. By the time the Patriot army reached the vicinity of Camden, sixty miles southeast of Charlotte, he had some 3,052 officers and men. However, the men were tired, worn down, ill and short of provisions. On August 15, they started the march toward the known British positions at 10:00 o'clock at night. For four hours they trudged through the deep sand and frequent swamps and then, suddenly the silence was shattered by the rattle of musketry ahead. Without the least warning, they had met the enemy. By an extraordinary coincidence, Cornwallis and Rawdon, intent on surprising Gates, had marched from Camden at exactly the same hour as Gates had chosen for his advance. To the astonishment of both they met. The fresh British troops had marched more than twice as far as the weary Americans, and the advance troops of both sides had simultaneously opened fire. General Gates called a council of war and his commanders were divided as to whether to retreat or attack. General Gates, with little support, determined to attack. In the ensuing battle on August 16, 1780, the regular, well-disciplined and well fed British troops fought by the rules while many of the American militia, dispirited, tired and ill-led, faced enemy fire and bayonets for the first time. The outcome might have been predicted. Disorder and confusion were followed by retreat which ended in flight, with the American Commander, General Gates, the hero of Saratoga, leading the way at full gallop. Only deKalb and his Maryland and Delaware troops stood their ground, a force of some six hundred men opposed by two thousand trained British regulars. The fighting was hand to hand, terrific in

its fierceness. Almost overwhelmed by the numbers that surrounded him, deKalb called for the bayonet again. Together his men answered, deKalb at their head. They crashed through the enemy's ranks, wheeled and smote them from the rear. But ball after ball had struck their heroic leader. Blood was pouring from him; yet the old lion had it in him to cut down a British soldier, whose bayonet was at his breast. That was his last stroke. Bleeding from eleven wounds, he fell. The heroic brigade had lost its leader, yet the worse than decimated ranks closed, advanced once more, repelled another charge; but that was all. Tarleton's calvary returning from pursuit of the fugitives, swept down upon them, broke their ranks, and the battle was over. The remaining officers of the Maryland and Delaware troops collected some sixty men who preserved a compact body in the retreat. Such of the rest as had not fallen or been captured scattered and fled to the swamps. The mortally wounded Major General deKalb was carried by British troops to a nearby wagon, where he stood, bleeding from his many wounds. When Cornwallis came riding by he rescued him from spoilers who were attempting to take his gold-laced coat and other personal effects. Lord Cornwallis caused him to be cared for by British surgeons; his great bodily vigor kept life in him for three days before he died.

But, where was the Commander in Chief, General Horatio Gates? From the time he gave the first order of battle to a subordinate, not one word of any sort had come from him to his fighting men. He had been "swept away" in that torrent of fleeing militia as some historians kindly describe his flight. "Swept away" he was - on the fastest horse in the army, a noted racer, "the son of Colonel Baylor's Feamaught, own brother to His Grace of Kingston's famous Careless," a fit charger for General Gates. And that gallant steed never stopped sweeping him away until he reached Charlotte, sixty miles from the field of honor. There Gates slept. He was subsequently court martialed, never again to command American troops.

On October 5, 1780, General Gates was replaced as Commander in Chief of the Southern Army by General Nathaniel Greene, who was summoned from West Point by Washington, received his orders and arrived at Charlotte to take command on December 2, 1780.

THE BATTLE OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

October 7, 1780

The Turning of the Tide of War

After the American defeat at Camden, South Carolina, Cornwallis was in almost undisputed control of South Carolina and Georgia, with the seaports of Savannah and Charleston in British possession, strongly fortified, the American forces disorganized and dispirited, with the Tories flocking to the British standard and American resistance confined to backwoods areas in the more remote parts of North and South Carolina. Had Lord Cornwallis merely reinforced his hold on what he controlled, he would have carried out the orders of his Commander in Chief, Sir Henry Clinton in New York, and eventually subjugated the entire South, but he was for an aggressive war and decided to carry the fight into North Carolina which at that time included the Tennessee territory. Cornwallis decided that after he conquered North Carolina he would take Virginia; then the rest of the South up to Pennsylvania "would fall without much resistance and be retained without much difficulty." Cornwallis had arranged with his commander to send reports directly to the War Ministry in London, thus by-passing his commander. The Ministry accepted the plans of Cornwallis and later instructed Sir Henry Clinton, his commander, to fan in with them. Now, Cornwallis decided to carry them out.

The British forces had been heavily reinforced at Camden after Gates' defeat. Among forces under his command were the American Volunteers commanded by Major Patrick Ferguson consisting entirely of Tory Militia, about 4,000 men. With this strong force, Ferguson held the District of Ninety-Six - the "upcountry" - in complete subjection, sending detachments in every direction to harass, plunder and destroy the "rebels."

