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AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST

# HALLOWED GROUND

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## *North Carolina at War*

OVERMOUNTAIN TO OUTER BANKS



**HALLOWED GROUND**  
A quarterly publication  
of the American  
Battlefield Trust  
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THE AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST preserves our nation's hallowed battlefields and educates the public about what happened there and why it matters today. We permanently protect these battlefields as a lasting and tangible memorial to the brave soldiers who fought in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. Thanks to the contributions of more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide, we have preserved more than 55,000 acres, more than 150 sites in 24 states. For more information, call 800-298-7878 or visit our website at [www.battlefields.org](http://www.battlefields.org). *Hallowed Ground* is the membership magazine of the American Battlefield Trust. It is produced solely for nonprofit educational purposes and every reasonable attempt is made to provide accurate and appropriate attribution for all elements, including those in the public domain. Contemporary images are reproduced only with permission and appropriate attribution; uncredited images are courtesy of the American Battlefield Trust. Feature articles reflect the research and opinion of the bylined author. ©2022 American Battlefield Trust.



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**T**HE HARSH REALITY of battlefield preservation is that our well-reasoned arguments regarding historic significance, heritage tourism potential, community or other benefits are not always enough.

Earlier this autumn, a subsidiary of a national real estate development firm acquired an 85-acre parcel adjacent to Trust-protected battlefield land at Bristoe Station for the astronomical price of \$54.8 million. Why? According to the county's deputy director of economic development, "Specialized logistics and supply chain distribution are a Prince William County targeted industry ... and we are looking forward to more growth in this hot industrial market." Translation: It's going to become a massive warehouse distribution complex, and there are likely more on the way.

I wish it were a case of "If we'd only known..." but the Trust and our regional allies first approached the local church that had long owned this land a decade ago to ensure that its leadership knew what happened there and to set the stage for discussions if and when they were ready to sell. But by the time they were ready to sell, the price for industrially zoned land in Northern Virginia had skyrocketed well above our ability to pay.

Sometimes, you see, it all comes down to money. As often as I say that America's hallowed ground is priceless, it does still carry a fair market value. And when that value rises, as in this case, to \$645,000 per acre, it simply isn't something we can pay in a sustained or ongoing fashion, especially for large parcels. Nor can we depend on local governments to prevent the up-zoning of battlefield properties to attract deep-pocketed firms. Preservation advocates waited all night for a chance to speak against such a measure for the strip of land between Manassas National Battlefield and Conway Robinson State Forest but were crushed when it passed regardless of their numbers and their thoughtful arguments.

It sometimes feels like the region between Washington, D.C., and Richmond is ground zero for this type of development, but the problem is far from isolated. In October, I accompanied several of this organization's Trustees on a tour of Revolutionary War sites in Upstate New York. We took a slight detour to visit Grant's

Cottage, the scenic home atop Mount McGregor where the general and president lived out his last days rushing to finish his memoirs. I made the short hike to the Eastern Overlook, the beloved view that Grant asked to visit just three days before his death, and was rewarded with a spectacular vista — described by Mark Twain as "the grandest scenery that I know of in America" — until I saw the view marred by a 34-acre Target distribution center on the valley floor below. My knees literally buckled at the sight.



As the Trust only works with willing sellers, it logically follows that not all sellers are willing to let us acquire their land for the price we are willing or able to pay. But in times like these when the situation seems daunting, I remember two things and know this is not insurmountable.

First, this organization has supporters like you, stalwart souls who rise to the occasion time and again when we put out the call. I will never live long enough to adequately thank you. And second, there ARE landowners who share our vision, who understand the power of place and how significant it can be to teaching and understanding the American story. People like Gary Ozenbaugh, the longtime owner of Gettysburg's iconic General Pickett's Buffet, who, when he had the opportunity to move his restaurant to a new, larger space proactively approached the Trust about preservation opportunities for the original site.

And what a site it is! If you've visited Gettysburg any time in the last few decades, you've spotted the venue on the edge of the national park, looking over the fields where Pickett's Charge unfolded. And because one man chose to do something noble and good for our country, generations of Americans will benefit.

Likewise, because you proactively choose to support the Trust's work, I know we will have a lasting impact on the landscape and on the minds of the millions of students that our education materials reach. Because you keep the faith, I do, too.

*David N. Duncan*

DAVID N. DUNCAN  
President, American Battlefield Trust

President Portrait by BUDDY SECOR

# battlefields.org

ON THE TRUST WEBSITE

## SWINGIN' THROUGH THE TAR HEEL STATE

The Trust's education team has embarked on trips to bring battlefield knowledge to screens big and small, with site visits and subject matter experts! Through efforts geared toward greater coverage of the Civil War's Western Theater, the Trust's Garry Adelman and Kris White partook in a video swing through North Carolina to cover locations such as Guilford Courthouse, Fort Fisher, Bentonville, Bennett Place and more. Check out the "Petersburg and North Carolina Battlefield Tour Series" playlist at [www.youtube.com/americanbattlefieldtrust](http://www.youtube.com/americanbattlefieldtrust).

## VOICES OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

Only five minutes from the North Carolina border by car, the Kings Mountain National Military Park is located in Blacksburg, South Carolina. But the battlefield's history was decided by a ragtag bunch of Patriots, many from North Carolina's backcountry, called the Overmountain Men. Learn about this decisive engagement through a three-episode audio drama created by 2019–2020 Youth Leadership Team member John Mugabe. The episodes give true voice to the long-ago soldiers whose valor at Kings Mountain kept the flame of freedom alive. Find the episodes at [www.battlefields.org/KingsMountainStories](http://www.battlefields.org/KingsMountainStories).

## NAVIGATING NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY

Home to a plethora of historic sites encompassing some of the most telling periods in U.S. history — from the first traces of revolution in 1771 to the Confederate army's final days during the 1865 Carolinas Campaign — central North Carolina is brimming with stories ready to be explored. Make the most of your trip with the Trust's three-day itinerary at [www.battlefields.org/TourCentralNC](http://www.battlefields.org/TourCentralNC).

If you're ready to start planning your next adventure, consider using the Trust's nascent-but-growing tour recommendations tool at [www.battlefields.org/tour-recommendation-database](http://www.battlefields.org/tour-recommendation-database).

## CALLING ALL PRESERVATION ALLIES

The Trust is launching a new subscription newsletter for friends groups, historical societies and other affinity groups with an ongoing interest in battlefield preservation advocacy. We encourage representatives of such organizations to sign up for quarterly updates on emerging threats to historic sites, discussion of best practices for outreach to decisionmakers and other proven tactics to empower the preservation community. Subscribe to this and other dispatches at [www.battlefields.org/email-signup](http://www.battlefields.org/email-signup).

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EXPLORE THIS ISSUE



Statue of General Nathanael Greene  
Guilford Courthouse National Military Park  
Greensboro, N.C.  
MATT BRANT

## FOLLOWING RESTAURANT RELOCATION, *Trust to acquire and restore iconic “General Pickett’s Buffet” site*



W

**HEN HE MADE** the decision to sell his popular business, allowing the iconic General Pickett’s Buffet to relocate south of the battlefield, Gettysburg restaurateur Gary Ozenbaugh knew exactly what he wanted to become of the original location: he approached the American Battlefield Trust about preservation options.

For decades, the restaurant has been part of the battlefield backdrop to millions of visitors, standing at the edge of Gettysburg National Military Park and visible from much of the area where the climactic Pickett’s Charge occurred on July 3, 1863. Now, following a \$1.5 million acquisition campaign and subsequent restoration costs, the Trust will be able to more seamlessly integrate the site into the adjacent parkland.

“It has been a privilege to contribute to the Gettysburg community for so many years, welcoming classroom field trips and family road trips by the tens of thousands,” said Ozenbaugh. “Knowing that, through working with the Trust, I am able to help enrich the experience of visitors for generations to come is an absolute joy.”

Although the beloved eatery is moving on from its Steinwehr Avenue roots, it is not disappearing from the Gettysburg landscape. A restaurant from the same team is set to open as an anchor of the reimagined Boyd’s Bears complex, vacant since 2011 and first unveiled in September by new owner Brian Smith, who grew up less than a mile from the site. The scenario is a true win-win for everyone involved: more preserved battlefield land, adaptive reuse of a commercial structure, and a beloved institution thriving in a new location, retaining local jobs and accommodating even more customers.

In purchasing the Pickett’s Buffet site, the Trust is acquiring a half-acre that overlooks the field of Pickett’s Charge, across which, on July 3, 1863, some 12,000 Confederate soldiers advanced, without cover, toward Cemetery Ridge. But the same ground also saw continued military service in World War I and World War II. Additional information on this multilayered history and the developing plan to restore the area to its wartime appearance are available at [www.battlefields.org/3to1match](http://www.battlefields.org/3to1match).★

Learn more  
by scanning!



## MARATHON MEETING APPROVES *bulking data centers near Manassas*

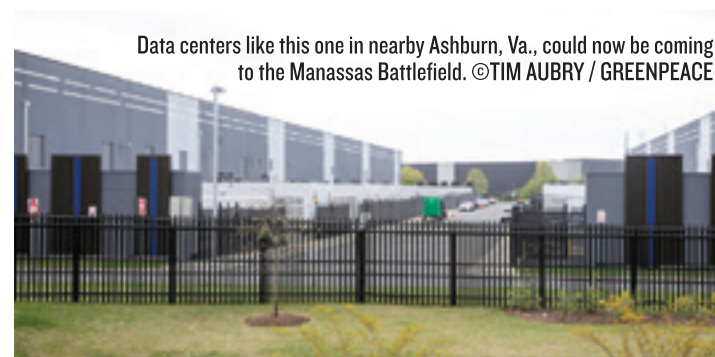
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**HE HEARING** started after dinner, but hundreds of local citizens waited patiently until after midnight — and conservation and preservation organizations even longer, into the pre-dawn gloom — to speak out against a controversial comprehensive plan amendment to allow large-scale data centers on a swath of land adjacent to Manassas National Battlefield Park. Despite significant public opposition and swirling procedural questions, the Board of Supervisors passed the measure 5-2, clearing the way for an incompatible development on this hallowed ground.

Sadly, this was not the only moment in the process when officials’ actions lacked sufficient transparency, leaving many residents and activists disillusioned. The American Battlefield Trust, alongside the Manassas Battlefield Trust, Journey Through Hallowed Ground, Piedmont Environmental Council, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Parks Conservation Association, Sierra Club, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Prince William Conservation Network and other organizations spent more than 18-months respectfully opposing the measure.

Thirty-five years ago, the modern battlefield preservation movement began, spurred by the massive suburban growth experienced across Northern Virginia. Today, the threats are different — deep-pocketed corporations that demand huge data centers and distribution warehouses or industrial-scale solar facilities, rather than subdivisions and strip malls — but the need to call for careful planning that balances modern development with respect for America’s past remains unchanged.

“While this is a sad day for those who care about our nation’s historic treasures, I am thankful for the hundreds of local residents who stood vigil through the wee hours to ensure their voices were heard, and honored to represent the thousands of Trust members who signed letters and spread the word of this threat,” said organization president David Duncan. “Although we are deeply disappointed that this proposal to allow development on the battlefield park’s doorstep has been approved, we are ready to work with the county to mitigate the impact of individual site rezoning plans as they are considered.”★



Data centers like this one in nearby Ashburn, Va., could now be coming to the Manassas Battlefield. ©TIM AUBRY / GREENPEACE



Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park  
Bristow, Va.  
JOSH FILO

## BRISTOE STATION LOSS DEMONSTRATES *deep pockets of developers*

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**HIS AUTUMN**, developers acquired an 85-acre parcel adjacent to Trust-protected battlefield at Bristoe Station for the astronomical price of \$54.8 million. Although it will be more than a year before the land is timbered and construction begins in earnest, we know it will become a massive complex of distribution warehouses.

Although the Trust and local allies made the seller, a local church, aware of the land’s significance and our willingness to negotiate a decade ago, by the time they moved forward in earnest with a sale, we were simply unable to compete with the prices that industrial companies can pay. This is especially true for land already zoned to comply with their needs — especially in Northern Virginia, where such parcels are increasingly rare and demand is at an all-time high.

There may be significant hurdles for developers to overcome in order to execute their vision — the presence of wetlands and streams on the property necessitates a formal consultation process with the Army Corps of Engineers. But this level of investment demonstrates the seriousness of the endeavor and a willingness to keep spending in order to secure the requisite approvals. With a preservation interest in adjoining land, the Trust will participate in that process and will actively seek means to mitigate the construction’s impact where possible.★

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

The Trust’s PO Box changed several years ago and our legacy access to the old one is expiring. Kindly ensure donations are mailed to:

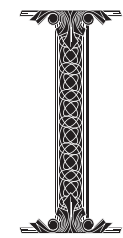
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## SHUTTERED BY LANDSLIDES, VICKSBURG NEEDS ADVOCATES

*Relentless erosion destroying historic battlefield*



Vicksburg National Military Park  
Vicksburg, Miss.  
MIKE TALPLACIDO



**I**N EARLY 2020, torrential rainfall resulted in catastrophic damage to Vicksburg National Military Park. Erosion caused by the region's unique geology has been an ongoing issue for the park for decades, but this event was devastating, undermining large swaths of the hilly landscape, buckling miles of the park's roads and, worst of all, washing out portions of Vicksburg National Cemetery, endangering the remains of our nation's fallen.

It has been nearly three years, and one-third of the park remains closed to visitors, deemed unsafe and inaccessible. Swift action by Congress and the National Park Service is imperative to restore, rebuild and reopen this national treasure before the cumulative impact of the damage is insurmountable.

Many of America's public lands are facing threats from wildfires, storms and hurricanes and other severe natural events. These threats have ravaged iconic sites, including Yellowstone National Park, where, earlier this year, landslides temporarily forced closure of the park. This situation drew national attention and swift action; yet Vicksburg, facing a similar situation, has languished.

That's why the Trust, and its partners at the

National Parks Conservation Association and the Friends of Vicksburg, is pushing for urgent action at the park and has even produced a short video to bring the reality of the situation into focus for those with the power to generate change. In this video, you can see the damage — likened to “an earthquake” — and hear from those deeply invested in the park, including tour guides and members of the Vicksburg friends group, preservation and cultural resource experts and others.

If action is not taken, the soft soil around Vicksburg will continue to erode unabated, pulling more of this hallowed ground into the Mississippi River.

Learn how you can help at [www.battlefields.org/preserve/speak-out](http://www.battlefields.org/preserve/speak-out).★

View the compelling video here!



Minecraft recreation  
of Civil War-era Vicksburg  
CARPER CREATIVE

## BRICK BY BRICK, A DIGITAL VICKSBURG IS RECREATED

*to benefit preservation*

**STUDENTS** of the Civil War continue to study the conflict in innovative ways — one of which is through gaming. Fans of Minecraft dove into a 3D re-creation of Civil War-era Vicksburg — built by more than 30 builders, modelers and developers over the course of the last year. Those involved met computer-animated, era-appropriate historical figures, played mini-games and more during a week-long event that started on November 11, 2022. All proceeds from this marathon gaming event went to the Trust.★

## COLOR BEARERS GATHERED

*for a “Revolutionary” Grand Review*



Valley Forge National Historical Park  
King of Prussia, Pa.  
MIKE TALPLACIDO



**A**T THIS OCTOBER'S Grand Review weekend, roughly 150 Color Bearers walked in the footsteps of General Washington's troops, as they ventured to New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania. They explored this heartland of Revolutionary history through an offering of nine tours and one compact history talk. As such, attendees walked away with a whirlwind of knowledge on the Revolution's Ten Crucial Days and Philadelphia Campaigns, and a pride in contributing to 210 preserved acres of hallowed history at the nearby Brandywine and Princeton Battlefields.★

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR PARK DAY 2023!

