

THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

JULY 2008

VOLUME 109 • NUMBER 3



Publication of this issue is made possible in part
by the Frederick Horner Bunting Publication Fund
and by the Post and Courier Foundation

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“EVERY THING HERE DEPENDS UPON OPINION”: NATHANAEL GREENE AND PUBLIC SUPPORT IN THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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ON OCTOBER 30, 1780, THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS confirmed George Washington's choice, General Nathanael Greene, as commander of the Continental army in the South.¹ A daunting challenge confronted Greene. After having captured Savannah, Georgia, in December 1778, and forcing the surrender of Charleston, South Carolina—and with it, virtually the entire American army in the South—in May 1780, British forces occupied the two southernmost states. Outrages on the part of the British army and their Tory allies against the persons and property of defeated rebels and other civilians had helped rekindle resistance, and during the summer, volunteer militia began conducting partisan warfare. But Greene's predecessor, General Horatio Gates, had led a restored southern army to disastrous defeat at Camden, South Carolina, in August 1780. Greene would assume command of the outnumbered and badly supplied survivors of Camden, aided by southern partisan militia.²

“Every Thing here depends upon Opinion,” Greene wrote, shortly after joining his new command at Charlotte, North Carolina. “If you lose the Confidence of the People you lose all support.”³ Greene's recognition that keeping the support of the people was crucial to victory in this popular

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¹ *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford, 34 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904-1937), 18: 994-95.

² Sources on the war in the South are too numerous to list fully. They include Walter B. Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats: The Southern Conflict That Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (New York: Morrow, 2001); Russell F. Weigley, *The Partisan War: The South Carolina Campaign of 1780-1782* (Columbia: Published for the South Carolina Tricentennial Commission by the University of South Carolina Press, 1970); Henry Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown: The American Revolution in the South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981); John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1985); John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas* (New York: Wiley, 1997). For the beginnings of resistance to British occupation in South Carolina, see especially Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 54-65.

³ Nathanael Greene (hereinafter cited as NG) to Henry Knox, December 7, 1780, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, ed. Richard K. Showman et al., 13 vols.

padlocked mill buildings. Like millions of Americans, South Carolina's displaced textile workers now have to forge a future without the manufacturing plants that provided them and their ancestors with stable jobs.⁶⁹

After 2005, when Hollings stepped away from politics, many Americans remained troubled by the rapid decline of the manufacturing sector. As the pace of job loss accelerated and the economic climate worsened, some of the former senator's predictions were vindicated. In early 2008, for instance, NAFTA became a hot topic in the Democratic primaries as both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama accused each other of supporting the unpopular trade deal, which many blamed for extensive job losses in manufacturing industries. In the first seven and a half years of George W. Bush's presidency, 3.5 million manufacturing jobs had disappeared, and many Americans consequently called for trade reform. Responding to this, once he secured the Democratic nomination, Obama pledged to implement "fair trade" policies that incorporated many of Hollings's ideas. In particular, he promised to fight for trade agreements that "spread good labor and environmental standards around the world" and expressed his opposition to "unfair government subsidies to foreign exporters." Noting that the trade deficit had reached an unprecedented 7 percent of the gross domestic product, Obama sensed that many Americans wanted new trade and economic policies. In the future, it seems clear that a fresh generation of lawmakers will continue the difficult struggle to protect American manufacturing jobs, a fight that Hollings helped to initiate.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Andrews, "Man in the News: Ernest Frederick Hollings"; Leona White quoted in Clark Surratt, "Mill Closing Marks End of Era for Neighborhood," *State*, June 29, 1996.

⁷⁰ Adam Davidson, "Clinton, Obama, and NAFTA: A Non-Issue?" February 26, 2008, available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=38185288> (accessed August 4, 2008); "Barack Obama's Economic Agenda," available at <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/economy/EconomicPolicyFullPlan.pdf> (accessed August 1, 2008); Tony Walker, "Give and Take of Globalisation," *Australian Financial Review*, August 21, 2008, 76.

revolution (as in numerous other wars, past and present) had a significant impact on his conduct of military operations. Historians have briefly noted this factor in Greene's thinking, but it has never been fully developed. This article explores the measures that Greene took to keep public confidence, the limits of those measures, and the role that concern for public support played in Greene's military strategy in the South. Thus, the focus is on one factor in Greene's military strategy. There is no intent to explain fully and evaluate Greene's generalship as a whole. Other factors in Greene's thinking will be mentioned briefly, however, in order to place the general's concern for public support in the context of his overall strategy.

"Public support" is admittedly an amorphous concept. Who constituted "the people," especially under the chaotic, deeply divided conditions that prevailed in South Carolina and its neighboring states in 1780? Greene never answered that question clearly, but it seems likely that his definition was broad: all free, white adults and adolescents. Of course, community leaders—men of local prominence, including ministers—played an especially important role in getting ordinary men and older boys to lend their support to the cause. The support of women also was needed. Their influence in the home could be important. For example, after the British overran South Carolina in 1780, Isabella Barber Ferguson, of the District between the Broad and Catawba Rivers, threatened to leave her husband, Samuel, if he joined the British side. He did not. Women could aid the cause more actively, as well. Jane Thomas, tending her sick husband, who was a British prisoner at Ninety Six in June 1780, overheard a conversation about a planned British raid on a patriot encampment in the area. Slipping away, she "rode more than fifty miles to warn" the men, who included her son.⁴ Certainly, some of "the people" were committed loyalists. But a revolution dependent on voluntary allegiance, confidence, and active participation needed the support of as many people as possible.

LESSONS LEARNED

Greene's ideas about the importance of public support were formed before he assumed the southern command. The son of a prosperous Quaker entrepreneur in Rhode Island, he had broken with the Society of Friends by 1773. Greene was appointed general of his state's volunteer army in 1775 and soon won the confidence of General Washington. He served as a field commander in Washington's army until reluctantly accepting appointment as quartermaster general in March 1778, an appointment that did not altogether remove him from the field. Greene both learned from and

(Chapel Hill: Published for the Rhode Island Historical Society by the University of North Carolina Press, 1976-2005), 6: 547 (hereinafter cited as *Greene Papers*).

⁴ Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 63, 91-92.

influenced Washington's strategy.⁵ His wide experience prepared him well for command in the South.

