



# The Battle at Fishing Creek

Closing the net

The Battle of Fishing Creek August 18, 1780





## Biography of General Thomas Sumter (August 14, 1734 – June 1, 1832)

Thomas Sumter was born in colonial Virginia.

Little is known about Thomas Sumter's father. The elder Sumter may have been an indentured servant. He settled on a homestead at Preddy's Creek in Louisa County, VA, where Thomas was born.

William Martin, a childhood associate of General Sumter, would say that Thomas "seems as if he felt mortified at the idea of his low birth (his father being a miller, and his mother a mid-wife) and that he wished everything connected with his early life be forgotten." (1)

Sumter would play a role in the capture of Fort Pitt in the French and Indian War. At the conclusion of that conflict, Sumter would embark on another journey as an escort of Cherokee chiefs to London. When he returned, he found himself in some financial trouble while waiting to be paid by the Royal government. He would end up settling near the Eutaw Springs in South Carolina. (2)

He became a merchant and sought to move up in social standing in his new colony. He married Mary Cantey and increased his property. He was a planter, a trader and even a ferry operator. He made business and social connections that would turn into political collateral later. He was elected as a delegate to the first Provincial Congress in December, 1774 for the District Eastward of Wateree River. (3)

The British burned the future General out of his home just north of Sumter, South Carolina on May 20, 1780. At the time he had resigned his commission as a Continental officer. Left homeless with his physically challenged wife and young son, he made the decision to return to the fight at the age of 46.

Sumter's men gave battle to the British at Williamson Plantation, Rocky Mount, Hanging Rock, Cary's Fort, Fishing Creek, Kings Mountain, Fishdam Ford, and Blackstock's. They killed, captured, or defeated British Captain Christian Huck, N.C. Loyalist Colonel Samuel Bryan, Loyalist Lt. Colonel James Cary, British Major Patrick Ferguson, British Cavalry Major James Wemyss and British Legion Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton.

General Sumter continued his war efforts even after being wounded twice. He would help supply the war effort with intel and provisions, even when he was not in the field fighting. However, his preference of independent command often put him at odds with American General Nathaniel Greene.

After the war he served the citizens of South Carolina for five terms in the House of Representatives in Washington, DC. He also was elected to the U.S. Senate and served till 1810.

And for these and other momentous reasons, General Thomas Sumter is a proud hero of the South Carolina.

(1) Gregorie, A (1931) Thomas Sumter, RL Bryan Company (pg. 4)

(2) Jones, R (2011) Before They Were Heroes at King's Mountain, Daniel Boone Footsteps Publishing (pgs. 8-17)

(3) Gregorie, A (1931) Thomas Sumter, RL Bryan Company (pg. 39)

