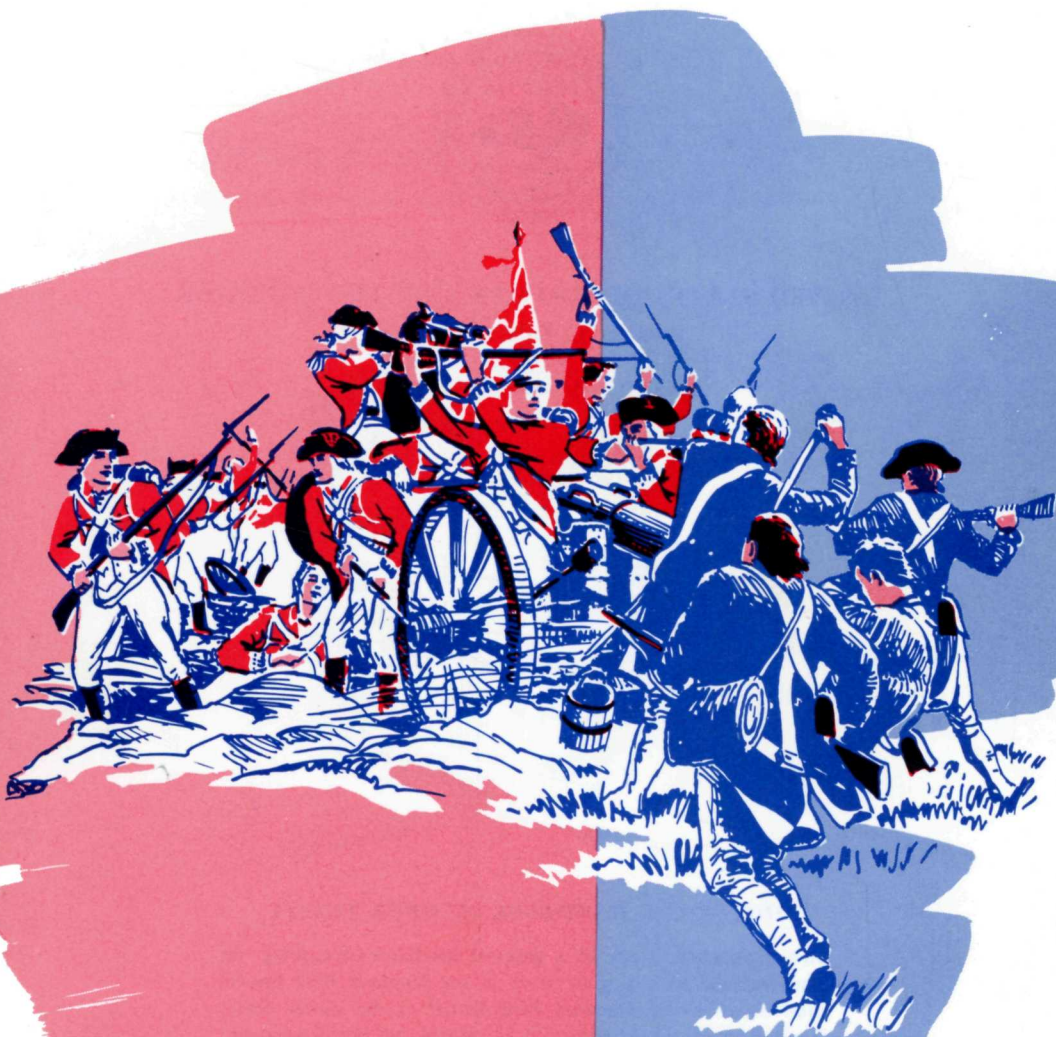


GUILFORD COURTHOUSE





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Stewart L. Udall, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*

HISTORICAL HANDBOOK NUMBER THIRTY

This publication is one of a series of handbooks describing the historical and archeological areas in the National Park System administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. It is printed by the Government Printing Office and may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D.C. Price 35 cents.

FOR YOUR SAFETY
Pedestrians viewing the battlefields can become forgetful and inattentive to traffic. Drivers should proceed slowly and with great care.

GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

National Military Park

NORTH CAROLINA

by Courtland T. Reid

(Based on original historical narrative by William P. Brandon)



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HISTORICAL HANDBOOK SERIES NO. 30

Washington, D.C., 1959

(Reprint 1961)

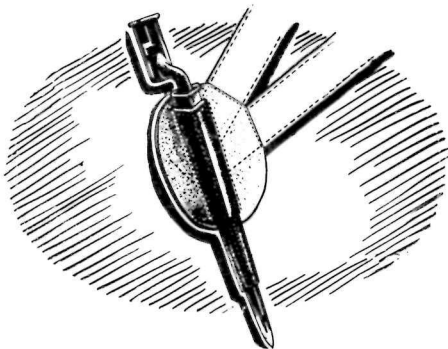
The National Park System, of which Guilford Courthouse National Military Park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and inspiration of its people.



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN.....	1
SWEEP THROUGH GEORGIA.....	3
SIEGE OF CHARLESTON.....	3
BATTLE OF CAMDEN.....	3
BATTLE OF KINGS MOUNTAIN.....	5
GREENE APPOINTED SOUTHERN COMMANDER.....	6
BATTLE OF COWPENS.....	7
RACE FOR THE RIVER CROSSINGS.....	10
THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE BEGINS.....	11
AMERICAN LINES.....	12
BRITISH LINES.....	14
ATTACK ON THE FIRST LINE.....	17
ATTACK ON THE SECOND LINE.....	17
ATTACK ON THE THIRD LINE.....	20
AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL.....	22
THE ROAD TO YORKTOWN.....	23
GUIDE TO THE AREA.....	27
THE GUILFORD BATTLE GROUND COMPANY.....	35
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK....	37
HOW TO REACH THE PARK.....	38
ABOUT YOUR VISIT.....	38
ADMINISTRATION.....	40
RELATED AREAS.....	40
SUGGESTED READINGS.....	40





"Another such victory would destroy the British Army."

—CHARLES JAMES FOX.

THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE, fought March 15, 1781, marked the beginning of the end of the Revolutionary struggle. It was a British victory, but a victory which left the enemy so weak that it caused them to lose the campaign in the Southern Colonies—a victory that started the armies of Cornwallis on the road to Yorktown and surrender.

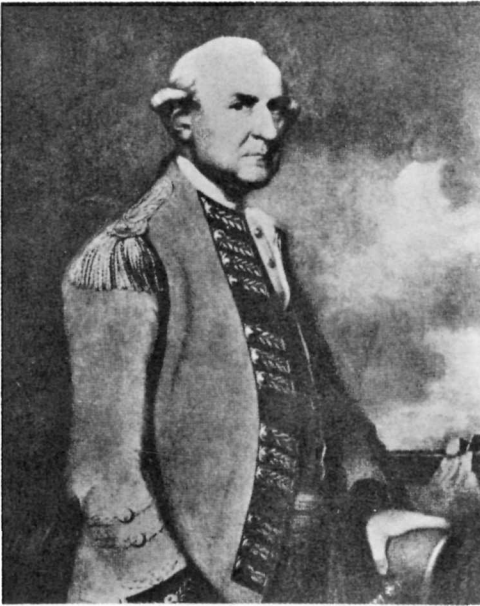
Inscribed on the Nathanael Greene monument in the park is this statement on the significance of the battle by C. Alphonso Smith:

In the maneuvering that preceded it, in the strategy that compelled it, in the heroism that signalized it, and in the results that flowed from it, the Battle of Guilford Court House is second to no battle fought on American soil. Over the brave men who fell here their comrades marched to ultimate victory at Yorktown, and the cause of constitutional self-government to assured triumph at Philadelphia. To officer and private, to Continental soldier and volunteer militiaman, honor and award are alike due. They need neither defense nor eulogy but only just recognition. . . .

The Southern Campaign

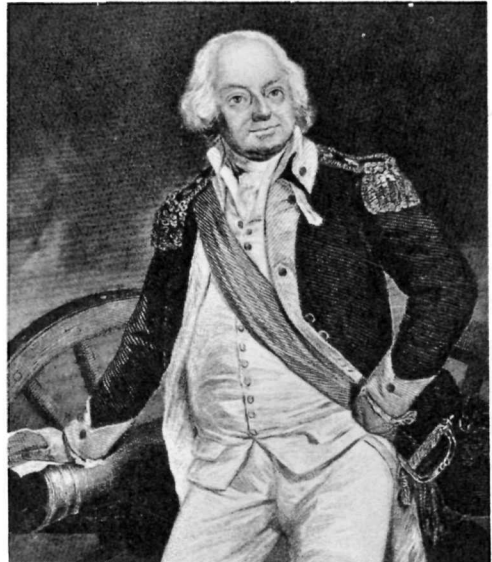
The campaign climaxed by the Battle of Guilford Courthouse began more than 2 years earlier. In 1778, with the war approaching a stalemate in the North, the British authorities adopted a new

The First Maryland Regiment charging the British Guard at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. A reproduction by F. E. Buffmire from a painting by F. C. Yohn.