Greene saw that the American Revolution was a people's war. "Popular opinion" must not dictate military operations, he wrote in December 1777, "but it is necessary to preserve the confidence of the country; for by the union and spirit of the people alone can the opposition be continued." The issue at the time was where the Continental army should make its winter quarters after the British had captured Philadelphia. Greene advised Wilmington, Delaware, where the army would be safe from surprise attack, could be supplied, and could defend as much of the countryside as possible. The last consideration was important, because the people would be more willing to support an army that tried to protect them from British depredations. "If the enemy are left at liberty to ravage at large," public confidence in the cause would be undermined, and not just in the vicinity. "The eyes of all the continent are upon us for protection, but it is natural for men to reason: what is my neighbours condition may bye and bye be mine." The army ended up at Valley Forge, a location that Washington believed was readily defensible, close enough to the British to keep watch on them, yet away from heavily settled areas already overburdened with refugees.⁶

The link between protection and public confidence in the cause influenced Greene's thinking on military plans for 1778. British strategy, he reflected, seemed to be to suppress the rebellion by taking "our *Capital Cities*, distressing our trade, destroying our Stores, and debauching one part of the Community to lend their Aid to subjugate the other." They had pursued this plan consistently, except "when their force was unequal to the business," and he predicted that they would continue to do so. "The greater distress the Enemy bring upon the Country the more difficult it becomes for us to support an Opposition; neither the Virtue of Citizens or Soldierly are equal to constant sufferings. The distresses of the Country will engage many in the Enemies service. The great difficulty the Enemy labour under is to continue

⁵The best biographies of Greene are Theodore Thayer, *Nathanael Greene: Strategist of the American Revolution* (New York: Twayne, 1960), and Terry Golway, *Washington's General: Nathanael Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005). George Washington Greene, *The Life of Nathanael Greene, Major-General in the Army of the Revolution*, 3 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1871), and William Johnson, *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene . . . in the War of the Revolution*, 2 vols. (1822; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973) are also useful. Dave Richard Palmer, *The Way of the Fox: American Strategy in the War for America, 1775-1783* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), 124, 171-72, contends that Greene influenced Washington's conclusion in September 1776 that the army must act defensively and avoid more defeats, the priority being its survival. Greene learned from Washington's execution of this strategy and applied the lesson with modifications in the South.

⁶NG to George Washington, [December 1, 1777], *Greene Papers*, 2: 225-26.

and secure their conquests at the same time; could they debauch such a part of the Inhabitants as to secure their Posts, their conquests would be almost certain."

To maintain public confidence, Greene favored an offensive against New York in 1778. The Continental army must show the people that the British would not inevitably hold every area that they occupied, he asserted, in order to buoy confidence in victory, "remove the impression of certain conquest . . . confirm the weak and wavering among ourselves, stagger the confidence [*sic*] of the Inhabitants now in the power of the Enemy and incline them to favour our designs."⁷

Prudential considerations soon tempered Greene's preference for the offensive. Sufficient supplies must be accumulated first.⁸ Another major theme in Greene's thinking emerged in September 1778, when he defended General John Sullivan's decision not to assault the British lines at Newport, Rhode Island, after a cooperating French fleet departed. Risky assaults were to be avoided, as military failure and the resulting negative public reaction could damage the cause severely.⁹

By 1779 caution had triumphed over boldness in Greene's judgment. When Washington asked his generals about the advisability of an attack on New York, Greene counseled that limited resources dictated a defensive strategy. By then the British evacuation of Philadelphia in 1778 had shown that the enemy would not always hold their conquests. Greene now believed that the apparent British war plan that he had detected the previous year was failing. Marching through the countryside and capturing cities accomplished little for them. "It is like a Ship plowing the Ocean, they have no sooner past than the scene closes and the people rise anew to oppose them. This will ever be the case while the grand Army is considered as capable of giving support to the people's endeavors." Thus the Continental army's survival was all-important. "Destroy this Army and the confidence of the people will sink and nothing but that can overcome us. For the degree of opposition [to Britain] will ever be in proportion to the people's confidence in their own strength and security."¹⁰

Greene realized, as well, that the Continental army's treatment of civilians would have a considerable effect on the degree of public support that the army received. Repeatedly, from 1775 on, he ordered that care be taken to prevent plundering, destruction of property, or even insults to civilians. Humanity and good military discipline dictated such a policy, but

⁷NG to George Washington, [April 25, 1778], *ibid.*, 355-59.

⁸NG et al. to George Washington, May 9, 1778, *ibid.*, 382.

⁹NG to John Brown, September 6, 1778, *ibid.*, 508.

¹⁰NG to George Washington, May 31, 1779, *ibid.*, 4: 107-08. Greene added that Britain's overriding objective should have been to destroy the Continental army. The editors of his papers note that the British did not disagree. See *ibid.*, 108, n. 6.

so did Greene's concern for public support.¹¹ People whose property the army or individual soldiers took were entitled to compensation, except for damages "incidental and unavoidable in all Wars," and Greene tried to see that they got it.¹²

Military necessity set strict limits to the Continental army's ability to respect civilian property, though. The army and its animals needed food, forage, and other necessities in order to survive, and wagons were needed to move the supplies. Washington and his officers were sometimes forced to order the impressment of supplies and wagons when "the Army cannot be provided for any other way."¹³

Necessity became particularly pressing during the winter at Valley Forge. A supply collapse in February 1778 forced Washington to order the seizure of any provisions that could be found. "Our poor fellows are obligd [*sic*] to search all the woods and swamps" for supplies that local people hid, Greene reported. "The Inhabitants cry out and beset me from all quarters," he told Washington, "but like Pharaoh I harden my heart. . . . I determine to forage the country bare."¹⁴

Necessity sometimes obliged Greene to continue the practice of impressment as quartermaster general. "It is impossible to carry on a war without oppressing the Inhabitants in some degree," he reflected in 1780, "and however disagreeable . . . it may be to the people, and to those in power, a regard to the common good and general safety will justify the measure; and tho' the people may be . . . impatient in the present hour, they will have a reason at a future day, to bless those who had resolution enough to consult and pursue their true interests."¹⁵ The larger cause of liberty required intrusions upon the liberty of individuals in the short term.

Military necessity sometimes required, too, that supplies be kept out of the enemy's hands. Washington and his officers at times ordered the removal or destruction of food, forage, and other supplies in areas that were indefensible and within British range. In September 1776, when it became

¹¹ General Greene's Orders, April 1, 1776, March 27, 1776, May 2, 1776, August 11, 1775, August 1, 1777, September 21, 1780, and NG to Anthony Wayne, December 19, 1778, *ibid.*, 1: 206, 205, 211, 107, 2: 132, 6: 303, 3: 120; Thayer, *Greene*, 87.

