

## Lancaster County History Commission

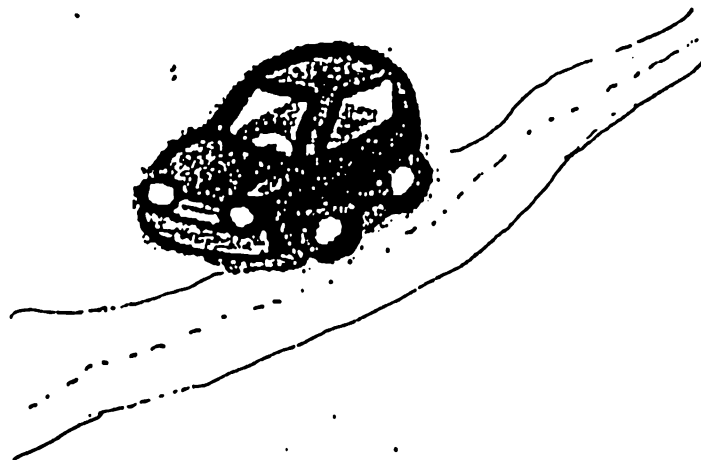
PO Box 1132  
LANCASTER, SOUTH CAROLINA  
29721

A DRIVING TOUR FEATURING REVOLUTIONARY  
WAR MILITARY SITES IN LANCASTER COUNTY  
AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES OF KERSHAW AND  
CHESTER.

by

WALTER CRAIG VICE CHAIR  
LANCASTER COUNTY HISTORY

COMMISSION



Lancaster County Council — Box 1809 — 116 W. Dunlap St.  
Telephone 803-285-1565 — FAX 803-285-3361



## DRIVING TOUR

For anyone wishing to give a tour starting at Andrew Jackson State Park, tell about the park. Leave the park, turn left. The first marker will be about Andrew Jackson. Explain marker. The next marker will be the Boundary Line marker; explain. Proceed to the Barr's Tavern marker; explain. Turn onto Hwy 9 By-pass and proceed to the Buford battle site; explain the battle.

To begin tour from Lancaster and not the park, take Hwy 9 to the intersection of Hwy 522. Turn right. The battle site is on the right. Proceed south on 522 to U.S. 521. Turn left. Before you get to Heath Springs, point out the Marion Sims historical marker on the right.

Proceed to the Duncan house, which is on the left just before the curve in Heath Springs. Tarleton and his men camped on the grounds of this home. Charles Mackey, a local patriot was captured by Tories and was ordered by Tarleton to be executed. Mackey's wife Lydia gained entry into the camp and begged Tarleton to spare her husband. Tarleton would not listen and began to mount his horse. Mrs. Mackey grabbed Tarleton's foot and pulled him to the ground. After a few attempts were made to get on his horse, Tarleton ordered parole for Mackey.

From Duncan home, proceed through Heath Springs to Flat Rock Road. The marker for Hanging Rock is at this intersection; do not explain the battle yet. Continue on Flat Rock Road to state road 29-467. Turn left and stop at marker for site of James Ingram home. Leave this site and go to Hanging Rock to explain the battle. Leave Hanging Rock and again go to Flat Rock Road. Turn left; go to Beaver Creek skirmish marker; explain. Proceed to Battle of Camden marker; explain.

From the Battle of Camden, go to Hwy 97 and proceed to the Fishing Creek marker on Hwy 21. This will be a long ride; you will want to explain where Sumter was going and what Tarleton was doing to try to catch up with Sumter. You will pass the Beaver Creek bridge; talk about the Catawba River and Liberty Hill so your passengers will not be bored. When you arrive at the Fishing Creek marker explain this battle. Leave and proceed to Waxhaw Church by way of Fort Lawn and Riverside Road. Leave Waxhaw Church and go to Hwy 5 and turn right, explaining the Robert Crawford marker you will pass. Go to Hwy 521 and turn left, and go to Andrew Jackson State Park.

The only American force of any consequence left in the state was the Third Virginia regiment of Continentals under the command of Col. Abraham Buford, about three hundred fifty men. They had two six pound cannons and a small detachment of cavalry.

Buford was enroute to support in the battle of Charles Town, but after the fall of the city was ordered to retreat to North Carolina.

Col. Buford headed east on the Santee and Wateree Rivers; this would take him to the North Carolina line, then east to Hillsborough in the modern Durham area. Here Buford would have joined with other patriot militia and Continentals to form an army that could once again fight the British.

