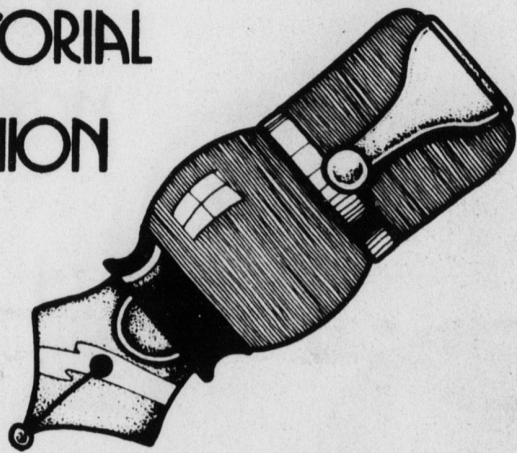


# EDITORIAL OPINION



## Freedom in our hands

Dick Leonard  
Editor, The Milwaukee Journal  
National President, The Society  
of Professional Journalists,  
Sigma Delta Chi

You would become furious if a policeman put his hand over your mouth while you were trying to tell people what you thought about Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford.

"Hey," you might say, "I've got a right to speak freely — the Constitution says so."

You would be right to demand your freedom of speech.

But would you stand up and protest when a public official gags a newspaper?

Probably not. Few Americans do. They don't realize that freedom of the press is every bit as important to them as their right to speak out.

When the press is gagged or otherwise restricted, there is little or no chance for people to learn what is happening in the world around them; no adequate way to let government know how citizens feel about important issues, and no hope that we can continue to live in the free society we enjoy today.

Free press. Free speech. Free society. They go together. You can't have one without the other.

Most Americans don't appreciate freedom of the press because they have never been without it. They really can't comprehend that most people in the world don't have a free press — and don't have any means of knowing the truth about what is happening in their own country or the world beyond.

In China, the editor of the People's Daily states flatly that his job is to print propaganda for the Communist Party.

In the Soviet Union, editors and commentators with high standing in the Communist Party decide what their comrades should know and think.

In most nations of Africa and South America, military dictators determine the content of the newspapers.

In all of these countries, and many more, press has become a bulletin board for the government. The readers know only what their rulers want them to know — and have no chance to talk back.

Could it happen here?

It's entirely possible. Frequent efforts are made to restrain the press from reporting events of public interest, to prevent reporters from attending meetings of public officials who are conducting the public's business, to close records of interest to the public, to jail newsmen for failing to reveal sources of confidential information that has been printed in the public interest.

Most of the efforts to destroy the free press have been defeated by vigilant newspapers and newspaper organizations which have waged campaigns against restrictive legislation and gone to court to fight for their First Amendment rights.

The public remains strangely silent. One public opinion poll indicated that most of the people questioned thought that news about government should be approved by government before it was printed.

Can you imagine Woodward and Bernstein of the Washington Post taking their Watergate stories to the White House for approval?

We've been fortunate in the United States. The Supreme Court has been a First Amendment court and has supported press freedom in most instances. But courts can change, usually in the direction of prevailing public opinion.

Strong citizen support for a vigorous, free press is necessary to guarantee that our nation will continue to be the land of the free.

Americans are holding freedom in their hands when they read the newspaper.



*'Don't involve me in your petty bickering!'*

Donald Patterson Jr.

## Writes about ancestors

**(EDITOR'S NOTE - Friday was the 177th anniversary of the Revolutionary War Battle of Kings Mountain and the Mirror-Herald reprints a state and national DAR-winning essay on "The Battle of Kings Mountain" by eighth grader Donald Preston Patterson, Jr. whose great-great-great-great-great-great grandfathers Preston Goforth and Arthur Patterson died in the battle. Donald is son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Patterson, now of Pompano Beach, Fla., and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Patterson of Kings Mountain.)**

By DONALD PATTERSON, JR.

My father's ancestors settled in western North Carolina in the early 1700's, and many relatives still live in Kings Mountain. When I was little, my father took me to the National Park to show me the names of Arthur Patterson and Preston Goforth (my grandmother's ancestor) on the monument there.

Thomas Jefferson said the Battle of Kings Mountain was "the turn of the tide" of the Revolutionary War in the South.

Because of a personal interest in this battle, I have greatly enjoyed this assignment.

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In the American Revolution, the final war years in the Southern colonies are often dismissed in favor of earlier, better-known battles. But in truth, the American Revolution was won in the South.

Sir Henry Clinton, British Army Commander, left Cornwallis to lead the British forces in the South. Clinton hoped to send an army north to trap General Washington in a pincer movement.

In May, 1780, Cornwallis ordered Major Patrick Ferguson to make newly avowed Loyalists into a strong royal militia. Ferguson, a Scotch three-year veteran of this war, commanded all the Loyalist militia raised in the Carolinas.

Invading South Carolina, Ferguson began to hunt down and punish "rebels" who resisted Royal authority. This resulted in guerrilla warfare between Carolinian Patriot and Tory sympathizers. There were more skirmishes here (137) than in any other of the thirteen original colonies.

Here the mountaineers made themselves known and became aware of Ferguson, who called them "backwater men . . . a set of mongrels." True, they were dressed in homespun or buckskin, and were of Scotch-Irish, English,

French and German ancestry, most were hard-working farmers and hunters. Almost five years passed before they were directly affected by British forces in the South. Stories of British atrocities fired their determination to defeat Ferguson and give the British a taste of their own medicine.

Summer, 1780, found Ferguson marching through the Carolinas, met by mountaineer militia regiments who engaged him in fierce actions.