¹² NG to John Lacey, April 21, 1778; General Greene's Orders, June 1, 1778; NG to John Jay, February 1 and 20, 1779. *Greene Papers*, 2: 349, 419, 3: 201-03, 278.

¹³ Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500-2000* (New York: Viking, 2005), 168; NG to Samuel Ward, December 31, 1775, and to Hugh Hughes, May 18, 1777, *Greene Papers*, 1: 173, 2: 83.

¹⁴ Wayne Bodle, *The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 165-69, 175-77; Thayer, *Greene*, 222-23; NG to George Washington, February 17 and 15, 1778, *Greene Papers*, 2: 288, 285.

¹⁵ NG to George Washington, November 14, 1778, to Charles Pettit, November 23, 1778, and to Joseph Reed, August 1, 1780, *Greene Papers*, 3: 70, 81, 6: 174.

apparent that the British would capture New York City, Greene even advocated unsuccessfully that the city be burned so that it could not be used as an enemy base.¹⁶

Greene's perception that loyalism was strong in New York made it easier for him to urge the city's destruction. His attitude toward Tory civilians seems to have changed during the first five years of the war. In 1775 and 1776, he had little sympathy for Tories. Greene complained to John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, in late 1776 that the British treated patriots who fell under their control harshly, "while those who are disaffected to our Cause are suffered to remain in Peace and Quiet amongst us." That must change, he wrote, lest "the Risque and Danger" of supporting the Revolution "and the apparent Security [of being] on the other" side induce lukewarm patriots to go over to the enemy. "A discretionary Power [for generals] to punish the disaffected is necessary. . . . If the Refusal of the Continental Money and the withholding of the necessary supplies from the Army . . . are to pass unpunished," the result "must Sap the Foundations of all Opposition."¹⁷

However, when British forces evacuated Newport, Rhode Island, in 1779, Greene advocated a more lenient approach toward loyalists, "a happy medium between too great severity and too much indulgence." Any punishment for Tories should not extend to "proscription and confiscation." "Let none fall a sacrifice [*sic*] but such as may be dangerous hereafter; or are necessary to deter others from a similar conduct." Greene's apparent change of heart reflected a change in circumstances, and perhaps greater experience and thought. In 1775 and 1776, he wanted to get people to support the war by punishing those who would not, as well as by cultivating public support. The British evacuation of Newport led Greene to look to the long-range future if the war was won. The restoration of internal harmony would be important for a postwar republic.¹⁸

The overview of army relations with civilians that Greene took south with him in 1780 was now complete. Public support was the key to sustaining the war effort. And the viability of the Continental army was crucial to maintaining confidence in the cause. Above all, the army's survival should not be put at risk. The offensive should be undertaken only if there was a good chance of success and the prospective benefits of victory seemed to outweigh the prospective costs of defeat. Within these cautious parameters,

¹⁶George Washington to NG, November 8, 1776, and February 12, 1778, NG to George Washington, November 9 and September 5, 1776, and February 15, 1778, *ibid.*, 1: 343, 2: 281, 1: 344-45, 295, 2: 286; Thayer, *Greene*, 97, 190, 107.

¹⁷Thayer, *Greene*, 60; NG to John Hancock, December 21, 1776, *Greene Papers*, 1: 374.

¹⁸NG to James M. Varnum, November 2, 1779, and to William Greene, October 29, 1779, *Greene Papers*, 5: 5, 4: 513.

though, the army must try to protect the people and their property whenever possible. Depredations and occupation by the British could undermine the public confidence needed for final victory. If the people ever believed themselves conquered, they would be.

Public confidence required that the army not abuse or plunder civilians, but the army's survival took priority. Impressionment of supplies—always with promise of payment—and their removal or destruction to keep them out of enemy hands were justified by military necessity. Tories must be deterred from supporting the enemy, but punishment for their actions should not be overly severe or indiscriminate. Circumstances in the South led Greene to vary his approach on occasion, but his fundamental outlook had been formed.

A WINNING STRATEGY

Britain shifted the focus of its North American war effort to the South after France's entry into the conflict in 1778, which forced a transfer of British military resources to other theaters. Attempting to do more with less in putting down the Revolution, Britain adopted a version of the strategy that Greene had feared could win the war for them. British forces would conquer an area, raise local loyalists to hold it, and move on to take control of another area. After they occupied South Carolina and Georgia, loyalist response had been numerically disappointing. Those Tories who did enlist often took vengeance on defeated patriots, who responded with partisan warfare. Nevertheless, the British commander in the South, General Charles Cornwallis, was preparing to take the war into North Carolina after his victory at Camden. Patriot militia postponed his advance with a major victory at Kings Mountain on October 7, 1780.¹⁹

Arriving at Charlotte to assume his new command on December 2, 1780, Greene quickly realized that public support would be even more important in the South than in the North. British occupation had destroyed patriot state government in Georgia, and all but done the same in South Carolina.²⁰ With no established political structure capable of organizing resistance and legally requiring men to act in those states, Greene would have to rely on the voluntary efforts of community leaders to rally their neighbors in support

¹⁹ Paul H. Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 83-93; John Shy, "British Strategy for Pacifying the Southern Colonies, 1778-1781," in *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*, ed. Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 158-59; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 60-62, 71; Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown*, 91-104.

²⁰ *Greene Papers*, 6: xvii. South Carolina governor John Rutledge had escaped and joined Greene. His legislature had given him broad authority to act in the name of

of the cause as well as the willingness of common men to fight voluntarily.²¹ In North Carolina, executive authority was weak and "failed completely in the military crisis of 1780-1781."²² Greene's statement that everything in the South depended on the people's support was literally correct.