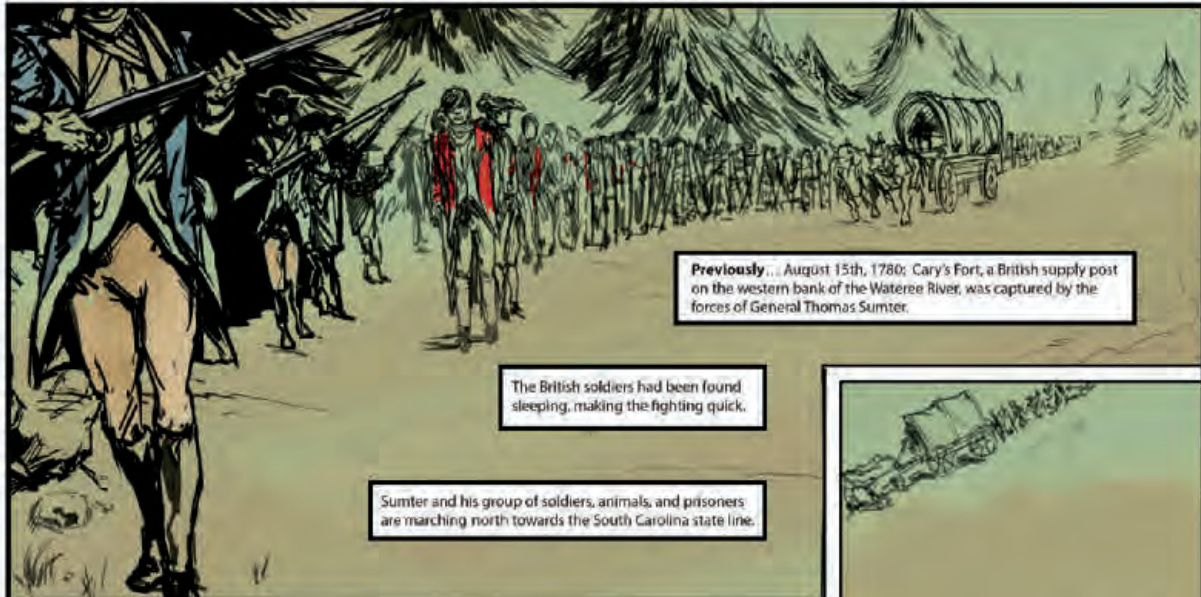


The Battle at  
**Fishing Creek**  
Closing the net

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**Dedicated to revisiting the heroes of the**  
**American Revolution. Historyman Comics**  
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**books available for your reading pleasure.**





**Previously**... August 15th, 1780: Cary's Fort, a British supply post on the western bank of the Wateree River, was captured by the forces of General Thomas Sumter.

The British soldiers had been found sleeping, making the fighting quick.

Sumter and his group of soldiers, animals, and prisoners are marching north towards the South Carolina state line.



It's time to order a rest.



It is the second day of the march.



Do you believe so?



They're used to this type of traveling. I think they should be able to hold out for a while longer.





What do you think should be our next move?

There isn't much else we can do but head north.

If we can get this livestock and prisoners to a safe place we can rest, regroup, and hit back.



Gates needs all the men he can get.



Sir, a messenger just arrived, and it's not good.



Well, get on with it.



Camden is lost. And Gates was seen fleeing from the field, while his men were still fighting.



Sumter's camp



Sumter's camp



I'm really worried now.

Well, no doubt we're on our own now.

Sentry.



Sir.

Yes, Sir.

Soldier, spread the word to keep a sharp eye out. We aren't out of this yet.



They could be anywhere.





Those are Sumter's fires?

Banastre Tarleton, in his task to recapture British supplies, has caught up to Thomas Sumter and catches a glimpse of his campfires from across the wide river.

A lust for Continental blood drives both Tarleton and his men, and the river is the only obstacle standing in their way.

We've found him.

They have to be, if not, we've been hunting the wrong prey all along.



Whoever they are, they'll be dead by this time tomorrow.



Sir, two ladies are here to see you.

Send them away. This is no place for a woman.

It seemed important.

Very well, then. Lead me to them.



Tom, if something happens to me... I need someone I trust to get this in the right hands.

This bag contains the hope we have to protect our families, homes, and freedoms.

I understand.



Good evening, ladies. What is your purpose here? This is no place for you to be.



We understand, but we have some information for you."



We think you might find some interest in it

How so?

Those soldiers across the river? We can help you get to them.



Now you have my attention. Do go on

They are on one side of the river, and you are on the other.

I am no fool. Get to the point.

We know of a place for you to cross the river that is not far from here



Yes. It's a short pass near the falls.

Here are the trails going north.

Tell me about the roads and trails on the other side of the river, north of here.



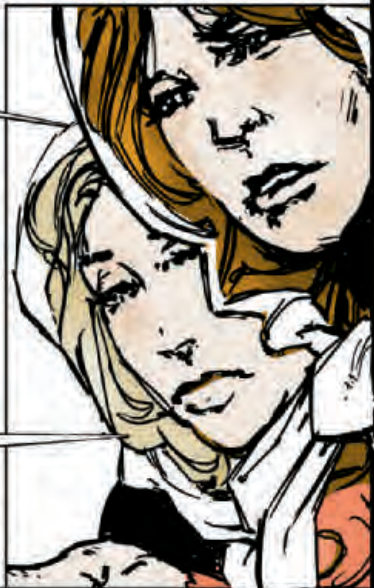
I see. Is that all you have come to tell me?



Yes, but we do ask a small price for our services.

Name it.

Would you allow us into the company of your men? My brother is in the cavalry, and I wish to ask around with his name.





By all means. If that's all, you may go.



