

Volume One of the complete Revolutionary War in the Carolinas.

Nothing but Blood and Slaughter The Revolutionary
War in the Carolinas, Volume One, 1771-1779

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/1469.html?s=pdf>

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

*Military Operations and
Order of Battle
of the Revolutionary War in the
Carolinas*

Volume One
1771-1779

Copyright © 2004 Patrick O'Kelley

ISBN 1-59113-458-7

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2004

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

*Military Operations and
Order of Battle
of the Revolutionary War in the
Carolinas*

Volume One
1771-1779

Patrick O'Kelley

To my wife Alice

Who missed me while I wrote this

PREFACE

The war in Carolinas was conducted in two campaigns, the first from 1775 until mid-1776. During this time the British attempted to gain a foothold in the South by organizing the Loyalist Militia and the Indians allied with Britain. At the same time the British attempted to invade the Carolinas with British Regulars and the Royal Navy. None of these actions were successful and the Carolinas was kept under control of the Patriots. The British thought that a large loyal population would rise to defend the King, but they were wrong.

After the British defeat at Saratoga in 1777 France entered into the conflict and the British conducted the second campaign for the Carolinas. The British invaded for a second time and quickly defeated the Continental army and the State militias. Conquering the Carolinas was fairly easy but keeping it was another matter. The partisan war conducted by Marion, Sumter and Davie wore down British supply lines and it the supply points needed troops to guard them.

The war in the Carolinas concluded with the war of attrition conducted by Greene and Morgan. Even though they won the battles against the Patriots, the British were not able to hold the ground that they had just “won” due to their losses. The British realized that to stay in a territory that was held by the enemy, and plagued with numerous guerilla bands that could cut off their supplies, would be suicidal. The British did not lose the tactical war of battles, but they lost the strategic war of logistics.

This first volume covers the war from 1771 to 1779, though the war did not begin until 1775. I have included the Battle of Alamance during the War of the Regulation. Some historians mistakenly called this battle the first battle of the Revolution, but it was not. It was a fight against backwoods North Carolina settlers versus the eastern North Carolina merchants supplied by the Royal Governor. I have included it because of the lasting effects of this Regulator War. It would define the Revolutionary War in North Carolina when it first began. Those who fought for the Regulators tended to fight for the

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

King. Ironically those who fought for the Royal Governor tended to fight against the Crown during the Revolutionary War.

I have tried to list every single incident that I could find in the two Carolinas. I had to include the military operations along the Savannah River in Georgia because it led directly to the battles in the Carolinas. I also included skirmishes that are in Tennessee today, but at the time they were part of North Carolina.

The war in the South turned ugly and brutal after the Battle of Kettle Creek in 1779. It would resemble Bosnia in 1995 more than it would Massachusetts in 1775. Old feuds and hostilities were accelerated by the war and murder was now justified if you did not think the right way. I cannot list every single fight because many have very little information. For some of these unknown fights I have attempted to place them in some sort of chronological order based upon circumstantial evidence.

I had to change my way of thinking on what is a battle and what is a skirmish. *The Annual Register or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature for the Year 1781* wrote that “Most of these actions would in other wars be considered as skirmishes of little account, and scarcely worthy of a detailed narrative. But these small actions are as capable as any of displaying conduct. The operations of war being spread over that vast continent...it is by such skirmishes that the fate of America must be necessarily decided. They are therefore as important as battles in which a hundred thousand men are drawn up on each side.”

So a major battle in the Revolutionary War would only be a footnote in the War Between the States, but so much more was decided because of it. If an incident is listed as a “battle” then it is a fight between two commanders that have brought all they can to the fight. If an incident is listed as a “skirmish” then it is smaller units that are not with their main command. It is very hard to determine exactly what happened in most of the battles. The accounts were written many years later and from old memories. Newspapers wrote some accounts and the more bloodier details were fabricated for use in propaganda. In many of the accounts, that were written right after the battle, the authors wrote what they saw, but the numbers of

Patrick O'Kelley

casualties or dates may be wrong. This is not a new phenomenon, reading accounts of enemy dead in Viet Nam makes you wonder if any Viet Cong were left alive in the entire country. The numbers of dead and wounded that I list for each battle may vary, depending on which account you read. I have tried to give the most realistic numbers, but in time these may be found out to be wrong. It is the best "guess" I made with the available information. We may never know the true story of the war, but having been in a couple of wars myself, I doubt if anyone will ever really know the truth. All we can do is get close enough and hope that the future shines more light on the subject.

I have tried not to describe the two sides as British and American. To do so would not be correct. There were many battles that were fought entirely by Americans. Some were for the King; some were for the United States. It was said that during the war 1/3 of the people were for the King, 1/3 were for Independence and 1/3 didn't care either way. If you look at the recent Presidential elections you will notice that not much has changed. The nation is still divided into thirds. In the South a better description would be that 40% were for the King and 40% were for the Patriots. For the other 10% it was very dangerous not to choose sides.

The different types of troops in the United States forces were Continentals, State Troops and Militia. The Continentals were fighting for the United States and were the regular standing army. Those who joined the Continental army would join for about three years, or the duration of the war. They would be issued a uniform and weapon and they would have the better officers. The State Troops fought for the United States and are more like the modern day National Guard. They also enlisted for a specific time period and many had uniforms issued by the States. The Militia were civilians and would show up with whatever weapons they had at home. They would wear civilian clothes and would have officers who might have been in the Continentals at one time. The militia would only show up when called upon to do their duty, and then they would go home.

The forces fighting for Royal Government were the Regulars, Provincials, Militia, German Auxiliaries and Indians. The Regulars

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

were the British equivalent of the Continentals. They were the standing army and at the time of the war they were the best-armed and trained army on the face of the earth. Provincials were Americans fighting for the British cause. They were similar to the State Troops of the United States army. They were armed and equipped by the British army and many of their officers were British Regular officers. Loyalist Militia was the same as the Patriot militia. They were Americans fighting for the King. Many historians commonly call the German Auxiliaries, Hessians, or Mercenaries. However they did not all come from Hesse and they were not mercenaries. Each German soldier went where his Generals told him to, and they did not get any extra money for their time. The only one who profited by their service was their ruler. The Indians tended to side with the British. To do so would only benefit them because the King had promised that no settler would move west of the modern day Blue Ridge Mountains. If they lost, the United States would take their land. If they won they would be able to keep it.

In this book the spellings of all the towns are done in the same manner as they were spelled in the 18th Century. I have decided to not footnote every single sentence, because to do so would interrupt the description of the battles. I have included footnotes at the end of the book to let the reader know where the information came from.

Finally I have placed the order of battles in a format that needs to be explained if one is not used to it. If the main commander is General One and his unit is Division Number One, it will look like this:

General One
Division Number One

Regimental commanders, company commanders and lesser commands would be indented to the right of them, such as this:

Patrick O'Kelley

General One
 Division Number One
 Colonel One
 Regiment Number One
 Captain One
 Company Number One

A listing of just an officer's name means it is his command.

Regiment Number One
 Captain One
 Captain Two

Organization for a military unit at the time of the Revolutionary War was the same for both sides. A British regiment would consist of about 500 men. These men would be broken down into twelve companies of about 70 men each. Three of these companies would be the Colonel's Company, the Lieutenant Colonel's Company and the Major's Company. Two of these companies would be the Light Infantry and the Grenadier companies. The remaining seven companies would be "hat" companies and would be commanded by a captain. This was a textbook regiment that would not have been seen very much on the battlefield due to losses, and men detailed out to other assignments. Regiments would be placed under the command of a higher officer and would then become Brigades or Divisions. The Patriot army was very similar to the British army, but only a few units, such as the South Carolina Regiments, had grenadier companies. In some battles, such as King's Mountain, some of the "companies" only had six men.

Many battles have more than one name. This is because each person who wrote about the incident would give it a different name. Each alternative listing will be in the footnotes. Many of the battles have different dates; some might even be in a different year. For those that do not have a specific date I have listed only the month.

FOREWARD

A few years before I retired from the U.S. Army I was given a mission to support a Special Forces Team who would be going through the Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Polk, Louisiana. For them it was a week of intense, realistic training. For me, it was a week of waiting for the observer/controller to call me to deliver supplies and equipment to them. So I had a lot of free time. I have been reenacting the Revolutionary War for over 20 years and I decided to go to the Post Library and see what they had there on the Revolutionary War. I found a single book written in the Bicentennial, that was part travel guide and part history. I was amazed at what the book did not have, but I knew existed because of my time reenacting these different battles. I then decided to find all the battles I could in that little book and write down who was there. I figured I could write a better book in a matter of months. That was in the summer of 1998.

For the next five years I amassed a huge amount of primary research, manuscripts and books on the war, tripling my personal library. I learned that most of the books out there that were taken as fact were flawed in many ways. This wasn't due to any deliberate intent of the author, but mainly due to the amount of research that was available at the time the books were written. I have tried to use all primary accounts in the book, but even these could be flawed if they were from very old memories, or if they were being used as propaganda against the enemy.

I also discovered that there were probably more military actions in the two Carolinas than in all the other States. Most people know of Lexington and Paul Revere and Bunker Hill and maybe even of Saratoga. However very few people know that the South had most of the battles. I think this goes back 140 years to the Centennial, when there was still an anti-Southern bias in the history books due to the War Between the States. I learned that most of what people know about the war is not true. It was all fabricated many years after the war to either sell books or to glorify an ancestor. I learned that the bloodiest battle of the war happened in the South, the longest siege, and the largest loss of life for our French allies. North Carolina was

Patrick O'Kelley

the first to declare itself independent and the first to tell the representatives to vote for National Independence.

The wars in the South led the British to the decision to negotiate a treaty that ended the war. Without Guilford Courthouse, there would have been no Yorktown. Without Cowpens there would have been no Guilford Courthouse. Without King's Mountain, there would have been no Cowpens. This goes back to the point that the British decided to take Savannah. In the end, without the South, there would have been no end of the war.

While researching this book I had help from historians, Park Rangers, Reenactors and other authors. I may have missed one or two of you and if I have I am sorry. I would like to thank W.F. Brown, III, Allan Dennison, Bart Reynolds III, Lawrence Babits (author of "A Devil of a Whipping"), John T. Hayes (publisher of the Saddlebag Almanac), W. Scott Smith, Mark Nichipor, Chris Ward, Sam Fore, Terry Crabb, John K. Robertson, Charles B. Baxley (Kershaw County Historical Society), Bob Brooks, Jefferson Weaver, and Jon Vogel

I would also like to thank the reenactors, those who carry the torch. Todd Braisted, Jay Callaham, Linea Bass, Ray Cassell and Bob Vogler, George A. Bray III, Paul Pace, Jim Pence, John Johnston, John Maass, Geoff Graff, Randy Blevins, Alexis DeKeyser, Robert Sulentic, Zack Pace and Bert Puckett, Stephen Gilbert, Brett Osborn, Jason L. Smith, Mark Hubbs, Todd Post and Adam Geibel.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Alice and my daughters, Cailin, Katrianne and Adelise. I am glad that they put up with this, because it took me almost 6 years to write something that I thought I would be done with in 6 months.

Patrick O'Kelley
Barbecue, North Carolina 2003

Contents

1771 The Regulator War	15
Battle of Alamance, North Carolina	
1775 A free and independent people	24
Seizure of powder and arms in the Carolinas	
Driving the Royal Navy out of Charleston	
Siege of Fort Ninety-Six, South Carolina	
1776 A more awfully pleasing sight I never beheld	73
Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, North Carolina	
Driving the Royal Navy out of Savannah	
Cherokee Indian Campaign	
Battle of Fort Sullivan, South Carolina	
1777 A Temporary Peace	170
Failure to drive the British out of Florida	
Naval actions around the Carolinas	
Naval actions by Carolina ships	
1778 Come and Take it	190
British attacks into Georgia	
British capture of Savannah	
1779 Such I sight I never saw before	223
British capture of Georgia	
British attacks into South Carolina	
Battle of Kettle Creek, Georgia	
Battle of Briar Creek, Georgia	
Cherokee Indian campaign	
British attack on Charleston	
Battle of Stono Ferry, South Carolina	
Siege of Savannah	

1771

War of the Regulation

Alamance, North Carolina
16 May 1771

Battle

North Carolina Provincials

Commanding Officer	Governor William Tryon
Colonel Joseph Leech	
Craven Detachment	3 companies
Captain Christopher Neale	
Provincial Rangers ¹	1 Company
Captain Simon Bright	1 company
Captain John Patten	
Beaufort Detachment	1 Company
Captain John Simpson's Company of Pitt County Militia	
Colonel Edmund Fanning	
Orange Detachment	1 Company. ²
Colonel William Thomson	
Carteret Detachment	1 Company
Colonel John Ashe ³	
New Hanover Detachment	2 companies
Colonel James Moore	1 company
Provincial Artillery ⁴	9 pieces
Colonel Needham Bryan	
Johnston Detachment	2 companies
Colonel Richard Caswell	
Dobbs Detachment	4 companies
Colonel William Cray	
Onslow Detachment	1 Company
Captain Salter	
Pitt Detachment	1 Company

Patrick O'Kelley

	Colonel Maurice Moore	
	Volunteer Light Dragoons ⁵	20
<i>Casualties</i>		9 killed, 61 wounded
<i>Total Provincials engaged</i>		600
<i>Regulators</i>		2,000
No Commanding Officer		
	Captain James Few	
	Captain John Pyle	
	Captain Robert Messer	
<i>Casualties</i>		9 killed, 200 wounded, 15 captured, 1 executed after the battle, 9 executed later

The War of the Regulation was not part of the War for American Independence, however the Regulator War had a great effect upon the Revolutionary War in North Carolina. In 1764 the people of Anson, Orange and Granville Counties began to make themselves heard, and within four years the group had grown and became known as The Regulators. They named themselves after the Regulators of South Carolina. The Regulators were frontiersmen who opposed the practices of government officials that they considered unjust and tyrannical.