Lord Charles Cornwallis, Lieutenant General in command of the British forces in the South. After a portrait by John Singleton Copley.

plan to transfer operations to the South, an area relatively untouched by the war up to that time. They planned to overrun the Southern Colonies successively from Georgia northward in the belief that little more than a parade of British might would be necessary to restore those Colonies to normal relations with the Crown.



Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, who surrendered his American Army to British forces under Sir Henry Clinton, at Charleston, S.C., in May 1780. From a lithograph donated to the National Park Service by the Guilford Battle Ground Company.

Sweep Through Georgia

Accordingly, an expeditionary force sent to Georgia under Sir Archibald Campbell captured Savannah during the last week of 1778. With the assistance of Gen. Augustine Prevost, who had marched northward from Florida with 2,000 men, Campbell completed the conquest of Georgia during the first half of 1779. In April, Prevost entered South Carolina and devastated it; but, failing to take Charleston, the key city of the region, he was compelled to return to Georgia. In September, the Americans, aided by a French fleet, attempted to retake Savannah, but they were repulsed with severe losses.

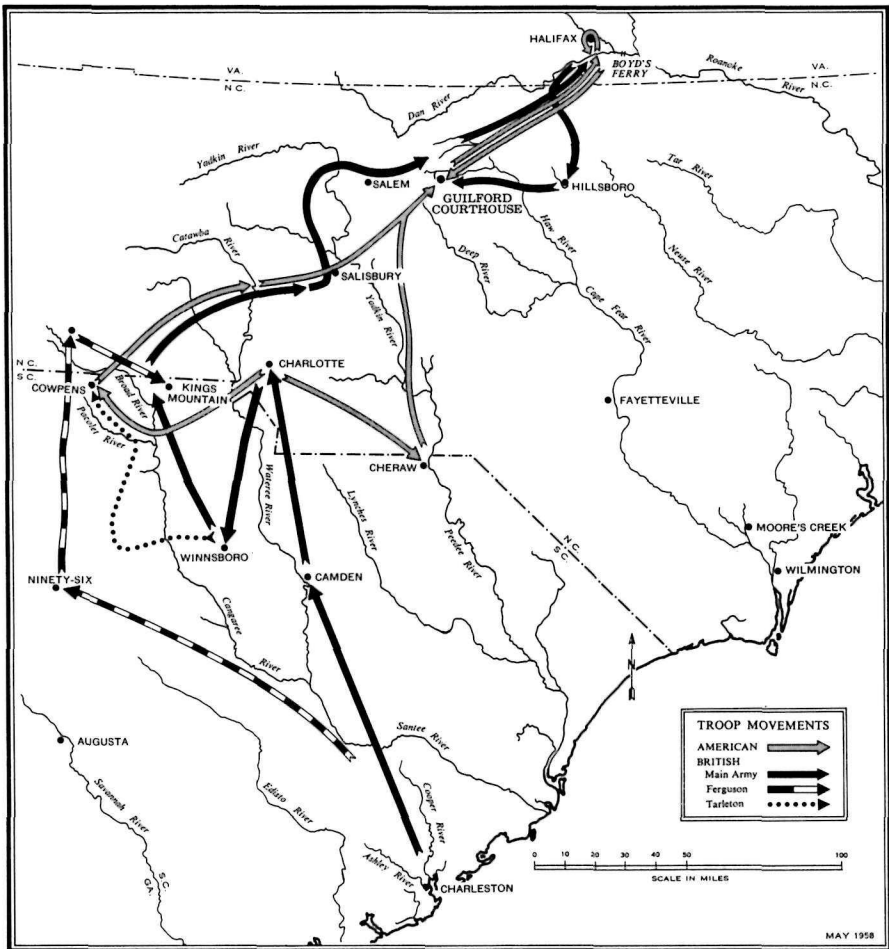
Siege of Charleston

In December Sir Henry Clinton, commander in chief of British forces in America, sailed south from New York with 8,000 men. He landed at Tybee Island at the mouth of the Savannah River. After obtaining reinforcements from Prevost, he proceeded against Charleston. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, the American commander, should have abandoned Charleston, but instead he collected all the troops he could and shut himself up in the city, where he surrendered on May 12, 1780, after a brief siege.

Having obtained his objective, Clinton returned to New York, leaving the Earl of Cornwallis in command, with the task of consolidating the gains in the South and continuing the conquest. Cornwallis established a series of military posts throughout South Carolina, but he was constantly annoyed and harassed by guerrilla raids led by such famed partisan leaders as Francis Marion, Thomas Sumter, Andrew Pickens, and Otis Williams. Charleston remained the British base of operations and supply depot, while activity in the interior centered at Camden.

Battle of Camden

In June, Gen. Horatio Gates was appointed commander of patriot troops in the South. He determined to liberate the South, beginning with a move in force against the British stronghold at Camden. This was, strategically and tactically, a sound conception, but in its execution Gates failed completely. His defeat at Camden on August 16, 1780, was one of the most disastrous battles in which an American army has ever been engaged. This defeat terminated all organized opposition to British control in South Caro-



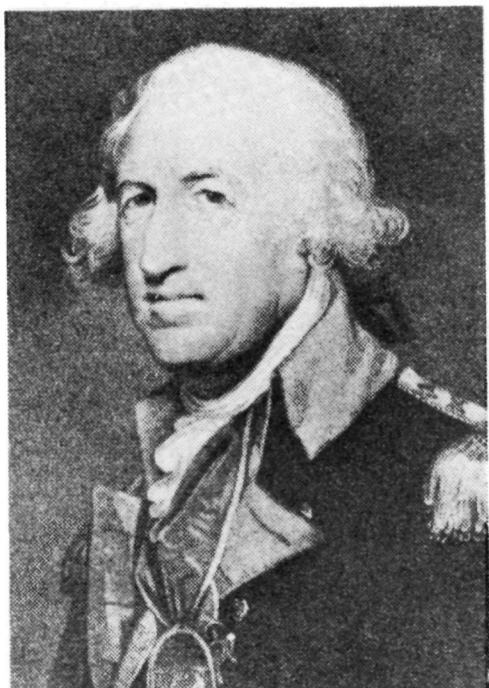
SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN TO THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

1780

- May 12 *Charleston Surrenders to the British.*
- August 16 *Cornwallis wins victory at Camden.*
- Sept. 26 *Cornwallis occupies Charlotte.*
- October 7 *Battle of Kings Mountain.*
- October 14 *Cornwallis retreats to Winnsboro.*
- December *Greene takes command at Charlotte.*

1781

- January 17 *Morgan defeats Tarleton at Cowpens.*
- February *American Army reunited at Guilford, but retreat continues north of Dan River.*
- March *Greene returns to Guilford, is attacked there by Cornwallis in Battle of Guilford Courthouse March 15, 1781.*

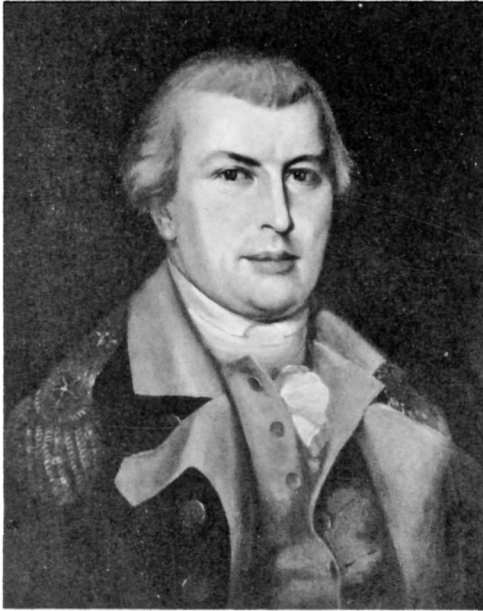


*Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates,
American Commander in the
South during most of 1780.*
Courtesy Emmet Collection,
New York, Public Library.

lina and cleared the way for further advances. In September, Cornwallis moved his main army from Camden to Charlotte. Simultaneously, a flank column, under Maj. Patrick Ferguson, was marching from Fort Ninety-Six through the Piedmont, carrying the war into the upcountry. This column was expected to join Cornwallis at Charlotte.