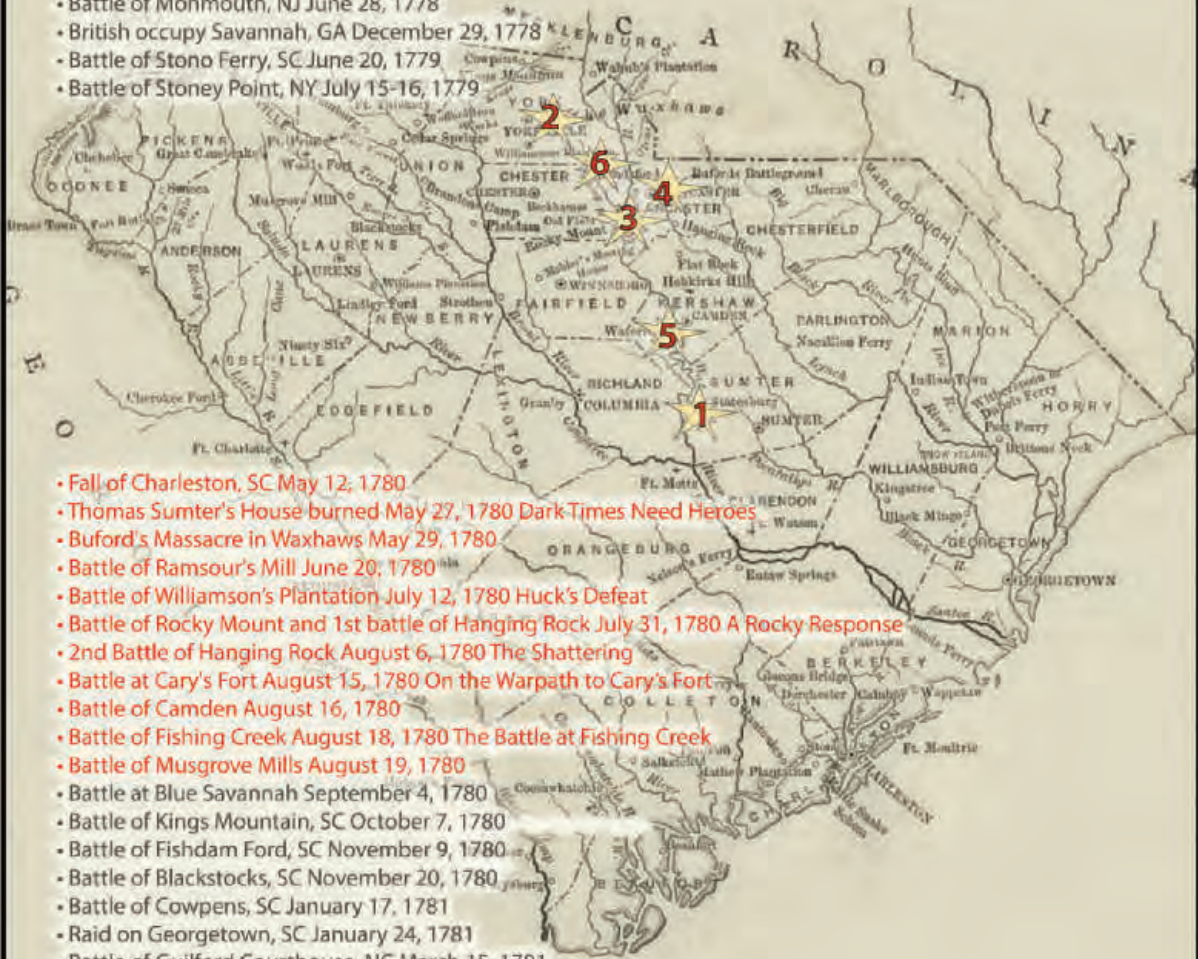
Keep an eye on them without letting them know. We can't afford to have spies in the camp.

We've got him.



- Boston Massacre March 5, 1770
- Charleston Tea Party December 3, 1773
- Boston Tea Party December 16, 1773
- Intolerable Acts March-May-1774
- 1st Continental Congress September 5, 1774
- Continental Congress passes Associational Acts October 18, 1774
- Camden Resolves November 5, 1774
- War begins at Lexington/Concord April 19, 1775
- Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" January 15, 1776
- British evacuate Boston, MA March 17, 1776
- British failed attack on Charleston, SC Sullivan's Island June 28, 1776
- Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776
- The Ring Fight October 12, 1776
- Washington crosses Delaware river December 25, 1776
- Winter camp at Valley Forge December 18, 1777
- Battle of Monmouth, NJ June 28, 1778
- British occupy Savannah, GA December 29, 1778
- Battle of Stono Ferry, SC June 20, 1779
- Battle of Stony Point, NY July 15-16, 1779

