

Hemphill Introduces Kings Mountain Stamp Bill

Congressman Robert W. Hemphill, of the Fifth District of South Carolina, announced today that he had re-introduced a bill to have the Post Office Department issue a stamp commemorating the Battle of Kings Mountain, in the Revolutionary War, which occurred in October of 1780, on a South Carolina mountain at the foot of the Blue Ridge. The bill was introduced in 1957 but was not acted upon.

In his remarks, included in the appendix of the Congressional Record of this day, Mr. Hemphill stated:

Mr. Speaker. Under leave to extend my remarks I wish to point out to our colleagues that I have introduced again today a bill requesting the Post Office Department to issue a stamp commemorating the Battle of Kings Mountain, which turned the tide of victory in the Southern Campaign in the Revolutionary War. This stamp would herald and salute those heroes of Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, and many from other States, who fought for freedom there.

That great organization of patriotic ladies, the Daughters of the American Revolution, are interested in this legislation. They have consistently worked to preserve the memories of those hallowed victories. I am sure, too, the veterans of this country, who have emulated the braveries of their forefathers, would appreciate this stamp.

I would like to review the history of that battle.

When Lord Cornwallis marched into South Carolina, he assigned to Tarlton, the territory

immediately to his left and to Patrick Ferguson, he assigned the territory farther to his left, and westward, being the mountain region. Colonel Ferguson had marched through South Carolina and on October 5 or 6, 1780, he reached Kings Mountain and there he encamped. Ferguson stated that God Almighty and all the rebels out of Hell could not move in. He had with him Tories or Loyalists, but no British troops.

The American forces had assembled at Sycamore Shoals, on the Watauga River and at Cowpens, South Carolina. These were the overmountain men and the Whigs of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. They had joined forces at Cowpens for the purpose of pursuing Ferguson and annihilating him. They numbered about 1,100 men. Ferguson realized that he was being pursued by American

forces, and fearing that he might be outnumbered, sent word to Charlotte, Cornwallis' headquarters, to send Tarlton and his forces to his aide. But, Providence, whom he had so recently challenged, took a hand as He always takes a hand, and the waters of the Catawba River over which Tarlton would have to cross were so swollen by heavy rains that he could not reach Ferguson.

As the American forces marched through the country, they were joined by many others. Even after the shooting started history tells us neighborhood farmers joined in the fighting, some for the Whigs and some for the Tories.

Ferguson evidently did not

realize how close the enemy was, and was also holding to the hope that aid would arrive from Charlotte, but the Whig forces were hastening toward his encampment. They had gained much information from the people along the way and knew pretty well the lay of the land at Kings Mountain.

When less than a mile from the Tories, the American troops dismounted and left a few men in charge of the horses. They

formed two lines of march in order to completely surround Ferguson. Colonel Cleveland led his men to the west side of the mountain. Colonel Campbell led his men to the east side and north of Ferguson. The Tories were now trapped and could not retreat.

Which side fired the first shot is not known, but the fighting started about 3 P. M. and went on for over an hour. The American forces had already learned that Ferguson was wearing a checked shirt over his uniform. Colonel Hambricht, one of the American officers, issued orders as follows in his Pennsylvania German accent, "Well, poys, when you see dot man mit the pig shirt on over his clothes you know who him is, and mark him mit your rifles."

The British being on a high level were at a great disadvantage in having to shoot downward and in danger of hitting their own men, but the American forces were able to shoot over the heads of their comrades and were able to take much better aim. They also had large trees to use for shelter.

During the battle, Ferguson mounted on his horse and blowing a whistle moved from one point to another to encourage his troops. He was sighted by the Americans and six or eight

bullets hit him and he was killed instantly. The mountain was a holocaust of smoke and fire; the earth littered with the dead, and drenched with blood. After Ferguson was killed, Colonel de Peyster took command, but about fifteen minutes later they raised the white flag.

The American losses were 28 and the British were about 300. The surviving Tories were captured and made prisoners of war.

The Battle of Kings Mountain was not only the turning point in the American Revolution, but has been called one of the great battles of all history.

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