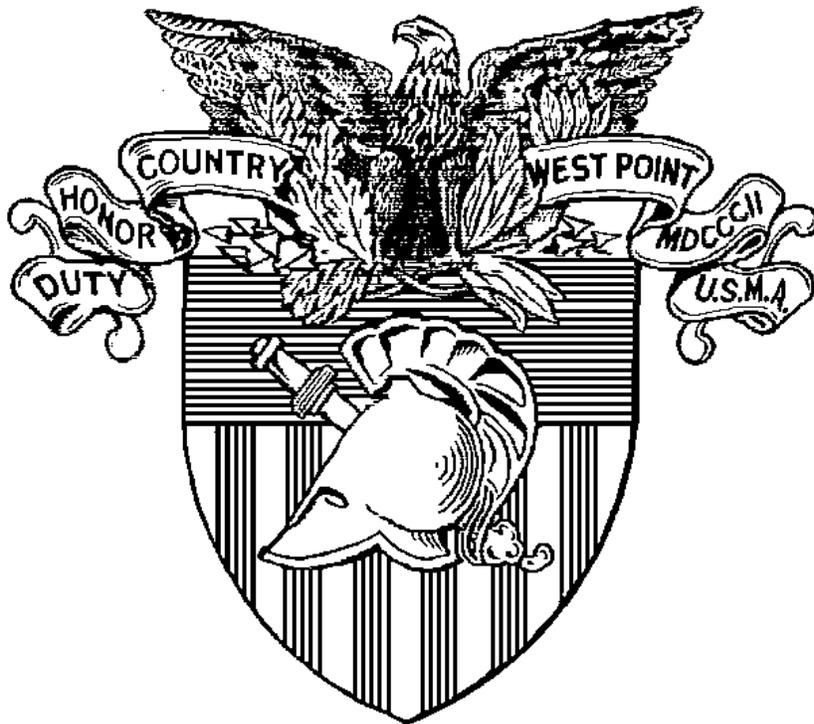


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Primary Source Reference Book For the 1781 Guilford Courthouse Campaign.



HI 301

History Of The Military Art

**Primary Source Reference Book
For the 1781 Guilford Courthouse
Campaign.**

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May 4, 1998

Editor's Introduction

The following primary source material concerning the Guilford Courthouse Campaign was compiled to assist West Point cadets in examining the battle that occurred on March 15, 1781 and the events and decisions that led to that battle. The diversity and contradictions of the eyewitness accounts also can be used to reveal the importance and hazards of primary source research.

Because of this purpose, the material was selected and compiled from original 18th and 19th century documents. In some cases, however, the grammar and spelling have been modernized to make the text easier to read. While some of the flavor of old English writing is lost through electronic scanning and computer editing, the resulting material possesses far more utility for the purpose of this work.

USMA Cadets who are referencing documents from this source book will record the citations in accordance with one of the two following format examples:

1. On-line version:¹

¹ Charles Cornwallis, "Document #2: Letter from General Cornwallis to Lord Rawdon, commander of the British garrisons in South Carolina," *Primary Source Reference Book for the 1781 Guilford Courthouse Campaign*, page 4 [book on-line] (West Point: Dept. of History, 22 April 98, accessed 12 Sept 98); available from <http://www-internal.dean.usma.edu/history/outreach/staffride/GCH-Book.htm>.

2. Locally published version:²

² Charles Cornwallis, "Document #2: Letter from General Cornwallis to Lord Rawdon, commander of the British garrisons in South Carolina," *Primary Source Reference Book for the 1781 Guilford Courthouse Campaign*, (West Point: Dept. of History, 22 April 98), 4.

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1. Selected Correspondence of Nathaniel Greene.

Source: Charles Caldwell, Memoirs of the Life and Campaigns of the Hon. Nathaniel Greene (Philadelphia: Robert Desilver, 1819), 432-435.

Document # 1: General Greene's official report of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse to Congress.

Camp at the Iron Works, March 16, 1781.

“Sir,

On the 10th, I wrote to his excellency general Washington, from the High Rock ford, on the Haw river, a copy of which I enclosed your excellency, that I had effected a junction with a continental regiment of eighteen months men, and two considerable bodies of militia, belonging to Virginia and North Carolina. After this junction, I took the resolution of attacking the enemy without loss of time, and made the necessary disposition accordingly, being persuaded, that if we were successful, it would prove ruinous to the enemy, and, if otherwise, it would only prove a partial evil to us.

The army marched from the High Rock ford on the 12th, and on the 14th, arrived at Guilford. The enemy lay at the Quaker meeting-house, on the Deep River, eight miles from our camp. On the morning of the 15th, our reconnoitering party reported the enemy advancing on the great Salisbury road. The army was drawn up in three lines. The line was composed of North Carolina militia, under the command of generals Butler and Eaton. The second line of Virginia militia, commanded by generals Stephens and Lawson, forming two brigades, one of Virginia, and one of Maryland continental troops, commanded by general Huger and colonel Williams. Lieutenant colonel Washington, with the dragoons of the first and third regiments, a detachment of light infantry, composed of continental troops, and a regiment of riflemen, under colonel Lynch, formed a corps of observation for the security of our right flank. Lieutenant colonel Lee, with his legion, a detachment of light infantry, and a corps of riflemen, under colonel Campbell, formed a corps of observation for the security of our left flank.

The greater part of this country is a wilderness, with a few cleared fields interspersed here and there. The army was drawn up on a large hill of ground, surrounded by other hills, the greatest part of which was covered with timber and thick under-brush. The front line was posted with two field pieces, just on the edge of the woods, and the back of a fence which ran parallel with the line, with an open field directly in their front. The second line was in the woods, about three hundred yards in the rear of the first, and the continental troops about four hundred yards in the rear of the second, with a double front, as the hill drew to a point where they were posted, and on the right and left were two old fields. In this position we waited the approach of the enemy, having previously sent off the baggage to this place, appointed for our rendezvous in case of a defeat. Lieutenant colonel Lee, with his legion, his infantry, and part of his riflemen, met the enemy on their advance, and had a severe skirmish with lieutenant colonel Tarleton, in which the enemy suffered greatly. Captain Armstrong charged the British legion, and cut down near thirty of their dragoons; but as the enemy reinforced their party, lieutenant colonel Lee was obliged to retire, and take his position in the line.

The action commenced by cannonade, which lasted about twenty minutes; when the enemy advanced in three columns: the Hessians on the right, the guards in the center, and lieutenant colonel Webster's brigade on the left. The whole moved through the old fields to attack the North Carolina brigades, who waited the attack until the enemy got within one hundred and forty yards, when part of them began to fire; but a considerable part left the ground without firing at all. The general and field officers did all they could to induce the men to stand their ground; but neither the advantages of the position, nor any other consideration could induce them to stay. General Stevens and general Lawson and the field officers of those brigades were more successful in their exertions. The Virginia militia gave the enemy a warm reception, and kept up a heavy fire for a long time; but being beat back, the action became general almost every where. The corps

of observation, under Washington and Lee, were warmly engaged, and did great execution. In a word, the engagement was long and severe, and the enemy only gained their point by superior discipline.

They having broken the second Maryland regiment and turned our left flank, got into the rear of the Virginia brigade, and appearing to be gaining on our right, which would have encircled the whole of the continental troops, I thought it was most advisable to order a retreat. About this time lieutenant colonel Washington made a charge with the horse upon a part of the brigade of guards, and the first regiment of Marylanders, commanded by colonel Gunby, and seconded by lieutenant colonel Howard, followed the horse with their bayonets; near the whole of the party fell a sacrifice. General Huger was the last that was engaged, and gave the enemy a check. We retreated in good order to the Reedy Fork river; and crossed at the ford, about three miles from the field of action, and then halted, and drew up the troops, until we collected most of the stragglers. We lost our artillery, and two ammunition wagons, the greater part of the horses being killed before the retreat began, and it being impossible to move the pieces but along the great road. After collecting our stragglers, we retired to this camp, ten miles distant from Guilford.

From the best information I can get, the enemy's loss is very great; not less, in killed and wounded, than six hundred men, besides some few prisoners that we brought off.

Inclosed I send your Excellency a return of our killed, wounded and missing. Most of the later have gone home, as is but too customary with the militia after an action. I cannot learn that the enemy has got any considerable number of prisoners. Our men are all in good spirits, and in perfect readiness for another field day [battle].

I only lament the loss of several valuable officers, who are killed and wounded in the action. Among the latter are general Stevens, shot through the thigh, and general Huger in the hand; among the former is major Anderson, one of the Maryland line.

The firmness of the officers and soldiers, during the whole campaign, has been unparalleled. Admidst innumerable difficulties, they have discovered a degree of magnanimity and fortitude that will forever add a luster to their military reputation."

End of Report

2. Selected Correspondence of Charles Cornwallis.

Source: First Marquis Charles Cornwallis, Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis Edited by Charles Ross, Vol. I, (London: John Murray, 1859), 85-89, 516-523.

Document #2: Letter from General Cornwallis to Lord Rawdon, commander of the British garrisons in South Carolina.

My DEAR LORD,

Hillsborough, Feb.21, 1781.

I tried by a most rapid march to strike a blow either at Greene or Morgan before they got over the Dan, but could not effect it. The enemy, however, was too much hurried to be able to raise any militia in this province. The fatigue of our troops and the hardships which they suffered were excessive. I receive strong assurances from our friends. To-morrow the King's standard will be erected, and I shall try every means to embody them, and to avail myself of their services. I cannot be sure when I shall be able to open the communication with Cross Creek; it must be done soon, as the troops are in the greatest want of shoes and other necessaries.

As I am informed that Greene expects reinforcements from Pennsylvania, and that Virginia militia are turning out with great alacrity and in great numbers, I should wish the three regiments expected from Ireland to be sent to me as soon as possible by way of Cape Fear, with orders to proceed without loss of time to Cross Creek.

I have written to Greene threatening to send the Prisoners of war to the West Indies in case he does not consent to an exchange. I would have you therefore make public demonstration of doing it, and inform the principal officers that you cannot answer delaying it longer than the first week in April. A convoy should be required without letting the officer of the navy doubt my being in earnest.

Yours most affectionately
Cornwallis

Document #3: Letter from General Cornwallis to Lord Rawdon, commander of the British garrisons in South Carolina.

DEAR LORD,

Camp at Guilford, March 17, 1781.

General Greene having been very considerably reinforced from Virginia by eighteen-months' men and militia, and having collected all the militia of this province, advanced "with an army of about 5000 or 6000 men and four 6-pounders to this place; I attacked him on the 15th; and after a very sharp' action routed his army and took his cannon. The great fatigue of the troops, the number of wounded, and he want of provisions, prevented our pursuing the enemy beyond the Reedy Fork. I shall send my aide-de-camp, Captain Brodrick, as soon as possible to England with the particulars; in the mean time I beg you will transmit the contents of this note thither and to the Commander-in-Chief.

If the reinforcement from Europe is arrived, send the whole or greatest part to Wilmington, with orders to proceed without loss of time to Cross Creek.

Believe me, & c.,
Cornwallis.

Document # 4: Personnel Reports from General Cornwallis.

MORNING STATE, MARCH 15.

Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, &c.....	286
Rank and File.....	<u>1638</u>
	1924

CASUALTIES AT CATAWBA FORD AND OTHER ACTIONS PREVIOUS TO MARCH 15.

	Officers.	R. and F., & c	Total
Killed.....	1.....	11.....	12
Wounded.....	2.....	86.....	88
Missing.....	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	3	97	100

CASUALTIES AT THE BATTLE OF GUILFORD.

	Officers.	R. and F., & c ³	Total
Killed.....	5.....	88.....	93
Wounded.....	24.....	389.....	413
Missing.....	<u>-</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>26</u>
	29	503	532

MORNING STATE, APRIL 15. Wilmington.

Officers, including Chaplains and Surgeons.....	127
Sergeants, Drummers, and Privates.....	<u>2059</u>
	2186

Of these, Rank and File, 1829.

On command, in and out of the district.....	544
Prisoners of war.....	694
Sick.....	436
Wounded.....	397
Detached	<u>214</u>
Including Officers.....	2273

Document #5: Letter from General Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton, commander of the British Army in North America.

Sir,

Camp near Wilmington, April 10, 1781.

I am very anxious to receive your Excellency's commands, being yet totally in the dark as to the intended operations of the summer. I cannot help expressing my wishes that the Chesapeake may become the seat of war, even (if necessary) at the expense of abandoning New York. Until Virginia is in a manner subdued, our hold of the Carolinas must be difficult if not precarious. The rivers in Virginia are advantageous to an invading army; but North Carolina is of all the provinces in America the most difficult to attack (unless material assistance could be got from the inhabitants, the contrary of which I have sufficiently experienced), on account of its great extent, of the numberless rivers and creeks, and the total want of interior navigation.

I have, &c.,

³ Editor's Note: "R. and F., & c." is short for rank and file.

CORNWALLIS

Document #6: Letter from General Cornwallis to Major-General Phillips, commander of a British Army detachment in Virginia.

DEAR PHILLIPS,

Camp near Wilmington, April 10, 1781.

I have had a most difficult and dangerous campaign, and was obliged to fight a battle 200 miles from any communication, against an enemy seven times my number. The fate of it was long doubt. We had not a regiment or corps that did not at some time give way; it ended however happily, in our completely routing the enemy and taking their cannon. The idea of our friends rising in any number and to any purpose totally failed, as I expected, and here I am, getting rid of my wounded and refitting my troops at Wilmington. I last night heard of the naval action, and your arrival in the Chesapeake. Now, my dear friend, what is our plan? Without one we cannot succeed, and I assure you that I am quite tired of marching about the country in quest of adventures. If we mean an offensive war in America, we must abandon New York, and bring our whole force into Virginia; we then have a stake to fight for, and a successful battle may give us America. If our plan is defensive, mixed with desultory expeditions, let us quit the Carolinas (which cannot be held defensively while Virginia can be so easily armed against us) and stick to our salt pork at New York, sending now and then a detachment to steal tobacco, &c.

I daily expect three regiments from Ireland: leaving one of them at Charleston, with the addition of the other two and the flank companies I can come by land to you; but whether after we have joined we shall have a sufficient force for a war of conquest, I should think very doubtful. By a war of conquest I mean, to possess the country sufficiently to overturn the Rebel government, and to establish a militia and some kind of mixed authority of our own. If no reinforcement comes, and that I am obliged to march with my present force to the upper frontiers of South Carolina, my situation will be truly distressing. If I was to embark from hence, the loss of the upper posts in South Carolina would be inevitable. I have as yet received no orders. If the reinforcements arrive, I must move from hence, where the men will be sickly and the horses starving. If I am sure that you are to remain in the Chesapeake, perhaps I may come directly to you.

It is very difficult to get any letters conveyed by land on account of the vigilance and severity of the Rebel government. I believe all mine to General Arnold miscarried, and I did not receive one from him.

Most sincerely yours,

Cornwallis

Document #7: Letter from General Cornwallis to Lord George Germain, the British Secretary of State for American Colonies.

MY LORD,

Wilmington, April 18, 1781.

I think it is incumbent on me to be explicit with your Lordship, as his Majesty's minister, on one or two capital points. The principal reasons for undertaking a winter's campaign were – the difficulty of a defensive war in South Carolina, and the hopes that our friends in North Carolina, who were said to be very numerous, would make good, their promises of assembling and taking an active part with us in endeavoring to re-establish his Majesty's government. Our experience has shown that their numbers are not so great as had been represented, and that their friendship was only passive. For we have received little assistance from them since our arrival in the province; and although I gave the strongest and most public assurances, that after refitting and depositing our sick and wounded, I should return to the Upper Country, not above two hundred have been prevailed upon to follow us, either as provincials or militia. This being the case, the immense extent of this country, cut with numberless rivers and creeks, and the total want of internal navigation, which renders it impossible for our army to remain long in the heart of the country, will make it very difficult to reduce this province to obedience by a direct attack upon it. If therefore it should appear to be the interest of Great Britain to maintain what she already possesses, and to push the war in the Southern provinces, I take the liberty of giving it as my opinion, that a serious attempt upon Virginia would be the most solid plan, because successful operations might not only be attended with important

consequences there, but would tend to the security of South Carolina, and ultimately to the submission of North Carolina. The great reinforcements sent by Virginia to General Greene, whilst General Arnold was in the Chesapeake, are convincing proofs that small expeditions do not frighten that powerful province.

I have the honor, &c.

Cornwallis

Document #8: Letter from General Cornwallis to Lord George Germain, the British Secretary of State for American Colonies.

My Lord,

Wilmington, April 18, 1781.

I feel myself much indebted to your Lordship for your kind assistance in procuring the rank of major for my aide-de-camp, Major Ross. I was much disappointed, to find that his Majesty did not think Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton's services deserved to be rewarded with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the army, and it would give me most sensible mortification if it should be now with-held from him. He was once, it is true, unfortunate; but the affairs of the 17th of January must be classed among the extraordinary events of war, as his disposition and conduct of the action were as unexceptionable as his previous maneuvers were able to force General Morgan to fight. . . .Your Lordship must know so well how agreeable any favor conferred upon my near relation and aide-de-camp, Captain Brodrick, must be to me, that I think it un-necessary to trouble you on that subject.

I have, &c.

Cornwallis

Document #9: Report from General Cornwallis to Lord George Germain on the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

MY LORD,

Guilford, March 17, 1781

Having occasion to dispatch my aide-de-camp, Captain Brodrick, with the particulars of the action of the 15th, in compliance with general directions from Sir Henry Clinton, I shall embrace an opportunity to give your Lordship an account of the operations of the troops under my command previous to that event and of those subsequent, until the departure of Captain Brodrick.

My plan for the winter's campaign was to penetrate to North Carolina, leaving South Carolina in security against any probable attack in my absence. Lord Rawdon, with a considerable body of troops, had charge of the defensive, and I proceeded about the middle of January upon the offensive operations. I decided to march by the upper, in preference to the lower roads leading into North Carolina, because fords being frequent above the forks of the rivers, my passage there could not easily be obstructed; and General Greene having taken post on the Pedee, and there being few fords in any of the great rivers of this country below their forks, especially in, winter, I apprehended being much delayed; if not entirely prevented from penetrating by the latter route.

I was the more induced to prefer this route, as I hoped in my way to be able to destroy or drive out of South Carolina, the corps of the enemy commanded, by General Morgan which threatened the valuable districts of Ninety-Six; and I likewise hoped by rapid marches to get between General Greene and Virginia, and by that means force him to fight without receiving any reinforcement from that province; or, failing of that, to oblige him to quit North Carolina with precipitation, and thereby encourage our friends to make good their promises of a general rising to assist me in re-establishing his Majesty's Government.

The unfortunate affair of the 17th of January was a very unexpected and severe blow; for, besides reputation, our loss did not fall short of 600 men. However, being thoroughly sensible that defensive measures would be certain ruin to the affairs of Britain in the southern colonies, this event did not deter me from prosecuting the original plan. That General Greene might be uncertain of my intended route as long as possible, I had left General Leslie at Camden until I was ready to move from Wynnesborough, and he was now within a day's march of me. He employed the 18th in forming a junction with him, and in collecting the

remains of Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton's corps, after which great exertions were made by part of the army, without baggage, to retake our prisoners, and to intercept General Morgan's corps on its retreat to the Catawba; but the celerity of their movements, and the swelling of numberless creeks in our way, rendered all our efforts fruitless.

I therefore assembled the army on the 25th at Ramsoure's Mill, on the south fork of the Catawba, and as the loss of my light troops could only be remedied by the activity of the whole corps, I employed a halt of two days in collecting some flour, and in destroying superfluous baggage and all my wagons, except those loaded with hospital stores, salt, and ammunition and four reserved empty in readiness for sick or wounded. In this measure, though at the expense of a great deal of officers' baggage, and of all prospect in future of rum, and even a regular supply of provisions to the soldiers, I must, in justice to this army, say that there was the most general and cheerful acquiescence.

In the mean time the rains had rendered the North Catawba impassable, and General Morgan's corps, the militia of the rebellious counties of Rowan and Mecklenburg under General Davidson, or the gang of plunderers usually under the command of General Sumpter, not then recovered from his wounds, had occupied all the fords in a space of more than forty miles upwards from the fork. During its height I approached the river by short march; so as to give the enemy equal apprehensions for several fords; and after having procured the best information in my power, I resolved to attempt the passage at a private ford (then slightly guarded) near M'Cowan's Ford, on the morning of the 1st of February.