At Charlotte, Greene found his resources even scantier than he had expected. "Give scope to your imagination and form . . . as bad a picture as you can draw and still it will fall short of the real state of things." He had 2,300 men on paper—950 of them Continentals—of whom 1,482 were present and fit for duty, but only eight hundred were adequately equipped. The men were "in rags or literally naked, housed in makeshift shelters," living from hand to mouth on food collected daily "in a Country that has been ravaged and plundered by both Friends and Enemies."²³

Obviously, more soldiers were needed, but Greene was highly critical of the method that had been used in the past to reinforce the army. State governments had called out "shoals of Militia" for short-term service. Such militiamen were poorly trained and undisciplined. Worse, he believed that they consumed far larger quantities of scarce supplies than Continental regulars, exhausting the limited resources of the countryside. The expense of supplying them bankrupted state treasuries. Nor could they be prevented from alienating public opinion by plundering. They had "laid Waste the whole Country," Greene complained. "The Expence and Destruction that follows this Policy must ruin any nation on Earth, and the very mode of the Defence must terminate in the Ruin of the People."²⁴

Greene bombarded the state governors in his department (and others who might have influence) with pleas to raise regulars, instead of calling out the militia. "Unless they [the southern people] are soon succoured . . . by a

the state until the legislature could meet again, but what he was able to accomplish was quite limited. See James Haw, *John and Edward Rutledge of South Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 131, 138-61.

²¹ Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 61-65, 68-70, 102, 142, shows how that process worked as resistance revived in 1780.

²² Hugh Talmadge Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 229-30. All states had trouble getting militiamen to turn out when ordered. See Mark V. Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War, 1775-1783* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1996), 332, 334. The problem in North Carolina was greater in degree, and in South Carolina and Georgia, different in nature.

²³ NG to Nathaniel Peabody, December 8, 1780, editors' introduction, and NG to Henry Knox, December 7, 1780, *Greene Papers*, 6: 554, xvii, 547; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford*, 288; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 130.

²⁴ NG to Ezekiel Cornell, December 29, 1780, to Henry Knox, December 7, 1780, to Joseph Reed, September 19, 1780, to Abner Nash, December 6, 1780, and to Nathaniel Peabody, December 8, 1780, *Greene Papers*, 7: 21, 6: 547, 296, 533, 555; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1780-1783* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 138-39.

good regular force their distresses [will] inevitably break their spirits, and they will be impelled to reconcile themselves to their misfortunes; than which nothing can be more fatal to the . . . independence of these States."

Nothing came of Greene's appeals for more regulars. Men preferred militia service and were averse to the Continental enlistment. The Maryland government, for example, replied that they could do little "as they have neither money nor credit, and from the temper of the people are afraid to push matters to extremities."²⁵ The state governments' concern for keeping public support thus impeded a favorable response to a measure that Greene considered necessary to keep public support. Greene would have to rely on what little he had, supported to an unreliable extent by the militiamen that he denigrated.²⁶

Seeing the situation in the South for himself reinforced a conclusion that Greene had reached before his arrival: circumstances required a defensive strategy. The liberation of South Carolina would have to wait. His army was badly outnumbered. There were more loyalists in the South than in the North. Many patriots were "distressed and dispirited" because of British successes. Before going south, Greene had advised "sending a sufficient force to give full protection to the country, and confine the British Army within their lines. We shall by this step recover the confidence of the people," the first step toward eventual victory.²⁷ Gates had taken the offensive instead, resulting in the disaster at Camden. Greene lamented the setback, not only because of losses in men and matériel, but also because it would further dispirit an "unfortunate Country" that "was too discouraged before to make any great exertions" and only now "was beginning to recover" and fight back. Another such defeat, he feared, would be a fatal blow to civilian morale, causing "the tide of sentiment among the people [to] turn against" the Revolution "and even endanger [North Carolina's] political existence."²⁸

The southern army, Greene believed, must "act altogether on the defensive." A defensive strategy would not be popular and would risk losing public confidence. The people were "impatient under their sufferings; and . . . anxious to make every exertion to recover the Southern States";

²⁵ NG to Ezekiel Cornell, December 29, 1780, to Thomas Sim Lee, November 10, 1780, to Abner Nash, December 6, 1780, and to George Washington, November 13, 1780, *Greene Papers*, 7: 21, 6: 473, 533, 479; Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (1979; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 323-26.

²⁶ NG to Henry Knox, December 7, 1780, *Greene Papers*, 6: 547.

²⁷ NG to Alexander McDougall, April 15, 1780, and to George Washington, July 6, 1780, *ibid.*, 5: 528, 6: 66-67.

²⁸ NG to W. Greene, September 5, 1780, and to North Carolina Board of War, December 7, 1780, *ibid.*, 6: 258, 549.

however, "if you push into Danger you hazard every thing." An offensive was unlikely to succeed with such limited resources. "The more we waste our strength in such a fruitless attempt, the less able we shall be . . . to give protection to the rest of the Southern States not yet in the enemies power."²⁹ As Greene had earlier stated, public opinion must not dictate military strategy. Trying to protect as many people as possible and limit the area of British control seemed to be the only feasible course with the inadequate resources at hand. Though disappointing to many people in the short run, a defensive strategy would, he hoped, bolster public confidence in the long run by ensuring the southern Continental army's survival and securing the country still in patriot hands.

Though defensive, Greene's strategy would not be passive. "My great object will be, to avoid a great misfortune, and do the enemy as much mischief as I can in the little partizan way." Southern partisan militia had already shown their ability to damage the enemy and limit British control of the countryside. Greene would try to support their efforts and coordinate them with the main army's operations. Partisan warfare, he told Francis Marion, would "preserve the Tide of Sentiment among the People as much as possible in our Favour," until a larger regular force could be raised.³⁰

Greene was fortunate to have the support of able partisan leaders who had combat experience as officers earlier in the war. Prominent among them were a trio of South Carolinians: Thomas Sumter, Francis Marion, and Andrew Pickens. Sumter, a backcountry planter and entrepreneur, had retired from military service in 1778. He took the field again as a partisan leader in May 1780. Marion, a planter in St. John's Berkeley Parish, was injured and left Charleston before the city fell. He led partisan resistance especially "along the Santee, Pee Dee, and Waccamaw Rivers." Pickens was a planter, storekeeper, and Presbyterian elder in Ninety Six District. A British prisoner on parole after the fall of Charleston, he considered his parole invalidated and took the field after the British "plunder[ed] his plantation and mistreat[ed] his family." Governor John Rutledge appointed Sumter commander of the state militia in October 1780, with Marion and Pickens each commanding a militia district.³¹

²⁹ NG to Joseph Reed, September 19, 1780, to Nathaniel Peabody, December 8, 1780, and to Henry Knox, December 7, 1780, *ibid.*, 296-97, 554, 547.

³⁰ NG to Nathaniel Peabody, December 8, 1780, and to Francis Marion, December 4, 1780, *ibid.*, 555, 520. Kwasny, *Washington's Partisan War*, 111-12, concludes that Greene learned from Washington how to coordinate regulars and militia effectively in a mix of regular operations and partisan warfare.