The settlers of the western portions of North and South Carolina had recently come down the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. They had little in common with the easterners and had no share in the government of the province. Each county had a group of men who had complete control over the affairs of the people. To operate effectively the government depended too much on the honesty of the officeholder. In the eastern areas this system worked fairly well, but the officers in the western counties tended to be selfish and greedy. The backwoods people were subjected to excessive taxes, dishonest sheriffs and expensive fees. The Regulators sought to eliminate this state of affairs.

In 1767 the North Carolina Royal Governor, William Tryon, wrote that the sheriffs had embezzled more than one-half of the public money, ordered to be raised and collected by them. In 1770 after an

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

investigation had been made it was reported that throughout the province the sheriffs were in arrears to the extent of £49,000.

A greater problem to the frontier people was the “clerks, registers, and lawyers,” which “swooped down upon the defenseless inhabitants like wolves.” Frequent proclamations by the governor against the taking of illegal fees had not the least effect. Scarcity of money contributed to the state of unrest in the whole province. The Parliament drained off gold and silver from the colonies, but forbade the colonies to issue legal-tender paper, for the protection of the British merchants. This did not have much of an effect in the east where warehouse certificates were used as a medium of currency. In the west they did not have such warehouses.

Herman Husband was one of the first “leaders” of the Regulator movement in North Carolina. There was no real leader to the Regulation. Husband was a man who believed in passive resistance. When the Regulators became violent he distanced himself and only exerted himself when he tried to make peace. James Hunter was another who was referred to as the “general of the Regulation,” but he declined to take command after Husband left the movement. Hunter said instead, “We are all freemen, and everyone must command himself!”

Edmund Fanning was the local leader of the opposition to the Regulators. Fanning was a native of New York and a graduate of Yale, and represented to the Regulators all that was evil in the government. Fanning was appointed by the easterners and stretched his authority as far as possible to take more money from the people.

The most prominent leader of the opposition was Royal Governor Tryon who took office in 1765 after Governor Dobbs died. Tryon persuaded the assembly to vote funds for the erection of “Tryon’s Palace” in New Berne. The heavy taxes levied for this building, known as the most beautiful in colonial America, were among the grievances of the Regulators.

There had been outbreaks of violence during the collection of taxes in Anson County and riots in the Granville district. In May of 1765 unauthorized settlers on a tract of land in Mecklenburg County

Patrick O'Kelley

rose up in arms and drove away the owner's agents who had come to survey the land.

In 1766 a group of men, enthusiastic of the success of the Sons of Liberty of Massachusetts in resisting the Stamp Act, called the people to gather at Maddock's Mill to determine if the people were being subjected to abuses. Edmund Fanning ordered the government officials not to cooperate with the delegates at the meeting, so nothing was accomplished.

South Carolina had a Regulator movement at the same time, but the two were not connected. The South Carolina Regulators wanted the government to come in and clean up the lawlessness in the backcountry. The South Carolina assembly dealt with the problem by giving the Regulators the power to handle their problems. It did not end in violence the way the North Carolina Regulator movement would.

In 1768 the sheriff of Orange County announced that he would receive taxes at only five locations and for all taxes not paid there would be an additional charge of almost 3 shillings levied. The Regulators drew together and refused to pay taxes or fees until they were satisfied that it was agreeable to the law. Officers seized a Regulator's horse, saddle and bridle and sold them for taxes. The Regulators, angered by this act, rode into Hillsborough and took back the horse, firing several shots into Edmund Fanning's house. Fanning ordered the arrest of William Butler, Peter Craven and Ninian Bell Hamilton, the leaders of the mob, and he called out seven companies of the Orange Militia. The people of Orange were so strongly sympathetic to the Regulators that only a token force turned out.

Fanning gathered a handful of armed men and arrested William Butler and Herman Husband. The two men were charged with inciting the people to rebellion and imprisoned in the Hillsborough jail. The next morning 700 men turned out to go to Hillsborough to release the prisoners and officials immediately released the two men. Governor Tryon's secretary told the people that if they would disband then the governor would receive their petitions. However Governor Tryon claimed that the secretary exceeded his authority and he refused to deal with the Regulators. The governor did issue a

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

proclamation forbidding the illegal taking of fees and ordered the attorney general to prosecute all duly charged with extortion.

In 1768 the governor went to Hillsborough to induce the people to abide by the laws. He charged several officials, including Edmund Fanning, with extortion. Fearing possible riots, Tryon called out the militia to insure protection for the court during the trial of Husband and Butler. With some difficulty he was able to raise 1,461 militiamen from Rowan, Mecklenburg, Granville and Orange counties. Ironically Fanning, who was scheduled to be tried for extortion, was the colonel of the militia. 3,700 Regulators assembled to oppose Fanning’s force, but found they were no match for Tryon’s trained militia.

After the trial Husband was acquitted, while Butler and two others were imprisoned. The Regulation had grown during the trial. Throughout the countryside there were numerous incidents involving the Regulators. 30 men in Edgecombe County attempted to rescue a leader of the movement in the Halifax jail. In Johnston County 80 men attacked the justice of the court, but withdrew when the justices and their friends took up clubs. In Anson County 100 armed men broke up the court and joined an association to assist each other in resisting the sheriff’s efforts to collect taxes.

Tryon dissolved the assembly in 1769 and ordered the election of a new one. Orange, Anson, Granville and Halifax counties returned their entire delegations without changing a single man. Tryon dissolved the assembly again. The Regulators broke into courts of justice, drove judges from the bench and set up mock courts. They also dragged attorneys through the streets and assaulted peaceful citizens who refused to sympathize with them.

In 1770 Judge Henderson was attacked in his court by a mob of 150 Regulators in Hillsborough and forced to leave the bench. Regulators led by Husband, Hunter, Howell and Butler attacked John Williams, an attorney. The assistant district attorney, William Hooper, later a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was dragged through the streets. Fanning was pulled from the courthouse by his heels, dragged through the streets, and then brutally whipped.

Patrick O'Kelley

The mob then broke into Fanning's house and demolished the building.

Because of the violence the North Carolina Assembly passed the Johnston Act, also known as the "Bloody Act", introduced by Samuel Johnston that provided the attorney general with the ability to prosecute charges of riot in any superior court in the province. All who avoided the summons of the court were declared outlaws and could be killed with impunity. The governor could also employ the militia to enforce the law.

The Regulators sent messengers into Bute, Edgecombe and Northampton counties to encourage those who would join them. The people of Rowan County denounced the Johnston Act and swore they would not allow any judge to hold court there. They also threatened to kill all clerks and lawyers who came among them and declared Fanning an outlaw that any Regulator could kill on sight.

On March 19, 1771 Tryon called for volunteers in the militia and offered a 40 shilling bounty. General Hugh Waddell had been ordered to march to Salisbury and subdue the Rowan Regulators, and to march on Hillsborough from the west. General Waddell had men from Anson, Rowan, Mecklenburg and Tryon counties.

Tryon's forces began gathering. On April 21st four Carteret County companies marched into New Berne under the command of Colonel William Thompson. The next day four companies from Craven County arrived, followed shortly by a sloop from New York "with two brass Field Pieces and their furniture, Drums, Colours, Camp Kettles, Leggings and Cockades." On the 24th these forces marched out of New Berne with "two Field Pieces, Six Swivel Guns mounted on Carriages, Sixteen Wagons and Four Carts, loaded with Baggage, Ammunition and as much provision as would supply the several Detachments that were to join them on their Route to Hillsborough."

On May 2nd nine men from Rocky River, known as the "Cabarrus Black Boys" disguised themselves and attacked a convoy that was taking powder from South Carolina to Waddell. They subdued the guards, burned the powder and vanished into the night. This was one of the first overt acts against Royal authority in the colonies.

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

On May 3, 1771 at Union Camp, on Smith’s Ferry, troops from Orange, Beaufort, New Hanover, Onslow, Dobbs, Johnston and Wake counties rendezvoused with the detachments of Craven and Carteret counties. Governor Tryon reviewed the troops but was disappointed by the Wake County forces. Not many men showed up and “not more than one man in five had arms.” When they learned that they were to be used against the Regulators they refused to obey the order. Governor Tryon had his men surround the Wake County men and then had forty of the Wake County men drafted for service. Other men were persuaded to enlist so that they were able to field fifty men.

On 7 May Tryon and his army marched on Hillsborough. There were 1,068 men with Governor Tryon and 248 with General Waddell. Two days later a large body of Regulators stopped Waddell’s force after crossing the Yadkin River. Waddell wrote that 2,000 Regulators surrounded his force “and with many Indian shouts they endeavoured to intimidate his men.” Some of Waddell’s sentries deserted to the Regulator’s side. General Waddell called a council and it was decided that due to the superior numbers of the enemy it would be wise to fall back to Salisbury.

On May 11th Tryon left Hillsborough intending to rescue Waddell. The next day “twenty Gentlemen volunteers, joined the Army, chiefly from Granville and Bute Counties. They were formed into a Troop of Light Horse under the command of Capt. Bullock.” The chaplain with Governor Tryon, Reverend McCarty, gave a sermon “If you have no sword sell your garment and buy one.” Along the march a Regulator was caught by the Light Horse, “laying in ambush with his gun.” Governor Tryon’s commissary took a hogshead of rum and some hogs out of the ambusher’s house that was meant for the Regulators.

On May 14th Tryon’s force reached the banks of the Alamance Creek where they rested for a day. On the morning of the 15th some Regulators, against the wishes of their leaders, captured Colonel John Ashe and Captain John Walker. After severely whipping the officers, they took them prisoners. Tryon held a council of war and it was determined that they should march against the Regulators the next day. A letter was sent to the Regulators offering them terms to

surrender. It also said that if they did not accept the terms his army would attack.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of May 16th Tryon left his tents and baggage at the Hillsborough camp under the guard of 50 men from Orange County and marched to a field within half a mile of the Regulators. Tryon ordered his army of almost 1,000 men into battle formation with drum beating and red silk colors flying. Tryon's officers wore yellow cockades as their symbol of authority. The companies from Carteret, Orange, Beaufort, New Hanover and Dobbs were in the lead, along with his artillery. Behind them came the companies of Onslow, Johnston and Dobbs with artillery on each wing.

The Regulators outnumbered Tryon's force, but had no leadership, purpose, organization, arms or ammunition for a battle. They had no officer higher than a captain and each individual company operated independently of the others. They thought that just by displaying in front of Tryon would frighten the governor into giving into their demands. As Tryon approached he sent his aide de camp, Captain Malcolm, and the Sheriff of Orange to give the Regulators one hour to disperse. The Sheriff read the letter from Governor Tryon to four different groups of Regulators, but each of them refused. Husband tried to bring about a last minute peace, but when he saw that violence was going to happen he mounted his horse and rode away.

Many of the Regulators were wrestling and frolicking when an old soldier told them to be prepared for an attack at any minute. When Tryon did not receive any reply at the end of the hour he sent an officer to receive their reply. Their answer was, "Fire and be damned!" As the lead elements of Tryon's force marched towards the Regulators they waved their hats at the Provincials telling them to "come on!"

Some of the Regulators petitioned the Governor to give up seven of their men for the two men that had been captured the day before. Tryon agreed but soon became suspicious when after half an hour there was no appearance of the captured officers. Suspecting that the Regulators were using the time to flank his army he marched to within 30 yards and gave the order to fire. Tryon's men hesitated.

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Tryon then yelled out, “Fire! Fire on them or on me!” Tryon’s artillery obeyed and fired three rounds, which signaled the start of the attack. The Regulators returned fire.

The Regulators were no match for Tryon’s well trained and well equipped force. Tryon’s artillery proved effective in the beginning, but the frontiersmen crouched behind rocks and trees and drove the gunners away, capturing one gun. These men were alone in their defense though since most of the Regulators left when the firing started.

The battle lasted two hours. Tryon lost nine killed and sixty-one wounded. The Regulators lost the same number killed, but an undetermined number wounded. Governor Tryon took fifteen prisoners. One of these prisoners was James Few a “a slow-witted boy.” He was executed the next day to strike terror in the hearts of the Regulators and to appease his men.

The day following the battle Tryon issued a proclamation offering pardon to those who would submit to the government and take an oath of allegiance. On June 9th six of the prisoners taken at the battle were sentenced to death and executed. The rest of the prisoners were given a reprieve until “his Majesty’s pleasure should be known.”

General Waddell returned to the Cape Fear and Governor Tryon departed for New York where he had just received the appointment as governor. He left Colonel Ashe in charge of the militia and ordered them to return to New Berne. The Regulators went into hiding; many went out west to what would become Tennessee and Kentucky. By 1772 1,500 of them had moved west after hearing glowing reports from Daniel Boone.

In 1772 the Johnston Act expired and the leaders of the Regulators, no longer outlawed, surrendered. When the Revolutionary War started the Crown had all but Husband pardoned. Ironically the men that fought with Tryon would fight against the Crown. Men like James Moore, Richard Caswell, Alexander Lillington, Robert Howe, Griffith Rutherford and John Ashe. The Regulators who stayed in North Carolina and honored their oath ended up backing the King and fighting against their former enemies.⁶

1775

“A Free and Independent People”

**Cochran’s and Hobcaw Magazine⁷, Charlestown⁸, South Carolina
21-22 April 1775**

Prior to any shots being fired at Lexington, Massachusetts some South Carolinians had been building up a secret store of gunpowder. The South Carolina militia of William Henry Drayton and of the Charlestown Artillery Company had received 10,000 pounds of gunpowder in a year and a half for training their men from the British Government. This powder was stored away.