Battle of Kings Mountain

Ferguson's advance aroused the back-country mountaineers, hitherto not particularly concerned with the war. Separated by time and distance from the more thickly populated coastal plains, these settlers had their own problems and their own troubles—notably the Indians. Ferguson's appearance in their own region was, however, of vital concern to them. They forthwith assembled in small bodies, each under its own leader, for the purpose of repelling the invasion. Eventually, about 2,000 of them gathered from the frontiers of the four southernmost States and at once set out in pursuit of the invader who had learned of the gathering and had turned toward Charlotte. Ferguson took position on Kings Moun-



Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene, American Commander in the South during 1780-81. After a painting by Charles Willson Peale. Independence National Historical Park Collection.

tain to await reinforcements and there was discovered and immediately attacked by about 1,000 backwoodsmen on October 7.

The position Ferguson chose for his stand was almost ideally suited to the type of fighting at which his adversaries were most adept. As a result, at the end of approximately an hour Ferguson was dead, about 400 of his men were slain, and more than 700 captured. On learning the news of this disaster, Cornwallis fell back from Charlotte to Winnsborough to await reinforcements.

Greene Appointed Southern Commander

A few days after Cornwallis withdrew from North Carolina, the Continental Congress made an important move affecting the war in the South. The fiasco at Camden had caused that body to lose faith in Gates, and Gen. George Washington was requested to nominate a successor. Nathanael Greene was Washington's choice, and Congress accordingly appointed him commander of the Southern Department.

Greene reached Charlotte early in December. There he found the remnant of Gates' force which had been joined by some additional militia. The men were low in morale and poorly equipped. Obviously, the Americans were in no condition to encounter the main British force. Therefore Greene decided to wage guerrilla-

Brig. Gen. Daniel Morgan, the "Old Waggoner," defeated the British cavalry under the command of Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton at Cowpens. From an engraving by Chappell. Photo by Cook. Donated to the National Park Service by the Guilford Battle Ground Company.



type warfare against Cornwallis' exposed western outposts. Dividing his army, Greene sent Gen. Daniel Morgan with about half of the men to the southwest toward Fort Ninety-Six. Meanwhile Greene conducted the remainder to a position on the Pee Dee River near the present site of Cheraw, S.C. This move was undoubtedly dangerous and violated the basic rule of strategy which forbids the division of a force in the face of a superior enemy; but it forced Cornwallis to act, for the Americans were distributed in a way that endangered his entire forward line. That line ran from Georgetown through Camden, Winnsborough, and Fort Ninety-Six to Augusta.

Battle of Cowpens

The British commander's answer to this threat was to divide his own army. He sent Col. Banastre Tarleton with a strong column

BRITISH UNIFORMS



First Battalion of the Guards.

Tarleton's Legion.





Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton was Cornwallis' chief subordinate and a brilliant cavalry officer. From a lithograph print donated to the National Park Service by the Guilford Battle Ground Company.

to operate against Morgan, while he intended to move into position to intercept the Americans whom he expected Tarleton to drive northward. Unfortunately for Cornwallis' plan, Morgan roundly defeated Tarleton in a battle at Cowpens, and then escaped because Cornwallis had delayed about 48 hours in moving the main British force northward. The Battle of Cowpens took place in mid-January 1781, and in it the British suffered a reverse almost as serious as that of Kings Mountain 3 months earlier.

Race for the River Crossings

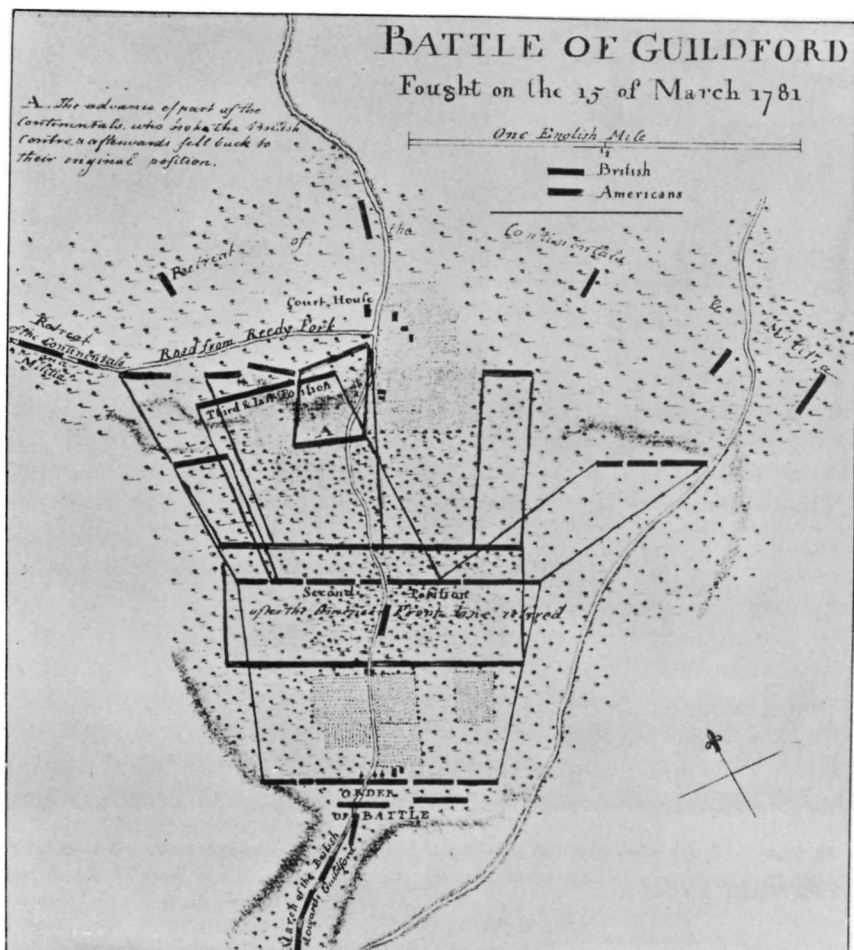
Morgan began a rapid retreat northward and eastward immediately after Cowpens, with Cornwallis in close pursuit. The two armies were then about 25 miles apart. Twenty-three days later, after the Americans had marched about 125 miles airline distance, they had gained 3 miles. When he began to retreat, Morgan sent news of his victory and of his future plans to Greene. Thereupon, Greene set his force in motion northward under Gen. Isaac Huger, while he, himself, with a small escort, joined Morgan near Beatty's Ford on the Catawba River near the present site of Moorseville, N.C. The Yadkin River was crossed a few miles from Salisbury at the Trading Ford, where an overnight rise of 2 feet in the stream prevented the passage of the pursuing British. From that point the Americans continued to Guilford Courthouse, where they were joined by the other half of the army from Cheraw, and whence the retreat was continued toward Virginia.

Cornwallis, unable to use the Trading Ford because of the high water, ascended the Yadkin River to the Shallow Ford, several miles west of the Moravian settlement at Salem.

By this time Greene's plans were fairly evident. He wished to avoid battle, to draw the British as far as possible from their base, and to be able to retire into Virginia if the necessity should arise. To prevent Greene from escaping and in the hope of forcing an engagement, Cornwallis continued the pursuit which developed into a race for the river fords.

The Dan River was deep and could be forded only on its upper reaches; therefore the Englishman interposed his army between Greene and these fords in the expectation that he might compel the Americans to fight. Greene, however, had prepared for just such a contingency and at his direction boats had been built and collected on the south bank of the Dan. In them the Americans safely crossed the river. Cornwallis gave up the chase and marched back to Hillsborough, where he raised the Royal Standard and issued a proclamation calling upon all loyal subjects to rally to his assistance. The results, however, were so disappointing that within a few days his army was again on the march, partly from the necessity of securing food.

Meanwhile, Greene collected reinforcements and rested his army in Virginia. His main object had been to draw Cornwallis away from his base, and, fearing now that he might return to it, Greene recrossed the Dan about March 1. For about 2 weeks he kept on the move, playing for time and position, and avoiding decisive action until he could be joined by the last of the summoned militia reinforcements. These reinforcements arrived in camp on March



This plan of battle, engraved for Henry Lee's Memoirs of the War, is a copy of the so-called Tarleton Map, which was published in London in 1787. It is not wholly accurate, and the north point should be rotated 50° to the left for proper orientation.

13 and 14, and the whole American force immediately marched to Guilford Courthouse where battle stations were taken. Cornwallis was informed of this on the 14th, and early on the next morning he marched from his camp on Deep River to the engagement he had so long sought.