Major Ferguson was outstanding, molded in the highest traditions of the British Army. The son of a Scottish judge, he entered the British Army at the age of 15 and served in wars on the continent of Europe until he came to America, where he was eventually Commander in Chief of the entire Tory Militia in the South, called the "American Volunteers." He invented the first breech-loading rifle, the predecessor of the modern rifle, which could be fired six or seven times a minute, several times as fast as a muzzle loader. At the time of the Battle of Kings Mountain, Ferguson was 36 years of age, a soldier of great merit and, although his right arm had been disabled earlier in the war at the Battle of Brandywine, he was a formidable antagonist with the sword in his left hand, and he was a dead shot with both rifle and pistol.

Beyond the mountains on the west in what is now Tennessee were the Watauga settlements inhabited by a hardy breed of frontiersmen, mostly Scotch-Irish, who were hunters and Indian fighters. By and large, those men were courageous, independent and used to hardship, privation and frontier warfare. Their equipment included horse, blanket, hunting rifle, and a bag of ground, parched corn which was supplemented with game. They were not only Whigs and sympathetic to the American cause unanimously but they were also bitter enemies of Ferguson himself whose merciless plundering in the Carolinas had made his name, with that of Tarleton, infamous. To those frontiersmen, Major Ferguson sent word, by printed handbills which he distributed widely in the area, that if they did not desist from opposition to the King, he would march over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay waste to their settlements and their crops with fire and sword. The reaction could be predicted.

First, the Watauga settlers decided that if any fighting was to be done, it ought to be elsewhere than in their territory, among their farms, homes, women and children. Colonel Isaac Shelby of Virginia and Colonel John Sevier of North Carolina accepted the challenge. They summoned Colonel William Campbell of Virginia and Colonel Benjamin Cleveland of North Carolina. Next, those leaders called for a muster of the Militia (which consisted of all able-bodied men between the ages of 13 and 80) to meet at Sycamore Flats on the Watauga River, which is located in east Tennessee near Johnson City, on September 25. Colonel Charles McDowell also joined them and in all they mustered approximately 1400 men. When Ferguson heard about the gathering at Sycamore Flats, he called on Cornwallis for reinforcements. The Americans called on Heaven and through their chaplain in a prayer service before the march, asked the aid "of the sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

Ferguson, with approximately 1,100 American Militia, placed his men on top of Kings Mountain and announced that "he defied God Almighty and all the rebels out of Hell to overcome him." He was confident as well as arrogant. His men were well trained and as experienced as regular soldiers. They were equipped with bayonets and well drilled in their use.

Major Ferguson was the only British soldier in the ensuing battle, one of the most important of the war. On both sides, all other participants were Americans.

The Battle of Kings Mountain was the first battle in history fought exclusively by men armed with rifles. The rifle, brought to America by Swiss and German immigrants who settled near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and known as the "Pennsylvania" or "Kentucky" rifle, was the most accurate weapon since the last British longbow, 300 years before. While the musket was generally used by all armies, it was ineffective at ranges in excess of 100 yards and inaccurate at closer ranges. The generally accepted standards of the day required troops to point the musket at the enemy and fire one or more volleys, then charge with the bayonet. The rifle, however, was a different weapon. Highly accurate at ranges up to 300 yards, an experienced rifleman could pick his target and hit it. In the hands of the frontiersmen, rifles were used with deadly effect.

The American patriots reached the mountain about noon on October 7, 1780, dismounted, fastened their blankets and coats to their saddles, tied their horses and took positions in a line completely around Ferguson's position on top of Kings Mountain. They moved up the mountain, from rock to tree and, although the fighting was intense, hand-to-hand and courageous on both sides, the deadly rifles took their toll and the position of the surrounded Tories soon became hopeless. Ferguson would not give up. He was everywhere on his horse, urging his men on. Twice, when white flags were raised, he cut them down

with his sword. To an officer who begged that the carnage might cease, he replied that he "would never surrender to such banditti." Toward the end with a few others he tried to cut his way through the surrounding troops, but a rifle bullet found its mark and he fell from his horse and died with one foot caught in the stirrup. The Tories, in terrified disorder, crowded behind their wagons and tried to keep up the fight, but the infuriated Whigs shot them down crying, "Buford! Buford! Tarleton's quarter!" As the killing continued, the American officers stopped their troops with difficulty and except for a foraging party which had left before the battle began, not one of Ferguson's men escaped death or capture. The patriots lost 28 killed and 62 wounded, while large stores of arms and ammunition fell into their hands.

The victory at Kings Mountain gave the American cause a great lift in the eyes of the people and those who had crowded to the Tory standard had second thoughts. As subsequent events proved, the tide of war had turned.