In 1774 England became worried about the amount of gunpowder available to the colonies and ordered that no “gunpowder or any sort of arms or ammunition” be exported “out of the kingdom.” The South Carolina General Committee advised that each man in the colony should “provide themselves with a keg of twelve and a half pounds of gunpowder and a proportionable quantity of bullets.” The General Assembly also encouraged the militia to “train every Saturday to acquire a thorough knowledge of the use of arms and discipline.” The excuse given to justify the increased military activity was to prepare for an attack from the Spanish in Havana.

In March of 1775 the only British presence in Charlestown was the Royal Navy Sloop *Tamar*. Her captain moved the *Tamar* out into the harbor so that the Carolinians would not seize it. Some of the troops in Charlestown were not militia or minutemen, but well trained and disciplined troops. Charlestown was able to field three eighty-man companies of light infantry, grenadiers and artillery.

Charlestown in April of 1775 was ringed by fortifications that had defended the town since the French and Indian War. Broughton’s Bastion, Lyttleton’s Bastion and Granville’s Bastion paralleled the Cooper River. Along East Bay Street was the curtain line. This was a brick wall five feet high that paralleled the river and ended at the Governor’s Bridge. In the middle of town was the Armory, known as

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

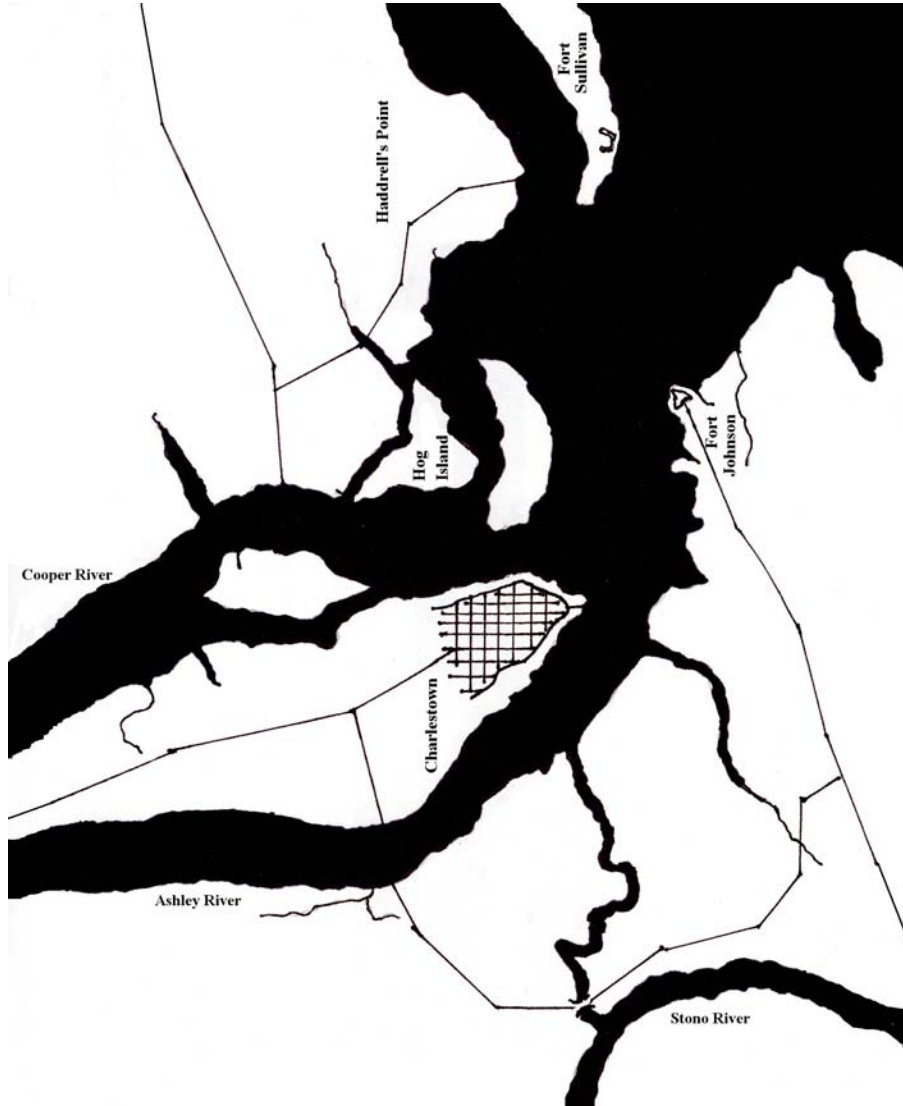
Cochran’s Magazine. Outside of town was the Charlestown Neck Magazine.

The largest fortification in Charlestown was Fort Johnson on James Island that guarded access to the Charlestown harbor. The James Island Militia Company could occupy the fort. Inside the town the Charles Town Militia consisted of 1,500 men divided into ten companies and a volunteer company was also available. Most of the cannon for these fortifications were in storage and would take time to mount them on carriages.

Three days after the Massachusetts colonists fired on British troops at Lexington and Concord the Secret Committee of the Provincial Congress seized the arms in Cochran’s Magazine. Thomas Moultrie wrote, “A few gentlemen went to Capt. Cochran (the King’s store-keeper) and demanded the keys of him: he said ‘He could not give them up, neither could he hinder them from breaking open the doors; this hint was enough; there was no time for hesitation; and that night a number of gentlemen went and broke open the doors.’”

Eight hundred stands of small arms, two hundred cutlasses and all the cartridge boxes were seized from the State House Armory. The South Carolinians now had the arms, and the next day the powder stores in Hobcaw Magazine, across the Cooper River, was seized. 170 pounds were taken from the Hobcaw Magazine and another 600 pounds in the shipyard. This action was done without any knowledge of the events of the rebellion in the North, but was done in response to the British Government’s coercive measures. The Royal Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina William Bull offered a reward of 100 pounds for apprehending the offenders, but the offenders were never caught.⁹

Patrick O'Kelley



Charleston, South Carolina

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

**Charlotte Town, North Carolina
20 May 1775**

Colonel Thomas Polk of the Charlotte militia sent out notices instructing the citizens of Mecklenburg to elect two men from each of the militia districts. These delegates assembled on May 19th at the courthouse in Charlotte. The meeting was announced because North Carolina Royal Governor Josiah Martin was trying to dictate the course of provincial legislation.

The Mecklenburg delegates elected Abraham Alexander as chairman and John McKnitt Alexander as secretary. John Davidson wrote that when they “were perfectly organized for business, a motion was made to declare ourselves independent of the Crown of Great Britain, which was carried by a large majority. Dr. Ephraim Brevard was then appointed to give us a sketch of the Declaration of Independence, which he did.”

During that day a courier rode into the village and told the assembly that a month before the citizens of Massachusetts had taken up arms against the British. The delegates now abandoned caution and angrily declared that they were ready to take up arms against British authority. Several of the delegates remembered that after the defeat of the Regulators at Alamance they had taken oaths to support the Crown. A suggestion was made that the oath was a two party contract, binding only as long as both parties upheld it. Since the King had withdrawn his protection and fired on citizens in Massachusetts the oath was no longer binding.

The minute book kept by John McKnitt Alexander containing the record of the convention of May 19-20, 1775 was burned in April 1800. Some historians question its authenticity, including Thomas Jefferson, whose national Declaration of Independence was adopted more than a year after the Mecklenburg Declaration. Many of those who dispute the authenticity of the Declaration always have insisted that when the minute book was burned, every paper and record was destroyed with it. This happens to be untrue. Other papers bearing on the subject, including a good copy of the May 20 Declaration, escaped the fire and now may be seen among the papers of the

Patrick O'Kelley

Southern Historical Collection in the library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

However on May 31, 1775 the same citizens met and created the Mecklenburg Resolves. Since the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence suspends all laws imposed by England, the Mecklenburg Resolves would establish new laws that would govern the now independent Mecklenburgers.

Captain James Jack traveled from Charlotte to Philadelphia to inform the Second Continental Congress of the Mecklenburgers' proclamation of freedom and presented the document to the North Carolina delegates in Congress. The delegates never presented the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence to Congress. Some believe they realized the declaration was worded so angrily that it would hurt chances of regaining peace with Britain.

On the modern state flag of North Carolina is the date, May 20th 1775, for the date that the Mecklenburg declaration was signed. The text of the Mecklenburg Declaration that was reconstructed from Alexander's notes, but was not published until decades later, is:

That whosoever directly or indirectly abetted or in any way, form or manner countenanced to unchartered & dangerous invasion of our rights as claimed by G. Britain is an enemy to this County - to America & to the inherent & inalienable rights of man.

We the Citizens of Mecklenburg County do hereby desolve the political bands which have connected us to the Mother Country & hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British crown & abjure all political connection, contract or association with that nation who have wantonly trampled on our rights & liberties & inhumanely shed the innocent blood of American patriots at Lexington.

We do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people - are & of right ought to be a sovereign & self-governing association, under the controul of no power other than that of our God & the general government of the congress, to the maintenance of which independence civil & religious we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual cooperation, our lives, our fortunes & our most sacred honor.

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

As we now acknowledge the existence & controul of no law or legal officers, civil or military, within this County, we do hereby ordain & adopt as a rule of life, all, each & every of our former laws - wherein nevertheless the crown of great Britain never can be considered as holding rights, privileges, immunities, or authority therein.

It is also further decreed that all, each & every military officer in this County is hereby reinstated in his former command & authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz. a Justice of the peace in the character of a 'Committee-man' to issue process, hear & determine all matters of controversy according to sd. adopted laws - to preserve peace, union & harmony in sd. County & to use every exertion to spread the love of country & fire of freedom throughout America until a more general & organized government be established in this province. A selection from the members present shall constitute a Committee of public safety for sd. County.

That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted by express to the President of the Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia, to be laid before that body.

Signed by:

Ephraim Brevard	Hezekiah J. Balch	John Phifer
James Harris	William Kennon	John Foard
Richard Barry	Henry Downs	Ezra Alexander
Charles Alexander	Zaccheus Wilson	Waightstill Avery
Benjamin Patton	Matthew McClure	Neil Morrison
Robert Irwin	John Flennegin	David Reese
William Graham	John Queary	Hezekiah Alexander
Adam Alexander	John Davidson	Richard Harris
Thomas Polk	Abraham Alexander	John McKnitt Alexander ¹⁰

Patrick O'Kelley

**Beaufort County Slave Uprising, North Carolina
8 July 1775**

North Carolina Royal Governor Josiah Martin formulated a plan for a massive British invasion of the South, beginning in North Carolina. Martin considered the idea of arming the slaves so that they would rise up against their Whig masters, however Martin later stated that he had never advocated a slave revolt. A slave uprising did occur in July 1775 along the eastern part of North Carolina, in Beaufort, Pitt and Craven counties and along the Tar River. The slave revolt originated in Beaufort County.

On July 8 the Pitt County Safety Committee ordered out the militia to “shoot one or any number of Negroes who are armed and doth not willingly surrender their arms.” A posse of 100 men captured 40 of the “suspected heads” of the uprising. The uprising had supposedly been organized by a white sea captain and “Merrick, a negro man slave who formerly Belonged to Major Clark, a Pilot at Okacock but now to Captain Naath Blinn of Bath Town.”¹¹

Five of the slaves were whipped, receiving 80 lashes each, and had their ears cropped. As soon as those slaves were punished there arose a second revolt in Craven and Pitt counties. Though 250 armed slaves were supposed to have been on the road between the counties, none were found.

According to the captured slaves the plan was for all the slaves to rise up on July 8th and to “fall on and destroy the family where they lived, then to proceed from House to House, (Burning as they went) until they arrived in the Back Country where they were to be received with open arms by a number of persons there appointed and armed by the Government for their Protection, and as a further reward they were to be settled in a free government of their own.”

The militia recovered “considerable ammunition” lending credence to the story. In the end the Whigs decided to destroy Fort Johnston on the Cape Fear River so that it would not be a gathering point for runaway slaves.¹²

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Bloody Point, South Carolina ¹³ **Naval skirmish**
9 July 1775

American Forces

South Carolina Provincial Troops	
Captain John Barnwell	
1 st South Carolina Regiment	300
Colonial Navy	
South Carolina Boats	
Captain John Bull	
Armed Barge	
1 st South Carolina Regiment	
Captain Barnwell’s Company	6 recruits
Lieutenant James Docharty	
Granville County Regiment of Foot	20
Captain John Joyner	
Armed Barge	
1 st South Carolina Regiment	9
Georgia Provincial Navy	
Captain Oliver Bowen	
Schooner <i>Liberty</i> ¹⁴	50 sailors
6-pounders	10
Swivels ¹⁵	“many”
Captain Joseph Habersham	
Georgia Militia	

British Forces

Commanding Officer	Captain Richard Maitland
Royal Navy	
Captain Richard Maitland	
His Majesty’s Armed Schooner <i>Phillippa</i>	6 guns
Unknown Captain	
Supply vessel	

Casualties The supply vessel captured

After the town of Savannah learned of the fighting in Lexington and Concord the “Liberty Boys” seized 500 pounds of powder from

Patrick O'Kelley

the Provincial Magazine on 11 May 1775. On the first of June, Royal Governor James Wright and the Loyalists of Savannah prepared to celebrate the King's birthday, however when a Royal Navy schooner arrived in Savannah on 2 June 1775 the Liberty Boys spiked the batteries and threw the cannon over the bluff. On June 5th the Whigs raised the first liberty pole and marched the armed militia. George Walton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, wrote, "a number of gentlemen dined at Tondee's tavern, where the *Union flag* was hoisted upon the liberty-pole, and two pieces of artillery were placed under it."

Things became violent when a man named Hopkins ridiculed the Liberty Boys. The Whigs tarred and feathered Hopkins and paraded him through town on a cart for five hours. Governor Wright wrote a letter to General Gage in Boston and requested that he send some British troops to Savannah to suppress the rebellion. The Secret Committee at Charleston intercepted the letter and replaced it with their own that had Governor Wright's name counterfeited on it. The letter said "I have wrote for troops to awe the people, but now there is no occasion for sending them, for the people are again come to some order." This bit of deception misled Gage.