The Battle of Guilford Courthouse Begins

Lt. Col. Henry Lee opened the battle with an advance guard action against the British near the Quaker settlement of New Garden,

Lt. Col. Henry Lee, familiarly known as "Light Horse Harry." His cavalry was used brilliantly by General Greene in the Southern Campaign. By J. Herring after a painting by Gilbert Stuart. Donated to the National Park Service by Guilford Battle Ground Company.



3 miles west of the American position. This skirmish resulted in no advantage to either side. The Americans retired, and the British continued to advance along the New Garden Road toward the courthouse.

American Lines

Greene's troops were drawn up in three lines, approximately 400 yards apart, facing west. The first two lines extended north and south across the New Garden road; the third line was entirely north of the road, following the crest of a low hill. Heavily wooded terrain limited the effectiveness of cavalry. The woods likewise reduced the effectiveness of artillery since the field of fire, particularly for the attacking force, was poor. Approximately one-half mile in front of the position was a small stream from which the ground rose steadily, though rather gradually, to the crest of a hill where the first line was drawn up. Three cultivated fields, one to the north and two to the south of the road, provided an excellent field of fire for parts of that line, and the rail fences enclosing the cultivated land afforded the troops some protection. The second line was entirely in the woods, and the third was near the eastern edge of a good-sized clearing.

Both flanks of the first two lines and the right flank of the third were unprotected. But the heavy woods dictated a direct frontal



New Garden Meetinghouse. A skirmish near this building was the first clash in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The meetinghouse was also used as a hospital for some of the wounded in the battle.

attack by the British; therefore these exposed flanks were not a disadvantage for the Americans. The left flank of the third line rested on the New Garden Road and was protected by artillery during the later stages of the battle.

The First Line consisted of two brigades of North Carolina Militia, almost all of whom were wholly untrained and entirely without battle experience. On the left flank were stationed Lt. Col. Henry Lee's Legion and Col. William Campbell's Riflemen. The former were regulars and the latter were frontiersmen from the Virginia and North Carolina mountains who had had appreciable campaign experience, including participation in the Battle of Kings Mountain. The right flank detachment was composed of Lt. Col. William Washington's regular cavalry, the remnant of the Delaware regiment of Continentals, and Col. Charles Lynch's Riflemen, com-

parable in experience and capacity to Campbell's. In the center on the road, a section of artillery, two 6-pound guns, commanded the stream-crossing below.

The Second Line was made up entirely of Virginia Militia, the majority of whom were as untrained and inexperienced as were the North Carolinians in the front line. The Virginia officers, however, were largely men who had served in the Continental Army, and a number of them had had some battle experience. Also in the ranks of the Virginians were a few men who had had previous military service. Thus the second line was somewhat stronger than the first by virtue of this leaven of experience. Finally, Brig. Gen. Edward Stevens, in command of one brigade, placed sentinels a few yards in the rear of his line to insure against any break by his men.

The Third Line was composed of Greene's two small brigades of Continental troops. Of the four regiments, one, the 1st Maryland, was a veteran unit. The 2d Maryland and the two Virginia regiments were recently reorganized, had excellent officers, and contained a good proportion of veterans in the ranks. The total force, regular and militia, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, numbered about 4,400. Of this total possibly 1,500 to 1,600 of all arms were regulars, but many of these fell into the recruit classification.

British Lines

Lord Cornwallis commanded an army, numerically inferior to Greene's; but it was vastly superior in organization, discipline, training, and experience. Engaged in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse were about 2,000 of the very flower of the British forces in America. There were two battalions, a grenadier, and a light infantry company of the Guards; the 23d and 33d Regiments of foot, the former, the famous Welch Fusiliers; the 71st Highlanders, the King's Own Borderers; the Regiment of Bose, one of the best of the Hessian units; some Hessian Yagers (riflemen); Tarleton's Legion Cavalry; and a detachment of the Royal Artillery. All were veterans, thoroughly schooled in the business of war, and commanded by able, experienced officers.

Advancing toward the east from the scene of the opening skirmish along the New Garden Road, the attacking force crossed the stream at the foot of the hill in front of the American position, and formed for action. Meanwhile, the American artillery had opened fire in an attempt to delay the crossing, and to harass the forma-

North Carolina Militia.



Virginia Militia.



AMERICAN UNIFORMS



*Delaware and Maryland
Infantry, Continental Line.*



William Washington's Cavalry.



North Carolina Militia in the First Line.

tion of the line, but with little result. The British artillery replied with an equally useless expenditure of ammunition.

Attack formation was a single line with a small reserve. The right wing consisted of the Highlanders and the Regiment of Bose with the 1st Battalion of Guards in support. In the left wing the 23d and 33d Regiments were in line and the 2d Battalion and Grenadiers of the Guards in support. The small reserve consisted of the artillery, confined by the woods to the road in the center; the Yagers and the Light Infantry of the Guards, stationed to the left in the woods; and the cavalry, on the road in column behind the artillery.

Virginia Militia in the Second Line.



Attack on the First Line

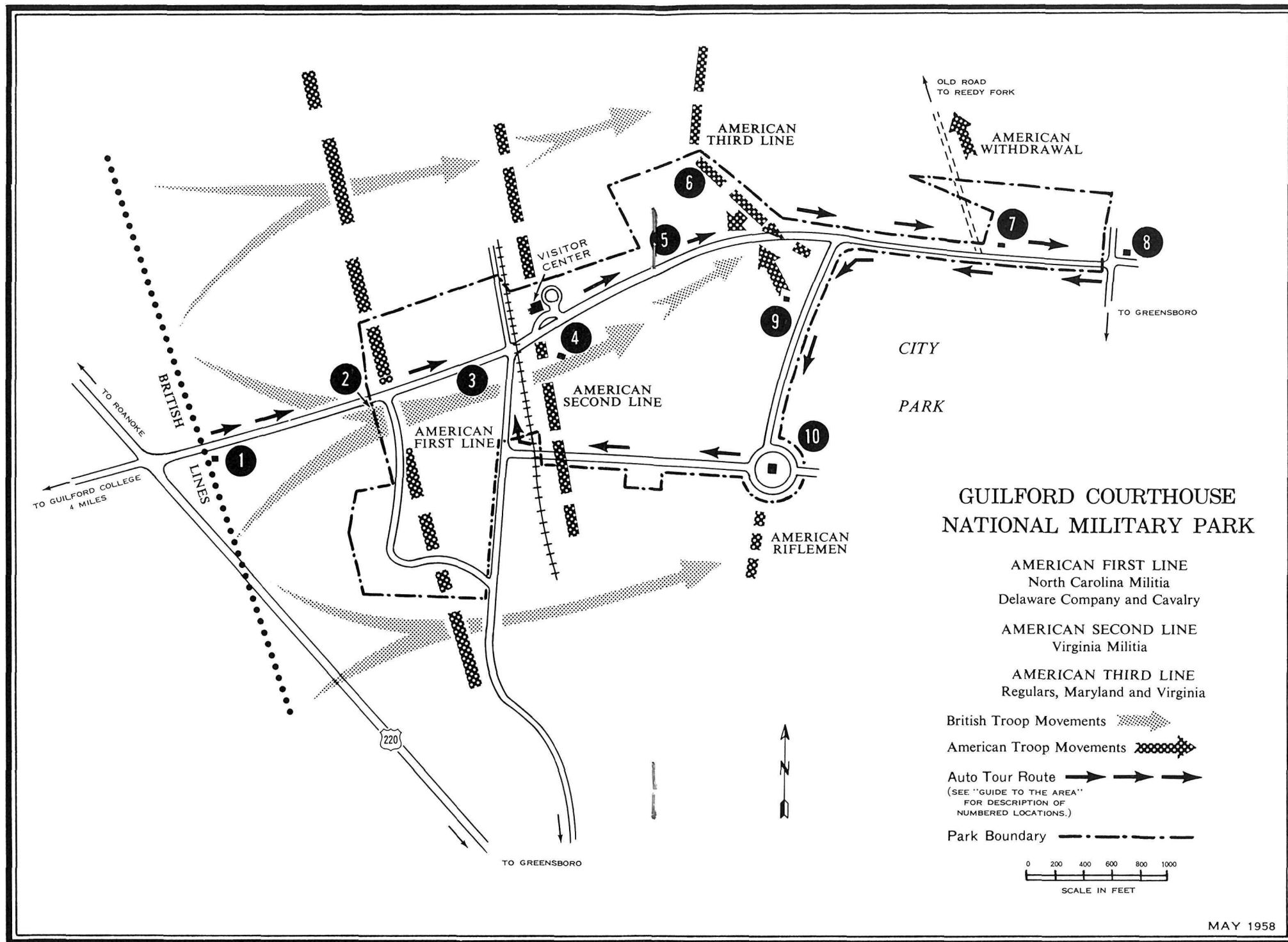
Their formation now completed, the British troops waited for the command to attack. At its word they moved almost directly east toward the brow of the hill held by the Americans. Brisk fighting ensued on the two flanks, where Greene had stationed his experienced troops. This flank resistance forced the commander of each of the two British wings to commit his small support to the battle in its earliest stages. Gen. Alexander Leslie, on the right, brought up the 1st Battalion of the Guards to assist in opposing the American left, and thus extended his own line. On the British left Lt. Col. James Webster caused his whole line to incline to the left, while his support, the 2d Battalion and Grenadiers of the Guards, moved into the center to maintain contact with the right wing and fill the interval caused by Webster's swerve to the left. The Light Infantry and Yagers were brought up from the reserve and posted on the extreme left flank. Many casualties were suffered by the British, especially by the flank units, but the center encountered little resistance, for that part of the American line, in large measure, broke at the first onset.

