

Kings Mountain Herald

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Reader Dialogue

Thanks to Moss, Broyhill

Dear Sir:

We members of Overmountain Victory Trail Association recently joined with other groups to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Battle of Kings Mountain. The marchers came from many states and walked through rain and chilly days to get to Kings Mountain. Credit for the great success of the Bicentennial and the naming of the trail "National Historic Trail" goes to two people.

First, Mayor John Henry Moss, General Chairman worked with many groups, the National Park Service, and State of North Carolina, Overmountain Victory Trail Assoc. and others and did a masterful job overseeing this tremendous effort.

Second, Congressman Jim Broyhill deserves most of the credit for getting the trail designated a national historic trail, the first in the southeast. I've never met Congressman Broyhill but I surely wish he was my Congressman.

Yours very truly,
JOHN H. PITTS
Atlanta, Ga.

Good job

To The Editor:

As a citizen of Kings Mountain I would like to say that I am not only speaking for just myself, but quite a few others, when I say that it is about time we let our Police Department know that we would like to say thank you for a job well done by each officer involved, and I agree with others that the city administration should hold a meeting and re-evaluate the very low pay scale that they have for officers.

It stands to reason if you pay more you get more. I for one would not risk my life for nothing.

WAYNE WORCESTER
119 Chestnut, Kings Mountain

Poets Corner



BATTLE OF KINGS MOUNTAIN

Two hundred years ago, our country belonged to England. England made our forefathers pay taxes. On July 4, 1776, our leaders declared that we were a free nation.

The Revolutionary War began. On October 7, 1780

General Ferguson's "Redcoats" were camping on top of Kings Mountain. Mountain men from all around

Surrounded the pinnacle.

When a musket was fired, the attack began ... Rushing and shouting they took deadly aim ... Less than an hour later, the guns were silent.

It was a great victory for our country. Today, we have a free and wonderful nation.

West School 4th Graders

Trina Anderson, Kelly Bess, Ronnie Carroll, Tony Day, Jeremy Evans, Tammy Henschel, Todd Jaycox, Andrea Mayhew, Elizabeth Phillips, Shermetta Watkins

THERE IS GOLD IN A DAY

Touches of gold that take hold and mold moments into lasting pleasure, Touches of sunshine where flowers entwine for this worth there is no measure.

Touches of nature that touch so gently the flutter of a butterfly's wing. A day when the morning is brightly dawning A bluebird awakens to sing.

The touch of a life that shines our path bringing joy untold. Banishes the gray from out of a day and adds bright touches of gold.

There's gold in a day in bright array if we only have eyes to see, Where to sift through the sand and held in the hand Pure gold without a fee.

Touches of gold that grasp and hold the heart in grateful praise. When we look to God who is giver of all and receptive to His caring ways.

Vivian S. Biltcliffe

Celebration a joy

Dear Sir:

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in the outdoor drama "Then Conquer We Must" in celebration of the bicentennial of the battle of Kings Mountain.

I met and got to know a lot of mighty fine folks from Kings Mountain. And it was a joy to witness the people of your area joining together in celebration of this great historical event.

I was impressed with the multitude of events the people of Kings Mountain planned and carried out in a most successful manner.

I have always had a great respect for your town and the way your citizens always get the job done. My respect has been renewed!

And to the good folk of Kings Mountain I express my appreciation for allowing me and others to share with you the fellowship and associations surrounding the recent celebration.

Sincerely,

JOHN (Lord Cornwallis) BROCK
Drawer 1029, Shelby, N.C. 28150

Good paper

Dear Sir:

Congratulations to you and your staff on outstanding Bicentennial Issue. The research, pictures and writing were great. In fact I brought several copies back across the mountains to be placed in appropriate places.

The City of Kings Mountain and Mr. John Henry Moss did an exemplary job in planning and execution of festivities. First was the ceremonies for the U.S. Postal Card First Day of Issue, next was the most delightful and entertaining parade and then the program at the Kings Mountain Battlefield.

It was a beautiful day and a great program.

Sincerely,

FRANK TANNEWITZ
Johnson City, Tenn.

What's your opinion

Something bothering you? Get it off your chest. Feel good about something? Share it. We want to hear from you. Address your letters to the editors to Reader Dialogue, P.O. Box 752, Kings Mountain, N.C. 28086. Unsigned letters will not be published.



Lib Stewart

DST is cause of all our present trouble

If you felt better Sunday morning than you did Saturday, the reason is simple.

You got back the hour they stole from you in the spring, when your clock sprang forward in defiance of the natural order of things. It was not the earth that suddenly jerked forward but you and your digital watch.

The Wilmington Sunday Star-News in a tongue-in-cheek editorial commented on this matter in a Sunday edition.

"We have all been out of it ever since. If this so-called Daylight Savings Time is not a Communist plot, it is only because the Reds weren't smart enough to think of it.

"It is rarely noted fact that since DST was invented, and forced upon an unsuspecting nation, things have gone wrong. Since Daylight Savings Time when have you seen a decent nickel cigar, a good presidential candidate, a mechanic who can fix your car? When have you seen a television commercial without a commercial for psoriasis cream?

