

# The Battle of KING'S MOUNTAIN

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

NINE hundred and fifty-five years ago a gallant little army of American frontiersmen charged up the rocky slopes of a flat-topped hill in South Carolina to win one of the most brilliant victories in the American War of Independence. Today finds the federal government of the nation, which they helped found, commemorating their achievement by establishing a national military park and a state recreational center around the site of their triumph.

The flat-topped hill, where was fought the Battle of King's Mountain on October 7, 1780, and much of the adjoining territory, 10,310 acres in all, are now being purchased by the United

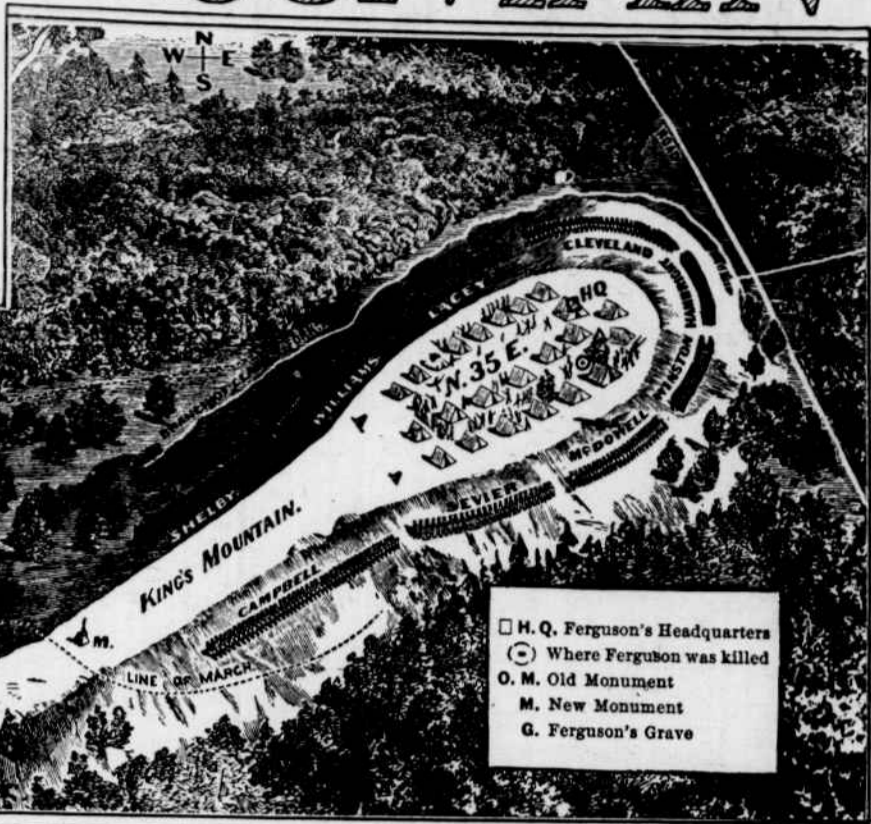


Diagram of the Battle of King's Mountain

States. Five thousand acres of this land will comprise the national military park. The remainder will be used as a recreational area for the poor and underprivileged classes, especially those in the mill towns of the northwestern part of the states. Camps are to be organized where they will be provided with facilities for all kinds of outdoor sports at a low cost. Thus is the patriotic impulse to honor the memory of the past being put to an eminently practical and humanitarian use for present and future generations of Americans.

The Battle of King's Mountain was one of the most dramatic events of the Revolution, both as to its actors and the circumstances under which it was fought. So far as the numbers engaged were concerned, it was a minor affair. But its results lifted it to a position of major importance in a campaign which culminated in a victorious end to the fight for liberty.

"Black 1780," the patriots called it, as the sixth year of their weary struggle opened. Down in the south two states, South Carolina and Georgia, lay prostrate before the enemy. Sir Henry Clinton had captured Charleston with its garrison of 5,000 men. True, such noted partisan leaders as Marion, the "Swamp Fox," Sumter, the "Carolina Gamecock" and Pickens were still harassing the enemy with their guerilla warfare but nothing conclusive could be expected of them.

With only these scattered bands of patriots to oppose him, Lord Cornwallis proceeded to complete his conquest of the south by invading North Carolina. As a part of his plan Maj. Patrick Ferguson of the Seventy-first regiment was sent toward the back country of the Carolinas to crush any patriot opposition which might develop, but primarily to rally the Tories and recruit them to the British standard.

Meanwhile the scattered patriots began making desperate efforts to resist his advance. Col. Charles McDowell of Burke county, N. C., was on the Broad river just over the South Carolina line when he heard of Ferguson's advance. He sent a call for help across the mountains to John Sevier and Isaac Shelby, leaders of the pioneers who had settled in what is now eastern Tennessee.