Lieut.-Colonel Webster was detached with part of the army and all the baggage to Beattie's Ford, six miles above McCowan's, where General Davidson was supposed to be posted with 500 militia, and was directed to make every possible demonstration, by cannonading and otherwise, of an intention to force a passage there, and I marched at one in the morning with the brigade of guards, regiment of Bose, 23rd, 200 cavalry, and two 3-pounders, to the ford fixed upon for the real attempt.

The morning being very dark and rainy, and part of our way through a wood where there was no road, one of the 3-pounders in front of the 23rd regiment and the cavalry, overset in a swamp, and occasioned those corps to lose the line of march, and some of the artillerymen belonging to the other gun (one of whom had the match) having stopped to assist, were likewise left behind. The head of the column in the mean while arrived at the bank of the river, and the day began to break. I could make no use of the gun that was up, and it was evident from the number of fires on the other side, that the opposition would be greater than I had expected. However, as I knew that the rain then falling would soon render the river again impassable, and I had received information the evening before that General Greene had arrived in General Morgan's camp, and that his army was marching after him with the greatest expedition, I determined not to desist from the attempt, and, therefore, full of confidence in the zeal and gallantry of Brigadier-General O'Hara, and of the brigade of guards under his command, I ordered them to march on but, to prevent confusion, not to fire until they gained the opposite bank. Their behavior justified my high opinion of them; for a constant fire from the enemy, in a ford upwards of 500 yards wide, in many places up to their middle, with a rocky bottom and strong current, made no impression on their cool and determined valor, nor checked their passage. The light infantry, landing first, immediately formed, and in a few minutes killed or dispersed everything that appeared before them, the rest of the troops forming and advancing in succession. We now learned that we had been opposed by about 300 militia that had taken post there only the evening before, under the command of General Davidson. Their general and two of his officers were among the killed; the number of wounded was uncertain, and a few were taken prisoners. On our side Lieutenant-Colonel Hall and three men were killed, and 36 men wounded, all of the light infantry, and grenadiers of the Guards. By this time the rear of the column had joined, and the whole having passed with the greatest dispatch, I detached Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton with the cavalry and 23rd regiment, to pursue the routed militia. A few were soon killed or taken, and Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton, having learned that 300 or 400 of the neighboring militia were to assemble that day at Tarrant's house, about 10 miles from the ford, leaving his infantry, he went on with the cavalry, and, finding the militia as expected, he, with excellent conduct and great spirit attacked them instantly, and totally routed them with little loss on his side, and on theirs between 40 and 50 killed, wounded, or prisoners. This stroke, with our passage of the ford, so effectually dispirited the militia,

that we met with no further opposition on our march to the Yadkin, through one of the most rebellious tracts in America.

During this time, the rebels having quitted Beattie's Ford; Lieut.-Colonel Webster was passing his detachment and the baggage of the army; this had become tedious and difficult by the continuance of the rain and the swelling of the river, but all joined us soon after dark, about six miles from Beattie's Ford. The other fords were likewise abandoned by the enemy; the greatest part of the militia dispersed; and General Morgan with his corps marched all that afternoon and the following night towards Salisbury. We pursued next morning in hopes to intercept him between the rivers; and, after struggling with many difficulties arising from swelled creeks and bad roads, the Guards came up with his rear in the evening of the 3rd, routed it, and took a few wagons at the trading ford of the Yadkin. He had passed the body of his infantry in flats, and his cavalry and wagons by the ford, during that day and the preceding night, but at the time of our arrival the boats were secured on the other side, and the ford had become impassable. The river continued to rise, and the weather appearing unsettled, I determined to march to the upper fords, after procuring a small supply of provisions at Salisbury. This and the height of the creeks in our way detained me two days, and in that time Morgan having quitted the banks of the river, I had information from our friends, who crossed in canoes, that General Greene's army was marching with the utmost dispatch to form a junction with him at Guilford. Not having had time to collect the North Carolina militia, and having received no reinforcement from Virginia, I concluded that he would do everything in his power to avoid an action on the south side of the Dan, and, it being my interest to force him to fight, I made great expedition and got between him and the upper fords; and, being assured that the lower fords are seldom practicable in winter, and that he could not collect many flats at any of the ferries, I was in great hopes that he would not escape me without receiving a blow. Nothing could exceed the patience and alacrity of the officers and soldiers under every species of hardship and fatigue in endeavoring to overtake him. But our intelligence upon this occasion was exceedingly defective, which, with heavy rains, bad roads, and the passage or many deep creeks, and bridges destroyed by the enemy's light troops, rendered all our exertions vain, for upon our arrival at Boyd's Ferry on the 15th, we learned that his rear-guard had got over the night before, his baggage and main body having passed the preceding day at that and a neighboring ferry, where more flats had been collected than had been represented to me as possible.

My force being ill suited to enter by that quarter so powerful a province as Virginia, and North Carolina being in the utmost confusion, after giving the troops a halt of one day, I proceeded by easy marches to Hillsborough, where I erected the King's standard, and invited by proclamation all loyal subjects to repair to it, and to stand forth and take an active part in assisting me to restore order and constitutional government. As a considerable body of friends were said to reside between the Haw and Deep rivers, I detached Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton on the 23rd, with the cavalry and a small body of infantry, to prevent their being interrupted in assembling. Unluckily, a detachment of the rebel light troops had crossed the same day, and by accident fell in with about 200 of our friends, under Colonel Pyle, on their way to Hillsborough, who, mistaking the rebels for Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton's corps, allowed themselves to be surrounded, and a number of them were most inhumanely butchered, when begging for quarter without making the least resistance. The same day I had certain intelligence that General Greene, having been reinforced, had re-crossed the Dan, which rendered it imprudent to separate my corps, occasioned the recall of Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton's detachment; and forage and provisions being scarce in the neighborhood of Hillsborough, as well as the position too distant (upon the approach of the rebel army) for the protection of the body of our friends, I judged it expedient to cross the Haw, and encamped near Allemance Creek, detaching Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton with the cavalry, light company of the Guards, and 150 men of Lieut.-Colonel Webster's brigade a few miles from me on the road to Deep River, more effectually to cover the country.

General Greene's light troops soon made their appearance; and on the 2nd, a patrol having reported that they had seen both cavalry and infantry near his post, I directed Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton to move forward with proper precautions, and endeavor to discover the designs of the enemy. He had not advanced far when he fell in with a considerable corps, which he immediately attacked and routed, but being ignorant of their

force, and whether they were supported, with great prudence desisted from pursuit. He soon learned from prisoners that those he had beaten were Lee's legion, 300 or 400 Back-Mountain men, under Colonel Preston, with a number of militia, and that General Greene, with a part of his army, was not far distant. Our situation for the former few days had been amongst timid friends, and adjoining inveterate rebels; between them I had been totally destitute of information, which lost me a very favorable opportunity of attacking the rebel army. General Greene fell back to Thompson's House, near Boyd's Ford, on the Reedy River, but his light troops and militia still remained near us, and, as I was informed that they were posted carelessly at separate plantations for the convenience of subsisting, I marched on the 6th to drive them in, and to attack General Greene if an opportunity offered. I succeeded completely in the first, and at Weitzell's Mill, on the Reedy Fork, where they made a stand, the Back-Mountain men and some militia suffered considerably, with little loss on our side; but a timely and precipitate retreat over the Haw prevented the latter. I knew that the Virginia reinforcements were upon their march and it was apparent that the enemy would, if possible, avoid risking an action before their arrival.

The neighborhood of the fords of the Dan in their rear, and the extreme difficulty of subsisting my troops in that exhausted country, putting it out of my power to force them, my resolution was to give our friends time to join us, by covering their country as effectually as possible consistent with the subsistence of the troops, still approaching the communication with our shipping in Cape Fear River, which I saw it would soon become indispensably necessary to open on account of the sufferings of the army from the want of supplies of every kind; at the same time I was determined to fight the rebel army if it approached me, being convinced that it would be impossible to succeed in that great object of our arduous campaign, the calling forth the numerous Loyalists of North Carolina, whilst a doubt remained on their minds of the superiority of our arms. With these views I had moved to the Quaker Meeting, in the forks of Deep River, on the 13th, and on the 14th I received the information which occasioned the movement that brought on the action at Guilford, of which I shall give your Lordship an account in a separate letter.

I have, &c.

Cornwallis.

Document #10: Follow-on Report from General Cornwallis to Lord George Germain on the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

MY LORD,

Guildford, March 17, 1781.

I have the satisfaction to inform your Lordship that his Majesty's troops under my command obtained a signal victory on the 15th instant over the rebel army commanded by General Greene.

In pursuance of my intended plan, communicated to your Lordship in my dispatch [document #8], I had encamped on the 13th instant at the Quaker Meeting between the forks of the Deep River. On the 14th I received information that General Butler, with a body of North Carolina militia and the expected reinforcements from Virginia, said to consist of a Virginia State regiment, a corps of Virginia eighteen-months' men, 3000 Virginia militia, and recruits for the Maryland line, had joined General Greene, and that the whole army, which was reported to amount to nine or ten thousand men, was marching to attack the British troops. During the afternoon intelligence was brought, which was confirmed in the night, that he had advanced that day to Guildford about twelve miles from our camp. Being now persuaded that he had resolved to hazard an engagement, after detaching Lieut.-Colonel Hamilton with our wagons and baggage, escorted by his own regiment, a detachment of 100 infantry and 20 cavalry, towards Bell's Mills, on Deep River, I marched with the rest of the corps at daybreak on the morning of the 15th to meet the enemy, or to attack them in their encampment. About four miles from Guildford our advanced guard, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, fell in with a corps of the enemy, consisting of Lee's legion, some Back-Mountain men and Virginia militia, which he attacked with his usual good conduct and spirit, and defeated it and, continuing our march, we found the rebel army posted on rising ground, about a mile and a half from the Court-house. The prisoners taken by Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton having been several days with the advanced corps, could give me no account of the enemy's order or position, and the country-people were

extremely inaccurate in their description of the ground. Immediately between the head of the column and the enemy's line was a considerable plantation, one large field of which was on our left of the road, and two others, with a wood of about 200 yards broad between them, on our right of it; beyond these fields the wood continued for several miles to our right. The wood beyond the plantation in our front, in the skirt of which the enemy's first line was formed, was about a mile in depth, the road then leading into an extensive space of cleared ground about Guilford Court-house. The woods on our right and left were reported to be impracticable for cannon; but, as that on our right appeared the most open, resolved to attack the left wing of the enemy; and, whilst my disposition was making for that purpose, I ordered Lieutenant Macleod to bring forward the guns and cannonade their center. The attack was directed to be made in the following order.

On the right, the regiment of Bose and the 71st regiment led by Major-General Leslie, and supported by the first battalion of Guards; on the left, the 23rd and 33rd regiments, led by Lieut.-Colonel Webster, and supported by the Grenadiers and second battalion of Guards commanded by Brigadier-General O'Hara; the Yagers, and light infantry of the Guards, remained in the wood on the left of the guns, and the cavalry in the road, ready to act as circumstances might require. Our preparations being made, the action began about half-an-hour past one in the afternoon. Major-General Leslie after been obliged, by the great extent of the enemy's line, to bring up the first battalion of Guards to the right of the regiment of Bose, soon defeated everything before him. Lieut.-Colonel Webster, having joined the left of Major-General Leslie's division, was no less successful in his front, when, on finding that the left of the 23rd was exposed to a heavy fire from the right wing of the enemy, he changed his front to the left, and being supported by the Yagers and light infantry of the Guards, attacked and routed it, the grenadiers and second battalion of Guards moving forward to occupy the ground left vacant by the movement of Lieut.-Colonel Webster.

All the infantry being now in the line, Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton had directions to keep his cavalry compact, and not to charge without positive orders, except to protect any of the corps from the most evident danger of being defeated. The excessive thickness of the woods rendered our bayonets of little use, and enabled the broken enemy to make frequent stands with an irregular fire, which occasioned some loss, and to several of the corps great delay, particularly on our right, where the first battalion of the Guards and regiment of Bose were warmly engaged in front, flank, and rear, with some of the enemy that had been routed on the first attack, and with part of the extremity of their left wing, which by the closeness of the woods had been passed unbroken. The 71st regiment and Grenadiers, and second battalion of Guards, not knowing what was passing on their right, and hearing the fire advance on their left, continued to move forward, the artillery keeping pace with them on road, followed by the cavalry. The second battalion of Guards first gained the clear ground near Guilford Court-house, and found a corps of Continentals infantry, much superior in number, formed in the open field on the left of the road.

Glowing with impatience to signalize themselves, they instantly attacked and defeated them, taking two 6-pounders, but, pursuing into the wood with too much ardor, were thrown into confusion by a heavy fire, and immediately charged and driven back into the field by Colonel Washington's dragoons, the loss of the 6-pounders they had taken. The enemy's cavalry was soon repulsed by a well-directed fire from two 3-pounders just brought up tip by Lieutenant Macleod, and by the appearance of the grenadiers of the Guards, and of the 71st regiment, which, having been impeded by some deep ravine, were now coming out of the wood on the right of the Guards, opposite to the Court-house. By the spirited exertions of Brigadier-General O'Hara, though wounded, the second battalion of Guards was soon rallied, and, supported by the grenadiers, returned to the charge with the greatest alacrity. The 23rd regiment arriving at that instant from our left, and Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton advanced with a part of the cavalry, the enemy were soon put to flight, and the two 6-pounders once more fell into our hands; two ammunition-wagons and two other 6-pounders, being all the artillery they had in the field, were likewise taken. About this time the 33rd regiment and light infantry of the Guards, after overcoming many difficulties, completely routed the corps which was opposed to them, and put an end to the action in this quarter. The 23rd and 71st regiments, with part of the cavalry, were ordered to pursue; the remainder of the cavalry was detached; with Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton, to our right, where a heavy fire still continued, and where his appearance and spirited attack contributed much to

a speedy termination of the action. The militia with which our right wing had been engaged, dispersed in the woods; the continentals went off by the Reedy Fork, beyond which it was not in my power to follow them, as their cavalry had suffered but little. Our troops were excessively fatigued by an action which lasted an hour and a half, and our wounded, dispersed over an extensive space of country, required immediate attention. The care of our wounded, and the total want of provisions in an exhausted country, made it equally impossible for me to follow the blow the next day. The enemy did not stop until they got to the iron-works on Troublesome Creek, eighteen miles from the field of battle.

From our observation, and the best accounts we could procure, we did not doubt but the strength of the enemy exceeded 7000 men; their militia composed their line, with parties advanced to the rails of the fields in their front; the continentals were posted obliquely in the rear of their right wing. Their cannon fired on us whilst we were forming, from the center of the line of militia, but were withdrawn to the continentals before the attack.

I cannot ascertain the loss of the enemy, but it must have been considerable; between 200 and 300 dead were left upon the field. Many of their wounded that were able to move, whilst we were employed in the care of our own, escaped, and followed the routed enemy; and our cattle-drivers and forage parties have reported to me that the houses in a circle of six or eight miles round us are full of others. Those that remained we have taken the best care of in our power. We took few prisoners, owing to the excessive thickness of the wood facilitating their escape, and every man of our army being repeatedly wanted for action.

The conduct and actions of the officers and soldiers that composed this little army will do more justice to their merit than I can by words. Their persevering intrepidity in action, their invincible patience in the hardships and fatigues of a march of above 600 miles, in which they have forded several large rivers and numberless creeks, many of which would be reckoned large rivers in any other country in the world, without tents or covering against the climate, and often without provisions, will sufficiently manifest their ardent zeal for the honor and interests of their Sovereign and their country.

I have been particularly indebted to Major-General Leslie for his gallantry and exertion in the action, as well as his assistance in every other part of the service. The zeal and slant of Brigadier-General O'Hara merit my highest commendations, for, after receiving two dangerous wounds, he continued in the field whilst the action lasted; by his earnest attention on other occasions, seconded by the officers and soldiers of the brigade; his Majesty's Guards are no less distinguished by their order and discipline than by their spirit and valor: the Hessian regiment of Bose deserves my widest praises for its discipline, alacrity, and courage, and does honor to Major Du Buy, who commands it, and who is an officer of superior merit. I am much obliged to Brigadier-General Howard, who served as a volunteer, for his spirited example on all occasions. Lieut.-Colonel Webster conducted his brigade like an officer of experience and gallantry. Lieut.-Colonel Tarleton's good conduct and spirit in the management of his cavalry was conspicuous during the whole action; and Lieutenant Macleod, who commanded the artillery, proved himself upon this, as well as all former occasions, a most capable and deserving officer. The attention and exertions of my aides-de-camp, and of all the other public officers of the army, contributed very much to the success of the day.

I have constantly received the most zealous assistance from Governor Martin, during my command in the southern districts. Hoping that his presence would tend to incite the loyal subjects of this province to take an active part with us, he has cheerfully submitted to the fatigues and dangers of our campaign; but his delicate constitution has suffered by his public spirit, for, by the advice of the physicians, he is now obliged to return to England for the recovery of his health.

This part of the country is so totally destitute of subsistence, that forage is not nearer than nine miles, and the soldiers have been two days without bread; I shall therefore leave about seventy of the worst of the wounded cases at the New Garden Quaker Meeting-House, with proper assistance, and move the remainder with the army to morrow morning to Bell's Mills. I hope our friends will heartily take an active part with us, to which I shall continue to encourage them, still approaching our shipping by easy marches, that we may procure the necessary supplies for further operations, and lodge our sick and wounded where proper attention can be paid to them.

This dispatch will be delivered to your Lordship by my aide-de-camp, Captain Brodrick, who is a very promising officer, and whom I beg leave to recommend to your Lordship's countenance and favor.

I have, & c.

Cornwallis

3. Henry Lee's Account of the Guilford Courthouse Campaign.

Source: Henry Lee, Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States (Washington: Peter Force, 1827), 164-183.

Document #11: Henry Lee's Account of the Guilford Courthouse Campaign.

Editor's note: The author of this account commanded Lee's Legion during the Guilford Courthouse Campaign. In accordance with the style of the times, in his narrative he refers to himself in the third person.

General Greene, as soon as he was advised in the morning of the enemy's advance, retired and passed the Haw; repeating, in his answer, his order to colonel Williams to avoid action, which he well knew was very practicable, unless our cavalry should meet with disaster. As soon as all appearances of further contest ceased, the prisoners, as was customary, were brought to the commandant; who, among other inquiries, asked, what officer led the enemy into the creek, and crossed with the leading section of the column? He was told, that it was lieutenant colonel Webster; and that he had passed unhurt.

Inscrutable are the ways of Providence. That superior soldier, whose life was in such imminent danger, was now safely shielded, though doomed to fall in a very few days.

Lord Cornwallis, finding that his attempt to bring Greene to action issued only in wearing down his brave army, and convinced that Williams was unassailable so long as he preserved his superiority in cavalry, withdrew towards Bell's Mill, on Deep River, with the resolution of restoring, by rest, the strength of his troops, and of holding it up for that decisive day, which, from his knowledge of the character of his adversary, he was assured would arrive as soon as he had acquired his expected reinforcements. The last ten days presented a very interesting and edifying scene. Two generals of high talents, ardently supported by their respective armies, contending, by a series of daring maneuvers, for a vast prize, which either might have lost by one false step. Had Cornwallis risked any partial operations against Williams, the destruction of the assailing corps would have led to the capture of the British army; whereas, had Greene, by incorrect intelligence or mistaken calculations, placed himself within reach of the British general, our army would have been cut to pieces. The loyalists looked on with anxious solicitude; and, finding that all the efforts of the royal leader were unavailing,--the American army retaining its ground, and its active cavalry penetrating in every direction,--they recurred to past admonition, and determined to repress their zeal, and to wait in quietude until the British superiority should be manifested by signal success.