In early summer of 1775 the South Carolina Council of Safety received intelligence that a shipment of gunpowder was on the way to Savannah, and that the powder would be used to supply the Indians. Two barges were sent from South Carolina to Bloody Point to intercept the shipment.

Captain John Joyner and Captain John Barnwell of the 1st South Carolina Regiment commanded the barges. When the South Carolinians arrived at Bloody Point they encouraged Captain Joseph Habersham of Georgia to outfit a schooner with 10 carriage guns and "many" swivels, and join the "fleet". Captain Oliver Bowen commanded the Georgia schooner. Captain Richard Maitland and the armed schooner *Phillippa* were escorting the supply vessel. On July 7th the two British ships anchored nine miles from Tybee Point and waited for a pilot to carry the ships into the Savannah River.

The Georgia schooner *Liberty* saw the two ships at anchor on July 8th, and stopped four miles from them. The small Carolina fleet

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

waited there until the next day at two o’clock when a pilot arrived and began guiding the British ships to the Tybee Bar.

Maitland saw the *Liberty* closing the distance. “The schooner was full of armed men and had ten carriage-guns mounted.” Below her deck several boards had been removed “which were for small arms in close quarters.”

At four o’clock the Georgia schooner fired two muskets at the *Phillippa* and ordered Captain Maitland to identify himself. Maitland demanded to know who the schooner was. Bowen “hailed down their pendant and hoisted at the masthead a white flag with a red border, on the field of which flag was stamped or imprinted in large red letters the word ‘American Liberty’, and the people on board the schooner said the schooner’s name was the *Liberty*.”

The *Liberty* followed the *Phillippa* and anchored beside her that night. The next day when the *Phillippa* entered Tybee Point she was ordered to anchor at Cockspur Island. On the island was the encampment of the South Carolina Provincials. “The number of the whole appeared to be about three hundred.”

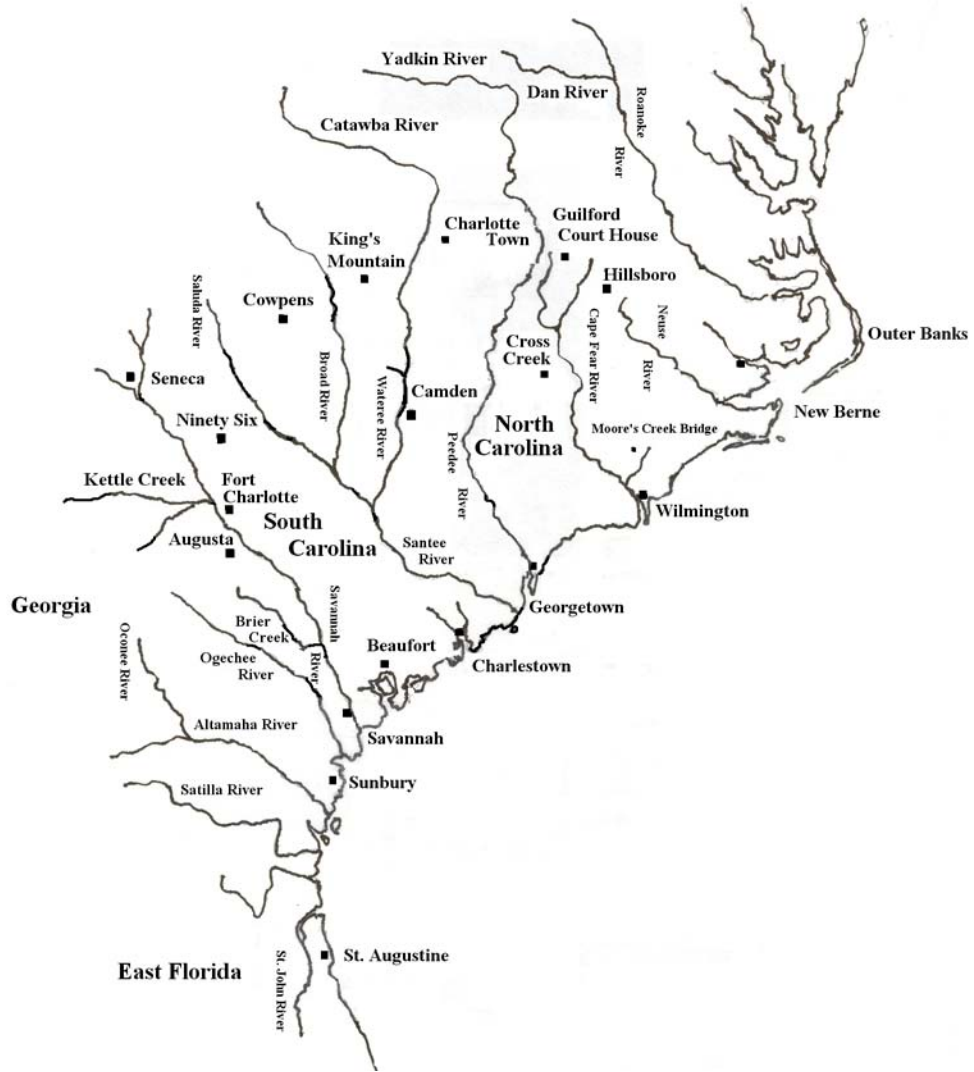
The South Carolinians rode out in boats and surrounded the two British vessels. Maitland was told to produce his papers. When it was learned that the powder was on board the Carolinians told him that they would “take all the gunpowder, shot, lead, and Indian trading arms.”

The Americans were able to take off 16,000 pounds of powder and “seven hundredweight of leaden bullets.” They also “took away all the bar-lead, sheet-lead, Indian trading arms, and shot, that were on board.” The Carolinians and the Georgians divided the cargo between them.

The South Carolinian’s powder was taken to Tucker’s Island where 4,000 pounds were put on board a schooner and delivered to the Congress in Philadelphia.

The powder was used in the siege of Boston and the invasion of Canada. The other 1,000 pounds and a supply of “salt-petre, sulphur, blankets and plains” were escorted back to Charlestown.¹⁶

Patrick O'Kelley



The Carolinas and Georgia

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

**Fort Charlotte, South Carolina
12 July 1775**

American Forces

Commanding Officer	Major James Mayson
South Carolina Regulars	
3 rd South Carolina Regiment of Rangers	
Captain John Caldwell	
1 st Company of Rangers	28
Captain Moses Kirkland ¹⁷	
2 nd Company of Rangers	23

Loyalist Forces

Commanding Officer	Captain George Whitefield
Loyalist Militia	
George Whitfield’s Company of Royal Militia	15
Lieutenant St. Pierre	
Fort Artillery	
Brass 3-pounders	2
Iron 6-pounders	4
Iron 4-pounders	6
Iron 2-pounders	4
Swivel guns on Triangles	2

The war opened up in the Carolinas on 19 April 1775 when a secret committee in Charlestown seized mail arriving on the British packet ship *Swallow*. The information from the ship revealed that the British Government was going to coerce the Colonies into submission. The Patriots in the Carolinas and Georgia then had a clear warning of the upcoming hostilities.

On 21 April the Patriots seized all the powder from the public magazines in Charlestown. On May 11 the Savannah Patriots seized their powder from the Royal magazine. On May 23rd Abner Nash led a group of Whigs to Tryon Palace in New Berne, North Carolina, to seize the cannon there. On May 31 the Mecklenburg Resolves, in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina declared all British laws null

Patrick O'Kelley

and void. On that day Royal Governor Josiah Martin fled from New Berne to Fort Johnston on the Cape Fear. On 6 June 1775 South Carolina was the first state to create regiments of regular troops. They created two infantry regiments made up of men from the Lowcountry and one regiment of Rangers from the Backcountry. On 8 June the Royal Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, fled to a British warship, the *Fowey*, at Yorktown, Virginia.

In June the Council of Safety in Charlestown ordered the commander of Fort Ninety-Six, James Mayson, to capture Fort Charlotte on the Savannah River west of Ninety-six.¹⁸ Fort Charlotte had been built in 1765 and was named after Queen Charlotte Sophia, wife of George III. According to Thomas Brown, a Loyalist in Georgia, Fort Charlotte was only second to the stone fort in St. Augustine in being the most formidable fortification in the South. However the fort's gun carriages needed repairs, the magazine needed new plaster and the cookhouse was useless.

Captains Kirkland and Caldwell with their Ranger companies took over Fort Charlotte without bloodshed or opposition. The only occupants of the fort were Captain Whitefield, his family, and a few men of the garrison. The rest of the Royal Militia was out at work. It was also easy to seize because Captain Whitefield had the same political views as Mayson. The Rangers seized 1,055 pounds of gunpowder, 18 cannon, 15 muskets, 83 casks of musket cartridges, 2,521 musket balls, and 343 iron cannonballs. Captain Mayson and the 3rd South Carolina Regiment would be stationed at Fort Charlotte to command the interior.¹⁹

Ninety-Six, South Carolina 17 July 1775

Ninety-six was a fort and trading post with the Cherokee Indians. It supposedly received the name Ninety-Six because the fort was ninety-six miles from Fort Prince George on the Keowee River. After being passed over for promotion the commander of Ninety-Six, Captain Moses Kirkland, decided to switch sides. Kirkland's company came with him to the Loyalists. Kirkland invited in a force

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

of Loyalist militia, led by Colonel Fletchall, to raid Ninety-Six. Fletchall stayed where he was, but sent 200 men from his force. Kirkland successfully prevailed upon every enlisted man in the garrison of Ninety-Six to desert. The Loyalist militia then took over the powder captured from Fort Charlotte and threw James Mayson in the Ninety-six jail. He was released a few hours later on bail to answer charges of robbing the King’s fort at Fort Charlotte.²⁰

Fort Johnston, North Carolina²¹
18 July 1775

Fort Johnston was a fort built to protect Brunswick Town from the Spaniards in the early 18th century. The fort was named after Gabriel Johnston, previous Royal Governor of North Carolina. The Spanish burned Brunswick and attempted to take the fort in 1748 in one of their last raids into North Carolina.

In 1765 Captain Robert Howe of the North Carolina militia had been made commandant of Fort Johnston after the death of the old commandant, Captain John Dalrymple. Howe was a friend and confidant of Governor William Tryon. After Howe had served as commandant for a year Captain John Collett arrived with a ministry commission that preempted the North Carolina governor’s appointment. When Collett left North Carolina in 1769 Tryon reinstated Howe as the commandant.

During the Regulator Movement Tryon depended upon Robert Howe for support from Fort Johnston to protect the capital at New Berne. Gunpowder, swivel guns and cannonballs were transferred from the fort to New Berne to protect the Governor. When Tryon left North Carolina in 1771 Robert Howe did not develop a good relationship with the new Royal governor, Josiah Martin. Howe was removed from his position of baron of the Court Exchequer, and then upon the return of Captain Collet to North Carolina Howe was removed as commandant of Fort Johnston.

In early 1775 Howe began training the Brunswick County Militia. Governor Martin did not think much of the militia, but he did identify Howe as one of the colony’s most dangerous men. Janet Schaw, of

Patrick O'Kelley

Edinburgh, Scotland spent most of 1775 on the Cape Fear and observed the militia while they trained. She wrote that the Brunswick militia training was “that of bush-fighting, but it appeared so confused and so perfectly different from any thing I ever saw, I cannot say whether they performed it well or not; but this I know that they were heated with rum till capable of committing the most shocking outrages...They at last...assembled on a plain field, and I must really laugh while I recollect their figure: 2000 men in their shirts and trousers, preceded by a very ill beat drum and a fiddler, who was also in his shirt with a long sword and a cue at his hair, who played with all his might. They made indeed a most unmartial appearance. But the worst figure there can shoot from behind a bush and kill even a General Wolfe.”

When the rebellion became too heated Governor Martin fled the governor's palace in New Berne after spiking the guns and hiding the ammunition of the palace. Initially Martin took refuge in Fort Johnston then after learning of an attack that was planned to be made against Fort Johnston he moved on board the British Sloop of War *Cruizer*. Martin left Collett in Fort Johnston, but Collett told him that he would not be able to defend the fort with the few men he had. Martin ordered the guns of Fort Johnston to be dismantled and moved to a position on the Cape Fear River that could be protected by the *Cruizer*.

A letter was delivered to Martin that informed him the militia intended to march on the fort and reclaim the guns, which would be kept safely for the King. In the letter Collet was charged with seizing corn from local residents and encouraging slaves to rebel against their owners.

On the night of July 18th Colonel Robert Howe and his militia, along with John Ashe and Cornelius Harnett, marched into the fort and burned it in full view of Governor Martin on the *Cruizer*. Five hundred men were observed inspecting the fort the next day, but none could get to the fort's guns, which had been in range of the *Cruizer*. Howe's men stayed at the fort for a while but did not rebuild it. Captain Collet, no longer having a fort to be in command of, sailed to

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Boston where he raised a company in the Royal Fencible American Regiment.²²

**Seneca Town, South Carolina
1 August 1775**

Skirmish

A detachment of 3rd South Carolina Rangers had been patrolling near Seneca Town on the South Carolina frontier.²³ The detachment stopped for the night and set up camp, but they failed to place out security. A party of Cherokee Indians surprised the Rangers, killing four and wounding six in the brief firefight.²⁴

**New Richmond, South Carolina
2 August 1775**

Thomas Brown had crossed the Atlantic in 1773 to take up lands in upper Georgia. He was a man of means because he brought seventy-four indentured servants with him, plus 75 more in 1775. He had twelve tracts of land near Augusta that encompassed 5,600 acres and he erected thirty-six farmhouses and a house. Brown wanted to continue to develop his estate, but this was cut short by the start of the war.