The American left flank detachment under Lee and Campbell retired toward the southeast under pressure from the Regiment of Bose and the 1st Battalion of the Guards. Continuing their struggle, these units became completely detached from the main course of the engagement, conducting what amounted to a separate conflict of their own. This battle within a battle was finally broken off by the Americans at about the same time that the main engagement ended.

The exact course of the American right flank detachment is unknown. It seems most probable that it briefly took position on the flank of the second line; and, upon the retirement of that body, moved thence to the flank of the third.

Attack on the Second Line

The break in the center permitted the attack to proceed east along the road and through the woods about 400 yards, where it struck the second line. There the Virginians gave a good account of themselves, inflicting further casualties upon the attackers. Superior British discipline, organization, and experience, however, were too much for the militia, who were forced to retire to the rear. The second line withdrew in a distinctly more orderly fashion than had the first line.



Attack on the Third Line

Withdrawal of the second line opened the way for the advance against the third. This last line was entirely north of the road and was opposed by the British left wing. Heavy woods and several gullies of considerable size served to slow up the advance, particularly that of the Welch Fusiliers. The 2d Battalion of the Guards made contact with the left units of the American line almost simultaneously with the attack on the American right by the Yagers, the Light Infantry, and the 33d Regiment. A general engagement resulted in which the contest was more nearly equal than any which had preceded it.

The Guards were shattered by the combined efforts of the Maryland Brigade and a charge by Washington's cavalry. This charge was the only real cavalry action during the battle. In their attack on the American line, the Guards had been repulsed by the 1st Maryland. Now in a counterattack, the Maryland regulars advanced to engage with the bayonet. Precisely at this time Washington led his saber-wielding dragoons through the broken ranks of the Guards and then left them to the mercies of the Marylanders. The infantry closed in a fierce but brief hand-to-hand conflict, ended only by a "whiff of grape-shot" thrown into the struggling mass at the order of Cornwallis. Only the imminence of a wholesale British retreat could have induced Cornwallis to thus fire into his own men.

The battlefield at Guilford Courthouse as it appeared in 1854. From Lossing's, A Pictorial Field Book of the American Revolution. Sketch by Benson J. Lossing.





Peter Francisco, giant member of the American forces at Guilford, who slew 11 men with his oversized sword during the battle.

On the extreme left the Yagers, the Light Infantry, and the 33d Regiment had been driven back to a position of safety by the steady fire of the Americans. They were not pursued, the defenders in that quarter remaining steadfast in their own position.

Lt. Col. William Washington led the only real cavalry action in the battle. From an engraving by J. B. Forest of a painting by Charles Willson Peale.



Lt. Col. John Eager Howard led the counterattack of the Marylanders. After a painting by Charles Willson Peale. Owned by John Ridgely of Hampton Farmhouse, Towson, Md.



By this time the Fusiliers had succeeded in passing the woods and gullies, which had impeded their progress, and were in position to attack. The Royal Artillery had occupied a position from which it commanded almost the entire American line with grape and canister, and the Highlanders to the south of the road threatened to turn Greene's left flank. The Guards, extricated from their conflict with the Marylanders by the grape-shot, were hastily reorganized, while the latter returned to their position in the American line. Tarleton had been dispatched with the cavalry to recall the 1st Battalion of the Guards from the detached contest with the troops of Lee and Campbell and to conduct that unit to the scene of the major engagement.

Thus, all was ready for a final assault in force upon the one remaining line of American troops. That assault was never to be made, for the American commander decided not to risk a final test of strength which might result in the complete destruction of his army.

American Withdrawal

General Greene was faced with a difficult decision at this juncture. On the one hand a desperate charge by his Continentals, or even a determined stand in their established position, might conceivably have shattered the little English force already weakened by extensive casualties. Either of these courses, however, involved the risk of sacrificing completely, or materially weakening, his two small brigades of regulars—the only thoroughly dependable force in his entire command.

On the other hand, a general retirement from the field with his remaining troops involved no risk and would leave him situated to renew the contest at his own discretion. His Continentals had not, thus far, suffered many casualties. They were entirely under control and fully capable of immediate or future action. He was fully aware that much further campaigning would be necessary if the South were to be redeemed from British domination. He had dealt a blow to his adversary while suffering little himself. He therefore ordered a general retreat, leaving to his enemy the field of conflict and hence the claim to victory.

British arms had gained another hard-fought field. Disciplined, organized, regular troops had triumphed again over greatly superior numbers of raw militia. No more than this had been accomplished. A victory had been won, but won at such cost that it could not be exploited. Of the entire British force at the beginning of the



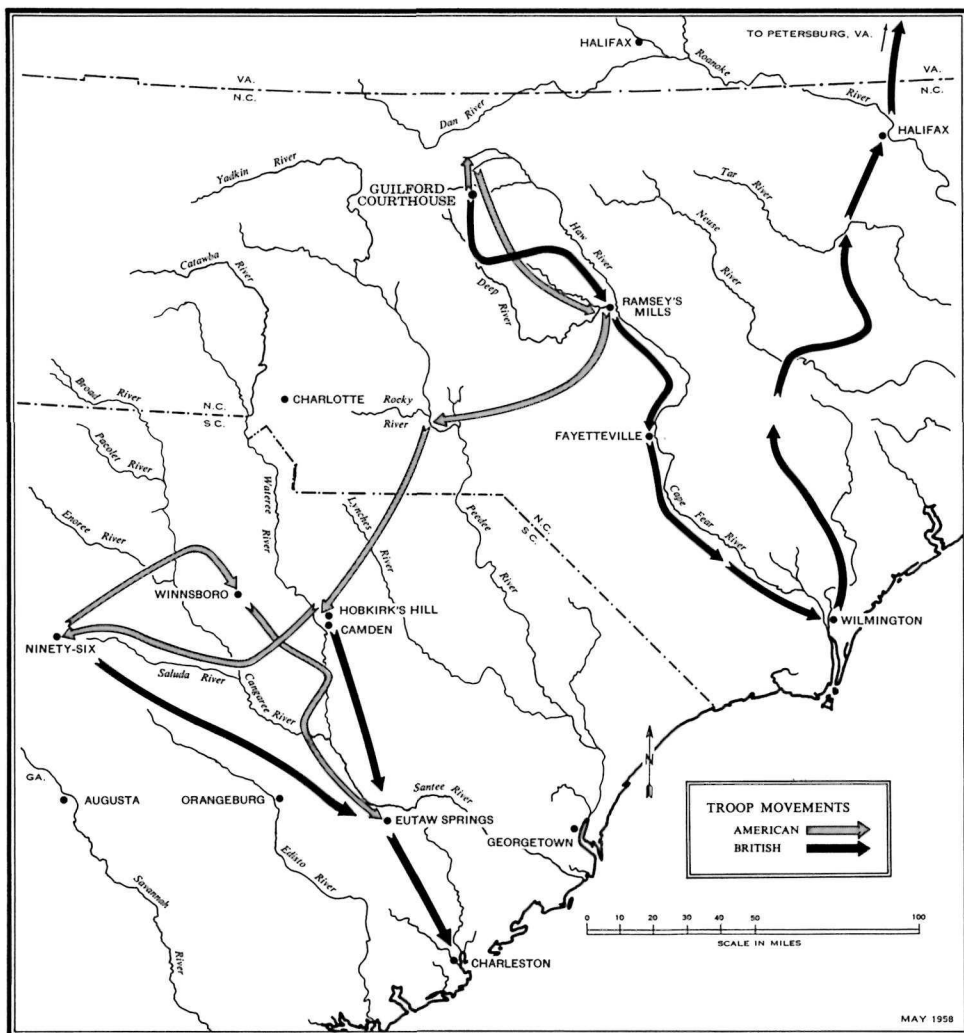
Americans withdrawing from the battlefield.

battle, nearly 600, or more than one-fourth of the whole, were casualties at its close 2½ hours later.