*Volunteers will gather nationwide on April 15*



**E**ACH YEAR, thousands of history enthusiasts, families, Boy and Girl Scouts, ROTC units and more come together to help keep our nation's heritage not only preserved, but well-maintained. In 2023, volunteers will muster at battlefields, museums, cemeteries and historical sites on April 15.

Since 1996, community-minded citizens have taken part in Park Day events at various sites across the country. Activities are chosen by each participating site and can include building trails, raking leaves, painting signs, constructing fences and contributing to site interpretation. In addition to the satisfaction that volunteer work brings, participants receive official

Park Day water bottles and may have the chance to hear a local historian speak on the importance of their site. Park Day can also be used to fulfill the service requirements associated with Scout troops, student organizations, training corps programs, school graduation requirements, and civic organizations.

While Park Day is an annual tradition for many locations, new sites are always welcome to join the movement. Site managers are invited to register online at [www.battlefields.org/parkday](http://www.battlefields.org/parkday). As the event draws closer, specific details for individual locations will be posted so that volunteers can identify an opportunity near them.★



Cedar Mountain Battlefield  
Culpeper County, Va.  
JENNIFER MICHAEL

Register your site today!



## THE “GREAT TASK” RETURNS *bringing students to Gettysburg for a thought-provoking journey*

**T**HIS AUTUMN, the Trust, alongside its partner the Gettysburg National Military Park, revived the full iteration of the “Great Task” Youth Leadership Program. Initially launched in early 2020, the Great Task took a pause during the pandemic but jumped back into gear with the start of the 2022–2023 school year. So far, three school groups and youth organizations, hailing from Arizona, Pennsylvania and Maryland, have met the challenge.

Supported by the Peter Bove and Barbara Stewart Foundation, the Great Task is based upon the ideals set forth in President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and utilizes the military park as an outdoor classroom to offer leadership and character-building experiences. While in Gettysburg, program participants learn about the actions, decisions, leadership and other traits demonstrated by ordinary individuals — be they soldiers, doctors, nurses or civilians — when confronted with extraordinary challenges during the battle.

Through seven jam-packed programming days, 62 students and 13 teacher-chaperones have embarked on the Great Task. They participated in sessions that included artillery drills, field hospital set-up, signal flag activities, behind-the-scenes tours of battlefield buildings and discussions over the creation of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery.

Walking in the footsteps of soldiers like those of the 9th Massachusetts Battery, General Meade and Abraham Lincoln yielded dialogue on effective leadership skills, as well as lessons and ideas for creating change in their own schools and communities and the country and world at large.

The multiday experience concludes with a battlefield service project, during which groups begin working together toward change right in Gettysburg.

The Trust’s Field Trip Fund had previously functioned as a bridge to span any financial gap inhibiting students and teachers from visiting battlefields and other historic sites. While it has been slow to return to its pre-pandemic glory, field-trip applicants are still encouraged to apply.

For more information on the Trust’s educational resources, scan the QR code.★



Participants learn about teamwork needed to fire artillery.  
AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST



## REMEMBERING COACH DOOLEY *A football legend and preservation champion*

**T**HE TRUST joins the outpouring of grief following the passing of Coach Vince Dooley on October 28 at age 90. Although best known for his 25-year career as head football coach at the University of Georgia, Dooley was an integral part of the historic preservation community, serving three terms on the Trust’s Board of Trustees and a term as chair of the Board of Curators of the Georgia Historical Society.

“Few earn the title of ‘Renaissance Man’ as fully as Coach Dooley, who was as at home on the football field as he was on the battlefield, never mind the garden,” said American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan.

Although he served in many capacities on the Trust’s Board between 2013 and May 2022, when his final term expired, Dooley was proudest of his time chairing the organization’s Education Committee, through which he saw the Trust escalate its online presence to provide high-quality content to both traditional students and lifelong learners. In a similar vein, in 2018, the Georgia Historical Society established the Vincent J. Dooley Distinguished Fellows Program to recognize senior scholars in the field of history and to mentor and develop emerging historians. Dooley was also instrumental in the protection of 180 acres associated with the Revolutionary War Battle of Kettle Creek in Washington, Ga., which enlarged the existing park by 233 percent.

You might not know that Dooley served two years in the Marine Corps, rising to the rank of captain and had his master’s degree in history. He was also a published author — in 2015, he released *The Legion’s Fighting Bulldog*, which examines the Civil War correspondence between Lt. Col. William Gaston Delony of Howell Cobb’s Georgia Legion Cavalry and his beloved wife Rosa.★

## REVOLUTIONARY NEW WAYS TO LEARN *about America’s founding conflict*

**T**HROUGH the Trust’s dedication to outside-the-box learning, students of history are gaining access to tools that present the story of the American Revolution in energetic, thoughtful ways. The newest resources to enter the Trust’s collection lean on a combination of eye-catching animation and clever dialogue, as well as immersive virtual reality (VR) footage.

After the success of our first two installments, we’ve again expanded our *How We Became America: The Untold History* series of video shorts. Supported by the American Battlefield Protection Program and brought to life by Makematic, this series is for students and teachers, but is easy to consume by all. It is designed to fill in the gaps and bring interesting stories to life. While the first two 15-episode batches focused on the Revolution and the Civil War, the new set expands upon the independence-yielding conflict.

And, as the *Untold* name suggests, there is a focus on subjects traditionally cast aside by history. One of the new episodes covers Salem Poor, who was once enslaved but bought his freedom and fought the British at places like Bunker Hill, Saratoga and Monmouth.

In the realm of virtual reality, the Trust followed up to the success of its *Civil War 1864: A Virtual Reality*



*Experience* — which launched in November 2019 and has received roughly 40 million views on YouTube — by releasing *Soldier Life of the American Revolution*. Produced by longtime partner Wide Awake Films, the VR experience places viewers in a 360-degree perspective of daily life during the Revolutionary War, giving them an inside-look at a military encampment, the chaos of woodland fighting and the perilousness of late 18th-century medicine.

To find these products on YouTube, scan the QR code.★

Watch the latest  
“Untold” episodes  
here!



The field team carefully takes notes on their findings at Camden.  
SARAH NELL BLACKWELL

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG AT CAMDEN *After forensic analysis, Patriot, Loyalist and British soldiers will be reburied in April ceremony*

**T**HROUGH a collaboration of the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust, Historic Camden Foundation and South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, new light will be shed on the lives and deaths of 14 Revolutionary War soldiers, after their skeletal remains were located and excavated on the Camden Battlefield. The work was done over an eight-

week period this autumn and announced for Veterans Day.

“These young men demonstrated their allegiance in an intense battle for liberty. They are truly America’s first veterans,” said Doug Bostick, CEO, South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust. “We have a responsibility to honor their sacrifice by ensuring their remains are protected in perpetuity and their stories of bravery are shared.”

Based on preliminary field examinations, the team believes that 12 bodies are Patriot

soldiers from either Maryland or Delaware, one is likely a Loyalist and the last a British Regular. Planning is underway for appropriate reinterment ceremonies April 20–22, 2023, in Camden.

Camden is a key site for our The Liberty Trail initiative, which has preserved 294 acres there in recent years. The Liberty Trail has introduced Voices of Camden, an immersive audio offering that is an excellent companion to The Liberty Trail app, and new interpretive signage is in process.★



Fort Johnson  
Charleston County, S.C.  
MATT BRANT

## SAVE SEVERAL CHAPTERS IN AMERICAN HISTORY *at places including Fort Ticonderoga and Antietam*

**P**RESERVATION PROJECTS can sometimes involve several layers of history, ultimately making for an even more meaningful impact. With its latest efforts, the Trust is targeting seven acres across three sites in New York and South Carolina, as well as 128 acres of battlefield land in Maryland and West Virginia. Altogether, these sites cover three separate conflicts in American history: the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.



Shepherdstown Battlefield  
Jefferson County, W.Va.  
MATT BRANT

With an ambitious goal of protecting 2,500 acres of Revolutionary War battlefield land to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Trust has eyes on a small property at Upstate New York's Fort Ticonderoga and two additional Palmetto State properties at Fort Johnson and Eutaw Springs.

Fort Ticonderoga, initially under French control, was a critical post during the French and Indian War. Captured by the British during that early conflict, a contingent of Green Mountain Boys and New England militia took the fort only one month into the Revolutionary War.

Just outside Charleston, S.C., the 2nd South Carolina Regiment seized Fort Johnson in September 1775. On April 12, 1861, a flaming mortar shot from Fort Johnson exploded over Fort Sumter, beginning the American Civil War.

The Eutaw Springs Battlefield can be found about an hour northwest of Fort Johnson and represents a key moment in the Southern Campaigns. This is where it became evident that Patriot forces wouldn't take defeat as an answer. It is

also a stop along the budding Liberty Trail.

These properties are valued at more than \$2.7 million, but thanks to a variety of matching grants and already-promised donations, \$62,000 remains for the Trust to raise and save these seven acres.

Learn about current opportunities!



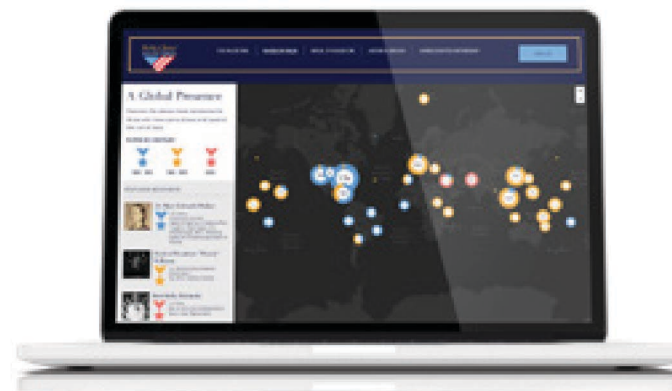
Preservationists are also needed to protect land associated with the bloody Maryland Campaign of 1862. Now, 160 years later, the Trust has launched an effort to protect 128 acres at the Antietam and Shepherdstown Battlefields. While six acres are prime for preservation at the site of America's bloodiest day at Antietam, 122 acres are at stake at Shepherdstown. With federal and state matching grants, partner funding and a generous donor, all gifts will be matched \$8-to-\$1 to meet the \$343,837 need.★



### IN MEMORIAM: *U.S. Rep. Donald McEachin*

**AS THIS ISSUE** of *Hallowed Ground* went to press, veteran lawmaker U.S. Rep. Donald McEachin (VA-4) passed away suddenly from secondary effects of the cancer he battled for years. This is a massive blow for the history, preservation and conservation communities, who lost a staunch ally. Alongside his family, friends, constituents and passionate staff, we mourn the passing of an exceptional man and dedicated public servant.★

## 3,500 ACTS OF VALOR *placed on interactive map*



**A** NEW GLOBAL MAP from the Medal of Honor Valor Trail™ — a joint initiative of the American Battlefield Trust and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society — allows users to virtually follow in the footsteps of Medal of Honor recipients. By clicking on a location, users can learn more about the actions that led to recipients' distinguished service, along with their personal histories.

The Medal of Honor Valor Trail™ initiative spans the full lineage of the Medal of Honor, from its Civil War origins into the 21st century. It is designed to connect the places most deeply connected to the lives and legacies of recipients — from battlefields to burial places, memorials to museums, hometowns to namesake sites. By connecting the many venues that tell a portion of the Medal of Honor story, the Valor Trail is creating a community of sites that together illuminate the core values of Medal of Honor service that spans centuries.

"From Normandy's Omaha Beach to the mountains of Afghanistan to Cemetery Ridge in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, more than 3,500 men — and one woman — have earned the Medal of Honor since the American Civil War. But their stories are rarely told from the places where their heroics unfolded," said David Duncan, president of the American Battlefield Trust.

Medal of Honor citations typically describe a single act of valor above and beyond the call of duty. Each is exceptional, but when viewed collectively through a map, they tell a much broader story that helps show the exceptional men and women who, generation after generation, have answered the nation's call to service. Few Americans can visit Iwo Jima or other remote sites, but the Trust and the Society are committed to marrying history with the latest technology to allow anyone to get to know these distinguished citizen soldiers.

Explore the Places of Valor map and the trail at large at [www.valortrail.org](http://www.valortrail.org).★

See the map here!



★ *There are 127 Medal of Honor citations tied to North Carolina Battlefields.* ★  
★ *Explore these and the 3,400 others around the globe with the Places of Valor map.* ★



## ACTIVITIES AFOOT IN CULPEPER *in preparation for state park*

**THE OPENING** of the Culpeper Battlefields State Park is still some 20 months away, but tangible progress is being made! Visitors to Brandy Station can now call up an augmented reality experience of St. James Church and walk a trail featuring 10 new interpretive markers. Another 10 markers were installed at Cedar Mountain over the summer. Meanwhile, ongoing meetings with decisionmakers and various park agencies have been productive and encouraging.★

See  
St. James Church  
through AR!



## RESTORATION PLAN FOR PRINCETON *will uplift 1777 battlefield*

**A** MILE SOUTHWEST of Princeton University, the Princeton Battlefield was toured by members of the American Battlefield Trust's Board of Trustees in October. This New Jersey state park site, which maintains and interprets the decisive victory that concluded General Washington's Ten Crucial Days Campaign, is the target for a transformative plan that will enhance the visitor experience through restorative landscape treatment and innovative interpretive improvements. The plan has been met with great enthusiasm by the Board, as well as state and local partners, and will have a tangible impact in time for the nation's Semiquincentennial celebrations in 2026.★

## GOOD NEWS FOR FUTURE VISITORS TO FORT FISHER *as plans to construct a brand-new visitor center move ahead*

**A**

**NEW VISITOR CENTER** is coming to Fort Fisher State Historic Site in Kure Beach, North Carolina. Nearly three times larger than its 1965 predecessor, the new center is expected to welcome more than a million annual visitors and will showcase museum exhibits detailing the fascinating

history of the Civil War fort.

While the project has been in the planning stage for many years, it can now begin moving forward as a result of funding needs being met. The Friends of Fort Fisher, Inc., the historic site's official support group, has been instrumental in coordinating and obtaining a sizable deal of funding from the state's legislature. The project budget is approximately \$25.5 million — most of which has been appropriated over several years.

Plans are also in place to reconstruct a portion of Fort Fisher's earthen ramparts that were demolished during World War II for the construction of an airstrip. The Friends have launched an additional capital campaign to raise the \$3.5 million needed for their reconstruction.

Fort Fisher's land face extended nearly one half-mile from the Cape Fear River to the Atlantic Ocean. The planned reconstruction will replace segments of earthworks that contained the fort's center sally port, which functioned as the main entrance to the

fortifications. This section also contained the seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-gun emplacement and traverses, as well as underground ammunition magazines.

Visitors to Fort Fisher will exit the visitor center and enter Fort Fisher through the sally port tunnel. From there, they can enter a recreated ammunition magazine and go up to recreated gun chambers. These emplacements will house original Civil War-era 32-pounder cannons.

Historic site manager Jim Steele remarked, "A new visitor center and restored earthworks will be welcome additions to Fort Fisher. The exhibits will cover Fort Fisher history in a broad, all-inclusive manner and feature something for every visitor."

Once called the "Gibraltar of the South," Fort Fisher had a simple beginning, consisting of several sand batteries that mounted less than two dozen guns. But under the direction of Col. William Lamb, in July 1862, the fortress began to expand. Made largely of earth and sand, the fort's sea face had 22 guns and its land face armed with 25 guns across its 15 mounds. A formidable barrier for keeping Wilmington under Confederate control, Fort Fisher was coveted by Union forces. While the Federals' attack on Christmas Eve of 1864 went awry, with Union leadership withdrawing forces upon deeming the fort too strong, the blue-clad men returned on January 12, 1865. After two and a half days of fighting on sea and land, the Union captured Fort Fisher, closing the South's final connection to the outside world.★



Digital rendering of the new visitor center design.