Thus the American general completely succeeded in his object, adding a new claim to the high confidence already acquired, and leaving it doubtful which most to admire,--his sagacity in counsel, his promptitude in decision, or his boldness and skill in execution. In this position, at the iron works on Troublesome creek, general Greene received the pleasing intelligence, that his reinforcements and supplies were approaching; and hearing at the same time from colonel Williams, that lord Cornwallis had retired from the contest of skill. He determined to give repose to his troops and wait for his long expected succour. In a few days the new levies under colonel Green, and the militia from Virginia under brigadier general Lawson, with a part of the supplies and stores so much wanted, reached camp. The levies were distributed in the regiments of Virginia, commanded by colonel Green and lieutenant colonel Hawes. The militia being united to those collected by Stevens while at Halifax court-house, were divided into two brigades, under the direction of that general, and brigadier Lawson; who, like Stevens, had commanded a continental regiment, and with many other brave and active officers, had been left without troops by the compression of our regular corps; yet being unwilling to abandon the service of their country, still in jeopardy, they both had offered to take command of the militia. Soon afterward came in the North Carolina force, led by the brigadiers Butler and Eaton. Previously colonels Campbell and Preston and Lynch⁴ had joined, whose

⁴ [Author's note] Colonels Campbell and Preston had been with the light troops for some days; succeeding the corps under brigadier Pickens, now returned home. Colonel Lynch had lately joined, commanding one of the battalions of the Virginia militia, which arrived under brigadier Lawson.

united corps did not exceed six hundred rank and file. Our force now was estimated at four thousand five hundred, horse, foot, and artillery; of which, the continental portion did not amount to quite one thousand six hundred. To acquaint himself with the character of his late accession of troops, and to make ready the many requisite preparations for service, the general continued in his position at the iron works, having drawn in most of the light corps. The Legion of Lee, and the Virginia militia attached to it under the colonels Preston and Campbell, still hovered around the enemy under the direction of lieutenant colonel Lee.

The American dragoons, far superior in the ability of their horses, stuck so close to the British camp as to render their intercourse with the country very difficult, and subjected the British general to many inconveniences, besides interrupting his acquirement of intelligence.

No equal party of the enemy's horse would dare to encounter them; and if a superior force approached, the fleetness of their horses mocked pursuit. Feeling his privations daily, lord Cornwallis; leaving his baggage to follow, made a sudden movement late in the evening from Bell's mill towards New Garden, a quaker settlement, abounding with forage, and provisions. Some of the small parties of the legion horse, traversing in every quarter, one of them approached Bell's mill, and found it abandoned. When informed by the inhabitants that the baggage had but lately proceeded under a very small escort, the officer commanding the horse determined to trace secretly the progress of its march. It so happened, that early in the night the escort with the whole baggage mistook the road; proceeding directly On instead of turning towards New Garden. Fortunately the vigilant officer discovered this error; and having ascertained the fact beyond doubt, he dispatched a courier to lieutenant colonel Lee with the information, attended by two guides well acquainted with the route taken by the British army, that taken by the escort and the intermediate cross-roads. The intelligence reached Lee about eleven o'clock, (later than was expected) as he had, from the advance or the enemy, taken a more distant position. Instantly the legion horse, with two companies of infantry mounted behind two of the troops, were put in motion: lieutenant colonel Lee taking the guides sent to him, advanced with the certain expectation of falling in with the lost escort. The night was extremely dark, and the country covered with woods; but the guides were faithful, intelligent, and intimately versed in all the roads, bye-roads, and even paths. Estimating the distance to march by their computation, it did not exceed nine miles, which we reckoned, dark as was the night, to make in two hours. Pushing on with all practicable dispatch, the first hour brought us to a large road: this the guides passed, leading the detachment again into a thick-wood. Here we continued another hour; when, finding no road doubts began to be entertained by the guides, which issued at last in attempting to return to the very road they had passed, it being concluded to be the one desired. Unhappily they became bewildered, after changing their course, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left; ever believing every change would surely bring us to our desired route, and yet always disappointed.

At length with great anxiety they proposed a halt, while themselves, accompanied by a few dragoons, should take different directions on our flanks in search of a house. This was readily acceded to, and the detachment dismounted, having not before halted. In the space of an hour one of them returned, and shortly after the other, both without success. It was now three o'clock, as well as we could make out the time by feeling the hour and minute-hands of our watches. Again we mounted, and again moved as our guides directed; more and more bewildered, and more and more distressed; persevering, and yet in vain. Lieutenant colonel Lee apprehensive that the detachment might be carried too remote from the place assigned for junction in the morning with the militia under Campbell, again halted and dismounted, determining to wait for the light of day. It at last to our great joy appeared; and even then our guides were so completely out of their reckoning, as to detain us a long time in the woods before they were satisfied of the course to be taken.

By examining the bark of the trees they ascertained the north and thus recovered their knowledge of our locality. We were within a mile of the road we had crossed, and which turned out to be the very road desired. When we passed it the enemy were, as was afterwards ascertained, two miles only on our right, as

much bewildered as ourselves. For finding that they had not reached camp within the period expected, calculating time from distance: and knowing that New Garden must be upon their left; they took a cross road which offered, and soon found themselves encompassed with new difficulties-fallen trees, and cross-ways as large as the road they had pursued:--when the officer determined to halt and wait for day. Lord Cornwallis became extremely alarmed for the safety of his baggage; dispatching parties of horse and foot in various directions to fall in with it, and detaching in the rear of these parties a strong corps to reinforce the escort. Not one of the various detachments either met with the escort or with Lee. As soon as it was light, the officer having charge of the baggage retraced his steps; and shortly after gaining the road he had left in the night fell in with the last detachment sent by lord Cornwallis, and with it safely reached the British camp; while lieutenant colonel Lee and his harassed legion, with his afflicted guides, much mortified, joined Campbell. Here he found orders from general Greene, now nearly prepared for forward movement, to return to camp. The British general remained in his new position; enjoying, without interruption, the wholesome supplies with which this fertile settlement abounded. Lee having proceeded towards the iron works, found the American army on the 14th at Guilford court-house, distant about twelve miles from the enemy ; and was immediately advanced on the road towards the quaker meeting house, with orders to post himself within two or three miles of the court-house, and to resume his accustomed duties. Lieutenant Heard, of the legion cavalry was detached in the evening with a party of dragoons to place himself near the British camp, and to report from time to time such occurrences as might happen. About two in the morning this officer communicated, that a large body of horse were approaching the meeting house, which was not more than six miles from our headquarters, and near the point where the road from Deep river intersects the great road leading from Salisbury to Virginia. The intelligence received was instantly forwarded to the general, and Heard was directed to proceed with a few of his dragoons down the flank of the enemy to discover whether the British army was in motion, leaving his second to hold their front. Hearing from Heard, agreeably to rule, every half hour, it was known, that; the enemy continued, though slowly, to approach; and at length he communicated, that his various attempts to pass down the flank as directed, had proved abortive, having been uniformly interrupted by patrols ranging far from the line of march; yet that he was persuaded that he heard the rumbling of wheels, which indicated a general movement. This being made known to general Greene, Lee was directed to advance with his cavalry, to bear down these interruptions, and to ascertain the truth. Expecting battle as soon as Heard's last information was received, the van was called to arms at four in the morning, and to take breakfast with all practicable haste. This had just been finished, when the last mentioned order from the general was communicated. Lieutenant colonel Lee instantly mounted, and took the road to the enemy, at the head of the horse, having directed the infantry and the rifle militia to follow, the first on his right, and the second on his left. The cavalry had not proceeded above two miles, when Lee was met by lieutenant Heard and his party, who were retiring followed leisurely by the enemy's horse. Wishing to approach nearer to Greene, and at all events to gain the proximity of the rifle militia and legion infantry, lest the British army might be up, as was suspected, Lee ordered the column to retire by troops, taking the proper distance for open evolution. The rear troop under Rudolph going off in full gallop, and followed in the like manner by the centre troop under Eggleston, the British commandant flattered himself with converting this retrograde movement into rout, and pressed upon the front under Armstrong, still in a walk, it being necessary to gain the open order required, that this officer should not change his pace. With him was lieutenant colonel Lee, attentively watching the British progress. Finding that the charge did not affect Armstrong's troop, now the rear, the enemy emptied their pistols, and then raising a shout, pushed a second time upon Armstrong who, remaining sullen as before, the leading section having nearly closed with us, drew up.

At this moment, Lee ordering a charge, the dragoons came instantly to the right about, and, in close column, rushed upon the foe. This meeting happened in a long lane with very high curved fences on each side of the road, which admitted but one section in front. The charge was ordered by Lee, from conviction that he should trample his enemy under foot, if he dared to meet the shock; and thus gain an easy and complete victory. But only the front section of each corps closed, Tarleton sounding a retreat, the moment he discovered the column in charge. The whole of the enemy's section was dismounted, and many of the

horses prostrated;⁵ some of the dragoons killed, the rest made prisoners: not a single American soldier or horse injured. Tarleton retired with celerity; and getting out of the lane, took an obscure way leading directly across the Salisbury road towards the British camp—while Lee, well acquainted with the country, followed the common route by the quaker meeting-house, with a view to sever the British lieutenant colonel from his army, by holding him well upon his left, and with the determination to gain his front, and then to press directly upon him with his condensed force; and thus place his horse between Tarleton and Cornwallis, presumed to be some distance behind; By endeavoring to take the whole detachment, he permitted the whole to escape; whereas, had he continued to press on the rear, he must have taken many. As Lee, with his column in full speed, got up to the meeting house, the British guards had just reached it; and displaying in a moment, gave the American cavalry a close and general fire.⁶ The sun had just risen above the trees, and shining bright, the refulgence from the British muskets, as the soldiers presented, frightened Lee's horse so as to compel him to throw himself off. Instantly remounting another, he ordered a retreat. This maneuver was speedily executed; and while the cavalry were retiring, the legion infantry came running up with trailed arms, and opened a well aimed fire upon the guards, which was followed in a few minutes by a volley from the riflemen under colonel Campbell, who had taken post on the left of the infantry. The action became very sharp, and was bravely maintained on both sides.⁷ The cavalry having formed again in column, and Lee being convinced, from the appearance of the guards, that Cornwallis was not far in the rear, drew off this infantry; and covering them from any attempt of the British horse, retired towards the American army. General Greene, being immediately advised of what had passed, prepared for battle; not doubting, that the long avoided, now wished for, hour was at hand.

Guilford court house, erected near the great state road, is situated on the brow of a declivity, which descends gradually with an undulating slope for about a half mile. It terminates in a small vale, intersected by a rivulet. On the right of the road is open ground with some few copses of wood until you gain the last step of the descent, where you see thick glades of brushy wood reaching across the rivulet. On the left of the road from the courthouse, a deep forest of lofty trees, which terminates nearly in a line with the termination of the field on the opposite side of the road. Below this forest is a small piece of open ground, which appeared to have been cultivated in corn the preceding summer. This small field was long, but narrow, reaching close to the swamp bordering upon the rivulet.

In the road captain Singleton was posted in a line with the termination of the large field and the commencement of the small one, with two six pounders within close shot of the rivulet, where the enemy, keeping the road, would pass. Across the road on his left, some few yards in his rear the North Carolina

⁵ [Author's note] This is not stated with a view to extol one, or disparage the other corps; but merely to state the fact. Lieutenant colonel Tarleton was obliged to use such horses as he could get; whereas his opponent had the whole South to select out of. The consequence was, the British dragoons were mounted upon small weak horses: those of the legion on stout, active horses, and kept in the highest condition. When they met, the momentum of the one must crush the other; and if the latter fled, he could not escape from his enemy, so excellently mounted. There was very little credit with such superior means, due to the American upon victory; whereas, the disgrace of defeat would have been extreme, and Lee's corps ought to have been decimated.

⁶ [Author's note] This was not at New Garden meeting-house, which was twelve miles from Guilford, and from which Cornwallis had moved at the dawn of day. It was now about one hour after sun rise—"the sun had just risen above the trees;" and Cornwallis in his report, says this affair happened about four miles from Guilford; that is about eight miles from New Garden meeting-house. Colonel Howard confirms this estimate of distance, for he says the firing was distinctly heard at Guilford. It was probably therefore a meeting-house of less notoriety than that at New Garden.

⁷ [Author's note] The British sustained a much heavier loss in killed and wounded than we did. His fire was innocent, overshooting the cavalry entirely; whose caps and accouterments were all struck with green twigs, cut by the British ball out of the large oaks in the meeting-house yard, under which the cavalry received the volley from the guards. Some of the infantry and riflemen were killed, and more wounded: among them was lieutenant Snowden, of the legion infantry, who, with most of the wounded, was necessarily left on the field.

militia were ranged under generals Butler and Eaton. At some distance behind this line, the Virginia militia, led by the generals Stevens and Lawson, were formed in a deep wood; the right flank of Stevens and the left flank of Lawson resting on the great road. The continental infantry, consisting of four regiments, were drawn up in the rear of the Virginia militia, in the field to the right of the road; the two regiments of Virginia, conducted by colonel Green and lieutenant colonel Hawes, under the order of brigadier Huger, composing the right; and the two of Maryland, led by colonel Gunby and lieutenant colonel Ford, under the orders of colonel Williams, composing the left. Of these, only the regiment of Gunby was veteran; the three others were composed of new soldiers, among whom were mingled a few who had served from the beginning of the war; but all the officers were composed of new soldiers, among whom were mingled a few who had served from the beginning of the war; but all the officers were experienced and approved. Greene, well informed of his enemy's inferiority in number knew he could present but one line, and had therefore no reserve; considering it injudicious to weaken either of his lines by forming one. On the right, lieutenant colonel Washington, with his cavalry, the old Delaware company under the brave captain Kirkwood, and colonel Lynch with a battalion of Virginia militia, was posted, with orders to hold safe that flank. For the same purpose, and with the same orders, lieutenant colonel Lee was stationed on the left flank with his legion and the Virginia riflemen commanded by colonel Campbell.

In the rear line our small park was placed, with the exception of two sixes with captain Singleton,--who was now with the front line, but directed to repair to the rear as soon as the enemy should enter into close battle, and there take his assigned station.

As soon as the British van appeared, Singleton opened a cannonade upon it,--convincing lord Cornwallis of his proximity to the American army. Lieutenant McCleod commanding the royal artillery, hastened up with two pieces, and, stationing himself in the road near the rivulet, returned our fire. Thus the action commenced: the British general in the mean time arranging his army in order of battle. Although he could form but one full line, he took the resolution of attacking an able general advantageously posted, with a force more than double, a portion whereof he knew to be excellent, supported by cavalry of the first character. Yet such was his condition, that lord Cornwallis was highly gratified with having it in his power, even on such terms, to appeal to the sword. The seventy-first, with the regiment of Bose, formed his right under the order of major general Leslie; his left was composed of the twenty third and thirty-third regiments, led by lieutenant colonel Webster.

The royal artillery, directed by lieutenant McCleod, and supported by the light infantry of the guards and the yagers, moved along the road in the center. The first battalion of guards, under lieutenant colonel Norton, gave support to the right. While brigadier O'Hara, with the grenadiers and second battalion of guards, maintained the left. Lieutenant colonel Tarleton, with the cavalry in column, formed the reserve on the road, in the rear of the artillery.

The moment the head of the British column passed the rivulet, the different corps, in quick step, deployed to the right and left, and soon were ranged in line of battle.

Leslie instantly advanced upon the North Carolina militia. These troops we see most advantageously posted under cover of a rail fence, along the margin of the woods; and Campbell's riflemen and the legion infantry connected in line with the North Carolina militia, turning with the fence as it approached the rivulet, raked by their fire the right of the British wing, entirely uncovered: -- the legion cavalry, in the woods, in a column pointing to the angular corner of the fence ready to support the militia on its right, or the infantry of the legion to its left. The appearance in this quarter was so favorable that sanguine hopes were entertained by many of the officers, from the manifest advantage possessed, of breaking down the enemy's right before he approached the fence; and the troops exhibited the appearance of great zeal and alacrity.

Lieutenant colonel Webster took his part with his usual ability, -- moving upon the Virginia militia, who were not so advantageously posted as their comrades of North Carolina, yet gave every indication of maintaining their ground with obstinacy. Stevens, to give efficacy to this temper, and strung with the recollection of their inglorious flight in the battle of Camden, had placed a line of sentinels in his rear with orders to shoot every man that flinched. When the enemy came within long shot, the American line, by

order, began to fire. Undismayed, the British continued to advance; and having reached a proper distance, discharged their pieces and rent the air with shouts. To our infinite distress and mortification, the North Carolina militia took to flight, a few only of Eaton's brigade excepted, who clung to the militia under Campbell; which, with the legion, manfully maintained their ground. Every effort was made by the generals Butler and Eaton, assisted by colonel Davie, commissary general, with many of the officers of every grade, to stop this unaccountable panic; for not a man of the corps had been killed, or even wounded. Lieutenant colonel Lee joined in the attempt to rally the fugitives, threatening to fall upon them with his cavalry. All was vain,--so thoroughly confounded were these unhappy men, that throwing away arms, knapsacks, and even canteens, they rushed like a torrent headlong through the woods. In the mean time the British right became so injured by the keen and advantageous contest still upheld by Campbell and the legion, as to render it necessary for Leslie to order into line the support under lieutenant colonel Norton, a decided proof of the difficult condition to which he must have been soon reduced, had the North Carolina militia done their duty. The chasm in our order of battle, produced by this base desertion, was extremely detrimental in its consequences; for being seized by Leslie, it threw the corps of Lee out of combination with the army, and also exposed it to destruction. General Leslie, turning the regiment of Bose, with the battalion of guards, upon Lee, pressed forward himself with the seventy-first to cover the right of Webster,--now keenly engaged with the Virginia militia; and seized the most advantageous position, which he preserved through the battle. Noble was the stand of the Virginia militia; Stevens and Lawson, with their faithful brigades, contending for victory against the best officer in the British army, at the head of two regiments, distinguished for intrepidity and discipline; and so firmly did they maintain the battle (secured on their flank by the position taken by Washington, who, anxious to contribute to the aid of his brave countrymen, introduced Lynch's battalion of riflemen upon the flank of Webster, already fully engaged in front) that brigadier O'Hara, advancing with the remainder of the left wing with fixed bayonets, aided by the seventy-first under Leslie, compelled first Lawson's brigade and then Stevens to abandon the contest. Unhappily the latter general received a ball through his thigh, which accelerated not a little the retreat of his brigade. The militia no longer presented even the show of resistance: nevertheless, such had been the resolution with which the corps under Lee, sustaining itself on the left against the first battalion of guards and the regiment of Bose, and so bravely did the Virginia militia support the action on the right, that, notwithstanding the injurious desertion of the first line without exchanging a shot, every corps of the British army, except the cavalry, had been necessarily brought into battle, and many of them had suffered severely. It cannot be doubted, had the North Carolina militia rivaled that of Virginia upon this occasion, that lord Cornwallis must have been defeated; and even now the continental troops being in full vigor, and our cavalry unhurt, there was good ground to expect victory.

Persevering in his determination to die or conquer the British general did not stop to concentrate his force, but pressed forward to break our third line. The action, never intermitting on his right, was still sternly maintained by colonel Norton's battalion of guards, and the regiment of Bose, with the rifle militia and the legion infantry; so that this portion of the British force could not be brought to bear upon the third line, supported by colonel Washington at the head of the horse, and Kirkwood's Delaware company. General Greene was well pleased with the present prospect, and flattering himself with a happy conclusion, passed along the line, exhorting his troops to give the finishing blow. Webster, hastening over the ground occupied by the Virginia militia, sought with zeal the continental line; and presently approached its right wing. Here was posted the first regiment of Maryland, commanded by colonel Gunby, having under him lieutenant colonel Howard. The enemy rushed into close fire; but so firmly was he received by this body of veterans, supported by Hawe's regiment of Virginia and Kirkwood's company of Delawares, (being weakened in his contest with Steven's brigade, and as yet unsupported, the troops to his right not having advanced from inequality of ground or other impediments) that with equal rapidity he was compelled to recoil from the shock.

Recrossing a ravine in his rear, Webster occupied an advantageous height, waiting for the approach of the rest of the line. Very soon lieutenant colonel Stuart, with the first battalion of guards, appeared in the open field, followed successively by the remaining corps, all anxious to unite in the last effort. Stuart,

discovering Ford's regiment of Maryland on the left of the first regiment, and a small copse of wood concealing Gunby, pushed forward upon Ford, who was strengthened by captain Finley with two six pounders. Colonel Williams, commanding the Maryland line, charmed with the late demeanor of the first regiment, hastened towards the second, expecting a similar display, and prepared to combine his whole force with all practicable celerity; when, unaccountably, the second regiment gave way, abandoning to the enemy the two field pieces.

Gunby being left free by Webster's recession, wheeled to his left upon Stuart, who was pursuing the flying second regiment. Here the action was well fought; each corps manfully struggling for victory; when lieutenant colonel Washington, who had, upon the discomfiture of the Virginia militia, placed himself upon the flank of the continentals, agreeably to the order of battle, pressed forward with his cavalry.