³¹ *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, ed. Walter B. Edgar et al. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974-1992), 3: 694-95, 477-78, 552-53. Biographies include Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Co., 1931); Hugh F. Rankin, *Francis Marion: The Swamp Fox* (New

Greene would cooperate with these and other leaders to wage a partisan war because it was all that could be done, not because he expected it to be decisive. "The salvation of this Country don't depend upon little strokes," he told Sumter. Partisan victories were "like the garnish of a table, they give splendor to the army and reputation to the Officers, but they afford no substantial national security." Only a regular army large enough to defeat the British army in the field could be decisive. Assemble such an army, and "all their posts will fall of themselves; and without this they will reestablish them though we should take them twenty times. . . . The enemy will never relinquish their plan, nor the people be firm in our favour untill [*sic*] they behold a better barrier in the field than a Volunteer Militia who are one day out and the ne[xt] at home." While Sumter should not neglect promising opportunities to strike, the Revolution was "not a war of posts but a contest for States dependent upon opinion" that only a regular army could win. Nor should the partisans attack rashly. "A misfortune at this time would be little less than fatal," Greene counseled Virginian Henry Lee, whose part-cavalry, part-infantry legion of the Continental army was cooperating with Marion, "[as e]very thing in this Country depends upon opinion."³² Greene's assessment was not totally mistaken, but he underestimated the impact of the partisans.

As for the main army, Greene's ragtag force faced a crisis. Greene found in December 1780, soon after his arrival, that his men could no longer be fed in the exhausted Charlotte area. The army must move. Without better supply arrangements, Greene also contemplated dividing his outnumbered army, which would allow for foraging over a wider territory, but "to detach one half the army for subsistence will leave the other a prey to the enemy."³³

Realizing the risk, Greene made a virtue of necessity. He had for some time been considering the idea of forming "a flying army," which, with the partisan militia's help, could "confine the enemy in their limits and render it difficult for him to subsist in the interior country." Sumter's plea for a detachment to cooperate with him west of the Catawba River may have helped solidify Greene's thinking on a plan he already "had in contemplation."³⁴ On December 20, Greene took some 1,100 men east to a new camp on the Pee Dee River near Cheraw, South Carolina, where he would rest, refit, and supply the men. He detached a smaller force that included his best

York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973); and Alice Noble Waring, *The Fighting Elder: Andrew Pickens, 1739-1817* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1962).

³²NG to Thomas Sumter, January 8, 1781, and to Henry Lee, January 12, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 7: 74-75, 104; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 244.

³³NG to Joseph Marbury, December 13, 1780, and to North Carolina Board of War, December 14, 1780, *Greene Papers*, 6: 566-67, 574.

³⁴NG to George Washington, October 31, 1780, and to Thomas Sumter, December 15, 1780, *ibid.*, 448, 581.

Continentals—the “flying army” he had contemplated—under General Daniel Morgan to the west of the Catawba, with discretion to act offensively or defensively, as Morgan saw fit. Morgan would “give protection to that part of the country . . . spirit up the people . . . annoy the enemy in that quarter,” and collect supplies that would otherwise fall into British hands. Concern for public support was thus one factor in the move, though not the major one. Greene reasoned that his unconventional action would confuse the British as to his intentions, make them divide their forces as well, and expose them to a thrust into their vulnerable rear by one American army if they chose to chase after the other. The strategy paid off when Morgan decisively defeated a British force led by Banastre Tarleton at Cowpens on January 17, 1781.³⁵

Paradoxically, the immediate aftermath of Cowpens brought increased danger. Cornwallis launched his planned invasion of North Carolina anyway. He burned most of his army’s baggage in order to move faster, in the hope of destroying Morgan’s force before it could reunite with Greene’s men. Failing that, he hoped to bring the combined American force to battle. Greene and Morgan retreated, reunited, and retreated again all the way into Virginia in February, while Cornwallis pursued vigorously.³⁶ Greene believed he had no choice. “If I should risque a General action in our present situation, we stand ten chances to one of getting defeated, and if defeated all the Southern States must fall. . . . Our force is so small and in such distress that I have little to hope and every thing to fear.” “The loss of the men in a general action,” he told North Carolina’s General Richard Caswell, would be “but a small part of the injury.” Worse would be “the effect it has upon the people at large, both in matters of finance and the power of opposing the enemy.” Greene surely knew that allowing Cornwallis to drive him from North Carolina would have a negative impact on public confidence, but a major defeat would be a still greater evil. The army’s survival, as always, was the highest priority. “While there is an army kept in the field, the hopes of the people are kept alive; but disperse that, and their spirits” would be crushed.³⁷

Greene had no intention of remaining passive in Virginia, however. Cornwallis, he realized, had “risqued every thing to subdue North Carolina.” Greene hoped that militia reinforcements would give him the strength

³⁵ Buchanan, *Road to Guilford*, 294; NG to Daniel Morgan, December 16, 1780, to Samuel Huntington, December 28, 1780, and to unknown person, [January 1781], *ibid.*, 6: 589-90, 7: 7-9, 175; Thayer, *Greene*, 296-98; Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown*, 120-34; Lawrence E. Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping: The Battle of Cowpens* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

³⁶ Buchanan, *Road to Guilford*, 334-58.

³⁷ NG to Thomas Sumter, February 9, 1781, and to Richard Caswell, February 16, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 7: 266, 295.

to turn and strike an important blow, or at least to harass Cornwallis's rear if the British commander did not pursue him into Virginia.³⁸

In fact, Cornwallis turned back toward Hillsborough, North Carolina, intending to rest and resupply his weary men and to rally North Carolina loyalists to join his army. About one thousand Virginia militiamen had joined Greene, but when the danger to their state receded, some began to go home. Although he considered his force insufficient for "any decisive efforts," Greene concluded that his army must return to North Carolina to press the British rear and deter loyalist militia from joining Cornwallis. The British "had every prospect of great reinforcements from the Tories of [North] Carolina," Greene wrote, and "I reflected that if they were permitted to roam at large in the State that it would indubitably impress the Idea of Conquest upon the Minds of the disaffected and perhaps occasion those who were wavering in their sentiments to take an active and decisive part against us." The army must act to encourage the public and discourage loyalists. "It was necessary to convince the Carolinians that they were not conquered, and by affording immediate protection to their property engage the continuance of their confidence and friendship." But "nothing shall hurry me into a Measure that is not" prudent. Greene would have to accomplish "by finesse [that] which I dare not attempt by force." He largely succeeded. On February 25, 1781, Lee's Legion surprised and smashed a Tory force marching to join Cornwallis west of the Haw River. That and the hovering presence of Greene's men deterred loyalists from joining Cornwallis without Greene's being forced to fight a major battle. British depredations also dampened popular enthusiasm for their cause.³⁹

