



Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution

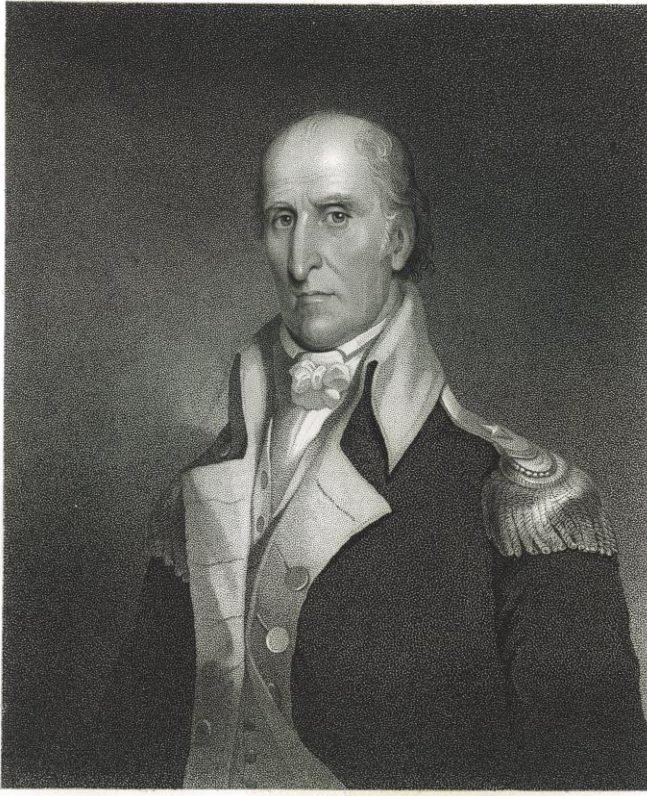
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The Parole of Col. Andrew Pickens

William R. Reynolds, Jr.



Brigadier General Andrew Pickens.

The fall of Charles Town in May of 1780 was interesting in itself, but it led to a most intriguing action—mass parole of American Whig militiamen. One of the more fascinating stories is that of then Colonel Andrew Pickens' parole period. The events surrounding his exit from parole status is captivating.

*In the following essay of his seventh-great-granduncle, William R. Reynolds, Jr. uses excerpts from, and paraphrases of, his book **Andrew Pickens: South Carolina Patriot in the Revolutionary War** to describe the event. He*

uses single quotation marks to set apart excerpts while internal citations are exhibited with the traditional double quotes.

Throughout the American Revolution, both sides utilized the European custom of offering paroles for captives. Usually, it was applied to officers but at times to the rank and file when there were not suitable facilities for maintaining large numbers of prisoners. Parole between the British and Americans had been a signed honorable transaction that allowed the captive to be released as long as he promised to not re-enter the war. Final disposition of his case was to transpire upon the end of hostilities when the winning military commanders would consider the wartime actions of all enemy parolees on a case by case basis. One of the first mass parole incidents occurred following the First Battle of Saratoga (or Battle of Freeman's Farm).

'...after the Americans had assailed the British for several days, General Burgoyne sent a flag bearer with a note requesting that negotiations be opened with General Gates. Gates responded that the British would immediately lay down their arms and surrender—'immediately' being rejected by Burgoyne.

Burgoyne's army was the first British unit to be soundly defeated by the Americans. It was a surety that he and his officers would face disgrace, and he had no idea what was in store for his rank and file. There was no precedence. The British themselves had captured many enlisted men already during the war and had confined them to horrible conditions aboard prison ships. However, it was a common occurrence for officers on either side to be paroled. Burgoyne decided to hold out for the best situation he could arrange for his men.

After much negotiation, Burgoyne offered that he and his entire 5,000-man force would march out of camp under arms with colors flying, lay down their arms at the order of the British officers, and then be paroled by the Americans to return to England. Furthermore, they would agree to not re-enter the current war in America. Gates accepted these terms, and Burgoyne signed the surrender document on October 17, 1777.’¹

Major General Benjamin Lincoln had waited too long to abandon Charles Town in May of 1780 and lost nearly all of the Southern Department to the British. General Henry ‘Light-horse Harry’ Lee later wrote:

*“...Indeed, the loss of Charleston was a sad deranging blow for the South; the force of which was aggravated by the injudicious, though faithful, effort to preserve it...General Lincoln no more ought to have been influenced by the remonstrances (sic) of the citizens of Charleston, when weighing in his mind the propriety of evacuation, than ought to a tender father to regard the crying of his child on his administering a dose of physic to save its life... the loss of men, stores, &c.... was a severe blow upon the United States, and excited very gloomy sensations throughout America. The error of risking a country to save a town which only can be retained by the reduction of the country, was now perceived with all its pernicious consequences...”*²

‘On the 10th, the state troops refused to man the defenses, and on the 11th they presented a petition to Lincoln that requested he accept the British terms of surrender. Lieutenant Governor Gadsden backed the request.’³ That day, Major General Benjamin Lincoln exchanged letters with British Major General Sir Henry Clinton which included Lincoln’s proposed terms of surrender and Clinton’s answer to each article. In articles 3 and 6, it was agreed that the Continental Army and Navy personnel would be held as prisoners of war. A separate article pertained only to the militia:

“ART. 4TH. – The militia now in garrison shall be permitted to return to their

respective homes, and be secured in their persons and property.

*Answer. – The militia now in garrison shall be permitted to return to their respective homes as prisoners on parole; which parole, as long as they observe, shall secure them from being molested in their property by the British troops.”*⁴

At that time the article pertained only to the militiamen who were garrisoned at Charles Town during the siege. ‘While the militiamen were paroled, the Continental prisoners were put on British prison ships at Charles Town. The officers, however, including Brigadier General William Moultrie, were kept comfortably under guard at Haddrell’s Point across both the Ashley River from Charles Town and the Stono River from James Island... The terms of Major General Benjamin Lincoln’s parole dictated that he report to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia with a full account of the siege, then retire to New England and refrain from further military action while a prisoner on parole. This was a major embarrassment for the General, and his career was effectively over.’⁵

‘Once Charles Town fell, the British controlled Georgia and coastal South Carolina. Word had not yet filtered into the backcountry regarding militia paroles, so Sir Henry Clinton still faced rebellion within the state... General Clinton, the same day [June 1, 1780], proclaimed that all Whigs who returned to their British allegiance would receive a full pardon. This was a caveat to the parole for the Whig militiamen who had served at Charles Town. On the 3rd, Clinton went a step further when he decreed that all paroled civilians sign an oath of allegiance to King George III within 17 days or be deemed still in rebellion. The original parole conditions allowed parolees to remain neutral in the war. This new declaration was momentous: the Whigs were not only required to declare allegiance to King George III, but must also take up arms for Britain against America.’⁶

The message of a general parole reached the Ninety Six District fairly quickly, and some made preparations to accept it. Others were resistant. The additional requirement to take up

arms for Britain was not immediately enforced in the backcountry. ‘On the 5th, Brigadier General Andrew Williamson, who knew Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Innes was coming to Ninety Six, sent a message ahead and asked for terms of surrender. Colonel Thomas Brown at Augusta had offered terms to South Carolina Colonel LeRoy Hammond, who accepted. Brown then dispatched Captain Richard Pearis to Ninety Six to present terms to General Williamson.

On June 7, 1780, Lieutenant Colonel Nisbet Balfour sent a message to Cornwallis stating, “...*By the best accounts I can get, Williamson is still in arms, as I mentioned, with a Col. Pickens, but believe they mean, not to continue in a body, but in small partys (sic) in the back country...*”⁷

Pearis moved into Ninety Six on the 7th, and Williamson sent a delegation to meet with him there. Once Williamson received the terms of surrender and parole, he read them to his brigade, sans Pickens and his regiment who were encamped a few miles away. The brigade voted on the terms and decided that Williamson should carry a flag of surrender to Pearis. The terms did not include Clinton’s latest proclamation to take up arms for the Crown. Communications in the backcountry were notably slow; the Whigs still assumed they could declare allegiance and sit out the war. Additionally, even though the brigade voted to accept terms, that only served as a vote to disband the brigade. Each individual militiaman had to decide whether he would personally sign the declaration or continue to fight.

