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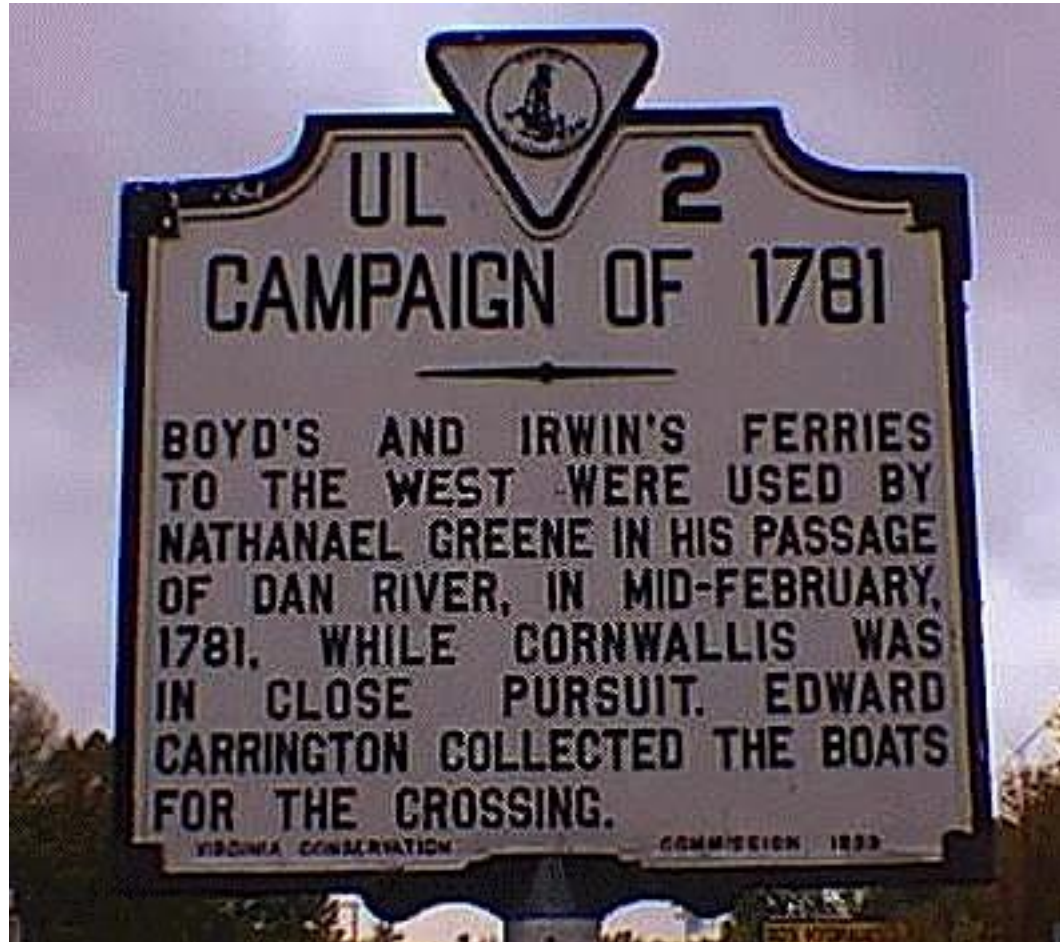
the

Dan

Timeline

Timeline

State Highway Marker	1939
Headspeth book	1973
DAR Memorial	1999
Exhibit concept completed	April 2006
Design completed	Oct 2006
Exhibit opens (225th anniversary)	July 26, 2008
Riverfront exhibit opens	June 2010
Tier One recognition	September 2013