THE BATTLE OF COWPENS

January 17,1781

General Nathaniel Greene took command of the Southern Army of the United States on December 2, 1780, at Charlotte, North Carolina. Although he found few forces to command, on arrival, the American victory at Kings Mountain in October had its effect and with the assistance of his commanders he soon organized a substantial army. Foremost among them was General Daniel Morgan, of Virginia, who had fought with Montgomery at Quebec and with Gates at Saratoga, an outstanding leader of distinction. General Morgan was a well educated, but tough, vigorous and hardy product of the frontier, having earned his title of "The Old Wagoner" through long years of guiding parties of settlers, traders and Indian fighters in their wagon trains. He knew how to lead the frontier militiamen and inspire them to hold their ground and do their best under adverse conditions in the face of well-trained, seasoned British Regular troops. His portraits show him in the buckskins of the frontier. General Greene had appointed General Morgan to command the "light infantry."

The campaign in North Carolina might well be described as "The River Campaign" because the movements of troops on both sides were often determined by the many broad, deep and swift rivers in the area, flowing generally southeasterly toward the coast. Greene's foresight in providing for the construction and transport in wagons of flatboats from one river to another, proved to be of the utmost importance in the campaign. The rivers were the Broad, Pacolet, Catawba, Dan, Enoree, Tiger, Deep, Haw, Santee, Congaree, Cape Fear and others, including several large creeks and tributaries.

On December 16, Greene directed Morgan to cross the Catawba to its western side, join the North Carolina Militia under General William Davidson, and operate between the Broad and Pacolet Rivers "either offensively or defensively, as your own prudence and discretion may direct - acting with caution and avoiding surprises by every possible precaution." The main objectives of Morgan were to protect the people, to annoy the enemy, and to collect and store provisions and forage. If Cornwallis attacked Greene's other force, at Cheraw Hill, Morgan was to rejoin and support that force.

On January 2, Lord Cornwallis ordered Colonel Banastre Tarleton to leave Ninety-Six and push Morgan to the utmost, either destroy Morgan's troops or push them across the Broad River towards Kings Mountain. Tarleton had about 1,100 troops, well-trained regular soldiers for the most part, including his own cavalry known as "Tarleton's Legion," a battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, a battalion of the 71st Highland Regiment, a party of Light Dragoons and a detachment of the Royal Artillery, with two light cannon. Morgan's corps consisted of 320 Continentals, 200 Virginia militia riflemen, 80 of Lt. Colonel William Washington's dragoons, and the remainder were North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia militiamen, making a total of about 1,040 troops. But in trained regulars Tarleton outnumbered Morgan more than three to one.

As Tarleton's troops approached, General Morgan withdrew to a place called "The Cowpens" where a local farmer penned his cattle. Today, it is located near Interstate Highway 85, between Kings Mountain National Military Park and Spartanburg, about three hours drive from Atlanta.

Morgan's choice of a battlefield has been severely criticized because it offered no protection from Tarleton's superior cavalry and trained regular troops. Lt. Colonel Henry Lee of Virginia, the famous "Light Horse Harry," father of General Robert E. Lee, had been sent by the Commander in Chief to join Greene's forces in the South, although he was not with Morgan at Cowpens. Colonel Lee later pointed out that beyond the Broad River, near Kings Mountain, there was a much better position which Morgan could have taken for the battle, but Morgan stoutly defended his position:

"I would not have had a swamp in view of my militia on any consideration;

they would have made for it, and nothing could have detained them from it ... I knew my adversary, and was perfectly sure I should have nothing but downright fighting. As to retreat, it was the very thing I wished to cut off all hope of. . . When men are forced to fight, they will sell their lives dearly and I knew that the dread of Tarleton's cavalry would give due weight to the protection of my bayonets and keep my troops from breaking. . . Had I crossed the river, one half of my militia would have immediately abandoned me. "

It was undoubtedly also a factor that Morgan, a fighter by nature, was irked by being obliged to withdraw before the oncoming Tarleton, and turned on his foe because he wanted to give battle, disregarding the weakness of his position. But whatever may be said of his choice of the battleground, there is no criticism of the disposition of his troops. It was novel, ingenious and masterly.

The evening before the battle, Morgan, true to his frontier background and innate skill as a "leader of men" visited the campfires, talking and joking with his men in their own language, his voice cheerful, and his manner confident and reassuring. He told them that "the Old Wagoner" would crack the whip over Ban Tarleton in the morning as sure as he lived. "Just hold up your heads, boys; give them two fires and you're free." They had a good night's rest and a full breakfast the next morning. After breakfast, Morgan formed his battle line. He placed his most dependable Continental troops, with seasoned militia, in his main line with Colonel John Eager Howard of Maryland in command. About one hundred fifty yards in front, there were 300 militiamen under Colonel Pickens of South Carolina in a line three hundred yards long. In front of them, in a similar line, were 150 picked riflemen, as sharpshooters. Back of all the infantry and concealed by high ground and trees were William Washington's dragoons and a detachment of Lt. Colonel James McCall's Georgia mounted infantry, armed with sabers to operate as cavalry.