1. Burning of Sumter's home in High Hill of the Santee
2. Williamson Plantation
3. Rocky Mount
4. Hanging Rock
5. Cary's Fort
6. Fishing Creek



- Fall of Charleston, SC May 12, 1780
- Thomas Sumter's House burned May 27, 1780 Dark Times Need Heroes
- Buford's Massacre in Waxhaws May 29, 1780
- Battle of Ramsour's Mill June 20, 1780
- Battle of Williamson's Plantation July 12, 1780 Huck's Defeat
- Battle of Rocky Mount and 1st battle of Hanging Rock July 31, 1780 A Rocky Response
- 2nd Battle of Hanging Rock August 6, 1780 The Shattering
- Battle at Cary's Fort August 15, 1780 On the Warpath to Cary's Fort
- Battle of Camden August 16, 1780
- Battle of Fishing Creek August 18, 1780 The Battle at Fishing Creek
- Battle of Musgrove Mills August 19, 1780
- Battle at Blue Savannah September 4, 1780
- Battle of Kings Mountain, SC October 7, 1780
- Battle of Fishdam Ford, SC November 9, 1780
- Battle of Blackstocks, SC November 20, 1780
- Battle of Cowpens, SC January 17, 1781
- Raid on Georgetown, SC January 24, 1781
- Battle of Guilford Courthouse, NC March 15, 1781
- Capture of Fort Watson, SC April 23, 1781
- Battle of Hobkirk Hill, Camden, SC April 25, 1781
- Battle of Hayes Station, SC May 8, 1781
- Capture of Orangeburg, SC May 11, 1781
- Capture of Ft. Motte, SC May 12, 1781
- Capture of Ft. Granby, SC May 15, 1781
- Capture of Augusta, GA June 6, 1781
- Siege of Ninety-Six, SC May 21-June 18, 1781
- Battle at Shubrick's Plantation, SC July 17, 1781
- Battle of Eutaw Springs, SC September 8, 1781
- British surrender at Yorktown, VA October 19, 1781
- British evacuation day in Charleston, SC December 14, 1782
- Peace Treaty of Paris September 3, 1783

**Thomas Sumter**, 46, District Eastward of the Wateree River, South Carolina (Stateburg and Eutaw Springs), Husband, Father, Businessman, Planter, Soldier, Politician

**William Bratton**, 40, York County, South Carolina, husband father, Sheriff, planter, soldier



### *Patriots*

### *The Battle at Fishing Creek:*

**Horatio Gates**, 53, Berkeley County, Virginia, Planter, Soldier



**Soldier Tom**, unk. age, Stateburg, SC, Father, African Slave owned by Thomas Sumter who went by the monicker "Soldier Tom" presumably because of his bearing and service to the general during the war





**Captain Charles Campbell**, 20's?,  
Great Britain, Soldier

## **British**

**General Cornwallis**, 41, Suffolk County,  
England, Widower, Father, Soldier



**Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton** 26,  
Liverpool, England, Soldier

Sumter's Camp

The camp has been quiet, the men resting from their march.



Until...

General Sumter

What's going on?

We need to pull out. Now!



Tarleton's Legion is on our trail just across the river. It would be prudent to not stay in any one place for long.







I agree with our Catawba friend. We need to move on.



I think you're right. We'll move.

Prepare the men!



Sumter's men decamp and move quietly away without notice.



They're gone.

The fires are still warm. They couldn't have left too long ago.

Sumter's men march hard through the morning. The men are tired and their heads are beginning to droop from fatigue.



Sumter believes that he has remained undetected. He has confidence in his men and believes that he is in friendly country.



After all, the Catawba Indian Nation, his friends, are just a few miles from where he is.

And this is Patriot Judge Gaston's stomping grounds.



Sumter's tired body slumps in the saddle.