The Americans, on the other hand, suffered only about half as many casualties. A large number of men were missing, principally from among the troops of the first line, but the majority of these found their way back to the army within a few days.

The Road to Yorktown

The Battle of Guilford Courthouse was the climax of a hard campaign of 2 months in the dead of winter. Cornwallis had previously destroyed his baggage train in order that he might pursue the Americans more rapidly during the race for the river fords. Now, after their victory at Guilford, the British found themselves in an almost desperate situation. Shoes, clothing, ammunition, medicines, food—all the myriad supplies and equipment necessary for successful campaigning—were either entirely expended or dangerously low. The men were tired and their morale was none too good. Rest, reorganization, and refitting were essential, and for this Cornwallis required time and safety. The English were, therefore, forced to retreat in order that they might establish immediate contact with their base of operations at Charleston.



SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN AFTER THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

1781

March 18	<i>Cornwallis starts his march to Wilmington.</i>
March & April	<i>Greene follows him for 50 miles, then returns to South Carolina.</i>
April 25	<i>Battle of Hobkirk's Hill.</i>
April & May	<i>Cornwallis marches from Wilmington to Virginia.</i>
May & June	<i>Greene besieges Ninety-Six.</i>
Sept. 8	<i>Battle of Eutaw Springs. British withdraw into Charleston.</i>

Cornwallis Retreating !

PHILADELPHIA, April 7, 1781.

Extract of a Letter from Major-General Greene, dated
CAMP, at *Buffalo Creek*, March 23, 1781.

“ON the 16th Instant I wrote your Excellency, giving an Account of an Action which happened at Guilford Court-House the Day before. I was then persuaded that notwithstanding we were obliged to give up the Ground, we had reaped the Advantage of the Action. Circumstances since confirm me in Opinion that the Enemy were too much gauled to improve their Success. We lay at the Iron-Works three Days, preparing ourselves for another Action, and expecting the Enemy to advance : But of a sudden they took their Departure, leaving behind them evident Marks of Distress. All our wounded at Guilford, which had fallen into their Hands, and 70 of their own, too bad to move, were left at New-Garden. Most of their Officers suffered-- Lord Cornwallis had his Horse shot under him-- Col. Steward, of the Guards was killed, General O'Hara and Cols. Tarleton and Webster, wounded. Only three Field-Officers escaped, if Reports, which seem to be authentic, can be relied on.

Our Army are in good Spirits, notwithstanding our Sufferings, and are advancing towards the Enemy; they are retreating to Cross-Creek.

In South-Carolina, Generals Sumpter and Marion have gained several little Advantages. In one the Enemy lost 60 Men, who had under their Care a large Quantity of Stores, which were taken, but by an unfortunate Mistake were afterwards re taken.

Published by Order,

CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.

††† Printed at N. WILLIS's Office.

Reproduction of a Philadelphia broadside, outlining Greene's activities in the South. In the Emmet Collection, New York Public Library.

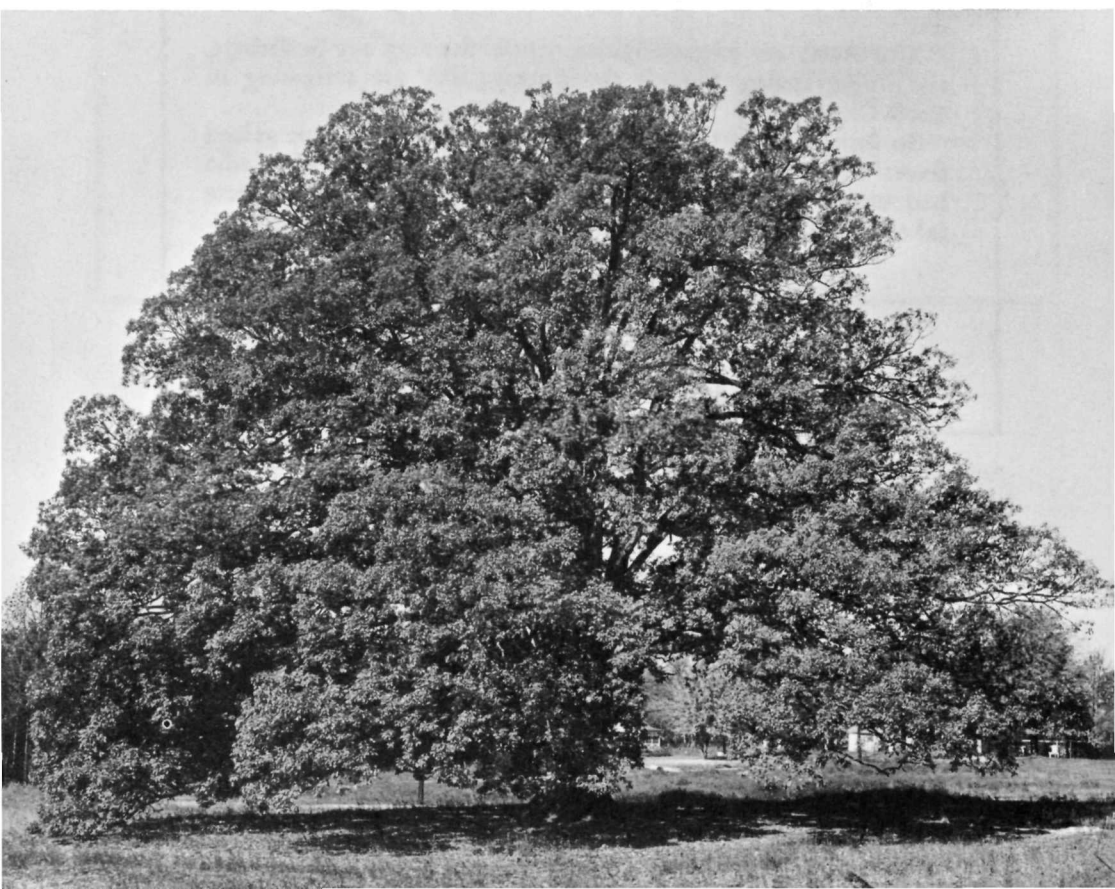
After the battle, Cornwallis headed southeast. His first destination was Cross Creek near Fayetteville. The settlers in that region, almost all Highland Scots, were largely loyalists, and it was thought that they would provide the retreating army with food and a safe haven for reorganization. It was also thought that water commu-

nication with Charleston could be established by way of the Cape Fear River. But the river was not navigable to Cross Creek, nor was food available. Of necessity, then, the march was continued to Wilmington, where the sea route to Charleston was open, and where all needed supplies could be delivered without difficulty.

In the meantime, Greene eagerly grasped the opportunity presented by the action at Guilford Courthouse and the retreat of his adversary. He followed Cornwallis part of the way to Cross Creek, seeking in his turn to bring on a contest. This Cornwallis avoided. After a few days of fruitless pursuit, Greene suddenly changed direction. He led his army into South Carolina and bent his energies to the redemption of that State.

In this purpose he was successful. At the end of the summer he had lost most of his battles, as he had lost at Guilford. But after each battle the British were compelled to evacuate one or more of their posts. Finally, in September, after the Battle of Eutaw Springs, the British were driven from the whole State and

The Liberty Oak. On the morning before the battle, General Greene's men camped around this tree. It stands today as a living reminder of the battle fought here for American liberty.



continued to hold only the city of Charleston, against which Greene was powerless for want of an assisting naval force.

Cornwallis remained at Wilmington for about a month, going thence to Virginia where he united with an army under Benedict Arnold and operated over much of the southern part of the State during the first part of the summer. Early in August he established himself at Yorktown, where he was forced to surrender on October 19.

The importance of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse lies not in the battle itself, nor in the numbers involved, the tactics employed, nor in the casualties inflicted upon either side. Rather its importance is in the effects which flowed from it, and in the fact that in winning, Cornwallis was the ultimate loser.