Stuart beginning to give ground, Washington fell upon him sword in hand, followed by Howard with fixed bayonets, now commanding the regiment in consequence of Gunby being dismounted. This combined operation was irresistible. Stuart fell by the sword of captain Smith, of the first regiment; the two field pieces were recovered; his battalion driven back with slaughter,--its remains being saved by the British artillery, which, to stop the ardent pursuit of Washington and Howard, opened upon friends as well as foes; for Cornwallis, seeing the vigorous advance of these two officers, determined to arrest their progress, though every ball, leveled at them, must pass through the flying guards. Checked by this cannonade, and discovering one regiment passing from the woods on the enemy's right, across the road, and another advancing in front, Howard believing himself to be out of support, retired, followed by Washington.

To these two regiments, (which were the seventy-first which general Leslie had so judiciously conducted after the ignominious flight of the North Carolina militia, and the twenty-third, the right of Webster,) brigadier O'Hara, though grievously wounded, brought the remnant of the first battalion of guards, whom he in person rallied; and, with the grenadiers, filled up the interval between the left and right wing.

Webster, the moment Stuart appeared in the field, putting Ford to flight, recrossed the ravine and attacked Hawes's regiment of Virginia, supported by Kirkwood's company. The action was renewed in this quarter with vigor; the seventy-first and twenty-third, connected in their center by the first battalion and grenadiers of the guards, having at the same time moved upon Howard. Meanwhile the long impending contest upon the enemy's right continued without intermission; each of the combatants getting gradually nearer to the flanks of their respective armies, to close with which was the desired object of both. At length lieutenant colonel Norton, with his battalion of guards, believing the regiment of Bose adequate to the contest, and close to the great road to which he had been constantly inclining, pressed forward to join the seventy-first. Relieved from this portion of the enemy, lieutenant colonel Lee dispensed with his cavalry, heretofore held in the rear to cover retreat in case of disaster, ordering it to close with the left of the continental line, and there to act until it should receive further orders. Upon Bose the rifle and the legion infantry now turned with increased animation and with confidence of success. Major De Buy, of the regiment of Bose, continued to defend himself with obstinacy; but pressed as he was by superior force, he at length gave ground, and fell back into the rear of Norton. Still annoying him with the rifle corps under Campbell, Lee hastened with his infantry to rejoin his cavalry upon the flank of the continentals, the point so long and vainly contended for. In his rout he found the battalion of guards under Norton in possession of the height first occupied by Lawson's brigade of Virginia militia. With this corps, again the legion infantry renewed action; and supported by the van company of the riflemen, its rear still waiting upon Major De Buy, drove it back upon the regiment of Bose. Every obstacle now removed, Lee pressed forward, followed by Campbell, and joined his horse close by Guilford court-house.

Having seen the flight of the second regiment of Maryland, preceded by that of the North Carolina militia--the corps of Lee severed from the army, and considering it, if not destroyed, at least thrown out of battle by Leslie's judicious seizure of the interval proceeded by the panic of the North Carolina militia, and in all probability not able to regain its station in the line-- Greene, immutable in the resolution never to risk annihilation of his force, and adverting to his scanty supply of ammunition determined, when he found all his personal efforts seconded by colonels Williams and Carrington to rally the second regiment of Maryland nugatory, to provide for retreat. Colonel Green, one of the bravest of brave soldiers, with his

regiment of Virginia, was drawn off without having tasted of battle and ordered to a given point in the rear for the security of this movement. Had general Greene known how severely his enemy was crippled, and that the corps under Lee had fought their way to his continental line, he would certainly have continued the conflict; and in all probability would have made it a drawn day, if not have secured to himself the victory. Ignorant of these facts, and finding Webster returned to battle-O'Hara, with his rallied guards in line-and general Leslie, with the seventy-first, connected with them on the right, and followed, as he well knew, by the remnant of his wing-he persevered in his resolution, and directed a retreat, which was performed deliberately under cover of Colonel Green. General Huger, who had, throughout the action, given his chief attention to the regiment of Hawes's, the only one of the two, constituting his brigade, ever engaged, and which, with Kirkwood's company, was still contending with lieutenant colonel Webster, now drew it off by order of the general; while colonel Williams effected the same object in his quarter; both abandoning our artillery, as their horses had been mostly killed; and general Greene preferred leaving his artillery, to risking the loss of lives in drawing them off by hand. Just after this had taken place, lieutenant colonel Lee joined his cavalry at the court-house; and, unpursued, retired down the great Salisbury road, until a cross-road enabled him to pass over to the line of retreat. The seventy-first and twenty-third regiments, supported by the cavalry of Tarleton, followed our army with the show of falling upon it; but the British general soon recalled them, and general Greene, undisturbed, was left to pursue his retreat. He halted first three miles from the field of battle, to collect stragglers and fugitives, and afterwards retired leisurely to his former position at the iron works.

The pertinacity with which the rifle corps of Campbell and the legion infantry had maintained the battle on the enemy's right, induced lord Cornwallis to detach the British horse to that quarter. The contest had long been ebbing before this corps arrived; and lieutenant colonel Tarleton found only a few resolute marksmen in the rear of Campbell, who continued firing from tree to tree. The appearance of cavalry determined these brave fellows to retire and overtake their corps.

Thus the battle terminated. It was fought on the 15th of March, a day never to be forgotten by the southern section of the United States. The atmosphere calm, and illumined with a cloudless sun; the season rather cold than cool; the body braced, and the mind high toned by the state of the weather. Great was the stake, willing were the generals⁸ to put it to hazard, and their armies seemed to support with ardour the decision of their respective leaders.

⁸ [Author's note] Never did two generals exert themselves more than did these rival leaders upon this occasion. Long withheld from each other by the sagacious conduct of Greene, until he acquired sufficient strength to risk battle, they seized with ardour the opportunity at length presented of an appeal to the sword. This decision was wise in both; and every step taken by the one and by the other, as well in preparation for battle, as in the battle, demonstrated superior abilities.

Greene's position was masterly, as was the ground selected for the combat peculiarly adapted to his views and troops. Cornwallis saw the difficulties thrown in his way by the skill of his antagonist, and diminished their weight by the disposition of his force, as far as it was practicable. Having done all that was possible to accomplish their purpose, no attention was omitted, no peril avoided in the course of the action, to produce the desired issue. They exposed their persons, unconscious of danger, and self-devoted to national triumph. Upon one occasion Greene was nearly passed by a body of the enemy within thirty paces of him, when major Pendleton, one of his aides, discovered them. Luckily a copse of woods intervened, which covered Greene's return to our line.

Soon afterwards Cornwallis, seeing the discomfiture of one battalion of the guards, repaired in person to direct the measures for the recovery of the lost ground ; when, by the dauntless exposure of himself, he was placed in extreme danger. It was upon this occasion that he ordered his artillery to open through his flying guards, to stop Washington and Howard. Brigadier O'Hara remonstrated, by exclaiming, that the fire would destroy themselves. "True," replied Cornwallis; "but this is a necessary evil which we must endure, to arrest impending destruction."

The British general fought against two to one;⁹ but he had greatly the advantage in the quality of his soldiers. General Greene's veteran infantry being only the first regiment of Maryland, the company of Delaware under Kirkwood, (to whom none could be superior) and the legion infantry; al together making on that day not more than five hundred rank and file. The second regiment of Maryland and the two regiments of Virginia were composed of raw troops; but their officers were veteran, and the soldier is soon made fit for battle by experienced commanders. Uniting these corps to those recited, and the total (as per official return) amounted to one thousand four hundred and ninety; so that even estimating our old and new troops in one class, still our infantry was considerably less than his lordship's. The North Carolina militia, as has been seen, abandoned us; and we had only the Virginia militia and the rifle corps under colonel Campbell and colonel Lynch to balance the enemy's superiority over our regular infantry. In artillery, the two armies were nearly equal, as they may be also considered in cavalry; the superiority in number, on the part of the British being counter-balanced by our excellence in quality.

The slaughter was prodigious on the side of the enemy, making, in killed and wounded, nearly one third of his army. The official report states the loss to amount to five hundred and thirty-two men, of whom ninety-three were found dead on the field of battle.

Lieutenant colonel Stuart, of the guards, and lieutenant O'Hara of the royal artillery, brother to the general, with many other officers, were killed. The brigadiers O'Hara and Howard, lieutenant colonels Webster and Tarleton, the captains Stuart and Maynard, Goodryche, Maitland, Schutz, Peter, and lord Dunglas, with several subalterns, were wounded; as were captains Wilmonsky and Eichenbrodt, of the regiment of Bose, with five subalterns.

Our loss was very disproportionate;¹⁰ only fourteen officers and three hundred and twelve, rank and file, of the continental troops killed, wounded and missing. As few prisoners were made, it is probable that those returned as missing were killed. Among the first was major Anderson, of the regiment of Maryland, much esteemed and highly regretted; with captian-----and three subalterns. Among the last was general Huger, commanding the Virginia brigade. Our loss of militia was still less. The four captains and seventeen privates killed ; brigadier Stevens, major----- three captains, eight subalterns, and sixty privates; wounded. Many were missing, as is always the case with militia after battle; but they generally are to be found safe at their own fire sides. General Greene, after reaching Troublesome creek, arrayed himself again for battle; so persuaded was he that the British general would follow up his blow, and so well satisfied with his own condition, though considerably reduced by the flight of the North Carolina militia, and by the voluntary and customary return of portions of that from Virginia. But the enemy was in no condition to advance. The name of victory was the sole enjoyment of the conqueror, the substance

⁹ [Author's note] Our field return, a few days before the action, rates Greene's army at four thousand four hundred and forty-nine, horse, foot and artillery; of which, one thousand six hundred and seventy were continentals, the residue militia. The enemy rate as at upwards of five thousand. He is mistaken: we did not reach that number, though some call us seven thousand.

Lord Cornwallis's army engaged, is put down at one thousand four hundred and forty-nine infantry; the cavalry has been generally estimated at three hundred; allowing the artillery to make two hundred, it will bring the British force nearly to two thousand; probably the real number at Guilford court-house. Lieutenant colonel Hamilton, with his own regiment, one hundred infantry of the line, and twenty dragoons, was left with the baggage sent off on the evening of the 14th to Bell's mill. The British force in toto may be put down at two thousand four hundred: one hundred less than it was when lord Cornwallis destroyed his baggage at Ramsour's mill, notwithstanding the companies of infantry raised while he lay at Hillsborough and other small accessions.

¹⁰ [Author's note] The disproportion in loss on this day is readily to be accounted for. We had great advantage in the ground, and were sheltered in various points until the enemy approached very near; while he was uncovered, and exposed from his first step to his last. We had spent the previous day in ease, and the night in rest; he had been preparing during the day, and marching part of the night. We were acquainted with Wood and tree fighting; he ignorant of both. And lastly, we were trained to take aim and fire low, he was not so trained; and from this cause, or from the composition of his cartridge, (too much powder for the lead) he always overshot.

belonged to the vanquished. Truly did the eloquent Fox exclaim in the British house of commons, “Another such victory would destroy the British army.”

On no occasion, in any part of the world, was British valor more heroically displayed. The officers of every grade did their duty; and each corps surpassed its past, though arduous, exertions in this terrible conflict. But the advantage of ground, the weight of numbers, the skill of the general, and the determined courage of such portions of the American army as fought, presented obstacles not to be surmounted by inferior force. So maimed was the British army, that notwithstanding the fight of the North Carolina Militia, had the second regiment of Maryland acted like the first, little doubt can exist but that lord Cornwallis must have shared the fate on this day, which he experienced afterwards. Afflicting were the sensations of the British general when he looked into his own situation after the battle. Nearly a third of his force slaughtered; many of his best officers killed or wounded; and that victory for which he had so long toiled, and at length gained, bringing in its train not one solitary benefit. Nobody of loyalists crowding around his standards; no friendly convoys pouring in supplies; his wants pressing and his resources distant. The night succeeding this day of blood was rainy, dark and cold: the dead unburied, the wounded unsheltered, the groans of the dying, and in providing comfort for the wounded. In executing these sad duties the British general regarded with equal attention, friends and foes. As soon as this service was over, he put his army in motion for New Garden, where his rear guard, with his baggage, met him. All his wounded, incapable of moving, (about seventy in number) he left to the humanity of general Greene. Here he issued a proclamation, depicting in strong colors the splendid victory obtained by the British army on the 15th; and calling upon the liege subjects of is Britannic majesty to come forward at this important juncture, and contribute their aid in completing the restoration of that happy government, not less the object of their hearts, than the guard of their lives and property. This done, his lordship proceeded on the 18th, by easy marches, to Cross creek; the center of the Highland settlement, and convenient to Wilmington, then in possession of major Craig, as before mentioned, and the depot of supplies for the royal army.

The retreat of the British general evinced, unequivocally, his crippled condition. No consideration, but conviction of his inability to improve the victory he gained, would have deterred a general less enterprising than lord Cornwallis, from giving full effect to the advantage his skill and courage had procured. Confident, as was general Greene, that his antagonist had suffered severely, he had not conceived his situation to be so impotent as it now appeared to be. Prepared to renew the combat, had the enemy sought it, he now determined to pursue the retiring foe, and bring him to action before he should gain his point of safety;¹¹ but this resolution was unhappily for several days delayed through the want of ammunition, with which it was necessary first to supply himself. In the mean time he detached lieutenant colonel Lee with his legion, and the militia rifle corps under Campbell, to hang upon the rear of the retreating general, lest the inhabitants of the region through which he passed might presume that our army had been rendered incapable of further resistance, and might flock to the royal standard.

The advanced corps soon came up with the British army, which had proceeded very slowly, with a view of cherishing its numerous wounded by the collection of every comfort which the country afforded, as well as to avoid fatigue, which the debilitated state of the troops could not bear. Upon the appearance of the

¹¹ [Author’s note]

*Nine o’clock, P.M. March 18th, 1701.

Lieutenant colonel Lee---

DEAR SIR : I have this moment got your note. I am perfectly agreed with you in opinion, that to attack the enemy on their march will be best. I have written to colonel Williams to that purpose.

It will be next to impossible to get the militia to send away their horses. They are so attached to this mode of carrying on the war, that they will not listen to any other. Frequent attempts have been made without effect. However, we can try the experiment: sound some of the more sensible on the subject. My letter must be short, as I write in pain,

Your affectionate, &c.

N. GREENE

light troops, this system was in a degree abandoned; lord Cornwallis conceiving it probable that the American army was not far in the rear, seeking battle, which his situation now made him anxious to avoid. At length he reached Ramsay's mill, on Deep river, where he halted a few days to renew his humane exertions for the comfort of his wounded, and to collect, if possible, provisions; the country between this place and Cross creek being sterile and sparsely settled. During this delay his lordship threw a bridge over the river, by which he might readily pass as he moved down on its northern bank. Nothing material occurred between the adverse van and rear corps; nor did the British general even make any serious attempt to drive from his neighborhood the corps of Lee; so sorely did he continue to feel the effects of his dear bought victory.

General Greene lost a moment in moving from his camp on the Troublesome, after the arrival of his military stores; and notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather and the deepness of the roads, he pressed forward from day to day by forced marches; but interruptions, unavoidable, occasionally delayed his progress. When the quarter master general assumed the duties of his station at Guilford court house, as has been before remarked, all that department of the army was entirely deranged; and such had been the rapid succession of keen and active service, that with all his laborious application, he had not been able to introduce into full operation his own system, although he had contrived to afford the means of prompt motion to the army. New duties became, from the necessity of the case, connected with his department. Without money to purchase, the subsistence of the troops depended upon compulsory collection from the country through which the army marched; and colonel Davie could with difficulty procure within one day enough for that day; so that the general would be often obliged to extend or contract his march to correspond with the fluctuating supply of provisions. Our difficulties in this line were considerably increased, as the British army had preceded us; and nothing but the gleanings of an exhausted country were left for our subsistence. To settlements which had from their distance escaped the British foraging parties, it became necessary for our commissary general to resort; and the conveyance to camp of supply when collected, devolved upon the quarter master general.

4. Banastre Tarleton's Account of the Guilford Courthouse Campaign.

Source: Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, in the Southern Provinces of North America (London: T. Cadell, 1787), 270-279.

Document #12: Banastre Tarleton's Account of the Guilford Courthouse Campaign.

THUS situated, Earl Cornwallis had the alternative, either to commence his retreat, or prepare for a general action. The power and position of his enemy rendered all the country beyond the pickets hostile to the British cause, which had no friends or partisans at this period except those included within the extent of the royal camp. On the 14th of March, his lordship determined to advance upon the Americans at Guilford, and bring on an engagement, that he thought they would not avoid, and which he hoped would be productive of considerable advantage. Before dawn next morning, the wagons, with the baggage, the wounded, and the sick, were instructed to move to Bell's mill, on Deep river, under the escort of a detachment, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, formed of his own regiment, one hundred infantry of the line, and twenty dragoons of the legion. The main body at daybreak marched toward the enemy's camp. The cavalry, the light infantry of the guards, and the yagers, composed the advanced guard. Colonel Webster's brigade, the regiment of Bose, and the brigade of guards, followed successively: The artillery marched with their respective divisions. The British had proceeded seven miles on the great Salisbury road to Guilford, when the light troops drove in a picket of the enemy. A sharp conflict ensued between the advanced parties of the two armies. In the onset, the fire of the Americans was heavy, and the charge of their cavalry was spirited: Notwithstanding their numbers and opposition, the gallantry of the light infantry of the guards, assisted by the legion, made impression upon their center, before the 23d regiment arrived to give support to the advanced troops. Colonel Lee's dragoons retreated with precipitation along the main road, and Colonel Campbell's mountaineers were dispersed with considerable loss. The pursuit was not pushed very far, as there were many proofs beside the acknowledgment of the prisoners, that General Greene was at hand. Captain Goodrick of the guards, a promising young officer, fell in this contest, and between twenty and thirty of the guards, dragoons, and yagers, were killed and wounded. The King's troops moved on till they arrived in fight of the American army. An engagement was now become inevitable, and both sides prepared for it with tranquillity and order.

DURING the skirmishing of the light troops, General Greene formed the American army of seven thousand men into three lines, and waited the attack. His front line consisted of North-Carolina militia, under Generals Butler and Eaton: The center was placed behind rails, in the rear of a clearing, about three hundred yards space, and the flanks extended into the woods: Two six-pounders were stationed to the right of the center, on the main road which led to the court house. The second line was composed of the Virginia militia, under the command of Generals Stephens and Butler, who formed their brigades in the woods parallel to the front line, and about four hundred yards in their rear. The continentals, consisting of two brigades, one Virginia and the other Maryland troops, with the Delaware regiment, were commanded by Brigadier-general Huger and Colonel Williams, and were posted facing the wood where the two lines of militia were drawn up: General Greene had chosen open ground, in front of the court house for great part of his regulars: The flanks did not dress up to the center, but were drawn back, so that each brigade presented a different front: Two six-pounders were placed on a small eminence which looked upon the road. The position of these brigades was near six hundred yards in the rear of the second line. Lieutenant-colonel Washington, with the dragoons of the 1st and 3d regiments, a detachment of light infantry, composed of continentals, and a regiment of riflemen under Colonel Lynch, formed a corps of observation for the security of the right flank. Lieutenant-colonel Lee, with his legion, a party of light infantry, and a corps of riflemen under Colonel Campbell, had a similar situation on the left.

As the front of the British column approached the open ground facing the American position, the enemy's six pounders opened from the road, and were immediately answered by the royal artillery. After

Earl Cornwallis had consulted the guides concerning the nature of the country, and viewed as touch as he could the disposition of the militia, he desired Major-general Leslie to move to the right with the 71st and the regiment of Bose, which force was to compose his front line for the attack of the enemy's left, and the 1st battalion of the guards was allotted for his reserve. Colonel Webster was directed to form the 23d and 33d on the left of General Leslie's division : Brigadier-general O'Hara was instructed to support Colonel Webster, with the 2d battalion and the grenadier company of the guards. Whilst these troops were forming, the yagers and the light infantry of the guards remained near the guns in the road ; but when the line moved on, they attached themselves to the left of Webster's brigade. The artillery, under Lieutenant Macleod, proceeded along the high road: The dragoons likewise could only move in column in the same direction, and Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton was ordered to keep his regiment in reserve till the infantry could penetrate through the woods to the open ground, near the court house, where the country was represented to be more favorable for the operations of cavalry.