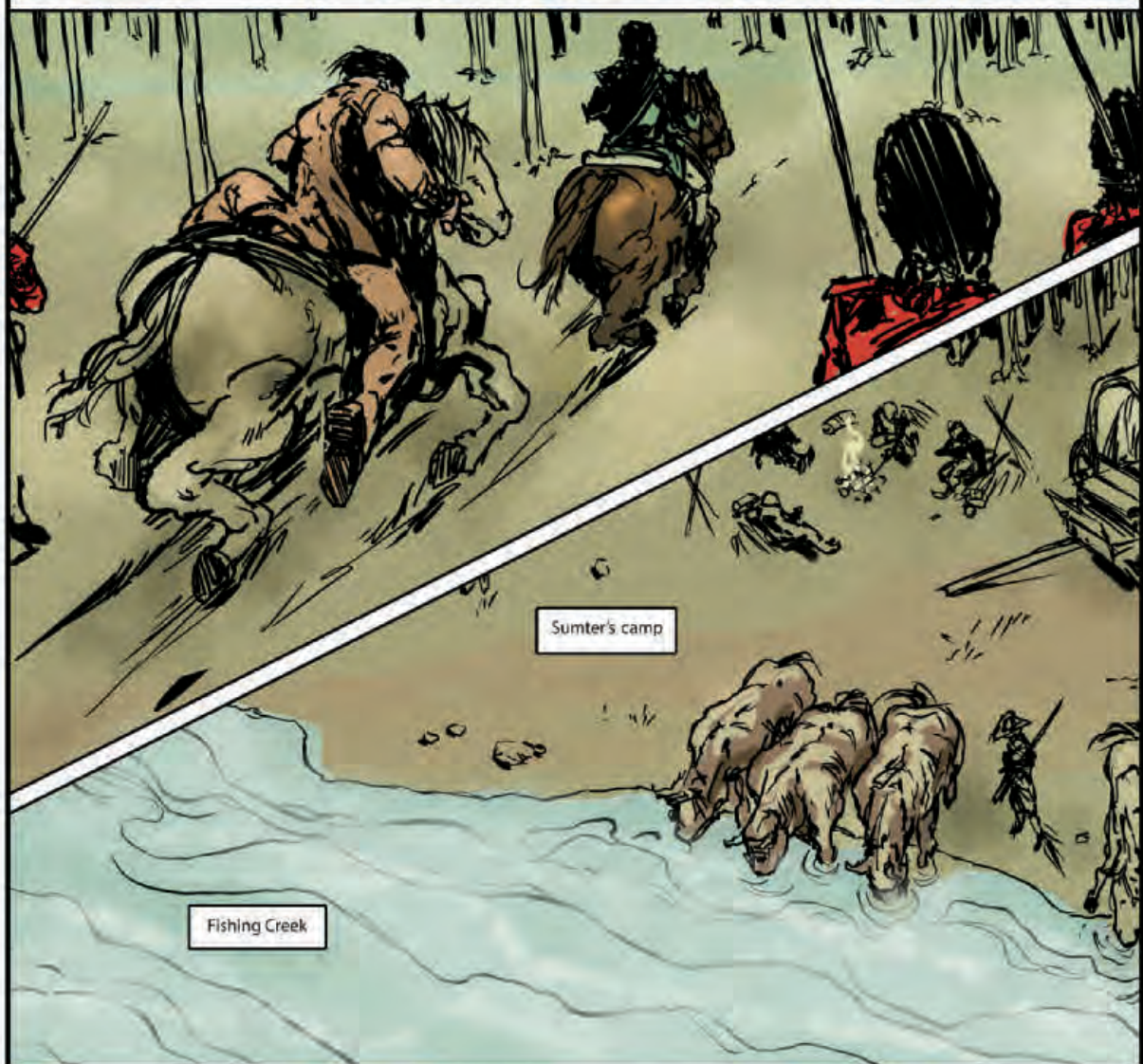
Tarleton is quickly closing in on him.





