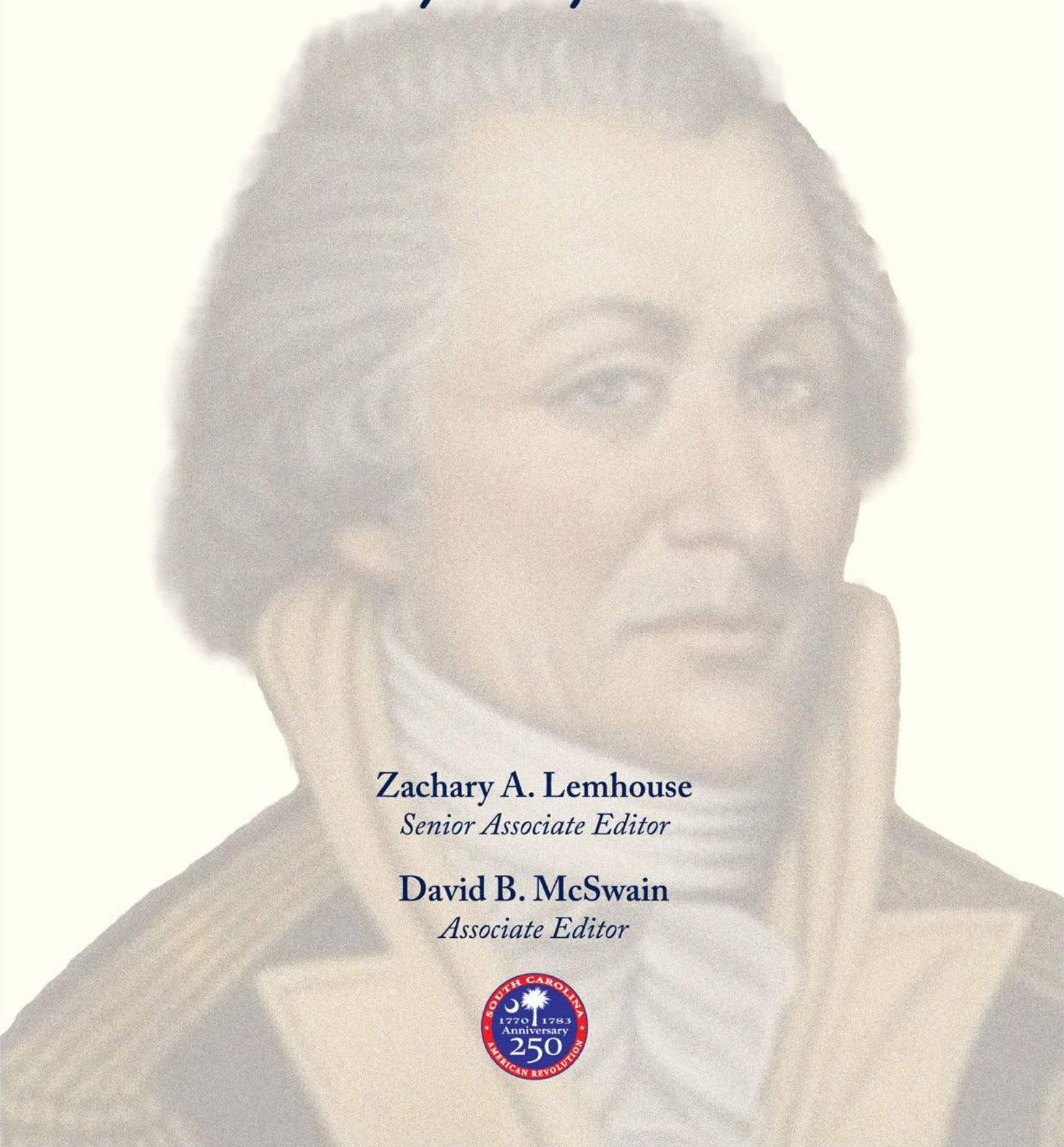
The Wartime Papers of Thomas Sumter
1780–1782



Zachary A. Lemhouse
Senior Associate Editor

David B. McSwain
Associate Editor

SOUTH CAROLINA 1770 1783 Anniversary 250 AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The Wartime Papers of Thomas Sumter

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South Carolina American Revolution
Sestercentennial Commission
2027



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The Wartime Papers of Thomas Sumter

is dedicated to:



Thomas Sumter Tisdale, Jr.
(1939 – 2025)

Gentleman, Attorney, Historian,
Publisher, Mentor, Friend

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Welcome from CEO Molly Fortune



The SC250 Commission is committed to preserving and honoring South Carolina's pivotal role in securing American independence. Among the most significant figures in this history is Thomas Sumter, the "Gamecock," whose leadership of Patriot militias and relationship with the Catawba Nation were instrumental in the Patriot cause. We thank the Southern Revolutionary War Institute (SRWI) in York County in initiating and partnering with us to produce this volume, editors Zach Lemhouse and David McSwain, and a host of other historians and artists for their review and illustrations.

The *Wartime Papers of Thomas Sumter* serves as an invaluable resource for scholars, historians, and the public, offering rare insights into the strategies and legacy of one of South Carolina's most revered heroes during 1780-1782, the most active period of the war in our state. This collection not only deepens our understanding of Sumter's contributions but connects us to the broader narrative of resilience, innovation, and determination that defined the American fight for freedom.

By ensuring the preservation and accessibility of these historical documents, we reaffirm our commitment to historical education, heritage tourism, and the legacy of those who shaped our nation. The SC250 Commission recognizes this collection, as well as the *Francis Marion Papers,* as cornerstones in commemorating the sacrifices and triumphs of South Carolina's patriots, inspiring future generations to appreciate and engage with their previously understated rich historical inheritance.



Publisher's Notes

As with the *Francis Marion Papers*, publishing the *Wartime Papers of Thomas Sumter* digitally makes it easier for readers to expand their learning beyond the content of the papers themselves. If read on a computer or digital device with access to the internet, live links to journal articles and other cited online sources are provided. The dynamic nature of this digital document also makes it easier to correct identified errors and add new letters as they are found.

The papers have been formatted to appear in their entirety on one or two pages, with footnotes that restart at 1 for each. A notation of the source/collection of each of the originals is also provided.

Brief biographies of individuals with whom Sumter corresponded appear throughout near the time of their first appearance in a letter—as a recipient or writer. Summaries of major battles and skirmishes in which Thomas Sumter played a major role are also included, as well as a few he did not participate in during his recovery from injuries sustained at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation. In most cases, though, Gen. Sumter corresponded with others even about the battles for which he was not present.

An extensive bibliography of works cited and recommended by the editors is included for students of all ages to learn more about the Revolutionary War in South Carolina, significant players in the conflict, and Thomas Sumter's role in bringing about American independence from Britain.

In addition to the transcriptions provided here, the editors have provided us with notes about letters referenced in other letters that, at least as of the date of publication, have not been found or transcribed. A list of those "missing" letters by approximate date can be found in the Appendix, along with a list of each letter and the repository in which each original letter is housed.

We invite all who read this to assist in searching not only for these missing letters, but to advise us when new collections relating to Sumter are announced or new correspondence is found. We welcome any and all comments about information included here.

Preface

PROJECT SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

The Wartime Papers of General Thomas Sumter is a joint project of the South Carolina American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission (SC250) and The Southern Revolutionary War Institute (SRWI). The SRWI is a scholarly research library dedicated to the study of the Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution. Founded in 2006 by historian Michael Scoggins, the SRWI is housed at the Historical Center of York County, one of four sites operated by Culture & Heritage Museums of York County (CHM)., While serving as historian for CHM, Scoggins authored and co-authored numerous books and articles about the American Revolution in the South, including *African-American Patriots in the Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution* (2004), *African-American Loyalists in the Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution* (2005), *The Day it Rained Militia: Huck's Defeat and the Revolution in the South Carolina Backcountry* (2005) and *Relentless Fury: The Revolutionary War in the Southern Piedmont* (2006).

One of Scoggins's many projects was to catalog and transcribe the wartime correspondence of General Thomas Sumter. He oversaw the digitization of letter images from the Library of Congress microfilm collection as well as from the Horatio Gates Papers. He also collected letters that had been included in the Lyman C. Draper Manuscript Collection housed at the Wisconsin Historical Society, also available on microfilm, as well as letters transcribed in *The Charleston Yearbook* (1880-1951), a series published annually by the City of Charleston, South Carolina. Transcription of these letters was underway in the spring of 2019 when Michael Scoggins died unexpectedly following a battle with cancer. Work on the project resumed in the fall under the direction of his successor Zachary Lemhouse. As the new director of the SRWI, Lemhouse enlisted the help of volunteer David McSwain to continue work on the project. Work was halted again in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed in July of the following year. In the fall of 2022, CHM entered into a contract with SC250 which provided funding to facilitate continued work on the project. Among other things, this funding allowed CHM to hire David to work exclusively on Thomas Sumter's papers.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Building on the work already done by Scoggins, a standardized system was developed for naming and organizing original document images and their transcriptions. A variety of published resources were consulted to identify additional Sumter letters that were still lacking. These included Anne King Gregorie's biography of Sumter and the wartime segment of *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*. The Greene Papers indicated that a large portion of Sumter's correspondence was in the collection of the William L. Clements Library, a repository of rare books and manuscripts located at the University of Michigan. The library was founded by William L. Clements, a businessman and collector of historical documents, who donated his collection as well as the funds for the new facility in 1923. Contact was made with archivists at the Clements Library who provided digital images of nearly eighty original letters between Greene and Sumter.

An additional seven letters were located in the private collection of real estate developer Harlan Crow. Other institutions with one or two original letters were also identified. New York City has three libraries with Sumter letters: The New York Public Library, the Morgan Library, and the Gilder-Lehrman Institute. Several university archives hold a Sumter letter, including Harvard, Yale, Duke, and the University of South Carolina's South Caroliniana Library. The Pennsylvania Historical Society contributed two letters and the Morristown National Historical Park had one as well. All institutions with original documents were cooperative in supplying quality digital reference images of the items.

Ultimately a total of 232 original letters to and from Sumter were located. An additional 29 letters were identified that have only a transcription and no known original document. Many of those letters appeared in the Lyman C. Draper Manuscript Collection and in nineteenth-century books or articles on the Revolution. In addition to the 261 known letters, there are more than 45 "known unknowns" — letters that we know were written on a specific date, but there is no further information other than possibly a recipient's comments on the contents.

For example, South Carolina's governor, John Rutledge, wrote to Sumter on January 16, 1781, and stated, "I rec'd. yours, of the 13th Inst., by the Bearer, & am glad to find that the reinforcements, to the Enemy, are not so considerable as was apprehended."[1] That letter, from Sumter to Rutledge, has not been found. It shows the importance of including all that can be known about these missing letters as they may still be able to provide a valuable insight into a certain episode of the war.

