



South Carolina's Who's Who of The American Revolution

Objective: To identify the major contributors to and their roles in the success of the Southern Campaign in South Carolina. (SC Standard 8-2.3)

Several battles of the American Revolution took place in South Carolina including the Battle of Cowpens and the Battle of King's Mountain. The British planned to end the colonists' rebellion by first controlling the Southern colonies then sweeping northward to obtain total victory. Their strategy began well with the fall of Savannah in 1778 and the fall of Charleston in 1780. Lord Cornwallis, the British commander, conquered the South Carolina backcountry using troops of loyalists to defeat their neighbors. By the summer of 1780, British control of South Carolina seemed assured, especially after Cornwallis' crushing defeat of American forces at Camden in August, 1780. Cornwallis was ready to begin his march northward.

A series of events beginning in autumn, 1780, put the success of the British Southern Campaign in doubt. In October, 1780, a patriot militia force defeated Patrick Ferguson and his corps of loyalists at Kings Mountain (see map above). Francis Marion was campaigning against British loyalists in the low country of South Carolina, and Thomas Sumter maneuvered his patriot forces against loyalists targets in the South Carolina upcountry. In addition, Nathanael Greene, the new commander of American forces in the south, had split his army to move more widely through the Carolinas.

Cornwallis, fearing for Ninety Six and overall British control of South Carolina, sent units to remove the patriot threat. The British lost many of the ensuing encounters including a significant defeat at The Cowpens In January, 1781. Cornwallis and Greene met each other in March, 1781, at Guilford Courthouse; the British won this encounter but lost nearly a third of its force including some of the best officers. Cornwallis then moved his army to Wilmington, and Greene turned his attention back to South Carolina and Ninety Six. Greene hoped to loosen the British hold on the backcountry by taking Ninety Six and forcing the enemy to Charleston.

Greene set siege to Ninety Six in May, 1781, but never took the fort. He was forced to lift the siege a month later as British reinforcements advanced toward Ninety Six. The British abandoned Ninety Six in July and moved to the coast. This signaled the end of British control of the interior. The Southern Campaign was over. British forces surrendered at Yorktown four months later, effectively ending the war.

In this learning station, you will complete the following:

1. Assign each group member to research one of the following men:
 - a. Francis Marion
 - b. Thomas Sumter
 - c. Andrew Pickens
 - d. Daniel Morgan
 - e. Nathanael Greene
2. Write a short biography of your assigned patriot, including the person's role in the Revolution's Southern Campaign. Your work should include at least one picture.