Digital rendering of the new visitor center design.

## GET READY FOR *North Carolina's Year of the Trail*

**ON AUGUST 18TH**, the state legislature declared 2023 North Carolina Year of the Trail, celebrating the state's extensive trail systems. The move comes to mark the 50th anniversary of the North Carolina Trails System Act, and recognize the role that hiking, biking, paddling, horseback riding and other trails play for locals and tourists alike. Look for more to come on how the state's linked historic sites and battlefields will take part in the festivities.★



## IN A WORLD OF PHIFERS, FIFERS AND PHEIFFERS

*Recalling the Revolutionary beginnings of  
a family steeped in Carolina history*

**T**

**HE TEXTILE BUSINESS** isn't the only thing that runs in Trust supporter Derick Close's family, as his ancestry is buzzing with individuals whose Patriot presence in Revolutionary North Carolina molded the Tar Heel State and the nation at large.

Digging into Close's matriarchal line uncovers a fascinating array of figures, including his sixth great grandfather Martin Phifer (Fifer, Pheiffer, etc.). A native of Switzerland, he sailed from Rotterdam in 1736 aboard the *Harle*, landing in Philadelphia. Between 1751 and 1756, he moved his family to the colony of North Carolina and settled on Cold Water Creek. Martin took up farming and became a successful planter. He went on to serve as a colonial assemblyman, and also a major during the French and Indian War — as well as serving in North Carolina's Regulator War. As such, he was favored by Governor William Tryon, who occasionally stayed at the Phifer home and used the plantation as a rallying point for militiamen.

However, when the Stamp Act was forced upon the colonies, revolutionary fervor sprang up in Martin. He was among the first to denounce the act and, when the Revolution began, he joined up alongside his sons to advance the Patriot cause. Little is known about his service, except that he obtained the rank of captain.

His sons were John (1747–78), Caleb (1749–1811) and Martin, Jr. (1756–1837).

John was appointed lieutenant colonel of the first battalion of Salisbury District Minutemen in December 1775. He stood against the Crown's policies as part of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina

on August 21, 1775, and again in Halifax, North Carolina, on April 4, 1776. The latter meeting resulted in the Halifax Resolves\* and John's military appointment in the Mecklenburg Militia. It is also rumored that he was one of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence\*. Serving under Colonel Griffith Rutherford, his last military expedition took him to the "Old Fort" in South Carolina, a longtime headquarters for Tory forces and their Native allies. He returned home from this with an unknown disease that prematurely ended his life on November 2, 1778. But his patriotic legacy lives on today — there is even a Lieutenant Colonel John Phifer Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

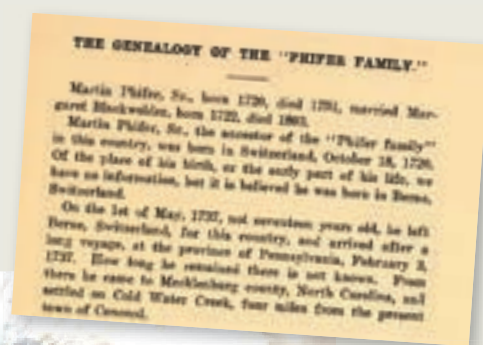
The middle son, Caleb, was commissioned a captain in the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia in September 1775. As part of the second battalion of Salisbury District Minutemen, Captain Phifer joined his company in the Snow Campaign of December 1775 and in the February 1776 Battle of Moores Creek Bridge. He later served under Colonel Adam Alexander — also an ancestor of Close's — in the Mecklenburg Militia. By 1778, he had been made a lieutenant colonel in the militia and went on to fight at Purrysburg and Briar Creek. In November 1779, the Mecklenburg County Militia was split into two regiments, and Caleb was commissioned as colonel and commandant of one of them. He served with the Mecklenburg Militia until the end of the war. Starting in 1777, he also began his 15-year service in North Carolina's House of Commons.

Martin, Jr. — Close's fifth great grandfather — attested to his Revolutionary War service when applying for a pension in 1832. In the National Archive's Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, available on Fold3, the application states that he was appointed as a captain and ordered by the State of North Carolina to raise a second troop of light dragoons in 1776. Upon raising these troops, he marched to Charleston but arrived too late to be of service during the British attack on Sullivan's Island on June 28, 1776.

After serving in the south for a handful of months, his troops were transferred into the northern army, where they remained until the spring of 1778. Although not expressed in identified primary source records, he was rumored to have endured the winter of 1777–78 with Washington's army at Valley Forge. While Charles H. Phifer wrote in a 1910 book that his great grandfather was "appointed Colonel of a Regiment of Horse, with his headquarters in Philadelphia," this remains unproven from military records such as Martin, Jr.'s pension application, which only notes the rank of captain..

The legendary George Washington, a supposed friend of Martin, Jr., later stayed at the Phifer home during his southern tour of the United States in the spring and early summer of 1791 — as noted in the president's diary.

Close's contributions to The Liberty Trail are enabling stories, much like this, to come alive for visitors to the Carolinas.★



BUDDY SECOR

In Cabarrus county, on the 12th ult. at the residence of his son, John Phifer, after a long and painful illness, Col. MARTIN PHIFER, in the 82d year of his age. He has left a numerous offspring to mourn his loss. Death has terminated the earthly existence of one who bore a distinguished part in the struggle for American Independence, and one among the few, if not the last of the officers of the Revolutionary Army belonging to the North Carolina Continental Line.

\*Read more about the significance of these two documents on Page 41



## BUILDING UP THE BENTONVILLE BATTLEFIELD

*Decades of vigilant efforts have yielded tremendous growth at this noteworthy site*

“It’s hard to describe the feeling of joy knowing that these acres — covering woods, fields and trenches — will be here for the next generation to explore,” said Bentonville Site Manager Colby Stevens, reflecting on the American Battlefield Trust’s extensive efforts.

**N**OW ENCOMPASSING more than 2,000 acres, the Bentonville Battlefield in Johnston County, N.C., has become a destination for visitors from far and wide. Over the course of 32 years, the Trust has helped to preserve more than 1,900 acres of immaculate hallowed ground, including a seven-acre victory across two properties just earlier this year.

The 1865 Battle of Bentonville, the largest ever fought in the Tar Heel State, was part of the last series of standoffs between Union Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman and Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, as Federal forces closed in around the Confederate army. At this central North Carolina site, the Confederates took the first step in their final stand.

For quite some time, however, this game-changing battlefield was left unpreserved and its future was not guaranteed.

It wasn’t until 1957 that the North Carolina State Legislature appropriated \$25,000 to purchase 51 acres, including the Harper House, at Bentonville. Then, over the course of the next 20 years, the Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site introduced interpretive programs that produced an uptick in visitation. Subsequently, the state’s General Assembly appropriated further funds to acquire an additional 36 acres.

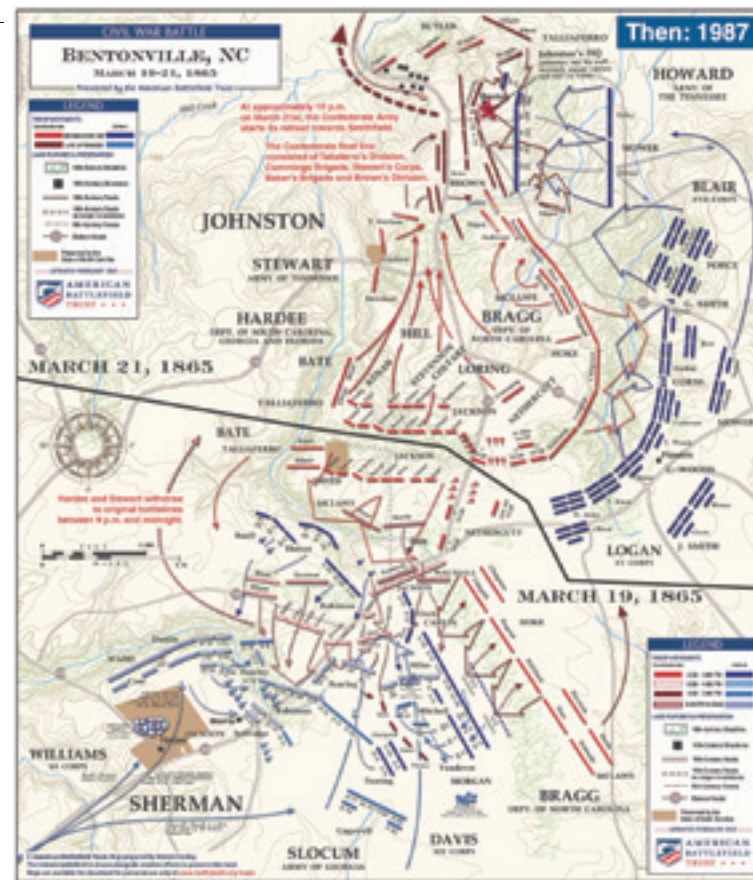


Harper House, 1895  
N.C. State Archives

In June of 1990, one of the Trust’s predecessor organizations — the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites — began what has now become an amazing journey for the Trust. The group purchased 7.24 acres at Bentonville with the assistance of the Bentonville Battlefield Historical Association. Over the following years, the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) took notice of the pristine condition of the North Carolina site, and the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission designated it as a “Priority One, Class A” battlefield in the *Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields*. Commission members and historians Ed Bearss and James McPherson were amazed by the quality and number of existing fortifications, unlike any they had seen before.

By 1996, the site was designated a National Historic Landmark. Soon after, local, state and federal entities joined together to plan and work toward larger preservation goals.

The Trust’s efforts at Bentonville have been ongoing since 2003, with steady support from ABPP boosting the impact of state funding and donor dollars. We’ve made longstanding connections, resourcefully relied on partners, received generous contributions from members, prioritized preservation targets and worked with the state to incorporate large swathes of battlefield land into the historic site. Altogether, these actions are the reason that Site Manager Colby Stevens can now say, “[O]f the more than 2,000 acres preserved at Bentonville, over 90 percent is thanks to the Trust.”



One person deeply involved in these preservation efforts is the Trust’s Director of Project Management Kathy Robertson. For her, the most notable part of piecing together Bentonville has been “the people, especially the landowners I’ve met.” She has stayed in touch with many of the families — and if you ask her about them, you can hear how much she genuinely cares. Through the real relationships Kathy and the Land Preservation team have fostered, Bentonville-area families have repeatedly come back to the Trust to ensure the protection of battlefield land.

“At Bentonville, we are working towards a critical mass that allows for many of these properties to interlock and become [a] whole,” says Kathy. “This, in turn, benefits the trails that visitors seek to explore [to] understand the battle’s history.”

When asked how preservation has changed the way visitors interact with the site, Stevens emphasized the extensive trail system. “As the battlefield rapidly expanded, staff realized that visitor access had to match the growth. Today, the trail is nearly 4.5 miles long and mostly follows either Confederate or Federal trenches dug on the first day of the battle. Where else can you walk the same woods, have nearly the exact same viewshed and, in some spots, even see the logs the soldiers used to build the trenches?”

Since becoming site manager in 2019, taking over the initiatives previous site manager Donny Taylor had set in motion, Stevens notes that he’s already seen tremendous growth at Bentonville and says there’s “no signs of slowing in the future.” He attributes much of the success to the partnership between North Carolina Historic Sites and the Trust.

Stevens noted, “We always love to see folks walk in the visitor center wearing a Trust t-shirt or baseball cap. That’s because your efforts are making a difference. Because of you, visitors can now follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, stand behind trenches these ancestors

dug or look across the same fields they fought upon in 1865. This, and much more, has enabled a profound visitor experience.”

The Trust has saved more acreage at Bentonville than at any other battlefield outside of Virginia. And, as Stevens indicated, the Trust has no plans to stop. While the organization works now to fill the “holes in the donut” in the first day’s battlefield, the long road ahead will consist of efforts to bring pieces of the second- and third-days’ battlefields into the fold.

As for Stevens, he says the park has its sights set on new tour stops, additional trails, refreshed historical waysides, new programs and additional interpretation perspectives. “The level of success that Bentonville has been able to attain thus far cannot be laid at the feet of one person — it stems from the wonderful partnership between North Carolina State Historic Sites and the American Battlefield Trust. Growth only works when both parties are fully invested and fully involved, a rare situation indeed, but one that has taken root at Bentonville.” ★



Cemetery for approximately 20 unknown Confederate soldiers.  
Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site  
Four Oaks, N.C.  
DAVID DAVIS

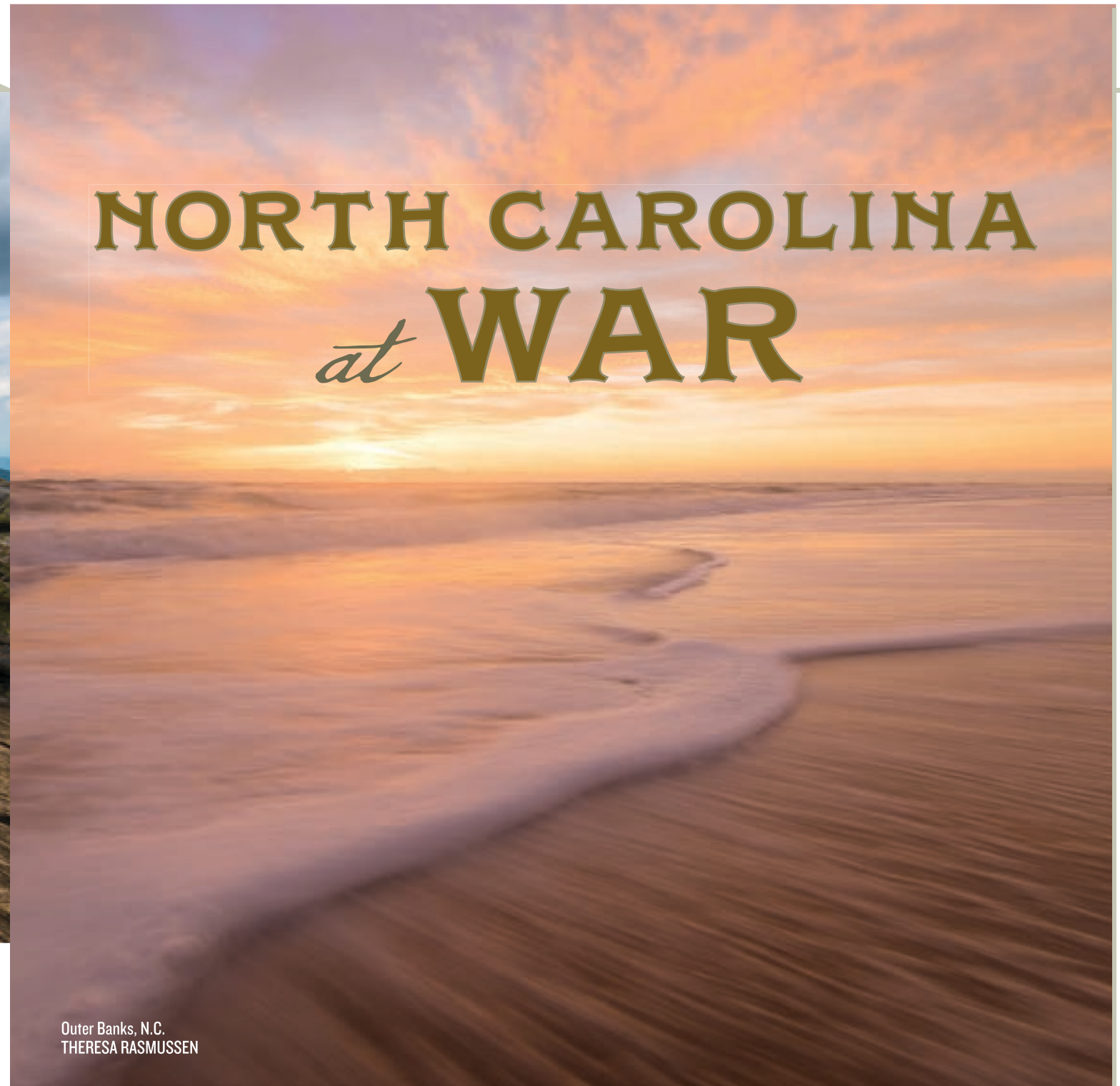


Harper House today  
Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site  
Four Oaks, N.C.  
DAVID DAVIS



Blue Ridge Mountains, N.C.  
THERESA RASMUSSEN

# NORTH CAROLINA *at* WAR



Outer Banks, N.C.  
THERESA RASMUSSEN

## OVERMOUNTAIN *to* OUTER BANKS

**IF ONE WAS TO LOOK AT NORTH CAROLINA** *from a bird's eye view, they'd see a mountainous west, a billy middle and low, flat ground in the east — adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean. These landscapes most certainly had their impact on American warfare, as they were traversed by disgruntled small farmers, backwoods hunters, southern Patriots under General Greene, Burnside's "Coast Division" and more. The blood spewed upon these grounds has amounted in a vast history, which you'll be introduced to within the following pages.*

# WAR before the WAR



Statue of James Hunter, the so-called General of the Regulators.  
Alamance Battleground State Historic Site  
Alamance County, N.C.