August, 1780, Cornwallis defeated Gates' American forces at Camden, a great British victory. The only real American Army in the South had been shattered. The mountaineers returned home to rest and strengthen their forces, resolving to meet Ferguson again.

Meanwhile, Cornwallis marched toward Charlotte, intending to invade North Carolina. To protect his left flank, he ordered Ferguson northward into western North Carolina. In September, 1780, Ferguson camped at Gilbert Town (Rutherford today). He commanded eleven hundred four trained soldiers and loyalists. A British prisoner, Samuel Phillips, went to Col. Isaac Shelby, the Patriot militia commander in Sullivan County, North Carolina, and recognized leader of the mountaineers. Ferguson warned Shelby that he would "march his army over the mountains hang their leaders and lay their country waste with fire and sword, if they did not desert" from opposing the British. The challenge couldn't be ignored.

On Sept. 25, 1780, over one thousand mountaineers gathered at Sycamore Shoals near Elizabethton, Tennessee. Shelby led 240 North Carolinians, Charles McDowell, 160, John Sevier, 240; William Campbell brought 400 Virginians, and James Williams led a South Carolina force.

Shelby and Sevier would later become the first governors of Kentucky and Tennessee, respectively, while Campbell's relative by marriage was Patrick Henry.

Each mountaineer carried a knapsack, corn bag, and Kentucky rifle. These rifles were extremely accurate at more than two hundred yards. Only at Lexington and Kings Mountain did the outcome hinge on the accuracy and range of these rifles.

A five-day march began Sept. 26, 1780. Benjamin Cleveland and three hundred fifty Virginians joined it. Campbell was chosen as commander of the Patriot forces.

Ferguson's spies informed him of the mountaineers' approach. On October 2, Ferguson sent word to Cornwallis that he would stand and fight if he weren't outnumbered. Oct. 6, 1780, Ferguson

reached Kings Mountain, one and one-half miles south of the North Carolina border, and camped to await the Patriots.

Kings Mountain is a rocky, wooded, Blue Ridge spur, rising sixty feet above the surrounding plain. A barren plateau, six hundred yards long and seventh feet wide on one end and one hundred twenty feet at the other, lies at its crest.

Learning of Ferguson's position, some nine hundred of the best frontiersmen moved through the rainy night October 6th, stopping at noon, Oct. 6, 1780, about one mile from the mountain. They formed a horseshoe around its base, surrounding the British.

Loyalist Alexander Chesney was about to tell Ferguson all was quiet when the surprising attack came. Sevier and McDowell formed the right flank, with Campbell and Shelby at center, and the Cleveland-Williams forces to the left. Campbell's men opened fire and the battle was on.

The British rained down a volley fire but the woods protected the Patriots. The Patriots' center force charged uphill, but British bayonets caused retreat. The barren crest made the British easy targets for the mountaineers to kill; the British overshoot the enemy. When British soldiers chased the Patriots downhill, they were killed attempting to get back to the crest. Twice the Patriots were forced to retreat.

Ferguson, bedecked in hunting skirt and silver whistle, charged on horseback downhill, urging the British forward. The Patriots shot him down with seven balls penetrating his body.

His second in command, Capt. De Peyster, surrendered, but many Patriots continued firing, remembering British atrocities. Col. Campbell managed to stop his men after the second truce flag was sent down. The Battle of Kings Mountain was ended.

The Patriots killed two hundred twenty-five Loyalists, wounded one hundred sixty-three, and took seven hundred sixteen prisoners. Only twenty-eight Patriots were killed and sixty-two wounded — all this in little more than one hour's time.

Conclusion. The Battle of Kings Mountain is significant because it caused disenchantment with the Loyalist cause and resulted in many Southerners' joining the American forces. All of the fighters had been Americans except Ferguson. Cornwallis lost his foothold in North Carolina. In Clinton's own words, the Battle of Kings Mountain was the "first link in a chain of events . . . ending in the total loss of America."

## A little more imagination....

To the editor,

So the coach doesn't know what's wrong with the Kings Mountain High football team? Maybe playing two games in one week had something to do with the problem. KM played a rained out Friday game on Monday when all other teams played on Saturday, then turned around four days later and played another game.

And maybe the problem lies in the fact the players know they can't beat an outstanding football team by averaging three passes with one completion. Usually every pass thrown by the KM team is on the same pass pattern and on third down. This certainly doesn't make it too hard for the opposing team to defend against it.

Check the teams that have beaten KM

and see how many passes they have thrown. East Rutherford continuously and very successfully used the halfback pass. KM never attempt such a pass even though they have had former quarterbacks in the backfield.

A little more imagination by the coaching staff would make the game much more enjoyable even if KM did lose.

DAVID CLIPPARD  
Kings Mountain

## Thank you...

To the editor,

The senior citizens and Swinging Mountaineers wish to thank everyone for their cooperation and help in making our first auction and gospel singing a huge success.

We are grateful to the fine singing groups who gave their time and talents to help us in our efforts to obtain some much needed sound equipment. GUSSIE & BUREN BOLTON Kings Mountain

**(EDITOR'S NOTE - The city's aging program raised \$375 during Depot Center festivities Sat., Oct. 1 for purchase of a sound amplifier.)**

## Who needs it?

To the editor,

Remember the fellow who studied to be a dentist, but couldn't take the grind? Or the guy who became a baker so he could make a lot of dough? That guy finally said "who kneads it?"

So the question today is who needs the local government one-on-one meetings? Surely if the person or persons running for public office today doesn't care enough to get out and work instead of using a ploy such as these district meetings in order to meet the public, then they don't deserve to be elected.

The only things we voters have seen accomplished in the past few years are a lot of promises with too little action and federal funding. EVERETTE PEARSON Kings Mountain

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