Another tantalizing group of lost letters are between Sumter and his wife, Mary. One of Gov. John Rutledge's letters to Sumter mentions an enclosed packet of letters from Sumter's wife.[2] This indicates that there was wartime correspondence between the couple. Unfortunately, none of their letters from that period have been found.

The original transcriptions — preserved in individual Word documents — match the text of the original documents. Spelling, punctuation, words per line, paragraph indentions, even page numbers when there were more than one (which was often) — were all matched as closely as possible. However, although Sumter had a good vocabulary, his punctuation — or lack of it — often makes it difficult to follow the flow of his words. For ease of understanding, we present each letter here in a more standardized letter format with some ad-hoc "paragraphing"— to improve overall readability and understanding.

No changes, however, were made to Sumter's words or spelling of names or places. To aid with keyword searches, the correct names of people and more familiar place names have been inserted in brackets. The word "Catawba," for example, is spelled many different ways — by others as well as by Sumter. It would be almost impossible to find every reference to the word without the addition of the correct version.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As previously mentioned, the late Michael Scoggins envisioned the Sumter papers project and made a major contribution to the database of primary documents. The late Charles Baxley, who served as chairman of the SC250 Commission, was a key advocate for making the Thomas Sumter and Francis Marion papers available to the public. Molly Fortune, CEO and Executive Director of the SC250 Commission, provided unwavering support throughout the project. Historians Will Graves and C. Leon Harris contributed invaluable commentary on the transcriptions and footnotes. University of Michigan graduate student Zoe Waldman spent many hours retrieving and photographing the dozens of Sumter letters at the school's Clements Library. Quarterly online meetings were held with a variety of experts to review progress and solicit their advice. Participants included the late Charles Baxley, Leon Harris, Will Graves, Molly Fortune, the late Thomas Sumter Tisdale, Jr., Rick Wise, Bill Davies, Thomas Powers, Justin Liles, Gary Sellick, Eric Emerson, Ben Rubin, and publisher Vally Sharpe.

1. Rutledge to Sumter, Jan. 16, 1781, DLC.
2. Rutledge to Sumter, Jan. 24, 1781, DLC.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SYMBOLS FOR MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES

CtY-BR: Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New Haven, Conn.

DLC: U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, DC

DNA: U.S. National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC

HCL: Harlan Crow Library, Dallas, Texas

MH: Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts

MdHi: Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland

MiU-C: University of Michigan, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan

NN: New York Public Library, New York, New York

NNPM: Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, New York

Nc-Ar: North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina

NcD: Duke University, Durham, North Carolina

NcU: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

NjMoHP: Morristown National Historical Park, Morristown, New Jersey

PHi: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

ScU: University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

WHi Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin

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Congaree, June 16th. 1781.

1781-06-16 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion —2 201
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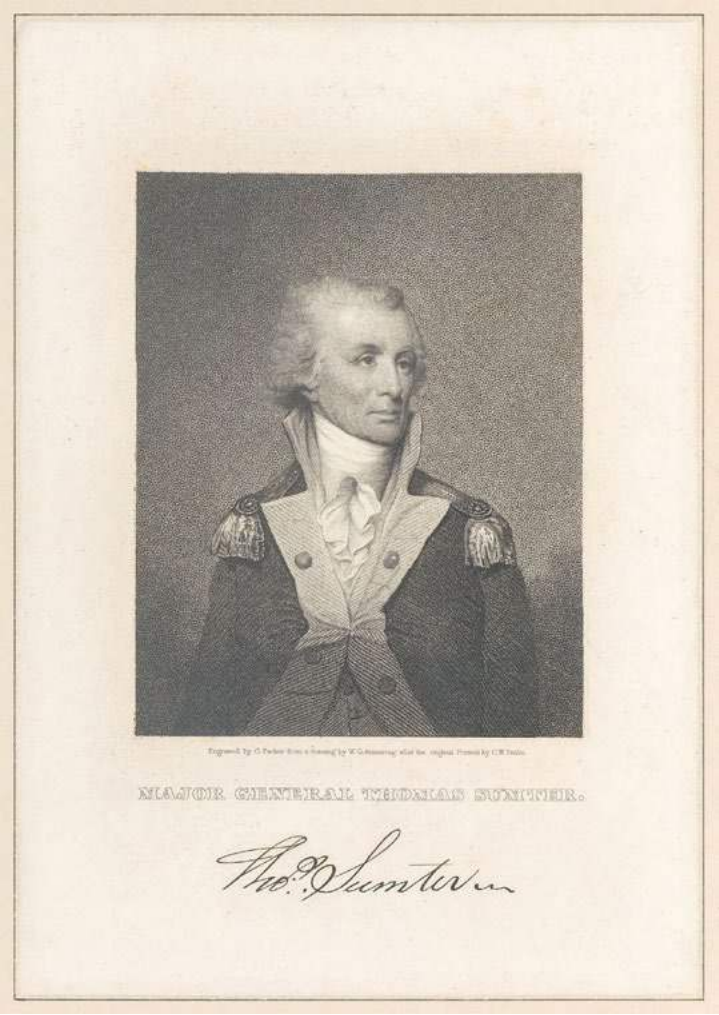
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The Wartime Papers of Thomas Sumter

1780-1782



Engraving of Major General Thomas Sumter by G. Parker from a drawing by W.G. Armstrong, after the original portrait by Charles Willson Peale.

Introduction

Thomas Sumter was born August 14, 1734, in Hanover County, Virginia. His parents, who emigrated from England, were William and Patience Sumter.[1] Thomas grew up on Preddy's Creek, where his father operated a small gristmill. The site is located near Charlottesville in present-day Louisa County, Virginia.[2]

Sumter enlisted in the Virginia militia during the French and Indian War, which began in 1754 and lasted to 1763. He joined the expedition of British Brig. Gen. John Forbes in 1758 to capture Ft. Duquesne from the French. Sumter was also part of a 1761 campaign against the Cherokees in western Virginia. The show of force convinced the Cherokees to sue for peace.[3] Sumter joined a delegation of Virginians who were sent to the Cherokee villages as a gesture of goodwill to shore up the new peace treaty. He participated in several peace pipe ceremonies in the "Overhill" settlements in what is now eastern Tennessee. Accompanied by several of the Cherokee chiefs, the delegation journeyed next to the colony's capital of Williamsburg. They arrived in April 1762 and met with Lt. Gov. Francis Fauquier.[4]

One of the Cherokee chiefs, Ostenaco, expressed to the governor a desire to visit London and meet King George III. Permission was granted, and Ostenaco set sail for England in May 1762 with two other chiefs. Among the Virginians accompanying them was Thomas Sumter. Arriving in early June, the chiefs soon became a sensation in London society. The delegation spent nearly three months enjoying the hospitality of the city and didn't set sail for America until late August 1762.[5]

The London delegation landed at Charleston in October and Sumter was invited by the Cherokee chiefs to accompany them back to their villages. Sumter spent the entire winter of 1762-1763 with the Cherokee and during that time he encountered a French agent named Baron Des Jonnes. Des Jonnes, who was fluent in several Native American languages, tried to persuade the Cherokees that the French were winning the war with Britain. Sumter saw the danger of this, physically subdued Des Jonnes, and delivered him to British authorities in South Carolina.[6]

Sumter's defense of British interests among the Cherokees gained him a favorable reputation in Charleston. But it was of no value to him when he returned home to Virginia in November 1763. Sumter had borrowed money from an Alexander McDonald before his first Cherokee expedition, with the intention of buying goods to trade. McDonald had never been paid back, and he took legal action when he discovered that Sumter was in the area. Sumter soon found himself in jail but managed to escape with the help of a friend named Joseph Martin. He made his way back to South Carolina and resided there for the rest of his long life.[7]

Sumter's fortunes changed when he received £700 from the British government for his services on behalf of the Crown. He used the money to buy land near Eutaw Springs, on the Santee River. His property was about sixty miles from Charleston and, at the time, was in an area considered the border between the settled plantation region and what was known as the "backcountry." Sumter saw an opportunity to profit from this location and established a store.

1. His last name was also spelled as "Sumpter." Thomas always signed his name as "Sumter," but many letters, documents, and newspapers would refer to him as "Sumpter" throughout his life.
2. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc., 1961; repr. 2000) 5.; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931; repr., Gamecock City Printing, Inc., 2000) 3; Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock: Nathanael Greene, Thomas Sumter, and the Revolutionary War for the Soul of the South* (Casemate Publishers, 2019) 2
3. Bass, *Gamecock*, 7-8; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 5-6; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 3.
4. Bass, *Gamecock*, 8-12; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 6-13.
5. Bass, *Gamecock*, 12-16; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 13-18; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 3-4.
6. Bass, *Gamecock*, 16-17; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 19-22; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 4.
7. Bass, *Gamecock*, 19; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 22; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 5.

He soon prospered in his business and became familiar with the wealthy planters in the region. These included the prominent Cantey family, which would soon play an important role in his life.[8]

Mary Cantey Jameson, a wealthy widow, lived on a Santee plantation not far from Sumter. Her husband William had died in the summer of 1766. Sumter began courting Mary later that year and they were married in the summer of 1767. Mary was about eleven years older than Sumter and partially paralyzed on one side from a childhood illness. She nevertheless gave birth to their child, Thomas Jr., the following year at age forty-five. The couple lived at her Santee plantation in a region known as Great Savannah. Sumter sold his store and built a larger one closer to his new home. He also built a sawmill and gristmill on nearby Jack's Creek, a tributary of the Santee. Like other wealthy planters, the Sumters exploited the labor of enslaved people of African descent. The exact number of people they enslaved during this period is unknown. We know that Sumter owned some enslaved people prior to his marriage because he used three of them as collateral for a loan in 1765. Mary had received nine enslaved people as a gift from her father in 1762 and an additional unknown number of enslaved people upon the death of her husband. There is no reliable figure for enslaved people until the United States Census was conducted. The 1810 census shows fifty-seven enslaved people on Sumter's plantation.[9]

Sumter concentrated on moneymaking ventures in the early years of his marriage but found himself gradually drawn into politics in response to internal conflicts within South Carolina as well as to the increasing friction between the colonies and Great Britain. The Regulator movement, which occurred in the late 1760s, was a campaign by backcountry settlers to enforce law and order in their neglected region. In addition to the use of vigilante force to suppress rampant criminal activity, the Regulators demanded more representation in the Assembly and called for more courts and jails in the backcountry. Sumter did not get directly involved in these activities, but he did endorse Regulator leader Moses Kirkland for the House of Representatives. Kirkland won the seat, but his later affiliation with the Tories would cause problems for Sumter when he attempted to offer his services to the Patriot cause.[10]