## THE BATTLE of ALAMANCE

by JEREMIAH DEGENNARO

PHOTOGRAPH by ANTHONY CRIDER

*Taxes and corrupt leaders: Two ingredients that when mixed together are nearly a guarantee for dissatisfaction from the population that feels their impact. In the case of colonial North Carolina's immigrant farmers, their unheard dissatisfaction developed into rage that fueled a war with land speculators and public officials.*

## Four years

before the American Revolution escalated into a war for independence, tensions gripped North Carolina that set a large portion of its citizens at war with each other. This crisis, known as the Regulator Movement or the War of the Regulation, began as a popular reform movement among small farmers, but ultimately turned deadly on May 16, 1771.

The roots of this movement can be found in the influx of immigrants who came to the North Carolina backcountry in search of cheap land. They found themselves straining against land speculators and public officials who the immigrants believed used their positions to enrich themselves at the expense of farmers. Dishonest public officials overcharged farmers on fees, and corrupt sheriffs over-collected taxes, pocketing the extra. These issues were exacerbated by other economically driven issues, such as shortages in available currency to settle debts and pay taxes. Enough farmers encountered the same issues that, in the mid-1760s, they started calling meetings and began to organize, naming themselves Regulators.

The Regulators tried various peaceful methods to obtain redress of their grievances. Community meetings led to associations and petitions, but petitions went unanswered. Regulators ran their own candidates for the Assembly and won several elections, but they were outnumbered, ignored and even censured by the legislators. They attempted to have their issues resolved in court, but "Courthouse Rings" run by the local elites made true justice unattainable. Finally, with frustrations mounting and no progress having been made, tempers boiled over and a crowd of Regulators rioted in the town of Hillsborough.

The Hillsborough Riot of 1770 found hundreds of Regulators targeting officials of the Superior Court when the court held its fall session in late September. The physical assaults and property damage were limited to those individuals the Regulators had taken issue with. For example, Regulators swarmed colonial official Edmund Fanning, dragging him by the feet out of the courthouse and beating him in the street. When he made his escape, the crowd moved on to his home. They broke inside; threw his money, valuables and furniture out of the windows; and then demolished the house.

Governor William Tryon seethed when he received the news of the riot. Having lost control of the backcountry, he began putting together the pieces to put down the Regulator movement by force. He first worked with the Assembly to pass a piece of legislation giving him sufficient power to raise an army and use

deadly force against the Regulators. This legislation, colloquially known as the Johnston Riot Act (after its primary author Samuel Johnston), went to great lengths to stop the Regulators. It retroactively made all of the Hillsborough Riot participants outlaws, which allowed for the seizure of their property and gave Tryon authority to raise an army and use deadly force against those who had broken the law.

Samuel Cornell, North Carolina's wealthiest citizen, personally bankrolled a large part of Tryon's expedition and joined the governor as an adviser. He later wrote a letter to his friend, New York merchant Elias Desbrosses, describing the affair in great detail. Cornell's money went toward enlistment bounties and daily pay for Tryon's volunteers. By mid-May, his force stood at roughly 1,000 men and eight artillery pieces. At the Battle of Alamance, on May 16, they were opposed by approximately 2,000 Regulators. Tryon attempted to order the crowd to disperse, but his messengers received shouts of "Battle! Battle!" and "Fire and be damned!" Cornell remembered of the Regulators, "[N]ever did I see men so daring & desperate as they were," recalling that before the battle began, many of the Regulators "would even run up to the mouths of our cannon & make use of the most aggrieving language that could be expressed, to induce the governor to fire on them; for they actually seemed impatient."

Tryon eventually obliged and opened the battle with a volley from his artillery. The ensuing action lasted approximately two hours, as the unorganized Regulators sustained heavy casualties and gave way to Tryon's volunteers.

In the aftermath, Tryon counted nine killed and 61 wounded from his own force and estimated 200–300 Regulator casualties. Local residents of the Moravian community at Bethabara wrote about seeing a man in town attempting to press their physician to help tend to wounded men after the battle. They later confirmed that the man was Regulator leader, Herman Husband.

In the years after the battle, many struggled to make sense of the movement and its bloody conclusion. Tryon's successor, Governor Josiah Martin, proclaimed in an address to the North Carolina Assembly that all wished "that the veil of oblivion may be drawn over the past unhappy troubles" of the province. Boston lawyer — and Son of Liberty — Josiah Quincy inquired after the Regulators on his tour of North Carolina in 1773. He received conflicting versions of their story and intent and wrote in his diary that he was left to make up his own mind.

In the years after the American Revolution, memory of the battle shifted. The 1771 fight between two factions of North Carolinians turned into a battle between Regulators and British troops, as artistic depictions of the battle featured backwoodsmen facing off against unbroken lines of redcoat-clad troops. Local boosters began trumpeting the claim that Alamance was the "first battle of the revolution," a superlative disproved by a close reading of primary sources from the Regulator movement. The reality is something much more complicated, and a forerunner to many of the popular movements and conflicts that later arose in the United States.★

*Jeremiah DeGennaro is the west region supervisor for North Carolina State Historic Sites. He previously served as site manager at Alamance Battleground State Historic Site.*

# HUNTING *for* LOYALISTS

## THE OVERMOUNTAIN MEN *and the* JOURNEY *to* KING'S MOUNTAIN

by WILLIAM P. CALDWELL

PHOTOGRAPHY by MARK THORBERRY

*With a common enemy, backwoods hunters and fighters united to chase down Redcoat Major Patrick Ferguson and his Loyalist army. Trekking more than 300 miles over mountains and rugged terrain, this ragtag bunch of Patriots ultimately found their target at Kings Mountain.*



Fall foliage graces the grounds at Kings Mountain National Military Park, Blacksburg, S.C.

## *Between*

October 10–13, 1780, a report arrived for General Lord Charles Cornwallis that changed the course of the American Revolution. Cornwallis, who had spent sickness-riddled weeks at his headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina, was anxiously awaiting word of the left wing of his army, last known to be somewhere in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. A returning patrol confirmed the rumors: Major Patrick Ferguson's force had been *destroyed* at Kings Mountain on October 7.

But just who had defeated Ferguson? These backcountry Patriots were unusual, their homes were spread across what are now five states: Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Most were frontiersmen whose wartime experiences were limited to clashing with Indigenous warriors and Loyalist neighbors rather than British regulars. These men followed the same familiar faces who led their communities in peacetime and carried their meager food in bags hanging over their saddles.

Immediately after their victory, they faded back toward the western mountains and away from possible British pursuit, unaware of the impact they had made. The British "Southern Strategy" that had successfully pushed troops north through Georgia and the Carolinas for the past year had been thwarted by backwoodsmen and sent the British retreating into South Carolina. Never again in the American Revolution would so many Patriot militias cooperate to accomplish a singular task: stop Patrick Ferguson and destroy his Loyalist army.

They were after Ferguson specifically. In summer 1780, as British "Inspector of Militia," he had led a force of Loyalist militia through western South Carolina. These men had fought bloodily against their Patriot neighbors since 1775 but needed leadership to be truly effective, and

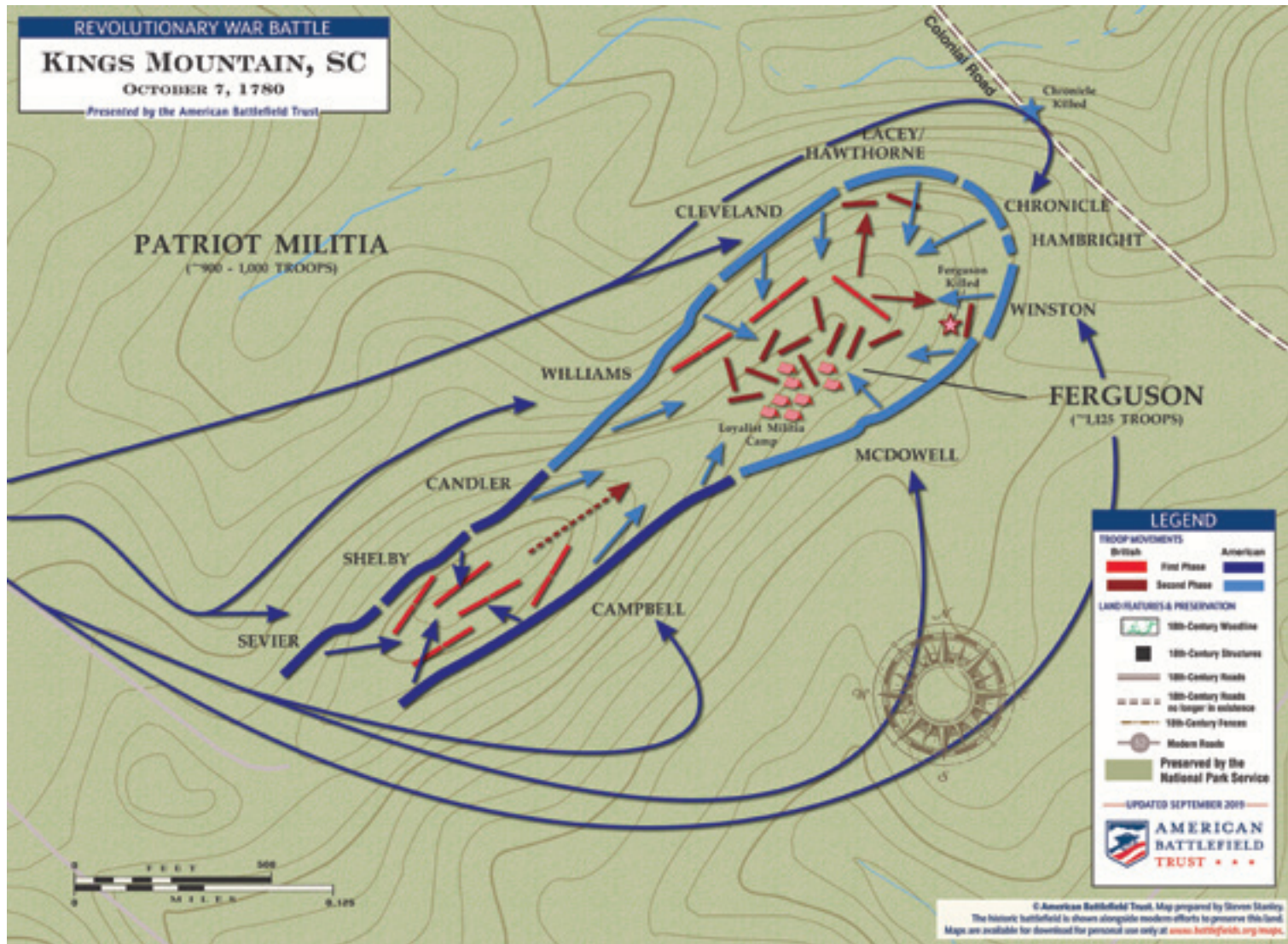
Ferguson, who had experience with unconventional missions, organized them to protect the left side of the British advance northward. By September, a combination of crushing British victories and Ferguson's persuasive leadership had recruited almost 4,000 men into Loyalist regiments and driven most remaining Patriots into hiding in the mountains. Ferguson realized he could not force these people into obedience and understood the importance of winning their hearts and minds if he was to establish a foothold in the mountains. He marched northwest into North Carolina and continued recruiting his army, establishing a network of spies and distributing proclamations to Loyalists and Patriots alike. One of these proclamations was given to a Patriot prisoner named Samuel Phillips, who was freed with orders to carry it to his Patriot leaders. Phillips traveled deep into the mountains of east Tennessee and brought news of the approaching Loyalist army to one of the most influential Patriot partisan officers, his distant cousin Colonel Isaac Shelby.

Most Patriots in the Blue Ridge Mountains were occupied with their own concerns when Isaac Shelby began organizing a force to oppose Patrick Ferguson. The backcountry settlements in what is now east Tennessee and southwest Virginia had fraught relationships with the neighboring Cherokee and Shawnee Nations that required constant vigilance, lest Loyalist neighbors agitate them into war. Shelby's request highlighted the necessity of cooperation: Ferguson needed to be stopped before he reached their settlements, but no Patriot leader was strong enough on his own. The plan was to combine men from across the backcountry and strike Ferguson before he could reach deeper into the mountains. Isaac Shelby and John "Nolichucky Jack" Sevier contributed more than 400 men from the mountainous northeast corner of Tennessee. Nearly 400 more men from the southwest corner of Virginia were led by William Campbell. The McDowell brothers, Charles and Joseph, brought 200 refugees Ferguson had chased from back east. Calls for aid were sent to Patriots on the Yadkin River in North Carolina under Joseph Winston and Benjamin Cleveland, men who had reputations for aggressive pursuit of Loyalists. These groups of frontier hunters and fighters recognized that Ferguson was different from the enemy they had pursued before: a smart, veteran British officer who would soon either be too strong to attack or safely out of their reach. Speed and surprise were critical for their plan to work.

On September 25, 1780, 1,000 "Overmountain" Patriots left Sycamore Shoals (today a state park in Elizabethton, Tennessee) and began climbing the rain-soaked western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Ferguson's spies brought him the Patriots' names and numbers, and news of their cooperation within days of their gathering. Ferguson, however, misjudged their route, assuming that this Patriot force would swing north through southern Virginia before descending along the eastern side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Instead, the frontiersmen climbed through Yellow Mountain Gap on the border of North Carolina and Tennessee, the highest altitude seen by soldiers during the American Revolution. At 4,649 feet, the rain became snow four inches deep, and the Patriots crossed the future path of the Appalachian Trail before descending the eastern slope into what is now Spruce Pine, North Carolina. While risky and challenging, this mountain trail shaved days off their journey and spoiled Ferguson's expectations.

