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## COMMENTARY

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# Battle of Kings Mountain hero

One of the heroes of the Battle of Kings Mountain was Frederick Hambricht (1727-1817). Hambricht was born in Germany, where he lived until he was 11 years old. He then went to Pennsylvania with



### Nearby history

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his family and that of his uncle. The two elder Hambrichts were Adam and Conrad, but no one knows which of the two was Frederick's father. The Hambrichts, like so many of this period, headed for the port of Philadelphia and became a part of that large group known as Pennsylvania Dutch. Like a number of others, Frederick Hambricht migrated elsewhere to seek his fortune. In 1755 he moved to Virginia, where he married Sarah Hardin. Five years later, he was living on the south fork of the Catawba River in Lincoln County, N.C.

When the American Revolution broke out, Frederick Hambricht volunteered and was made cap-

### ■ Frederick Hambricht led 60 men in fighting called "turning point" of Revolutionary War.

tain. He was 49 years of age and had no previous military experience but believed wholeheartedly in the Patriot cause.

Records are scanty, but they seem to indicate that Hambricht went wherever there was action. He fought the Indians on both sides of the Appalachian mountains. In 1779 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and was present at the siege of Charleston. When it was obvious that Charleston would fall to the British, Hambricht came up to the Broad River and began recruiting in what later would be Chester and York counties.

On Oct. 7, 1780, Hambricht was at Kings Mountain. Because of his age, Hambricht was not given battle command as his rank entitled him, but chance placed him "in the right place at the right time."

About 2 miles from the British camp, Hambricht spotted a young man named John Ponder whose brother he knew was a Tory in the British camp. Hambricht ordered Ponder stopped and searched. Ponder was carrying a dispatch from Colonel Ferguson to Lord Cornwallis imploring Cornwallis to

send additional men. When Ponder was told to identify Ferguson, he said that Ferguson was the best-dressed man on the mountain but that day he was wearing a checked shirt over his uniform. Col. Hambricht, in his Pennsylvania Dutch accent, called out to his men, "Well, poys, when you see dot man mit a pig shirt on, you may know who him is, and mark him mit with your rifles."

Maj. William Chronicle, a younger, more vigorous man than Hambricht, was assigned to lead one of the companies up the side of the mountain — one with about 60 South Fork men. Chronicle did not get far when he was mortally wounded. Hambricht was then in charge of the company.

Toward the end of the fighting Hambricht was wounded in the thigh, severing an artery. His boot soon filled with blood but he pressed on and is quoted as shouting, "Huzza, my prave poys, fight on a few minutes more and the battle will be over!" It was soon over. Ferguson was killed and the British surrendered in what has been called the "turning point of the American Revolution."

When the battle was over, it was found that Hambricht had not only been wounded in the thigh, but his hat had three bullet holes in it. Hambricht recovered but some of the sinews in his leg were cut and he never walked well again. This ended Hambricht's Revolutionary service.

When the war was over, Hambricht moved to York County. He built a sturdy two-story log cabin on King's Creek within sight of Kings Mountain where he remained until his death at the age of 90.

Large families were the rule in Hambricht's time, but Hambricht had more than average. By his first wife, Sarah Hardin, there were 12 children and by the second wife, he is thought to have had 10 more.

Frederick Hambricht was buried in Old Shiloh Presbyterian cemetery just over the Gaston County, N.C., line in Grover. The stone includes the verse:

"Adieu to all, both far and near/My loving wife and children dear/for my immortal soul is fled/I must be numbered with the dead."

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