The 1770s was the first of several decades in which Sumter was involved in public service in a variety of capacities. His first public position was justice of the peace. Sumter sided with the Whigs/rebels in the colonists' dispute with the crown and, with the backing of the powerful Cantey family, was elected in 1774 as a delegate to the First Provincial Congress of South Carolina. The Congress convened on January 11, 1775, and demanded that the Crown respect basic American rights such as trial by jury and the right to petition for a redress of grievances. Although the delegates stopped short of advocating independence from Britain, the Congress nevertheless recommended that the colonists begin organizing military forces [militias already existed] and practicing military drills. The Congress moved beyond this stage when it met again in June and authorized the raising of two regiments of infantry and one of mounted rangers. Sumter wanted to be considered for an officer position in the newly formed units and was endorsed by Col. Richard Richardson. Richardson lived near Sumter and had also married a Cantey. But Sumter's past connections with Moses Kirkland — now a Loyalist — caused him to be passed over by the Congress's executive arm, the Council of Safety. Sumter responded by raising his own company of militia from his local area.[11]

In August 1775, Sumter was reelected by his district to the second Provincial Congress and, thanks to his role with the militia, now had the rank of captain. Tensions between Patriots and Loyalists in the backcountry were also brewing in that period as both sides recruited militia and struggled for control of munitions. Attempts to tamp down hostilities with a treaty between the two sides only held for a few weeks. Gunpowder intended for the Cherokees was captured by Loyalists in October, prompting the Council of Safety to send a military expedition under Col. Richardson. Richardson named Sumter as his adjutant general and they led their force toward the backcountry in

8. Bass, *Gamecock*, 20-22; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 26; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 5.
9. Bass, *Gamecock*, 22-23; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 29-31; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 7-8; Third Census of the United States, 1810. (NARA microfilm publication M252, 71 rolls) Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.
10. Bass, *Gamecock*, 23-24.
11. Bass, *Gamecock*, 24-29; Fred Anderson Berg, *Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units: Battalions, Regiments, and Independent Corps* (Stackpole Books) 109-111; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 34-40; William E. Hemphill and Wylma A. Wates, eds., *Extracts from the Journals of the Provincial Congresses of South Carolina, 1775-1776* (Columbia: SC Archives Department, 1960) 36; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 8.

November 1775. Their numbers eventually swelled to nearly five thousand as they made their way to the region between the present-day cities of Columbia and Greenville. The campaign culminated in the Battle of Great Cane Break on December 22. Patriot forces surprised a Loyalist camp on the Reedy River, recaptured the Cherokee's gunpowder, and took 130 prisoners. A heavy snow fell as Richardson's men struggled to make their way back toward the Low Country. The successful expedition later became known as the "Snow Campaign" and it helped burnish Sumter's credentials as an able military leader. Richardson praised Sumter in a report to the Council, declaring that his adjutant-general had "behaved very well and has been to me and the cause, of extra service."[12]

South Carolina's Second Provincial Congress convened again in February 1776, with Sumter in attendance as a delegate. The Congress authorized the creation of two more rifle regiments for defense of the colony. Sumter was appointed as lieutenant colonel of the Second Regiment of Riflemen, which later became known as the Sixth Regiment. He immediately drew £3,000 from the treasury and headed for the backcountry to enlist new recruits. His campaign took him as far as the Waxhaws and the "New Acquisition" district in the upper part of the colony. New Acquisition, as the name implies, was land acquired from North Carolina when the boundary between the two colonies was resurveyed and adjusted in 1772. Present-day York County and part of Cherokee County were formed from this area which, at the time, was populated by Scots-Irish Presbyterians who were hostile to the British. Similar sentiments were present in nearby Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and Sumter not only found many willing recruits in this area, but it would later provide a place of refuge and recovery for him during the darker days of the war.[13]

Sumter returned to the Charleston area with his new recruits, and they encamped at nearby Ten Mile Spring in March. They did not have to wait long to see action as the British were already preparing to attack Charleston by sea and seize control of the city. The British fleet was first sighted on May 31, 1776, and preparations for battle began in earnest after General Charles Lee of the Continental Army arrived in the city on June 4. Sumter's regiment was deployed to Long Island (now known as the Isle of Palms) to guard against the British establishing a beachhead in the rear of Fort Sullivan on Sullivan's Island. It's not clear exactly where Sumter's regiment was when the full-scale assault by the British began on the morning of June 28. Most likely, they were on Sullivan's Island as a rear guard along with Colonel William Thomson's 3rd Regiment of Rangers. Fort Sullivan, with its spongy palmetto log walls, withstood the British bombardment as the defenders took a steady toll on the enemy's ships. Thomson's Rangers, likely supplemented by Sumter's regiment, also repelled a diversionary attack made against their position when the British made a feint at crossing Breach Inlet from Long Island. After nearly twelve hours of fighting, the British finally gave up on the attempted invasion and turned their attention North.[14]

But a threat from a different direction flared soon after the victory at Charleston, and it would once again involve Sumter. Factions of the Cherokee Nation who chose to ally themselves with England began attacking settlements throughout the Southern colonies. Their actions were primarily due to objections with colonists over peace and land disputes and not their alliance with Great Britain. Sumter and his regiment were dispatched in August to join up with the forces of Major Andrew Williamson, a militia commander who had been battling with the Cherokee in northwestern South Carolina. The area consists of present-day Oconee and Pickens counties. Sumter arrived at Williamson's camp on September 12, 1776. The combined force set off for what is now eastern Tennessee and engaged in a series of battles with Cherokee warriors, combined with a scorched earth campaign of burning their villages and destroying food supplies. During this period, Sumter's Second Regiment became the Sixth Regiment of South Carolina's Continental Line. Sumter was now an officer in the Continental Army, but he would not remain in that role for the duration of the war. With the Cherokees subdued by early October, Sumter marched his men back into South Carolina and set up camp in Tawcaw Swamp, within a few miles of his plantation. The Cherokees, suffering

12. Bass, *Gamecock*, 29-32; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 41-43; Bobby Gilmer Moss, *The Snow Campaign, 1775: First Land Battle of the American Revolution in South Carolina* (Scotia-Hibernia Press, 2007) 18-19.
13. Bass, *Gamecock*, 33-34; Berg, *Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units*, 112-113; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 44-45.
14. Bass, *Gamecock*, 35-37; Georgia Muldrow Gilmer, *American Revolution Roster Fort Sullivan, 1776-1780: Battle of Fort Sullivan Events Leading to First Decisive Victory* (Fort Sullivan Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, 1976) 43-63, 287; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 45-48; Terry W. Lipscomb, *The Carolina Lowcountry: April 1775-June 1776 and the Battle of Fort Moultrie* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1994) 24; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 8.

through a winter with no food, sued for peace in February 1777. By the conclusion of Williamson's expedition, the Patriots had burned thirty-two Cherokee villages and destroyed hundreds of acres of their agricultural land. But the fighting was not finished in the southern colonies, and Sumter would soon find himself on the march again.[15]

The British, who still had an outpost at St. Augustine in East Florida, launched a raid northward into Georgia in February 1777. Fort McIntosh, a Patriot militia outpost on the Satilla River, fell to British and Loyalist troops on February 18. General Robert Howe, now in command of Continental forces in the South, took up a position in Savannah and ordered Sumter to follow with his regiment into Georgia. Sumter marched his troops overland to the Savannah River, where he commandeered boats and proceeded downstream to link up with Howe in mid-March. Howe ordered him to secure Fort Morris at Sunbury, which was on the coast just south of Savannah. The fort, while under the command of General Lachlan McIntosh, had just rejected a British demand to surrender. Sumter next moved out into the Georgia countryside to scout for British activity and to secure two outposts that had been overrun previously by them. Sumter, writing to McIntosh on April 2, expressed his opinion that there were no longer any enemy forces north of the Satilla River.[16] The report to McIntosh is the only surviving wartime letter of Sumter written during the 1770s. Almost all his surviving letters were written in 1780 and 1781.[17]

Without having seen any significant military action in Georgia, Sumter and his troops returned to Charleston in mid-May. It was at this same time that General McIntosh killed Governor Button Gwinnett of Georgia in a duel. Although Gwinnett was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, he and McIntosh represented opposing factions within the Georgia Patriot cause and were bitter enemies. The duel was the result of insults hurled at Gwinnett by McIntosh before the Georgia assembly on May 1, 1777. McIntosh was acquitted in a civil trial, but in August he was summoned to a hearing before Congress in Philadelphia. Sumter was also invited to Philadelphia, presumably to testify about McIntosh's activities in Georgia. He took the opportunity while there to meet with South Carolina's delegates, including his former Provincial Congress colleague Henry Laurens — now president of the Continental Congress. Perhaps due to Sumter's lobbying with those gentlemen, Sumter was soon promoted to full colonel of the Continental Army.[18]

After his return from Philadelphia, Sumter had a mostly uneventful winter with his troops in the winter of 1777-1778. Barracks life in Charleston was fairly dull aside from a controversy over the soldiers sporting beards and unkempt long hair. Morale dropped during those slow weeks and several officers resigned their commissions to return home. But the coming of spring brought with it renewed activity by the British in Florida and Sumter and his regiment were soon on the march again.[19]

In April 1778, Sumter's regiment was ordered into action by General Howe. A campaign to neutralize the troublesome British base in St. Augustine was underway which was to combine Continental troops with militia units from South Carolina and Georgia. Progress through Georgia was made difficult for the Continentals by heat, disease, poor roads, and food that was severely lacking in quality and quantity. Sumter himself was sidelined by malaria and had to transfer command to Lt. Colonel William Henderson. To make matters worse, both the Georgia and South Carolina militia commanders refused to relinquish command to General Howe or share their supplies with the Continentals. One of the objectives was to capture Fort Tonyn, a small British outpost on the St. Mary's River just above Georgia's border with Florida. But the British, having learned of the approach of Patriot forces, had already burned the fort and retreated to St. Augustine.[20]

In light of a depleted army and squabbling among his militia commanders, Howe now saw that pressing on to St. Augustine was impossible. He held a council with his officers and they agreed that it was time to abandon the

15. Bass, *Gamecock*, 38-41; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 48-57; Michael C. Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia: Huck's Defeat and the Revolution in the South Carolina Backcountry (History Press, 2005)* 33-34; Llewellyn M Toulmin, "Backcountry Warrior: Brig. General Andrew Williamson," *Journal of Backcountry Studies*, Vol. 7 No.1, (Spring 2012); Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 8-9.
16. The Satilla River is just above the Georgia/Florida border.
17. Bass, *Gamecock*, 41-43; Gregoire, *Thomas Sumter*, 58-60
18. Bass, *Gamecock*, 33-34; Berg, *Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units*, 112-113; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 44-45.
19. Bass, *Gamecock*, 45-46; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter,* 69.
20. Bass, Gamecock, 44-45; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter,* 64-68.

campaign and return to South Carolina. The Sixth Regiment did not arrive back in Charleston until August. Sumter does not appear in the Continental Army's records at this time and had apparently gone home early to continue recovering from malaria. With two years of military service behind him and the Cherokee and British posing no imminent threat, Sumter resigned his commission as a colonel on September 19, 1778.[21]

Sumter may have taken a hiatus from military duties, but he continued to serve the public as an elected representative to the South Carolina General Assembly. The 1779 session saw the granting of road projects and ferry permits that were to his benefit, evidence that not all his politicking was altruistic in nature. As Sumter continued to prosper in his civilian life, his interlude of peace proved to be short-lived. The British had captured Savannah only a few months after he had submitted his resignation the previous September. In spring 1780, they began making their way up the coast with Charleston as their objective. The city was placed under siege in early April and held out until May 12, 1780. Soldiers and civilians fleeing before the British passed by Sumter's home and he took the opportunity to sell provisions to some of them. But the onslaught of the British into the interior of South Carolina compelled Sumter to don his uniform once again. He rode north on May 28 in hopes that he and his fellow Patriots could rally and resist the British tide. According to tradition, members of Tarleton's Legion plundered Sumter's home soon afterward while en route to overtake Abraham Buford. Some accounts suggest that Sumter's home may have been burned. Regardless, the die was cast and Sumter was now girding for battle.[22] Tradition states that he would soon earn the nickname "Gamecock" which was bestowed upon him by the local citizenry.[23]

As noted earlier, the only wartime Sumter letter we have before this period is from 1777.