Williamson immediately rode to Pickens’ camp to speak with the Colonel. The General then read the terms to Pickens’ regiment. After Williamson made the presentation, he returned to his brigade. Andrew Pickens’ regiment haggled for three days. On June 10, Pickens’ regiment, as did Williamson’s brigade, overwhelmingly voted to disband and accept the terms of parole. The Colonel sent the results to Williamson. Lieutenant Colonel James McCall was the most notable of only six who voted not to disband; however, an unknown number of militiamen abstained from the ballot.

Also on the 10th, Innes, unaware that the issue had been resolved by Pearis, received Williamson’s original message about terms. Innes responded by messenger that the militiamen must surrender their arms, sign paroles, and disband their units. Appropriate punishments for previous actions would be implemented at the conclusion of the war.

Williamson went to Ninety Six that evening and signed the parole. He also agreed to turn his fortified estate at White Hall into a British outpost. Pearis agreed that protection for the parolees would begin on the 12th. On the 13th, Pickens traveled to Ninety Six with 300 of his regiment, and they signed the agreement with Pearis.⁸

Dr. A. L. Pickens wrote that as many as 70 had left for North Carolina to reorganize and continue the fight. It is likely that they joined the newly re-formed New Acquisition Militia...He further expressed the likelihood that Joseph Pickens did not have the same pressure to sign the terms as did his high-profile brother, Andrew. Joseph, not a major British target, may have continued the effort with McCall. Captain Robert Anderson apparently did not accept parole.’⁹

‘...on the 6th, Major General Clinton embarked for the return trip to New York and left Lieutenant General Charles Lord Cornwallis to command the British Army in the South and, especially, to enforce the new surrender terms. Clinton demanded that Cornwallis bring South Carolina into submission before he attempted a move into North Carolina.

On June 8, 1780, Cornwallis placed Lieutenant Colonel Francis Lord Rawdon over the affairs of backcountry South Carolina and moved his headquarters back to Charles Town. Rawdon moved his own headquarters to Camden to be more central to the outposts...

Colonel Innes arrived at Ninety Six on the 16th and found the Whigs had already complied with the surrender terms. All was relatively peaceful in that community. The surrender terms only regarded a declaration of

allegiance. The British had yet to press General Clinton's new proclamation requirement of military service to the Crown. That would occur later in the year...¹⁰

During this period, one of Andrew Pickens' Loyalist neighbors began to visit regularly at Andrew's home. He bragged about each Loyalist victory as he heard of it. He once declared, "*It Ain't no use fer the rebels to keep on fightin' the king. Ef they don't stop they air all a-gwine 'a be kilt!*" At that time, Andrew grabbed him, led him to the gate, and booted him hard enough to give him momentum to run down the hill toward the creek. Andrew gave chase and added kicks as he went.¹¹

Also on the 18th, General Cornwallis sent a message to General Clinton that the rebellion in South Carolina had been quashed. That was not entirely true, but Cornwallis needed to justify his plan for an invasion into North Carolina.¹²

'British Lieutenant Colonel Nisbet Balfour and Major Patrick Ferguson arrived at Ninety Six on June 22. Balfour camped outside the village. Ferguson bivouacked his force in Savage's Old Field near the site of the stockade used by Williamson's force during the Loyalist siege of 1775. **No sooner had they settled in, when Brigadier General Andrew Williamson secretly paid them a visit. Balfour and Ferguson each wrote messages to Clinton; Balfour stated that Williamson pledged to aid the British as a civilian and that he believed the entire backcountry could be brought to British allegiance if they could also win over the support of Pickens and Hammond. Ferguson wrote, "...By General Williamson's report...if he could work without disgusting them [the Ninety Six District Whig militiamen]he hoped to convert the majority of them into good Loyalists..."**¹³

Colonel William Hill stated in his memoirs:

"...Shortly after the fall of Charleston... the British had advanced above Camden to the Waxsaw (sic) & fixed a post at Rocky Mount, and Granby, on the Congarees (sic), Orangeburg & &c. At that time all the upper division of the State was commanded by

*Genl. Pickens as Genl. Williamson that had the chief command previous to that time, turned a traitor to his country. & went to the enemy then in Savannah, & made his peace with them..."*¹⁴

The backcountry Whigs had not counted upon General Williamson's treachery. **He was the only one of their officers who had not only signed an allegiance, but actually offered his active service on behalf of the Crown.** Indeed, he had promised to try and bring Andrew Pickens into the fold, which was a prime goal for Lieutenant General Cornwallis. The British Commander knew the value of Andrew Pickens in a Loyalist uniform. He was certain that the majority of Whigs would lay down their arms and follow Pickens into a provincial regiment.¹⁵

'On the 30th, General Cornwallis sent another message to General Clinton to proudly report Brigadier General Andrew Williamson's submission at Ninety Six. He explained that Williamson offered his assistance to bring Andrew Pickens and others to the British standard. He also related details about the destruction of Hill's ironworks and stated that it *"...put an end to all resistance in South Carolina..."* **This must have been a curiosity for General Clinton since he had heard from Cornwallis that South Carolina had been subjugated nearly two weeks earlier. ...**¹⁶

'Shortly after Cruger took command of Ninety Six, Andrew Pickens and Andrew Hamilton (a captain in Pickens' regiment who was also under parole) were arrested and kept in the Ninety Six jail for about one month under guard of Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Allen of the New Jersey Volunteers. The record is clear that Colonel Pickens had accepted and was abiding by parole, but the conditions surrounding the arrest rendered a suspicion that he may have broken parole terms. Therefore, he and Andrew Hamilton joined Colonel John Thomas, Sr. behind bars pending an investigation and/or trial. They were at the mercy of Cruger and Allen because many who had broken parole were hanged immediately upon arrest. However, Cruger was well aware that Cornwallis had a keen interest in coaxing Colonel Andrew Pickens

into the British cause. His assistance would be more valuable than Andrew Williamson's in drawing others to serve the Crown. Therefore, he and Hamilton were eventually released.¹⁷ Colonel Thomas was later transferred to prison in Charles Town until the end of the war. He and his wife, Jane, each died in 1811. Hamilton stated in his pension application:

*"...The deponent further says that he omitted heretofore to mention that Colonel or General Pickens & himself went unaccompanied by others to confer with a Colonel Few from Georgia who had a few troops in the District of Ninety Six, all true Whigs, that when Colonel Pickens & himself (the deponent) were on their road to see Colonel Few, a private (unintelligible) of the Tory stamp directed them to a Camp of British soldiers & Tories by whom Pickens & himself were made prisoners & sent to the Village of Cambridge or Ninety Six, where they remained prisoners one month, under a British officer by the name of Allen, by some means Colonel Pickens obtained his & my release, from imprisonment, while prisoners we were treated with great attention & kindness by the British attributable I believe to the popularity & influence of General Pickens..."*¹⁸

The arrest likely occurred after August 1, 1780, when Cruger and Allen moved into Ninety Six. It just as likely occurred prior to August 18 when the Georgians returned home since Hamilton stated he and Andrew had spoken with Colonel Few. Andrew Pickens was likely released from jail prior to September 14. He had a conversation with James McCall on that day regarding Pickens rejoining the active militia. Andrew could not have tried to locate Colonel Few after that date. On the 15th the Georgians and McCall put Augusta under siege. There was not a full month following that to coordinate one month of inactivity for Andrew Pickens. The Georgians did not return to South Carolina until the end of September, and Cruger sent Pickens on an errand of mercy on October 15. The British actively tried to enlist Pickens' services

after that date, which left no other period available for a month of imprisonment.'¹⁹

Major General Horatio Gates, a hero of Saratoga, was forced upon General Washington by Congress which selected Gates to be the next Commander of the Southern Department after Major General Benjamin Lincoln had lost most of the army of the south at the Fall of Charles Town. However, it took Gates a few short weeks to expose the remainder of his army to General Cornwallis at Camden. In that battle Gates was sent running to the north and was disgraced worse than Lincoln. The rest of the Southern Department was left in tatters. The battle, coincidentally, took place as Pickens and Hamilton were likely being jailed.