Around March 10 or 11, some four hundred Maryland Continental recruits and more than one thousand militia joined Greene's army. His force now outnumbered Cornwallis's men. Greene resolved that his army was "much more respectable than it had been" and would not grow in the foreseeable future. It could only decrease as militiamen drifted away homeward, and could only be fed with "the greatest difficulty . . . in this exhausted Country." Greene therefore decided to offer battle. The resulting engagement at Guilford Courthouse on March 15, 1781, was technically a British victory, since Greene withdrew from the field. But it was a strategic success for the rebels. Heavy British casualties and a dearth of provisions forced Cornwallis to retreat to Wilmington, on the coast.⁴⁰

³⁸ NG to Baron Steuben, February 10, 1781, to Thomas Wade, February 16, 1781, and to Abner Nash, February 17, 1781, *ibid.*, 273, 298, 302.

³⁹ Thayer, *Greene*, 321-22; NG to George Washington, February 28, 1781, to Baron Steuben, February 29 [March 1?], 1781, to Abner Nash, March 6, 1781, and to Thomas Jefferson, March 10, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 7: 369-71, 374-75, 401, 419-20; Buchanan, *Road to Guilford*, 362-64.

⁴⁰ Buchanan, *Road to Guilford*, 368-83; Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown*, 169-76; NG to Samuel Huntington, March 16, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 7: 433-35.

Greene followed for some distance. He hoped at first to make another attack that would wreck Cornwallis's "prodigiously crippled" army. But the militia began to depart, decreasing Greene's strength. Provisions were scarce, the local inhabitants were "disaffected," and Cornwallis did not provide an opening for attack. Greene decided to break off the pursuit and "carry the War immediately into South Carolina. The Enemy will be obliged to follow us or give up their posts in that State." If Cornwallis followed, Greene's maneuver would "draw the war out of this State [North Carolina] and give it an opportunity to raise its proportion of Men." If not, the British "must lose more there [South Carolina] than they can gain here [North Carolina]."⁴¹

To Greene's surprise, the British general did not follow him southward. Instead, Cornwallis took his army north to join British forces in Virginia. That allowed Greene's little army and southern partisan militiamen to take on the scattered British posts in South Carolina and Georgia, which could be aided from the stronghold at Charleston. Encouraging public support for the cause in South Carolina and Georgia had not been the primary reason for Greene's return to the former state, but he noted with satisfaction that the move had "revived the sinking hopes of the people, and once more induced them to exert themselves for the recovery of their liberty." Active exertions were limited at first, though. Patriots, Greene noted, "last year spent their time and their substance in fruitless exertions" to no avail. Many had "left the Country. Last year it was full of resources, this [year] it is almost totally exhausted." Fearful of Tory raids on their homes and needing to attend to spring planting, many militiamen were reluctant to take the field. Greene told Andrew Pickens to "give the Inhabitants the strongest assurances that it is my intention to maintain our footing in this State," in order to encourage them to turn out.⁴²

Military successes accomplished more than assurances in rallying public support in 1781. Francis Marion's men and Lee's Legion captured the British post of Fort Watson on the Santee River in April. Advancing toward Camden, Greene's army suffered a setback at Hobkirk Hill later that month, but Greene's advance and militia activity forced the British to evacuate Camden on May 10. Sumter took Orangeburg the next day, and the British-held Fort Granby on the Congaree River fell to Lee's men on May 15. Moving rapidly, a contingent of Lee's Legion captured Fort Galphin on the Savannah River on May 19. Lee, Pickens, and Georgia partisans under Elijah Clarke took Augusta, Georgia, on June 5, and the British evacuated Georgetown on June 6.

⁴¹NG to Benjamin Cleveland, March 19, 1781, to Samuel Huntington, March 23 and March 30, 1781, and to George Washington, March 29, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 7: 453, 465, 8: 7-9, 7: 481-82.

⁴²NG to John Butler, April [21], 1781, to Samuel Huntington, April 22, 1781, and to Andrew Pickens, June 19, 1781, *ibid.*, 8: 126, 129-30, 415; Thayer, *Greene*, 342-43.

Meanwhile, Greene's army, joined by Lee and Pickens after their success at Augusta, had laid siege to Ninety Six on May 22. They were unable to take the post, giving up the siege when a British relief force arrived from Charleston. Greene's objective was achieved, though, as Ninety Six had become isolated and untenable in a countryside increasingly under partisan control. The British soon evacuated it.⁴³

By July 1781, Greene's still-small army and the partisan militia had captured or forced the evacuation of the British posts in the South Carolina and Georgia interior. After the battle of Eutaw Springs on September 8, the British held only small areas around Charleston and Savannah. Writing from Oliphant's Mill, South Carolina, Greene's aide-de-camp Captain William Pierce, Jr., told him that news of Eutaw Springs had "passed through the Country like Lightning. . . . Our Friends are much elevated with the success. . . . An humble Cottager who lives a few Miles from here and who looks to be on the eve of life was very happy last Evening with a Bottle of Whisky in one hand, and an earthen cup in the other, drinking the health of Genl. Greene." Thanks to the victories in the Carolinas and Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown in October 1781, public confidence was, at least for the moment, no longer a concern.⁴⁴

Even so, the war was not over. Greene had to guard against the possibility of a new British offensive from Charleston, perhaps with reinforcements sent from New York. His small and poorly supplied force could easily sustain reverses that would give "the Enemy command of the most fertile parts of this Country. A change of sentiments may also take place among the Inhabitants." Greene employed such arguments for the rest of the war to urge the southern state governments to reinforce and support the army. There was little result, especially after it became clear in 1782 that Britain intended no major offensive operations in North America and peace negotiations were underway in Europe. "As danger retires exertions cease," Greene complained in 1782. "Virginia and North Carolina are taking a serious nap," and nothing was being done to support the army. Reports of impending peace, he feared, lulled the people and their governments into a false sense of security.⁴⁵ Still, even without the material public support it needed, the army managed to survive until the war was, in fact, over.

⁴³Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown*, 178-205, 272-74.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 212-21; William Pierce, Jr., to NG, September 23, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 9: 388-89; McCrady, *History of South Carolina in the Revolution*, 251.