The sharpshooters in the front line in irregular formation were to take cover behind trees, hold their fire until the enemy was within fifty yards, then take careful aim at the officers and fire two volleys. Then they were to retire slowly, firing at will, and pass through the spaces between the men in the second line of militia, reinforcing it. The second line, thus reinforced, was to fire "low and deliberately" and when hard pressed by the oncoming British was to retire in good order around the main formation of troops, which lay in wait over a slight rise, concealed from the enemy. There they were to rally, re-form and act as reserve troops. The orders were not given to the officers only, but every man was informed of the plan of action and all those in the second line were especially cautioned not to be alarmed by the falling back and apparent defeat of the men in front of them. All of the militia men in the first two lines were mounted and their horses were tied to trees behind the cavalry reserve, an arrangement very consoling to their owners as affording a means of swift retreat in case of disaster. This disposition having been made, the men were told to sit down and rest until the enemy was sighted, but not break formation. Morgan then rode along the lines, encouraging the men in his confident and assured manner. As a result of his leadership, planning and foresight, the men were in good spirits and ready for a fight.

On the British side, the flamboyant Tarleton, eager to fulfill his promise to destroy Morgan's corps or push them back towards Kings Mountain, where Cornwallis would finish them off, had allowed his

men little rest that night. At 3:00 o'clock in the morning they were afoot and for five hours thereafter, mostly in the dark, they marched on muddy roads, through swamps and creeks and over broken ground, covering eight very long miles, before they came in sight of the Americans. When he saw the first line of troops, but without sufficient reconnoitering to observe the main battle line in the rear, he at once ordered his legion cavalry forward to attack the riflemen. As they came on, they received a volley that emptied fifteen saddles. His famous legion then recoiled, so convinced of the marksmanship of the riflemen that they could not be induced to charge again. The front line riflemen, still firing at will, then retired and took their places in the second line. Tarleton then deployed his troops in battle formation, with his two field pieces deployed for action and immediately ordered his whole line forward. The second line of Americans, under Colonel Pickens of South Carolina, waited until the enemy were "within killing distance." Then, taking careful aim with their rifles, they delivered their fire, reloaded and fired again with deadly accuracy, resulting in many casualties. Although the British line wavered, it continued moving forward and Pickens' men, according to orders, turned about and ran toward the rear of the main American battle line, pursued by the mounted British dragoons. To their astonishment, the mounted troops of Washington and McCall, until that time out of sight, charged forward, swords in hand, on the rear of the attacking dragoons and routed them completely. Pickens' troops gained the safety of the rear lines.

As Morgan had anticipated, retreat of the first two lines of troops was mistaken by Tarleton for the flight of the entire army. Giving their traditional loud battle cries, they rushed forward with fixed bayonets only to be met with another unwavering and deadly fire from the main battle line of Continental soldiers and seasoned militia. The equally courageous British line came on relentlessly and there was hot fighting for nearly half an hour. Another American withdrawal became necessary because Tarleton had called on his reserve of Highlanders and they were about to outflank the American line. As Tarleton saw this second withdrawal, he ordered up his cavalry and the rest of his force. His men, eager to outstrip the others, broke ranks and charged forward towards the Americans in total disorder. Colonel Washington, noticing the confusion, sent word to Morgan, "They are coming on like a mob. Give them one fire and I'll charge them." Just as Pickens' riflemen, having made a complete circuit of the field, came up on Morgan's right as reinforcements, Morgan gave the order "Face about, give them one fire and the day is ours!" The oncoming British line was charging in a mad rush forward over the hill and were within fifty yards of their enemy when Morgan's order was obeyed. The whole American line blazed with gunfire. The shock was terrific. Colonel Howard, one of the outstanding commanders of the war, saw the moment for the final order, "Give them the bayonet!" As the seasoned Continental troops, reinforced by the militia, charged into the disorganized British ranks, the mounted infantry and cavalry of Washington and McCall struck them on the flank and in the rear. With bayonet and saber, they split the disorganized Redcoats and tore them apart.

Although the battle in the center was over, on the American right, the 71st Highlanders held out and the British dragoons on the left were still active. Pickens' riflemen attacked the dragoons with such destructive fire that they fled the field, but the Highlanders fought on. Not until the whole weight of the American forces fell upon them were they forced to yield and their commander, Major McArthur, gave up his sword to Colonel Pickens. Tarleton urged his reserve of 200 dragoons to go forward, but they refused to move. He then tried to protect and remove his two artillery pieces, but Washington again attacked and drove the remaining British troops from the field, except for the artillerymen who stuck to their guns. They were the last to be overcome and never did surrender. Almost to a man, they were struck down at their posts. Washington followed Tarleton who was in full retreat and got well ahead of his own troops. Seeing that, Tarleton and two of his officers turned and attacked him. One of them aimed his saber at Washington, but an American sergeant, who had caught up with his commander, caught the blow on his own saber. Another British officer was about to cut down Washington when a fourteen-year-old black bugler shot him with his pistol. Tarleton himself made a saber thrust at the American colonel but the blow was parried, he fired his pistol, wounding Washington's horse and then galloped away. This episode has been portrayed in a famous painting which may be seen at Page 230, "The American Heritage Book of the Revolution."