Shortly thereafter, Col. Thomas Sumter lost 150 militiamen killed and 300 captured along with 100 Maryland Continentals and two cannon to Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton at Fishing Creek on the 18th.²⁰

'South Carolina's exiled Governor, John Rutledge, joined General Gates at Hillsboro and tried to communicate with the active militias from there. He wanted to divide the state under the auspices of the militias: Francis Marion on the coast, Thomas Sumter in the middle, and Andrew Pickens in the backcountry. That would have to wait. Pickens was still honoring his parole, and Sumter was now in exile in North Carolina with a reduced force.'²¹

'Lieutenant General Charles Lord Cornwallis was eager to move into North Carolina after the British victories over Major General Horatio Gates at Camden and Brigadier General Thomas Sumter at Fishing Creek. Cornwallis had met with Major Patrick Ferguson on August 23, 1780, to explain that the fall campaign would begin with the army's march to Charlotte, North Carolina. He had also determined that Ferguson would disjoin from the army and take his detachment into North Carolina to the west of Charlotte. There Ferguson would guard Cornwallis' left flank, harass and punish active local Whigs, raid Whig farms for supplies, and deliver the supplies to the army. He would also recruit Tories to comprise

local militia regiments and also to supplement his own provincial force.

Ferguson left Fair Forest Creek on September 2, and on September 8, General Cornwallis marched his army out of Camden. The General enthusiastically headed for Charlotte, North Carolina; however, his force was weakened as several men were down with malaria. He also missed Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton who was ill with yellow fever. Cornwallis ordered Tarleton's Legion to remain with their leader and protect him from Whig capture. Cornwallis wrote two separate messages to Lieutenant Colonel Nisbet Balfour about Tarleton's illness and how it inconvenienced the General. He lost Tarleton's services; the British Legion was useless because it had to protect Tarleton from Whig attacks, and they were unable to demolish Thomas Sumter's militia while it was yet being organized.

Illnesses were a huge concern for the British. Summer in the southern campaign had been devastating since the fall of Charles Town. The humidity, heavy rains and mud, bugs, and reptiles, and other vermin had taken their toll on the forces. Moreover, the two mosquito-borne ailments had depleted the roster, and the ever-reliable Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton was suffering.

Major Patrick Ferguson arrived at Gilbert Town (just north of present-day Rutherfordton), North Carolina, on September 7. He camped on a hill that overlooked Gilbert Town from the west, later referred to as Ferguson's Hill (present-day Ferguson's Ridge). Ferguson was an experienced British military officer with an excellent service record. He had been assigned to several command positions and was eager to embark upon his new assignment. He was aware of the Over-mountain (or backwater) settlements and knew they could pose a threat to Cornwallis' flank. On the 10th, the Major tried to secure that flank as ordered by the General. He paroled prisoner Samuel Phillips, cousin to Isaac Shelby, with a message for the Over-mountain men. Ferguson told them to stay on their side of the mountain and "*...desist from their opposition to the British arms, and take protection under his*

standard." If they did not, he threatened to "*...march over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay their country waste with fire and sword.*"²²

Historians typically confuse the two diseases and often use them interchangeably. There are, however, considerable differences.

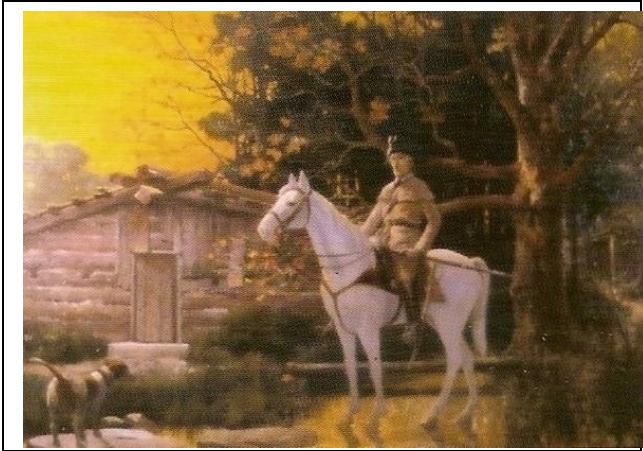
Yellow fever is caused by a virus that is spread by mosquitoes. This severe disease results in death for 20 to 50 percent of those who develop it in the present-day and usually occurs within two weeks from the start of infection. Complications during the toxic phase of a yellow fever infection include kidney and liver failure, jaundice, abdominal pain with vomiting (sometimes of blood), heart arrhythmia, bleeding from the eyes and nose, and brain abnormalities including delirium, seizures, and coma. Survivors recover gradually over a period of several weeks to months, and they sometimes experience secondary bacterial infections, such as pneumonia or blood infections.

Malaria is caused by a parasite transmitted by mosquitoes. A malaria infection is generally characterized by recurrent attacks of chills and fever, profuse sweating with dropping body temperature, headache, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. The signs and symptoms of malaria typically last for several weeks; however, some malaria parasites can lie dormant in the body for months, or even years.

Given the difference in the quality of medical care, the fatality rate and duration of illness for these two diseases was likely far worse in 1780 than noted above.

On the 12th, Ferguson took a detachment to try and locate Colonel Charles McDowell; however, McDowell had evacuated the area and crossed over the mountains to locate Colonels Isaac Shelby and John Sevier. Samuel Phillips found Colonel Shelby at his home in the Holston settlements and reported Ferguson's warning. Shelby then located Colonel Sevier in the Nolichucky settlements, and together they decided they could not allow Ferguson to get away with his threat. Sevier began to look for McDowell whom he knew to be in the vicinity.

Shelby agreed to contact Washington County, Virginia, Colonel William Campbell. Shelby and Sevier were laying plans to set up a massive rendezvous to take place in the near future...



General Andrew Pickens (1739-1817), by Wilbur George Kurtz--General Pickens is depicted near his Block House which he built as a refuge in the event of an Indian attack. It was at this property where Major Dunlap and his Tories burned buildings and harassed his wife and children late in 1780. The action drove Pickens to dissolve his parole agreements with the British. The picture is located in the Welcome Center, in the Old Bank Building, 107 Court Square, Abbeville, South Carolina.

It was likely that Andrew Pickens and Andrew Hamilton were released from the Ninety Six jail during the same time period. Lieutenant Colonel James McCall thought that Pickens' imprisonment might sway him, so he tried to convince the Colonel to forego his parole and take command of the militia. That discussion occurred before McCall departed for Georgia to aid Colonel Elijah Clarke with an attack on Augusta that would begin on the 14th. McCall had wanted to raise 500 men, including Colonel Andrew Pickens, for the action, but he only mustered 80—and no Pickens. Andrew explained that he had given his word to abide by parole, and that as long as the British kept their end of the agreement, he was honor bound to do the same.²³

McCall did go to Georgia; however, he and Clarke were unable to take Augusta and lost some men trying to accomplish it. 'On the 22nd, Cornwallis received a report that Tarleton felt

better and expected to take the field in short order. He ordered Major Archibald McArthur and his 71st Regiment of Foot to protect Tarleton until he fully recovered. Meanwhile, Colonel Elijah Clarke realized that the Georgia backcountry Tories were in complete control. He knew that Whig families were not safe, especially those of the militia leaders. Clarke gathered 700 Whigs, 300 of them militiamen and the rest family members, and left Georgia for the safety of the Over-mountain settlements. He was aware that backcountry South Carolina contained many dangers. A large party of Whigs would stand out and invite an attack by the Tory militias. Clarke decided to take a high country route through the mountains near the 1777 Cherokee boundary...