DURING these arrangements for the attack, the British artillery cannonaded the enemy's center with considerable effect: Lieutenant Q'Hara, a spirited young officer, was unfortunately killed, whilst directing the three pounders before the line was ready to move on. The troops were no sooner formed than they marched forwards with steadiness and composure: The order and coolness of that part of Webster's brigade which advanced across the open ground, exposed to the enemy's fire, cannot be sufficiently extolled: The extremities were not less gallant, but were more protected by the woods in which they moved. The militia allowed the front line to approach within one hundred and fifty yards before they gave their fire: The front line continued to move on: The Americans sent back their cannon, and part of them repeated their fire: The King's troops threw in their fire and charged rapidly with their bayonets: The shock was not waited for by the militia, who retreated behind their second line. At this place the action became more severe. The broken ground and the extent of the enemy's front had occasioned the flanks to open from the center; upon which Generals Leslie and Q'Hara moved the two battalions and the grenadiers of the guards into line, when the superior discipline and bravery of the King's troops again threw the militia into confusion. The thickness of the woods where these conflicts happened prevented the cavalry making a charge upon the Americans on their retreat to the continentals, and impeded the British infantry moving forwards in a well connected line. Some corps meeting with less opposition and embarrassment than others, arrived sooner in presence of the continentals, who received them with resolution and firmness.

At this period the event of the action was doubtful, and victory alternately presided over each army. On the left of the British Colonel Webster carried on the yagers, the light company of the guards, and the 33d regiment, after two severe struggles, to the right of the continentals, whose superiority of numbers and weight of fire obliged him to recross a ravine, and take ground upon the opposite bank. This maneuver was planned with great judgment, and, being executed with coolness and precision, gave Webster an excellent position till he could hear of the progress of the King's troops upon his right. In the center the 2d battalion of the guards, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Stewart, supported by the grenadiers, made a spirited and successful attack on the enemy's six pounders, which they took from the Delaware regiment ; but the Maryland brigade, followed by Washington's cavalry, moving upon them before they could receive assistance, re-took the cannon, and repulsed (e.) the guards with great slaughter. The ground being open, Colonel Washington's dragoons killed Colonel Stewart and several of his men, and pursued the remainder into the wood. General O'Hara, though wounded, rallied the remainder of the 2d battalion of the guards to the 23d and 71st regiments, who had inclined from the divisions on the right and left, and were now approaching the open ground. The grenadiers, after all their officers were wounded, attached themselves to the artillery and the cavalry, who were advancing upon the main road. At this crisis, the judicious use of the three pounders, the firm countenance of the British infantry, and the appearance of the cavalry, obliged the enemy to retreat, leaving their cannon and ammunition wagons behind them. Colonel Webster soon after connected his corps with the main body, and the action on the left and in the center was finished.

EARL Cornwallis did not think it advisable for the British cavalry to charge the enemy, who were retreating in good order, but directed lieutenant-colonel Tarleton to proceed with a squadron of dragoons to the assistance of Major-general Leslie on the right, where, by the constant fire winch was yet maintained,

the affair seemed not to be determined. The right wing, from the thickness of the woods and a jealousy for its flank, had imperceptibly inclined to the right, by the which movement it had a kind of separate action after the front line of the Americans gave way, and was now engaged with several bodies of militia and riflemen above a mile distant from the center of the British army. The 1st battalion of the guards, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Norton, and the regiment of Bose, under Major De Buy, had their share of the difficulties of the day, and, owing to the nature of the light troops opposed to them, could never make any decisive impression: As they advanced, the Americans gave ground in front, and inclined to their flanks: This fort of conflict had continued some time, when the British cavalry, on their way to join them, found officers and men of both corps wounded, and in possession of the enemy: The prisoners were quickly rescued from the hands of their captors, and the dragoons reached General Leslie without delay. As soon as the cavalry arrived, the guards and the Hessians were directed to fire a volley upon the largest party of the militia, and, under the cover of the smoke, Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton doubled round the right flank of the guards, and charged the Americans with considerable effect. The enemy gave way on all sides, and were routed with confusion and loss. Thus ended a general, and, in the main, a well-contested action which had lasted upwards of two hours. General Leslie soon afterwards joined Earl Cornwallis, who had advanced a short distance on the Reedy-fork road, with the 23d and 71st regiments, to support the other squadron of the British legion, who followed the rear of the continentals.

On the part of the British, the honorable Lieutenant-colonel Stewart, of the guards, two lieutenants, two ensigns, thirteen sergeants, and seventy-five rank and file, were killed: Brigadier-generals O'Hara and Howard, Lieutenant-colonels Webster and Tarleton, nine captains, four lieutenants, five ensigns, two staff officers, fifteen sergeants, five drummers, and three hundred and sixty-nine rank and file, were wounded; and twenty-five rank and file were missing.

The American loss amounted to a more considerable number, though it was eventually of less importance; most of the militia having returned to their homes, instead of repairing to the rendezvous at Speed-well furnace. The continentals had one brigadier general, one major, nine captains, seven subalterns, fourteen sergeants, eight drums and fifes, and two hundred and ninety rank and file, killed, wounded, and missing. The Virginia militia had one brigadier general, eight captains, eighteen subalterns, fifteen sergeants, and three hundred and sixty-one rank and file killed, wounded, and missing. The North-Carolina militia had six rank and file killed; one captain, one subaltern, and three rank and file wounded; and two captains, two subalterns, and five hundred and fifty-two rank and file, missing.

EARL Cornwallis's disposition of the King's troops was judiciously adapted to the ground where the action commenced, and the gallantry and undaunted bravery of his officers and soldiers were conspicuous throughout the different and trying engagements of the day; but the superior numbers of the enemy, together with the present situation of the royal army, far distant from support or resource, and deficient in supplies to prosecute any advantage, undoubtedly rendered a general action more desirable to the Americans than to the British. The move, therefore, to Guilford, produced one of the most hazardous, as well as severe battles that occurred during the war. The post occupied by General Greene on this occasion was extremely well chosen, and the manner of forming his troops unexceptionable. The reasons which now induced him not to decline an engagement equally indicated his wisdom and his professional knowledge. A defeat of the British would have been attended with the total destruction of Earl Cornwallis's infantry, whilst a victory at this juncture could produce no very decisive consequences against the Americans. The ability of the English commander, seconded by the vigour and resolution of his officers and soldiers, with extreme difficulty forced the enemy from their position, and in that fortunate exploit the British army was crippled, by the quality and number of the officers and men killed and wounded. One opportunity being overlooked by General Greene, towards the close of the action, gave that advantage, which was long doubtful, to the disciplined perseverance of the King's troops. If one brigade of continentals, after the repulse of the 2d battalion and the grenadier company of the guards, had taken possession of, and remained at the eminence on the edge of the wood, from whence the three pounders afterwards fired upon them, they would effectually have broken the left of the center, and continued the confusion of the British, there being no support immediately at hand, nor any corps in reserve, except the cavalry, who could not stir

a yard out of the road, on account of the thickness of the brush-wood; and the guards being pressed by the maneuver and entangled in difficult ground, could not have manifested their active and persevering courage by rallying and returning to the charge: By this advance likewise the 23d and 71st regiments would have been kept asunder, and the 33d, with the light company of the guards, divided from the center. The superior number, as well as freshness of the continentals, having had no march, and but a flight engagement, together with the comparative flare of the British, and the evident advantage of the ground, might have intimidated and recommended the movement, which, if carried into immediate execution, would probably have produced the most fatal effect; but the pause of the Americans, and their voluntary return to the ground where they were originally formed, presented the marked and favorable interval, of which the British availed themselves, by collecting as large a force as possible, and pushing forwards their center. To this oversight or hesitation of the Americans may chiefly be attributed victory, which, however splendid and honorable to the general and the troops, was not useful or advantageous to Great Britain.

The wounded of both armies were assembled expeditiously after the action, and the surgeons were desired to separate the British and Hessians, who were severely wounded, from those who could bear the exercise of traveling: The former, to the amount of severity, with several Americans who were in the same situation, were lodged, under the protection of a flag of truce, in New-garden meeting house, and other adjacent buildings, whilst the latter were placed in the best wagons, or on horseback, to attend the motions of the King's troops. The position and strength of General Greene, at the iron works on Troublesome creek, about twelve miles distant from Guildford, did not invite the approach of the British army; Earl Cornwallis, therefore, commenced his march on the 18th for Deep river, in his way to Cross creek. On this move his lordship distributed a proclamation, in which he published an account of his victory, exhorted the loyalists to join him, and offered pardon to the Americans who had taken part in rebellion, if they would surrender their arms and ammunition on or before the 20th day of April, and retire to their homes to live peaceably till civil government was restored.

5. Major St. George Tucker's Account of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Source: Major St. George Tucker, "The Southern Campaign 1781: From Guilford Court House to the Siege of York: Narrated in the Letters from Judge St George Tucker," *The Magazine of American History* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1881), 40-42.

Document #13: Major St. George Tucker's account of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Editor's note: Major St. George Tucker was in Lawton's Brigade of Virginia militia at Guilford.

LAURA TOWN, March 18th, 1781.

"My ever dear Fanny: Col. Mumford, being on his return, is kind enough to promise me that he will, if possible, forward this letter to you. You will readily suppose that at such a juncture I could by no means omit an opportunity of relieving that anxiety which I am sure you must feel at hearing that we had a general action on Thursday last at Guilford Court House. I flatter myself that the moment which informs you of the battle will convey to you the information of my safety. You may perhaps expect that I can give you some account of the battle. I must candidly acknowledge myself totally incapable of doing so. I will only tell you that Lawson's brigade composed a line near the center of which my post was. A cannonade of half an hour ushered in the battle. Our friend Skipwith was posted in the express direction of the shot, and, with his battalion, maintained his post during a most tremendous fire with "a firmness that does him much honor. Col. Holcombe's regiment was on the right of him and on my left, so that I was in perfect security during the whole time, except from a few shot which came in my direction. Beverley was still further on the right. When the cannonade ceased, orders were given for Holcombe's regiment and the regiment on the right of him to advance and annoy the enemy's left flank. While we were advancing to execute this order, the British had advanced, and, having turned the flank of Col. Mumford's regiment-in which Skipwith commanded as major, we discovered them in our rear. This threw the militia into such confusion, that, without attending in the least to their officers who endeavored to halt them, and make them face about and engage the enemy, Holcombe's regiment and ours instantly broke off without firing a single gun, and dispersed like a flock of sheep frightened by dogs. With infinite labor Beverley and myself rallied about sixty or seventy of our men, and brought them to the charge. Holcombe was not so successful. He could not rally a man though assisted by John Woodson, who acted very gallantly. With the few men which we had collected we at several times sustained an irregular kind of skirmishing with the British, and were once successful enough to drive a party for a very small distance. On the ground we passed over I think I saw about eight or ten men killed and wounded. During the battle I was forced to ride over a British officer lying at the root of a tree. One of our soldiers gave him a dram as he was expiring, and bade him die like a brave man. How different this conduct from that of the barbarians he had commanded!

In attempting to rally a party of regular troops I received a wound in the small of my leg from a soldier, who, either from design or accident held his bayonet in such a direction that I could not possibly avoid it as I rode up to stop him from running away. The bayonet penetrated about an inch and a half between the bones of my leg. I felt no inconvenience from it for some hours, but have since been obliged to hobble with the assistance of a stick, or with some one to lead me. After this our militia joined the Virginia regulars under Col. Campbell, and sustained a good smart fire for some minutes. We were soon after ordered to retreat. Whilst we were doing so, Tarleton advanced to attack us with his horse; but a party of continentals, who were fortunately close behind us, gave him so warm a reception that he retreated with some degree of precipitation. A few minutes after we halted by the side of an old field fence, and observed him surveying us at the distance of two or three hundred yards. He did not think it proper to attack us again, as we were advantageously posted; and the continentals, who had encountered him just before, were still in our rear. After this the whole army retreated in good order to the iron works, fifteen miles from the field of battle having lost the field and our artillery. But how these things happened I cannot tell, for during

the whole of the battle I knew nothing of what passed in any quarter than on the ground where our regiment was engaged. Cornwallis undoubtedly gained a dear bought victory. He lost between six and seven hundred men, as Gen. Greene yesterday told me, provided the officers who were engaged in the different parts of the field of battle have not misrepresented the numbers they saw spread over the places they crossed over. Our lost in killed, wounded, and missing is some-what short of two hundred. One hundred of the wounded are at this place. Of all these there are but three broken bones, the rest being flesh wounds- chiefly in the legs and thighs. Gen. Stevens is wounded in the thigh.

The Virginia militia had the honor to receive Gen. Greene's thanks for their conduct. Some were undoubtedly entitled to them, while others ought to blush that they were undeservedly included in the number of those who were supposed to have behaved well. Capt. Ballew, Capt. Ogilvy, Capt. Overstreet, Lient. Mosely, Lient. Anderson, Lieut. Mayrit, Ensign Sam Williams, and some others of our regiment, whose names I am not well enough acquainted with to call to mind now, are among the number of those to whom the compliment from the general was most justly due. I can say nothing of those officers who were not under my own eyes; for, as I before observed, I know nothing of the battle but what related to our own regiment, having been the greater part of the time wholly by ourselves. I believe the rest of the Virginia militia behaved better than Holcombe's regiment and ours. The surprise at finding the enemy in their rear I believe contributed to the disgraceful manner in which they fled at first. But it is not a little to the honor of those who rallied that they fired away fifteen or eighteen rounds- and some twenty rounds- a man, after being put into such disorder. Such instances of the militia rallying and fighting well are not very common, I am told. Perhaps it is more honorable than making a good stand at first, and then quitting the field in disorder. Our friend Beverley (Randolph) showed by his conduct that his character is uniform. He was himself- I need say no more. Major Hubbard, of Col. Mumford's regiment, had the skirt of his surtout shot away by a cannon ball, and his horse slightly wounded by the same. There were not, however, above ten men killed and wounded during the whole cannonade, in which, I believe, six pieces of artillery were constantly employed for half an hour.

Beverley sustained no other injury during the action than the loss of his blankets, which were on his horse. Lawson, Skipwith, Mumford, Holcombe, and every officer of your acquaintance sustained none at all. When I got to the iron works, Dr. Armstrong and Copeland very kindly assisted me, looking out for a house to lodge in where I might not be inconvenienced by numbers or distressed by the groans of the wounded. I yesterday obtained leave of absence from camp for a few days for the recovery of strength in my leg. I expect in five or six days to be able to return to my duty, which I am anxious to discharge in such a manner as not to subject me to any ill-natured reflections. Here let me take notice that I am much obliged to Gen. Lawson for a particular kind of attention which he has paid me ever since I have been with him. As my acquaintance with him was very slight, and I am conscious that my inexperience in military matters must make me sometimes act improperly, I think this acknowledgment due to a man, who is in general remarkable for a vigorous exaction of duty. Gen. Greene is also very polite and attentive to the Virginia officers. We are as happy in these respects as our most sanguine wishes could make us. Should Cornwallis attack us again I think he would purchase a second victory full as dearly as the first. Our troops are now somewhat used to the noise of guns, of which many had no idea before.”

6. Sergeant Roger Lamb's Account of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Source: Roger Lamb, An Original and Authentic Journal of Occurrences During the Late American War (Dublin: Wilkinson & Countney, 1809), 348-362.

Document #14: Sergeant Roger Lamb's Account of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Editor's note: Sergeant Lamb was a member of Lieutenant Colonel Webster's 33rd Regiment of Foot at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Such was the scarcity of provisions at Hillsborough, that it was found impossible to support the army in that place. They were even obliged to kill some of their best draft horses. They therefore passed the Haw, and encamped in Allamance Creek. This movement much dispirited the loyalists, and raised the drooping hopes of the Americans. As the British retired, Greene advanced, crossed the Haw, and posted himself between Troublesome Creek and Reedy Fork, carefully changing his position every night, to avoid an engagement. In this situation, lord Cornwallis gave orders to beat up the American posts at Reedy Fork, in order to compel them to a greater distance, or perhaps allure Greene, who lay in the direction of Guildford Court-House, to a general engagement. Early in the Morning of the 6th of March, the army passed Allamance Creek, and marched towards Reedy Fork. The Americans were not unapprised of the movement, and hastily retreated across the Fork. General Greene instead of marching to their assistance abandoned them to their fate. At Wedzell's Mill, they were overtaken by lieutenant colonel Webster, and numbers fell. The supplies and reinforcements which Greene anxiously expected, arrived at last, under Lawson, Butler, and Eaton, with the North Carolina militia, from the frontiers, commanded by Campbell and Preston, making his numbers in the whole upwards of five thousand men.

Thus reinforced, he determined to offer lord Cornwallis battle. He re-passed the Haw, and marched to Guildford Court-House, but twelve miles from the British army, at the Quakers' meeting house in the forks of Deep River.

On the 15th of March, about four miles from Guildford, the engagement began; colonel Tarleton led on the British advance. The Americans were commanded by general Lee, who behaved with the most undaunted bravery, and maintained himself against the most formidable opposition, until the 23d regiment advancing to the support of Tarleton, compelled him to give way. Greene formed his order of battle on a commanding site. It consisted of three lines. Two brigades of the North Carolina militia flanked by a wood, composed the first. That of Virginia, commanded by Stevens and Lawson, formed the second. These were completely encompassed in the woods, three hundred yards in the rear of the first. Four hundred yards behind them, in open ground, near the Court House, the third was formed, consisting of two brigades of continental troops. Two corps of observation were placed on the right and left flanks; the one commanded by colonel Washington, the other by colonel Lee. The British advance was formed by a column of royal artillery, under the command of lieutenant Macleod; and the disposition of the main attack was as follows: the 71st, the regiment of Bose, commanded by general Leslie, and the 1st battalion of guards, colonel Norton, formed the right line; the 23d and 33d led on by colonel Webster, and supported by brigadier general O'Hara, and the grenadiers and 2d battalion of guards, constituted the left; corps of observation, light infantry of the guards, and yagers, on the left of the artillery, and the cavalry in column behind on the road.

These masterly dispositions precluded one of the most signal battles ever gained by British valor. The details are so accurately laid down by Stedman, who had every opportunity of ascertaining even the minutest circumstances that it may be better to quote his account of it, than by aiming at originality, fall short of the particulars. "This disposition being made, the line received orders to advance, and moved forward with that steady and guarded, but firm and determined resolution which discipline alone can confer. It has been remarked by an eye-witness [Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton], that "the order and coolness

of that part of Webster's brigade which advanced across the open ground, exposed to the enemy's fire, could not be sufficiently extolled." At the distance of one hundred and forty yards they received the enemy's first fire but continued to advance unmoved. When arrived at a nearer and more convenient distance, they delivered their own fire, and rapidly charged with their bayonets: the enemy did not wait the shock, but retreated behind their second line. In other parts of the line the British troops behaved with equal gallantry, and were not less successful. The second line of the enemy made a braver and stouter resistance than the first. Posted in the woods, and covering themselves with trees, they kept up for a considerable time a galling fire, which did great execution. At length, however, they were compelled to retreat, and fall back upon the continentals. In this severe conflict the whole of the British infantry were engaged. General Leslie, from the great extent of the enemy's front, reaching far beyond his right, had been very early obliged to bring forward the 1st battalion of the guards, appointed for his reserve, and form it into line: and lieutenant colonel Webster, finding the left of the 33^d regiment exposed to a heavy fire from the right wing of the enemy, which greatly out-flanked him, changed its front to the left, and the ground become vacant by this movement, was immediately occupied by general O'Hara with the grenadiers, and 2^d battalion of the guards. Webster moving to the left with the 33^d regiment, supported by the light infantry of the guards, and the yagers, routed and put to flight the right wing of the enemy, and in his progress, after two severe struggles, gained the right of the continentals; but the superiority of their numbers and the weight of their fire obliged him, separated as he was from the British line, to re-cross a ravine, and occupy an advantageous position on the opposite bank, until he could hear the progress of the king's troops on the right. The British line being so much extended to the right and left, order to show a front equal to the enemy, was unavoidably broken into intervals in the pursuit of the first and second American lines; some parts of it being more advanced than others, in consequence of the different degrees of resistance that had been met with, or of other impediments arising from the thickness of the woods, and the inequality of the ground. The whole, however, moved forward; and the second battalion of the guards, commanded by the honorable colonel Stuart, was the first that reached the open ground at Guildford Court House. Impatient to signalize themselves, they immediately attacked a body of continentals, greatly superior in numbers, that was seen formed on the left of the road, routed them and took their cannon, being two six-ponders; but pursuing them with too much ardor and impetuosity towards the wood on their rear, were thrown into confusion by a heavy fire received from a body of continents, who were yet unbroken, and being instantly charged by Washington's dragoons, were driven back with great slaughter, and the loss of the cannon that had been taken. Lieutenant Macleod, advancing along the road with the royal artillery, had by this time reached the open ground. By a spirited and well-directed cannonade he checked the pursuit of the Americans. Fortunately also, the 71st regiment, belonging to general Leslie's division, was seen emerging from the woods on the right, and the 23^d not long afterwards, made its appearance on the left. To the right and left of these regiments, general O'Hara, although severely wounded, rallied with much gallantry and great expedition, the remains of the 2^d battalion of the guards; and the Americans were quickly repulsed and put to flight, with once more the loss of the two six-ponders: two other six-ponders were also taken, being all the artillery which they had in the field, and two ammunition wagons. The 71st pushed forward to an eminence at the Court House, on the left flank of the continentals. Lieutenant colonel Webster again advanced across the ravine, defeated the corps that was opposed to him, and connected himself with the center of the British line. The continentals of the American army being now driven from their ground, as well as the militia, a general retreat took place; but it was conducted with order and regularity. The 23^d and 71st, with part of the cavalry, were at first sent in pursuit of the enemy, but afterwards received orders to return. It is probable that, as the British commander became more acquainted with all the circumstances of the action, and the number of the killed and wounded, he found it necessary to countermand his orders, and desist from the pursuit. The action being now ended in the center and left of the British line, a firing was still heard on the right, where general Leslie with the 1st battalion of the guards and the regiment of Bose, had been greatly impeded in advancing by the excessive thickness of the woods, which rendered their bayonets of little use. The broken corps of the enemy were thereby encouraged to make frequent stands, and to throw in an irregular fire; so that this part of the British line was at times warmly engaged in front,

flank, and rear, with some of the enemy that had been routed in the first attack, and with part of the extremity of their left wing, which, by the closeness of the woods, had been passed unseen.