The British commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Clinton, knew Buford's army was in the area and detached Earl Cornwallis with two thousand five hundred infantry, five cannons and Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's cavalry to pursue Buford. After marching for four days, Cornwallis knew "because Buford had a ten-day head start" that he could not catch Buford with his foot soldiers and wagons. He then sent Lt. Col. Tarleton with one hundred seventy cavalry, one hundred mounted infantry and a three-pound cannon and hoped that this mounted force could catch the fleeing Americans.

Tarleton left the main body on May 27, 1780 and by pressing his horses, killing a few in the process, managed to reach Camden the following day. Here he learned that Buford had left the area on May 26.

Tarleton gave his men and horses a few hours rest and at two a.m. on May 29 left Camden. At daylight, he learned the Continentals were only twenty miles ahead. Tarleton dispatched an officer with a summons to Buford to surrender; he stated that he had seven hundred men and Cornwallis was within a short march.

Col. Buford called a meeting with his officers and gave them three courses of action they could take. First, they could comply with the demand to surrender. Second, abandon the baggage and by rapid march save the men. Third, fortify the men with wagons and fight the British. The first two proposals were voted down because if Cornwallis were near he would have crushed any fortification they could have built in such a short time. So, they continued to march, hoping to reach reinforcements. However, Tarleton arrived sooner than anticipated. What happened next is which version of the battle, "American or British" one would believe. The American version states that the British charged and killed Buford's rear guard. Buford was forced to fight in a lightly wooded area with no physical defense against cavalry. He formed a single line with his colors in the center; his artillery wagons and baggage with supplies would continue to march.

When Tarleton charged, Buford ordered his men to hold their fire until the British were close. When the Americans fired, the volley emptied a few saddles and killed a few horses, including Tarleton's. Before the Americans could reload, the British were slashing left and right with their swords. Buford ordered a surrender flag raised but it was ignored by the British.

The British account of the battle states no flag was raised.

All sources agree that the British killed one hundred thirteen men and wounded one hundred fifty men so badly they were unable to travel. Col. Buford escaped and fled north to Hillsborough but he had lost his army.

Americans who died on the battlefield were buried on the site of the battle. Eighty-four soldiers are buried in a mass grave with a rock wall surrounding it. There is said to be another grave containing the remains of twenty-five soldiers, but the location is unknown.

Some wounded survivors were said to be Maj. Robert Crawford, a Lt. Pearson and Capt. John Stokes. The wounded were taken to the Waxhaw Meeting House to be treated. There they would be helped by the Jackson family. Elizabeth Jackson had lost her son Hugh after the battle of Stono Ferry in 1779 near Charles Town. She and her now eldest son Robert, age sixteen, and Andrew, her youngest, around thirteen, helped nurse the badly wounded Americans back to health. Andrew, the future American general and president, saw firsthand the brutality of the British and he would never forget or forgive them.

At a place in the modern era of Lancaster County that is known as the Buford Crossroads and in 1780 was called by the British as the Battle of the Waxhaws, a defeated American army became the rallying cry for future battles. For from this day forward when the American armies would go into battle, the battle cry was "Remember Tarleton's quarter" which was synonymous for "Take no prisoners."

The Battle of Buford was fought over two hundred years ago and the names of the soldiers buried in the mass grave unknown. Hopefully in the future a roster of Buford's regiment can be found. If so, we can rightfully honor the names of the soldiers who fought and died at this battle.

## BATTLE OF HANGING ROCK

On July 30, 1780 Gen. Thomas Sumter failed to capture a British outpost at Rocky Mount, which would be south of what is now Great Falls. One week later he turned to the British encampment at Hanging Rock. Maj. John Cardon, a British officer, had five hundred soldiers; included with these men were about one hundred fifty members of Tarleton's Legion. Tarleton was not at the camp.

Sumter had about eight hundred men; about five hundred were North Carolina militia, the rest from South Carolina. About midnight on August 5, Sumter was within two miles of Hanging Rock; at daybreak his army was moving to attack. His command was divided into three columns. They had planned to attack the left, center and right of the enemy camp. Hanging Rock had natural defenses such as creeks and large boulders and very little man-made improvements.

When Sumter attacked, the untrained troops of the British broke ranks and rushed to the center of camp, the Americans in pursuit.

Some historians say that the voice of William R. Davie could be heard exhorting his men to "Remember Tarleton's quarter" and demanding that the Tories surrender or die.

This battle would have been a complete victory for the Americans had it not been for the supplies in the British camp. The Americans simply stopped fighting and began looting the British camp, which consisted of kegs of rum. Some of the Americans were just too drunk to fight. Seeing this, Sumter decided to let well enough alone. He gave orders to take anything needed, take paroles of British officers, gather the wounded and move out.