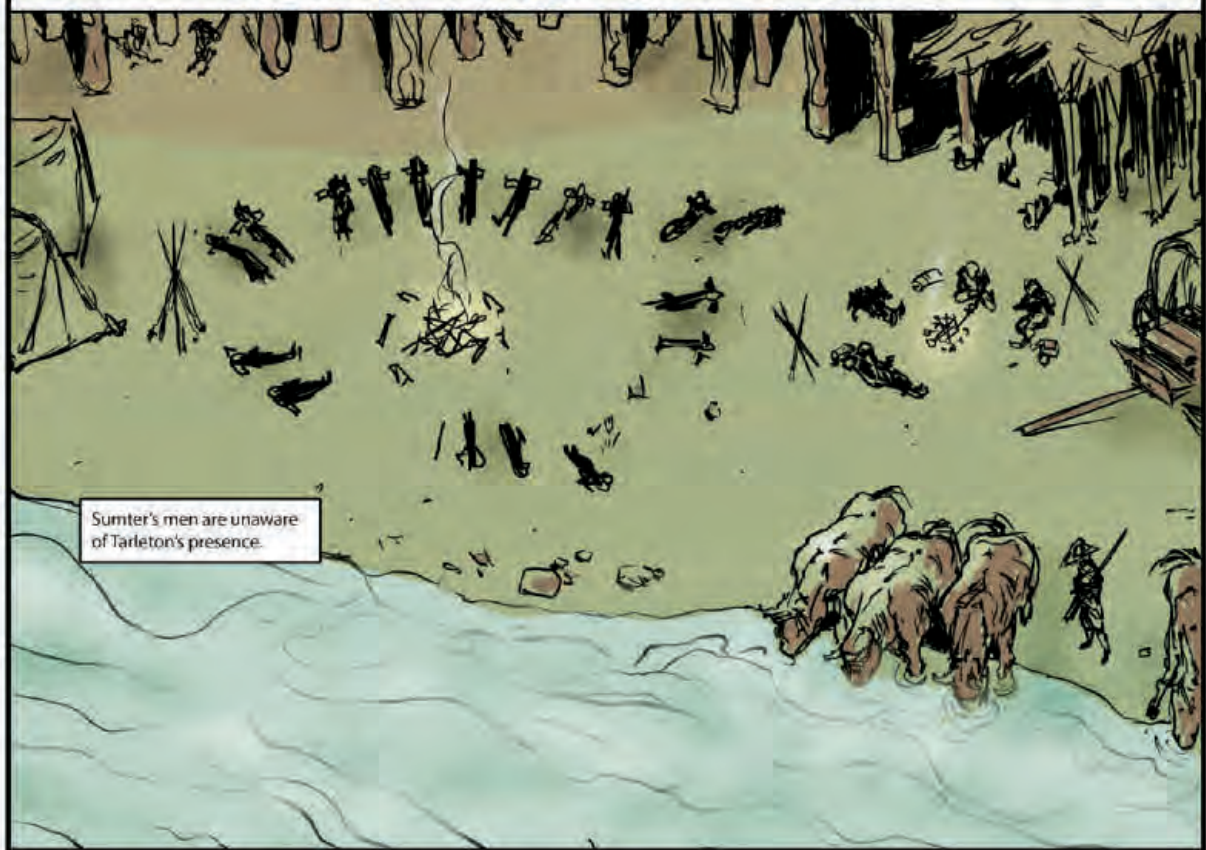
How close are we? This would be a great feather in our hats if we're able to bag this covey of turtle doves.

*They're just over that hill.*



Sumter's camp

Fishing Creek



Sumter's men are unaware of Tarleton's presence.



Tarleton's men slip quietly up to the edge of the camp.



Fight. Run. Stay alive.



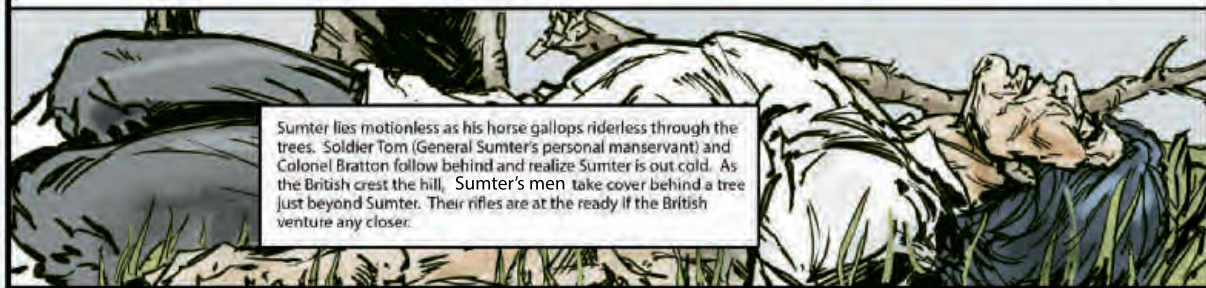
General Sumter scurries from under his wagon as his men grab their rifles and horses. The surprise is so great that he forgets his Continental blue coat.



He jumps upon his horse, bare-back, and follows his men up the hill.