"Returning to Real Time until the spring will not give the universe enough time to correct the damage done by the last assault of chrono madness, but at least it will give us all a few moment's breathing space."

Tribute to the OM Men

Second of three parts.

(An appraisal made by Sam J. Ervia, Jr. of Morganton, N.C. in honor of those who re-enact annually as a patriotic obligation the over-the-mountain march of the heroes of King's Mountain from Sycamore Shoals to the King's Mountain battlefield.)

After dispatching Ferguson to western South Carolina, Cornwallis marched from Camden to Charlotte, where he arrived September 26, 1780. While en route, he was constantly harassed by small bands of South Carolina partisans and North Carolina Whigs, and was reputed to have exclaimed that he had run into a hornet's nest.

Ferguson was highly successful in organizing the western Tories. With the aid of British Lieutenant Colonel Nisbet Balfour, who was stationed at Ninety-Six, S.C., he formed about 4,000 of them into seven regiments.

His success contributed to his ultimate undoing. For several years these Tories had been deterred from hostile action by fear of reprisals at the hands of the Whigs. Ferguson's activities in organizing them emboldened them to throw off restraints and to plunder and burn the homes of Whigs. As a consequence, much civil strife ensued among the Tories and Whigs of the area, and the determination of the western Whigs to resist Ferguson became implacable.

With the consent of Cornwallis, Ferguson decided to invade North Carolina. He sent couriers ahead during messages to the inhabitants of Rutherford, Tryon, and Burke Counties and to the people dwelling beyond the Blue Ridge on the Holston, the Nolachucky, and Watauga Rivers in what is now east Tennessee.

These messages urged that all revolt against the King in these areas cease, pledged to the people who submitted to the King's rule British protection against the Whigs, and declared that if the people of these areas persisted in revolt against the King Ferguson would lay waste their country with fire and sword.

On September 7, 1780, Ferguson crossed the North Carolina border with about 50 of his American Volunteers and 300 southern militia and marched to Gilbert Town in Rutherford County. During subsequent days he extended his invasion of North Carolina to Tryon and Burke Counties, and remained in North Carolina during the remainder of September, seeking to enlist the aid of the Tories, to persuade the Whigs to submit to the King's rule, and to subdue any Whigs who refused to do so. He increased the resentment of the western Whigs by confiscating their horses for British use and by appropriating their cattle, swine, poultry, and crops for the sustenance of his forces.

The Tories hastened to assure Ferguson of their allegiance to the King. A few wealthy men of Whig sympathies pretended to submit to the King's rule to secure British protection for themselves and their possessions. The majority of the people, however, revealed to Ferguson their abiding determination to support the cause of independence against all hazards.

The courage and sagacity of the Whig women folk equalled that of the men.

The truth of this observation was revealed by three Burke County women: Mrs. Thomas Lytle, wife of a Captain of Whig militia; Grace Greenlee Bowman, widow of Sheriff John Bowman; a deceased Captain of Whig militia; and Mrs. Thomas Hemphill, the wife of a Captain of Whig militia.

Ferguson visited the Lytle home and sought to persuade Mrs. Lytle to induce her absent husband to desert the Whigs and take British protection. Mrs. Lytle refused to do so. Ferguson told her that "the rebellion" had had its day and is now virtually "put down" and warned her that if her husband persisted in the rebellion and came to harm his blood would be "upon his own head". Mrs. Lytle calmly replied: "I don't know how this war will end, but I do know my husband will never prove a traitor to his country."

On receipt of news in June, 1780, that her husband had been mortally wounded in the Battle of Ramsour's Mill, Grace Greenlee Bowman carried their

two year old daughter on horseback 40 miles to him, nursed him during his dying hours, and saw that his remains were decently buried.

When Ferguson invaded Burke County, the widowed Grace Greenlee Bowman apprehended one of his officers taking her horse from her stable. When she objected, the officer stated: "Madam, the King hath need of your horse." Mrs. Bowman stepped into her home, returned with her late husband's loaded rifle, aimed it at the officer's head, and ordered him to put the horse back in the stable. The officer replied, "Madam, the King hath no further need of your horse," and returned the horse to the stable. The widow afterwards contracted a second marriage with General Charles McDowell.

A foraging party of Ferguson's men seized the entire flock of the Hemphill sheep, carried them to his camp, and put them in an enclosure guarded by a soldier ignorant of the vagaries of sheep. Mrs. Hemphill mounted her horse and rode directly to Ferguson's headquarters. This colloquy ensued between her and Ferguson:

She said: "Your men have taken all my sheep. Winter is coming. I have no means of clothing my little children except from the wool of my sheep."

Ferguson asked: "Where is your husband?"

Mrs. Hemphill answered: "I will not tell you a lie, Sir. He is out with the Whigs."

Ferguson responded: "Madam, your husband is engaged in a rebellion against his lawful King, with others that are at war with me; but I am not here to oppress women and children. My soldiers must be fed, but you may have half of the sheep."

Mrs. Hemphill inquired: "May I choose my half?"