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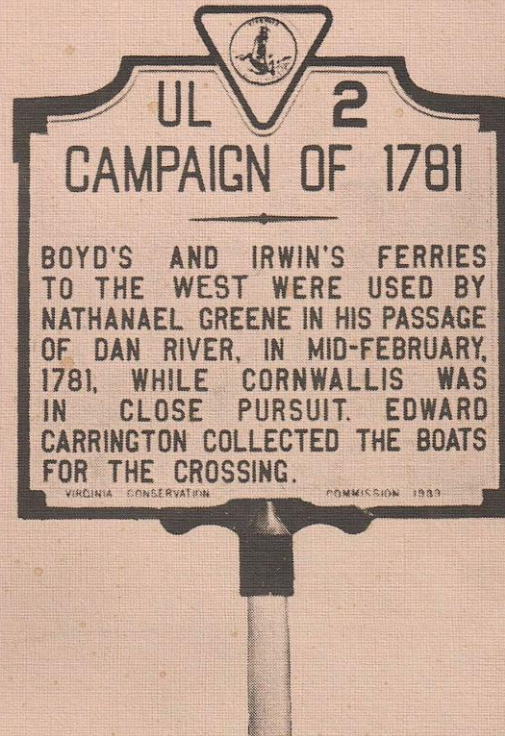
CAMPAIGN OF 1781

BOYD'S AND IRWIN'S FERRIES TO THE WEST WERE USED BY NATHANAEL GREENE IN HIS PASSAGE OF DAN RIVER, IN MID-FEBRUARY, 1781, WHILE CORNWALLIS WAS IN CLOSE PURSUIT. EDWARD CARRINGTON COLLECTED THE BOATS FOR THE CROSSING.

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION

COMMISSION 1933

THE RETREAT TO THE DAN



By
W. Carroll Headspeth
and
Spurgeon Compton

“The Crossing of the Dan was as significant to the southern campaigns as Washington’s crossing of the Delaware. In fact, Greene’s crossing of the Dan led more quickly to long-term victories than those at Trenton and Princeton. Greene’s crossing led to Guilford Courthouse and, six months later, to Yorktown . . .”

—Dr. Lawrence E. Babits, George Washington Distinguished Professor of History, East Carolina University, North Carolina

“This American retreat, which extended across the breadth of North Carolina, is considered one of the masterful military achievements of all time.”

—Dennis M. Conrad, Project Director and Editor, The Papers of General Nathanael Greene

WHY GENEALOGY IS BUNK (p.90) ~ LOVING EDWARD HOPPER

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{ JULY 2007 }

Come with
us to the
CASBAH
(before it's too late)

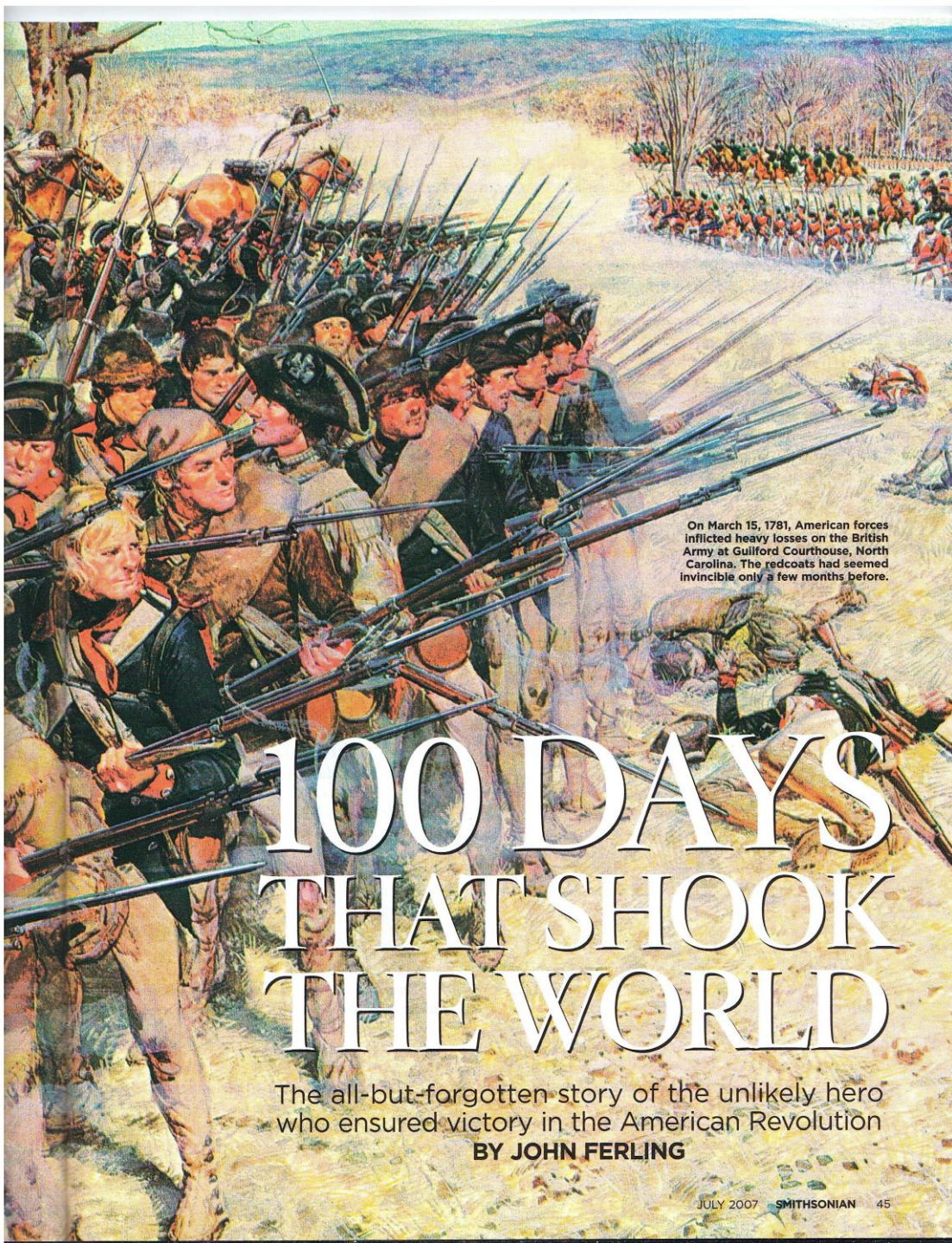
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AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