...The General [Cornwallis] instructed Ferguson to capture Clarke should the Georgian avoid Cruger's troops as they passed through Ninety Six. Ferguson began to patrol the area near Gilbert Town where he actively recruited militiamen while keeping a keen eye peeled for Clarke and company.

Shortly thereafter, Ferguson heard that Clarke was moving into North Carolina further to the west, so he decided to set an ambush at McDaniel's Ford on Greene River. The movement was described by Lieutenant Anthony Allaire:

"Wednesday, 27th. Got in motion at five o'clock in the morning, and marched three miles to Rucker's Mill, and halted... Thursday, 28th. Got in motion at five o'clock in the morning; marched seven miles to Mountain creek (sic), forded it, although very difficult, continued on about a mile farther to Twitty's Ford of Broad river (sic), and took up our ground on its banks. At six o'clock in the evening got in motion, forded the river; marched two miles to McDaniel's Ford of Green river (sic); forded it, and marched two miles farther; halted on the road; lay on our arms till four o'clock the next morning... Friday, 29th. We then, at that early hour, moved on three miles to one James Step's plantation, and halted. This man has been very unfortunate in his family; his wife, who

is a very decent woman, was caught by the Indians about a twelvemonth past. They scalped and tomahawked her several times in the head, treated the infant she had in her arms in a most inhuman and savage manner. They mashed its head in such a manner that its recovery is truly astonishing; but what this poor, unhappy woman seems most to regret is the loss of her oldest son, whom the savages took, and she now remains in a state of uncertainty, not having heard from him since... Saturday, 30th. Lay at James Step's with an expectation of intercepting Col. Clarke on his return to the mountains; but he was prudent enough to take another route..."
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Ferguson, after he found that Clarke was even further west, also learned that the Over-mountain militias had gathered again, en masse, and were headed in his direction. He then decided to forget about Colonel Elijah Clarke and return to fulfill his original orders to cover Cornwallis' flank. On the 30th, he headed for a juncture with the General at Charlotte. Cornwallis had arrived and established his headquarters there on September 26.'²⁵

'When Samuel Phillips delivered Ferguson's message to his brother-in-law, Isaac Shelby, at Shelby's Fort, he also provided intelligence regarding the strength and make-up of Ferguson's force. He added that one of Ferguson's Loyalist troops had been caught, tarred, and feathered by some of Captain Robert Sevier's light-horse militia in the Nolichucky settlements (*Robert was Colonel John Sevier's brother*). The Tory offered to guide Ferguson and his force through the passes to the Over-mountain settlements.

This was too much of a threat to the backwater communities. It was time to muster the large Over-mountain militia to deal with Major Patrick Ferguson...

The Whig militia planned the rendezvous for September 25 at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River... Colonel Shelby sent his brother, Captain Moses Shelby, with an invitation for Colonel William Campbell of the Washington County, Virginia, militia to

participate in the gathering. Campbell was not receptive at first. He was busy vying with Tories and Indians around his home. They had been roiled by Cornwallis to harass the Whigs of the area prior to Cornwallis' planned invasion.

Colonel Campbell called a council of war with his officers. They agreed to assist with the proactive effort to attack the British while still in South Carolina. Campbell then decided he would split his force and leave one-half of the militia to defend their home area. He next sent a message to Wilkes County North Carolina Regiment Colonel Benjamin Cleveland that invited his participation and advised him to meet at Quaker Meadows, the home of Colonel Charles McDowell. Colonel Cleveland owned an estate called Roundabout in Wilkes County, North Carolina (*at present-day Ronda less than 10 miles northeast of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina*).

On September 25, 1780, Colonels Isaac Shelby and John Sevier arrived at Sycamore Shoals with 200 militiamen each. They were greeted by North Carolina Colonels Charles McDowell and Andrew Hampton who had been camped at the shoals for several days with 450 men between them. Early the next day, Colonel William Campbell appeared with 200 more men to total 1,050.' This was the magnificent throng that anchored the force in the Battle of Kings Mountain in South Carolina on October 7, 1780. Prior to the battle, they were met at Cowpens by several South Carolina militia units and a 30-man detachment of Georgia Colonel Clarke's militia as the main body of Georgians headed for the Over-mountains to shelter their families. Major Patrick Ferguson lost 157 killed and 763 captured—a devastating number for Cornwallis.'²⁶

The victors retraced their trails and carried the prisoners with them. However, forage was minimally available and the weather was cool and damp. Prisoners escaped daily. 'On the 11th, the army camped five miles northeast of Gilbert Town at the estate of Colonel John Walker, a prominent Whig. A Tory prisoner, who had hauled two captured muskets, hid nearby in a hollow sycamore.

Unfortunately for him, Colonel Thomas Brandon saw him, dragged him out, and hacked him to death. Several acts of brutality against the Tories caused Colonel Campbell to issue a general order:

*"I must request the officers of all ranks in the army to endeavor to restrain the disorderly manner of slaughtering and disturbing the prisoners. If it cannot be prevented by moderate measures, such effectual punishment shall be executed upon delinquents as will put a stop to it."*²⁷

The Over-mountain army remained at Gilbert Town until the 13th. They required time to recover from the long, tedious march to Kings Mountain, the strenuous battle, care of the wounded, guard duty, and foraging. Additionally, the march from the battlefield was rapid because British reinforcements had been rumored to be on the way. Colonel Shelby described their condition when he later wrote, *"Owing to the number of wounded, and the destitution of the army of all conveyances, they traveled slowly, and in one week had only marched about forty miles."*²⁸ The rest at Gilbert Town was necessary, but because Ferguson's corps and others had recently stripped the area of provisions, it was imperative the troops continue to move.

On Friday the 13th, troops and prisoners marched to Bickerstaff's Old Fields on Robertson's Creek nine miles northeast of Gilbert Town. On the 14th, several subordinate officers from both Carolinas apprehensively approached the commanding officers. There had been several escapes, and attempts at the same, among the prisoners. As Lieutenant Allaire wrote on the 15th, *"...About one hundred prisoners made their escape on this march."*²⁹ The officers were concerned about some Tory prisoners who were well known for having committed severe atrocities upon Whig families in both states. The officers feared those Tories would plan an escape and go unpunished for their iniquities.

This was a serious matter for consideration. Colonel Shelby stated later:

*"...[When we] reached Gilbert Town...were informed by a paroled officer, that he had seen eleven patriots hung (sic hanged) at Ninety Six a few days before, for [just] being Rebels. Similar cruel and unjustifiable acts had been committed before. In the opinion of the patriots, it required retaliatory measures to put a stop to these atrocities..."*³⁰

The colonels obtained a copy of North Carolina criminal laws and determined two magistrates could empanel twelve jurors to consider the cases of the subject Tories. Capital punishment would be considered in such cases as murder, arson, house-breaking, riots, and other acts of violence. This may seem harsh, but the lack of British control against condemnable activities in the South Carolina backcountry was designated as the primary reason those Whig settlers became involved in the fight for American Independence at all. They had been subjected to many atrocities by harsh criminal elements that endeared themselves to King George III just to assure there would be no proper civil authority to control their activities.