While the Overmountain men descended, Yadkin Valley Patriots moved southwest toward the appointed meeting spot at Quaker Meadows (present-day Morganton, North Carolina). Their small but fierce band grew steadily as they traveled, reaching 400 fighters by the time they arrived on September 30. Ferguson welcomed his spies' reports of these movements. Throughout the summer, his biggest challenge had been chasing the small bands of mounted Patriot militia that were now willingly massing into a single target. Ferguson requested cavalry





Kings Mountain U.S. Monument  
Kings Mountain National Military Park  
Blacksburg, S.C.

## WHEN THE RAIN FINALLY RELENDED... FERGUSON AND HIS ARMY OF MORE THAN 1,000 LOYALISTS FACED ANOTHER KIND OF STORM: A DEADLY RING OF PATRIOT RIFLEMEN.

reinforcements to ensure victory and began to consolidate his forces for the anticipated fight.

The Patriots knew they needed to strike quickly and split as they navigated through the Gillespie and Hefner Gaps to descend to the Catawba River and Quaker Meadows, where they joined the Yadkin Valley men to create an army nearly 1,500 strong. After a night of much-needed food and rest, the army resumed its pursuit south on the morning of October 1. Torrential rains stalled their progress for nearly two days, giving them the chance to strategize. The Patriot colonels recognized that no one man had authority over their army, a potential cause of confusion in combat. Shelby proposed William Campbell as their leader: Campbell had traveled the farthest and brought the most men, and the Virginian would not cause jealousy among the many North Carolinians. Campbell reluctantly accepted command but insisted that a group council be held before any large decision. This now-united force continued south to Ferguson's last known location at Gilbert Town (now an archaeological site in Rutherfordton, North Carolina), but found the settlement deserted. The heavy rains had erased any tracks, and these Patriot hunters feared their prey had escaped.

On October 5, the thin line of starving horses and rain-soaked men stretched along the mud trails with no sign of Ferguson. They

camped that evening at Alexander's Ford on the banks of the Green River, not far from the South Carolina border, and the Patriot commanders decided they could risk only one more day of searching for Ferguson's trail before abandoning their plan. Out of the dark quiet, horsemen thundered into camp bringing news to their leaders: Another force of approximately 500 Patriot militia had gathered to join in the pursuit and, better yet, they knew Ferguson's location. These critical reinforcements were Carolinians and Georgians led by James Williams, William Chronicle, Edward Lacey and William Hill — some of Thomas "The Gamecock" Sumter's best junior officers.

These groups met the next night at Saunders' Cowpens, a well-known cattle pasture later to become its own famous battlefield. Barely had these forces begun to rest when spies arrived, confirming that Ferguson was about 30 miles east on the road toward Charlotte. If the efforts of these nearly 2,000 Patriots over the past 13 days and 300+ miles were to mean anything, Ferguson had to be stopped before reaching the city. But the Patriots were exhausted; days of marching and riding with no food and little rest had taken their toll. Storm clouds once again darkened the western sky as each commander walked among his men, selecting the best fighters and horses to continue the pursuit. Only 900 hand-picked men mounted in the pouring rain to continue down the dark trails.

Daybreak on October 7 found these Patriots miles away from Ferguson's campsite. Isaac Shelby scolded the men when they suggested rest, reminding them of their determination to see this job finished. As these horsemen drew closer, additional information about Ferguson's camp came from unexpected sources: released prisoners, locals who had taken Ferguson food and Loyalist messengers. Intercepted letters revealed that Ferguson knew of his pursuers and painted a clear picture of what the Patriots could expect to find: The sought-after Redcoat had a strong position on a rocky ridge called "Kings Mountain," beside the road to Charlotte, and he hoped to rest his men and buy time until reinforcements arrived. He did not know that his calls for aid had failed.

When the rain finally relented on the afternoon of October 7, 1780, Ferguson and his army of more than 1,000 Loyalists faced another kind of storm: a deadly ring of Patriot riflemen.

The battle was decided in little more than an hour. The Loyalist position was assaulted on all sides by Patriot frontiersmen, who used the heavy woods as cover to pour streams of fire into the defenders. Several times the Loyalists pushed the Patriots back with bayonets, only for the Patriots to return up the wooded slopes. Eventually, the Loyalists exhausted their ammunition, and their formation began to break. Ferguson led a final charge to break through the Patriot backwoodsmen, but nine shots threw him from his saddle. The



Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail  
Kings Mountain National Military Park  
Blacksburg, S.C.

Loyalist defenders broke, and chaos ensued as surrendering men became targets for revenge. By 4:30 p.m., Ferguson and nearly his entire Loyalist army was destroyed.

The swiftness of the Patriot pursuit, the brutality of their attack and the prisoner executions over the following weeks shattered the fighting spirit of most southern Loyalists. The Overmountain Men disappeared as rapidly as they had arrived, but rumors of their presence threatened every British outpost. Cornwallis moved back into South Carolina, buying the Patriots time to rebuild the southern Continental army. Today, the 330-mile trail used by these Patriots is preserved as the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, a motor route with a growing network of hiking trails stretching across four states. It is dedicated to protecting the route and sharing the story of how an army of backwoods hunters and fighters shared command, cooperated with their neighbors and created a stumbling block that saved the American Revolution.★

*William Caldwell, a graduate of North Greenville University, is an expert on the southern colonies in the 18th-century. He is currently an interpretive ranger on the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.*

# DIVIDE *and* CONQUER

Nathanael Greene Monument  
Sculpted by Francis Herman Packer  
Guilford Courthouse National Military Park  
Greensboro, N.C.



## THE RACE *to the DAN* and the BATTLE of GUILFORD COURTHOUSE

by JOHN R. MAASS  
PHOTOGRAPHY by MATT BRANT

*A symbol of strength in the Southern Campaign of the Revolution, Nathanael Greene led his men with a bold strategy that infused new life into the Patriot forces. From a masterly river crossing to a defensive stand that kept his forces largely intact, the general and his men used wit and determination to batter Crown forces under Lord Cornwallis.*

# When

Major General Nathanael Greene arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina, on December 2, 1780, as the new Continental Army Southern Department commander, he was taking over a theater that had seen few Patriot victories over the past year. But a series of swift and masterful maneuvers, augmented by audacity and sheer luck, shifted the balance in just four months.

The situation Greene inherited was dismal. Charlestown, South Carolina, besieged by British forces under Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton, had surrendered on May 12, 1780. This catastrophe included the surrender of more than 5,000 Continental soldiers and southern militia troops. The victory also allowed the British to quickly overrun the state's backcountry and establish several garrisons at Camden, Ninety Six, Cheraw, Georgetown and other posts. And although Clinton returned to New York City in late June, he left behind several thousand men commanded by Lieutenant General Lord Charles Cornwallis, who had seen extensive service in America by that time. His Lordship wasted no time marching his troops into the interior of the state in an attempt to gain British control over the American rebels.

Meanwhile, by the end of July, the Continental Congress and several southern states had cobbled together a new army in North Carolina, supported by militia companies. The new force, however, lacked adequate arms, food, clothing and equipment. Major General Horatio Gates, the “hero of Saratoga,” was given command of the department, against General George Washington’s better judgment, and quickly moved his weary troops toward Camden, South Carolina, where Cornwallis had concentrated a veteran army of about 2,000 soldiers.

Gates’s approximately 5,000 troops arrived tired and famished several miles north of Camden by August 14. It was coincidence that both sides chose to move after dark the next evening. After an engagement that night in the piney woods north of Camden, the British attacked Gates’s lines at dawn, routing the Americans and earning a “complete victory” in the hour-long struggle.

The Patriot troops fled to North Carolina, and, in early October, Washington, with the authority of Congress, chose Greene as a successor to Gates. Leaving West Point, New York, almost immediately, he and his staff rode south toward the Carolinas, meeting with state governors and legislatures along the way to implore them to send more troops and supplies to the army at Charlotte. Greene arrived at the outset of December and assumed command the next day, as Gates departed the army’s encampment.

Cornwallis, meanwhile, was not idle, advancing into North Carolina and occupying Charlotte after a brief skirmish on September 26. But in the second week of October, disaster struck the British when a mounted force of American frontiersmen surrounded and annihilated Major Patrick Ferguson at Kings Mountain. The stunning victory for the American cause forced Cornwallis to withdraw to Winnsboro, South Carolina, where his worn-down,

fever-ridden soldiers recuperated until early January.

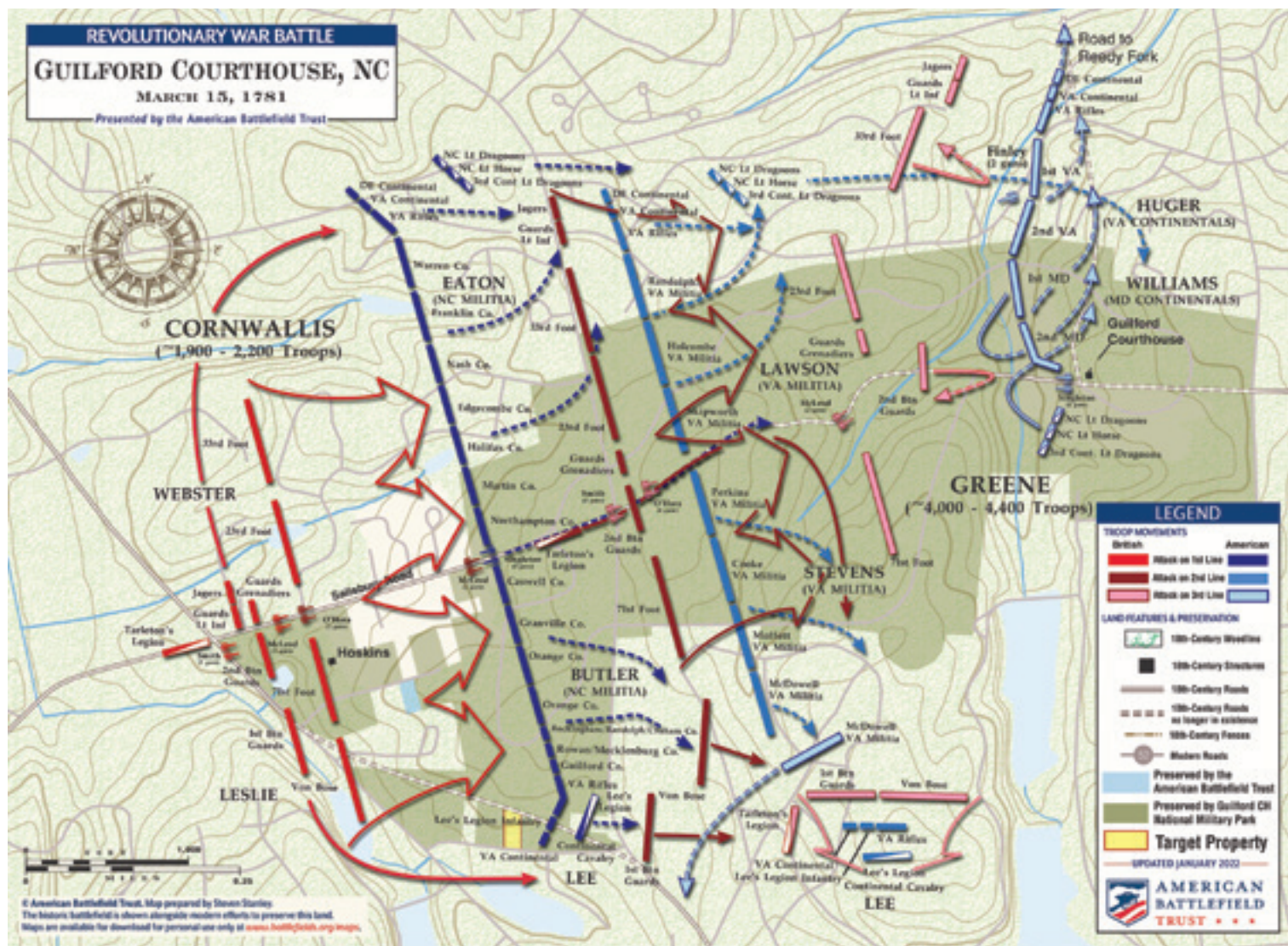
Greene took stock of his new army’s deplorable condition: His soldiers were poorly clad and shod and ill-fed, and many were without proper arms and accoutrements. To ease the logistical problems he faced, Greene made a bold choice with his outnumbered force, moving east along the Pee Dee River, where he hoped to find it easier to supply them. A smaller force of dragoons and light troops remained in the area south of Charlotte to threaten British posts west of the Catawba River and gather more militia. This detachment was led by Brigadier General Daniel Morgan, a dynamic leader and experienced officer capable of independent command, who had arrived at Charlotte in October.

Now rested and expecting reinforcements, Lord Cornwallis resumed his campaign to conquer North Carolina in mid-January 1781. To eliminate Morgan’s threat to the South Carolina backcountry, Cornwallis dispatched a fast-moving column of infantry, artillery and dragoons — about 1,000 British Redcoats and Loyalists led by Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton, a young, hard-hitting cavalryman with a reputation for ruthlessness and impetuosity.

Tarleton pursued Morgan through a cold winter rain, and finally drew close enough to attack the retreating Americans on January 16 at a large open area called the Cowpens. Morgan was ready for the dawn assault, his men arrayed in three lines to accommodate the typical weakness of the militia: a propensity to flee in the face of a bayonet-wielding enemy. Morgan put riflemen first, then the militia — each with orders to fire a few volleys, then retire to the rear. His most trusted units, Maryland, Virginia and Delaware Continentals, made a third line on a low hill, with mounted troops to the rear hidden by the ridge.

True to form, Tarleton charged ahead with only part of his detachment on the field. Morgan’s deployment worked to perfection, and almost all of Tarleton’s force was captured along with their artillery, although the brash commander escaped east with a few dozen troops back to Cornwallis’s camp.

Morgan could not rest on his laurels. With hundreds of prisoners in tow, he sped north, hoping to cross the Catawba River near Charlotte and avoid Cornwallis’s army. By the end of the month, with his troops across the



The Hoskins Farm, where the British initiated the Battle of Guilford Courthouse

## DEADLY FIRE FROM THE VIRGINIANS IN THICK WOODS AND BRUSH CAUSED CORNWALLIS'S ATTACK TO BECOME DISJOINTED.

river and the Cowpens captives moved into North Carolina, Morgan deployed his forces to guard several Catawba fords. Cornwallis, his pursuit inexcusably slow, even allowing for rain-swollen streams, finally reached Ramseur's Mill on January 25 and ordered the army's nonessential baggage burned to quicken the pace. With a forced crossing of the Catawba under fire from North Carolina militiamen at Cowan's Ford on February 1, the 2,800 Redcoats were poised to strike.

General Greene had arrived at the flooded Catawba River on January 30 to join Morgan ahead of the main army under Brigadier General Isaac Huger, now marching west from their Cheraw, South Carolina, camps. Greene prudently ordered Morgan to cross the Yadkin River at Trading Ford near Salisbury, then move to the tiny hamlet of Guilford Courthouse 60 miles to the northeast. They were soon joined by Huger's troops and the Continental dragoons under Lieutenant Colonel Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee by February 7.

Cornwallis's army had pursued Greene but halted at Salisbury on February 4, unable to cross the Yadkin as the Americans had taken all available boats. Rather, the British crossed the river upstream at Shallow Ford, then marched quickly to



Grave marker of three Delaware Continental soldiers.

the Moravian village of Salem, 25 miles from Guilford Courthouse. This movement placed the British on the same side of the Yadkin and dangerously close to the American army of about 2,000 men. Greene had to put another river between his troops and the enemy, so after discussing the situation with his officers — less Morgan, absent with debilitating medical complaints — Greene decided to move north-east toward safety and to resupply across the Dan River.