At one period of the action the first battalion of the guards was completely broken. It had suffered greatly in ascending a woody height to attack the second line of the Americans, strongly posted upon the top of it, who, availing themselves of the advantages of their situation, retired, as soon as they had discharged their pieces, behind the brow of the hill, which protected them from the shot of the guards, and returned as soon as they had loaded, and were again in readiness to fire. Notwithstanding the disadvantage under which the attack was made, the guards reached the summit of the eminence, and put this part of the American line to flight: but no sooner was it done, than another line of the Americans presented itself to view, extending far beyond the right of the guards, and inclining towards their flank, so as almost to encompass them. The ranks of the guards had been thinned in ascending the height, and a number of the officers had fallen: captain Maitland, who at this time received a wound, retired to the rear, and having had his wound dressed, returned immediately to join the battalion of guards to which he belonged. Some of the men, too, from superior exertions, had reached the summit of the eminence sooner than others; so that the battalion was not in regular order when it received the fire of the third American line. The enemy's fire being repeated and continued, and, from the great extent of their line, being poured in not only on the front but flank of the battalion, completed its confusion and disorder, and notwithstanding every exertion made by the remaining officers, it was at last entirely broken. Fortunately, at this time, the Hessian regiment of Bose, commanded by lieutenant colonel de Bury, which had hitherto suffered but little, was advancing in firm and compact order on the left of the guards, to attack the enemy. Lieutenant colonel Norton thought the fortunate arrival of the regiment of Bose presented a favorable opportunity for forming again his battalion, and requested the Hessian lieutenant-colonel to wheel his regiment to the right, and cover the guards, whilst their officers endeavored to rally them. The request was immediately and most gallantly complied with; and, under the cover of the fire of the Hessians, the exertions of lieutenant colonel Norton, and his few remaining officers, were at last successful in restoring order. The battalion, being again formed, instantly moved forward to join the Hessians: the attack was renewed, and the enemy were defeated. But here the labors of this part of the line did not yet cease. No sooner had the guards and Hessians defeated the enemy in front, than they found it necessary to return and attack another body of them that appeared in the rear; and in this manner they were obliged to traverse the same ground in various directions, before the enemy were completely put to the rout. The firing heard on the right, after the termination of the action in the center, and on the left, induced lord Cornwallis to detach Tarleton, with part of the cavalry, to gain intelligence of what was doing in that quarter, and to know whether general Leslie wanted assistance. But before Tarleton's arrival on the right, the affair was over, and the British troops were standing with ordered arms; all resistance having ceased on the part of the Americans, except from a few hardy riflemen, who lurking behind trees, occasionally fired their pieces, but at such a distance as to do no mischief. These colonel Tarleton, when requested, readily undertook to disperse with his cavalry, and pushing forward under cover of a general volley of musketry from the guards and the regiment of Bose, quickly performed what was expected of him. In this affair colonel Tarleton himself received a slight wound, but the rest of his corps returned unhurt.

In this battle the British troops obtained a victory most honorable and glorious to themselves, but in its consequences, of no real advantage to the cause in which they were engaged. They attacked, and defeated an army of more than three times their number,¹² not taken by surprise, but formed in regular order of

¹² [Author's Note] By the return of the adjutant of the day, it appears that the British troops engaged in the action amounted to fourteen hundred forty five. The cavalry are not included in this return, and indeed they were not engaged, except for an instant on the right, after the action in the center and on the left, was over. The Americans were generally supposed to amount to seven thousand men, and a letter, found in the pocket of one of their sergeants that was slain, specifies seven thousand to be the number of their army: but Gordon in his history, who appears to have taken their numbers, from official documents, states them to be fourteen hundred and ninety continentals, and two thousand seven hundred and fifty three militia; in all, four thousand two hundred and forty

battle, and ready to engage; an army too, that is allowed on all hands to have been strongly and judiciously posted, on ground chosen with care, and most excellently adapted to the nature of the troops that occupied it. The resistance of the enemy was in proportion to the advantages they possessed; nor did they yield, but with extreme reluctance. Even the militia, encouraged by their position, fought with bravery and greatly weakened the British line before reached the continentals. The Virginia militia, who composed the second American line, did not quit their ground, it is said until their commander, seeing them no longer able to withstand the attack of regular troops, and ready to be overpowered, gave orders for a retreat. A victory achieved under such disadvantages of numbers and ground, was of the most honorable kind, and placed the bravery and discipline of the troops, beyond all praise; but the expense at which it was obtained rendered it of no utility.

Before the provincials finally retreated, more than one third of all the British troops engaged had fallen. The whole loss, according to the official returns, amounted to five hundred and thirty two: of these ninety-three were killed in the action, four hundred and thirteen were Wounded, and twenty-six missing. Amongst the killed were the honorable lieutenant colonel Stuart of the guards, lieutenant O'Hara of the royal artillery, brother of the brigadier, lieutenant Robinson of the 23d regiment, ensign Talbot of the 33d, and ensign Grant of the 71st; amongst the wounded were brigadiers general O'Hara, and Howard; lieutenant colonels Webster, and Tarleton; captains Swanton, Schutz, Maynard, Goodricke, lord Dunglans, Maitland, Peter, Wilmonsky, and Eichenbrodth; lieutenants Salvin, Winyard, Schewener, and Graise; ensigns Stuart, Kelly, Gore, Hughes, and De Troot; and adjutant Colguhoun, and Fox.

The loss of the Americans in this action has been variously estimated, and does not appear to have been fully ascertained. If we are to credit their official returns, the whole loss in killed and wounded, as well of militia as continentals, did not exceed two hundred and fifty men. But, by lord Cornwallis's dispatches, it appears that between two and three hundred of their dead, were found upon the field, after the action; and if we proportion their wounded according to the number of the slain, their whole loss in killed and wounded, must have greatly exceeded that of the British troops. The number of those who were missing, according to their own returns, was confessedly great; but as the British troops took but few prisoners, it is probable that the greatest part of the missing, consisted of militia, who, escaping from the action, fled to their own houses, and did not afterwards return.

The wounded of both armies were collected by the British, as expeditiously as possible after the action: it was, however, a service that required both time and care, as from the nature of the action, they lay dispersed over a great extent of ground. Every assistance was furnished to them, that in the then circumstances of the army could be afforded; but, unfortunately the army was destitute of tents, nor was there a sufficient number of houses near the field of battle to receive the wounded. The British army had marched several miles on the morning of the day on which they came to action. They had no provisions of any kind whatever on that day, nor until between three and four in the afternoon of the succeeding day, and then but a scanty allowance, not exceeding one quarter of a pond of flower, and the same quantity of very lean beef. The night of the day on which the action happened was remarkable for its darkness, accompanied by rain which fell in torrents. Near fifty of the wounded, it is said, sinking under their aggravated miseries, expired before morning. The cries of the wounded, and dying who remained on the field of action during the night, exceeded all description. Such a complicated scene of horror and distress, it is hoped, for the sake of humanity, rarely occurs, even in a military life.

History, perhaps, does not furnish a similar instance of a battle gained under all the disadvantages with which the British troops, (assisted by a regiment of Hessians, and some Yagers,) had to contend against, at Guilford Court House. Nor is there, perhaps, on the records of history, an instance of a battle fought with more determined perseverance than was shown by the British troops on that memorable day. The battles of Cressy, of Poitiers, and of Agincourt, the glory of our own country, and the admiration of ages, had in each

three foot soldiers, and two hundred cavalry. But he seems not to have included the back woods men, under Campbell and Preston; so that their whole number probably exceeded seven thousand men.

of them, either from particular local situation, or other fortunate and favorable circumstances something in a degree to counterbalance the disparity of numbers; here, time, place, and numbers, all united against the British. The American general had chosen his ground, which was strong, commanding, and advantageous; he had time not only to make his disposition, but to send away his baggage, and every encumbrance. His cannon and troops, in numbers far exceeding the British, were drawn out in readiness to commence the action, when lord Cornwallis approached to attack him.

General Greene fled to Reedy Fork Creek, where, when he passed the river, he halted on the opposite bank to collect his stragglers. When he partially accomplished this, he pushed on to Troublesome Creek, about twelve miles further. Lord Cornwallis, (from the army being in want of provisions, and its several Other distresses,) found it would be inadvisable to pursue the fugitives. It on the other hand became indispensably necessary to move towards some place where supplies might be obtained. Accordingly about seventy wounded were left at the Quaker's meeting house, under protection of a flag of truce, and the army slowly retired to Cross Creek.

It was part of lord Cornwallis's plan for the operation in the north, that colonel Balfour, the commandant at Charlestown, should dispatch a force by water, sufficient to take Wilmington, as a post of communication, and a medium of obtaining supplies. This service was executed by major Craig in the end of January, and put in a proper state of defense. Wilmington lies near the mouth of Cape Fear River and Cross Creek (a settlement of loyal Highlanders) is on a branch of it, about one hundred miles up the country. From thence it was expected the army would obtain supplies, and it was moreover admirably adapted, from its central situation, as a rallying point for those who were well affected to the royal cause. Lord Cornwallis began his march from Guildford Court House by issuing a proclamation, inviting the loyal to his standard, and offering pardon to those who should return to their allegiance. His lordship then proceeded by slow marches to Cross Creek; general Greene following him as far as Ramsey's Mill, on Deep River. Nothing but slight occasional skirmishes ensued during the march. On his arrival at the Creek, every hope was disappointed. Four days forage could not be had in twenty miles, all communication, with Wilmington from the narrowness of the river, was impracticable and the scattered inhabitants on its lofty banks were irreconcilably hostile. The troops therefore began their march to Wilmington, at which place they arrived on the 7th of April. During these toilsome movements, the British army sustained an almost irreplaceable loss, by the deaths of colonel Webster of the 33d, captains Schntz and Maynard of the guards, and captain Wilmouski and ensign De Troot of the regiment of Bose. They all received their mortal wounds at Guildford Court House. Of colonel Webster's great military talents and virtues, mention at large has already been made in this Journal; but the sympathetic manner in which lord Cornwallis communicated to the Reverend Dr. Webster, of Edinburgh, the intelligence of his son's death is at once a proof of his lordship's goodness of heart, his tender sensibility, and of the high estimation in which he held the deceased. The following is a copy of his letter on that occasion:

Wilmington, April 23, 1781.

Dear Sir-It gives me great concern to undertake a task which is not only a bitter renewal of my own grief, but must be a violent shock to an affectionate parent.

You have for your support, the assistance of religion, good sense, and the experience of the uncertainty of human happiness. You have for your satisfaction, that your son fell nobly in the cause of his country, honored and lamented by all his fellow soldiers; that he led a life of honor and virtue, which must secure him everlasting happiness. When the keen sensibility of the passions begins to subside, these considerations will give you real comfort.

That the Almighty may give you fortitude to bear this severest of trials, is the earnest wish of your companion in affliction, and most faithful servant,

" CORNWALLIS."

As the Author belonged to colonel Webster's brigade, he is enabled, (and the Reader will naturally expect it from him,) to state some circumstances unnoticed by any historian, from his own personal observation. After the brigade formed across the open ground, the colonel rode on to the front, and gave the word, "*Charge.*" Instantly the movement was made, in excellent order, in a smart run, with arms charged: when arrived within forty yards of the enemy's line, it was perceived that their whole force had their arms presented, and resting on a rail fence, the common partitions in America. They were taking aim with the nicest precision.

Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
A *dreadful* interval, and, front to front,
Presented, stood in terrible array."

At this awful period a general pause took place; both parties surveyed each other for the moment with the most anxious suspense. Nothing speaks, *the general* more than seizing on decisive moments: colonel Webster rode forward in the front of the 23rd regiment, and said, with more than even his usual commanding voice (which was well known to his Brigade,) "*Come on, my brave Fuzileers.*" This operated like an inspiring voice, they rushed forward amidst the enemy's fire; dreadful was the havoc on both sides.

"Amazing scene!

What showers of mortal hail! What flaky fires!"

At last the Americans gave way, and the brigade advanced, to the attack of their second line. Here the conflict became still more fierce. Before it was completely routed, where I stood, (it is not from egoism, but to be the better understood, that I here, without breaking the thread of precision, assume the first person) I observed an American officer attempting to fly. I immediately darted after him, but he perceiving my intention to capture him, fled with the utmost speed. I pursued and was gaining on him, when, hearing a confused noise on my left, I observed several bodies of Americans drawn up within the distance of a few yards. Whoever has been in an engagement well knows that, in such moments all fears of death are over. Seeing one the guards among the slain, where I stood, I stopped and replenished my own pouch with the cartridges that remained in his; during the time I was thus employed, several shots were fired at me; but not one took effect. Glancing my eye the other way, I saw a company of the guards advancing to attack these parties. The Reader may perhaps be surprised at the bravery of troops, thus with calm intrepidity attacking superior numbers, when formed into separate bodies, and all acting together; but I can assure him this instance was not peculiar; it frequently occurred in the British army, during the American war. It was impossible to join this company, as several of the American parties lay between me and it. I had no time for deliberation. How to act I knew not. On the instant, however, I saw lord Cornwallis riding across the clear ground. His lordship was mounted on a dragoon's horse *(his own having been shot;) the saddle-bags were under the creature's belly, which much retarded his progress, owing to the vast quantity of underwood that was spread over the ground; his lordship was evidently unconscious of his danger. I immediately laid hold of the bridle of his horse, and turned his head. I then mentioned to him, that if his lordship had pursued the same direction, he would in a few moments have been surrounded by the enemy, and, perhaps, cut to pieces or captured. I continued to run along side of the horse, keeping the bridle in hand, until his lordship, gained the 23rd regiment, which was at that time drawn up in the skirt of the woods.

7. Selected Correspondence of Adjutant General Joseph Reed.

Source: William Reed, Life and Correspondences of Joseph Reed, Military Secretary of Washington and Adjutant General of the Continental Army (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1847), 344-353.

Document #15: Letter from General Greene to Joseph Reed, Adjutant General of the Continental Army.

Editor's Note: Some of the original letters to Reed were damaged and the symbol [- - -] signifies sections or words that were indecipherable.

Dear Sir,

Camp on the Pedee, January 9th, 1781.

I intended to have written you before, but I have been so employed since I left Philadelphia, that I have been obliged to deny myself the pleasure of writing to my friends, to attend to the more immediate duties of my department. On my journey I visited the Maryland and Virginia Assemblies, and laid before them the state of this army, and urged the necessity of an immediate support. They both promised to do everything in their power, but such was their poverty, even in their Capitals, that they could not furnish forage for my horses. I have also written to the States of Delaware and North Carolina, neither of which have taken any measures yet for giving effectual aid to this army. I left General Gist in Maryland, and Baron Steuben in Virginia, to forward the recruits and supplies. Measures are taking in Virginia which promise us some aid, though very trifling to what they ought to give, and what our state requires. All the way through the country, as I passed, I found the people engaged in matters of interest and in pursuit of pleasure, almost regardless of their danger. Public credit totally lost, and every man excusing himself from giving the least aid to Government, from an apprehension that they would get no return for any advances. This afforded but a dull prospect, nor has it mended since my arrival.

I overtook the army at Charlotte, to which place General Gates had advanced. The appearance of the troops was wretched beyond description, and their distress, on account of provisions, was little less than their sufferings for want of clothing and other necessaries. General Gates had lost the confidence of the officers, and the troops all their discipline, and so addicted to plundering, that they were a terror to the inhabitants. The General and I met upon very good terms, and parted so. The old gentleman was in great distress, having but just heard of the death of his son before my arrival.

The battle of Camden is spoken of very differently here to what it is to the Northward, and as for a regular retreat, there was none; every man got off the ground in the best manner he could. This is the account Colonel Williams gives, who was one of the last on the field. Indeed, the whole business was a short fight and then a perfect flight, and the greatest loss happened after the troops broke, and attempted to make their escape. From all I can learn, if General Gates had stopped at Charlotte, little more disgrace would have fallen to his share than is common to the unfortunate. Generals Gates and Smallwood were not upon good terms; the former suspected the latter of having an intention to supplant him. Some think General Gates's suspicions were groundless, and had no other foundation but the General's own imagination. Others are of opinion that they were well founded, and that my appointment was a great disappointment as well as mortification to Smallwood. How the matter was I know not. The General (Smallwood) is gone to the Northward, having declared, for reasons, that he could not think of submitting to the command of Baron Steuben, and that if justice was done him and the State, his commission would be dated at least two years earlier than his appointment. I expostulated with him upon the impossibility of the thing, let his private merit be ever so great, but it was all to no purpose. He was fixed in the principle, and determined upon the measure. He has many enemies in the Maryland line, but upon the whole I think him a sensible man and a good officer.

The wants of this army are numerous and various, that the shortest way of telling you is to inform you that we have nothing, as General Du Portail can inform you from his own observation. The great

departments of the army had nobody at the head of them, fit to provide in a country like this for a sergeant's party. I have got Colonel Carrington to accept of the Quartermaster-General's department, and am in hopes of getting a good man at the head of the Commissaries, without which I foresee we must starve. I am endeavoring to bring everything into order, and perfect our arrangements as much as possible, but it is all an up-hill business.

The loss of our army in Charleston, and the defeat of General Gates has been the cause of keeping such vast shoals of militia on foot, who, like the locusts of Egypt, have eaten up everything, and the expense has been so enormous, that it has ruined the currency of the State. It is my opinion there is no one thing upon the Continent that wants regulating so much, as the right which the States exercise of keeping what militia on foot they please at the Continental expense. I am persuaded North Carolina has militia enough to swallow up all the revenues of America, especially under their imperfect arrangements, where every man draws and wastes as much as he pleases. The country is so extensive and the powers of Government so weak, that everybody does as he pleases. The inhabitants are much divided in their political sentiments, and the Wigs and Tories pursue each other with little less than savage fury. The back-country people are bold and daring in their make, but the people upon the sea-shore are sickly and but indifferent militia. The ruin of the State is inevitable if there are such large bodies of militia kept on foot. No army can subsist in the country long if the ravages continue. Indeed, unless this army is better supported than I see any prospect of, the Country is lost beyond redemption, for it is impossible for the people to struggle much longer under their present difficulties. There appears a foolish pride in the representation of things from this quarter; the strength and resources of the Country are far overrated, and those who are engaged in this business, to indulge their pride, will sacrifice their Country. The inhabitants are beginning to move off in great bodies, and unless a firmer barrier can be formed, this quarter will be all depopulated. We are living upon charity, and subsist by daily collections Indian meal and beef is our common diet, and not a drop of spirits have we had with us since I came to the army. An army naked and subsisted in this manner, and not more than one-third equal to the enemy in numbers, will make but a poor fight, especially as one has been accustomed to victory and the other to flight. It is difficult to give spirits to troops that have nothing to animate them.