Thus Guilford Courthouse is important in the immediate result of rendering North Carolina safe and in the larger result of freeing Greene's hands for reconquest to the southward. Broken was the grand British plan of campaign which would have detached the Southern Colonies from the Colonies to the north. Cornwallis was driven into Virginia without making secure his rear. Greene had lost a battle but won a campaign.

Guide to the Area (see map on centerfold)

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park contains approximately 149 acres, including the site over which much of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse was fought, and also the site of the original Guilford County Courthouse. In the park are a total of 29 monuments and memorials, including a fine equestrian statue of Gen. Nathanael Greene. Buried in the area are the remains of six persons prominent in the history of the State of North Carolina.

This guide has been prepared to enable you more readily to identify and appreciate some of the points of interest on the battlefield. Two numbered points, the Hoskins House and the Liberty Oak, are on privately owned land; all other points are within the park boundaries. Signs and markers on the ground lend assistance in following the flow of battle.

1. **HOSKINS HOUSE.** This house is the only structure remaining of those that stood on or near the battlefield during the Revolutionary War. The Hoskins family owned much of the farmland in the vicinity. The house stands in the area where Cornwallis halted his march and arranged his troops in battle formation to begin the assault. The house is said to have been used as a hospital for some of those who were wounded during the battle.



Kerrenbappuch Turner Monument.

2. FRONT LINE OF BATTLE. The British approached from the west and attacked the American first line near the present park boundary. The line was about three-quarters of a mile in length with its center on the New Garden Road, where you are now standing. The North Carolina Militia made up the bulk of the first line. Untrained and without bayonets, they broke before the British massed charge. Regular troops on the flanks of the first line inflicted heavy casualties upon the British before giving way.

The small monument in this area marks the remains of Capt. James Tate, of the Virginia Riflemen, who was killed near the

Quaker settlement of New Garden, 3 miles west, in the skirmish which preceded the battle here. His remains were reinterred on this spot in 1891.

3. KERRENHAPPUCH TURNER MONUMENT. According to tradition, Mrs. Kerrenhappuch Turner rode on horseback from her Maryland home to nurse back to health a son wounded on the Guilford battlefield. Mrs. Turner lived to be 115 years of age and left many descendents, several of whom have been prominent in the history of North Carolina and nearby States.

In this area are several other monuments. Beside the Turner monument is a memorial to Mrs. Turner's grandson, James Morehead, who also fought in the Guilford battle. Across the road is a memorial to Nathaniel Macon and gravestones marking the remains of Maj. John Daves and Gen. Jethro Sumner. All three men were Revolutionary War patriots.

4. NATHANAEL GREENE MONUMENT. The most imposing monument in the park is this memorial to the commander of the American forces at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. It is located in the area where the Virginia Militia occupied the American second line.

Nathanael Greene Monument.





The Delaware and Maryland Monuments.

As early as 1848 there was an effort made by citizens of Greensboro to erect a monument to Greene on the battlefield. An organization was formed and funds raised in 1857-59, but this effort was dropped during the Civil War. In 1888 the first of a series of bills to erect such a monument was introduced into the United States Congress and in 1911 a bill to appropriate \$30,000 for the purpose was passed. Work was begun in 1914 and the monument was unveiled with appropriate ceremonies on July 3, 1915.

Francis Herman Packer was the sculptor. The central figure is an equestrian statue of General Greene. At center front is a symbolic female figure who is crowned with laurel. She holds two palm branches in her right hand and a shield ornamented with an eagle and 13 stars in her left. The monument is 35 feet high and the base is approximately 40 by 30 feet.

5. DELAWARE AND MARYLAND MONUMENTS. Delaware and Maryland regiments made up the bulk of the Southern Continental Army at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The Delaware Monument marks the grave of three unknown American soldiers who fell on the battlefield. Their remains were discovered in 1888 and identified by coat buttons stamped "U.S.A." The Maryland Monument was erected by members of the Maryland Historical Society in memory of the soldiers of the Maryland line. Both monuments were dedicated in 1892.



The American Third Line Monument marks the midpoint of the line.

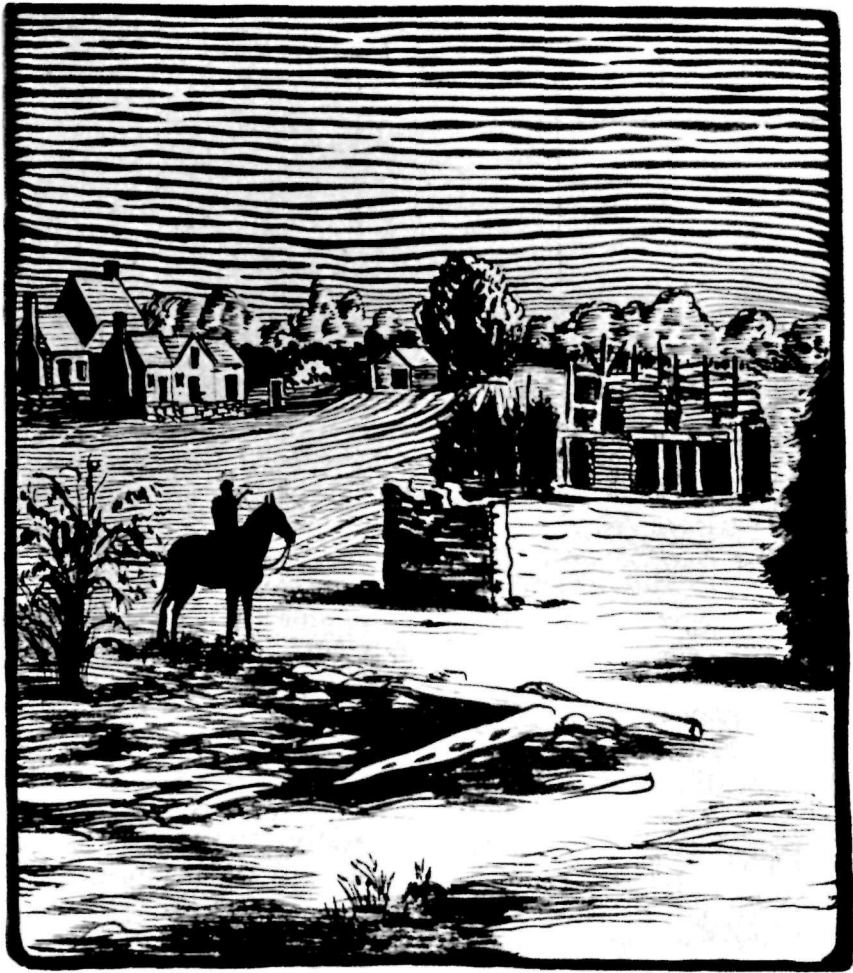
On the road nearby, Cornwallis, during the climactic phase of the battle, ordered two cannon charged with grapeshot to be fired into the hand-to-hand fighting being waged in the vale below. This desperate measure killed a number of his own troops as well as Americans, but it was effective in breaking up the fighting.

6. THIRD LINE MARKER. The American third line was composed of regular troops of the Southern Continental Army—about 1,500 strong at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Thus it was at the third line that the British encountered the most resistance and where the hardest fighting took place. The tall white cenotaph marks the mid-point of the third line, which extended northward from the New Garden Road.

The small monument near the road is a memorial to Lt. Col. James Stewart, leader of the 2d British Guards, who fell mortally wounded at this spot. His sword was exhumed here in 1866. Colonel Stewart can be seen leading the Guards in the action portrayed in the museum diorama at the visitor center.

7. GUILFORD COURTHOUSE SITE. Guilford County was formed in 1771 and the first courthouse was erected at this location in 1774. Greene bivouaced his troops in the clearing around the courthouse the night before the battle. The courthouse, as the most prominent structure in the area, lent its name to the battle fought several hundred yards to the west.

In 1808 it was decided that the county seat should be in the geographical center of the county, which was determined to be 6



Chimney remnant of the original Guilford County Courthouse. After a sketch by Porte Crayon in Harper's, July 1857.

miles to the southeast. A courthouse was constructed at the new location and the city of Greensboro (named for General Greene) grew up around it.

As Greene retreated from the battlefield, he withdrew eastward along the New Garden Road, then turned toward Troublesome Creek on a road that during the Revolutionary War ran northward near the courthouse.

8. LIBERTY OAK. On the morning before the battle, General Greene's men camped around this tree. A white oak, it has a circumference of 17 feet 3 inches at breast height and a spread of more than 100 feet.



Winston Monument. Maj. Joseph Winston is shown giving his order to charge during the final phase of the battle.

9. FRANCISCO MONUMENT. From this hill, Lt. Col. William Washington's cavalry charged the British Guards in the vale below, while simultaneously the 1st Marylanders counterattacked from the edge of the woods. Thus was enacted one of the most dramatic scenes of the Revolutionary War.