Mr. Draper stated it well:

*"It has been before observed that, in the ranks of Colonel Ferguson, there were individuals notorious as habitual plunderers and murderers...There were no [active] courts of justice to punish their offences; and, to detain them as prisoners of war, was to make them objects of exchange...again enlarged, and suffered to renew their outrages? Capture in arms does not exempt the deserter from the gallows; why should it the cold-blooded murderer?..."*³¹

Many of the North Carolina officers were magistrates, so they seated a jury of colonels, majors, and captains to consider the charges. The number of prisoners condemned to be executed has been variously reported as anywhere from 30 to 40. Nine were hanged that same night, three at a time, from a large tree near the road that became known as the Gallows Oak.³²

'Andrew Pickens had honorably kept his parole throughout the events of Gates' defeat at Camden and Ferguson's at Kings Mountain. The

latter caused concern for Lieutenant Colonel John Harris Cruger. One week after the Battle of King's Mountain, Cruger asked Colonel Pickens to find the Over-mountain militia and check on the prisoners' welfare. Many of the Loyalists' families were neighbors of Pickens, so he consented to locate them. He departed with Captain John Bowie and local resident John Hamilton as travel companions.

The Over-mountain militia had left Bickerstaff's Old Fields and the Gallows Oak on their way to the McDowell brothers' place at Quaker Meadows. Pickens and his colleagues located Colonel William Campbell on the 15th. Colonel Campbell eyed them with suspicion and put them under guard. He held them at Quaker Meadows for two days, rebuked them for taking parole, again for not carrying arms even while under parole, and then allowed them to view the prisoners. He also informed them about the escapees, those who were hanged, and that 678 prisoners remained under guard.

On October 21, Colonel Pickens reported to Cruger regarding the condition of the prisoners. He also reported that the backwater men were returning to their homes and were not preparing to march on Ninety Six. Cruger repeated the report in a message to Cornwallis and stated that Pickens had exhibited cooperation. The Ninety Six Garrison Commander also suggested that it might be an appropriate time to offer Colonel Pickens a commission at the head of a Loyalist militia unit.'³³

'November 12, 1780...Balfour...wrote Cornwallis on the same day that he had spoken with Robert Cunningham about command of the Tory militia. Balfour informed the General that Cunningham was excited about the concept, and he also mentioned he would soon meet with Williamson and Cruger. That indicated the officers had already been coordinating on Cornwallis' plan for a strong militia in the Ninety Six District. It also illustrated that Andrew Williamson was working closely with the British under his parole. Indeed, Balfour had sought advice from Williamson which

demonstrated the former Whig General exhibited no neutrality at that time.

On the 14th, Lieutenant Colonel Cruger wrote to Cornwallis and verified Balfour's letter regarding the visit. Cruger further stated that Williamson and Pickens were of a mind to accompany him to visit Balfour. Williamson and Cruger heavily courted Colonel Pickens per Cornwallis' desires. They still believed that, if Pickens should don the cloak of a Tory militia colonel, British control of Ninety Six would be a given.'³⁴

On November 20, 1780, South Carolina Brigadier General Thomas Sumter was severely wounded by some members of the 63^d Mounted Infantry Regiment in an action against Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton at Captain William Blackstock's farm on the Tyger River.

'They badly wounded Sumter with buckshot. Sumter turned command over to Georgia Colonel John Twiggs and called for a surgeon. Dr. Robert Brownfield immediately realized that Sumter was bleeding dangerously so, without any anesthetic, the doctor removed the buckshot, cauterized the wounds, and applied a dressing with poultice. Dr. Brownfield marshaled a group of militiamen to construct a litter to accommodate Sumter. The men stretched an uncured bull hide over two poles that were tautly bound between two horses.'³⁵

'An exaggerated account of the confrontation, likely initiated by Tarleton, appeared in the November 17, 1780 issue of the *Royal South Carolina Gazette*. It was reprinted in the January 11, 1781 issue of *The London Chronicle*:

"That the Earl Cornwallis having dispatched Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton with part of the legion, and 63d Regiment, in quest of Sumpter, that active and enterprising officer, on the 20th inst came up with Mr. Sumpter's rear guard on the Enoree; they were immediately attaked (sic), and cut up to a man. Colonel Tarleton having discovered Sumter's tract (sic), immediately pursued him with a great rapidity, and came up with him at Black Stolks (sic) on Tyger River. The force of the rebels consisted of about 1000

*men, headed by Sumpter, Clarke, Lacy, and Brennan, who were posted on advantageous ground. All the force Colonel Tarleton could bring up, was, 190 cavalry, and 90 infantry. The attack commenced, and notwithstanding the superior numbers of the rebels, and the advantage of the ground, they could not withstand the ardent bravery of the King's troops, but after some resistance were totally defeated and dispersed; and their horses, waggons, &c all taken.—The slaughter amongst them, which was very great, would have been much more so, if the night had not favoured (sic) their escape. Sumpter is dangerously wounded, and it is thought must long before this have fallen into Colonel Tarleton's hands. Our loss consists of fifty killed and wounded.”*³⁶

‘On November 22, 1780, General Cornwallis gave Robert Cunningham a commission of Brigadier General of the Ninety Six Militia Regiment. Cornwallis was convinced that Cunningham had the ability to take charge and keep the Ninety Six District under control. Cunningham was popular among local Tories, so Cornwallis hoped he would be a successful recruiter for the militia.

Meanwhile, Cornwallis decided to strengthen efforts to convert Colonel Andrew Pickens to the British cause. Colonel Cruger wrote Cornwallis on the 27th and hinted that someone from Long Canes would almost assuredly accept command of a Tory regiment. He further stated that, once the commission of Tory colonel was finalized for that anonymous individual, every backcountry fighter would flock to the Tory unit. Obviously, Cruger did not hide the identity of Colonel Andrew Pickens very well.

The very next day Cruger sent another missive to Cornwallis stating that Andrew Williamson had expressed the same sentiments to Cruger that Cruger expressed to Cornwallis about Andrew Pickens being ready to convert. He added that Williamson was becoming more and more the asset they had hoped he would be. On the 30th, Cornwallis responded to Cruger that

he would be grateful when the Long Canes individual would finally take command.

British Lieutenant Henry Haldane then spoke with Andrew Pickens. Haldane promised Pickens that, if he would muster his old regiment in favor of the British, Cornwallis would assure him of a promotion and of protection for him and his family. Cruger, also at the meeting, assured Pickens that his acceptance would bring peace to the backcountry. Pickens was noncommittal, but agreed to go with Cruger and Williamson to discuss the matter with Balfour at Charles Town.

Major General Gates moved the Southern Department to Charlotte once the British had vacated. Major General Nathanael Greene arrived at Charlotte on December 2, and the official Change of Command was accomplished on the 4th. Some writings indicate the command changed on the 3rd; however, Greene biographer William Johnson stated it occurred on the 4th. Greene knew that Congress had ordered a court of inquiry be held regarding General Horatio Gates and his conduct at Camden. Greene determined that it would be in the best interest of all to approach Congress regarding a postponement in deference to the personal tragedy of Robert Gates' death. Green thought Gates' grief would be hardship enough and would hamper his presentation of a proper defense. Gates pushed for an immediate inquiry, but the postponement request was forwarded. Gates indicated he would await the inquiry at his home. General Greene then wrote General Washington on the 7th, “*General Gates sets out to-morrow for the northward. Many officers think very favorably of his conduct, and that, whenever an inquiry takes place, he will honorably acquit himself.*”³⁷

Meanwhile, General Greene was unimpressed with his Southern Department. He found that not only were there a mere 1,500 Continental soldiers, but those were ill-equipped and poorly-disciplined. He also found supplies short with only three days' subsistence in the storehouse. He had predicted such and, while on his way south, arranged for food and clothing to be sent from Virginia to the army in Charlotte.

Neither was the General overly impressed with the situation in the Carolinas. He wrote:

"...the powers of government [are] so weak, that every body (sic) does as he pleases. The inhabitants are much divided in their political sentiments, and the whigs (sic) and tories (sic) pursue each other with little less than savage fury. The back country people are bold and daring; but the people upon the sea shore are sickly, and but indifferent militia.