But where to cross? The closest point was Dix's Ferry, just inside Virginia, but the British at Salem were equidistant to this point and could threaten the movement. Instead, Greene chose to use two crossings farther downstream, Boyd's and Irwin's Ferries, near present-day South Boston, Virginia, on a section of the Dan where the Americans had previously collected boats for transport. He had to be careful, however, because getting to the ferries and crossing before Cornwallis could overtake them was not guaranteed.

To execute the maneuver known to history as the "Race to the Dan," Greene employed a ruse to help keep the British off his tail, splitting his army again. On February 10, Greene led the main body north-east toward Virginia from Guilford Courthouse, while a smaller rearguard detachment of dragoons and light troops, commanded by Colonel Otho

Holland Williams of the Maryland Continentals, fooled Cornwallis into following their march for Dix's Ferry.

For the next four days, Redcoats chased the rebels across a largely unsettled Piedmont region of sandy roads and tall pines. Often, Tarleton, leading his dragoons in the British pursuit, closed within a hundred yards of the fatigued Americans, who were subsisting on less than three hours sleep and little time to eat their bacon and ground corn. Early on the morning of the 14th, Greene ordered Williams to shift his route to the main body's path as the army approached the ferry sites. Although Cornwallis doggedly chased his prey, Greene and his troops managed to cross the Dan River on boats collected there weeks before, just hours in advance of the British appearing on the south bank. Williams called the "race" one of Greene's most "masterly and fortunate maneuvers."

While the exhausted Americans rested and refitted on the north bank, Cornwallis moved his men south to Hillsborough by February 20. Once Greene pursued the British after recrossing the Dan, the two belligerents engaged in a period of several weeks maneuvering between Hillsborough and the Deep River settlements (near present-day High Point), including a few bloody skirmishes. As Cornwallis marched to the Deep Creek Friends (Quaker) Meeting House on March 13, Greene cautiously pursued him, then brought the army to Guilford Courthouse on the 14th. There, hundreds of militia companies and a contingent of newly raised Continentals from Virginia joined the American army, swelling its ranks to over 4,000 soldiers. That evening, he decided to attack the British at their encampment the next day.

In the pre-dawn darkness of March 15, 1781, Cornwallis roused about 2,000 troops and set them off on the New Garden Road to attack Greene's army, only a dozen miles away. Once Greene learned from his scouts that the Redcoats were on the move, he took up a defensive position and deployed his troops in three lines, much as Morgan had done at Cowpens two months earlier. In the first line he positioned the North Carolina militia at the edge of an open field along the New Garden Road, situated at the woods' edge behind a rail fence; they were supported by more reliable troops on each flank — riflemen and Lee's Legion on the left, and Washington's cavalry and a company of Delaware Continentals on the right. Two artillery pieces took up a position on the road.

In the second line in wooded terrain, Greene deployed the two brigades of Virginia militia, many of whom had seen prior service in the Continental Army. Behind them, several hundred yards away on a high ridge, Greene placed his Continentals — two regiments from Maryland and two from Virginia, supported by two more artillery pieces — along the Reedy Fork Road north of the small courthouse.

In the morning, a running cavalry fight along New Garden Road developed as the Redcoats advanced. Once near Greene's lines, Cornwallis deployed his foot regiments on either side of the road, with artillery in the center, and Tarleton's dragoons held in reserve to exploit any success. The British commander's plan was simple: strike head on with relentless bayonet assaults.

Upon the initial British assault, the first line of North Carolina militia fled the field, some without firing a shot. The flanks offered

some resistance, but soon the British reached the second line. Deadly fire from the Virginians in thick woods and brush caused Cornwallis's attack to become disjointed, with elements veering off to chase retreating rebel troops. Eventually, the Virginians retreated under British assaults, and several regiments of Redcoats came upon the third American line, where the Continentals initially put up a stout defense. But when the British 2nd Battalion of Guards charged Greene's left flank, they routed the newly raised 2nd Maryland regiment and threatened Greene's rear. The fighting turned into a confusing melee and Greene, unwilling to risk a catastrophic defeat, left the field to the enemy. The Americans retreated north in good order as most of the militia dispersed immediately.

Cornwallis had won a Pyrrhic victory, losing about 25 percent of his men. Most of Greene's troops had fought hard, acquitted themselves well and were fit to fight another day. Low on supplies and greatly reduced by his casualties, Cornwallis retreated to the coast, reaching Wilmington on April 7 after a slow, frustrating march. His invasion of the state had been defeated in a campaign brilliantly executed by General Greene. ★

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# BURNSIDE TAKES *the* COAST

## BURNSIDE'S NORTH CAROLINA EXPEDITION

by ANDREW DUPPSTADT

PHOTOGRAPHY by CHRIS M. ROGERS

*After raising a "Coast Division" that wasn't particularly of the sea-faring sort, Ambrose Burnside's fleet embarked on an expedition that looked to expand Union access to the Tar Heel State. It was safe to say that the Carolina coast was in for an awakening.*

New Bern Battlefield Park  
New Bern, N.C.

## At the outset

of the Civil War, Confederate forces established two Outer Banks positions, Forts Hatteras and Clark, defending the navigable inlets connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the interior sound. But their artillery was insufficient to engage the Union blockading squadrons that soon arrived off Southern coasts. In late August 1861, the war's first combined operation of Federal army and navy forces dislodged the sparse opposition and established a strategic foothold that would not be relinquished throughout the war.

Early on the morning of August 28, despite heavy seas, a small contingent of infantry was landed on the beach, while the heavy naval guns bombarded Fort Clark. In a matter of hours, their ammunition expended, the Confederate

defenders abandoned Fort Clark and Union soldiers entered the fort. Although Fort Hatteras was more stoutly defended, it similarly fell the next day to a second round of overwhelming firepower – an estimated 3,000 rounds.

After disastrous defeats at Big Bethel and Bull Run, word of the Union's nearly bloodless triumph — although some 600 Confederate prisoners were transported north to a POW camp on Governor's Island in New York Harbor — was widely celebrated. While the Navy had compelled the surrender, Army Brig. Gen. Benjamin Butler had gone ashore to accept the unconditional surrender and politticked to wear the laurels.



Following the success of the Hatteras Expedition, which closed the inlet to blockade running, a larger and more complex operation was planned for the spring of 1862. Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan tapped Brig. Gen. Ambrose Burnside to organize and command this new expedition in North Carolina, and coordinate with U.S. Navy Flag Off. Louis M. Goldsborough, commander of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, on the joint operation. McClellan's objectives were ambitious:

Burnside and Goldsborough were to capture Roanoke Island, New Bern, Beaufort and Fort Macon and seize the railroad as far west as Goldsboro. Success in this endeavor could lead to possible strikes against other crucial points such as Raleigh and Wilmington.

What became known as the Burnside Expedition was initially a combination of ideas put forth by Goldsborough and Col. Rush Hawkins of the 9th New York Regiment. Following the capture and occupation of Hatteras, both felt that the Pamlico Sound region of North Carolina was ripe for invasion. Hawkins specifically pointed to what he perceived as strong Unionist sentiment in coastal North Carolina and the ability to recruit soldiers from the region who were loyal to the Union, an idea that both appealed to President Abraham Lincoln and made sense strategically. By controlling a large swath of coastal North Carolina, the Union could deny the Confederacy much of the area's agricultural output.

Burnside began raising his "Coast Division" months before the expedition began, and before he even knew where it would go. Initially, he hoped to raise troops from coastal areas of New England who had some experience on the water. His troops would be transported on U.S. Army gunboats, and he felt that having men experi-

enced at sea would be an advantage. Ultimately, his troops did come mainly from Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts, although not necessarily with any maritime background. There were some unorthodox units in the division as well, particularly the 1st New York Marine Artillery, a group that conformed to neither army nor navy standards, and is referred to in the records by numerous names. He also collected a menagerie of vessels that were converted to military usage. Burnside assembled a staff of trusted West Point classmates and personal friends, choosing Gens. John G. Foster, John Parke and Jesse Reno as his three brigade commanders. By late December 1861, Burnside's troops were gathered and ready to move to Annapolis and, later, to Fortress Monroe in Virginia. Burnside alone knew their eventual destination.

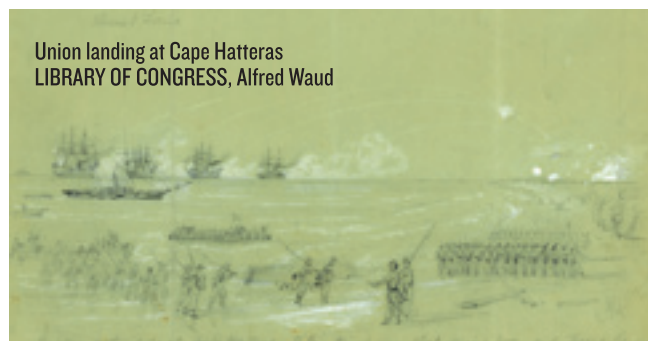
Embarking from Hampton Roads in late January, the Union Navy experienced delays due to storms lashing the coast near Hatteras. Burnside's troop transports finally departed on February 5. The attack on Roanoke Island began on February 7, and the island fell to Union forces the next day. The Union Navy then turned its attention toward destroying North Carolina's fledgling navy, nicknamed the Mosquito Fleet, which, with just nine small gunboats, was no



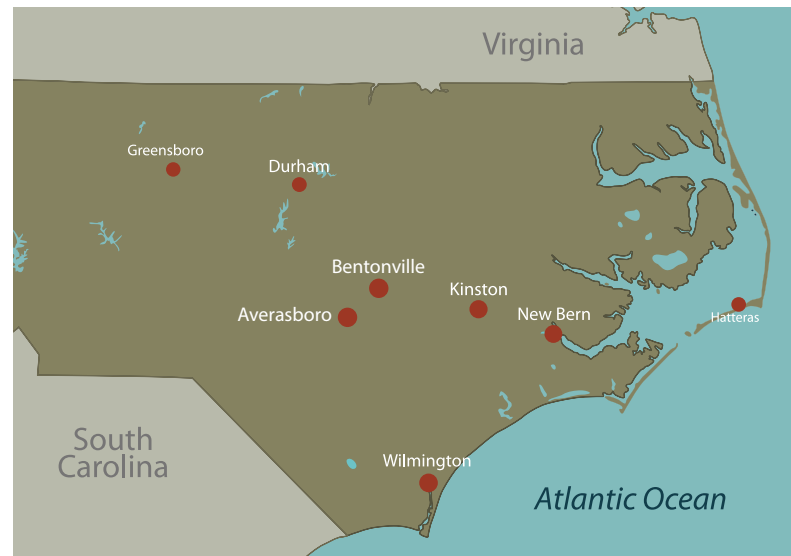
match for the 23-vessel Union naval force and was destroyed at the Battle of Elizabeth City on February 10. Union forces also burned the town of Winton on February 19. Capturing Roanoke Island and Elizabeth City ensured Union control of both the Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds, giving the Union military an effective foothold in the eastern part of the state from which to base future operations.

New Bern was the next target of the expedition, and Burnside's fleet sailed from Roanoke Island on March 11 with a combined force of 11,000 men. On March 12, sailing in two parallel lines, the fleet entered the Neuse River. They anchored at the mouth of Slocum's Creek (near present-day Havelock) and, early on the morning on March 13, shelled the shoreline and disembarked. No Confederates were posted there, but sentries upriver set bonfires to announce the Union force's approach. The troops marched overland about two miles to reach the Beaufort–New Bern Road, then pressed on — a total of 13 miles — to New Bern. Meanwhile, the navy, under Cmdr. Stephen C. Rowan, who had replaced Goldsborough when he was recalled to Virginia for other duties, worked its way upriver, shelling and capturing numerous Confederate fortifications. The next day, March 14, after a brief defense by the Confederates, New Bern fell to the Union soldiers and remained occupied for the rest of the war. Burnside then turned his attention to the east.

From New Bern, Union troops followed the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad southeast, capturing Havelock, Carolina City and Morehead City. By March 26, Union forces had occupied Beaufort, which the Confederates had abandoned, and began planning their assault on Fort Macon, a masonry fortification on Bogue Banks that guarded the Beaufort Inlet. Union troops were ferried to Bogue Banks from March 29 to April 10. Once on the island, they erected gun emplacements and prepared to lay siege to Fort Macon. Col. Moses White, commander of the fort, was hampered by a garrison of only 403 men as well as old, smoothbore artillery pieces that lacked the range and accuracy of the Union guns. On April 25 the Union guns opened fire on the fort from land and sea. However, tempestuous seas contributed to an inability to render much damage to the fort, and the navy vessels were ultimately forced to disengage and sit out the contest when they found themselves being damaged by Confederate fire. Still, the older masonry fortification was no match for the Union's rifled artillery, and it soon became apparent that the walls and powder magazines could be breached under heavy fire. Colonel White was forced to surrender Fort Macon.



Union landing at Cape Hatteras  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, Alfred Waud



**THE OLDER MASONRY  
FORTIFICATION WAS NO MATCH  
FOR THE UNION'S RIFLED ARTILLERY,  
AND ... THE WALLS AND POWDER  
MAGAZINES COULD BE BREACHED  
UNDER HEAVY FIRE.**



New Bern Battlefield Park  
New Bern, N.C.



New Bern Battlefield Park  
New Bern, N.C.

By late April 1862, the Union controlled the coast of North Carolina from the Virginia border south to the White Oak River. Occupation forces remained in coastal North Carolina, at such locations as Roanoke Island, Plymouth, New Bern and Beaufort. Indeed, Beaufort became a coaling station for the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, making it less difficult for the Union to conduct interior raids, refuel its blockading force and supply troops. New Bern became the military and political center for the Union in North Carolina. Roanoke Island and New Bern also became home to two large freedmen's colonies, as thousands of enslaved persons flocked to these locations to escape bondage and enjoy the protection of the Union forces.

Ultimately, the capture of Fort Macon and the end of the Burnside Expedition marked the last major military action in the state for more than two years, as the Union turned its attention to other theaters of the war. Aside from two brief forays farther inland — Foster's Raid in December 1862 and Potter's Raid in July 1863



Gunboats advance toward New Bern, N.C.  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES, Herbert E. Valentine



Original trenches  
New Bern Battlefield Park  
New Bern, N.C.

— Union forces made little effort to extend their range of occupation or strike the interior of North Carolina. To the south, the port of Wilmington quickly became the most important blockade-running destination in the Confederacy, fueling Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. However, Union forces did not target Wilmington until very late in 1864 and early in 1865, despite controlling much of the rest of coastal North Carolina.★

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# POWER of the SWORD

## THE TAKING of WILMINGTON PORT and FORT FISHER

by RAY FLOWERS

PHOTOGRAPHY by CHRIS M. ROGERS

*After the fall of the formidable Fort Fisher, the Confederates surrendered their arms to the Federal forces. But one sword would carry special weight and can even be seen at Fort Fisher State Historic Site.*

## Within weeks

of the Civil War's outset, Confederate artillery positions were placed near the mouth of the Cape Fear River to protect the vital trade route to Wilmington. Steadily improved with earthen walls designed to absorb heavy ordinance, Fort Fisher grew to become the largest fortification in the Confederacy — a veritable Gibraltar that kept Union fleets and armies at bay until late 1864.

The first battle for Fort Fisher began on Christmas Eve. Union naval artillery knocked out some Confederate guns long enough to land infantry on the beach, but the assault was unsuccessful. Rather than follow his orders to besiege the fort, Union General Benjamin Butler withdrew his stranded troops and was removed from command for disobedience.