The victory was complete, with nearly nine-tenths of the British force killed or captured, with 800 muskets, 35 baggage wagons, 100 dragoon horses, a large quantity of ammunition, and the colors of the

7th Regiment. Congress reacted with resolutions for "a complete and important victory," promotions, swords, medals and other rewards.

The battle again proved the value of militia when properly handled by competent leaders and it gave a deathblow to Tarleton's reputation as a military leader. Today, a magnificent portrait of Colonel Tarleton, in complete military uniform with black-plumed helmet and jackboots, may be seen in the British National Portrait Gallery in London.

But there were far more important results of the battle. In the opinion of John Marshall, "Seldom has a battle, in which greater numbers were not engaged, been so important in its consequences as that of Cowpens." It gave General Greene his chance to conduct a campaign of "dazzling shiftiness" that led Cornwallis by "an unbroken chain of consequences to the catastrophe at Yorktown which finally separated America from the British crown."

THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURT HOUSE

March 15, 1781

"We fight; get beat, rise and fight again." -General Nathaniel Greene

After the victory at Cowpens, Morgan did not rest on his laurels. Cornwallis' much greater army was nearby and poised to cut off Morgan's retreat in the event of the expected British victory. Now, he was ready to attack Morgan's force, victorious, but weakened by the battle. Between Morgan and Greene were four rivers, the Broad, the Catawba, Lynch's Creek and the Pee Dee. Cornwallis marched north to attack Morgan, but Morgan took the road to Ramsour's Mills, -northeastward, and passed that crossroads on January 23, having crossed the Broad and the Catawba Rivers and putting them between his troops and the pursuing British. Morgan had covered one hundred miles in less than five days, crossing two rivers in the journey under very difficult conditions. In an effort to catch the fast moving Americans, Cornwallis made a momentous decision. He spent two days destroying most of his baggage, wagons, tents and surplus provisions. At that time, seeing the supplies destroyed, many Hessian troops and some British soldiers deserted, perhaps as many as 250. The decision of Cornwallis to lighten his baggage in an effort to catch the enemy, was a magnificent gesture, but in the end it proved to be "vain and useless and finally fatal" to Cornwallis and his army.

On January 25, General Greene, encamped at Cheraw, received news of the victory at Cowpens, took measures to assist Morgan and prepared to move his forces with Morgan's across the Dan River into Virginia, where American reinforcements in large numbers were expected. He ordered boats to be assembled on the Dan River at the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia. Greene then rode with a small detachment the one hundred twenty-five miles to confer with Morgan at his camp on the Catawba. When Greene learned that Cornwallis had destroyed most of his supplies and equipment, he conceived a plan to lead Cornwallis north, farther and farther from his supply bases on the coast, while drawing nearer and nearer to his own in Virginia and the North. Morgan opposed the plan as dangerous, but Greene decided on it and overruled Morgan's objections.

Thereafter followed the famous Retreat to the Dan, "one of the most memorable in the annals of war." Only about 2,000 in the American Army and less than 3,000 British were engaged, but its consequences were great and it led, finally, to entrapment of the British army at Yorktown. The American forces reached the Dan River first and safely crossed, thanks to the prudent advance preparations made. The rear guard, "Light Horse Harry" Lee's cavalry, reached the boats at the river and safely crossed just before the advancing British troops arrived. The river was too high to cross without boats and every boat was on the farther shore in the hands of the Americans. Greene had won the race.

When Greene crossed into Virginia, it left the British forces in complete domination of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, including the only major ports: Charleston and Savannah.

Cornwallis issued a proclamation calling all citizens to join him "with their weapons and ten days provisions."

But wars are not fought nor victories won by stationary armies and stable conditions. Although the expected reinforcements from Virginia drifted slowly to the American army, Greene decided to return to North Carolina and give the forces of Cornwallis the battle they had been seeking. Six weeks before, on his way north, Greene had passed through the area where he now determined to make his stand. On April 14, he went into camp near Guilford Court House. Today, the battlefield, a National Military Park, lies just north of the City of Greensboro, North Carolina. On the day of encampment, Greene's forces consisted of 4,400 men, many of them never before battle tested and many of the militia unreliable. But it was as large an army as was ever assembled in the South up to that time and it greatly outnumbered Cornwallis' army, probably about 1,900.

When Greene marched to Guilford, Cornwallis was encamped at New Garden, about twelve miles southwest and Greene's move was a challenge which Cornwallis could neither ignore nor refuse. In fact, it gave him the opportunity he had been seeking for two months. And scarcity of supplies (due in large part to his own destruction of them) now compelled him either to fight or retreat toward the seacoast. As between those alternatives, Lord Cornwallis, an honorable, brave and courageous soldier who never fled a good fight, did not hesitate.