*War here is upon a very different scale to what it is at the Northward. It is a plain business there [in the North]. The geography...there reduces its operations to two or three points. But here it is everywhere; and the country is so full of deep rivers and impassible creeks and swamps, that you are always liable to misfortune...The whigs and tories are continually out in small parties, and all the middle country is so disaffected that you cannot lay in the most trifling magazine, or send a wagon through the country with the least article of stores without a guard."*³⁸

That letter delineated the reason previous Southern Department commanders lacked success, and why the British could not expand on, nor even hold on to, the success they gained. The Continental Army and British forces were not accustomed to the type of guerilla warfare that enveloped the backcountry, so they would never understand it. The Whig militias were focused and well trained; the British provincial forces were moderately centered on the task at hand, but the Tory militias were not interested in training or subjugation to officers. Therefore, the American reliance on local militias in the latter stages of the southern campaign was successful, but British attempts at similar efforts were failures.

Greene had arranged for Brigadier General Daniel Morgan to meet him at Charlotte. Morgan, a first cousin of Daniel Boone whose mother was a Morgan, had agreed to come out of retirement for the promotion. He agreed despite his suffering from severe arthritis, sciatica, and hemorrhoids. Regardless of his ailments, he was

invaluable to General Greene. Brigadier General Isaac Huger also joined Greene. Huger and Morgan would lead two divisions in the reorganized Southern Department. Morgan took command of 400 Continentals (including 80 light dragoons) and 200 militiamen, and Huger led the main force of 650 Continental soldiers who were soon to be joined by 1,000 recruits from Virginia. Morgan's wing was designed to be a light, quick-moving force and was called the 'Flying Army.'

One month earlier, a rumor had made the rounds at Camden that Brigadier General Morgan was prepared to invest that city. It was reported in the January 11, 1781 issue of *The London Chronicle*:

"Charlestown, Nov. 13 [1780]

Extract of a Letter from Camden, dated the 13th instant

*On the evening of the 9th instant, came in a deserter from the rebels. He informs, that General Morgan having received intelligence that our troops had evacuated this town, marched from North Carolina with 300 foot, and 75 horse, in order to take possession; but on his approaches, as far as the Waxaws (sic), distant 35 miles from this, he was informed, that we still kept possession, and meant to defend the place, let the consequence be what it would, which induced him to retreat with precipitation to his former station.—We have thrown up works all round the town, and at several places about a mile distant.—We are under no apprehensions of having a visit paid us by the Americans. They have nothing, for miles round, to subsist on; and their only incitement for coming into the country is plunder. Lord Cornwallis is perfectly recovered, and his army in high spirits."*³⁹

General Greene also made contact with various militia leaders. He wrote letters to Brigadier General Francis Marion and Colonel Elijah Clarke. He urged the 'Swamp Fox' to continue his current actions with his militia and suggested that Clarke speed up his efforts to harass Ninety Six. He asked Thomas Sumter to write Andrew Pickens and urge him to forsake

his parole, rejoin the Patriot cause, and bring his militia to Charlotte.

Greene knew the Whigs in South Carolina would be buoyed by the new Southern Department activities. Dr. J. B. O. Landrum wrote:

*"...The Whigs became convinced by the oppression and arbitrary conduct of the enemy that the promised protection...already disregarded would not be longer afforded. There was a general inclination to resume arms once more. A leader was all that was necessary to arouse them to action. That person proved to be Gen. Andrew Pickens, who, among the rest of the Whigs in South Carolina, had been compelled to submit..."*⁴⁰

Greene would need help to make this happen, and he would get it from an unlikely source; the British.

Georgia Militia Colonels Elijah Clarke, Benjamin Few, and John Twiggs were still encamped at Long Canes with Lieutenant Colonel James McCall. McCall had learned that Pickens and Williamson were considering a visit with the British. This was of great concern because McCall knew that Williamson had already become sympathetic to Britain. He did not want Pickens to make the same move, so he discussed the situation with Colonel Few. Few called a council, and the group, eagerly agreed to persuade Pickens he should break parole. McCall devised a plan to stage a kidnapping and thus provide cover to protect Colonel Pickens from the British. Andrew Pickens could have been hanged if he were caught meeting with active Whigs while on parole. Once he was taken to the Whig camp on the 4th, Andrew Pickens admitted that he and Williamson were to meet with the British. However, he added that he was still honor bound by his parole and must remain neutral. He stated, *"...My honor is pledged. I am bound by the solemnity of an oath not to take up arms, unless the conditions of protection are violated by the British themselves, or by somebody acting under Royal authority."*⁴¹

Pickens on one hand was thankful for the parole he had been under for the past six months.

That had been a rare opportunity for him to spend considerable uninterrupted time with his wife, children, and estate. They had been living in peace and had not been threatened. The neighborhood Tories respected him nearly as much as did the Whigs. He allowed several temporary paroles to Tories after the Battle of Kettle Creek, so the Loyalists could see to their families. He had made a strong impression. Everyone trusted him to be an honorable man.

On the other hand, Pickens likely regretted having taken Williamson's advice about parole. Whig fervor was low after Charles Town fell, and Britain controlled South Carolina, so parole seemed necessary for the security of his family. Pickens, loyal to his Whig friends, remained neutral throughout his parole. Williamson, however, actively lobbied against the Whigs. When the Patriot militia became active, the Colonel may have thought he was shirking duty to his country by remaining on parole. There was no alternative for him. No matter how torn he may have been, he was honor bound.

Cruger wrote Cornwallis on the 5th that he had a plan for the Ninety Six District. He would convince Pickens, when commissioned a colonel, to lead a Tory militia regiment. Then Cruger and Balfour would prepare a declaration (yet another declaration) and would demand that the local citizenry sign. Men in the district would be required to pledge their loyalty to King George III and to bear arms for the British.

Major Samuel Hammond led his command to White Hall on the 6th, kidnapped Williamson, and took him before Colonel Benjamin Few and the others at Long Canes. They insisted that Williamson explain his actions in support of the British. He was inimical and refused to cooperate. The Whigs held him in camp for several days. Initially they begged him to change his loyalties and rejoin the effort. Then, since they considered him a traitor, they threatened his life if he did not. They paroled him to White Hall and suggested he take a few days to reconsider his position. Adding further insult, they accompanied him to his estate and proceeded to eat food that Williamson had

stored for the Tory regiments within the Ninety Six District. They commandeered the remainder and took it to Long Canes.

Williamson reported the affair to Lieutenant Colonel Cruger who had already written Cornwallis on the 9th that he had organized the Tories to drive Colonels Clarke and Twiggs with their militias back to Georgia. Cruger had further informed Cornwallis that Williamson was detained by the Whigs.

On December 12, 1780, Lieutenant Colonel Cruger dispatched provincial Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Allen with his New Jersey Volunteers to engage the Whig militia. Allen had a total force of 400 men that included Major James Dunlap and his Tory dragoons. The Loyalists made camp en route to Long Canes and were unaware that 100 Whig militiamen, on their way to harass Ninety Six, were bivouacked nearby. A Whig foraging party stumbled upon Allen's men. The Tories chased the retreating foragers back to the Whig encampment. The Whigs were surprised and routed.

The Loyalists followed the Whigs for two miles, but they could not keep up with the smaller party and so returned to their position. Shortly, Colonel John Twiggs rode into the Tory cantonment under a truce flag and met with Lieutenant Colonel Allen. They discussed the short battle, and Twiggs inquired about the condition of the wounded and captured Whigs. Twiggs then informed Allen that Lieutenant Colonel James McCall had been slightly wounded, but Colonel Elijah Clarke had taken a ball in the shoulder.