**SUNKEN TREASURES IN
THE SOUTH CHINA SEA**

**ARMISTEAD MAUPIN
ON SAN FRANCISCO**

**A GLACIER EXPERT'S LONG
VIEW OF GLOBAL WARMING**



On March 15, 1781, American forces inflicted heavy losses on the British Army at Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina. The redcoats had seemed invincible only a few months before.

100 DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

The all-but-forgotten story of the unlikely hero who ensured victory in the American Revolution

BY JOHN FERLING

WINTER CLOUDS SCUDDERED OVER NEW WINDSOR, NEW YORK, some 50 miles up the Hudson River from Manhattan, where Gen. George Washington was headquartered. With trees barren and snow on the ground that January 1781, it was a “dreary station,” as Washington put it. The commander in chief’s mood was as bleak as the landscape. Six long years into the War of Independence, his army, he admitted to Lt. Col. John Laurens, a former aide, was “now nearly exhausted.” The men had not been paid in months. They were short of clothing and blankets; the need for provisions was so pressing that Washington had dispatched patrols to seize flour throughout New York state “at the point of the Bayonet.”

At the same time, many Americans felt that the Revolution was doomed. Waning morale caused Samuel Adams, a Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, to fear that those who had opposed independence in 1776 would gain control of Congress and sue for peace with Britain. During the past two years, three American armies—nearly 8,000 men—had been lost fighting in the South; Georgia and South Carolina appeared to have been reconquered by Great Britain; mutinies had erupted in the Continental Army and the nation’s economy was in shambles. Washington was aware, he wrote to Laurens, that the “people are discontented.” Convinced that the army was in danger of collapse, Washington predicted darkly that 1781 would prove America’s last chance to win the war. Nothing less than the “great revolution” hung in the balance. It had been “brought . . . to a crisis.”

Yet within a matter of months, a decisive October victory at Yorktown in Virginia would transform America’s fortunes and save the American Revolution. The victory climaxed a brilliant—now largely forgotten—campaign waged over 100 fateful days by a former foundry manager totally lacking in military experience at the outset of the war. Yet it would be 38-year-old general Nathanael Greene who snatched “a great part of this union from the grasp of Tyranny and oppression,” as Virginia founding father Richard Henry Lee would later tell Greene, when the two met in 1783.

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR, Britain had focused on conquering New England. By 1778, however, it was clear that this would not be achieved. England’s crushing defeat at Saratoga, New York, in October 1777—British general John Burgoyne’s attempt to invade from Canada resulted in the loss of 7,600 men—had driven London to a new strategy: The South, as Britain now perceived it, was tied by its cash

Historian JOHN FERLING is the author of Almost a Miracle: The American Victory in the War of Independence, published this month by Oxford University Press.