Greene sent Lee's legion with a detachment of riflemen toward the British encampment at New Garden. Three or four miles from Guilford, Lee met Tarleton leading the oncoming British forces. A hot skirmish followed before Lee "retired precipitately" to notify Greene of the oncoming Redcoats.

Not long before, Daniel Morgan, from his home in Virginia, a casualty of arthritis and rheumatism, had written to Greene with wise advice about the American militia, "If they fight, you beat Cornwallis. If not, he will beat you." He advised flanking the lines of militia with riflemen under good officers. "Put the . . . militia in the center with some fixed troops in their rear to shoot down the first man that runs."

Greene followed Morgan's advice. He fixed his lines in front of the Court House, perched upon high ground, with a split rail fence in front, woods on the flanks and an open field of five hundred yards which the British would have to cross to reach the line behind the fence. His artillery centered on the road to the Court House. The cavalry of Lee and Washington was placed on either flank of the forward line with the Virginia and Maryland Continental troops on high ground in the rear. Greene followed Morgan's example in dealing with the militia and walked along the lines asking as Morgan had done before Cowpens for two volleys before they retired. "Two rounds, my boys, and then you may fall back."

About half past one, the battle began with the advance of the British center into the clearing, fifes playing and drums beating. After they had crossed more than two-thirds of the open field, the first volley of 1,000 rifles spoke and gaps appeared in the advancing scarlet line, but it came steadily forward. Within one hundred yards of the rail fence, the line halted, delivered a volley and bravely charged forward, but it halted again some fifty yards from the fence because, wrote Sergeant Lamb of the Welch Fusiliers, it was seen that the American forces had their arms resting on a rail fence, aiming with nice precision. As the troops watched each other, face to face, Colonel Webster of the Fusiliers, rode forward and shouted, "Come on, my brave Fusiliers." They rushed forward and into the teeth of the enemy's fire with dreadful havoc on both sides. The North Carolina militia had now delivered their two fires as ordered. There was no time to reload, even if they tried and without a moment's hesitation, they turned and ran back through the woods, and the second line, to safety. They had done what they had been asked to do and they had the commander's permission to leave the field. The British were now up to the second fence with no opponent visible, but there was a steady fire upon both their flanks, so they wheeled to the left and right to meet the challenge, the Grenadiers and the 2nd battalion of Guards assuming the position in the center.

Cornwallis held the field. He had a victory, but he had paid a price. Of 1,900 men who went into battle on the British side, more than a fourth were casualties, 93 dead and 439 wounded, with especially The clear ground was behind and the fighting now was from tree to tree, hand to hand, with much

heroism on both sides. There was cavalry attack and counter attack; the troops became mixed together and Cornwallis finally ordered the artillery to fire grape shot into the melee of British and American troops, forcing the Americans to withdraw and allowing the British a chance to re-form. At the end, a general retreat took place by the Americans, "but it was conducted with order and regularity" wrote Stedman, an English historian who was in the battle.

heavy casualties among the officers. Not counting the militia who ran clear away and were reported "missing," Greene's casualties were 78 killed and 183 wounded.

In this battle, on both sides, the most admirable military qualities were displayed. All gave proof of a high degree of valor and steadfastness. On the whole, however, the laurels for military achievement must be awarded to the British. Starting hungry, they marched twelve hard miles and immediately went into battle against an enemy of greater numbers (disregarding the North Carolina militia there were more than 3,000 Americans against 1,900 British) who had been refreshed by a night's sleep and breakfast. That enemy force was so posted as to have every advantage of its skill in woodcraft and marksmanship and the superiority of the rifle over the musket. But the British faltered not at all in advancing across a quarter-mile of open ground against two rifle volleys precisely aimed. When the 33rd and the Guards were shattered, the Guards, indeed, torn to pieces, they rallied, re-formed, and attacked with no less vigor for their punishment. Fortescue, the historian of the British army, surveying its whole history from Crecy and Agincourt to the middle of the nineteenth century, says, "Never, perhaps, has the prowess of the British soldier been seen to greater advantage than in this obstinate and bloody combat." The merits and achievements of the Americans in this battle are enhanced, in the judgment of history, in proportion to the military ability of those opponents.

THE MARCH OF CORNWALLIS TO YORKTOWN

AND THE LAST BATTLES IN THE CAROLINAS

March - September 1781

After Guilford Court House, the American forces had left the field to the British, but there was little comfort to be found there. After the battle, rain began to fall in torrents; the wounded lay scattered about, many of them untended and dying. There were few medical stores and little food. From their last meal on the evening of March 14, before the battle, the British troops had been entirely without food for forty-eight hours and what each man got after that was four ounces of flour and four ounces of lean beef. Cornwallis was almost destitute of supplies, and his nearest certain source of them was at Wilmington, two hundred miles away. "As for securing provisions from the country around him, his army was, in effect, the garrison of a besieged town. No foraging party could safely go abroad. No provisions could come unmolested by road or river. He had lost the campaign, and there was no hope of recovery; his army was too weak to fight another battle. If it should try and should lose as many men as in the last one, the patriot countrymen would rise and tear the rest of it to pieces. All he could hope for now was a swift, safe retreat to a place of refuge and a store of food."