Following the narrow escape, Colonels Twiggs, Few, and Clarke departed for Georgia with their militiamen. McCall led his militia toward Charlotte to locate General Greene.⁴²

Lieutenant Colonel Allen was content that the Georgia Whigs had withdrawn toward their homes; hence, he returned with his force to Ninety Six. Dunlap, however, did not believe that Clarke was healthy enough for the trip, so he began an intense search with his dragoons. First Dunlap went to James McCall's home to make sure that McCall and Clarke were not there to convalesce. Dunlap did not find them. In a rage,

he burned the home, terrorized Mrs. McCall and her children, stripped the family of all their food and clothing, confiscated what cattle he and his men could take with them, and killed the remaining stock. When McCall and Clarke learned of Dunlap's violence, they each were so enraged that they each declared they would not ever forget Major James Dunlap.

Dunlap next made a grievous misjudgment, an error so severe that he would never be able to endear himself to either Cruger or Cornwallis again. Dunlap knew that Colonels Clarke, Pickens, and Lieutenant Colonel McCall had made history together (Kettle Creek), so he presumed that Clarke might recuperate at Pickens' estate. Dunlap attacked the Pickens estate! Pickens was away, and Dunlap did not find Clarke. This was just another Whig plantation to the Major, so he destroyed many of the structures, horrified Becky and the children, and rode away. Andrew Pickens' children were young; they ranged in age from one to twelve years old.

Dunlap, a New Jersey Tory Provincial officer, seemingly had no concept of what he had done. Blindly, he assumed that a Whig is a Whig and he had no inkling of the esteem with which local Tories held the Pickens'. He may have been aware that Cruger was heavily recruiting Pickens, but he just could not comprehend how important the Whig officer could be to the British cause.⁴³

The British effort to make a Tory colonel out of Pickens, which had little chance to succeed, was definitely thwarted by Major Dunlap's aggressiveness. Pickens returned to his estate to find dead cattle, empty grain silos, and widespread destruction. His family, though frightened, had not been harmed. Beckie was strong, but the children cried as they told Andrew how rough the Tories handled them, and how the Loyalists verbally abused them with vile language and threats. Andrew understood that his parole would not provide future assurance of protection for his family.



General Andrew Pickens' Blockhouse was located at the present site of the Little River Electric Co-op office, 300 Cambridge Street, Abbeville, SC.

Colonel Pickens was not yet ready to take up arms; something else had to be accomplished first. He would inform the British authorities that he was no longer obligated by the conditions of parole, and that he would no longer remain neutral. He would do so the honorable way—in person.

He deliberated his target, which British authorities he would notify. He first reflected upon the primary authority in the Ninety Six District, Lieutenant Colonel John Harris Cruger. Cruger had dealt with him fairly; however, Cruger's name had been associated with the hangings of those who violated parole. Cruger had a fierce temper and might regard the mere mention of abandoning parole as cause for execution. Pickens decided it would be senseless to go directly to the Commander of the Ninety Six District, so he considered Cruger's subordinates.

There would be some risk no matter to whom he directed his declaration, but the danger could be diminished depending upon the wisdom of his choice. He decided. General Andrew Williamson, though not judged entirely trustworthy, had a small British outpost at White Hall commanded by Captain George Ker (sometimes Kerr) who reported directly to Cruger. The Colonel knew that Williamson was at the post and would likely act as a buffer should Pickens need him to do so.

When Andrew Pickens arrived at White Hall, he was greeted by Williamson who hoped his old friend and subordinate had come to join the cause. However, Pickens simply asked to meet with Ker and requested Williamson to attend. The Captain was available and invited the pair in. Lieutenant Henry Haldane, who had previously spoken with Pickens about conversion to the British cause, was in the room. Andrew invited Haldane to stay as he thought the Lieutenant might be another (though likely unnecessary) ingredient to help deter an irrational, spur of the moment, response by Ker.

Colonel Pickens calmly chronicled James Dunlap's actions. Andrew described how Dunlap had searched for Clarke, harassed his family, and destroyed his property. He told the gathering that he was saddened that they had not fulfilled their promise to protect his family during Andrew's parole. The room was quiet, and the British officers paled. They saw a 'Tory Colonel Pickens' slip from their grasp. Williamson hung his head and fidgeted.

Then Pickens arrived at the crux of his visit. He flatly declared that, because the British had violated their oath, he no longer felt bound by his. He would no longer remain neutral.

The officers tried to convince him that to abandon his parole was folly. Haldane told Pickens about the coming proclamation to be signed by all in the district. He stated that Cruger would only promise protection if the Colonel would join his friend, General Williamson, in adopting the British cause. Unruffled, Andrew answered that he had already tried to rely upon the word of the British and suffered indignities because of it. He further declared that he absolutely could not sign such a declaration as Haldane had described.

Captain Ker made one last attempt to dissuade Pickens from his announced action. He said, "You will literally fight with a halter around your neck! Though our countries are at war, you have given proof of personal friendship and I hope you may never fall into the hands of the British government."⁴⁴

Andrew Pickens, in reply, repeated his logic

*“I have honorably and conscientiously adhered to the rules laid down in the protection I took, but now I consider myself completely absolved by the wanton plunder and waste, and the indignities that have been offered to my family... Will you communicate this message to Colonel Cruger at Ninety Six, and thank him for his civilities while I was under British protection?”*⁴⁵

Pickens gave a sigh of relief as he left White Hall. He had fulfilled his goal. His honor was secure, and he was not hanged because of it.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, Major General Nathanael Greene contemplated his next move. Charlotte did not offer any long-term possibility for his headquarters. The British had already stripped the area of forage during Lieutenant General Charles Lord Cornwallis’ recent headquarters there. The army must move to be fed. Additionally, Cornwallis’ army, sans outpost garrisons, outnumbered Greene’s 3,500 men to 2,000. Cornwallis was located at Winnsboro, South Carolina, just 50 miles south of Charlotte, which put Greene at a strategic disadvantage. He had to leave Charlotte as he expected Cornwallis might return. Cornwallis’ strategy would likely be to attack Greene while the Southern Department was in such meager condition. No matter where Greene might try to move, his foe could easily move in the same direction, cut Greene off, and force a fight for which the Southern Department was ill prepared.

Greene solved the problem in a unique way. He split his force, a rare decision for a commander so severely outnumbered. One half of the army could more easily find sufficient forage, so he planned to set the two divisions in different regions. Once each wing arrived at its region, it could spread out over several smaller encampments, far enough from the others to further improve foraging possibilities, yet near enough to quickly conjoin when required.’⁴⁷



Brigadier General Daniel Morgan in traditional battle attire.

‘General Morgan left Charlotte on the 21st. Lieutenant Colonel John Eager Howard from Maryland was Morgan’s second and had direct command of the Continental Army units. They crossed the Catawba at Biggin’s Ferry on the 22nd, generally followed Cane Creek, forded the Broad River on the 24th, and established their main camp at Grindal Shoals on the Pacolet River December 25, Christmas Day. Grindal Shoals is east of present-day Pacolet Mills, South Carolina, near State Highway 18.

Another effect of the army’s split was that Lieutenant General Cornwallis was blocked from attacking General Greene’s position with his entire force. Should Cornwallis depart Winnsboro with the majority of his army, General Morgan could attack Cruger at Ninety Six with little difficulty. Conversely, a Cornwallis move on Morgan would provide Greene an opportunity to attack the large British detachment at Camden. General Greene’s

historic decision to split his army in the face of a superior-size enemy force, and to organize Morgan's wing into the 'Flying Army' would prove invaluable. Cornwallis could not expect such an unusual, albeit wise, move.

The timing was perfect. "...*Buckling on the sword, General Pickens resolved to lead the way in exciting the well affected to the American cause to hazard all and rally once more in defense of Liberty...*"⁴⁸ Colonel Andrew Pickens met several confidantes while Morgan made his way to the Pacolet. It was a grand council: Colonel Pickens, brothers John and Lieutenant Joseph Pickens, cousins and Captains Robert and John Pickens, in-laws Majors John Bowie and Alexander Noble, several members of the Calhoun family, and comrade Captain Robert Anderson. They discussed Cruger's forthcoming declaration. Once Cruger had posted the order throughout Ninety Six, neutrality would no longer be an option for any of the group. Their only option was to reactivate the Ninety Six Regiment under Colonel Andrew Pickens, align with the South Carolina State Troops, and support the Continental Army under General Morgan. Lieutenant Joseph Pickens would be promoted to Captain in the state militia.