Greene (above) judged his initial prospects for victory as “dismal.”

crops, tobacco and rice, to markets in England. The region, moreover, abounded with Loyalists; that is, Americans who continued to side with the British. Under the so-called Southern Strategy as it emerged in 1778, Britain would seek to reclaim its four former Southern colonies—Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia—by expelling rebel forces there; regiments of Loyalists, also called Tories, would then occupy and pacify the conquered areas. If the plan succeeded, England would gain provinces from the Chesapeake Bay to Florida. Its American empire would remain vast and lucrative, surrounding a much-reduced and fragile United States.

At first, the new strategy met with dramatic success. In December 1778, the British took Savannah, stripping the “first . . . stripe and star from the rebel flag of Congress,” as Lt. Col. Archibald Campbell, the British commander who conquered the city, boasted. Charleston fell 17 months later. In August 1780, the redcoats crushed an army led by Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates at Camden, South Carolina. For the Americans, the desperate situation called for extreme measures. Congress removed Gates and asked Wash-

ington to name a successor to command the Continental Army in the South; he chose Greene.

NATHANAEL GREENE’S METEORIC RISE could hardly have been predicted. A Quaker whose only formal schooling had been a brief stint with an itinerant tutor, Nathanael was set to work in his teens in the family-owned sawmill and iron forge. In 1770, he took over management of the foundry. In 1774, the last year of peace, Greene, then 32, married Catherine Littlefield, a 19-year-old local beauty; and won a second term to the Rhode Island assembly.

Later that year, Greene enlisted as a private in a Rhode Island militia company. When hostilities between Britain and the Colonies broke out at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775, Greene was suddenly elevated from the rank of private to brigadier general—doubtless a result of his political connections—and named commander of Rhode Island’s force. Although he had begun as what his fel-

low officer Henry Knox called, in a letter to a friend, “the rawest, the most untutored” of the Continental Army generals, he rapidly gained the respect of Washington, who considered Greene’s men to be, he wrote, “under much better government than any around Boston.” During the first year of the war, Washington came to regard Greene as his most dependable adviser and trusted officer, possessed not only with a superb grasp of military science but also an uncanny facility for assessing rapidly changing situations. By the fall of 1776, rumor had it that should anything happen to Washington, Congress would name Greene as his successor.

IT WAS WASHINGTON’S CONFIDENCE in Greene (who, since 1776, had fought in

campaigns in New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, and had served two years as the Continental Army’s quartermaster general) that caused the commander in chief to turn to him as the war crisis deepened in the autumn of 1780. Greene was commander of the Continental installation at West Point when he learned of his appointment on October 15. He hastened to Preknass, New Jersey, where the Continental Army’s main force was camped, to confer with Washington. Soon after Greene’s departure from New Jersey, he received a letter in which Washington soberly advised: “I can give you no particular instructions but must leave you to govern yourself intirely [sic], according to your own prudence and judgment and the circumstances in which you find yourself.” On December 2, Greene took command of what was left of Gates’ army, in Charlotte, North Carolina—some 1,000 thin and hungry Continentals and 1,200 militiamen, all of them, Greene said, “destitute of every thing necessary either for the Comfort or Convenience of Soldiers.” He told the governor of North Carolina, Abner Nash, that he had inherited “the Shadow of an Army, . . . a small force . . . very incompetent to give Protection” to the Carolinas. Greene, writing to Washington, assessed his prospects for success as “dismal, and truly distressing.” But he knew that should he fail, the entire South, as his cavalry commander, Henry Lee, put it, “would be ground to dust” and face “reannexation to the mother country.”

Greene was also fully aware that he faced a formidable British opponent. After the fall of Charleston in May 1780, Charles, Earl Cornwallis—usually referred to as Lord Cornwallis—had been ordered to pacify the remainder of South Carolina. The 42-year-old Cornwallis had fought against France in the Seven Years’ War (1756–63) and had seen con-

siderable action against the American rebels since 1776. Unassuming and fearless, the British general treated his men with compassion, but expected—and got—much from them in return. By early summer 1780, six months before Greene would arrive in Charlotte, Cornwallis’ men had occupied a wide arc of territory, stretching from the Atlantic Coast to the western edge of South Carolina, prompting British headquarters in Charleston to announce that resistance in Georgia and South Carolina had been broken, save for “a few scattering militia.” But the mission had not quite been accomplished.