Sumter's army reported twenty dead and forty wounded. His estimate of enemy casualties were one hundred thirty killed and the same wounded.

Thomas Sumter and William R. Davie would become well-known names during and after the American Revolution. The Battle of Hanging Rock would produce another well-known name, but it would be years after the war that this great American's name would go down in history as one of the most beloved men in America. The Battle of Hanging Rock was the first battle that a thirteen-year-old boy of the Waxhaws would fight in, although some said he was only a mounted messenger for Maj. Davie. Others said he did shoulder a rifle and fought. This was Andrew Jackson's first time in battle. It has been said that in watching William R. Davie, he learned firsthand a great deal about field command.

## BEAVER CREEK SKIRMISH

Patriot Maj. William Richardson Davie knew that supplies were being brought from Camden to Hanging Rock. On July 20, 1780 he, along with a small party of patriots struck a convoy at Flat Rock, about five miles south of Hanging Rock. The wagons and supplies were destroyed and prisoners were taken; this action was done without any patriot casualties.

That same day, flush with victory from Davie's raid on the convoy, the patriots were ambushed by Tories several miles west of Beaver Creek. The patriots fell back, and taking another route, returned to their base. Davie lost one killed and three wounded. The British prisoners were hit hard; many of them were killed or wounded.

BEAVER CREEK SKIRMISH

Although it is known as the Battle of Camden, this battle was fought about five miles north of Camden and could have been called the Battle of Gum Swamp. Regardless of the name, it was one of the worst defeats of an American army during the Revolution.

After the fall of Charles Town, pleas for aid were sent to Congress. Congress sent a regiment from Delaware and two units from Maryland consisting of around two thousand men, all Continentals and considered excellent troops. The troops were under the command of Maj. Gen. Baron de Kalb and left Morristown, New Jersey May 16, 1780.

Around the middle of July, Gen. Horatio Gates joined the troops and assumed command. Gates had won a victory at the Battle of Saratoga, New York and was in good graces with the politicians. The army under Gates' command crossed into South Carolina on August 6 and by August 13 the army was camped about thirteen miles north of Camden. There were militia units from North Carolina and Virginia joining Gates' army which now numbered between three to four thousand men.

BATTLE OF CAMDEN

The town of Camden was little more than a village in the mid 1700s. The village existed because it was at the head of navigation of the Wateree and the intersection of several Indian trails. The British saw the village as a base that could supply the war effort as a mid-point between Charles Town and the Piedmont and upper parts of South Carolina.

This would be one battle that the American forces were larger than the British forces almost two to one.

The British army had much to lose if they were defeated at the Battle of Camden. Cornwallis, who was now in charge of the army at Camden reasoned that if he retreated, the entire state except Charles Town would be lost. He would also lose eight hundred men who were sick in the hospital at Camden as well as all the ammunition and supplies stored there. If he fought and lost he would not be much worse off, but if he fought and won the patriot army would be destroyed; he could move to the upper parts of South Carolina and on to North Carolina.

Although the odds were against him, Cornwallis chose to fight, and with a great deal of determination and a little luck, the British army soundly defeated what was perhaps one of the best-equipped and most seasoned American armies. The defeat at Camden left a courageous Maj. Gen Baron de Kalb mortally wounded when his horse was shot from under him. He then fought on foot with his men until he received eleven wounds before going down. He died three days

## BATTLE OF CAMDEN - Page 2

Gates, in contrast, disappeared from the battle; he arrived at Charlotte late that night. The British reported about seventy men dead; for the Americans, it would be around nine hundred dead and one thousand taken prisoner.

Horatio Gates would be branded a fool and a coward in years to come. He did deserve some of the blame for his poor judgement in the heat of battle.



We know that August 16, 1780 was a sad day for the patriot cause in South Carolina. A proud American army under the command of Horatio Gates was virtually decimated by the British at the Battle of Camden. August 18 was also a sad day.

Thomas Sumter, known as the "Gamecock" was a local boy. He was known as a fierce fighter and if defeated would lower the morale of the local militia.

Gen. Gates had given Sumter five hundred men from his army. Sumter had about three hundred men in his own regiment. Gates wanted Sumter to disrupt the supply lines between Camden and Charles Town. There was also a supply train from the outpost at Ninety-Six approaching Camden.

Sumter achieved what Gates wanted him to do; he reported to Gates that he had taken six wagon loads of supplies and seventy prisoners. He had also taken a redoubt known as Tarry's Fort, which guarded the main ferry crossing a mile from town.