I have been obliged to take an entire new position with tire army. General Morgan is upon Broad River with a little flying army, and Colonel Washington since his arrival there has defeated a party of Tories, the particulars of which I beg leave to refer you to the President of Congress for. This Camp I mean as a Camp of repose, for the purpose of repairing our wagons, recruiting our horses, and disciplining the troops. Colonel Lee has just arrived, and his corps is in good order, and I am told Colonel Greene from Virginia is at hand.

General Leslie with his detachment has arrived at Camden, and we have reports that another is coming.

I beg my compliments to all friends.

And am, with great esteem and regard,

Your most obedient humble servant,

N. GREENE.

Document #16: Letter from Henry Lee to Joseph Reed, Adjutant General of the Continental Army.

On Pedee River, South Carolina, January 9th, 1781.

I not only discharge a debt which my friendship owes by this address, but execute in some degree that duty which my country has a right to exact from me as their servant. I have lamented through the progress of the war, the imperfect manner in which all events are communicated to those whose station calls for the most accurate account of every material transaction. One characteristic is applicable to most of our public relations, and is particularly applicable to those from this quarter. Exaggeration of successful operations, diminution to adverse. From hence arise those false hopes which influence our Councils and operate on the exertions of the people. This single consideration ought to influence a perfect communication between those in the field and those at the head of affairs, and indeed I think if the printers would refuse the publication of

reports, it would have a happy issue on the temper of the people. I wrote to General Wayne yesterday. I beg to refer you to him for the relation of past occurrences [---] Southern army, their pos---

The two letters will present you with a comprehensive view of the general face of affairs in the Southern district. Lord Cornwallis, consummate in the art of war his decision and conduct on the 16th of August, will ever do him honour. On retiring from Charlotte he made a most masterly disposition of his army, comprehending within his posts the rich western country of South Carolina. Camden, Ninety-Six, and Georgetown are his most important posts. He is nursing his army, recruiting his horse, augmenting his cavalry, and establishing a traitorous correspondence with the inhabitants of North Carolina. From the best accounts, I reckon the British army inclusive of the garrison at Charleston, and including General Lesly's reinforcement, will amount to 5000 effectives. Add to this computation a numerous cavalry, perhaps one thousand, on the legionary plan. With this army he can [---] through North Carolina, pro [---] lower route. It is a [---] that the major part of the State are in the British interest, and that the enemy will receive every aid as soon as they can establish themselves in any part of the lower country, or in any important point in the upper. In my opinion a very different policy must be pursued by the General commanding the Southern army, from what was pursued in the Northern States. There it was our interest to keep on the country flank of the foe. Here it is our plan (in my humble opinion,) to move in the lower country, keeping an army of observation on the left flank. You must know that only on the river is there the least attention to agriculture among these people unless high up in the country. The settlements on the river are rich and populous; the intermediate lands barren and unsettled. Therefore the motions of the armies must be from river to river, striking at the head of navigation, and receiving by boats the produce on [---] meats. Should Cornwallis [---] the upper route, it will be in Greene's power to preserve himself in the lower country, and subsist his army on its retrograde; while General Morgan, with the aid of our back friends, may harass and disturb the enemy's progress. Should he take the lower route, the difficulty of subsisting the flank detachment, will be very great, nor can the army support itself comfortably during its retreat. The enemy are making preparations to move out, though from the impoverished state of their horses, I flatter myself we shall not be disturbed for three or four weeks. If you hear that the enemy move on the Salisbury route, and there is no corresponding operation from Virginia, or via Cape Fear River, be assured we shall battle them, unless the country deprive us of every assistance. If they move on the lower route they will proceed in [---] this army [---] properly clothed and fed regularly; this representation is very different from what you have in the civil characters of North Carolina. Rely on it, the zeal of those gentlemen leads them into mistakes. I dare Say they will tell you of the mighty exertions of their State. It is natural to good men to wish that their countrymen should act with propriety, but it is a public misfortune that this disposition should create opinions and issue informations, which in their consequences are injurious to the public good. I remember well when I was in Philadelphia and Cornwallis' retreat from Charlotte was announced, some gentlemen high in office from the Southern world, spoke confidently of the capture of the British army. Our regular force in the field was not adequate to the capture of a British regiment, nor had this little force supplies of provision to support them in three days. How horrid is it that the public [---] by the communi [---]. Every little [---] is cried up into a victory; when [---] British Chief will readily sacrifice one thousand of those poor wretches to destroy on hundred of our regular troops. Indeed such an exchange would hardly be accepted by us.

General Greene is exerting himself with great wisdom. His movement from Charlotte was most judicious. His Camp on this river abounds with supplies for man and horse, procured by his personal efforts. He has wisely declined the aid of one class of the North Carolina militia who were ordered out, and is assiduous in his attempts to clothe and discipline his little brigade. I very well know that irregulars are completely unfit for the war in this country, notwithstanding Campbell's glorious success at King's Mountain. They will do in the flank of the enemy, and will suit Morgan's detachment exactly. His business is to harass, our business to force the enemy from their posts; irregulars will do very well for the one, but will not answer where much patience is required in the operations, and where want of correspondence in motion may blast the best-concerted plan. Were we equal to the enemy in regulars, and clad, a position on

the Santee River would oblige Cornwallis to relinquish his possessions; indeed there is nothing so easy as to restore the country of South Carolina had we but an army of 5000 regulars.

This army must be had, and well supplied, or our allies must assist the operations in the country. If neither is done, I pronounce without any pretension to the gift of prophecy, that North Carolina will be added to the British dominions in America before `82. The Marquis Lafayette and General Wayne would be of infinite service in this country. I wish to God they were sent here forthwith. I hope to hear from you whenever leisure will permit, and beg you to accept my most earnest wishes for your public and private prosperity.

I have the honour to be,
Your most obedient servant,

HENRY LEE *

* [Original editor's note] The above letter is much mutilated by fire.

Document #17: Letter from General Greene to Joseph Reed, Adjutant General of the Continental Army.

Camp near the Iron Works, March 18, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I have been too much engaged since the enemy crossed the Catawba to keep up my correspondence regularly with you. I have had the pleasure to receive several letters from you, but no opportunity to answer them. To the best of my remembrance the last time I wrote you was at the Pedee just after Tarleton's defeat, wherein I informed you that, notwithstanding that success, we had little to hope, and much to fear. The operations since have verified my apprehensions. North Carolina has been as nearly reduced as ever a State was in the universe, and escape. Our force was so small, and Lord Cornwallis's movements were so rapid, that we got no reinforcements of militia, and therefore were obliged to retire out of the State, upon which the spirits of the people sunk, and almost all classes of the inhabitants gave themselves up for lost. They would not believe themselves in danger until they found ruin at their doors. The foolish prejudice of the formidableness of the militia being a sufficient barrier against any attempts of the enemy, prevented the Legislature from making any exertions equal to their critical and dangerous situation. Experience has convinced them of their false security. It is astonishing to me how these people could place such a confidence in a militia scattered over the face of the whole earth, and generally destitute of everything necessary to their own defense. The militia in the back country are formidable, the others are not, and all are very ungovernable and difficult to keep together. As they have generally come out, twenty thousand might be in motion, and not five hundred in the field.

After crossing the Dan, and collecting a few Virginia militia, finding the enemy had erected their standard at Hillsborough, and the people began to flock to it from all quarters, either for protections, or to engage in their service, I determined to recross at all hazards, and it was very fortunate that I did, otherwise Lord Cornwallis would have got several thousand recruits. Seven companies were enlisted in one day. Our situation was desperate at the time we recrossed the Dan; our numbers were much inferior to the enemy, and we were without ammunition, provisions, or stores of any kind, the whole having retired over the Stanton River. However, I thought it was best to put on a good face, and make the most of appearances. Lieutenant Colonel Lee's falling in with the Tories upon the Haw almost put a total stop to their recruiting service. Our numbers were, doubtless, greatly magnified, and pushing on boldly towards Hillsborough, led Lord Cornwallis into a belief that I meant to attack him wherever I could find him. The case was wildly different. It was certain I could not fight him in a general action without almost certain ruin. To skirmish with him was my only chance. Those happened daily, and the enemy suffered considerably; but our militia coming out principally upon the footing of volunteers, they fell off daily after every skirmish, and went home to tell the news. In this situation with an inferior force, I kept constantly in the neighborhood of Lord Cornwallis until the 6th, when he made a rapid push at our Light Infantry, commanded by Colonel Williams, who very judiciously avoided the blow. This manoeuvre of the enemy obliged me to change my

position. Indeed, I rarely ever lay more than two days in a place. The country, Being much of a wilderness, obliged the enemy to guard carefully against a surprise, and rendered it difficult to surprise us. We had few wagons with us—no baggage, and only tents enough to secure our arms in case of a wasting rain.

Here has been the field for the exercise of genius, and an opportunity to practice all the great and little arts of war. Fortunately, we have blundered through without meeting with any capital misfortune. On the 11th of this month I formed a junction, at the High Rock Ford, with a considerable body of Virginia and North Carolina militia, and with a Virginia regiment of eighteen months' men. Our force being now much more considerable than it had been, and upon a more permanent footing, I took the determination of giving the enemy battle without loss of time, and made the necessary dispositions accordingly. The battle was fought at or near Guilford Court-House, the very place from whence we began our retreat after the Light Infantry joined the army from the Pedee. The battle was long, obstinate, and bloody. We were obliged to give up the ground, and lost our artillery, but the enemy have been so soundly beaten that they dare not move towards us since the action, notwithstanding we lay within ten miles of him for two days. Except the ground and the artillery, they have gained no advantage; on the contrary, they are little short of being ruined. The enemy's loss in killed and wounded cannot be less than between six and seven hundred, perhaps more. Victory was long doubtful and had the North Carolina militia done their duty, it was certain. They had the most advantageous position I ever saw, and left it without making scarcely the shadow of opposition. Their General and Field Officers exerted themselves, but the men would not stand. Many threw away their arms, and fled with the utmost precipitation, even before a gun was fired at them. The Virginia militia behaved nobly, and annoyed the enemy greatly. The horse, at different times in the course of the day, performed wonders. Indeed, the horse is our great safeguard, and without them the militia could not keep the field in this country. Colonel Williams, who acts as Adjutant-General, was very active, and to this officer I am greatly indebted for his assistance. Burnet is one of the finest young men I ever saw, and will make one of the greatest military characters. I am happy in the confidence of the army, and, though unfortunate, I lose none of their esteem. Never did an army labour under so many disadvantages as this; but the fortitude and patience of the officers and soldiery rise superior to all difficulties. We have little to eat, less to drink, and lodge in the woods in the midst of smoke. Indeed, our fatigue is excessive. I was so much overcome night before last that I fainted.

Our army is in good spirits, but the militia are leaving us in great numbers to return home to kiss their wives and sweethearts.

I have never felt an easy moment since the enemy crossed the Catawba until since the defeat of the 15th, but now I am perfectly easy, being persuaded it is out of the enemy's power to do us any great injury. Indeed I think they will retire as soon as they can get off their wounded. My love to your family and all friends. You will please to accept this short account until I have a better opportunity to write you.

Document #18: Letter from General Greene to Joseph Reed, Adjutant General of the Continental Army.

Camp near Camden, on the West side of the Waterec, May the 4th, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I have been in this department near six months, and have written you several letters, without receiving a line of remembrance. Formerly I used to flatter myself of holding a place in your friendship, and my being sent to this unfortunate country, I hope, has not lessened it; for I am sure I never had more need of it in my life, either for consolation or support.

The nature of the war and the circumstances of this country appear to be little known to the Northward. The strength and resources of these States to support the war have been greatly magnified and overrated, and those whose business and true interest it was to give a just state or the situation of things, have joined in the deception, and from a false principle of pride of having the country thought powerful, have led people to believe it was so. It is true there were many inhabitants, but they were spread over a great extent of

country, and near equally divided between the King's interest and ours. The majority is greatly in favour of the enemy's interest now, as great numbers of the Whigs have left the country. The produce that is raised in the country is difficult to collect, from the extent of country, in the best of times, and utterly impossible to do it now, as all the horses and means of transportation are destroyed. The love of pleasure and the want of principle, among many of those who are our friends, render the exertions very languid in support of our cause; and unless the Northern States can give more effectual support, these States must fall, and, what is worse, I am afraid this fall will lay a foundation to sap the liberties of all the rest; for the enemy recruits with great facility in these States, and the service in this quarter is so disagreeable to our soldiers, from the scanty supplies, that many of them enter their service. The enemy have got a much firmer footing in South Carolina and Georgia than is generally believed. Camden, Ninety-Six, and Augusta cover all the fertile parts of these States; and the enemy have laid waste the upper country in such a manner that an army cannot subsist in the neighborhood of them; and this must secure their posts. Nothing but a superior army to the enemy's collective force can give relief to this distressed country, the miseries of which exceeds all belief. Nor do I believe any people suffered greater calamities. The Whigs and the Tories are butchering one another hourly. The war here is upon a very different scale to what it is to the Northward. It is a plain business alone. The geography of the country reduces its operations to two or three points. But here it is everywhere; and the country is so full of deep rivers and impassable creeks and swamps, that you are always liable to misfortunes of a capital nature. In collecting provisions and forage, we are obliged to send the same guards and escorts as if the country was avowedly our enemy's.

Some of the States, when ruin approaches them, exert themselves; but the difficulties and danger no sooner subside than they sink down into their former sloth and inattention, and seem to be content with the merit of what they have done, without once considering what there is to do. This is the case with Virginia, who exerted herself greatly on the enemy's approach this last winter, but have left us to ourselves ever since. North Carolina did nothing at all until she saw that we would not let the enemy possess the State quietly. There are many good Whigs in the State, but I verily believe the Tories are much the most numerous, and the Whigs are so fond of pleasure, that they have but little relish for the rugged business of war. Government is so feeble that it is next to nothing, and the popular plan that influences the Councils greatly weakens the natural interest of the well affected. The Whigs will do nothing unless the Tories are made do equal duty; and this cannot be effected, as the Tories are the stronger party; so neither aid the army. However, measures are now taking to raise men for a year, and I am in hopes some will take the field.

Maryland has given no assistance to this army. Not a man has joined us from that State, and we are discharging her men daily, their times of service being out. She has shamefully neglected us. You frequently hear of great things from Generals Marion and Sumter. These are brave, good officers; but the people that are with them come and go just as they please, and are more allured from the hopes of plunder than from a desire to serve the public; at least this is the case with many, if not all their followers. These parties serve rather to keep the dispute alive, than lay a foundation for the recovery of the country. Don't be deceived in your expectations from this quarter; if greater support cannot be given for the recovery of these States, they must and will remain in the hands of the enemy.

Our manoeuvres have been various, and the conflict very unequal. We have been twice beaten; the last time by an unfortunate order of Colonel Gunby, who ordered the first Maryland regiment to retire, when the enemy were fleeing before them, and the enemy in confusion in all quarters. Victory was certain, and the fall of Camden as certain, as I had taken measures to cut off the enemy's retreat. To induce them to sally was the object of our position, after finding that the works were too strong and the garrison too large to storm with a prospect of succeeding. The event was the most unfortunate that can be imagined, not from the injury we received, but the loss of the opportunity to take the place. Camden seems to have some evil genius about it. Whatever is attempted near that place is unfortunate. War is a critical business, and the best-concerted plans subject to disappointments from the most trifling incidents.

The prospects here are so unpromising, and the difficulties so great, that I am sick of the service, and wish myself out of the Department. When I made this last movement, I expected 2000 Virginia militia to operate with us, and 1000 men with Sumter; but both have failed me and I am in the greatest distress. The tardiness of the people puts it out of my power to attempt anything great. If our good ally, the French, cannot afford assistance to these Southern States, in my opinion there will be no opposition on this side Virginia before fall; and I expect the enemy will possess all the lower country of that State. The want or subsistence will prevent further operations in this country, unless we can take post on the Congaree, where provisions are to be had in great plenty.

With esteem and regard,

I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

N. GREENE.

8. Selected Correspondence of General George Washington.

Source: George Washington, Correspondences of the American Revolution: Being Letters of Eminent Men to George Washington Ed. By Jared Sparks, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1853), 214-215, 224-228, 233-236, 244-247, 259-260, and 266-268.

Document #19: Letter from General Greene to General Washington.

SIR,

Camp, Pedee, 24 January, 1781.

My public letter will inform your Excellency of the success of the troops under the command of Colonel Morgan. The event is glorious; and I am exceedingly unhappy that our wretched condition will not permit our improving it to the best advantage. I shall do all I can, but our prospects are gloomy: Our force is small, and daily declining. We have no clothing or provisions but what we collect from day to day; and the enemy's late excursion into Virginia, I apprehend, will cut off our prospects from that quarter. I hope your Excellency will repeat your letters to Congress upon the necessity of filling the army, and forming magazines of provision and forage. We never can be fortunate but that it operates to our disadvantage; and above half the pleasure that results from the victory is lost in the apprehension that it will relax the preparations for the support of the war. I wish your Excellency to place this event in its true point of light to Congress; that if it stands alone it will be of no consequence, but if properly improved upon, it may have the most salutary effects.

What your Excellency mentioned in your last private letter to me is very just; the Commanding Officer has a collective view of all the difficulties in the different departments. But when I was with the Northern army, I had a pretty good opportunity of knowing the difficulties, from being at the head of one of the great departments, and from the confidence which you were pleased to honor me with.

In comparing the difficulties of the northern service with this of the southern, one bears but a small proportion to the other -- whether from the make of the country, the divisions among the inhabitants, the difficulty of obtaining supplies, or the unequal force we have to contend with. And my spirits would sink under the load, was it not from a persuasion that, to whatever straits I may be reduced, or however unfortunate I may be, from the hazards I am obliged to run, your Excellency will do justice to my intentions. I have one consolation, which is, I have the confidence of the troops, and the good will of the officers. But the unsettled state of the different lines in point of rank, multiplies our embarrassments; nor can I see the least prospect of bringing them to a speedy close.

I hope Baron Steuben writes your Excellency respecting the enemy's movements in Virginia, as I have desired him to be very particular, and keep you constantly informed of every material circumstance. I beg my respectful compliments to Mrs. Washington, and to all the gentlemen of your family. I am, with esteem and regard,

Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

Nathanael Greene

Document #20: Letter from General Greene to General Washington.

Camp, Guilford Court-House, 9 February, 1781.

Sir,

Since I wrote your Excellency by Major Giles, Lord Cornwallis has been constantly in pursuit of the light infantry and the prisoners, is now between the Shallow Ford, upon the Yadkin and Salem, one of the Moravian towns; and still pushing into the country with great rapidity. The moment I was informed of the movements, of Lord Cornwallis, I put the army in motion on Pedee, and left it under the command of Brigadier-General Huger, and set out to join the light infantry, in order to collect the militia, and embarrass the enemy till we could effect a junction of our forces.

General Morgan, after the defeat of Tarleton, had very judiciously made forced marches up into the country, and happily crossed the Catawba the evening before a great rain, which prevented the enemy from following him for several days, during which time the prisoners were got over the Yadkin, and on their march for Dan River, which I hope they have passed, and are in Virginia.

On my arrival at the light infantry camp, I found them at Sherald's Ford, on the Catawba. The enemy were a little lower down the river, at McCowen's Ford, and the river still so high that they could not cross. We made the best disposition we could to stop them, when the river should fall. But the fords were so numerous, and our forces so small, that we could not effect it. General Davidson, who had great influence among the Muhlenberg and Roan militia, had made use of all the arguments in his power to get the militia into the field, but without effect. They had been so much in service, and their families so distressed, that they were loath to leave home, even on the most pressing occasion.