With Washington's cavalry was Peter Francisco, a giant of 6 feet 8 inches, who wielded a 5-foot sword given him by Gen. George Washington after Francisco's complaint that ordinary swords were too light. With his huge sword and mighty courage, legend credits Francisco with slaying 11 men in the battle.

The monument was erected by Peter Francisco Pescud, a grandson of the Revolutionary hero. Unveiled in 1904, the monument is also a tribute to the Marquis de Bretigny and, through him, to all French participants in the American War for Independence.

10. WINSTON MONUMENT. Maj. Joseph Winston and Capt. Jesse Franklin led the Surry County Riflemen against the Hessians and Tarleton's dragoons in the last action of the battle. The figure atop the monument depicts Winston waving his troops into battle.

Both Franklin and Winston were later prominent in North Carolina politics, with Franklin serving as Governor and Winston as a member of Congress. The city of Winston-Salem is named in part for the latter. The tombs of both men are located nearby, the remains being reburied here many years after the battle.



Diorama of Col. William Washington's cavalry attacking British regulars. Peter Francisco, left foreground.



Francisco Monument, looking toward the American Third Line.

Judge David Schenck rescued the Guilford battlefield from oblivion by establishing the Guilford Battle Ground Company in 1887.

From a portrait donated to the National Park Service by Paul W. Schenck, after an engraving by F. G. Kernan and Company, New York.



The Guilford Battle Ground Company

Creation of the battlefield park was largely due to the vision, the energy, and the devotion of Judge David Schenck of Greensboro, N.C., who in the early 1880's was accustomed to make frequent visits to the area for the purpose of studying the battle. On one of these visits in October 1886, Judge Schenck suddenly decided to purchase the site in order to rescue it from oblivion. It was nearly sundown, but an irresistible urge to carry out this scheme spurred him to immediate action, and before the twilight had faded, he had bargained for 30 acres of land.

Soon after his initial activity, Judge Schenck succeeded in imparting some of his enthusiasm for the battleground venture to a group of his intimate friends, and together they determined to place the enterprise on a firm basis. They incorporated under the name of The Guilford Battle Ground Company and petitioned the State Legislature for a charter. An act of incorporation, passed by the legislature and ratified on March 7, 1887, stated that the corporation would exist "for the benevolent purpose of preserving and adorning the grounds on and over which the battle of 'Guilford Court House' was fought" and the "erection thereon of monuments, tombstones, or other memorials to commemorate the heroic deeds of the American patriots who participated in this battle for liberty and independence."



The Park Visitor Center.

In May of the same year, the stockholders enumerated in the charter held their first meeting, organized the company, and elected Judge Schenck to the presidency, a position he held for many years. The company then set to work vigorously to carry out the purposes for which it had been formed. Stock was sold at \$25 a share and, as money came in from the sale of stock, more land was purchased. It seems to have been an accepted indication of good citizenship in the community to own one or more shares of stock in the company and, by 1893, stock was owned by 100 individuals and corporations. As it obtained land, the company proceeded to develop the battlefield. Woodlands were cleared and monuments were erected. During the 30 years of the company's existence, between 20 and 30 monuments were erected in the area—some by the company, some by individuals, and others by governmental units, including the United States and the State of North Carolina. The company also erected a small museum and acquired a number of 18th- and early 19th-century items for exhibit. A part of this museum collection is now on display in the visitor center at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park.

In addition to its program for the development of the battlefield, the Guilford Battle Ground Company desired to make its property a historic shrine—a repository for the remains of patriotic and distinguished individuals. As a result, the remains of six persons



The Hooper-Penn-Hewes Monument is a memorial to the three North Carolina signers of the Declaration of Independence.

were secured and reinterred on the battlefield. Among these were two of the North Carolina signers of the Declaration of Independence, a North Carolina senator, and a Governor of the State.

Under the auspices of the company, annual patriotic celebrations were held on the "Battle Ground," a name still used locally to designate the park; and on these occasions, usually July 4, the people of the surrounding country gathered almost *en masse*.

In 1931, the Battle of Guilford Courthouse ~~was~~ reenacted by units of the National Guard in commemoration of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the battle.

Establishment of the National Military Park

An effort to have its property recognized as of national significance and to have it declared a national preserve was inaugurated by the Battle Ground Company in 1910. Several bills to effect the transfer of the property to the Federal Government were introduced in Congress, but it was not until March 2, 1917, that the legislation creating Guilford Courthouse National Military Park was enacted. Promptly after passage of the act, the Battle Ground Company deeded its lands to the United States, wound up its affairs, and went out of existence.

From 1917 to 1933 the park was under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of War. In 1933 the park was transferred to the Department of the Interior to be administered by the National Park Service. An attempt has been made by the Service to restore the battlefield to its historic setting. To that end many trees have been planted to give the area a semblance of the open woodland in which the American and British forces fought.

How to Reach the Park

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park is situated in gently rolling country in the Piedmont section of North Carolina, 6 miles northwest of the center of the city of Greensboro. It is one-half mile east of a major north-south highway, U.S. 220.

About Your Visit

You may obtain information about this and other areas of the National Park System at the visitor center located immediately adjacent to the park entrance. This building is open daily from 9 a.m.

A motor road girdles the park and provides access to all parts of the battlefield.





Monument erected to the memory of "Bugler Boy" Gillies, trumpeter to "Light Horse Harry" Lee. Gillies was killed by troopers of Tarleton's Legion a few miles from the Guilford battlefield.

to 5 p.m., and contains museum exhibits which explain the battle and its significance. Park personnel at the visitor center will assist you. School or other large groups should make advance arrangements with the superintendent of the park for special service.

Adjoining the National Military Park on the southeast is a park owned by the city of Greensboro in which are facilities for picnics and limited fishing.

Administration

Guilford Courthouse National Military Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Park offices are located in the visitor center. A superintendent, whose address is Box 9145, Plaza Station, Greensboro, N.C., is in immediate charge.

Related Areas

Significant parts of several of the major battlefields of the Revolutionary War have been set aside under the control of the Federal Government to be administered by the National Park Service. Areas in this group are: Colonial National Historical Park (which includes the Yorktown Battlefield), Va.; Cowpens National Battlefield Site, S.C.; Kings Mountain National Military Park, S.C.; Moores Creek National Military Park, N.C.; and Saratoga National Historical Park, N.Y. Other areas, also administered by the National Park Service and related to the Revolutionary War, are Federal Hall National Memorial, N.Y.; Independence National Historical Park, Pa.; Morristown National Historical Park, N.J.; Statue of Liberty National Monument, N.Y.; and Washington Monument National Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Suggested Readings

- ALDEN, JOHN RICHARD, *American Revolution, 1775-1783*. The New American Nation Series, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954.
- , *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789. A History of the South*, Vol. III, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 1957.
- CALDWELL, CHARLES, *Memoirs of the Life and Campaigns of the Hon. Nathanael Greene*. Robert DeSilver, Philadelphia, 1819.
- GREENE, GEORGE W., *The Life of Nathanael Greene*. 3 vols. G. P. Putnam and Son, New York, 1867-71.
- LEE, HENRY, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States*. University Publishing Company, New York, 1870. (1st ed., Philadelphia and New York, 1812.)
- MILLER, JOHN C., *Triumph of Freedom*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1948.
- SCHEER, GEORGE F. AND HUGH F. RANKIN, *Rebels and Redcoats*. The World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, 1957.
- WARD, CHRISTOPHER, *War of the Revolution*, ed. by John Richard Alden. Vol. II. The MacMillan Company, New York, 1952.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
HISTORICAL HANDBOOK SERIES

(Price lists of National Park Service publications may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents,
Washington 25, D.C.)

Antietam
Bandelier
Chalmette
Chickamauga and Chattanooga Battlefields
Custer Battlefield
Custis-Lee Mansion, the Robert E. Lee Memorial
Fort Laramie
Fort McHenry
Fort Necessity
Fort Pulaski
Fort Raleigh
Fort Sumter
George Washington Birthplace
Gettysburg
Guilford Courthouse
Hopewell Village
Independence
Jamestown, Virginia
Kings Mountain
The Lincoln Museum and the House Where Lincoln Died
Manassas (Bull Run)
Montezuma Castle
Morristown, a Military Capital of the Revolution
Ocmulgee
Petersburg Battlefields
Saratoga
Scotts Bluff
Shiloh
Statue of Liberty
Vanderbilt Mansion
Vicksburg
Yorktown