On January 12, the Union moved again, the Second Battle of Fort Fisher likewise beginning with a naval attack. By the following day, Union command deemed the fort weakened enough to land infantry, which isolated the works that same day. Naval bombardment continued unabated, and a second shore force of sailors and Marines landed on the 15th in preparation for a two-pronged attack that afternoon.

As the fighting progressed, Maj. Gen. William Whiting, Col. William Lamb and Maj. James Stevenson were rendered "hors de combat" and incapacitated, devolving Confederate command to Maj. James "the Tarantula" Reilly. Faced with overwhelming odds, Reilly

and about 600 refugees migrated to a cul de sac, "where I [Reilly] expected to reform our shattered ranks, and to be in a position to engage the enemy under more favorable conditions." Alas, upon arrival, the Tarantula was surprised to discover the earthwork abandoned, the battery evacuated, the guns spiked and every vessel taken. Having exhausted his options, real estate and whatever luck the Irish are said to possess, the savvy veteran with two decades of army service had arrived at the mortifying and penultimate moment of his military career.

It was no accident that the climactic scene in this Southern tragedy was played out at Battery Buchanan, the last major engineering project undertaken on Confederate Point, situated at the terminus of the peninsula overlooking New Inlet and ancillary to Fort Fisher — the largest seacoast fortification in the Confederacy. The lovestruck engineer who submitted the design christened it "Augusta Battery" for his sweetheart, before Whiting, the district commander, quashed the sentimentality and officially dubbed it "Battery Buchanan" in honor of Admiral Franklin Buchanan — the South's only full admiral, gallant hero of Mobile Bay and commander of the ironclad C.S.S. *Virginia* on the one day when that ship ruled the seas like Poseidon.

The admiral's namesake, an elliptical, 43-three-foot-high earthwork, boasted four heavy smoothbore cannon, two 10-inch Columbiads and two 11-inch Brookes, and occupied a detached and isolated position that seemingly rendered it impregnable. A "no man's land" of flat sand afforded a clear field of fire for nearly a mile in advance, while in the rear yet of paramount importance was a wharf that facilitated the mooring of river steamers. This was manned by the Confederate navy and commanded by Capt.



Shepherd's Battery  
Rifled and banded 32-pounder cannon  
Fort Fisher State Historic Site  
Kure Beach, N.C.

Robert Chapman. Post commander Lamb described it as, "a citadel to which an overpowered garrison might retreat, and with proper transportation, be carried off at night, and to which reinforcements could be safely sent under the cover of darkness."

But at 10:00 p.m., on the cold, moonlight night of Sunday January 15, 1865, there was no help in sight. With three Yankee regiments bearing down on them and a mile-wide river to their back, the hopelessness of the situation was evident. As Reilly "observed the [enemy's] skirmish line ... advancing upon the point," he and two fellow officers emerged from the shadow of the battery to confront the foe. Three hundred yards out Reilly stopped and "took my handkerchief and placed it on the point of my saber and awaited your coming." He did not have to wait long.

Later, the wounded and imprisoned Whiting loudly declared that they'd been betrayed, maintaining that the loss of Fort Fisher "is due wholly and solely to the incompetence, imbecility and pusillanimity of Braxton Bragg." Meanwhile, Reilly, unharmed but a prisoner for the rest of the war at Fort Delaware, placed the onus on

Chapman alone: "I thought him too good a soldier to abandon us." The wounded and captured Lamb split the blame, suggesting that Chapman, "following the example of Gen. Bragg ... abandoned us to our fate."

But finger-pointing was still in the future as the 6th Connecticut, 7th New Hampshire and 27th U.S. Colored Troops regiments converged on the battery. Also there in the vanguard was Capt. Ezra Lewis Moore of the 7th Connecticut — a 27-year-old schoolteacher who'd enlisted as a private, but through a combination of "accuracy and promptness in the office and bravery in the field," risen to become the brigade's assistant adjutant general. A comrade remembered that Moore "seems to have been the right man in the right place." Undoubtedly, Major Reilly would have agreed: "When I surrendered my saber to you it was with a heart of the deepest depression. As a brave soldier you treated us courteously and showed no bravado over our defeat for which accept my sincere thanks."

Five and a half weeks after the capture of Fort Fisher, on



Fort Fisher State Historic Site  
Kure Beach, N.C.

February 22, 1865, Washington's birthday, Wilmington fell to Federal forces, and soon after, the new commander of the "Wilmington District," Maj. Gen. Joseph Hawley, established his headquarters at the Bellamy Mansion on the northeast corner of 5th and Market Streets, accompanied by a bevy of staff officers, including Moore. From early March through much of June, a galaxy of stars both military and civilian illuminated the halls of the mansion. Gens. William T. Sherman and John Schofield, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles and Postmaster General William Dennison, Jr., were all visitors. In May, former treasurer of the United States, now Chief Supreme Court Justice, Salmon P. Chase, and his beautiful daughter Kate passed through. During his stay at Federal Headquarters, the judge used Moore's desk to write a dispatch and inadvertently left his gold pen and silver case behind. Moore wrote that he only discovered it after Chase had departed and, "As he never inquired for it — I retained it as a memento of the visit and have it to this day."

On October 20, 1893, 28 years after the war, two other former adversaries — Confederate Colonel William Lamb and Federal General Newton Martin Curtis — who had spent the better part of a January afternoon in 1865 attempting to slay one another, returned to revisit Fort Fisher. The next day's *Wilmington Messenger* featured a lengthy article detailing their reunion and how Lamb jocularly referred to Curtis as "my friend the enemy." The piece was clearly picked up by some of the Northern papers because, within the week, an inspired Moore had written a letter to Wilmington's mayor, seeking Reilly's whereabouts.

The old major was not hard to find; for many years, he had lived in Wilmington and run the Market Street Ferry. After retirement, he moved across the river to a farm in Brunswick County, where he received Moore's unexpected and generous correspondence. His response to the unlooked-for gesture was immediate: "Dear Captain, Accept my thanks.... It certainly was a surprise and a pleasure."



**"WHEN I SURRENDERED  
MY SABER TO YOU  
IT WAS WITH A HEART  
OF THE  
DEEPEST DEPRESSION."**



Capture of Fort Fisher  
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A package from New England soon arrived with a note enclosed: "My Dear Major: I take great pleasure in forwarding ... the sword which has been the subject of our recent correspondence. The sword of Fort Fisher." Reilly's gracious note of acceptance back to Moore closed with a fraternal invitation, "Captain, if you have the time this winter to come and see me, we will visit the fort and see the ruins of that historic place." But, alas, there was to be no earthly reunion, as Reilly died the following November.

Today, thanks to the generosity of Reilly's descendants, that light cavalry saber produced by the Ames Manufacturing Company of Chicopee, Massachusetts, in 1859, is on loan to the state and can be seen at the Fort Fisher Visitors Center. Emblematic of both combat and reconciliation, some would consider it the most pertinent artifact in the exhibit hall.

Indeed, the site owes Captain Moore a great debt for bringing the story full circle with his magnanimous gesture. However, so far as we know, he never gave Chase back his pen. ★

*Ray Flowers is a North Carolina native and a lifelong enthusiast of the Civil War, particularly on the Lower Cape Fear. A University of North Carolina Wilmington graduate, he has worked at Fort Fisher for more than two decades.*



Fort Fisher State Historic Site  
Kure Beach, N.C.



Scrub live oak trees at Fort Fisher.  
Fort Fisher State Historic Site  
Kure Beach, N.C.

## THE 1865 CAMPAIGN *for* NORTH CAROLINA

by DERRICK BROWN

PHOTOGRAPHY by MATT BRANT

*As Sherman's Federal forces crossed into North Carolina in early March of 1865, Confederate leadership — recognizing their numerical disadvantage — put forth forlorn efforts to protect the resources the state provided to their Southern armies. With the reins in the hands of Joseph Johnston, the Confederates set their sights on slowing Union movements before the blue-clad troops reached supplies and reinforcements in Goldsboro.*

# SHERMAN'S JUGGERNAUT

Averasboro Battlefield and Museum, Dunn, N.C.

## *The final charge*

of the Army of Tennessee — battle-hardened veterans of Stones River and Chickamauga who had fought and failed to hold Atlanta and Nashville — was different than any it had made before. Instead of traversing the hills of Tennessee or the mountains of north Georgia, its troops advanced across the open fields and pine stands of the North Carolina coastal plain, a “western” army fewer than 100 miles from the Atlantic coast. But geography was not the only difference: The force that had approached 70,000 men the previous spring could only muster 4,500 to fight on March 19, 1865, the decisive day of the Carolinas

Campaign — a once-great army reduced to the size of a small division.

Fighting in North Carolina was sporadic for the first three years of the war, characterized by Union lodgments on the coast, with occasional inland raids, and unsuccessful attempts by the Confederacy to evict the invaders. This changed in spring 1865, when there were no fewer than 100,000 Federal soldiers in the eastern half of the Tar Heel State. Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, with two armies totaling 60,000 men and having completed his march through Georgia and taken Savannah on December 21, 1864, chose to advance overland through the Carolinas toward Virginia.

Following logistical and weather delays, Sherman moved into South Carolina on February 1, opposed by Lt. Gen. William J. Hardee, commander of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, now a ragtag force of fewer than 14,000. Hardee's orders were to defend

Charleston, but when Sherman captured the capital at Columbia on February 17, he forced the coastal city's evacuation. On March 8, Sherman crossed into the Tar Heel State.

The newfound Federal focus on North Carolina was troubling, as the port at Wilmington and the state's many farms had long been the basis of supply for Southern armies. Worse still was the thought of Sherman marching north unopposed to add his strength to the that of Grant. Someone had to take charge of the disorganized Confederate forces and give battle to Sherman. Technically, this was the job of Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, but the imaginative Creole's plans were unrealistic and Gen. Robert E. Lee, appointed general in chief in early February, had sway to insert an alternative. The problem was that Lee's top choice to revive the public and army's confidence was his old friend Gen. Joseph Johnston, who did not want the job. Indeed, Johnston initially suspected a plot to make him a scapegoat, should he be forced to surrender, and anyway, President Jefferson Davis didn't want him to have the position; this was, perhaps, the only thing they still agreed upon. Lee recalled the reluctant Johnston anyway. His orders were to form an army to drive back Sherman, but Johnston immediately tried to temper such lofty expectations.

Johnston was an obvious choice because much of his new command would be his old command, the Army of Tennessee. After that force's disastrous battles around Atlanta and catastrophic foray back into Tennessee, the remnants were ordered east to the Carolinas. Due to a combination of attrition and transportation issues, only 4,500 infantry had made it east by mid-March. Add in Hardee's men, Lt. Gen. Wade Hampton with a cavalry division from Lee's army, Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler's western cavalry contingent and Gen. Braxton Bragg's Department of North Carolina, and Johnston could boast only 25,000 men of all arms.

Sherman's objective was Goldsboro, where the railroads from the state's ports, now under Federal control, intersected. Here, he could be resupplied and reinforced on rebuilt rail lines. Laying track as they advanced, Maj. Gen. John Schofield's XXIII Corps and Maj. Gen. Alfred Terry's Provisional Corps planned to meet Sherman at Goldsboro. Already

outnumbered nearly 3-to-1 by Sherman, Johnston's only hope was to fight the Union forces before that rendezvous.

Johnston hoped to oppose Sherman's crossing of the Cape Fear River, but he needed time to concentrate his forces. To this end, Johnston ordered Hampton's cavalry to delay the Federals. Unfortunately for him, U.S. cavalry commander Maj. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick was doing an admirable job of screening for the advancing columns. An opportunity to defeat Kilpatrick, however, and get at the Federal infantry came on March 10 at Monroe's Crossroads, just west of Fayetteville. Fighting was fierce, and Kilpatrick was nearly captured, but having survived their initial shock, several Federal regiments rallied. This bought time for Union infantry to arrive, forcing Hampton to withdraw.

Sherman's rapid advance thwarted Johnston's plans to fight for Fayetteville, and the Confederate headquarters shifted north to Smithfield, along the North Carolina Railroad. A new plan emerged: If he couldn't stop Sherman from reaching Schofield, maybe he could stop Schofield from reaching Sherman. Johnston had little choice but to assign this task to Bragg, who was near Kinston and dispatched portions of two corps to further the goal.

Bragg was able to concentrate 8,500 men just east of Kinston at Wyse Fork for a surprise attack on March 8 against Maj. Gen. Jacob Cox's corps from Schofield's command, which was busy repairing the railroad. Bragg's assault destroyed a Union brigade and captured two regiments before running out of steam. Federal reinforcements arrived the next day, offering them a numerical advantage, but Bragg chose to stay on the offensive, moving against the Union right where strong defensive works ultimately aborted the attack. Further assaults on March 10 were beaten back with heavy losses. Unable to destroy Cox's larger

force, Bragg was at least able to delay work on the railroad, maybe slowing the junction of U.S. forces in North Carolina.

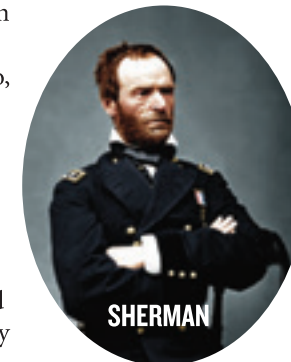
With Schofield temporarily checked, Johnston needed someone to do likewise to Sherman, who occupied Fayetteville on March 11. Rand proceeded to destroy the city's arsenal. For this task Johnston turned to “Old Reliable” Hardee. On March 15, Hardee chose the tiny hamlet of Averasboro to deploy his 6,000 men, blocking the road employed by Sherman's left wing, the Federal force having taken dual routes to speed the march and facilitate better foraging. The risk of this was that Sherman's troops were not always concentrated when venturing through enemy territory, even if each half likely outnumbered any force that could be arrayed against them.

As the 27,000-man left wing neared Averasboro on March 16, Hardee tried to mitigate his numerical inferiority by employing an in-depth defense, placing two lines of untried troops in front of his veterans. The plan worked well, but knowing it was only a matter of time before enough Union reinforcements arrived to crush him, Hardee retreated after sundown. His stand bought Johnston an extra day and captured prisoners that supplied valuable intelligence — Sherman was heading to Goldsboro — but at the cost of 800 soldiers.

By March 18, Johnston had gathered all available troops, hoping to again engage Sherman's left wing before it reached Goldsboro. Hampton, known for having an eye for terrain, recommended his camp site — just south of Bentonville and 20 miles east of Goldsboro — as a suitable place to lay a trap.

Sherman initially anticipated Johnston opposing his march on Goldsboro, but when no blocking force other than cavalry materialized, he began to relax. His complacency was made worse by Kilpatrick's conjecture that the Confederates were falling back toward Raleigh. Thus encouraged, Sherman left to join Maj. Gen. O.O. Howard's right wing early on March 19, believing it would soon encounter Union forces advancing from the coast. Subsequently, when the decisive day of the campaign's largest battle began scant hours later, Sherman was absent.