He marched for Cross Creek, a settlement of loyal Scottish Highlanders, on the Cape Fear River, hoping for supplies there, but his hopes failed to materialize and he was forced to go on to Wilmington, a hundred miles farther southeast. After he rested there and refitted his army, now reduced to one thousand four hundred thirty-five fit men, he resolved to march to "the back part of Virginia" to attempt a junction with General Phillips, leaving the remaining British forces in the Carolinas under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Rawdon, then encamped at Camden.

On April 25, 1781, Greene's army met Rawdon's at the battle Hobkirk's Hill, near Camden. In numbers, it was a relatively small engagement and Rawdon won the day, but the price he paid for victory was too high and Greene's army remained intact.

Skirmishes continued between Rawdon's army and American forces commanded by Francis Marion, William Davie, "Light horse Harry" Lee, Pickens and Sumter. On May 22, 1781, Greene besieged the British stronghold at Ninety-Six. The siege failed and the British continued to hold the fort.

After Ninety-Six, Greene's army marched towards Charlotte, northeastward, crossing the Saluda River the first day, then the Enoree, the Tiger and the Broad, to the Congaree. On learning that the army of Lord Rawdon, which he thought was in pursuit after the siege of Ninety-Six had turned back, Greene decided to rest his troops. They too had suffered much from extreme heat, forced marches and lack of food and supplies. Rice was their staple, in the absence of bread, and they fed on frogs and alligators. Greene determined to take his army to an area called "The High Hills of Santee," a long, irregular chain on the east bank of the Wateree River, about twenty miles north of its juncture with the Congaree. The hills are composed of sand and clay, twenty-four miles long, rising some two hundred feet about the riverbank to a wide plateau. The army remained there for six weeks while resting and recuperating. By the end of August, Greene's army had increased to some two thousand men and he decided to resume active military operations.

On August 22, the Americans broke camp and marched to Eutaw Springs, where the British army was encamped, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Stuart, who had succeeded Lord Rawdon due to the latter's illness. At the time, Greene's army consisted of one thousand two hundred fifty-six Continental infantry, plus North and South Carolina militia under Sumter, Pickens and Marion, and cavalry under Lee and Washington, with four pieces of artillery. The British forces consisted of regular troops commanded by Major Marjoribanks and Lieutenant Colonel Stuart, including the famous Buffs, and a large number of Tories from New York, New Jersey and South Carolina, a total of about two thousand men. He had three artillery pieces.

The battle of Eutaw Springs, on September 8, 1781, was one of the hottest engagements of the revolution and in the fight the hero was British Major Marjoribanks, who died in the battle, a valiant and outstanding soldier. American casualties amounted to five hundred twenty-two, including killed, wounded and missing, while the British losses were eight hundred sixty-six, more than two-fifths of the entire British force, including killed, wounded and missing. The British again held the field and claimed a victory, but neither side could carry on the fight and the results were distinctly favorable to Greene's side.

After Eutaw Springs, there was no serious fighting in the states of North or South Carolina or Georgia, and the British domination of territory was confined to the seaports of Charleston and Savannah and the areas immediately surrounding those cities.

The battle site at Eutaw Springs is now a national military park about sixty miles from Charlotte, toward Charleston.

On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis, who had finally been forced by a lack of supplies and support to bring the British forces in Virginia to a peninsula on Chesapeake Bay at Yorktown, surrendered his army. He had intended to rendezvous with British naval forces which would take his army to safety but the French fleet under Admiral d'Estaing had reappeared and blockaded the port. A terrific storm had also intervened and had dispersed the British transports and their supporting vessels. Washington had descended upon the British forces from the north and besieged Yorktown in a masterly fashion, finally achieving the victory which is now regarded as the end of the Revolutionary War.

"In fact, the capitulation at Yorktown was the surrender of only one of the three British armies in America, and that the weakest. New York was still held as strongly as ever; Wilmington in North Carolina and Savannah in Georgia were still in British hands, and Charleston, the capital city of the south and its most important strategic position. Yorktown was not everything. In fact, peace was yet more than a year away; and during that time, though no important battle was fought, the troops in the south had to continue their exertions and undergo much hardship."

Although Greene had great leaders under his command in the southern campaign, including General Daniel Morgan, General Elijah Clarke, Colonels Pickens, Sumner, Sumter, Wade Hampton, Francis

Marion, William Davie, William Washington, Richard Henry Lee, and others, to Greene alone must go the glory for victory in the Southern campaign, which ended the war.