After Gates was defeated at Camden, Sumter decided to proceed up the west side of the Wateree River taking the prisoners, about two hundred fifty, and fifty wagons loaded with arms, ammunition and other supplies badly needed by the Americans. Sumter was trying to reach Charlotte where the supplies would be more secure.

The British, knowing Sumter had a large army and supplies once again, sent Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton to catch the fleeing army. As in his pursuit of Buford, Tarleton traveled light with about three hundred fifty men. His route paralleled Sumter on the opposite side of the river. To save time, he would go cross-country through woods and did not follow the paths along the winding river.

By nightfall of August 17, Tarleton ordered his men not to light any fires and to remain quiet. He secured all boats in the area. At first light on August 18 Tarleton's scouts found the Americans had left camp. Tarleton's army crossed the river and set out in Sumter's tracks.

The British reached Fishing Creek about noon. Moving carefully, after about five miles they caught up with Sumter's rear guard. Although shots were fired Sumter's army was not alarmed. What Tarleton saw next must have been a dream to a cavalryman - an enemy camp lolling about and bathing in the river, their muskets and rifles stacked. It didn't take long for Tarleton to form his cavalry and infantry into a single line. The British then charged. The battle

## BATTLE OF FISHING CREEK - Page 2

When the battle was over the British had lost sixteen men. American losses were about one hundred fifty dead and over three hundred prisoners taken. Sumter lost his cannons plus all the supplies he had taken a few days before.

Sumter escaped; he had been asleep under a wagon. He left without his coat, hat or saddle for his horse.

Once again an American army was lulled into thinking the British army could not move as quickly as Tarleton did; this would be the last time Sumter would be caught "napping."

BATTLE OF FISHING CREEK

## WAXHAW MEETING HOUSE

The Waxhaw Meeting House was organized around 1755. The church began as a log structure. The meeting house not only served as a place of worship, but as a place where the local patriots could gather to discuss the war effort in the district.

The church served as a hospital for wounded American soldiers and it was burned by the British during the Revolutionary War.

Buried in the cemetery are a number of Revolutionary War soldiers. William R. Davie is buried here. There is a memorial to Elizabeth Jackson and two of her sons, Hugh and Robert. Her husband, Andrew Jackson, Sr. is buried here.

As we end this tour of Revolutionary War sites in and near Lancaster County, let's reflect a little about the entire war. Although the war started in 1776, it was nearly four years before the war reached the Waxhaws. You may ask how could the Americans win a war when the large Continental armies were defeated at Charles Town, Camden and Buford. The Continental army was an important part of the Revolutionary War but when the war left the large cities and fighting began in the surrounding countryside, the local militia played an important part in the war effort. These men were called "patriots" and "whigs" if they fought for America. If some remained loyal to the king, they were called "tories" or a "loyalists." The men fighting on the local front were almost always neighbors and much of the time they were related.

South Carolina played an important part in the Revolution. There were more than one hundred twenty-five battles fought on South Carolina soil.

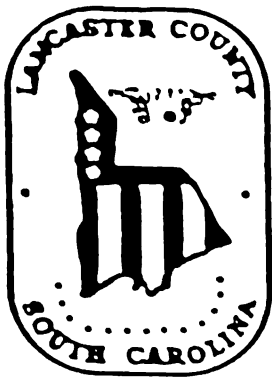
The British were defeated at Cowpens on January 17, 1781 by Gen. Daniel Morgan's army. The British were defeated at King's Mountain by the "Overmountain Men" on October 7, 1780. Gen. Nathaniel Green's battle at Hobkirk's Hill in Camden on April 25, 1781 was not a clear victory but the British army could ill afford to lose any number of men.

There were other battles such as Fish Dam Ford, Mud Lick or Musgrove's Mill that were not large but added to the attrition of the British soldiers.

## WAXHAW MEETING HOUSE

Let's not forget one man in the war who held the British armies at bay for years - Francis Marion. Gen. Marion stayed one step ahead of the British for years and the guerilla tactics he used were an effective tool for the American cause. Even the swift British officer Tarleton could not catch up with him. After chasing Marion and his men for miles through swamps Tarleton told his men, "Come boys, let us go back. As for this damned old fox, the devil himself could not catch him." Francis Marion would become a legend of the Revolutionary War.

WAXHAW MEETING HOUSE

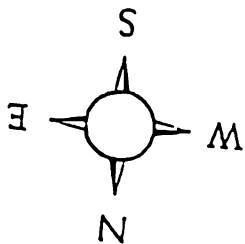


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LANCASTER COUNTY SC REVOLUTIONARY WAR SITES

DRIVING TOUR



●	Sites
○	State Hwy.
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