21. Bass, *Gamecock*, 45-46; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter,* 69.
22. Bass, *Gamecock*, 47-52; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter,* 70-75*;* Carl P. Borick, *A Gallant Defense: The Siege of Charleston, 1780* (University of South Carolina Press, 2003); George Smith McCowen, Jr., *The British Occupation of Charleston, 1780-1782* (University of South Carolina Press, 1972) 2-6; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock,* 9-11.
23. Sumter biographer Anne King Gregorie attributes the nickname to the "Gillespie Brothers" who were known cockfighters in the Carolina Backcountry. According to tradition they recognized the same tenacity in Sumter as their prize-winning gamecock named Tuck.

1777-04-02 Thomas Sumter to Lachlan Mcintosh

Fort Howe[1] 2d April 1777

Sir

I have had two parties out Both of Which Returned without making any Discovery. One of them was at fort McIntosh.[2] Past through the Middle Grounds by difrent Routs. and is of oppinion that there is no enemy on this side Satilli [Satilla River], Col. [John] Sterk [or Stirk] and Capt. [Joseph] Pannil of the 2d Georgia Battn. are apprehensive they have Influence Suficient to Stop a Number of the men late of the 1st Battn. whose Times Are out, and about to leave this State. in consequence of Which I thought it No way Improper for them to go to Savanah for a few days as I Judge there is No danger at present. I [illegible segment] Wound and otherways in Good health.

I am Sir your Most obdt. Servt
Thos. Sumter

Brigadr. Genl. [Lachlan] McIntosh

P.S. Sir I beg leave to remind you of Genl. Howes [*remainder of letter not visible*]

[Transcribed from the original at the New York Public Library]

1. Fort Howe was on the Altamaha River in Georgia.
2. Fort McIntosh was a log structure on the east side of the Satilla River near present day Atkinson, GA. Troops from South Carolina and Georgia under Capt. Richard Winn had surrendered the fort on February 18, 1777 after a siege by Loyalist and Indian forces.

1780

In early 1780, Col. William Hill wrote that Col. Sumter was in Salisbury, N.C. and that he had written to Sumter, informing him of their plans to attack "a large body of Tories that had collected at a place called Ramsours Mill…"[1] That letter, listed in the Appendix, has not been found, nor have any others before July 17, 1780, after his return to military service, when he wrote to General Baron Johann DeKalb, the transcription for which appears on page 11.

DeKalb was in command of Maryland and Delaware Continental troops ordered south by Gen. George Washington. Sumter told DeKalb of the "numerous" Loyalists west of the Broad River and declared, "I am destitute of almost every Requsite for war, but notwithstanding, Can Counter act some of their Designs untill your army arrives."[2]

For context with respect to Sumter's activities immediately prior to this letter, we begin with a "headnote" about the Catawba Nation, their participation as soldiers under Sumter's command, and the community's Patriot support throughout the war, and a brief biography of William Hill, his Ironworks, and their importance to the Patriot effort.

1. Salley, A.S., Jr., ed., *Col. William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution* (The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1921), 8
2. Sumter to DeKalb, July 17, 1780, DLR.

The Catawba Nation

Thomas Sumter's militia force included Native Americans from the Catawba Nation, who proved to be invaluable as scouts and soldiers. Despite their many contributions to the Patriot cause, the Catawba are not mentioned in any of Sumter's wartime correspondence. The Catawba have inhabited their ancestral lands along the Catawba River for at least six thousand years. By the time of the Revolution, their numbers had dwindled to about five hundred and they were concentrated in a few settlements along the Catawba River in the New Acquisition District (present-day York County) of South Carolina. Their European neighbors, mostly Scots-Irish immigrants who arrived in the 1750s, were fiercely anti-British. This, combined with the Catawbas' own longtime enmity toward the Cherokees, who were aligned with the British, prompted them to ally themselves with the Patriots. They served in units under the leadership of white officers at the Battle of Sullivan's Island in June 1776 and Andrew Williamson's expedition against the Cherokee that fall.[1] After the fall of Charleston in May 1780, Sumter chose the Catawba River area on the North Carolina border as a base of operation to recruit and train soldiers. In addition to members of his old regiment and new volunteers from among area settlers, Catawba warriors also arrived in his camp to offer their services. The Catawbas not only permitted use of their lands by the Patriot troops; they helped provision them from their own supplies. One of Sumter's officers, Richard Winn, recalled, "When we took the field after the fall of Charleston, we often encamped on their lands for days together. Those friendly Indians drove us beef from their own stocks."[2]

Thomas Sumter established a company of 41 Catawba soldiers led by Captain Thomas Drennan. Members of Drennan's company included General New River, the Catawba chief, as well as Peter Harris, who had served previous tours of duty with the Georgia militia and South Carolina's Third Regiment of Rangers. Drennan's company likely participated in all of Sumter's major battles including the Battle of Rocky Mount, the Battle of Fishing Creek, and the Battle of Hanging Rock.[3]

In the wake of the Patriot defeat at Camden, the Catawba joined others who were fleeing the advancing British army and many took their families to safety in Virginia. Thirty or more warriors from that party joined with Gen. Nathanael Greene in North Carolina and served as scouts prior to the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in March 1781. Catawba continued serving with Greene through the Battle of Eutaw Springs in September 1781, the last major battle of the war in South Carolina.[4]

Although their towns were ransacked and in ruins, the Catawba returned to their ancestral homeland along the Catawba River and began the arduous task of rebuilding. This process was led by Catawba women who helped establish two new villages, Catawba Oldtown II and Ayers Town.[5]

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1. Brooke M. Bauer, *Becoming Catawba: Catawba Indian Women and Nation Building, 1540-1840* (University of Alabama Press, 2023) 115-116; Thomas J. Blumer, *Catawba Nation: Treasures in History* (History Press, 2007) 42-43; Douglas Summers Brown, *The Catawba Indians: The People of the River* (University of South Carolina Press, 1966) 258-263; James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawba and Their Neighbors from European Contact Through the Era of Removal* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1989) 215-216.
2. Brown, *The Catawba Indians*, 267; Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 216.
3. "Paybill for Capt. Thomas Drennan's Company of Catawba Indians," *Accounts Audited of Claims Growing Out of the Revolution in South Carolina, 1775-1856,* Series S108092, 3931-A, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia; Brown, *The Catawba Indians*, 267-270; Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 216.
4. Bauer, *Becoming Catawba*, 116-117; Blumer, *Catawba Nation*, 44-47; Brown, *The Catawba Indians*, 270; Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 216.
5. Bauer, *Becoming Catawba*, 117-118

Colonel William Hill and His Ironworks

William Hill was one of the most influential business and military leaders in upstate South Carolina before, during, and after the Revolution. His "Hill's Iron Works" produced much-needed munitions for the Patriot cause.

Hill established his ironworks in 1766 along the banks of Allison Creek, a tributary of the Catawba River in present-day York County. Exploiting dozens of enslaved people, Hill's Ironworks produced an estimated 106 tons of wartime materials for the Patriot cause including cannon, swivel guns, and ammunition. After the fall of Charleston in May 1780, the ironworks became the defacto headquarters for the local Patriot militia. It was destroyed by the British under the command of Capt. Christian Huck on June 18, 1780.[1]

Shortly thereafter, Hill and his "Regiment of Light Dragoons" put themselves under the command of Thomas Sumter and soon were involved in battles and skirmishes including Huck's Defeat, Rocky Mount, Fishing Creek, Fishdam Ford, Blackstock's Plantation, Quinby Bridge, and Shubrick's Plantation.

As the war began winding down, Hill — like Sumter — continued serving his state as a member of the legislature. He served multiple terms as a state senator and as a member of the House all the way to 1813. He was also a justice for the Camden District and when York County was formed in 1785, he served as a county judge from that year until 1799. In 1786, he revived his destroyed ironworks[2]

William Hill died in 1816 at age seventy-five. He is buried at the historic Bethel Presbyterian Church in York County, surrounded by dozens of other local Patriots who fought for their nation's independence.

1. "Iron Act," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/event/Iron-Act, Accessed June 23, 2017; Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 58-59; Terry Ferguson, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Early Ironworks in Northwestern South Carolina (National Parks Service, 1987); A. S. Salley, ed., *Col William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution* (The State Company, 1921) 6-7; Scoggins, *The Day It Rained Militia*. 80-83; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 58-59; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," *Names in South Carolina, Vol XXII* (Winter, 1975) 33.
2. Bobby Gilmer Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots in the American Revolution* (Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1983) 446; Salley, Col William Hill's Memoirs, 11, 15-23; Michael C. Scoggins, *Relentless Fury: The Revolutionary War in the Southern Piedmont* (Culture & Heritage Museums of York County, 2006) 34; Louise Pettus, "Col. Billy Hill's Ironworks," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC: June 2, 1986); Terry Ferguson, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Early Ironworks in Northwestern South Carolina (National Parks Service, 1987).