Sevier had his hands full fighting the Cherokees, but he sent 200 men to McDowell's aid and Shelby crossed over with a similar force from Sullivan county. There was a short period of guerilla fighting in which Shelby won a minor success at Musgrove's Mills. Then came the news of the crushing defeat of Gates' American army at Camden by Lord Cornwallis and the death of Baron De Kalb. Two days later the Americans suffered another disaster. Tarleton, one of Cornwallis' most brilliant officers, had surprised the wily Sumter at Fishing Creek and cut his command to pieces.

North Carolina now lay wide open to Cornwallis' invasion. He advanced to Charlotte with little or no opposition and Ferguson marched north through the back country.

In the meantime Shelby and Sevier had withdrawn across the mountains to make plans for resisting Ferguson or any other British force which should operate along the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge. They also sent word to the leaders in Wilkes and Surrey counties to gather their men and prepare for a counterstroke against the British.

Ferguson learned that the mountain men were rallying. At Gilbert Town he paroled one of his prisoners and sent him to Shelby with a letter in which he informed the "Back Water Men," as he called the mountaineers, that if they did not "desist from their opposition to the British arms, he would march his army across the mountains, hang the leaders and lay the country waste with fire and sword."

When Shelby received Ferguson's letter he rode hastily to hold a conference with Sevier. The two leaders resolved to muster their forces and strike Ferguson before he could secure enough reinforcements to carry out his threat to invade their country or could fall back to a position in closer touch with Cornwallis' larger force.

Immediately they sent out a call to arms to every settlement west of the mountains. Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga river near the present town of Elizabethton, Tenn., was named as the rendezvous and there on September 25 gathered more than 1,000 frontiersmen, most of them mounted and armed with long rifles. Shelby was there with 240 North Carolinians from Sullivan county and Sevier brought an equal number from Washington county. Col. Charles McDowell came with 160 men from Burke and Ruther-

ford counties. Col. William Campbell of Washington county, Va., responded to the call with 200 men and another 200, led by Col. Arthur Campbell, his brother, soon joined him.

The next day the mountain men swung into their saddles to ride against the invader and a Scotch Presbyterian pastor, Rev. Samuel Doak, sped them on their way with this benediction: "With the Sword of God and of Gideon!" Soon after they crossed the mountains they discovered that two Tories among their number had slipped away to carry a warning to Ferguson. There was now more need than ever for speed, so they pushed on rapidly to Quaker Meadows. There they were joined by Colonel Cleveland with the men from Wilkes county and by Major Winston with the men from Surrey, some 350 in all.

Meanwhile the two deserters had reached Ferguson, who immediately began his withdrawal from the mountains.

By October 6 Ferguson had reached King's Mountain. It was about 36 miles from Charlotte—near enough for him to be reinforced by Cornwallis if the need arose. But when he saw how admirably it was situated for a defensive engagement he did not feel that he would need aid. It was a natural fortress, a table land about 600 yards long, 60 to 120 feet wide, rising some 60 feet above its immediate surroundings, its sides covered with trees and its top protected by huge rocks. Taking up his position on this table land, Ferguson awaited the onslaught of the enemy.

On October 6 the mountaineers reached Cowpens where they were joined by Col. James Williams of South Carolina who, with 400 men, had been pursuing Ferguson as he moved north. This detachment was made up of groups of Sumter's scattered forces under Colonels Hill and Lacey and of North Carolinians under Graham, Ham-bright and Chronicle. This brought the combined strength of the American force up to nearly 1,800. But when their leaders learned that Ferguson was still far ahead of them they decided that a quick dash was necessary if they were to catch him before he joined Cornwallis.

Accordingly they selected 900 of their best horsemen and at 8 o'clock that night they started on the march. Rain poured down upon them, but they pressed on steadily over slippery mountain trails. About noon the next day the weather cleared and the sun came out to shine upon their bid for fame. Early in the afternoon they discovered the enemy on King's Mountain. They dismounted at the foot of the mountain, tied their horses under the trees and prepared for the attack.

Their tactics were simple. Their plans was to surround the hill and trap its defenders with a ring of fire as the ever-tightening circle of riflemen ascended the slope. All of the commanders cautioned their men to hold their fire until near enough to the foe to make their shots count—an admonition which was scarcely necessary, for these hunters and Indian fighters were not

accustomed to waste powder and lead with their long rifles.

The attack began about 3 o'clock. Whooping like Indians, Campbell and Shelby's men drove in the British outposts. At the sound of their voices, Captain De Peyster, Ferguson's second in command, who had fought at Musgrove's Mills and heard such whooping there, remarked: "These things are ominous; these are the d-d yelling boys!" But Ferguson immediately sprang on his horse and blew his whistle to call his men to arms. They opened fire at once but with little effect. Shooting down hill, they constantly over-shot the mark, even when they had a clear view of their assailants.