⁴⁵NG to John Rutledge, December 9, 1781, to Richard Henry Lee, April 25, 1782, to Henry Knox, May 20, 1782, to Alexander Martin, May 31, 1782, to John Martin, June 8, 1782, to John Barnwell, July 31, 1782, to George Washington, December 19, 1782, and to Benjamin Harrison, December 20, 1782, *Greene Papers*, 10: 20-21, 11: 115, 217-18, 270, 308, 474, 12: 314, 318.

"THE PEOPLE OUGHT TO RECEIVE AS LITTLE INJURY AS POSSIBLE"

The army's survival required supplies, and the supply situation was more difficult in the South than in the North. A more thinly settled land meant less food and forage available in a given area, and as the land was fought over, supplies became scarcer. Wagons and horses to transport supplies were hard to find. There was no hard money for payment, and paper currency was badly depreciated, if it was available at all. Civilians, often of Tory sympathies or wavering in their allegiance, were frequently unwilling to part with food, forage, wagons, and horses.⁴⁶ As a result, Greene was forced to impress supplies more regularly than Washington had done in the northern theater.

Greene was well aware that impressment was a delicate business, since it could alienate the people whose support was essential to the war effort. Greene tried to prevent abuses and mollify civilians as much as possible, but the army, if it was to survive, must be supplied.⁴⁷ In December 1780, shortly after his arrival in the South, Greene told North Carolina governor Abner Nash, "It is my wish to pay the most sacred Regard to the Laws and Constitution of the State, but the Emergencies of War are often so pressing that it becomes necessary to invade the Rights of the Citizen to prevent public Calamities." Greene promised strict disciplinary action "to preserve the Property of the People from unjust Invasions." But what had to be done would be done. "Many may think that War can be accommodated to civil Convenience, but he who undertakes to conduct it upon this Principle will soon sacrifice the People he means to protect."⁴⁸

When the army retreated into Virginia, Greene, with Governor Thomas Jefferson's approval, ordered the impressment of cavalry horses. He told his officers to "treat the inhabitants with tenderness" and to spare breeding mares and stud stallions, but the cavalry often took any horses they could find. There was a great outcry of protest from Virginians, who were attached to their prized horseflesh. Trying to strike a delicate balance between the army's physical needs and the imperative of preserving public support, Greene ordered the return of the more valuable breeding stock. "The rights of Individuals are as dear to me as to any Man," he wrote to Jefferson, "but the safety of a community I have ever considered as an object more valuable. . . . In war it is often impossible to conform to all the ceremonies of Law and

⁴⁶ Thayer, *Greene*, 282.

⁴⁷ David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution*, ed. Lester H. Cohen, 2 vols. (1789; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1990), 2: 551 (original pp. 230-31).

⁴⁸ NG to Abner Nash, December 6, 1780, *Greene Papers*, 6: 534.



As the Continental army retreated across North Carolina ahead of Lord Cornwallis and the British, tradition has it that on February 2, 1781, General Nathanael Greene stopped at a tavern in Salisbury owned by Elizabeth Maxwell Steel. Upon hearing of Greene's empty war chest and shortage of supplies, Steel presented him with two bags of gold and silver coins from her personal savings. Steel's patriotism and generosity were the exception. Far more often, Greene's Continentals had to subsist through impressments of private property. Believing that victory in the South could only be achieved with broad public support, Greene tried to prevent his army and the militia from plundering, and he ordered subordinates to exercise diplomacy when seizing civilian property. "You cannot treat the inhabitants with too much delicacy," he wrote one officer. This Alexander Anderson engraving, from William Gilmore Simms's *The Life of General Nathanael Greene* (1849), depicts the scene at Steel's Tavern.

equal justice; and to attempt it would be productive of greater misfortunes to the public . . . than all the inconveniences which individuals may suffer."⁴⁹

In Greene's mind, an orderly and restrained system of impressment was a necessity. Plundering by soldiers was, however, an unmitigated evil. Upon his arrival in the South, Greene found that his needy new command was "so addicted to plundering, that the utmost Exertions of the Officers cannot restrain the Soldiers." Cornwallis's British regulars too often "looted indiscriminately" on the march. In Greene's view, the militia, both Whig and Tory, was even worse. "The division among the people is much greater than I imagined," Greene wrote in January 1781, "and the Whigs and Tories persecute each other, with little less than savage fury." Indeed, one North Carolina militia commander later told Greene that his men "would Turn out With Alacrity" if told they could plunder, "but finding that To be discountenancd makes them act with Reluctance." Outlaw bands, seeking their own gain but often claiming to be patriots or loyalists, added to the problem.⁵⁰

Greene did everything he could to stop his army and patriot militia from plundering. He considered the practice wrong, destructive to discipline, and damaging to the public support his army needed. "The Inhabitants find they are subject to oppression instead of finding protection." Repeatedly, he urged militia commanders to put an end to plundering and promised severe punishment. "You cannot treat the inhabitants with too much delicacy," he admonished one officer, "nor should the least encouragement be given to soldiers either to invade their property or offer them insult. . . . The Army must be subsisted, but the feelings of the people ought to receive as little injury as possible in the mode . . . and the best compensation should be made them that our circumstances will admit."⁵¹

Compensation in certificates for impressed horses, Greene told Sumter in 1781, should be given equally to Whigs and Tories. "If any discrimination is necessary, [let] Government make that hereafter." Consistently, Greene urged leniency toward Tories who were not themselves guilty of murders or other crimes. Humanity called for such a policy, as did the need to put an end to the devastation of the countryside and the deaths of Whigs as well as Tories that accompanied it. Indiscriminate retaliation against all British sympathizers, regardless of the roles they had played, would "render their

⁴⁹NG to Thomas Jefferson, [April 28, 1781], *ibid.*, 8: 166-67; Thayer, *Greene*, 319-20; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 174.

⁵⁰NG to Robert Howe, December 29, 1780, and to Alexander Hamilton, January 10, 1781, William Henderson to NG, July 6, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 7: 17, 88, 8: 501; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 188-89, 123.