Later that summer, backcountry patriots across South



Greene’s strategy was to lure the British ever deeper into the Carolinas. Ultimately, he wrote, he was not “without hopes of ruining Lord Cornwallis.”

Carolina took up arms. Some of the insurgents were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who simply longed to be free of British control. Others had been radicalized by an incident that had occurred in late May in the Waxhaws (a region below Charlotte, once home to the Waxhaw Indians). Cornwallis had detached a cavalry force under Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton, by reputation hard and unsparing, to mop up the last remaining Continentals in that area, some 350 Virginians under Col. Abraham Buford. Tarleton’s 270-man force had caught up with Buford’s retreating soldiers on May 29 and

campaign that even Tarleton later praised as “judiciously designed and vigorously executed.” Cornwallis had lost one-tenth of his men; the remainder had been exhausted by their punishing, and fruitless, exertions. Ordering an end to the pursuit, he issued a proclamation claiming victory, on the grounds that he had driven Greene’s army from North Carolina. Cornwallis then retreated to Hillsborough, 65 miles south.

But Greene had not given up the fight. Only eight days after crossing the Dan and longing to achieve a resounding victory, he returned to North Carolina with 1,600 men. As Greene headed toward Hillsborough, members of his cavalry, commanded by Col. Henry Lee, surprised an inexperienced band of Tory militiamen under Col. John Pyle, a Loyalist physician. In an action disturbingly similar to Tarleton’s Waxhaws massacre, Lee’s men slaughtered many of the Loyalists who had laid down their arms. American dragoons killed 90 and wounded most of the remaining Tories. Lee lost not a single man. When he heard the news, Greene, grown hardened by the war, was unrepentant. The victory, he said, “has knocked up Toryism altogether in this part” of North Carolina.

Cornwallis was now more eager than ever to engage Greene, who had halted to wait for reinforcements. Initially, Cornwallis had held a numerical advantage, but he could not replace his losses; after Pyles’ Massacre, the recruitment of Loyalists virtually ceased. The rebel force, meanwhile, grew steadily as militia and Virginia Continentals arrived. By the second week in March, Greene possessed nearly 5,000 men, approximately twice Cornwallis’ force.

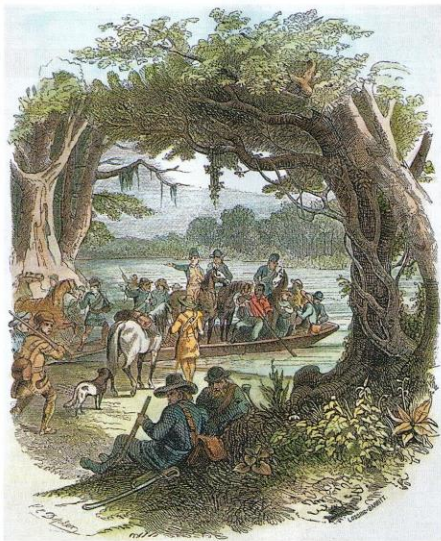
Greene chose to meet Cornwallis near Guilford Courthouse, at a site he described as “a Wilderness” interspersed with “a few cleared fields.” The thickly forested terrain, he thought, would make it difficult for the British to maintain formation and mount bayonet charges. He positioned his men much as Morgan had done at Cowpens: North Carolina militiamen were posted in the front line and ordered to fire three rounds before they fell back; a second line, of Virginia militiamen, would do the same, to be followed by a third line of Continentals. Around noon on March 15, a mild spring day, the rebels glimpsed the first column of red-clad soldiers emerging through a stand of leafless trees.

The battle was bloody and chaotic, with fierce encounters among small units waged in wooded areas. Ninety minutes into it, the British right wing was continuing to advance, but its left was fraying. An American counterattack might have turned the battle into a rout. But Greene had no cavalry in reserve, nor could he be sure that his militiamen had any fight left in them. He halted what he would later call the “long, bloody, and severe” Battle of Guilford Courthouse, convinced that his troops had inflicted sufficient losses. Cornwallis had held the field, but he had lost nearly 550 men, almost twice the American casualties. The “Enemy got the ground,” Greene would write to Gen. Frederick Steuben, “but we the victory.”