Ferguson answered in the affirmative and sent her to the guard with an orderly, who told the guard that the commander had instructed that he return to her the half of the sheep chosen by her.

Mrs. Hemphill first chose the old bellwether ram, who had led the flock for years. To the frustration of the guard, the whole flock jumped out of the enclosure and followed their flying leader home.

Pending the assembling of enough Whigs to offer Ferguson adequate resistance, many Whigs hid themselves and their horses and cattle from the forces of Ferguson to escape discovery.

While he remained in Rutherford, Tryon, and Burke, trouble was brewing for Ferguson beyond the Blue Ridge.

Acting with the approval of Colonel Charles McDowell, of Burke County, N.C., Colonel Benjamin Cleveland, of Wilkes County, N.C., and Colonel William Campbell, of Washington County, Va., Colonel John Sevier and Colonel Isaac Shelby, who resided in the over-the-mountain country, scheduled a rendezvous for the Whigs at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga for September 25, 1780, to plan action against Ferguson.

Sevier and Shelby knew that the Whigs would provide their own horses, long rifles, hunting knives, blankets, and other personal equipment for the execution of any plan adopted, and serve without pay. They knew, however, that money would be required to finance the expenses incident to any expedition over the Blue Ridge, and persuaded John Adair, the patriotic entry taker of Sullivan County, to advance to them for this purpose \$12,735 he had collected from land sales and had been unable to remit to the North Carolina Treasurer because of the unsettled state of the country. Adair made the advancement to Sevier and Shelby for this patriotic purpose upon their personal assurances that they would replace the money in case North Carolina so demanded.

On September 25, 1780, the following Whig contingents met at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga: 240 "over-the-mountain" men under Colonel John Sevier; another 240 "over-the-mountain" men under Colonel Isaac Shelby; 400 Virginians under Colonel William Campbell, of Washington County; and 160 North Carolinians under Colonel Charles McDowell, of Burke County, and Colonel Andrew Hampton,

of Rutherford County. They agreed to cross the Blue Ridge and attack Ferguson without delay.

On the following day, the Reverend Samuel Doak, an "over-the-mountain" Presbyterian preacher, delivered to the assembled Whigs a sermon of moving power. He implored the Almighty to bless the fight of the Whigs for freedom, and exhorted the Whigs to unsheathe the Sword of the Lord and Gideon and smite Ferguson.

As soon as the sermon ended, the Whigs mounted their horses and began their trek across the Blue Ridge. The route they took has been traced with meticulous care by historians.

When they reached the beautiful Roan Mountain, they encountered an early snowfall, and discovered that two of their number had deserted and hurried ahead to warn Ferguson of their coming.

On September 30, they reached Quaker Meadows which lay below the hillside home of Charles McDowell and across the Catawba River from Morganton. They were joined at this place by 350 North Carolina Whigs under Colonel Benjamin Cleveland, of Wilkes County, and Major Joseph Winston, of Surry County, and camped for the night at Quaker Meadows. The Whigs enjoyed the relaxing hospitality of the McDowells and their neighbors, and their leaders held a council of war under the historic Council Oak. This venerable oak succumbed long ago to the ravages of time, and the spot where it stood is now indicated by a simple marker.

On the following day the Whigs resumed their trek, and at even time pitched camp at Bedford Hill near the present Burke, McDowell, and Rutherford County lines. The next day rain made travel difficult, and the Whigs remained in camp all day to enable their leaders to solve a perplexing problem.

Colonel Charles McDowell was the senior militia officer present, and protocol dictated that he was entitled to the overall command of all the assembled Whig forces.

Some weeks before the British had made a surprise attack upon a small Whig encampment on the Pacolet in South Carolina, and killed Noah Hampton, a son of Colonel Andrew Hampton. Hampton had an emotional conviction that Colonel McDowell was morally responsible for his son's death for failing to station pickets at proper distances from the encampment, and was reluctant to serve under his direct orders. While there seems to be no substantial evidence that the other Whig leaders in the camp at Bedford Hill shared Hampton's emotional conviction, some of them believed Colonel McDowell too cautious to have overall command of their hazardous mission when they confronted Ferguson.

They wished to solve their problem without causing embarrassment to anyone, and they accomplished their objective by means revealing that they were diplomats as well as warriors.

They argued that the highest ranking officers in camp at Bedford Hill were colonels of militia holding their commissions under different jurisdictions; that it would be inappropriate, therefore, for any one of them to exercise authority over the others; that in consequence they should request Major General Gates, who was at Hillsborough, to assign to them as an overall commander at Continental officer holding the rank of General; and that Colonel McDowell, as the senior militia officer present, ought to journey to Hillsborough and present to Gates a letter signed by Cleveland, Shelby, Sevier, Hampton, Campbell and Winston, asking Gates to assign a general officer such as the Old Wagoner, Daniel Morgan, or the gallant William Lee Davidson, to exercise command over the expeditionary force as a whole.

These arguments had convincing power. They moved Colonel McDowell to action which explains why he, as the senior militia officer among the assembled Whigs, did not command them at King's Mountain.

After delegating the immediate command of the Burke County Whigs to his younger brother, Major Joseph