Hampton recommended that Bragg's command block the Averasboro-Goldsboro Road near the Willis Cole Plantation while Hardee — command-

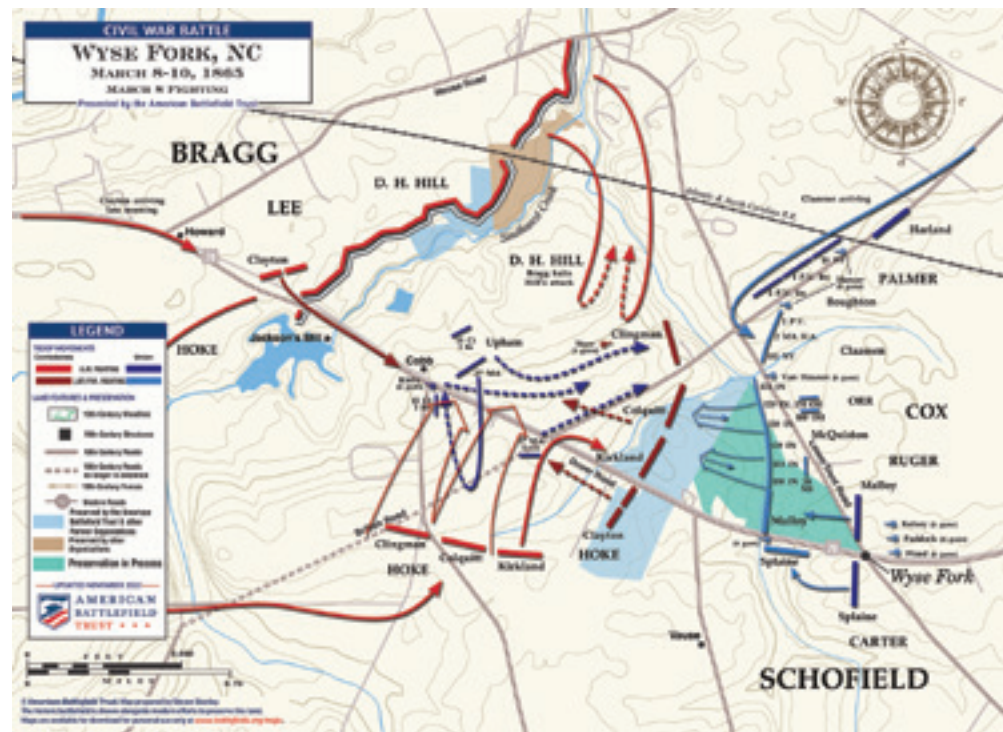


ing both his own corps and the Army of Tennessee contingent — waited to deliver the knockout blow with a 10,000-man charge. But because of the distance that Hardee's men had to march from Averasboro, the main assault could not begin until 2:45 p.m., and when it did, it was undermanned. This delay allowed more Federals to deploy, unnerving Bragg, who asked for help. Johnston inexplicably sent him Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws's division, Hardee's largest. Hardee's assault lost nearly 40 percent of its punch before the charge even began.

The last grand charge of the Army of Tennessee was initially successful. Hardee routed one poorly deployed division and a brigade from another before bogging down in the face of a well-entrenched XX Corps, supported by five batteries. Bragg was ordered to make a simultaneous advance, but his assault was somehow delayed. This allowed a XIV Corps division to entrench in his front, which delivered a bloody repulse when Bragg finally advanced. This blunder was compounded by Bragg's most unpardonable offense — the failure to even use McLaws' forces, posted near an impassable swamp.

During the early phases of the March 19 battle, left wing commander, Maj. Gen. Henry Slocum, advised Sherman that he was only skirmishing, but the flight of a battle-hardened XIV Corps division, and word from captured prisoners changed his tune. By midafternoon Slocum consolidated, awaiting help from the right wing. This reinforcement took the better part of a day, but Slocum held his ground.

The prudent thing for Johnston to do was to retreat before Howard arrived, but he chose to remain on the field despite the threat of being caught between two Federal armies. Perhaps he recalled his orders from Lee to keep Sherman occupied, or perhaps he realized that continuing the fight at Bentonville was the best he could hope for



### SHERMAN'S FORCE SWELLED TO NEARLY 85,000 MEN, WHILE JOHNSTON COULD CALL UPON FEWER THAN 30,000 MEN.

mathematically. Maybe Sherman would grow overconfident and attack Johnston's well-prepared positions like he had done at Kennesaw.

With the arrival of the right wing on March 20 the armies skirmished, but there was never the massive assault that Johnston had both hoped for and dreaded. Perplexed by Johnston's decision to remain on the field, Sherman saw no reason to risk a general battle before Schofield, even now occupying Goldsboro, arrived.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Mower, a division commander in the XVII Corps, wanted no part in waiting, and twisted his permission to do "a little reconnaissance" on March 21 into an assault on Johnston's left flank.

The charge nearly captured Johnston and likely would have cut off the Confederates' route of escape had it been supported, but Sherman, angry that Mower disobeyed orders, refused reinforcements. Even so, only a desperate counterattack led by Hardee gave Johnston the opportunity to order a retreat to Smithfield

under the cover of darkness. The largest, bloodiest and, ultimately, final major battle fought in North Carolina ended with 2,606 Confederate and 1,527 Union casualties.

With Schofield's arrival, Sherman's force swelled to nearly 85,000 men, while Johnston could call upon fewer than 30,000 men. With the fall of Petersburg and capture of Richmond, Sherman's objective shifted to eliminating Johnston's army, and when he advanced west toward Smithfield and Raleigh on April 9, Johnston had no choice but to retreat in a last, forlorn hope to join with Lee, who, in a twist of fate, himself surrendered that day.

At an April 13 meeting in Greensboro, Johnston told Davis there was little recourse but for his army to seek terms. He met twice with Sherman to negotiate on broader topics, but on April 26, at Bennett Place, surrendered the 90,000 Confederate troops across the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida on nearly the same terms given to Lee in Virginia two weeks earlier.★

*Derrick Brown is Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site's operations manager and a dedicated Civil War historian.*



Wyse Fork Battlefield  
Kinston, N.C.  
DAVID DAVIS

## PAGE from the PAST TANGIBLE LINKS TO HISTORY

### KING GEORGE AND BROADSWORDS! *The Legacy of Moores Creek National Battlefield*

**M**ANY of the American Revolution's early battles were thoroughly British victories, as the Patriots who founded our country found near-constant defeat during the first year of the war. Yet while the minutemen's loss on Lexington Green and General Joseph Warren's death at Bunker Hill are common subjects in U.S. history books, the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge — one of the Patriots' first outright victories in the war — is all but forgotten in the realm of popular knowledge. This is especially surprising given that it also counts as history's last broadsword charge by Scottish-Highlanders. The battle revealed the Revolution to be a complex affair, as North American-born Patriots and Loyalists clashed, pitting countrymen against countrymen. The memory of this legendary conflict is preserved at Moores Creek National Battlefield.

In January 1776, the British royal governor attempted to strike a claim for control of North Carolina. He called for Major General Henry Clinton's assistance and put out a call for all North Carolinian Loyalists to meet the arriving officer in mid-February. Most of the men who gathered were of Scottish descent and were led by one Brigadier General Donald MacDonald. But the actions of Colonel Richard Caswell and his Patriot militiamen resulted in a three-minute-long battle on February 27, and ensured that

MacDonald and his host never rendezvoused with the British general.

Moores Creek exists as it did then, a wide berth of swamp water, with some sections going as deep as 25 feet, although fighting unfolded near a shallower section. The famous bridge the Patriots cleverly entrapped through the means of removing planks and slathering the girders with soft soap and animal fat has been re-created. Similarly, the earthworks where Patriot troops fired upon the few Scottish Loyalists, who chose to let out a Gaelic battle cry "King George and Broadswords!" and unsuccessfully charge the Patriot position, have also been re-created. The only remaining original visual landmark in the park is the Black River Road, where both Patriots and Loyalists walked to reach their initial positions.

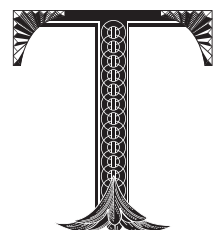
This historical site also holds several monuments that connect the battle thematically to modernity. To honor the Americans who died on both sides, the park currently holds monuments for both Patriots and Loyalists. Erected in 1857, the Grady Monument is a tall sandstone obelisk that holds the interred remains of the only Patriot soldier who gave his life that day, Private John Grady. The second monument, simply known as the Loyalist Monument, was placed in the park in 1909 to honor the fallen Loyalists as Americans rather than enemies, as it notes the Highland-Scots' bravery, courage and freedom of choice and expression. The park also received another monument in 1907, dedicated to folk-legend Mary Slocumb, supposedly a Patriot soldier's wife who had a premonition that her husband's life would end at Moores Creek. She reportedly rode more than 70 miles to save him, and when she found that he was not there, she assisted in tending to the battle's wounded Patriots until after her husband returned, unscathed, from chasing the Loyalists in their retreat. The monument stands to represent women's paramount involvement in the American Revolution.

Moores Creek National Battlefield represents a battle worth remembering; one which, had it not occurred, would have certainly led to a North Carolina unlike what we see today.★



Moores Creek National Battlefield  
Currie, N.C.  
DAVID DAVIS

## DONALD BRUCE “DONNY” TAYLOR 1948–2022



**THE BATTLEFIELD** preservation community lost one of its most ardent boosters with the death of Donald Bruce “Donny” Taylor, the longtime site manager at Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site in North Carolina, on June 23.

“He was a wonderful guy and such an advocate and worker for battlefield preservation,” said Ramona Bartos, deputy state historic preservation officer for the North Carolina Office of Archives and History.

Taylor, 73, was a farmer who turned his love for Civil War history into a second career with his work to help save Bentonville, a battlefield that saw the last full-scale action of the Civil War and the largest battle in North Carolina on March 19–21, 1865.

The Union victory by Gen. William T. Sherman’s troops came at a cost of more than 4,100 casualties. It seriously weakened

battlefield — 59 transactions dating back to 1990 and totaling 1,924 acres, about a third of the entire field of conflict.

“It’s a great place to come and spend the day with your family,” Taylor said in a 2021 Trust online video about the battle.

The well-preserved battlefield has a visitor center and museum. The Harper House, used as a hospital, still stands. A Confederate mass grave, the Harper Family cemetery and a 4.5-mile walking trail leading to a section of Union earthworks are also accessible to the public.

A native of Kinston, N.C., Taylor was a 1966 graduate of South Lenoir High School, attended Mount Olive College and served in the U.S. National Guard from 1968 to 1979. His love of the land and family connections led him to become a farmer. He was also a volunteer firefighter at the Wyse Fork Fire Department for 25 years. And his love for history led him to become a volunteer at the *CSS Neuse* Interpretive Center State Historic Site in Kinston, where the hull of the vessel and many artifacts are on display.

Taylor began his second career as an interpreter with the Department of Cultural Resources at the North Carolina Office of Archives and History at the Gov. Charles B. Aycock Birthplace in Fremont. He then became assistant manager at the *CSS Neuse* site, and for 18 years he served as manager of the Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site until his retirement at the end of 2018.

In 2019, Taylor was awarded the N.C. State Order of the Long Leaf Pine, one of the state’s highest civilian honors, for his exemplary, longtime service to North Carolina. He also received the William T. Alderson Lifetime Achievement Award from the N.C. Museum Council.

He was a Civil War reenactor and a charter member of the 27th N.C. Regiment, serving as colonel of the 2nd N.C. Battalion. He enjoyed relic hunting for many years and also became a wildlife photographer, with some of his photos appearing in *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine.

Ultimately, however, he may be remembered most for his service at Bentonville Battlefield, with his friendly attitude on the countless battlefield tours he happily conducted. When the Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site posted the news of his retirement on its Facebook page in 2018, dozens of people responded with compliments and congratulations, including historian Eric Wittenberg, who wrote, “Visits to Bentonville just won’t be the same without you.” ★



Donny Taylor and Ed Bearss touring the Bentonville Battlefield in 2013.

the Confederate army under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, who surrendered to Sherman on April 26, 1865, ending the Civil War.

With Taylor’s help and guidance, the Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site has become a showcase for Civil War history in North Carolina. The Trust and its partners have made more individual acquisitions at Bentonville than any other American

## IT WAS RESOLVED ... OR WAS IT? *North Carolina at the forefront of the independence movement*



**EMBLAZONED** on North Carolina’s flag are two dates — May 20, 1775, and April 12, 1776 — that symbolize the Tar Heel State’s long, strong commitment to democracy and independence.

In 1819, an article published in two North Carolina newspapers reported the existence

of the so-called Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, which, if it existed, would predate the 1776 Declaration of Independence by more than a year. The article’s author, Joseph Mcknitt Alexander, claimed that, on May 20, 1775, state delegates were emboldened to write the Mecklenburg Declaration after hearing of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, with his father serving as clerk to the gathering.

Supposedly, the state delegates had dissolved their relationship with Great Britain, declaring the mother country as an enemy to not only America but also to the inalienable rights of man. Author Alexander reported that the original document, perhaps conveniently, was lost in a fire, but that supporting evidence and first-person testimonials confirmed its existence. His story went that a rider was dispatched to Philadelphia with the declaration, but he was turned away by delegates who were not yet ready for such radical action.

That the alleged document bore a startling resemblance in language to Thomas Jefferson’s more famous prose caused incredibly controversy: Just how much had this secret source inspired the official one? Had Jefferson outright plagiarized it? Unsurprisingly, many prominent leaders, including Jefferson



and John Adams, denounced the validity of the claim, but speculation lingered.

Proponents of the Mecklenburg Declaration crowded in the 1830s when Francis L. Hawks brought forward a 1775 proclamation by Royal Governor Josiah Martin that described an article published by the Mecklenburg committee dissolving laws and setting up a new system of government. It wasn’t until the early 1900s that it was discovered that Governor Martin referred to the *Mecklenburg Resolves* — a list from late May 1775 of specifically rejected British laws — not a *Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*. Had the various testimonials regarding participation in a Mecklenburg-based document’s creation conflated these items? Even today, many North Carolinians choose to believe they were a year ahead of the declaration game.

The second date on the Tar Heel state’s flag, April 12, 1776, lacks such contention. Three months before 56 men signed the Declaration of Independence, in the wake of the Patriot victory at Moores Creek Bridge, the Fourth North Carolina Provincial Congress met in Halifax, North Carolina, where they unanimously adopted the Halifax Resolves. These were sent to the delegates

assembled at the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Despite not being a direct call for independence, the Resolves ordered the North Carolina delegation in Philadelphia to form foreign alliances and vote for independence from Great Britain. With this action, North Carolina became the first colonial government to allow its delegates to advocate and vote for complete independence. ★





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HERITAGE SITES

CSS NEUSE



**I**T TOOK A LOT of effort to get the CSS *Neuse*, a steam-powered ironclad ram of the Confederate States navy, to where it is today. Following the vessel's scuttling at the Siege of Kinston in 1865, the *Neuse* remained in the river area surrounding Kinston. In 1954, six high school boys were able to excavate 14 "live" percussion projectiles from the wreck site. This event inspired locals to organize a concentrated 10-year preservation project that led to the recovery of the *Neuse*. Years later, on June 23, 2012, the nonprofit organization, CSS *Neuse* Gunboat Association, purchased a site in downtown Kinston and founded an interpretive center for the ironclad.

One can find the CSS *Neuse* Civil War Interpretive Center on a downtown boulevard of Kinston. This historical site represents

the city's relationship to America's deadliest war and shows patrons that citizens and soldiers sought new methods of naval warfare throughout the Civil War.

The CSS *Neuse's* current home is a state-of-the-art facility that boasts top-of-the-line measures to ensure that the ship's remains are preserved for years to come. Visitors can view thousands of artifacts related to the ironclad, as well as visual and interactive exhibits that help bring this 19th-century ship into modernity. Patrons can also expect unique tours provided by local historians and the center's enthusiastic staff members.

The CSS *Neuse* Civil War Interpretive Center is constantly innovating and improving. The center's future holds endless possibilities for interpretive exhibits dedicated to highlighting the history of the Civil War, naval combat and Kinston, North Carolina. ★

CSS NEUSE CIVIL WAR INTERPRETIVE CENTER 100 N. Queen St., Kinston, NC 28501 (252) 526-9600  
[historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/css-neuse-and-governor-caswell-memorial](http://historicsites.nc.gov/all-sites/css-neuse-and-governor-caswell-memorial)

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