New Richmond was on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River, across from Augusta, Georgia. Because of his Loyalist leanings Thomas Brown was attacked by a mob of men calling themselves the “Liberty Boys” led by Captain Hamilton. The mob demanded that Brown sign the Association, an agreement that stopped trade with Britain, horse racing, and obedience to any measure ordained by Congress.

Brown refused stating that he did not want to take up arms against his country and he also did not want to fight against the people who were his neighbors. Captain Hamilton told Brown that he could not remain neutral. When Brown’s property was threatened with destruction he went inside his home and got two pistols. Brown told the mob that along with public liberty, they should respect private liberty. Fifty of the protesters left, but the rest rushed at Brown.

Patrick O'Kelley

Brown fired into the crowd, shooting a ringleader, Chesley Bostick, through the foot. Brown then drew his sword, but before he could strike he was beaten in the head from behind with a rifle butt.

The crowd stripped his hair off with knives, and tarred him so bad that he lost two toes. Brown survived the mob's justice and afterwards took his vengeance on Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida as the leader of the King's Rangers.²⁵

St. Augustine Bar, Florida

7 August 1775

The South Carolina Council of Safety devised a plan to take the island of New Providence in the Bahamas and seize the powder and military stores on the island. They chose Captain Clement Lemprière to head the expedition. Lemprière was a South Carolina privateer in command of the Sloop *Commerce* and was told he could go to New Providence or St. Augustine and seize any powder he could find.

When the *Commerce* was ready to sail from Beaufort to Providence Lemprière received information that a ship had sailed from London with a load of powder. The ship was the brig *Betsy* bound for St. Augustine under the command of Captain Alvara Lofthouse.

On August 7th the *Commerce* spotted the *Betsy* waiting off the St. Augustine Bar. The brig was too heavy to pass over the bar and was waiting for the tide so she could sail into the harbor at St. Augustine. Inside St. Augustine a British schooner, *St. John*, had slowly been unloading barrels of powder for the last two days and taking it into St. Augustine.

Lemprière brought the *Commerce* came alongside the *Betsy*, keeping his crew below decks. Lofthouse and his crew had not suspected anything and did not even know about the revolution. Lofthouse thought the *Commerce* was a "Negro vessel." When the *Commerce* came alongside the *Betsy* the armed crew of the *Commerce* jumped on board. The 16-man crew on board the British supply ship was sleeping and were away from their arms. They were quickly taken without injuries.

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

The Carolinians were able to unload 17,000 pounds of powder when they spotted the *St. John* coming out of the harbor. The *St. John* had been quickly outfitted to deal with the *Commerce* with “eight pieces of small ordnance, an officer and thirty privates of the 14 regiment.” The *Commerce* quickly departed the area, leaving the *Betsy* and most of her cargo of military stores. The cargo they left consisted of blankets, some field pieces and 6,000 more pounds of gunpowder.²⁶

**Fort Johnson, South Carolina
14 September 1775**

American Forces

Commanding Officer	Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Motte
South Carolina Regulars	
2 nd Regiment of Provincial Troops	
Captain Francis Marion	50
Light Infantry	
Lieutenant John Allen Walter	
Captain Bernard Elliot	
Grenadiers ²⁷	50
Lieutenant Richard Shubrick	
Captain Charles Cotesworth Pinckney	
1 st Regiment of Provincial Troops	
Grenadiers	50
Lieutenant John Mouatt	
South Carolina Militia	
Captain Benjamin Stone	
James Island Militia Company	100
Captain Thomas Heyward	
Charles Town Battalion of Artillery	3 pieces

Patrick O'Kelley

British Forces

Commanding Officer	Gunner George Walker
Seamen from the <i>Tamar</i>	5
Artillery	
26-pounders	7
18-pounders	12
12-pounder	1
9-pounder	1

Charlestown was the largest port south of New York City and it was the largest harbor in the South. For a ship to enter into Charlestown harbor was no easy matter. An arriving ship had to wait for the right combination of incoming tide and onshore breeze to begin the task of entering the harbor. A ship had to have a local pilot to guide it around the sandbars and shifting underwater obstacles, and many of the pilots in Charlestown were Black. A ship could take one of six channels to get to the city, depending on the draft of the vessel. If the ship were heavily laden it would enter through the main ship channel, however Lawford's channel could be used.

Once across the Charlestown sandbar the pilot would tack the ship four miles to the mouth of the harbor, the ship would then make a turn to port in front of Sullivan's Island and proceed towards town. A large sand bar, called the middle bank, divided the harbor into two sections. In another war this middle bank would have Fort Sumter built on it.

If a ship went into the southern passage it would pass in front of Fort Johnson on its way to the city of Charlestown. The fort was Charlestown's principal fort, built in 1747. It was located on James Island in Charlestown harbor, and had been named after Proprietary Governor Sir Nathaniel Johnson. The northern passage would pass through Rebellion Road, a large ship anchorage near Haddrell's Point. This name had been given to it in 1744 and had nothing to do with the current rebellion against the British. These passages would take a ship seven hours before a pilot could tie up to the Charlestown docks. Very small craft could get to Charlestown by entering Stono Inlet,

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

proceeding up Wappoo Creek and use the Ashley River to approach the Charlestown docks from the west.

In August 1775 Charlestown began to make the water approach into Charlestown more difficult. The beacon on the middle ground and lighthouse island was taken down. Also several trees used by pilots as landmarks to guide across the bar were chopped down. The King of England had declared the city of Charlestown in open rebellion, and the Council “dangerous and ill designing men.”

The Royal Sloop of War *Tamar* lay in Rebellion Road. She had been built in 1758 and was an old ship that had been posted to Charlestown from Boston in September 1774. The ship was described as being in “a very unwarlike condition” and its copper sheathing was “dropping off forward.” Captain Edward Thornborough was the captain of the *Tamar*. Even though the *Tamar* was an old ship, it still had the ability to destroy the town if it wished. The Carolinians had nothing to reach the ship. In June of 1775 a motion had been made to outfit the *Maria Wilhelmina* with fifty guns to drive away the *Tamar*, but the motion was voted down 180 to 11 in the Provincial Congress.

The Royal Governor of South Carolina, Lord William Campbell, had returned to South Carolina after an absence of two years. It was learned that the Governor was expecting a ship from England, the Sloop of War *Scorpion* along with the transport ship *Palliser*. The cargo ship was “to receive on board the cannon and other ordinance stores at Fort Johnson.”

The South Carolinians became alarmed because the guns at Fort Johnson made up a significant part of its defense and the fort was a primary storage site for a large quantity of round shot belonging to the town’s heavy artillery. The caretaker of Fort Johnson was a man known as “Gunner” Walker and he was not a friend to the Patriot cause. On August 19th he had been tarred and feathered by a Patriot mob in Charlestown for making harsh comments about America and the South Carolina assemblymen. The mob wheeled him around the city in a cart, and stopped in front of all the Loyalist homes. He then was forced to “drink damnation to them all.”

Patrick O'Kelley

On August 31st the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments had established grenadier companies. The commanders of the grenadier companies were allowed to choose men from all the other companies and they would be an elite hand picked force available for dangerous missions. On September 7th another British ship, the armed sloop *Cherokee*, appeared in the harbor. The Council of Safety thought this ship was the vanguard of a British fleet sent to punish the South Carolinians. Until September the Carolinians had been careful not to provoke the British ship in its harbor, but by the middle of the month the Patriots felt confident that they could take Fort Johnson.

The Council of Safety gave orders to Colonel William Moultrie that he need to “detach one hundred and fifty men under such command as you shall judge proper for the seizure.” Colonel Moultrie chose Lieutenant Colonel Motte to command the force. Motte’s assault force would consist of the Grenadier companies of the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiment under the command of Captain Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Barnard Elliot. With them was Francis Marion’s light infantry company. Reinforcements under Major Owen Roberts would move in on Fort Johnson after Motte’s force had taken possession.

At midnight Motte loaded his men aboard two ships, the *Carolina* and *Georgia Packet* at Gadsden’s Wharf and set sail for the fort. The assault would be the first time that South Carolina actually attacked British military forces. The assault force traveled at night so the *Tamar* would not detect them.

Both of the Carolina ships were afraid of the guns at the fort and anchored a mile to the west of the fort. Only two small boats were available for landing, so just a few men could be carried over at a time. Instead of landing at Captain Stone’s wharf the ships were carried onto a mud flat by the tides and currents. The boats had to be dragged through the mud for a quarter mile by the landing force. This was hazardous due to the number of sharks that fed on the garbage dumped by the city into the bay. A few days earlier a “Negro boy, property of Mr. Reed” had his leg bitten off by a shark when he decided to bathe in the harbor.

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Moses Kirkland had been able to sneak on board the *Tamar* and tell the Governor of the capture of Ninety-Six. The Governor had watched the activity in town and deduced that the Carolinians were going to seize the fort, the last position still controlled by the English. Governor Campbell ordered his secretary, Alexander Innes, to take the sailors on board the *Tamar* and dismount the cannon at Fort Johnson. The sailors had labored through the night dismounting and spiking the guns and left the fort only two hours before the arrival of Motte and his men.

By dawn only part of Motte’s force was ashore. Elliot and Pinckney’s Grenadier companies were ashore, but Marion’s Light Infantry Company had not arrived yet. Motte decided to attack with the men he had. A mile from the fort he split his element into three parts, each to assault one side of the fort. Once they reached the fort they found the gates were wide open. Lieutenant Mouatt rushed the fort and quickly captured Gunner Walker and five sailors from the *Tamar*, who put up no resistance. Inside the fort all the cannons had been thrown from their carriages, however they had not been spiked.

When the Governor found out that Motte had seized the fort he sent his secretary, Alexander Innes, to the fort. The secretary was met at waterside by Captain Pinckney and asked, “What troops are in the fort?” Pinckney answered him, “American troops.”

Innes then asked, “Who commands them?” Pinckney asked, “By what authority do you ask it?” Innes fired back, “By the Governor’s! And I have a message for Colonel Motte!” Pinckney told him that he would deliver the message to him, but Innes would not be allowed inside the fort.²⁸ Shortly afterward the *Tamar* came up to within point blank range of the fort. The fort only had three cannons remounted at that time, but the fort’s defenders were ready to put up a fight.

Motte came to the waterside of the fort and met Innes. The secretary asked, “By what authority did he take possession of the fort?” Motte replied that he held it by the express command of the Council of Safety of this Province. Both British ships returned to their former positions without firing a shot. The South Carolina Royal Governor dissolved the Commons House of Assembly that day and fled to the *Tamar*.

Patrick O'Kelley

After the capture of the fort the Carolinians feared an attack by the Royal Navy. On September 15th Motte ordered 250 men of the 1st South Carolina Regiment under the command of Major Owen Roberts to reinforce Fort Johnson. Captain Thomas Heyward with a detachment of Charlestown artillery had three cannon immediately mounted. The citizens of the town sent “the most valuable...effects and papers into the country.” Many citizens did not want the Patriots to antagonize the British. After the fort was seized a petition signed by 300 citizens was sent to Henry Laurens, asking that work “desist on fortifying the town and stopping the bar.”

The South Carolinians defenders flew their flag for the first time over Fort Johnson. Colonel Moultrie described the flag; “I was desired by the council of safety to have one made, upon which, as the state troops were clothed in blue, and the fort was garrisoned by the first and second regiments, who wore a silver crescent on the front of their caps; I had a large blue flag made with a crescent in the dexter corner, to be in uniform with the troops: This was the first American flag which was displayed in South Carolina.”²⁹

**Bullock's Creek, South Carolina
16 September 1775**

American Forces

Commanding Officer	Colonel William Henry Drayton
Colony Militia	
Colonel William Henry Drayton	
South Carolina Militia	
Major James Mayson	
Artillery	4 swivel guns
Major Andrew Williamson	
Backwoods militia	
Captain LeRoy Hammond	
Captain James McCall	
Georgia Militia	84
<i>Total American Forces</i>	1,100

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

<i>Loyalist Forces</i>	
Commanding Officer	Colonel Thomas Fletchall
Loyalist Militia	
Colonel Thomas Fletchall	
Upper Saluda Militia	250
Captain Thomas Brown	
Captain Robert Cunningham	
<i>Total Loyalist Forces</i>	2,450

When hostilities broke out between Great Britain and the colonies most men had to choose either the Patriot or Loyalist side. To remain neutral may be dangerous. By August 1775 several bands of men in the backcountry of South Carolina had chosen to support the King. Patrick and Robert Cunningham, Thomas Fletchall, Moses Kirkland and Thomas Brown led these armed bands.

Colonel William Henry Drayton, commander of a regiment of militia in Charlestown, was convinced that the turncoat Captain Moses Kirkland was raising men for an attack on Augusta. To prevent this Drayton sent Major Andrew Williamson to the river crossing thirty miles above Augusta, Colonel William Thomson's Rangers to the ridge forty miles to the east, and Colonel Richard Richardson to the Enoree to check on any support coming into Ninety-six from Loyalist colonel Thomas Fletchall at Bullock's Creek. Drayton's men moved from Snow Hill to Ninety-Six dragging four cannon.

Along the way Drayton picked up eighty-four Georgians raised to fight Kirkland, and 141 South Carolinians under Captain LeRoy Hammond. On 30 August Drayton's force arrived at Loyalist Robert Cunningham's home, hoping to surprise him, however Cunningham had fled. He had left all of his papers and letters, which were seized by Drayton's men. The approach of Drayton's army made Kirkland's followers desert him at the time Kirkland was on the British warship the *Tamar* in Charlestown Harbor conferring with the Royal governor.