Ferguson next tried to repulse the attack with bayonet charges. But the Americans simply gave way until the charge had spent its force, then swarmed back, taking their toll as the baffled defenders of the mountain retired. As they pressed on fiercely and relentlessly, some of the Tories in Ferguson's command began to realize that they were doomed. They tried to raise white handkerchiefs tied to bayonets but Ferguson angrily slashed them down with his sword. Two horses were shot under him but he mounted another and continued his efforts to rally his men. Finally, seeing that the destruction of his command was inevitable if he stayed there, Ferguson with several of his officers turned their horses down hill and tried to cut their way through the grim ring of death. He was shot from his horse and killed instantly.

Captain De Peyster continued the fight for a little while, then seeing that further resistance was hopeless, ordered a white flag raised. A few moments later he surrendered to Campbell but it was some time before the fighting could be stopped.

The battle had lasted only a little more than an hour. The British losses were 225 killed, 163 wounded and 716 taken prisoners, a total of 1,104. The losses of the Americans were 28 killed and 62 wounded, a total of 90. But the victory on this South Carolina hilltop came as one bright ray of sunshine in the midst of the gloom of "Black 1780." The loss of 1,000 men was a stunning blow to Cornwallis. It halted his advance and placed him on the defensive. Before he could regain the initiative, the patriot forces had a chance to rally and the danger that peace might be made with the southern provinces still under British control was averted. Not only was King's Mountain the outstanding American victory of 1780, but it helped pave the way for the greatest victory of all the following year—the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. And finally, as Colonel Landers has suggested, "It is an exemplification of American aspirations for self-government and a display of romantic hard-ship and bravery well worthy of the careful study of American youth."

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## Shopping May Be a Wearisome Work or a Pleasant Adventure

Shopping has two aspects. One is of its tiresome element. The other is of its interesting element. It is wearisome to stand about and wait until busy salesmen have the chance to wait on you in your right turn. The walking from one store to another, and then through the shops, in search of the needed, or wanted, thing to accord with both preference and price the purse permits, the trying on of frocks, or being fitted to articles, if clothes must be bought, all these and many other of the activities of shopping are tiresome, indeed. Were it not for the pleasant reverse side of the consideration, stores would not be crowded, only dire necessity would tempt purchasers. Fortunately all shopping is not of this sort.

Window shopping is the feature that begins the pleasure, even be-

fore the shops are entered. Window dressers are paid well to arrange goods so that they will appeal to passers-by to enter. They may see what they want, or perhaps what they would like to have. These window displays are planned to lure persons into the shops, for comparatively few persons go through a store without buying something, however small. Windows, consequently, are worth looking into. It is a pleasure to do it.

If windows are fascinating, this is but the beginning of interest. Once the shops are entered, it is amazing how well and how invitingly the wares are displayed. Any woman who has gone through just one department, that carrying kitchenware for instance, will discover many articles, new ideas, or improvements of old ones, that makes her feel repaid for the exertion. The furniture department or the furniture store, the yard goods department with its handsome textiles, the dress shop, the lingerie shop, etc., each is a joy just to look at.

Shopping in large cities has both the tiresome and the pleasurable sides to the fullest degree. Shopping in smaller places is far less exhausting, and, when there are fine shops in that town or locality, then the enjoyable element prevails. As every normal person has more or less shopping to do, it is well, before starting out, to determine on one of two ways to shop. Either she should go with unseeing eyes straight to the department or shop where the wanted articles are to be found, and eliminate to the least possible degree the wearisome feature. Or she should be determined

### King Who Reigned 10 Days Left 10 Tons of Books

The libraries formed by Henry V. of France, and by the Empress Elisabeth of Austria, have been acquired by a famous London bookseller and will probably be exhibited to the public this fall.

Henry V. of France, who reigned for ten days in 1830 and died as the Comte de Chambord in 1883, was Henry, Duke of Bordeaux, a grandson of Charles X. of France. His magnificent library, consisting of ten tons of books in 87 huge cases, was eventually left to the son of Don Carlos—Don Jaime, Duke of Madrid. After negotiations lasting over a year it has been bought from his heirs and removed to London from the Castle of Frohsdorf, near Vienna.

Many of the books have superb Louis XVI bindings, and a feature of the library is an extraordinary collection of French pamphlets written between 1820 and 1875, for and against the monarchy.

The library left by the Empress Elisabeth consists of a huge number of volumes in lavish bindings. Liszt's Coronation Mass, 1856, is in a specially ornate binding of salmon pink, embossed with the arms of the empress.

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