Huck's Defeat

The Battle of Huck's Defeat (also known as the Battle of Williamson's Plantation) was fought on July 12, 1780, in present-day York County. On July 10, 1780, British Capt. Christian Huck was dispatched with a detachment of Loyalist militia, British Legion Dragoons, and New York Volunteers to apprehend Patriot leaders in the New Acquisition District. Thomas Sumter, who was encamped with his Patriot militia at the Old Nation Ford of the Catawba River, had sent many of his men home to assist their families in reaping the wheat harvest. Huck felt this was a prime opportunity to catch them unawares.[1]

Huck and his men reached Col. William Bratton's plantation (present-day Historic Brattonsville) on the afternoon of July 11. When they arrived, Col. Bratton's wife, Martha, was home alone with her five children. According to family tradition, Martha dispatched an enslaved man named Watt with a message notifying Col. Bratton of Huck's arrival. After being threatened by Huck and his men, Martha and her children were locked in the attic of their home, and the British made camp at the neighboring plantation of James Williamson.[2]

When news of Huck's movements reached Sumter's camp, a detachment of Patriots was sent under the command of Col. William Bratton. In the morning of July 12, 1780, they ambushed the British. During the brief fifteen-minute battle that followed, thirty British and Loyalist soldiers were killed, including Capt. Huck. This Patriot victory boosted morale and inspired many recruits to join the fight for independence.[3]

Sumter reported the battle five days later in the described letter to General Baron Johann DeKalb, which follows. Terming it a "Most Considerable Scirmish [sic]," he described the enemy's losses as "Kild [sic] upon the Spot, was one Col., one Capt. & Twelve others; one Majr., one Lt. & Twenty-Seven others Taken prisoners, Since Which the Number found Dead a Mounts [sic] to Twenty one, the Loss Very Considerable among the Dragoons. I had about one hundred and thirty men in the action, the Enemy Twice that Number, Seventy of which were Brittish [sic]. We Released a Number of our friends, Who was fast Bound with Cords and otherways Treated with Great Sevearity [sic].[4]

1. Michael C. Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia: Huck's Defeat and the Revolution in the South Carolina Backcountry* (The History Press, 2005) 101-102;
2. Walter Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats: The Southern Conflict That Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (Harper Collins Publishers, 2001) 73-78; Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 102-108;
3. Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats*, 79-87; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," *Names in South Carolina, Vol XXII* (winter, 1975) 33-35; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (The University of Alabama Press, 1985) 83-84; Scoggins, *The Day It Rained Militia*, 109-126;
4. Sumter to DeKalb, July 17, 1780, DLC.

1780-07-17 – Thomas Sumter to Johann de Kalb

State So, Carolina, Camp Cawtaba [Catawba] River.[1] 17 July. 1780

Dr. Generl

Having been well Informed that you are Marching to the Reliefe of this Country,[2] I think it my Duty to give you the Earliest Intelligence of the Situation and force of the Enemy together with Such other things as appears the Most Interesting from the last accounts. the Number of Brittish Are as followeth, Vize; at George Town 280. C. Town [Charlestown] 800. Beauford [Beaufort] 12. Savanah [Savannah] in georgia 300 Agusta [Augusta] 600. Sennica [Seneca] fort. 70.- Ninty Six [Ninety Six]. 250. fairforest 30 Rocky Mount 200- hanging Rock. 320 foot 70 Dragoons —Camden & its Vicinity 700. Cheraws Said to be 600-

Total. 3482

This Number I Conceive to be equal to the Whole of the Brittish force provided every man fit for Duty was brought together from the Difrant posts, Which if attempted Could not possibly be effected in less than twelve or fifteen days time. as to their Tory or Militia force, Nothing Certain Can be Said. that depending Solely upon Circumstances, and is a Matter of a Very Serious Nature to this Country, and indeed to the Continent, for if they are permitted to Retreat Slowly to Charles Town, or have an opportunity of Collecting the Tories and Imbodying their Militia Who they to Compell to do Duty, I Say if they are suffered to do this, they will by that means add above ten thousand men to their army and thereby become So Strong as Not only to keep possession of Charles Town but also a Great part of the State besides — to obviate this, which your excellency will I hope pardon me for the freedom I take in giving my oppinion, the Method I Should propose to prevent this junction and accumulation of force, Would be to detach a Body of Light Troops to take post upon the South Side of Santee River, at Williams and Manigaults ferries, this Woud effectually cut off their Retreat to Town and thereby prevent them from forcing the Militia to Retreat with them or from their Gathering together the Tories, and also from Stripping the Country of all its Resources Which they are with the Greatest Diligence Doing, and if Not Shortly prevented will leave it in a Situation Not Capable of Giving Scarce any Support to an army. —

When it is Considered how Vastly Weak the enemy is by being So Detached in Small parties, and the Impossibility of their being Collected in a Short Time, and the Certainty of their being much anoyed if that Shoud be attempted, Leaves No Room to Doubt, but that one thousand or fifteen hundred Troops Might, With the Greatest propriety, Take post at the place before Mentioned, and woud unfailable answer the end Designed, Not only by preventing them from forcing the Militia into their Service and Carring off all the horses, Stock and other provisions that the country affords, But woud Render their own Retreat exceeding Difficult, if not impossible, as it Coud be effected only by the way of Georgia.—

[T]he Distresses of the people of this Country has been for Some Time past allmost beyond Conception, in the Northeren part of the State they have Now Some Respite. I having Collected a party of men, attacked and Dispersed the enemy, So As to Cleare two Regiments of them, the Most Considerable Scirmish Happened on Wednesday Morning.[3] The enemy's loss, Kild upon the Spot, was one Col., one Capt. & Twelve others; one Majr., one Lt. & Twenty-Seven others Taken prisoners, Since Which the Number found Dead a Mounts to Twenty one, the Loss Very Considerable among the Dragoons. —

1. At this time Sumter's camp was at Clems Branch on the east side of Catawba River on land of the Catawba Nation.
2. Gen. Baron Johann de Kalb had marched south in command of Maryland and Delaware Continental troops.
3. Sumter was referring to the Battle of Williamson's Plantation, also known as Huck's Defeat. Loyalist troops under Capt. Christian Huck were surprised and defeated by local militia in what is now York County, South Carolina. Huck was killed in the battle, which occurred on July 12, 1780.

I had about one hundred and thirty men in the action, the Enemy Twice that Number, Seventy of which were Brittish. We Released a Number of our friends, Who was fast Bound with Cords and otherways Treated with Great Sevearity. —

[O]n Saturday last I sent a party over Broad River who Broke up an encampment of Tories that were forming there, to Secoure a passway over the River. They Did them but Little Damage, except that of Taking their post, which was of Consequence to them, and not easy to be maintained by me, as the Tories are Very Numerous in that quarter and are Supported by Brittish. I am destitute of allmost every Requsite for war, but notwithstanding, Can Counter act some of their Designs untill your army arives — Which I have the Greatest hopes will be Soon, if Not Disagreeable

Shoud be exceedingly obliged by having the Route of your army for this few Days to Come — as I might thereby be the better inabled to act aGainst the enemy With a probability of Success.

I am, Dr. Genl. With the Greatest Respect,

Your Exclencys most obedt H'ble Servt

Thos. Sumter

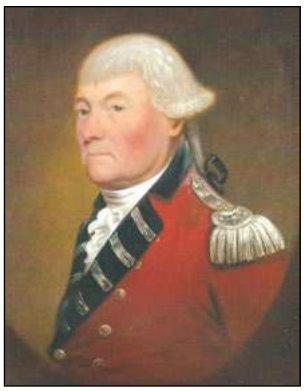
Majr. Genl. De Kalb

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress] DeKalb received the letter on July 21 and wrote at the top: "Received the 21. answered immediately that I would lay the letter before Gl. [Horatio] Gates at his arrival."4 His reply on 21 July has not been found.]

4. DeKalb was about thirty miles south of Hillsborough, North Carolina awaiting Gates when the letter was written. On July 25, Gates joined DeKalb on Deep River near present Coleridge, NC and replaced DeKalb as commander of the Southern Department of the Army. Bill Anderson, "American Revolution Sites, Events, and Troop Movements by Day," http://elehistory.com/amrev/SitesEventsTroopMovements.htm. On August 16, Gates was defeated and DeKalb mortally wounded at the Battle of Camden.

Rocky Mount

Rocky Mount was Sumter's first battle after the fall of Charleston in May 1780. The British had established a post on the summit of a hill overlooking the Catawba River near present-day Great Falls, South Carolina. The troops based there consisted of 150 New York Volunteers and 150 local Loyalist militia under the command of Lt. Colonel George Turnbull. Sumter's intelligence had indicated that post contained two log houses and a frame structure with easily penetrated clapboard siding. But Sumter was unaware that the building had been reinforced with an additional inner wall and the void filled with clay.[1]



George Turnbull.
Wikimedia. CC BY-SA 4.0.



William Richardson Davie
Charles Willson Peale

Sumter enlisted the aid of Col. William Richardson Davie of North Carolina. Together they coordinated their efforts to attack two British strongholds simultaneously. It was decided that Sumter would attack the British fortification at Rocky Mount while Davie created a diversion by attacking the British outpost at Hanging Rock, several miles to the east. On July 30, 1780,[2] Sumter and his force of 500 militia reached the outpost, easily dispersed Loyalists camped outside of it, and then began an assault on the buildings. Sumter's troops were forced to fall back as their musket fire was not having the expected effect on the clapboard building. Sumter demanded a surrender, but Turnbull refused.[3]

Colonel William Hill and one of his sergeants then attempted to set one of the structures on fire from behind the cover of a boulder but were driven off by a bayonet charge. The second attempt was successful under a barrage of cover fire, but the fire was soon doused by a late-day thunderstorm. Sumter was forced to break off the attack and withdraw to his camp upstream on the Catawba.

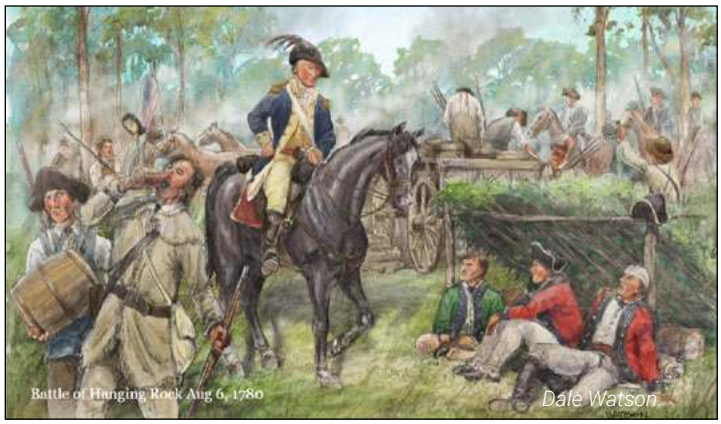
Colonel Davie, meanwhile, fared much better at Hanging Rock. (See Hanging Rock summary.) His men had pretended to be Loyalists to infiltrate the camp outside the main outpost. Davie's men routed the Loyalist forces, captured their horses and weapons, and retreated from the area before the British could respond.[4]

In Sumter's correspondence, he described the Rocky Mount engagement in an August 9 letter to Major Thomas Pinckney, an aide-de-camp of General Horatio Gates: "With about five hundred men I attacked Rockey [sic] Mount; the action continued upwards of Eight hours; was offten [sic] within thirty feet of their works; but they were so Constructed that I Coud [sic] by No means force them. I Made an attempt to fire them in the evening, and should have Succeeded, if the afternoon had Not proved excesively [sic] wet."[5]

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1. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc. 2000) 63-65; Walter Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats: The Southern Conflict That Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (Harper Collins, 2001) 101-102; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L Bryant Company, 1931) 87-88; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," *Names in South Carolina, Vol. XXII* (Winter 1975) 36; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University of Alabama Press, 1985) 97; Michael Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia: Huck's Defeat and the Revolution in the South Carolina Backcountry, May-July 1780* (History Press, 2005) 140-141
2. Some sources suggest the Battle of Rocky Mount was fought on August 1.
3. Bass, *Gamecock*, 63-67; Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats* 101-102; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 88-90; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three*,"* 36; Pancake, *This Destructive War,* 97; Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia,* 140-141;
4. Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 102-104; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 90; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," 36; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 97; Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia*, 140-141
5. Sumter to Pinckney, Aug. 9, 1780, NN.

