

S.C. - King's Mountain, Battle of - Markers

YORK D. A. R. UNVEILS MARKER

A marker to Col. James Hawthorne, York county's "forgotten" man of the Revolution, was dedicated with suitable ceremonies Saturday at Kings Mountain Battle Ground.

The battle of Kings Mountain, fought on October 7, 1780, is considered the turning point of the American Revolution.

The erection of a suitable marker to Col. Hawthorne was for 20 years a project of Miss Margaret Gist of York who died more than a year ago.

Miss Daisy Gist, her sister, unveiled the marker which was placed by the Kings Mountain Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, York. Mrs. J. C. Roper of Clover is the chapter regent.

Mrs. Lamar Black had charge of the program.

Special music was furnished by a group of York High school students who sang patriotic songs.

For many years members of the York chapter have held their October meetings on the date of the historic battle and at the battleground.

Kings Mountain Battleground is located in Kings Mountain National Military park approximately 15 miles north of York.

Situated in Northwestern York and North Cherokee counties the park contains approximately 4,000 acres. Monuments there include a centennial monument erected in 1880, the United States government obelisk erected in 1909 and the monument erected in 1930 on the 150th anniversary of the battle, President Herbert Hoover was the speaker.

The Battle

It is a strange fact that Major Patrick Ferguson remains even to this day the hero of the Battle of King's Mountain. Although he fought a losing battle and paid with life and with the death and capture of every one of his 1,100 men, the picture of Ferguson and his gallantry lives even

today.

The Battle of King's Mountain was one of two fought during the Revolutionary war in York county—the other was the Battle of Huck's Defeat. Both were mere skirmishes by modern battle evaluation, but the Battle of King's Mountain turned the tide of the War and helped to change the course of history.

Historians say the battle lasted little more than an hour. The 1,100 Tories led by Ferguson were overtaken and surrounded by the Patriot force of 910 men on the spur that distinguishes the low mountain.

The battle was no less intense because many of Ferguson's men were cousins or even brothers of those untrained and backwoods Patriots who routed them so completely. The fighting was no less intense because the Patriots knew that their only pay would be worthless script. They used their own rifles and powder; they wore nondescript clothing of skins, furs and any home-made garments they could find. They lived on what the land provided and order and discipline were unknown until the critical time of fighting gave the men a common purpose.

Ferguson knew of the danger because two deserters from Sevier's band had fled to Gilbertown near Rutherfordton, N. C., and warned him. However he was still unable to withstand the Patriot's onslaught when after 12 days of pursuit and after a ride through an all night rain the Patriots came at mid-day on October 7 on Ferguson and his men.

Leader

After a council of war Col. William Campbell was chosen as leader of the Patriots. Although history has not invested him with the glamour of Major Ferguson and although his grave is less conspicuously marked, Col. Campbell fought no less bravely. With his coat off and his shirt unbuttoned he led his men. Long

years later a grandson, Senator Preston, was breakfasting at a house near King's Mountain and happened to mention his grandfather. The housewife noticed the resemblance of Col. Campbell, and declared that she dreaded Col. Campbell most of all men on earth as he was the man who had hurt her husband at Kings Mountain. Campbell was married to Elizabeth Henry, a sister of Patrick Henry.

Hero Still

But the hero of the battle after so many years is still Major Ferguson who dashed round blowing a silver whistle to bring order. Two horses were shot from under him and his sword was broken at the hilt. When Ferguson fell, some accounts say that he had been hit by six bullets.

White rags were waved from Tory ramrods but violent efforts from Patriot leaders were required to stop the fighting. In little more than an hour the battle was over with a Patriot loss of 28 killed and 62 wounded.

Handicapped with a disabled right arm, Ferguson was known as the "one armed devil". Evidently a military genius — though a loser in the important last battle — he devised the Ferguson breech loading flint lock rifle. This rifle was superior to any in the world at that time.

No one knows the name of the first visitor to place a stone on Major Ferguson's grave. But for many years each visitor to the tomb has added his small token of remembrance. Now the visitor has to search the once stony hillside for a great distance to find a stone to toss on Major Ferguson's last resting place.

Strange to say the bones of the King's Mountain dead lay scattered over the hillside for wolves to toss about until 1815 when they were gathered up and given burial.

Another Patriot defender at the Battle of King's Mountain was Col. Fred Hambright. Col. Hambright was born in Germany in

1727 and lived near King's Mountain in a house that burned in 1927. He died in 1817 and his body is buried in Shiloh cemetery at Grover, N. C., now the grounds of a Negro church.

In Bethel Presbyterian church cemetery lie the remains of Col. William Hill and of Dr. William McLean, only man at Kings Mountain with any medical knowledge. Also buried there is the body of John Chittim, son of William Chittim, who lived on what are still known as the Chittim bottoms on Catawba Creek. He was seriously wounded in the Battle of King's Mountain but lived until December 24, 1818.

Historians have not recorded Col. Hawthorne's contribution to the success of the Patriots. However, his part in the now famous battle was recounted at Saturday's dedication of a marker to his memory.

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