On the 31st Drayton learned that another group of Loyalists were gathering near Saluda and he sent 100 horsemen there to disperse

Patrick O'Kelley

them. Drayton learned that Cunningham had joined with Colonel Thomas Fletchall and they were going to attack Drayton's force at 2:00 in the morning. Colonel Drayton could retreat towards Colonel Thomson's Rangers holding a ridge forty miles to the west, or he could defend Ninety-Six. Drayton had chosen to stand and fight. Drayton seized Ninety-Six and prepared it to defend it against any possible attack from Fletchall's Loyalists. After Ninety-six was captured Kirkland went disguised into Charlestown and returned to the *Tamar*. He later went to Saint Augustine and then to Virginia, where he was captured and sent to a Philadelphia prison.

On September 1st Drayton decided to place his men in the prison building in Ninety-Six. A swivel gun was placed in each room of the building, and a small guard placed with each gun. Drayton also sent Major James Mayson with 100 mounted men to a ford on the Saluda River. They would ambush whatever came to attack the jail. Both armies were eager to attack each other but no fighting occurred. An uneasy peace went on for a few weeks while both sides tried to anticipate what the other side was doing.

Drayton invited Fletchall to Ninety-Six and proceeded to get him drunk, persuading him to sign a treaty on September 16th that stated neither side would give aid and comfort to any British troops, nor would they dispute the authority of Congress. This was known as the Treaty of Ninety-Six. After the signing Fletchall's men were furious and were willing to follow Cunningham or Brown into battle. Instead the men were sent home and told by Brown to prepare to rally when the time was needed. After Robert Cunningham returned to his home he was taken "by the Liberty people in Charleston" and imprisoned there. Cunningham was released and he ran for election to the South Carolina Congress in 1778, as a Tory. He beat James Williams and was elected to the Senate.³⁰

Sullivan's Island, Charlestown Harbor, South Carolina 18 September 1775

After the Patriots had seized Fort Johnson they expected the position to be so formidable that the Royal Navy ships would leave

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Charlestown harbor. The British ships did not leave, but merely moved out of range of Fort Johnson and anchored in Rebellion Road. The Carolinians began to consider a way to reduce the threat of the Royal Navy. The Provincial Congress debated on whether to fortify Sullivan’s Island, beside Rebellion Roads. The Congress sent Lieutenant Colonel Motte to Fort Johnson and sent another detachment to Mt. Pleasant and Sullivan’s Island. This move was not a secret because it was reported in the Charlestown papers.

On 18 September Captain Thornborough of the Royal Sloop of War *Tamar* sent a detachment on shore to Sullivan’s Island to keep the island under British control. The *Tamar* fired a 6-pounder and seven swivel guns loaded with grape at the shoreline in case any of the patriots may be lurking, but there was no response. Thornborough’s men were there to cut down any trees on the island that might be used in making a new fort. That day the Royal Navy sloop *Scorpion* arrived to reinforce the *Tamar*.

The following morning Colonel Motte at Fort Johnson seized a boat bringing supplies to the *Tamar*. Motte fired a 6-pound cannon to stop the boat, and then boarded it. The Carolinians confiscated twenty-one casks of water, one case and two bottles of liquor and some brown sugar. Thornborough was angered at this aggression and declared a blockade of Charlestown. On 23 September the *Tamar* seized the sloop *Polly* because the ship had a “quantity of shott on board.” The *Polly*’s owners, Benjamin and Isaac Huger, protested that the shot on board the vessel was only ballast. Captain Thornborough refused to return the sloop and the *Polly* became a tender for the *Tamar*.³¹

The sailors from the *Tamar* that had been captured at Fort Johnson told Lieutenant Colonel Motte that three more warships and a bomb ketch would be coming to Charlestown to attack Fort Johnson, and then burn the town. This was a realistic threat since the British did burn Charlestown, Massachusetts. The South Carolina Council of Safety declared a state of emergency.³²

Patrick O'Kelley

Cumming's Point, Charlestown Harbor, South Carolina³³
28 September 1775

The Sloop of War *Tamar* continued to remain in the harbor of Charlestown, reinforced by the *Cherokee* and the *Scorpion*. These ships delayed the South Carolina Patriots from establishing forts in the surrounding islands. The captain of the *Cherokee*, Lieutenant John Fergusson, wanted to punish the town for capturing Fort Johnson. Royal governor Campbell liked Fergusson's attitude so much better than that of Captain Thornborough of the *Tamar*. Fergusson described Thornborough as "a poor, helpless, lame, bedridden old man." However the "bedridden old man" did have some fight left.

When thirty South Carolinians tried to move to Cumming's Point in three canoes, the *Tamar* moved to intercept them, however the wind died out and the *Tamar* beached on a sandbar. The ship used her anchor and kedge to haul herself into a better wind, then when she came within range of the canoes she fired her 6-pounder at them with round shot. The South Carolinians quickly returned to Fort Johnson.³⁴

Rebellion Road, Charlestown Harbor, South Carolina
18 October 1775

On 18 October the Royal Navy sloop *Tamar* fired on a boat leaving from Fort Johnson with round shot from its 6-pounders. The boat retreated back to Fort Johnson and there were no injuries. Since the Royal Navy presence continued to be a threat to Charlestown the Carolinians continued to improve Fort Johnson against a possible attack. By 25 October over 2,000 palmetto logs had been floated across Charleston harbor to rebuild the outer walls.

Another solution would be to engage the ships with naval power. On 26 October the Provincial Congress began to determine how "many seamen are enlisted in the Regiments of foot." Colonel Motte wrote, "It was now thought necessary to have some armed schooners for the defence of our harbor and rivers, but it was very difficult to

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

man them without taking the seamen from the first and second regiments, as they had already inlisted all the sailors in port; however it was absolutely necessary as the enemy had a schooner cruising on our bar, and we had information that the men-of-war’s boats used to come up to town every night and get intelligence of our proceedings: Therefore, on 27th October, the council of safety ordered that thirty seamen from the first and second regiments be put on board the *Defense* Schooner, commanded by Capt. Tufts; the schooner was stationed between Fort Johnson, and the town, to intercept the men-of-war’s boats.”³⁵

Congaree River, South Carolina³⁶
31 October 1775³⁷

To avert an outbreak of Indian raids and to appease the Cherokees Henry Laurens, President of the South Carolina Council of Safety, had sent a supply of 1,000 pounds of powder and lead to the frontier for the use in hunting. This powder was being escorted by a detachment of Rangers under the command of Lieutenant Thomas Charleton. The Loyalists did not want the Patriots to have the Indians as allies, so Patrick Cunningham needed to intercept the shipment. Cunningham delayed the first wagon driven by Moses Cotter at the Congarees. This wagon was escorted by a vanguard of twenty men.

Cunningham asked Cotter what he had in the wagon. Cotter told them it was rum. Sixty men then rose out of the roadside. Cunningham said, “I order you to stop your waggon in his majesty’s name, as I understand you have ammunition for the Indians to kill us, and I am come on purpose to take it in his majesty’s name.” Cunningham had an ulterior motive and was also taking the powder in retaliation for the arrest of his brother Robert. The Loyalists removed the kegs of powder and put the powder in bags they had prepared before the seizure. They also cut the lead bars into small pieces with their tomahawks.

Lieutenant Charleton and the Ranger escort appeared in the distance. Cunningham’s men quickly hid in the trees. One of Cunningham’s men said, “there comes the liberty caps; damn their

Patrick O'Kelley

liberty caps, we will soon blow them to hell.” Lieutenant Charleton was quickly surrounded. He was outnumbered and facing rifles at close range. When one of the Loyalist fired into the air Charleton wisely surrendered. The Loyalists marched off with the ammunition and the Ranger prisoners, who were soon released. Moses Cotter immediately went to Ninety-Six and reported the incident to Major Mayson.

Not wanting to cause panic in the backcountry President Laurens and the council immediately dispatched letters assuring the people that the powder had been sent only after “long and mature deliberation.” Their decision had been based on the premise that a smaller amount of powder would be required to keep the Cherokee at peace than would be necessary to defeat them in battle.

On November 4th Major Andrew Williamson in the Long Cane Militia District learned that the powder had been taken and raised his militia regiment. They marched to Ninety-Six with the mission of retaking “that ammunition and bring those people to justice.” However this was only a pretext to round up even more Loyalists because Colonel Richardson had been taking Loyalists into custody before the Mine Creek incident, in violation of the Ninety-Six Treaty.³⁸

Charlestown Bar, South Carolina November 1775

While sailing through a heavy fog the Royal Sloop of War *Tamar* captured a Georgian sloop. On board the *Tamar* was Royal South Carolina Governor Lord Campbell. Captain John Wanton commanded the Georgian sloop that had a load of apples and cider bound for Georgia. The Royal Governor took the apples and put “Gunner” George Walker in command of the Georgian sloop. “Gunner” Walker had been the man in charge of Fort Johnson in Charlestown when it was captured by the Patriots and had just recently been released by South Carolina.

Walker took on board the sloop two trunks of pistols and cutlasses, two chests of arms, and one other sailor from the *Tamar*. He had

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

instructions from Lord Campbell to go to St. Augustine and bring back twenty men to retake Fort Johnson. As soon as the *Tamar* was out of sight Wanton and his men seized “Gunner” and his mate, and placed them in the hold. Captain Wanton sailed to Savannah and turned over the two men to the Committee and collected £200 for the boxes of arms.³⁹

**Charlestown Bar, South Carolina
9 November 1775**

In September the city of Charlestown had not cut off all supplies to the British ships, but they did limit it to a single day’s rations at a time. The British retaliated by creating a blockade of the port. In October the Provincial Congress outfitted the South Carolina Navy ship *Defense* with men from the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments to counter the naval threat. These men had been sailors prior to enlisting in the Carolina regiments.

On October 23rd the Royal Navy ships were finally denied any provisions at all. In retaliation Captain Thornborough of the *Cherokee* no longer allowed any vessel to enter the harbor for any reason. The normally faint-hearted merchants of Charlestown became whole-hearted Patriots when faced with the possibility of economic failure.

All along the Charlestown waterfront the gun positions had been enlarged, and new batteries were built on Gadsden’s, Exchange, Beale’s and Gibbe’s wharfs. These wharfs projected into the Cooper River and made artillery platforms that could rake any ship coming down the stream. Some wharves had buildings on them and they were torn down to permit an unobstructed field of fire. Furnaces were constructed at certain positions to heat up shot that would set enemy ships on fire.

Many of the citizens of Charlestown did not want to attack the British ships in the harbor, claiming that the Continental Congress refused them permission to attack British warships. However Congress authorized the three regiments of “Continental” and also told the Council of Safety that if they “think it expedient for the

Patrick O'Kelley

security of that colony, to seize or destroy, and shall seize and destroy, any ship or vessel of war, this Congress will approve of such proceedings.” Though the Congress authorized the Continentals, they were not in the Continental army and were still considered Provincial troops.

In November the entire South Carolina Navy consisted of the schooner *Defense*, under the command of Captain Simon Tufts, and the two pilot boats *Hawke* under Captain Joseph Vessey and the *Hibernia* under Captain Thomas Smith. Soldiers from the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments augmented these ships as sailors. Another ship, the *Comet*, was still being outfitted.

The first cruise of the South Carolina Navy was on November 7th when the two pilot boats *Hawke* and *Hibernia* set sail to warn any approaching merchant ships that they needed to go to the ports of Beaufort or Georgetown. On November 9th the two Carolina pilot boats spotted the British pilot boat *Shark* under the command of Lieutenant Peyton. The two Carolina boats chased the British boat back to Charlestown in the very first offensive action taken by the South Carolina Navy.⁴⁰

Hog Island Channel, Charlestown Harbor, South Carolina 11 – 12 November 1775

American Forces

Commanding Officer	Captain Simon Tufts
South Carolina Provincial Navy	
Schooner <i>Defense</i>	40
9-pounders	2
6-pounders	6
4-pounders	4
Captain William Scott	
2 nd South Carolina Regiment	35

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

British Forces

Commanding Officer	Captain Edward Thornborough	
Royal Navy		
Captain Edward Thornborough		
His Majesty’s Sloop of War <i>Tamar</i>		100
6-pounders		16
Swivel guns		14
Lieutenant John Fergusson		
His Majesty’s Sloop of War <i>Cherokee</i>		50
6-pounders		8
4-pounders		4
3-pounders		3

The Royal Governor of South Carolina, Lord William Campbell, had taken refuge aboard the *Tamar*. The *Tamar* had been reinforced by the British sloop, the *Cherokee*, and was anchored just out of range of Fort Johnson’s guns in an area known as Rebellion Road. Rumors of an impending attack by Royal Navy ships brought about changes in the harbors defense. The Carolinians decided to close the Hog Island channel by sinking several old schooners.⁴¹

The plan was to have the South Carolina Navy schooner *Defense* sink several old ships in Marsh Channel and Hog Island Creek. Thirty-five men from the 2nd South Carolina Regiment on Fort Johnson augmented the crew for this mission and were to act as marines. Fort Johnson was placed on alert so that they would be able to fire upon the British ships in support of the *Defense*. The plan was to have the British shoot first so that they would be the aggressors. To keep this mission a secret Lieutenant Colonel Motte was ordered to detain all boats and canoes fishing in the harbor.

In the afternoon of November 11th Captain Tufts and his ship, *Defense* proceeded with four hulks in order to sink them in the channel. The *Defense* flew the blue South Carolina flag with the crescent. On board the *Defense* was William Henry Drayton, the President of the Provincial Congress.