Hanging Rock



Undaunted by his failure to take the British outpost at Rocky Mount on July 30, 1780,[1] Sumter set his sights on their even larger encampment at Hanging Rock to the east. The garrison was commanded by Major John Carden, whose Prince of Wales American Regiment was there along with British Legion infantry and militia units from both Carolinas. The exact total of troops at the outpost is not known, but some estimates are as high as 1,400. Sumter had a force of about 800 militia troops from both Carolinas.[2,3]

As Sumter and his men neared the enemy camp on the night of August 5, they held a council to devise a plan of attack. They decided to assault the camp in three detachments the following morning. However, in avoiding enemy pickets, the guides became confused and the entire force collided together as they struck the Loyalists' right flank. These immediately broke and retreated toward the Loyalists' camp in the center, hotly pursued by the Patriots. The Legion infantry and others tried to make a stand, but they were overrun and soon joined the fleeing Loyalists. The Prince of Wales regiment rallied and recaptured two artillery pieces that had been abandoned. But Major Carden lost his nerve in the chaos and turned command over to Legion Captain John Rousselet. The captain formed a square around the two field pieces and Sumter's men refused to charge across open ground to attack this formation.[4]

To make matters worse for Sumter, ammunition was running low and many of his troops were preoccupied with looting the British camp. After four hours of hot, exhausting fighting, Sumter called off the attack. His troops fell back towards Waxhaw with their captured horses, muskets, and other stores. British killed and wounded numbered over 200 while Sumter's causalities were around sixty.[5]

Only one existing letter by Sumter describes the action at Hanging Rock. Three days after the battle he wrote to Major Thomas Pinckney, aide-de-camp of General Horatio Gates. Sumter described his strategy, the flow of the battle, and why he was forced to pull back short of total victory: "Notwithstanding their opposition was but feeble, and I in possession of two thirds of that camp also for More than Half an hour, yet was obliged to leave them, from Several Causes, the action having Continued without Interruption for three hours, men fainting with heat and Droughth [sic], Numbers Kild [sic] and Wounded, but the true Cause of my not Totally Defeating them was the want of Led [sic]."[6]

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1. Some sources suggest that the Battle of Rocky Mount was fought on August 1.
2. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co. Inc., 2000) 68; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 92; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," *Names in South Carolina*, Vol. XXII (Winter, 1975) 36.
3. https://southcarolina250.com/publication/british-casualty-reports-shed-light-on-sumters-early-partisan-actions/
4. Bass, *Gamecock*, 69-71; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 92-94; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," 36; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (Russell & Russell, 1901) 627-629; David Lee Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies*, (McFarland & Company, 2000) 160; John S. Pancake, This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782, (The University of Alabama Press, 1985) 97.
5. Bass, *Gamecock*, 71-73; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 94; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 97; Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies*, 160-161; https://southcarolina250.com/publication/british-casualty-reports-shed-light-on-sumters-early-partisan-actions/
6. Sumter to Pinckney, Aug. 9, 1780, NN.

Horatio Gates

Sumter exchanged only a handful of letters in 1780 with General Horatio Gates. Gates had taken command of the Southern Department of the Continental Army from Benjamin Lincoln after the fall of Charleston in May. The interaction between Sumter and Gates was limited to only a few months due to Gates's crushing defeat at Camden in August. Gates was replaced before the end of the year by Gen. Nathanael Greene. Horatio Gates was born in England around 1727 and joined the British army in the 1740s with the purchase of a military commission. Gates participated in the War of Austrian Succession and later served in North America during the French and Indian War. Frustration with his inability to advance beyond the rank of major led Gates to sell his commission and, with the help of George Washington, he purchased a plantation and settled in Virginia in 1772.[1]



Horatio Gates. *National Portrait Gallery.*

Gates sided with the Patriot cause when armed hostilities with Britain began in 1775. He offered his services to General George Washington, having known him from their service together in the French and Indian War. Gates was appointed adjutant general of the Continental Army and although he made significant contributions in the area of administration, he still preferred a field command. In 1776 he was promoted to major general and placed in command of Fort Ticonderoga. His shining moment came in 1777 as commander of American forces at the Battle of Saratoga. The defeat of British forces under General John Burgoyne boosted Patriot morale and helped convince France to ally with the Americans.[2]

Gates's victory at Saratoga caught the attention of some members of the officer corps and congress who believed that Gates should replace Washington as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. This pro-Gates faction was led by General Thomas Conway. Despite the efforts of the so-called "Conway Cabal," if it in fact existed, Washington remained in command.[3]

Gates managed to salvage his working relationship with Washington and the Continental Congress placed him in command of the Southern Department of the Continental Army after the surrender of General Benjamin Lincoln in May 1780. His first and only major action in that position was his encounter with Lt. General Charles, Lord Cornwallis at the Battle of Camden in August of that year. In spite of numerical superiority, the mixed force of Continentals and militia were routed with heavy losses. Congress replaced Gates with Gen. Nathanael Greene at Washington's suggestion and there were calls for a Congressional board of inquiry, but after seeing the battlefield, Greene concluded that Gates did nothing to deserve censure, so Gates avoided a court martial and was allowed to continue serving on Washington's staff for the duration of the war.[4]

1. Mark M. Boatner, III, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1994) 412; Kevin Dougherty and Steven D. Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox: The Leadership of Francis Marion* (Casemate Publishers, 2022) 38; Jerry Kail, *Who was Who During the American Revolution* (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1976) 448-449.
2. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* 412-413; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 38-39; Kail, *Who was Who During the American Revolution,* 449.
3. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* 413; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 39; Kail, *Who was Who During the American Revolution,* 449.
4. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* 415-416; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 40; Kail, *Who was Who During the American Revolution,* 449.

1780-08-07 – Maj. Thomas Pinckney (Gates) to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters near Andersons Cross Roads[1] 7th August 1780

Dear Col.

After a rapid March forty miles in two Days; we have arrived within fourteen Miles of the Enemy's Post at Lynch's Creek,[2] but they have prudently thought proper to decamp last night for Camden. We here formed a junction with Major Genl [Richard] Caswell whose numerous Division we found well arm'd and accourterd, and eager for Action. Upon the Whole we form an Army fully sufficient to drive our late insulting Foes to Charles Town, without the considerable Reinforcements, which are coming up. General Gates (who now Commands in Chief in the Southern Department) desires to be particularly acquainted with your situation, and any late Intelligence you may have collected. He would therefore be glad if you could send him a confidential officer, well instructed upon the necessary Points Immediately. If you should not be able to spare an officer, you will be pleased to write fully, but so as to be calculated for accidents.[3] The State of Provisions in your Neighbourhood should be particularly attended to, and Intelligence concerning it, immediately sent. I am & c.

T.P.

[Transcribed from the original letter in the Gates Papers: Major [Thomas] Pinckney[4] by Order of Genl. [Horatio] Gates to Colonel Sumpter]

1. About five miles NW of present-day Chesterfield, South Carolina.
2. Lynch's Creek, now known as Lynches River, flows from near Waxhaw, NC southeastward toward the Great Pee Dee River.
3. Sumter responded with a letter dated August 9.
4. Thomas Pinckney, who was an aide-de-camp for Gates, would be captured nine days later at the Battle of Camden.

1780-08-09 – Thomas Sumter to Thomas Pinckney

[Some portions of the letter are illegible in the original document but appear in the 19th century transcription by Lyman Draper. These segments are noted in brackets.]

Camp Waxsaws [Waxhaws], 9th August, 1780.

Dr. Sir[1]

I have just Now Received your favour of the 7th Inst., and am exceeding glad to heare that his Excellency, Major Genl. [Horatio] Gates, with the Army, are so farr advanced, and think myself fortunate to have the power to furnish him, through you, with Intellegence, this Moment Received by express from Santee and the Congrees,[2] of the Most Interesting Nature, But shall first mention Something Relative to my own Situation and Circumstance, and the progress I have made since I had the pleasure of hearing from you, on Sunday morning, 23d Ultimo.

With about five hundred men I attacked Rockey Mount[3]; the action continued upwards of Eight hours; was offten within thirty feet of their works; but they were so Constructed that I Coud by No means force them. I Made an attempt to fire them in the evening, and should have Succeeded, if the afternoon had Not proved excesively wet, my led [lead] being exhausted, I withdrew a small distance; where I interrupted two parties going to Reenforse that post. My Loss, Kild and Wounded did not exceed twenty; that of the enemy more than three times as great,[4] together with Several prisoners, a Great Number of excellent horses, Saddles, Guns, &c. — after Relieving and Covering the Country three days, I fell back up the Catabaw [Catawba] River twenty miles, to a Shallow foard, as that River was up, Intending to pass it as early as posable to attack the enemy upon the East Side at hanging Rock, a post of Very Great Consequence of late, there being three hundred men detached from this place to the Reliefe of Rockey Mount, Determined me to loose No time, I accordingly began to pass the River on Saturday evening [August 5], The Rapidity of the Current was So Great I was not only thereby much delayed, but Met with Considerable Loss; however, proceeded on, but by these Delays was obliged to alter my mode of attack, and instead of Making it at Day brake [August 6], Concealed myself until Six o'clock, allowing them to scatter, and then go on with precippitation, as I know'd their Number much more Considerable than my own, in this manner I proceeded, and shoud have succeeded according to my wishes if they had not been Reinforced that Night with three hundred men from Rockey Mount and a troop of Dragoons from Camden; this Circumstance I was acquainted with before the enemy was alarmed, but I had Six hundred brave men upon Whom I Coud Depend, therefore Resolved to proceed,

The enemy had three large encampments, their Lines so extensive that it was impossible to attack the Whole at once, In consequence of which I proceeded against the Most Considerable of the Tory encampments and that of the British, which Lay in the Center, all upon exceeding advantageous hights. in about half an hour I had possession of Col. Bryant's [militia Col. Samuel Bryan] Camp, the action Still Continuing very hot in the British, Who were well posted, and had advantage of a field piece and open ground all around them, they had Detached a Colum[5] to support Bryant, who through a swamp found means to turn my Right flank.