⁵¹NG to Isaac Shelby, August 2, 1781, to Elijah Clarke, June 7, 1781, to Andrew Pickens, July 30, 1781, and to Joseph Eggleston, October 21, 1781, *Greene Papers*, 9: 127-28, 8: 356, 9: 109, 460.

situation desperate and make them from a feeble and partial enemy a firm and determinate foe. . . . It is the very policy which the enemy would wish us to adopt." And open season on Tories would give the British "a pretence to burn and destroy the Country" in retaliation.⁵²

Treatment of Tories, of course, was ultimately up to state governments. Greene urged the southern governors to offer loyalists a chance "to come in with particular exceptions." He enjoyed some success. In September 1781, for example, Governor John Rutledge of South Carolina issued a proclamation offering pardon to loyalists (with stated exceptions) who would agree to serve six months of active duty in the state militia. Several hundred took advantage of the offer, but turmoil continued for the rest of the war. Desperate Tories—and outlaws pretending to be Tories—"conceal themselves in the Swamps from whence they issue forth and murder and rob every person on the road."⁵³ Under such circumstances, Greene noted, "The resentment of the people runs so high that the voice of humanity . . . has little or no effect." All of the southern states eventually offered varying degrees of clemency to many Tories, but the legislatures understandably were often less forgiving than Greene might have wished.⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

General Nathanael Greene recognized that victory in the American Revolution required the confidence and active support of the American people. That perception was very important in Greene's military strategy and relations with civilians as commander of the southern Continental army, though it was never the only—or necessarily the controlling—factor in his decisions. Above all, Greene believed, the Continental army must survive. Its continued existence meant hope, and its destruction would be a fatal blow to public confidence in the cause. That long-run consideration

⁵² NG to Thomas Sumter, April 30, 1781, to A. Martin, October 9, 1781, and to Griffith Rutherford, October 20, 1781, *ibid.*, 8: 176-77, 9: 438-39, 457; Thayer, *Greene*, 357, 383.

⁵³ NG to J. Martin, January 9, 1782, Thomas Burke to NG, March 28, 1782, and Ichabod Burnet to Charles Pettit, April 12, 1782, *Greene Papers*, 10: 173-74, 549-50, 11: 38-39; Rutledge proclamation, September 27, 1781, in *Documentary History of the American Revolution . . . Chiefly in South Carolina*, ed. Robert W. Gibbes, 3 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1853-1857), 1: 175-78; David Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South-Carolina, from a British Province to an Independent State*, 2 vols. (Trenton, N.J.: Isaac Collins, 1785), 2: 332.

⁵⁴ NG to George Weedon, October 1, 1782, *Greene Papers*, 12: 4; John Richard Alden, *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 324-27; Mark A. Clodfelter, "Between Virtue and Necessity: Nathanael Greene and the Conduct of Civil-Military Relations in the South, 1780-1782," *Military Affairs* 52 (October 1988): 172.

sometimes meant that his outnumbered army must act on the defensive or retreat, even if doing so discouraged people in the short term. But the defensive would not be passive. At least the army would help maintain public support by trying to protect those civilians not yet under British control. Beyond that, Greene sought opportunities to strike blows that would damage the enemy and raise civilian spirits without a major battle that he had little chance of winning. That meant partisan warfare. Greene believed that these small-scale forays would not decide the outcome of the war, but they had the potential to damage the enemy and give the people hope. In 1781 concerns that in North Carolina patriots would give up the fight and loyalists would join Cornwallis's army prompted Greene's crucial decision to resume the offensive by taking the army from Virginia back into North Carolina before his strength was adequate for a major contest. Reinforcements soon arrived, though, enabling him to offer battle at Guilford Courthouse and igniting the chain of events that won the war in the South.

The urgent need to feed and supply the army complicated Greene's efforts to maintain public support. Military necessity compelled him to impress supplies, paying in certificates that might or might not eventually be redeemed. Greene regretted the necessity and realized that it endangered public support, but the army's survival as always took precedence. He tried his best to see that impressment was done in the least offensive way possible and to prevent soldiers from plundering civilians on their own.

Greene's concern for public support extended also to loyalists, active and passive. Shocked at the killing and looting that a bitter civil war had engendered, he sought in the name of humanity and reconciliation to put an end to such practices on the patriot side. He urged, with limited success, that Tories who had not committed such offenses be given an opportunity for pardon, in order to weaken the enemy's support and begin healing the wounds of war. Greene's realization of the importance of public support and his actions to maintain it significantly influenced his conduct of the southern campaigns of 1780 to 1782.

BOOK REVIEWS

To Make This Land Our Own: Community, Identity, and Cultural Adaptation in Purrysburg Township, South Carolina, 1732–1865. By Arlin C. Migliazzo. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007. Pp. 480; \$59.95, cloth.)

More than twenty-five years in the making, Arlin Migliazzo's study of Purrysburg Township, South Carolina, is both timely and needed. Community studies of the Lower South in the colonial period have lagged far behind those of New England, the middle colonies, or the Chesapeake. There is still much about everyday life in the Carolinas and Georgia that scholars do not know. Migliazzo's work contributes to a new and growing scholarship that seeks to address this gap and complements other recent work by Bradford Wood and Peter Moore. Each book investigates the history of a non-plantation area, greatly expanding and revising scholars' understanding of the social and economic development of the region.

Purrysburg Township was founded in 1732 along the Savannah River, the first of a series of defensive townships designed by Governor Robert Johnson to guard the Carolina frontier against Indian or Spanish attacks. Purrysburg was the culmination of years of scheming by the colorful Swiss entrepreneur Jean Pierre Purry to create a settlement at what he considered to be the ideal latitude, thirty-three degrees north. He brought with him an ethnically diverse group of Protestants, made up of Huguenots, French Swiss, German Swiss, Salzburg German, Italian Piedmontese, and English colonists. Migliazzo set himself the project of trying to determine "by what set of adaptive processes could an ethnically diverse group of strangers bound together only by their pledge to immigrate . . . create a *community*" (p. 3). Purrysburg's ethnic and religious heterogeneity and eventual incorporation into the world of southern plantation agriculture made it very different from the stereotypical New England town (then again, many communities in New England did not fit the model either). It was not a failure, however, the author argues. There are many different kinds of communities, he maintains, and Purrysburg settlers did build relationships in their new homeland. To investigate the development of community ties in and around Purrysburg, Migliazzo applies network theory, investigating the ways in which the colonists developed relationships both horizontally (at the local level) and vertically (with those in the broader geographical region). Although linguistic barriers inhibited the growth of communal ties within Purrysburg itself during the first generation of settlement, Migliazzo demonstrates that settlers quickly established "a host of vertical relationships (and hence community) with those outside Purrysburg" (p. 299). German-speaking settlers in particular benefited from the presence of the German