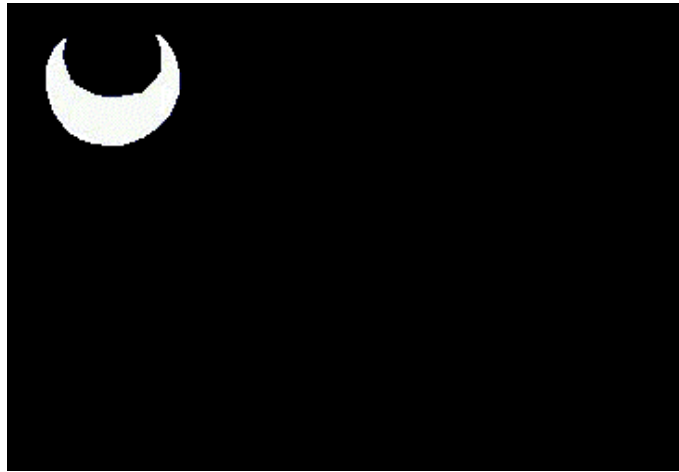
At 4:30 in the afternoon the *Tamar*, commanded by Captain Edward Thornborough, fired six shots at the *Defense*; Tufts dropped

Patrick O'Kelley

anchor and returned fire, sending two shots towards the British ships. The *Tamar* continued to fire, but to no effect. Captain Tufts fired one more shot, then ignored the *Tamar* and commenced to sink the hulks. Captain Tufts sank three of the hulks, but the tide came in. Tufts decided to wait until the tide went out again so that the hulk would sink where it was supposed to be.

At four o'clock in the morning on the 12th the *Tamar* and *Cherokee* had drifted close to the *Defense*. They both fired a broadside at the South Carolina Navy ship and continued to fire until seven o'clock, when Tufts carried the hulk to the proper area and sank it. After completing his mission Tufts retired from the scene. The *Tamar* sent an armed boat to the hulk and set it on fire and towed it to shallower water. Tufts fired a parting shot at the armed boat, but since he was ineffective he quit expending valuable powder.

The *Tamar* had shot over 100 rounds at the *Defense*, but only struck her three times. Fort Johnson fired three shots at the British vessels with her 26-pounders, striking the sails of the British ships. The Charles Town Militia was called out during the naval battle, and remained on station for several hours afterwards, prepared for a very improbable land assault.



South Carolina Flag

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

On the 24th of November two more hulks were sunk in the marsh channel so that all ships would have to pass by the guns of Fort Johnson. Moultrie wrote, “this was the commencement of hostilities in South-Carolina.” However this action was ineffective, within 3 months the currents and tides in Charlestown harbor had carved new channels around the wooden obstructions.

After this action the South Carolina Provincial Congress authorized the arming and manning of the ship *Prosper* to take or sink the Royal Navy sloops *Tamar* and *Cherokee*. The Royal ships were a constant threat to Charlestown and needed to be removed. The *Prosper* had been a merchant ship that went between Bristol and the colonies before the war. The Provincial Congress resolved that she should be taken into the service of the colony and armed as a frigate of war, with eight 12-pounders, seven 6-pounders and four 4-pounders.

Tufts was appointed as the commander of the *Prosper* in November. He had a hard time raising a crew for the ship so Colonel Moultrie was told “to order a detachment of forty Privates, who are best acquainted with maritime affairs, to do duty and serve on board the armed Ship *Prosper* for one month.” On December 11 the *Prosper* received her first assignment. Tufts was to “move the ship *Betsey* up the Ashley River, near the *Prosper*, being very attentive to prevent negroes going on board the said ship, and every irregular correspondence with the shore.”

William Henry Drayton was anxious to bring on a complete break from Great Britain and decided to use the *Prosper* to achieve his goals. He was appointed by the committee of safety to command the *Prosper*. Tufts did not put up any objection to the change of command, and went back to his command of the schooner *Defense*. Moultrie commented that Drayton “was no sailor, and did not know any one rope from another.”

In December the *Prosper* was supplied with 200 pounds of cannon powder and 18 cutlasses, however the *Prosper* never saw action as a South Carolina naval ship. It languished in Charlestown Harbor, eventually stripped of her guns, until the October 1776 when she was

Patrick O'Kelley

sold. The *Prosper* was renamed the *Liberty* and on March 29, 1777 she was captured by a British ship near Ushant.⁴²

**Fort Johnston, North Carolina
16 – 21 November 1775**

British Forces

Commanding Officer	Captain Francis Parry
Royal Navy	
Captain Francis Parry	
His Majesty's Sloop of War <i>Cruizer</i>	60
6-pounders	4
4-pounders	4
Captain John Tollemache	
His Majesty's Sloop of War <i>Scorpion</i>	100
6-pounders	14
Swivel guns	8
Hand Granadoes ⁴³	4
Marines	Unknown number

In the middle of November the British sloops *Cruizer* and *Scorpion* were ordered to retrieve any guns and ammunition from Fort Johnston that may have been left behind when the Patriots captured it in July. As British sailors put the cannon from Fort Johnston onto a transport the *Cruizer* fired on American militiamen in the woods around the fort. Forty British sailors and marines remained in the fort with swivel guns, while the sloops anchored nearby, firing grapeshot into the woods to keep the militia out of musket range.⁴⁴ During the artillery fire the defenders of the fort fired muskets and swivel guns to keep the Patriots from retaking the fort. This operation continued for a week until all the guns from the fort had been taken from the beach. Afterwards the *Cruizer* and *Scorpion* sailed back to the Cape Fear harbor.⁴⁵

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

**Ninety-Six, South Carolina ⁴⁶
18 – 21 November 1775**

Siege

American Forces

Commanding Officer	Major Andrew Williamson	
South Carolina Provincials		
Major James Mayson		
3 rd South Carolina Regiment of Rangers		37
Colony Militia		
Major Andrew Williamson		
Long Cane District Militia		523
Captain George Reed		25
Captain Andrew Pickens		40
Captain Aaron Smith		17
Captain Benjamin Tutt		34
Captain Andrew Hamilton		23
Captain Thomas Langdon		12
Captain Adam C. Jones		26
Captain Mathew Beraud		13
Captain Charles Williams		11
Captain Francis Logan		18
Captain Alexander Noble		4
Captain John Anderson		11
Captain James Williams		28
Captain Robert McCreary		30
Captain John Rodgers		20
Captain Hugh Middleton		3
Captain Francis Siquefeld		17
Captain David Hunter		19
Captain John Erwin		26
Captain Robert Anderson		18
Captain Nathaniel Abney		23
Captain William Wilson		16
Captain Joseph Hamilton		
Hamilton's Artillery		17
Swivel guns		3

Patrick O'Kelley

Georgia Militia	
Captain James McCall	54
Captain Jacob Colson	18
<i>Total American Forces Engaged</i>	560
<i>Casualties</i>	1 killed, 12 wounded
<i>Loyalist Forces</i>	
Commanding Officer	Major Joseph Robinson
South Carolina Loyalist Militia	
Ninety-Six District	
New Acquisition Regiment	1,892
Captain Richard Pearis	
Captain John Mayfield	
Captain Benjamin Wofford	
Captain Mathew Floyd	
Captain David George	
Captain Patrick Cunningham	
Captain Evan McLaurin	
Captain Thomas Edgehill	
Captain Jacob Fry	
Captain Jones ⁴⁷	
Captain James Phillips	
Captain George Zuber	
Captain William Hunt ⁴⁸	
<i>Casualties</i>	52 killed, 20 wounded ⁴⁹

Major Andrew Williamson and his Patriot militia were camped on Long Cane Creek. Williamson had vowed to retake the ammunition captured by Patrick Cunningham at Mine Creek, and bring the Tories to justice. On November 18 Williamson's force of 576 South Carolinians and Georgians marched towards Ninety-Six and erected a square breastwork in the field near the town in two hours. The field was known as Savage's Old Field and was on the plantation of John Savage. The fortified position around a barn became known as Williamson's Fort and was constructed of old fence rails and straw with a rawhide covering. Williamson chose to defend there instead of

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Ninety-Six so that his artillery, three swivel guns would have a better field of fire, and would be used at their maximum potential.

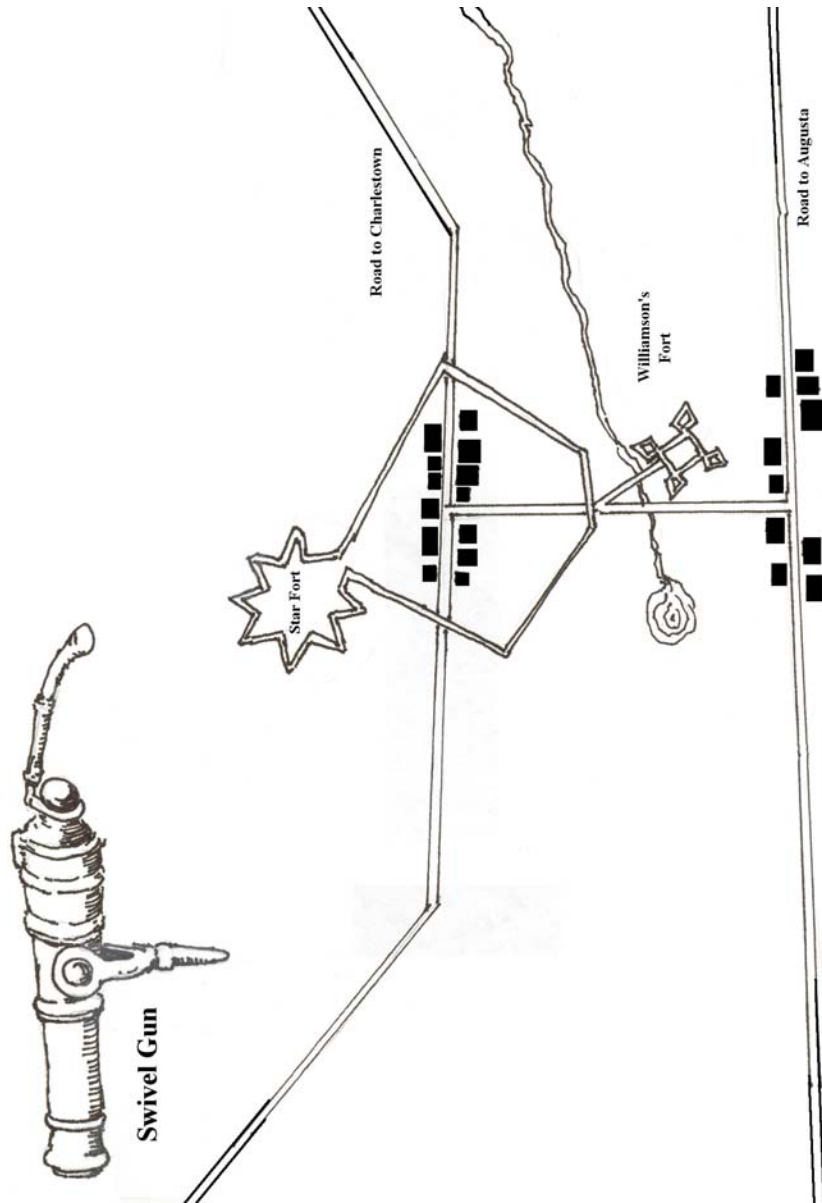
The Loyalist army, 1,892 men under the command of Major Joseph Robinson crossed the Saluda River and arrived at Ninety-Six at 11:00 on Sunday the 18th with drums beating and colors flying. The Loyalists took over the town and converted the jailhouse into a fortified position, then began the siege of Fort Williamson.

Major Mayson and thirty-seven South Carolina Rangers had reinforced Williamson's force, and they had plenty of supplies but no water. The Loyalists began the siege by demanding that Williamson disperse. Williamson parleyed for some time, delaying any Loyalist assault. Shortly after 3 o'clock two of Williamson's men were seized outside the fort when they went to get water. Williamson ordered his men to fire an opening volley to end the parley, which was answered by the Loyalists. The ensuing skirmish lasted for two and a half hours, until darkness had made accuracy impossible.

For two days the swivel guns on the fort kept the Loyalists at bay. On November 20th the Loyalists tried to burn the defenders out by setting fire to the grass and fences around the fort, but the grass was too wet. They then attempted to use a "rolling battery," behind which they approached the barn and set it afire. However the "rolling battery" caught on fire instead. Williamson's men overcame their thirst by digging a forty foot well, which after three days brought forth "very good water." They were well fed since they had 38 barrels of flour and 4 steers.

On November 21 both sides agreed to call off the fight. This was just in time for Williamson because the fort's defenders only had forty pounds of powder left and were about to launch a counter-attack to break the siege. The second Treaty of Ninety-Six was signed on 22 November and stated that Major Joseph Robinson would withdraw his troops beyond the Saluda so Williamson could withdraw his troops without being molested. Fort Williamson's breastworks were leveled and the swivel guns were surrendered as a gesture. These were later returned to Fort Charlotte.

Patrick O'Kelley



Map of Fort Ninety Six

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

The Loyalists lost 52 killed and 20 wounded. 12 of Williamson’s men were wounded and one was killed, James Birmingham, a South Carolinian, considered as the first Southerner to die in the Revolution for the Patriot cause. The battle fought at Ninety-Six was the first land battle of the Revolution fought in the South.⁵⁰

Rebellion Roads, Charlestown Harbor, South Carolina 5 December 1775

The Royal Navy still sat at anchor in Charlestown harbor with Fort Johnson blocking one side of the harbor, and the Hog Island channel had been shut off on the other. The South Carolinians had outfitted the frigate *Prosper* to counter the British ships and two pilot boats were manned by the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments to stop any boats from delivering supplies to the British ships. To further counter any British moves five more pilot boats were purchased to cruise between James and Shute’s Folly Island, and in Hog Island Creek.

Captain Thornborough of the *Tamar* outfitted the captured merchantship *Polly* and fitted it with swivels to try to capture the two pilot boats in the harbor. The British ships also continued to capture any ships that came within its reach. The Royal sloop of war *Scorpion* had arrived in Charlestown at the end of November and on board the *Scorpion* was North Carolina Royal Governor Martin. Martin and South Carolina Royal Governor Campbell argued over where the British squadron in Charlestown should go, to the Cape Fear, or to attack Charlestown.

The Patriots were being armed by a large “quantity of fire arms and military stores” that were being brought into Charlestown from the Dutch island of St. Eustatia in the West Indies. Captain Tollemache decided to make the blockade of Charlestown a reality and stop all traffic from entering the harbor.