The action was aGain Renewed upon that Quarter, at length every man of them was either Kild or taken, the British Camp was then attacked with greater Violence, they sustained it with Great Bravery for Near an Hour, at length gave way, leaving me in full possession of their Camp also. They Rallied aGain in Col. Robinson's encampment,[6] and Notwithstanding their opposition was but feeble, and I in possession of two thirds of that camp also for More than Half an hour, yet was obliged to leave them, from Several Causes, the action having Continued without Interruption

1. Maj. Thomas Pinckney, Aide de Camp of Gen. Horatio Gates.
2. Probably referring to Fort Granby and Friday's Ferry on Congaree River at present-day Cayce.
3. Sumter's attack on the British post at Rocky Mount actually occurred on Sunday, July 30, 1780.
4. Modern estimates for Rocky Mount are 12 American and 20 British casualties.
5. This column was the Prince of Wales American Regiment
6. There is no other reference to a Col. Robinson at the battle. The British rally was in a camp that at the start of the battle was occupied by the Prince of Wales American Regiment under Maj. John Carden.

for three hours, men fainting with heat and Droughth, Numbers Kild and Wounded, but the true Cause of my not Totally Defeating them was the want of Led, having been obliged to make use of arms and ammunition taken from the enemy. I had about Twenty Kild, forty wounded, Ten Mising. I took seventy three prisoners, forty odd of which are British, among whom were three Commissioned officers — from the Best accounts the loss of the enemy Kild is Not less than one hundred and thirty, the Number of Wounded in proportion, every officer in the Prince of Waleses Regiment was Kild or badly Wounded.[7] I Brought off about one hundred horses, two hundred & fifty Stand of arms, with other articles of Considerable value.

The number of the enemy at the Time I made the attack was by far the Most Considerable, at this post, to any other they had in the State, there being, from Certain accounts, Not less than fourteen hundred Ingaged. But the Number Now at that place is Not more than three hundred, the Enemy are calling in their outposts; Col. Ennis [Alexander Innes] is now Marching with the Regulars from Ninety-Six to the high hills of Santee;[8] [there is also a party (illegible; phrase from Draper)] coming from the Congrees [Congarees]. Some [Detachments of Tories are Moving to that Quarter also, but When all their outposts are (illegible; phrase from Draper)] Call'd in and their whole force Brought together, exclusive [of those in the fork of Broad and Saludie River, which I donte think will be ordered downwards, Will not amount to three thousand men, but if those in the fork should join them, it will (illegible; phrase from Draper)] increase their Number to five thousand at least. But this accumulation of force is, in my opinion, [Not to be feared. The Tories in this quarter will preferr Moving to the westward rather than to Charles Town. [illegible; phrase from Draper)]

Both British and Tories are pannick struck, and I am well Convinced that fifteen hundred men can go through any part of the State with ease. This will Not be the Case ten or fifteen days hence, especially if they have time to gather the Militia, who [they are now treating with intolerable Sevearity to Make them Join and March with them. I have mentioned (illegible; phrase from Draper)] What I think their force may be, exclusive of the Militia, but Without Very Speedy Relief I Doubt Numbers will Join them, to prevent which I take the Liberty to Say that was there about fifteen hundred men to Take post at the High hills or at Nelson's ferry[9] it Woud inevitably Ruin their army, as they Coud by No means effect a Retreat without going far to the Westward, and perhaps Not without going through Georgia. In either Case an army Coud Not be Supported, and Woud be a Means of preventing the Militia from being forced into the Lines of Charles Town. They are now striping the Country of all the Waggons, horses, Cattle, and every other article Necessary for the Support of an Army, to effect Which purpose they Mean to take post at the High hills and Neilson's ferry, these being Sentrial posts and such as Commands all the passage, either by land or Water, to Charles Town, of Consequence, and will of Corse Make it Dificult to Remove them. But was they Deprived of this one advantage, it Woud totally Ruin them, and I am fully Convensed that twelve or fifteen hundred men Can Distress them more in this way than three times that Number woud to be employed in any other. I am So Circumstanced that I Can't be explicit; therefore, the better to be understood, I have sent an officer, Capt. Kemble [Frederick Kimball], Who understands the Geography of the Country and the present situation of the enemy, [to whom I beg to refer you. (illegible; phrase from Draper)] as to provision, I have taken every Care to Save it, but have Not been able to have it prepared for the army — but have appointed Several persons, Who are Now busiely Imployd for that purpose — Capt. Kemble will be Capable of Satisfying you Relative to my Situation, although I have wrote much, it is with Much pain I have Wrote at all.[10]

I am Sir with the Greatest Esteem

Your most obedt. Hble. Sert.

Thos. Sumter

7. Modern estimates for Hanging Rock are 53 American and 200 British casualties.
8. Around present-day Stateburg.
9. Nelson's Ferry was on the Santee River near Eutaw Springs.
10. Sumter is possibly referring to a wound he received at Hanging Rock. Some 19th century accounts say he was shot in the thigh at that battle, but Sumter does not verify that in his writings.

Majr. [Thomas] Pinckney.

N.B. You'll please to excuse the appearance of the Gen'mn I Send. He is one of the unfortunate Sufferers, Which is the Cause.

I have this moment Received an account that the enemy had 25 Kild, that they had spiked the field-piece and was Retreating when I came off.

[Transcribed from the original letter in the Gates Papers]

1780-08-12 – Thomas Sumter to Thomas Pinckney (Gates)

Camp Lands foard [Landsford][1] Catawba River 12 aug[t] 1780

D[r] Sir

By accounts Just Received from Ninety-Six

Co[l]. Ennis [Alexander Innes] did Not March to Take post at the High Hills of Santee as was expected, he is still at his Station,[2]

Co[l]. [John Harris] Cruger Comm[ds], his force about five hundred men one hundred and fifty at agusta [Augusta], None at the Congrees [Congaree][3]. Weak in Town [Camden] and Very Sickly, a strong post

Just to the Wesward of us Col[s] Farquersons [Major Patrick Ferguson's] & [Robert] Cunninghams, Rockymount [Rocky Mount] four hundred, place much Strengthened, one field piece and one Hoitzer [howitzer], are now moving into the Neighbourhood of this post,

Camden altogether Defenceless without the Troops have Retreat to it, Which I Judge is Not the Case, they are busy in preparing Works at the Saw mill, and woud prove an advantageous post if there was no way of Going Round, but if they think to Make a Stand there it will prove an excelent trap for them, as the General Can't fail of having a proper Description of the Country about Camden, I am Clear they mean to Make to [sic: no?] great opposision at that place these preparations are meare amusements by which they expect to gain Time enough to Remove their Sick & Wounded, Which are Very Numerous. The have also Considerable Stores, their large Boats has just Come up in which are a quantity of Salt Rum & Sugar. Cloathing &c — But Shoud His Excellency Gen[l] Gaets [Horatio Gates] think Proper to Send a party over Pinetree Creek to fall in their Rear, either at the Creek or at the highills [High Hills] or Nielsons ferrey [Nelson's Ferry] it woud totally Ruin them as Nothing is more Certain than that their Retreat woud be Rendered exceedingly precarious, and the Necessary Supplies for their army Impossible to be had, the way they woud have to move to Save themselves, and if these large Convoies of provision Which are Now intended for Charles Town Were Cut of [cut off] that place, Could by no Means hold out, but afew days if beseaged — There is nothing to fear from Action, they Can't Spare men from Town, the only force we have to oppose is what they Raise in this State. The Chief of the Militia Downwards are our friends Readyer to do their Duty than ever,

Notwithstanding, many of these [?] are in arms against us. The Methods Taken to oblige them to bare arms are Intolerable. Two of the Militia Who had lately joined me were taken a few days ago, Carried to Rockymount [Rocky Mount] and immediately hanged, Nothing less than Ironing[4] Serves for any Who Disobey.

I have just got a Reinforcement from the Congrees [Congarees] of about forty, many of the first people in that Q[r] also some few from the Wateree. the Whole Country, Wishing for an opportunity to Join the army —

I have had posted some Distance below Rockeymount [Rocky Mount], have Secoured Chiefe of the provision in the fork, but by Covering So much of the Country I have worn Down my horses Very much. am Very Desirous of Taking post in the Dutch fork,[5] apart that abounds in provision, from Whence they began to Cary Supplies to Ninety-Six.

[*letter continues next page*]

1. Land's Ford, now called Landsford, crossed the Catawba River northwest of present-day Lancaster, South Carolina.
2. The High Hills of Santee are around present-day Stateburg, South Carolina. Innes was at Ninety Six on the day Sumter wrote this letter.
3. Sumter was probably referring to Fort Granby and Friday's Ferry on Congaree River at present-day Cayce, South Carolina.
4. "Ironing" referred to the use of shackles on a prisoner.
5. Dutch Fork was the area between the fork of the Broad and Saluda rivers, northwest of present-day Columbia, South Carolina. "Dutch" referred to the large number of German settlers in the area.

I am Dr. Sir with Great Regard
Your Most obed & Hble Servt

Thos. Sumter

Maj. Thos. Pinckney[6]

NB.

The enemy are gaining Strength to the westward, they are Raising Several Battalions, their Measures and bounty Succeeds only Two well. our advantage Depends much upon Dispatch their army at present is much more Sickly than ours. in a few weeks ours will be in the same Situation, but a push in to the heart of the Country Settles the Whole Business in three weeks Time, as well in Charles Town as the Country. the enemy are so Detached that they Can't oppose our army. there is a Great Quantity of old Corn upon the Congrees [Congarees] —the enemy have a Great Many thousand bushels there stored up. the Next of your favours. I am honoed with I hope will be from Santee or Camden.

TS

[Transcribed from the original letter in the Gates Papers]

6. Pinckney was an aide-de-camp of General Horatio Gates and would be captured at the Battle of Camden on August 16.

1780-08-15 – Thomas Sumter to Horatio Gates

Wateree ferry 15 Aug. 1780[1]

Dear Genl, have just time to inform you that early this morning I took possession of all the passways over the Wateree River, from Elkins's foard to Mr. Whiticar's [Whitaker's] ferry , five miles below Camden. The enemy had guards at many different places upon the River, all of which were evacuated last night or this morning, and the guards ordered into Camden, except those at Wateree ferry, which was continued on both sides of the River, of which the guard upon the west side was surprised by a party of my men who killed seven and took about thirty prisoners, among which was Col. [James] Cary[2] the commander, together with thirty-eight waggons, loaded with corn, rum, &c. also a number of horses,

The boats were all upon the opposite side of the river; the ground upon this side is very bad; the enemy keeps up a constant fire, but I have received no damage yet. I intend to keep possession if I can, until I am honoured with your Excellency's further commands. I should not have been so precipitate in my movements, but foresaw the excessive disadvantage that would result from their having the communication open, where by they was constantly receiving both men and provisions — the number of Troops, Regulars I mean, do not exceed twelve hundred, and not as many as one thousand of the Militia who are generally sickly, and much dispirited, there is a reinforcement said to be on the road from town, will arrive in two days, the number about five hundred — as soon as possible, will give you an account of what is passing.