A decisive triumph had eluded Greene, but the heavy attrition suffered by the British—some 2,000 men lost between January and March—led Cornwallis to a fateful decision. Convinced it would be futile to stay in the Carolinas, where he would have to either remain on the defensive or resume an offense that promised only further “desultory expeditions” in “quest of adventures,” Cornwallis decided to march his army into Virginia. His best hope of turning the tide, he concluded, was to win a “war of conquest” there. Greene allowed him to depart unimpeded, leading his own forces south to liberate South Carolina and Georgia.

Although Greene reentered South Carolina with only 1,300 men (most of his militia had returned home) to oppose nearly 8,000 redcoats there and in Georgia, the British were scattered across the region, many in backcountry forts of between 125 and 900 men. Greene took them on systematically. By the end of the summer, the backcountry had been cleared of redcoats; Greene announced that no “further ravages upon the Country” were expected. What was left of the British Army was holed up in Savannah and Charleston.

JUST NINE MONTHS EARLIER, it had appeared that the Carolinas and Georgia were lost, leaving the fledgling nation—if it even survived—as a fragile union of no more than ten states. Greene’s campaign had saved at least three Southern states. Now Cornwallis’ presence in Virginia gave General Washington and America’s ally, France, the possibility of a decisive victory.

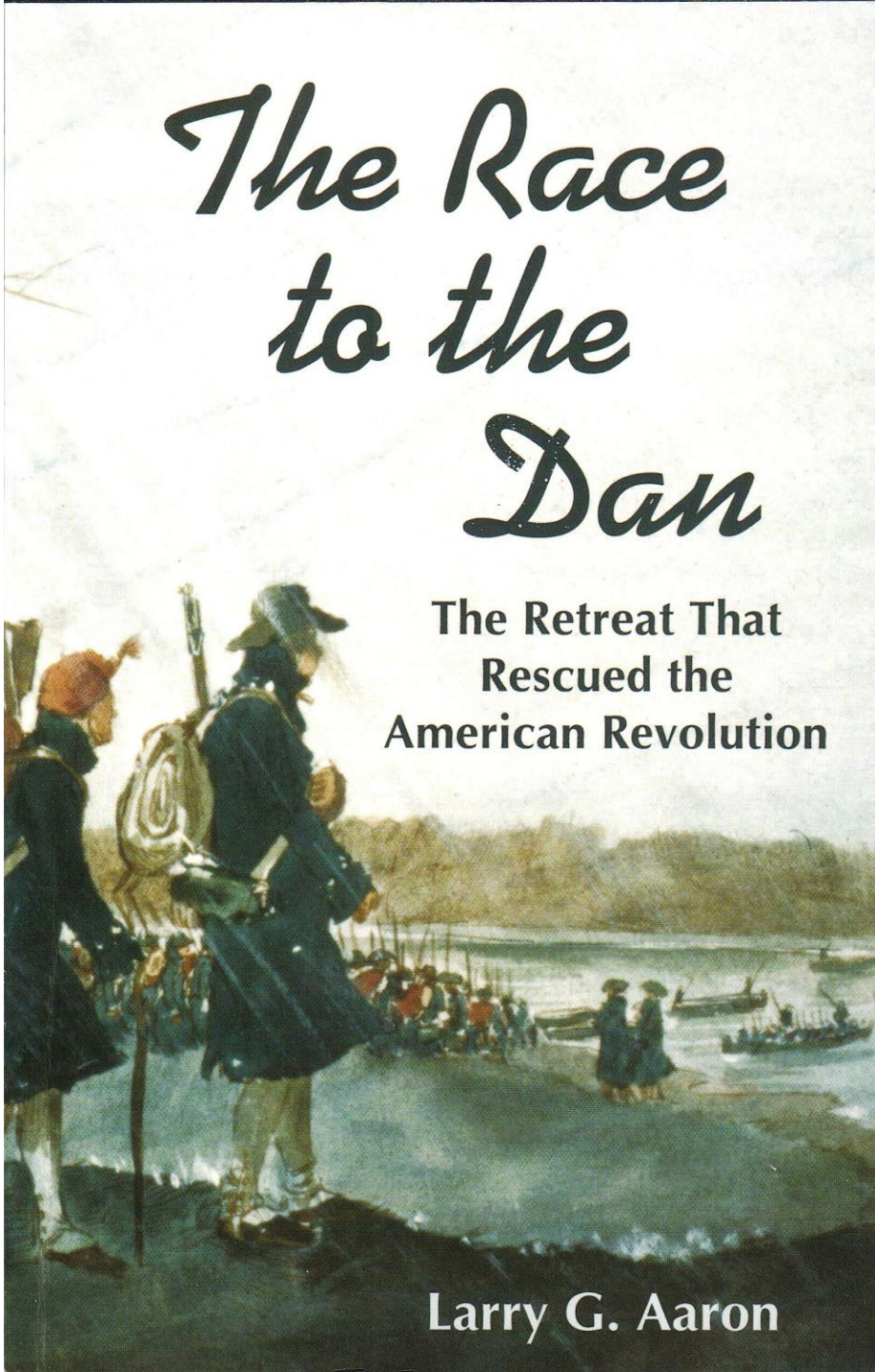


Greene (above), crossing the Dan River, outwitted Cornwallis—who had no boats. “All our troops are over,” Greene exulted.

The Race to the Dan

**The Retreat That
Rescued the
American Revolution**

Larry G. Aaron



SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

& WORLD REPORT
U.S. News
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SECRETS OF AMERICA'S BEST GENERALS

George
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Hidden Genius



Grant and Sherman's
Private Plan to Win
the Civil War



Ike's D-Day Coup



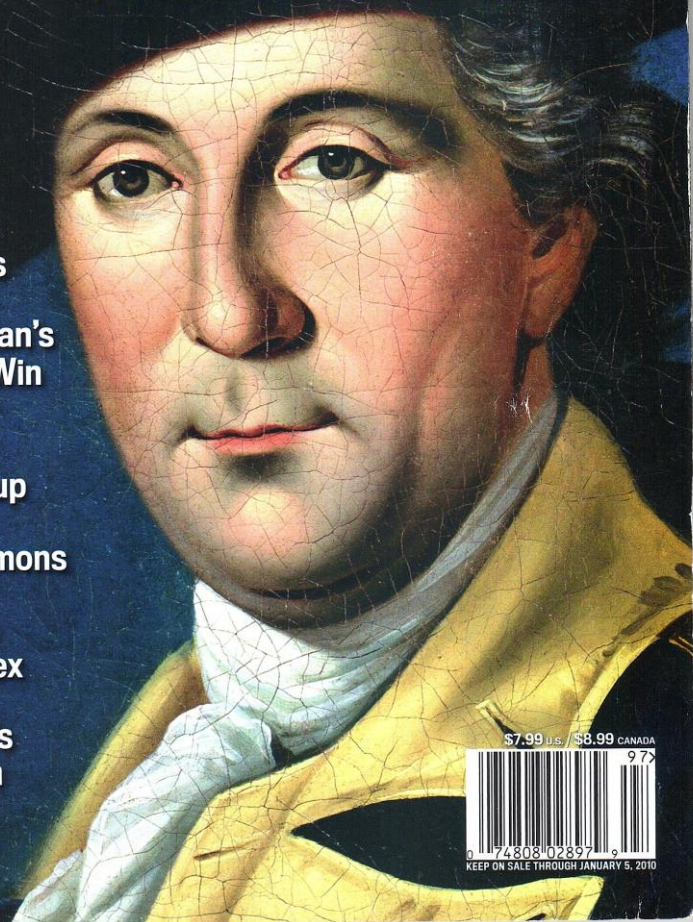
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The Revolution's Secret Weapon

UNDEREQUIPPED AND OUTNUMBERED, NATHANAEL GREENE STILL FOUND WAYS TO WEAKEN AND CONFOUND THE BRITISH ARMIES IN THE SOUTH

REALIST.

Greene gave up his pacifism for the Revolution.