On December 5th the *Scorpion* captured two ships, the *Hetty* and the *Thomas and Stafford* at the mouth of Charlestown harbor. The smaller boats from the *Scorpion* had captured the two ships, their crews and two Charlestown pilots. Tollemache thought that the *Hetty* was such a fine vessel that he commissioned it as a British warship

Patrick O'Kelley

and renamed it the *General Clinton*, bringing the British “fleet” in the harbor to six vessels.

Mr. Fenwick Bull went to the to protest the seizure of the ships, and he also protested that “several Negroes” were on the *General Clinton*. Tollemache of the *Scorpion* declared “he did not deny his having some of our negroes on board, but said they came as free men, and demanded protection; that he could have had five-hundred who had offered; that we were all in actual rebellion; and that he had orders to distress America by every means in his power; that had his advice been taken, Fort Johnson should have been attacked on the day of his arrival, if the attack had cost fifty men, and that this town should soon be laid in ashes; but that it would soon be destroyed; that upon his honor he expected soon, two frigates and a bomb to arrive here.” Captain Tollemache also carried off a Black harbor pilot when Colonel Moultrie refused to return some British seamen who had deserted the *Scorpion* and joined the 2nd South Carolina Regiment.⁵¹

Snow Campaign, South Carolina 8 – 30 December 1775

American Forces

Commanding Officer	Colonel Richard Richardson
North Carolina Regulars	200
Captain George Davidson	
1 st North Carolina Regiment	
Captain George Davidson’s Company	
Captain John Armstrong	
2 nd North Carolina Regiment ⁵²	
Colonial Militia	
North Carolina Militia	900
Colonel Thomas Polk	
Mecklenburg County Militia	
Captain Cromisle	
Colonel Griffith Rutherford	
Rowan Mountaineers	

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Colonel Richard Caswell		
New Berne District Militia		
Colonel Francis Locke		
Rowan County Militia		
Colonel James Graham		
Tryon County Militia		
South Carolina Militia		
Colonel John Thomas, Sr.		
Spartan Regiment	200	
Captain John Thomas, Jr.		
Captain Thomas Brandon		
Lieutenant Colonel John Lisle	150	
Colonel Thomas Neel		
New Acquisition Militia	200	
Captain Peter Clinton		
Colonel James Steele		
Union District Militia		Unknown number
<i>Total American Forces engaged</i>		4,500
<i>Casualties</i>		1 wounded
<i>Loyalist Forces</i>		
Commanding Officer		Colonel Thomas Fletchall
South Carolina Loyalist Militia		
Ninety-Six District		
New Acquisition Regiment	350	
Captain Richard Pearis		
Captain John Mayfield		
Captain Benjamin Wofford		
Captain Mathew Floyd		
Captain David George		
Captain Patrick Cunningham		
Captain Evan McLaurin		
Captain Thomas Edgehill		
Captain Jacob Fry		
Captain Jones		
Captain James Phillips		

Patrick O'Kelley

Captain George Zuber
Captain William Hunt

Casualties

6 killed, 150 captured

Colonel Richard Richardson had arrived with a relief force in the upcountry of South Carolina after the siege of Ninety-six. The Loyalists, abiding by the terms of the treaty, had disbanded most of their forces. Richardson refused to abide by the Treaty of Ninety-Six and rounded up their leaders and sent them to Charlestown under arrest.

Joseph McJunkin wrote "As soon as the army was collected at Granby the line of march was taken up by way of Weaver's Ferry on the Saluda. While there encamped two of Col. Fletchall's emissaries, Benjamin Wofford and Betty Scruggs, made their appearance. They were on their return from Charleston, whither they had gone to carry dispatches to the British Governor. They were very merry and took notice of things without seeming to do so. Some of the soldiers recognized them and gave notice to Col. Thomas of their character and probable intentions. By his orders they were arrested and searched. Upon the person of the woman a bundle of papers was discovered which disclosed to the General the intended movements of the Tories and the plan of union with the British Governor."

Richardson detached 1,300 of his troops on December 22nd to attack the camp of Patrick Cunningham that rested on Cherokee land. Richardson's men were discovered as they approached the camp. Cunningham told his men to shift for themselves, and they all ran into the woods. He was able to escape on horseback and hide at a camp at the Great Cane Break on Reedy River. Thomas Fletchall was found by Richardson's men hiding in hollow sycamore tree on Fairforest Creek and was sent down to Charlestown with a number of his partisans.

The militia led by Colonel Charles Polk had no choice but to go on this expedition because the young ladies of Mecklenburg entered into a compact whereby they agreed not to "receive the addresses" of any young man who did not serve in the campaign against the Scovelites. "The ladies were of the opinion that any man staying loitering at

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

home would not have the spirit which would qualify them to be defenders and guardians of the fair sex.”

After Cunningham had been defeated at the Great Cane Break, Richardson considered the area pacified and turned homeward. He couldn't stay because winter was coming and his army had “no tents, shoes wore out, and badly clothed.” Along the way home it snowed for thirty hours, dumping two feet on the men, thus giving the expedition the name of the “Snow Campaign.”⁵³

**Ash's Plantation, Haddrell's Point, South Carolina
13-14 December 1775**

With the British “fleet” in Charlestown harbor increasing to six vessels, the Provincial Congress and Council of Safety knew that they needed professional soldiers manning the harbor defenses. The militia could safely guard Dorchester, twenty miles inland from Charlestown. Colonel Job Rothmaler and the Prince George County Militia Regiment assumed the duties from Francis Marion's company of the 2nd South Carolina Regiment.

The British ships began to mount small scale raids against the undefended northern side of Charlestown harbor. Captain Joseph Maybank's militia had patrolled Haddrell's point in early October but at the end of November Captain Allston's Raccoon Company, consisting of Indians, was ordered to patrol the same area.

On December 5th the British conducted a reconnaissance of Hog Island Creek with small boats. John Ash's plantation near Haddrell's Point was “robbed” by men under “Governor Campbell's command” on the same night. In spite of the patrols by the Indian company the British still raided along the northern part of Charlestown harbor. The British needed food and supplies to maintain their position in Rebellion Roads and these raids kept their men alive. During the night of 13 December “men from the Men of War” raided Ash's Plantation again. They took some of his livestock. The British must have been satisfied with this last raid because there were no more expeditions against the Charlestown mainland for the rest of 1775.⁵⁴

Patrick O'Kelley

**Haddrell's Point and Sullivan's Island, South Carolina⁵⁵
19 – 20 December 1775**

When the *Scorpion* had captured Captain Jacob Milligan's ship, the *Hetty*, Mulligan observed huts being built on Sullivan's Island with slave labor. Sullivan's Island was named for Captain Florence O'Sullivan, one of the earliest settlers of South Carolina. These huts were an encampment being built for the crews of the British warships in Rebellion Road. The British were planning on living there for the winter months. Milligan reported his observations to the Council of Safety. The Council of Safety also found out that "Lord William Campbell had gone to great lengths in harboring & protecting Negroes on Sullivan's Island from whence these villains made nightly sallies and committed robberies & depredations on the Sea Coast of Christ Church Parish."

On December 2nd William Henry Drayton and Doctor David Olyphant were appointed commissioners to determine a location of a battery at Haddrell's point. The Carolinians were no longer going to put up with the Royal Navy ships anymore. On December 6th work was stopped at all the other fortifications across from Charlestown Neck and the workers and their equipment were transported over the Cooper River to Mount Pleasant.

Before building the battery on Haddrell's Point Colonel Moultrie was ordered to clear Sullivan's Island of all English sailors "and Negroes, who are said to have deserted to the enemy." Moultrie was also ordered to make the island uninhabitable for the British by burning the "pest house" that the British were using as a living quarters.

On December 9th Moultrie sent Major Charles Cotesworth Pinckney with 150 men to Haddrell's Point to a fording place that had recently been discovered between Haddrell's Point and Sullivan's Island. Moultrie ordered them to "surprise, seize and apprehend a number of negroes who are said to have gone over to the enemy, together with every person on the island."

Pinckney arrived at Haddrell's Point, but was unable to find the ford or any boats to cross. Moultrie ordered Pinckney back to

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Charlestown. This delay may have been intentional, since none of the Carolinians wanted to be bombarded by three armed vessels. Something did happen to change all of this. Because there was no longer a chance to get food from the town of Charleston Captain Tollemache took the *Scorpion*, the *Palliser*, “two Bermudian Sloops, and a Schooner, along with thirty to forty slaves and an excellent black pilot” and returned to the Cape Fear. All that remained was the *Cherokee* and the *Tamar*.

On the night of December 19th the Patriot’s struck. Not waiting for Pinckney’s forces, Captain Allston’s Raccoon Company of Riflemen, who had been waiting in vain in an ambush position, was ordered to cross over to Sullivan’s Island. At 7:00 a.m. the fifty-four Indians surprised the British and burned the Pest House on Sullivan’s Island. They also destroyed some water casks, and burned “Gunner” Walker’s house. No white men were casualties, but four Blacks “who would not be taken” were killed. The Indians captured 4 white men, four women, and three children. Three of the men were crew from the Sloop of War *Cherokee* and one of the prisoners was a boy from the *Cherokee* who was returned to the ship in the morning.

Several British sailors hid from the Indians throughout the night and when they were taken off the island in the morning they were fired upon by the Indians. The Indians “were permitted to fire (being all rifle men) and must have killed every sailor what appear’d in the boats.” The Council of Safety endorsed the killing and capturing of the slaves. They wrote that the runaway slaves “received such a check yesterday Morning as will serve to humble our Negroes in general & perhaps mortify his Lordship not a little.” Since Captain Allston’s Indians knew the island they were ordered to stand guard there until they could be relieved by regular troops.

With Sullivan’s Island clear of any enemy the Carolinians could build the battery on Haddrell’s Point. The battery was to mount four 18-pounders and a force of 200 men from the regulars would build it. Carts were built by Michael Kalteisen, the town wagon master, to transport the cannons from Charlestown and a detachment from the newly created 4th South Carolina Artillery, under the command of Captain Beekman, would supervise the construction.

Patrick O'Kelley

The British were distracted by the attack on Sullivan's Island and did not notice that the regulars had crossed the Cooper River during the night of 20 December. The whole force could not move at once and it took until almost dawn before they were all across the river. The force united at the home of Jonathan Scott then moved into the woods for the night. The regulars were from the 1st South Carolina and consisted of the 70-man company of Captain Thomas Pinckney, and the Grenadier Company.

Pinckney's march to the position at Haddrell's Point was done at a leisurely manner. The Patriots were more concerned about Christmas dinner than they were about constructing artillery positions. Pinckney himself wrote, "we marched to attack some Chocolate and Sausages well supported by Cherry Bounce and plan Brandy at Jonathan Scott's."

Throughout December 22nd the troops spent their time constructing the 228 fascines that were needed to build the 58-foot long battery. Pinckney's men emplaced the fascines while others positioned the cannon and laid down wooden gun platforms. All through the night and the next day the men quickly worked before the British ships noticed their efforts. At dawn on December 24th Governor Campbell and the British received an unwelcome Christmas present. A battery with two guns ready for action confronted the hungry sailors. Pinckney named the two guns his "bulldogs." The battery had walls that were 24 feet thick and they also had cannons that were larger than those on the ships.

The Council of Safety further depleted any food source by driving off the livestock that grazed on Morris Island. John Morris, who lived on the island, had been supplying the British with fresh meat. The British knew that if the Patriots established a gun position on Cummings Point they would be trapped within the harbor. The British ships weighed anchor and moved to a position near the Bar where they were out of range from Haddrell's Point.⁵⁶

“Nothing but Blood and Slaughter”

Great Cane Brake, South Carolina ⁵⁷ **Battle**
22 December 1775 ⁵⁸

American Forces

Commanding Officer Colonel William “Danger” Thomson

South Carolina Provincials

Colonel William “Danger” Thomson

3rd South Carolina Regiment of Rangers 500

Major James Mayson

Colonel Thomson’s Company

Captain Samuel Wise

Captain John Caldwell

Captain Ely Kershaw

Captain Edward Richardson

Captain Thomas Woodward

Captain John Purves

Captain Nathaniel Abney

Captain John Lewis Peyer im Hoff

Captain Charles Heatly

Captain Robert Goodwyn

Captain Robert Anderson

Colonial Militia

Colonel Richard Richardson

South Carolina Militia

Unknown number

North Carolina Militia

Colonel William Polk

Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Martin

Total American forces engaged 1,300

Casualties 1 wounded

Loyalist Forces

Commanding Officer Major Joseph Robinson

South Carolina Loyalist Militia

New Acquisition Regiment 200

Captain Patrick Cunningham

Casualties 6 killed, 130 captured

Patrick O'Kelley

After the ambush at his camp, Patrick Cunningham had withdrawn to the Great Cane Brake to gather reinforcements and he was desperately seeking aid from the Cherokees to the west. The Great Cane Brake was located on the Reedy River in the southern portion of present-day Greenville County. Colonel Richardson sent Colonel Thomson and 1,300 men to “break up this nest of sedition and turbulent spirits.”

Arriving on the night of December 21, Thomson waited until daylight to strike, however their force was discovered in the morning before they had the Loyalists entirely surrounded. Cunningham shouted for every man to save himself, and he rode away on a barebacked horse, without his breeches.

The Patriots only had one man wounded, the son of Colonel William Polk, who had been shot in the shoulder. The Loyalists had 6 men killed and 130 captured. Cunningham was later captured and sent to the Charlestown jail. Most of Major Robinson's force was captured, but Robinson escaped. The Loyalists who were able to escape made their way to the safety of the Cherokee lands.⁵⁹

Volume One of the complete Revolutionary War in the Carolinas.

Nothing but Blood and Slaughter The Revolutionary
War in the Carolinas, Volume One, 1771-1779

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/1469.html?s=pdf>