Sumter lies motionless as his horse gallops riderless through the trees. Soldier Tom (General Sumter's personal manservant) and Colonel Bratton follow behind and realize Sumter is out cold. As the British crest the hill, Sumter's men take cover behind a tree just beyond Sumter. Their rifles are at the ready if the British venture any closer.





Sumter, unconscious and unaware of the present danger, slips into his dreams.



That guy can't be Sumter.



He doesn't have a blue coat.

Let's head back toward the camp.



General, wake up! ... Wake up!



Awakening from his dreams  
General Sumter hears:

Come on! Sir, come on! Wake up!

General, we have  
got to go now! Grab your rifle and  
let's find your horse.



Bratton, from his own saddle, keeps an eye on the hilltop. The fighters head through the woods looking for Sumter's horse and other remnants of their army.





General, I guess you forgot your coat?

Sumter, Soldier Tom, and Bratton pull up to a tavern in Charlotetown, North Carolina. The tavern is really nothing more than a farm house with a sign out front. Outside the tavern they see refugees of their army gathered around Colonel Richard Winn, William Hill and a few Catawba.

No, I didn't forget it, I just couldn't get to it in time. I know exactly where it is... or was...



It probably saved his life that he didn't pick it up, truth be known.



Well, where do we stand, Winn, as far as our losses?

Well, we are still alive so there is that. That British Captain... Captain Campbell was it? The one who burned your house? He was shot dead. So that is good. But, Camden is lost and so is everything we gained at Cary's fort.

Where is Gates?



He is around here somewhere, or headed to Hillsborough.

But the really good news is that Colonel James Williams linked up with some North Carolina and Georgia militia to the west of here. They set a trap at Musgrove Mills for the British. Word is that they won a pretty good victory.



So, we are still in it! We are not whipped yet!

We can still fight!



## Footsteps of Heroes: Ishmael Titus

Ishmael Titus was a warrior. He enlisted in the North Carolina militia near present-day Boone. He joined as a substitute for his master, and thereby won his freedom after his service of a year. He then enlisted as a free man and continued the struggle for American Independence on his own accord. In his pension application we find references to his involvement at important battles like the Battle of Camden, Kings Mountain, and Guilford Courthouse.

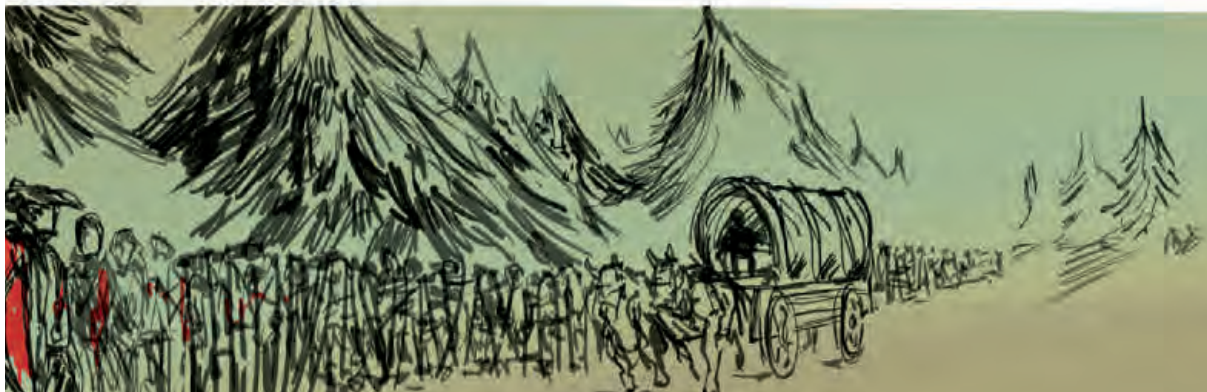
He was later taken prisoner by the Tories along with Colonel Benjamin Cleveland. While forced to forage for horses for his captors, he helped a posse track down the villains and liberate his commanding officer.

Titus was 89 years old and had moved to Williamstown, Massachusetts at the time of his pension application. He was vouched for by four leaders of that community.

We are fortunate to have some sliver of knowledge of this man of history. He saw the fledgling nation in the worst and best of battles. He was an honorable participant in the struggle for a new nation and chose to be more than a mere spectator of history. Ishmael Titus was a man who valiantly did his part for the hope of freedom: his and ours.



## Freedom Reigns!



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FISHING CREEK