"The campaigns of Greene and his army in the south, which brought about the overthrow of British power in Georgia and the Carolinas, have been ably summarized and brilliantly characterized by three historians of note - one an American, the other two Englishmen. Major General Francis Vinton Greene writes:

The eleven months campaign - January to December 1781, from the Catawba to the Dan and from the Dan back to Charleston and Augusta - received at the time the enthusiastic commendation of Washington and his comrades on the one hand and of Tarleton and Stedman on the other. It has always been considered one of the most brilliant in American annals, and it has been quite as much praised by English as by American writers. Though the numbers on each side were small, yet from the military standpoint it is full of interest and instruction and well repays examination in all its details. The marches, the manoeuvres, the sieges, the raids and scouting by both Lee and Tarleton, the improvised pontoon-trains, the proper use of the topography of the country for defense and offense - were all admirable. There was but little artillery on either side, but it was well handled. The four battles were fiercely contested and the percentage of loss on both sides was large. The British had the advantage of well-trained and well-armed troops, but this was more than counter-balanced by the superiority of American generalship. In only one respect can Greene be criticized, and whether the criticism is just or unjust it is hard to say. He lost every battle. Morgan, under similar circumstances, gained a great victory. If Greene had possessed the same temperament as Morgan or Wayne [or, it may be said, as Benedict Arnold] he would probably, both at Guilford and at Eutaw, have made one more effort and risked everything on the result of it. If unsuccessful, he would have been destroyed; if successful, he would have hastened by a few months what he finally accomplished. The general opinion is, and it is probably well founded, that the circumstances did not justify the risk, and that his prudence - in saving his little army while there was yet time and after he had, in each case, inflicted such loss on his adversary as to compel the adversary's retreat - was not the least of the many exhibitions of good judgment which characterized the whole campaign.

Sir George Otto Trevelyan in his history of the Revolution presents this appreciation of Greene's services and the services of his men:

Nathaniel Greene, while he was securing those great and decisive results, had depended mainly on his own resources, and had taken all his measures entirely on his own responsibility. So far as any combined action between the Northern and Southern armies was concerned, they might just as well have been operating in two different hemispheres. The intervening spaces were so enormous, and the obstacles to free and rapid communication so formidable, that news of victory or defeat did not arrive at Washington's headquarters in New Jersey until three or four weeks after a battle had been fought in South Carolina; and Washington's letters of advice and criticism, even if he had been unwise enough to write them, would have taken as long, and longer still, to find Greene in one of his shifting bivouacs on the banks of the Santee or the Catawba.

Greene's handful of Continental troops had performed wonders ... Between April 1780, and April 1781, they had marched above two thousand six hundred miles, besides being engaged in many skirmishes and two pitched battles. They had passed through, or over, a score of streams many of which ... would have been reckoned large rivers in any other country in the world. Shoeless and in rags, and laden with their heavy firelocks, they plodded through the wilderness for month after month of a never-ending campaign without showing any perceptible diminution of their martial ardor. After a lost battle - which was a familiar experience to them - they almost

instantaneously recovered their self-confidence and their self-complacency, with the invariable elasticity of the American soldier....

At Eutaw Springs many of the Continental infantry, the cloth of whose coats had long ago rotted off them in fragments, 'fought with pieces of [Spanish] moss tied on the shoulder and flank to keep the musket and the cartridge-box from galling. " They sometimes got nothing for ten or twelve days running except. half a pound of flour and a morsel of beef "so miserably poor that scarce any mortal could make use of it " and were fain to live upon green corn and unripe apples and peaches. During the pursuit of Cornwallis, after Guilford Court House, many of them fainted on the road for lack of food.

Of Greene himself, Sir John Fortescue has this to say:

"Greene's reputation stands firmly on his campaign in the Carolinas, his luring Cornwallis into a false position, and his prompt return upon Camden after the retreat of Cornwallis to Wilmington. His keen insight into the heart of Cornwallis' blunders and his skillful use of his guerilla troops are the most notable features of his work, and stamp him as a general of patience, resolution and profound common sense, qualities which go far towards making a great general. One gift he seems to have lacked, namely, the faculty of leadership, to which, as well as to bad luck must be ascribed the fact that he was never victorious in a general action . . . Saving this one small matter, Greene, who was a very noble character, seems to me to stand little if at all lower than Washington as a general in the field. "

After the war, the state of Georgia gave General Greene a plantation near Savannah, where he resided until his death. The Union Bag-Camp Paper Corporation plant now occupies part of the old plantation site. General Greene's body was interred in Savannah and a magnificent obelisk erected in the square on Bull Street.

When he joined the Continental army, his Quaker brethren ousted him from membership in Rhode Island, but his unfaltering service and devotion to his country immortalized his name.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This sketch was made from "The War of the Revolution", Two Volumes, by Christopher Ward, published by The MacMillan Company: New York, 1952. References and quotations may be found therein.