The enemy crossed at McCowen's Ford, where General Davidson was posted with the greatest part of the militia, who fled at the first discharge. The enemy made good their landing, and the militia retreated. A place of rendezvous was appointed for the militia to collect at, who were posted at the different fords up and down the river above thirty miles. Part of them halted about seven miles short of the place of rendezvous, and were overtaken by Tarleton, and dispersed. I waited that night at the place appointed for the militia to collect at until morning; but not a man appeared. The light infantry continued their march to Salisbury, and crossed the Yadkin. But before we got over all the baggage and stores, the enemy were at our heels. A pretty smart skirmish happened between a party of our riflemen and the advance of the enemy near the ford. We had secured all the boats, and the river was so high that the enemy could not follow us.

Heavy rains, deep creeks, bad roads, poor horses, and broken harness, as well as delays for want of provisions, prevented our forming a junction as early as I expected; and, fearing that the river might fall so as to be fordable; I ordered the army to file off to this place, where part of them arrived last evening; the rest I hope will be in this night. The enemy, finding they could not cross the Trading Ford, marched up to the Shallow Ford, where they passed the night before last, and are within twenty-five or thirty miles of this place.

As soon as I arrived at the light infantry camp, I wrote letters to all the militia officers over the mountains, and in the upper country, to embody their men and join the army as early as possible. But very few have joined us, and those principally without arms or ammunition. We have no provisions but what we receive from our daily collections. Under these circumstances, I called a Council, who unanimously advised to avoid an action, and to retire beyond the Roanoke immediately. A copy of the proceedings I have the honor to inclose.

I had previously ordered all the stores and heavy baggage to be removed to Prince Edward Courthouse; and informed Governor Nash of our situation. I have formed a light army, composed of the cavalry of the first and third regiments, and the legion, amounting to two hundred and forty; a detachment of two hundred and eighty infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Howard; the infantry of Lieutenant-Colonel Lee's legion, and sixty Virginia riflemen; making in the whole seven hundred men, who will be ordered, with the militia, to harass the enemy in their advance, check their progress, and, if possible, give us an opportunity to retire without a general action.

The force under Lord Cornwallis, consists of between twenty-five hundred and three thousand troops, including near three hundred dragoons, and their mounted infantry. They have destroyed their wagons, and are completely equipped as light infantry. I have the honor to inclose a copy of a letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Lee, extracts of two letters from General Marion, and a copy of a letter from a well-informed gentleman; respecting the operations at Wilmington. General Morgan is so unwell that he has left the army. The enemy, since the action of the 17th ultimo, have pursued him upwards of two hundred miles. He was obliged to leave the wounded, the arms, wagons, and carriages of the artillery, taken in the action; but I hope they have not fallen into the hands of the enemy.

I have ordered General Marion to cross the Santee River, and General Sumpter to collect the militia in the upper part of South Carolina. General Pickens has orders to take command of the men in arms in the rear of the enemy. I have wrote Mr. Henry, the late Governor of Virginia, to collect, if possible, fourteen or

fifteen hundred volunteers, to aid us, should the enemy attempt to pursue its beyond the Dan River. I had the satisfaction to receive your Excellency's dispatches of the 27th of December, and the 2d and 9th of January, a few days since. I have the honor, to be, with sentiments of the highest esteem and respect, yours, &c.

NATHANAEL GREENE.

Document #21: Letter from General Greene to General Washington.

Camp, Irwin's Ferry, on the Dan River, 15 February, 1781.

Sir,

I wrote your Excellency at Guilford Court-house, giving you an account of our situation, and of the measures advised by the Council of War, since which time we have been maneuvering constantly in the face of the enemy, who pressed our rear every day.

Finding our numbers and condition so unequal to the enemy, that it would be too hazardous to risk a general action, and being pressed in point of time to get off our stores and baggage, notwithstanding I had ordered it to file off for Hillsborough when the army began their march from Pedee, and the stores from Hillsborough to cross the Roanoke the moment I could satisfy Myself that it was the intention of Lord Cornwallis to penetrate the upper country, - to gain time to effect this business, as well as give the militia an opportunity to collect, I found it necessary to form as strong a covering party as possible, which was commanded by Colonel Williams, who had orders to keep as near the enemy as he could, without exposing the party too much, and retard their march all in his power. His conduct upon the occasion does him the highest honor.

Lord Cornwallis has been at our heels from day to day ever since we left Guilford; and our movements from thence to this place have been of the most critical kind, having a river in our front, and the enemy in our rear. But, happily, we have crossed without the loss of either men or stores. Much credit is due to Lieutenant-Colonel Carrington on this occasion. The enemy are on the other side of the river, and, as it is falling, I expect it will be fordable before night; and the fords are so numerous, and the enemy lie in such an advantageous situation for crossing, that it would be a folly to think of defending them, as it would reduce our force to small parties; which might prove our ruin. The miserable situation of the troops, for want of clothing, has rendered the march the most painful imaginable, several hundreds of the soldiers tracking the ground with their bloody feet. Your feelings for the suffering soldier, had you been here, must have been pained upon the occasion.

The enemy's movements have been so rapid, and the country under such terror, that few or no militia have joined us, and the greater part we had have fallen off. Inclosed I send your Excellency the strength of the British army, which you will see is much stronger than I had calculated upon in my last. This account I believe may be depended Upon, though I have not a shilling of money to obtain intelligence, notwithstanding my application to Maryland for money for this particular service; and your Excellency knows that good intelligence is the soul of an army, and ought to govern all its movements.

I have done every thing to call out the militia of the upper country, and have kept Governors Nash and Jefferson as regularly advised of the state of matters, as time and circumstances would permit. Nothing is yet done to give me effectual support; and I am not a little apprehensive that it is out of the power of Virginia and North Carolina to afford it. I must repeat again what I have said in several letters, that I fear nothing can save the Southern States but a good regular army; and I am more confirmed of the importance of the cavalry upon this occasion than ever I have been, though strongly impressed with it before.

Should Lord Cornwallis cease his pursuit after this army, I imagine he will file off for Halifax; and endeavour to establish a post there; to prevent which I have sent Colonel Kosciuszko to fortify it. That position would greatly awe Virginia, and almost totally subject North Carolina. If we can prevent his taking post there, and oblige him to fall down into the lower country, he will reap little advantage from his movements. I wish it was in my power to give Your Excellency more flattering accounts from this quarter; but I fear, unless reinforcements come from the northward, this will prove a devoted country. However, my

utmost exertions shall be continued to save these States, and I shall be happy, if my conduct meets with your approbation, as my situation affords me no prospect of personal glory.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lee made a charge upon the enemy's advanced party, a few days since and cut off the greater part of them. A captain and several privates were made prisoners. The enemy move with great caution; though with great rapidity, frequently performing marches of thirty miles a day. Myself and my aids are most worn out with fatigue, which prevents my giving you more frequent and particular accounts of our movements. Our army are in good spirits, notwithstanding their sufferings and excessive fatigue. I have had no further accounts from Wilmington or the Baron Steuben since I wrote.

I am, with great respect, yours, & c.,

NATHANAEL GREENE

Document #22: Letter from General Greene to General Washington.

Head-Quarters, High Rock Ford, on Haw River, 28 February, 1781.

Sir;

I did myself the honor to write your Excellency on the 15th instant, when I was endeavoring to collect a body of militia to reenforce this army. But the enemy, early on the 19th, filed off to Hillsborough, where Lord Cornwallis issued a proclamation (a copy of which is inclosed), and made use of every art to induce the people to join him. To prevent his success in the execution of this business, which we had every reason to believe he would accomplish, I was obliged to recross the Dan River before the militia could be assembled. This was effected on the 23^d, and with great difficulty we, have reached this place.

The scarcity of provision, which is rendered more distressing by the loose and irregular manner in which the militia of this country take the field, is not only embarrassing, but very alarming. The want of penal laws to oblige the inhabitants to supply themselves with arms and accoutrements, renders the aid of the militia precarious and almost useless. I am anxiously waiting the arrival of Colonel William Campbell, who is expected to join its with a respectable body of mounted riflemen, which will enable this army to approach the enemy with greater confidence and effectually to harass their way.

Lord Cornwallis evacuated Hillsborough on the 26th, and moved on the road to Guilford Court-House, and crossed the Haw River, at Tralinger's Ford, twenty miles below this place, last night. His route and his object are uncertain; but circumstances lead to a belief that he will move towards Cross Creek, by which I fear he will collect a very large number of the disaffected inhabitants. I have received no accounts from General Sumpter; but wish he may be able; in conjunction with General Marion, to destroy some of the enemy's small posts in South Carolina, and prevent the accomplishment of their designs in that country. The enemy have ordered two regiments of negroes to be immediately embodied, and are drafting a great proportion of the young men of that State, to serve during the war.

We have the most unequivocal and full evidence of the disaffection of a great part of this State. The enemy have raised seven independent companies in a single day; and we have the mortification to find, that most of the prisoners we take are inhabitants of America. The Legislature, I am informed, have passed a law for drafting twenty-seven hundred men for twelve months, but they cannot attempt to carry it into effect while the enemy continue in the State.

Our detachments have been successful in several attempts upon the enemy's pickets, having killed and wounded about thirty, and made twenty prisoners, without any loss. General Pickens, with a body of mounted riflemen, and Lieutenant-Colonel Lee, with the cavalry of his legion were detached to endeavor to harass the enemy; and being informed that Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton had passed the Haw River, near General Butler's plantation, they immediately went in pursuit of him, but, unfortunately, came up with a body of upwards of two hundred of Colonel Hambleton's corps, and the North Carolina Tories, three miles in his rear, who were to have joined him that evening. The General attempted to pass by them as a detachment of the British army, which the legion succeeded in; but when the militia came up, the enemy discovered their mistake, which obliged our troops to charge them, in doing which, some of the militia could not be prevented from firing, which alarmed Colonel Tarleton, and gave him an opportunity to

escape. The whole of the enemy were routed in a few minutes, and the greater part of them left dead on the ground. Colonel Piles and several officers were among the number.

The want of supplies in this country, the superiority of the enemy, and the mode in which the militia do duty, are alarming circumstances at this critical period; and, unless the most vigorous exertions are made in the Southern States, we cannot be relieved. Of the troops raised by the State of Virginia last summer, four hundred are now at Chesterfield Court-House, naked, and unable to march. But the Baron Steuben has detained some clothing coming from Philadelphia, which will enable him to send them forward immediately. They were raised for eighteen months, but the greater part of the time will expire before they join the army. I wish these States could have been convinced of the loss they sustain by short enlistments.

Your Excellency's letter of the 2d instant with the inclosed Act of Congress, was handed me on the 20th. I am convinced that Colonel Armand's legion can render no service on its present footing. The officers refuse to go on duty with the men; thirty-eight, out of a detachment of forty men, deserted to the enemy, and the Baron Steuben was obliged to order a number of them to join their regiments, who are prisoners at Charlottesville.

The militia of the back country have returned from their expedition, having destroyed most of the towns belonging to the Cherokee Indians. I have commissioned a number of the principal inhabitants to treat with the Cherokee and Chickasaw nations on term of accommodation, subject to the determination of Congress. A copy of their instructions I shall inclose as early as possible. I have the honor to be, with esteem and respect, & c.,

NATHANAEL GREENE

Document #23: Letter from General Greene to General Washington.

Head-Quarters, Iron Works, North Carolina, 10 March, 1781.

Sir,

Since I had the honor of addressing your Excellency last, there have been some changes in our circumstances. On the 2d, Lieutenant-Colonel Lee, with a detachment of riflemen, attacked the advance of the British army under Colonel Tarleton, near Alamance, and killed and wounded, by report, about thirty of them. On the 6th, the British moved down towards High Rock, either with a view to intercept our stores, or cut off the light infantry from the main body of the army, then advanced near seven miles; but they were handsomely opposed, and suffered considerably, without effecting any thing.

This manoeuvre occasioned me to retire over the Haw River, and move down the north side of it, with a view to secure our stores coming to the army, and to form a junction with several considerable reinforcements of Carolina and Virginia militia, and one regiment of Virginia eighteen-months' men, on the march from Hillsborough to High Rock. I effected this business, and the enemy retired towards Guilford Court-House. Our militia had been upon such a loose and uncertain footing ever since we crossed the Dan, that I could attempt nothing with confidence, though we kept within ten or twelve miles of the enemy for several days. The enemy kept close, seemingly determined that we should gain no advantage of them without risking something of consequence. I have the honor to be, with great respect and esteem, &c.,

NATHANAEL GREENE.

Document #24: Report from General Greene to General Washington on the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Camp, near the Iron Works, 10 miles from Guilford Court-House, 18 March, 1781.

Sir,

My letter to Congress, a copy of which I inclose to your Excellency, will inform you of an unsuccessful action with Lord Cornwallis on the 15th. Our prospects were flattering; and had the North Carolina militia seconded the endeavors of their officers, victory was certain. But they left the most advantageous position I ever saw, without scarcely firing a gun. None fired more than twice, and very few more than once, and near

one half not at all. The Virginia militia behaved with great gallantry, and the success of the day seemed to be doubtful for a long time. The action was long and severe.

In my former letters I inclosed to your Excellency the probable strength of the British army, since which they have been constantly declining. Our force, as you will see by the returns, was respectable; and the probability of not being able to keep it long in the field, and the difficulty of subsisting men in this exhausted country, together with the great advantages which would result from the action, if we were victorious, and the little injury, if we were otherwise, determined me to bring on an action as soon as possible. When both parties are agreed in a matter, all obstacles are soon removed. I thought the determination warranted by the soundest principles of good policy, and I hope events will prove it so, though we were unfortunate. I regret nothing so much as the loss of my artillery, though it was of little use to us, nor can it be, in this great wilderness. However, as the enemy have it, we must also Lord Cornwallis will not give up this country without being soundly beaten. I wish our force was more competent to the business. But I am in hopes, by little and little, to reduce him in time. His troops are good, well found, and fight with great obstinacy.

I am very happy to hear the Marquis de Lafayette is coming to Virginia, though I am afraid, from a hint in one of Baron Steuben's letters, he will think himself injured in being superseded in the command. Could the Marquis join us at this moment, we should have a glorious campaign. It would put Lord Cornwallis and his whole army into our hands. I am also happy to hear, that the Pennsylvania line are coming to the southward. The mutiny in that line was a very extraordinary one. It is reported here to have proceeded from the great cruelty of the officers. A member of Congress writes this; but I believe it to be so far from the truth, that I am persuaded it originated rather through indulgence than from any other cause.

Virginia has given me every support I could wish, or expect, since Lord Cornwallis has been in North Carolina; and nothing has contributed more to this than the prejudice of the people in favor of your Excellency, which has been extended to me from the friendship you have been pleased to honor me with. The service here is extremely severe, and the officers and soldiers bear it with a degree of patience that does them the highest honor. I have never taken off my clothes since I left the Pedee. I was taken with a fainting last night, owing, I imagine, to excessive fatigue and constant watching. I am better to-day, but far from being well.

I have little prospect of acquiring much reputation while I labor under so many disadvantages. I hope my friends will make just allowances; and as for vulgar opinion, I regard it not. Neither time nor health will permit me to write your Excellency upon many matters which are upon my mind. I beg my best respects to Mrs. Washington.

With esteem and regard I am, & c.,

NATHANAEL GREENE

9. Selected Correspondence of Daniel Morgan.

Source: James Graham, The Life of General Daniel Morgan, of the Virginia Line of the Army of the United States with portions of his Correspondence (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1856), 370-375.

Document #25: Letter from General Morgan to General Greene.

CARTER HARRISON'S, Feb. 20, 1781.

DEAR SIR: I have been doctoring these several days, thinking to be able to take the field again. But I find I get worse. My pains are now accompanied by a fever every day. I expect Lord Cornwallis will push you until you are obliged to fight him, on which much will depend. You have, from what I see, a great number of militia. If they fight, you will beat Cornwallis; if not, he will beat you, and perhaps cut your regulars to pieces, which will be losing all our hopes.

I am informed that among the militia will be found a number of old soldiers. I think it would be advisable to select them from among the militia, and put them in the ranks with the regulars; select riflemen also and fight them on the flanks, under enterprising officers who are aquatinted with that kind of fighting; and put the militia in the center, with some picked troops to their rear, with orders to shoot down the first man that runs. If anything will succeed, a disposition of this kind will. I hope you will not look at this as dictating, but as my opinion on a matter that I am much concerned in. I am informed there are some odds of a hundred of the garrison regiment disposed of on little guards round Richmond. If they were collected in a body, and militia in their places, they would make a pretty little reinforcement.

I have the honor, & c.,
Daniel Morgan

Document #26: Letter from General Greene to General Morgan reporting the events at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

CAMP NEAR THE IRON WORKS

10 MILES FROM GUILFORD C. H., March 20th, 1781

Dear Sir: Since we crossed the Dan, we have made many maneuvers and had much skirmishing. I have not time to give you the particulars. Until the 11th, our force was inferior to the enemy's, which obliged us to act cautiously. But forming a junction with a body of North Carolina and Virginia militia, and Col. Campbell coming up with a detachment of eighteen months men from Virginia, I determined to give the enemy battle. It was fought a little west of Guilford C. H. We were drawn up in three lines; North Carolina militia in front; the Virginia militia formed the second line, and the Continental troops the third. Col. Washington with the dragoons of the first and third regiments, a detachment of eighty light infantry, and two hundred riflemen under Col. Lynch, formed a covering party for the security of our right flank. Lieut. Col. Lee and his legion, and about two hundred and fifty riflemen under the famous Col. Campbell, formed a covering party for our left. The battle begun about twelve o'clock, and lasted about two hours. The conflict was bloody and severe, and had the North Carolina militia done their duty, victory would have been certain and early. But they deserted the most advantageous post I ever saw, and without scarcely firing a gun. The Virginia militia behaved with great gallantry, and the fate of the day was long and doubtful. But finally we were obliged to give up the ground; and as our artillery horses were killed before the retreat began, we were obliged to leave our artillery on the ground.

The enemy's loss is very great, not less than between six hundred and seven hundred men; and perhaps more. Our loss is much less, though considerable. The greater part fell upon the regular troops. We

retreated in good order three miles, and there halted and collected all our stragglers; after which we retired about ten miles from the place of action, where we have remained ever since. The enemy are now retiring from us, and have left us one hundred and seventy or eighty of their wounded. They are moving towards Bell's Mill. We shall follow them immediately, with the determination for another touch. The enemy had many officers killed and wounded. Among the latter, Gen. Moria is said to be mortally wounded.

The bearer of this, one of Lee's legion, waits upon you to get the colors taken at the Cowpens, to convey them to Congress, there to be deposited as a lasting monument of your gallantry and good fortune.

Marquis de Lafayette is coming to Virginia, with a detachment of light infantry from the Northern army. Arnold must fall. I have not time to be more particular. God bless you with better health.

With esteem, I am, &C

N. GREENE.

Document #27: Letter in reply from General Morgan to General Greene.

SARATOGA, 11th April 11th, 1781.

DEAR SIR: I was honored with your letter of the 28th of March. I assure you, sir, it gave me very great satisfaction, both from the intelligence and the mode of conveyance. I have been particularly happy in my connections with the army, and am happy to tell you, sir, you are among the number I esteem. Your good conduct as an officer and a gentleman while I had the pleasure of serving with you, created that esteem, and your gallantry and good conduct since that period has confirmed it with me, and I believe with every other person. If you get your due, which I make no doubt you will, you will have the thanks of your country: for in my opinion you have done wonders, in repelling the enemy when the whole country stood trembling at their approach, and indeed, thought it almost impossible, as matters stood, to stop their career.

Your determination to give the enemy battle was in my opinion well-timed, and the disposition well concerted. Such conduct and bravery will seldom fail of success. You perhaps will call this a flattering letter. But it has always given me pleasure to give every one his due; and I think it right, or where is the grand stimulus that pushes men on to great actions? On the other hand, I am as willing to give a person his demerits, if the person be worthy of notice.

I was not at home when the express arrived, nor did he await my coming. But I sent the standards on to Congress, and informed the President by your order.

I expect by this time you have come up with my Lord Cornwallis, and am in hopes, with an army sufficient to cope with him; but much fear it as I know what militia can do. But I think Cornwallis's army must be dispirited, from the manner they were handled in the last engagement. God send you success.

I am directed by our Assembly to send their thanks to the officers and men that fought with me on the 17th of January last; will be much obliged to you to put it out in orders.

The pain in my hip has left me; but I believe the same kind of pain taken me in the head, which makes me blind as a bat two or three times a day. But the cold bath seems to help me; and I am in hopes ere long to give you some little assistance.

Please to make my compliments respectfully to the gentlemen of your family.

I have the honor, & c.,

Daniel Morgan