In late 1780, the Americans were losing the war in the South. Savannah and Charleston had fallen, and the British, who had effectively quashed local resistance, were threatening Virginia, heartland of the Revolution. Into this dire situation the American commander

in chief, George Washington, sent his quartermaster, Nathanael Greene—a former Quaker from Rhode Island and one of his most capable generals. Leaving behind his beloved wife, Caty, and their four children, who would not see him again for several years, Greene set about building a winning strategy for wearing down the more numerous and better-equipped British. By dividing his army and joining with partisans in the Carolinas, Greene was able to harass and diminish Gen. Charles Cornwallis's army.

Here, in an excerpt from Greene: Revolutionary General, Steven E. Siry describes how, during Greene's first three and a half months as southern commander, he and his hardy Continentals regained the advantage and opened the way toward the British surrender at Yorktown in 1781.

BY STEVEN E. SIRY

When Nathanael Greene learned that he had been appointed commander of the Southern Department, one of his greatest wartime ambitions was realized. But it also created major fears connected to his ambition. As he told Washington, "My only consolation is, that if I fail I hope it will not be accompanied with any marks of personal disgrace."

Since the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Greene had been a fervent nationalist who denounced the "prejudices" of people with strong "local attachments." Soon after the fighting had started, he declared, "I feel the cause and not the place. I would as soon go to Virginia as stay" in New England. Arriving in Charlotte, N.C., on December 2, he formally took command of the Southern Army the next day.

Although Greene had anticipated major supply







The Race to the Dan
Council of War
March of Blenheim



The Crossing of the Dan
Across the River, Jan 29, 1709

Major General
Nathaniel Coxe
Lt. Col.
Edward Coxe
The Dan River
has crossing place at
Blenheim in the
winter of 1709
while General of the day
General Keith Gordon
is the command of the
Southern Army

General of the Day
General Keith Gordon





A TYPICAL COLONIAL ERA
River Ferry Flat



General Greene takes command

After the American defeat at Camden, Washington's ablest general, Nathaniel Greene, was sent in late 1780 to command the southern army. Greene found the army in "wretched condition," and began to make it a mobile force to

confront the superior forces of British general Lord Cornwallis. He split his army into two forces and sent one unit under General Daniel Morgan westward to the tactical encounter with Banastre Tarleton at Cowpens.



Illustration of a military camp or encampment, showing soldiers and horses, likely related to the Battle of Cowpens.

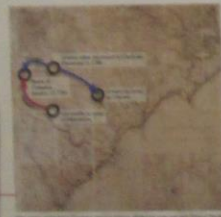
The Battle of Cowpens

"I was desirous to have a stroke at Tarleton...and I have given him a devil of a whipping."

Daniel Morgan

"I hope Congress will not take it into their heads that Lord Cornwallis is ruined from this fortunate event."

General Nathaniel Greene



Map showing the route of the Battle of Cowpens, illustrating the strategic movement of the American army from Camden to Cowpens.



Morgan vs. Tarleton

Reports quickly told Morgan two miles to each other at the Battle of Cowpens. Daniel Morgan, a renowned military officer nicknamed the "Old Magician" for his men's high skill in maneuvering, he escaped from the army of 1778 with 100 men after the American defeat at Camden. Banastre Tarleton was a young son in the British army (later Lord Cornwallis), renowned for his daring cavalry work at American Bay. Tarleton took care for his treatment of the weakness of American maneuvering in battle.



Illustration of the Battle of Cowpens, showing the tactical encounter between Morgan and Tarleton.

Morgan and Tarleton met at Cowpens on January 17, 1781, where Morgan had devised a perfect tactic. He established three lines of health, sharpshooters out front, militia in center, and regular Continentals in the rear. Tarleton first charged into the sharpshooters and militia, who weakened the British before committing Tarleton's army then ran headlong into Morgan's regulars. British losses were staggering, with 90 percent of their number either killed, wounded, or captured. Learning of this loss, Lord Cornwallis orders to "regain his prisoners," "he neither what the cost."



Portrait of Lord Cornwallis, the British general who was defeated at Cowpens.

...of the Dan



dedication of
General
Nathaniel
Greene's
military grave

The Crossing of the Dan River
The Dan River was a major obstacle for the British and their allies during the American Revolutionary War. On September 19, 1781, the British crossed the river at this location, leading to the Battle of the Clouds. The crossing was a critical moment in the war, as it allowed the British to move their forces into the interior of the state.

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*General Greene's Crossing Of The Dan
Halifax County, Virginia
February 14, 1781*