Some historians have written that Andrew Pickens talked with his brothers John and Robert at his council. However, Andrew did not have a brother named Robert. Captain Robert Pickens was his cousin, so the writings should have shown the name 'Joseph' rather than 'Robert.' The mistake may have originated with a statement by Dr. A. L. Pickens that... "Joseph and Robert were soon with him again." However, Dr. Pickens' comment did not pertain to the council, but to formation of the militia. The Colonel had fought for many years with his brother, Joseph, and his friend, Captain Robert Anderson. These are the Joseph and Robert to whom Dr. Pickens referred.⁴⁹

Immediately after he settled at Grindal Shoals, General Morgan sent messages to local Whig militia commanders. He sent aides to

Colonel Pickens to implore the Colonel to gather his militia and join him. Pickens explained that it would be a problem to recruit and gather his force, and to then march the 80 miles to Grindal Shoals. Pickens' was concerned about the large Tory militias that constantly patrolled the area. Georgia Loyalist Colonel Thomas Waters operated out of Fair Forest which lay between Grindal Shoals and Long Canes, and Brigadier General Robert Cunningham was stationed at Williams' Fort (*on Williams' plantation located east of present-day Cross Hill, South Carolina, where State Highway 560 crosses Mud Lick Creek*).

Morgan decided he could resolve the problem. On December 29, he dispatched Continental Army Colonel William Washington with 80 Continental dragoons and militia Lieutenant Colonel James McCall with 200 of his mounted militiamen to keep the Tories busy.

Colonel Waters had 250 Georgia militiamen. Reminiscent of Major James Dunlap, they were actively engaged in nefarious attacks on Whig-owned estates. They antagonized women and children at their homes, and threatened men who had settled into some semblance of neutrality. Washington and McCall pushed their force hard in country heavily controlled by the Tory provincials and militias, but it was noon on the 30th before the Americans caught up to Waters' throng. The Tories were comfortably camped around Hammond's store and had no warning until the pickets reported the arrival of the cavalry. Waters had just enough time to form a line on top of a prominence. Washington stopped his troops on top of an adjacent rise when he saw the long line of Tories. After just a few seconds, Washington let out a long whoop, waved his saber, and led his force in a charge. (*Hammond's store was located on the Bush River due south of Clinton, South Carolina.*)

Major Thomas Young of McCall's mounted militia described the action in his journal:

"When we came in sight we perceived that the Tories had formed in a line on the brow of the hill opposite to us. We had a long hill

to descend and another to rise. Lt. Col. Washington and his dragoons gave a shout, drew swords, and charged down the hill like madmen. The Tories flew in every direction without firing a gun. We took great many prisoners and killed a few." ⁵⁰

The skirmish was actually a chase. The Tories lost 100 men either killed or severely wounded. Forty Tories, 50 horses, and over 200 rifles were captured. The Tories reportedly did not get off a shot, thus the mortality might be deemed unwarranted. However, the South Carolina militia had heard enough of the indignities Waters' militia had forced upon Whig families, and vengeance was unavoidable. Waters escaped through the forest with 100 survivors.

Some record that Thomas Waters was a Lieutenant Colonel at the time; however, Thomas Brown of the Augusta garrison wrote him in February, 1779 and addressed the letter to Col. Thomas Waters. The date of the original citation in the source was only readable to 'Feb. 177_'; however, February 1779 fits with Brown's appearance in Augusta. Waters' home was on the Savannah River north of Augusta, and he had apparently been an original member of the Georgia Rangers since 1773. ⁵¹

The next day, a detachment approached Fort Williams to take care of Brigadier General Robert Cunningham and his 150 Tories. Cunningham, however, had heard of Waters' embarrassment and evacuated toward Ninety Six just as the Americans arrived. The attackers were led by South Carolina militia Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Hayes with 40 militiamen supported by Continental Cornet James Simons and 10 of Washington's dragoons. This amounted to another embarrassment for the British. Cornwallis had sustained high hopes for Cunningham to take forceful control of the Tory militia in Ninety Six and to keep the Whigs in check. However, with a superior force by four-to-one, he was chased out of his fortress and did not even attempt a skirmish. (*Cornet was the*

lowest-ranking commissioned officer in the Continental Cavalry.)

Cruger reported to Cornwallis:

"General Cuninghame, on hearing of Water's (sic) defeat...had just marched out with the last of his garrison, as a party, consisting of about forty militia horsemen under Colonel Hayes, and ten dragoons under Mr. Simmonds, arrived..." ⁵²

Cunningham's brigade was, in fact, so large that Hayes did not attempt to give chase but chose instead to raze Fort Williams. Cruger exhibited great control with his report when he did not criticize Cunningham for his timidity; Cornwallis could figure that out for himself. ⁵³

Many backcountry Whigs knew about the declaration Cruger had printed, so they flocked to Ninety Six prepared to declare their oaths upon his return. Several had been with McCall and the Georgians at Long Canes when they were routed by Lieutenant Colonel Allen and Major Dunlap. With morale at a low, they may have decided discretion made more sense than to continue a battle against the British government.

Things changed drastically in the rollercoaster world of backcountry South Carolina. Word was widespread, not only of Pickens and his old regiment reawakening, but of Lieutenant Colonel Washington and Colonel Hayes respectively forcing Colonel Waters and Brigadier General Cunningham to back down. Additionally, the Americans did so just a few miles from a Tory stronghold; the village of Ninety Six.

On the morning of the 29th, well-coordinated with Washington's foray, Colonel Andrew Pickens, Majors John Bowie and Alexander Noble, and Captains Robert Anderson and Joseph Pickens mustered 100 of their old regiment around Long Canes and began the trek toward Grindal Shoals. Theirs was not a timid group. The men epitomized courage, especially since each was aware he would be hanged if captured by the British. When they arrived at the Saluda, they deemed it safe enough to rest. Soon Washington, McCall, and Hayes, who were also returning to General Morgan, joined them for the final leg of the journey. Pickens and McCall

reunited with a combined force of 260 militiamen.’⁵⁴

Pickens and his officers met with Brigadier General Daniel Morgan and then set up camp. The South Carolina militia followed the example that Morgan had set. Morgan split his forces into small detachments that camped separate from each other. This structure aided all to forage as each group had to find food in a smaller area for its own troops. Also fewer soldiers were exposed to danger in the event of a surprise attack.

Colonel Andrew Pickens and Brigadier General Daniel Morgan was a match of destiny. Pickens took charge of all militia, save those state troops that were directly assigned to the Continental Army to fulfill the quota of particular states. He led his militiamen as the rear guard while General Morgan headed the army toward Cowpens. Pickens’ force disrupted the forage ahead of Tarleton’s advancement as the British officer chased Morgan toward that famous battle. Morgan assigned Pickens to command the militia line during the Battle of Cowpens and also to be second in command overall. That was an unusual move as Lieutenant Colonel John Eager Howard command the Continental Army infantry line and Lieutenant Colonel William Washington led the Continental Army Cavalry. In the past, in joint militia and Continental Army actions, militia officers’ ranks were discounted one or two levels in favor of the regular officers’ ranks. The actions of Andrew Pickens in that battle earned him a promotion to South Carolina Brigadier General and many accolades of fellow officers, both American and British.

The purpose of the book *Andrew Pickens: South Carolina Patriot in the Revolutionary War* was written to keep the valuable historical record of Andrew Pickens forever available. The book is recommended by SCAR and is available from the publisher McFarland & Co. Jefferson, NC. \$39.95 paperback and other booksellers.

<http://www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-6694-8>

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