I am Dr Genl.,
with the Greatest Respect
Your Excellency's most obed Hble Servant
Thos. Sumter

P.S. I have the pleasure to inform your Excellency that I have this Instant made about fifty prisoners. all British, six waggons, Baggage, & c. just from Ninety Six —Many of the prisoners are sick.

T.S.

His Excelency Maj. Genl. [Horatio] Gates
Wateree Ferry 15 Aug 80
Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter in the Gates Papers]

1. The Battle of Camden would be fought the next day.
2. Also spelled Carey. The Loyalist leader had built a small fort on his own plantation to guard the ferry crossing.

Camden, Carey's Fort, and Fishing Creek

Major General Horatio Gates, known by many as the "Hero of Saratoga," was placed in command of the Southern Department of the Continental Army following Benjamin Lincoln's surrender at Charles Town in May 1780. Anxious to drive the British from Camden, Gates marched his "Grand Army" (as he called it) directly to the British stronghold. Unfortunately, in his zeal, Gates pushed his men to the point of exhaustion.[1]



A colorized version of the engraving of the Death of De Kalb at Camden. *Alonzo Chapel*.

As Gates approached Camden, he rendezvoused with General Thomas Sumter. Sumter requested reinforcements to help him secure the fords on the Catawba and Wateree River. Gates acquiesced and allowed 300 militia and 100 Continental regulars of his forces to leave his army to accompany the Gamecock. On August 15, 1780, Sumter and his brigade attacked Carey's Fort located on the west bank of the Wateree River in present-day Kershaw County. At the time, Carey's Fort was the only British garrison west of the river in the immediate vicinity. The Patriots surprised the fort and found the entire garrison asleep. Taking advantage of the situation, Sumter's men rushed in and captured the 108 occupants as well as 36 wagons loaded with supplies.[2]

Aware of Gates's presence in the area, Lord Cornwallis had arrived to take personal command of the British army garrisoned at Camden. On the evening of August 15, both armies began marching toward each other. The British intended to surprise the Patriots, while the Patriots intended to occupy a strong position closer to Camden in hopes Cornwallis would attack. In the early morning hours of August 16, 1780, Gates's Grand Army, approximately 4,100 strong, met the British numbering approximately 2,200 about eight miles north of Camden.

Despite the superior numbers of Patriot soldiers, the Battle of Camden was a decisive victory for the British. Gates ordered his poorly disciplined militia to open the attack against seasoned British regulars. With most of them facing bayonets for the first time, the Patriots broke rank and fled the field. Gates and most of the militia officers were swept along with them as they tried unsuccessfully to rally the panicked men. Despite the rout,

1. Thomas J. Kirkland and Robert M. Kennedy, *Historic Camden Part One Colonial and Revolutionary* (The State Company, 1905) 147-152; Terry Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," *Names In South Carolina, Vol. XXII* (Winter, 1975) 37; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (Russell & Russell, 1901) 658-666; Jim Piecuch, *The Battle of Camden: A Documentary History* (History Press, 2006) 12-13; John R. Maass, *Horatio Gates and the Battle of Camden – That Unhappy Affair, August 16, 1780* (Kershaw County Historical Society (12-21); *H.L. Landers, The Battle of Camden South Carolina August 16, 1780* (United States Government Printing Office, 1929) 8-16; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University of Alabama Press, 1985) 99-101.
2. Ann King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L Bryan Company, 1931) 99-100; Kirkland and Kennedy, *Historic Camden*, 152-153; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," 37; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 101;

Maryland and Delaware Continentals under the command of Maj. Gen. Johann de Kalb bravely remained on the field until they were outflanked and forced to retreat. De Kalb was mortally wounded and died several days later.[3]

Sumter, who was unaware of the Patriot defeat at Camden, was moving north along the Wateree River with his partisan brigade. Cornwallis, enraged by the Patriot victory at Carey's Fort, sought to punish the Gamecock as well as recover the men and munitions that had been seized by Sumter's men. Cornwallis dispatched Tarleton and the British Legion to overtake Sumter. Shortly after noon on August 18, 1780, Tarleton reached Sumter's camp at Fishing Creek in present-day Chester County. Many of the Patriots were resting in the afternoon sun or refreshing themselves in the nearby river. The Patriots were caught completely unaware and as a result were severely defeated. One-hundred-fifty Patriots were killed and many others were captured, though Sumter managed to escape into Charlotte, North Carolina.[4]

Sumter's correspondence during this period only addresses the capture of Carey's Fort. Sumter sent a letter to General Gates later that day describing how the outpost was "surprised by a party of my men who killed seven and took about thirty prisoners, among which was Col. Cary the commander, together with thirty-eight waggons, loaded with corn, rum, &c. also a number of horses." There are no existing Sumter letters which discuss the battles at Camden or Fishing Creek. But it should be pointed out that there are no known letters to or from Sumter in the five-week period following August 15.[5]

3. Kirkland and Kennedy, 153-170; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Three," 37; Landers, *The Battle of Camden, South Carolina,* 35-59; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution*, 666-681; Maass, Horatio gates and the Battle of Camden, 33-56; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 103-107.
4. Walter Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats: The Southern Conflict that Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 2001) 111-112; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 101-102; Kirkland and Kennedy, *Historic Camden*, 199-201; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles: Part 3,"37; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 107; https://southcarolina250.com/publication/british-casualty-reports-shed-light-on-sumters-early-partisan-actions/
5. Sumter to Gates, Aug. 15, 1780, NN.

1780-09-23 – Thomas Sumter to Jethro Sumner

Camp Island foard, 23rd Sept. 1780 Sir [North Carolina Militia General Jethro Sumner]

My spies brings me accounts this morning that the Enemy have Evacuated their camp at Whites Mill[1] and it is suposed they have crosed the River at Lands foard [Landsford][2] , which I judge to be the case, they have a number of horse but not one half of them Equiped as cavalry. Perhaps they mean to be troublesome to you, they have been collecting guides, for Difrent purposes, and has offered twenty Guineas to any one who will Conduct them privately to my Camp.

I have also Received Intelegence that Col. Maryan [Francis Marion] has surprised and taken George Town, [Georgetown][3] made two hundred prisoners, destroyed the Stores and a number of vesels and small craft which was provided for the security of the Garrison if obliged to Retreat. I lately Ingaged Col. Clark [Elijah Clarke] of Georgia, an Interprising offr. with whom I sent a troop of So. Carolina horse with letters to Col. [Andrew] Pickens[4] and the Inhabitants of Ninty Six [Ninety Six] District, urging them to assist Said Clark in taking the posts of agusta [Augusta] & 96 [Ninety Six], and to prevent if posible, the Treaty Intended to be held with the Indians —I am informed that all the posts about agusta [Augusta] are accordingly Taken, except Ray's fort[5] which Col. [Lt. Col. Thomas] Brown still holds.[6] Chief of his garrison are Indians — 96 [Ninety Six] was also attacked, and Woud have been Taken, if it had not been for a large Reinforcement of Indians which the British Brought in to the assistance of that place.[7] I hear Col Ferguson [Maj. Patrick Ferguson] is retreating.

I am Sir, with Great Respect, Your most obed & Hble Servant,
Thos. Sumter

Br. Genl Sumner

[Outside]
The Honourble Brigr. Genl. Sumner Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. White's Mill was on Fishing Creek below present-day Rock Hill, South Carolina.
2. The ford was on the Catawba River 7 miles NW of Lancaster, South Carolina.
3. This report was false.
4. Andrew Pickens, who had accepted British parole and was expected by the British to cooperate in resisting Clarke. (Balfour to Cornwallis, 20 September 1780, *Cornwallis Papers* 2, 91.)
5. Ray's fort is unknown. The fort in Augusta was Fort Grierson.
6. Clarke was forced to break off the siege as British reinforcements approached. Augusta would not be taken until June 5, 1781.
7. There is no record of any such attack.

1780-09-28 – Lt. John Money to Thomas Sumter

Head-Quarters, Charlottetown [Charlotte] 28TH Sept. 1780.

Sir,

Lord Cornwallis having received your Consent to exchange John Hutchinson a Prisoner with you, for John How [Howe],[1] when on his March,[2] had not an opportunity of giving his Answer till this day. His Lordship desires me to acquaint you that the Prisoner How is at Charlestown, but he will by the first oppy. [opportunity] write to the Commandant, & give Directions for his immediate Release, and Permission to return home, trusting you will observe the same Rule with John Hutchinson.

I am Sir Your most obedient and most humble servant

J. Money [Lt. John Money]

Aid de Camp

[Transcribed from original letter at the British National Archives, Cornwallis Papers]

1. John Howe was a commissary and had been captured at the Battle of Fishing Creek on August 18.
2. After stopping at Waxhaws in South Carolina to let his 2,200 men recover from disease, Cornwallis marched his army to Charlotte, where he arrived on September 26.

John Rutledge



John Rutledge. *National Governors Assoc.*

Governor John Rutledge of South Carolina is the corresponding party in forty-one of Thomas Sumter's wartime letters, making him second behind Gen. Nathanael Greene. Almost all the letters are from Rutledge to Sumter. About a fourth of them are known only because they are referenced in other letters and their contents are unknown, aside from comments about them by Rutledge or Sumter. Rutledge's main topics in his letters are acquiring and distributing military supplies, military draft policy and enforcement, and preparations for the General Assembly election held in the fall of 1781.

Rutledge was born in Charleston around 1739 to a family whose wealth allowed him to pursue a career in law by first serving as an apprentice to local attorneys, followed by further studies at London's Middle Temple. Rutledge returned to Charleston and was admitted to the South Carolina bar in 1761. He quickly became one of the more prominent attorneys in the city. Rutledge married Elizabeth Grimke, whose cousins Sarah and Angelina Grimke later became well-known abolitionists. Rutledge was not opposed to the use of enslaved labor and would acquire two plantations with enslaved workers himself.[1]

Rutledge ventured into politics at the beginning of his law career and was elected to the South Carolina Commons House of Assembly in 1761. He served in that body until 1775. Rutledge also served as a representative to the 1765 Stamp Act Congress in New York. This was a response by the colonies to the British Stamp Act of 1765, which imposed taxes on a wide array of printed materials. The Congress passed a "Declaration of Rights and Grievances" which asserted that the colonists had all the rights of Englishmen and that the Stamp Act imposed taxation without representation.[2]

As tensions continued to mount between the colonies and Britain, Rutledge was elected to the First Continental Congress in 1774, along with his brother Edward. They also served in the Second Continental Congress. But John Rutledge was pulled back to service in South Carolina after being elected president (equivalent to governor), under the terms of a new constitution drawn up in March 1776. Rutledge's first priority was to build up the defenses around Charleston, in anticipation of a British assault. That attack came in June and was successfully repulsed by the city's defenders.[3]

The British tried again in May 1780. This time, Rutledge, at the encouragement of Benjamin Lincoln, left Charleston in advance of the British to raise militia to assist against the approaching siege. He was therefore not present when Lincoln surrendered the city on May 12. Despite the fall of Charleston, Rutledge was still President of South Carolina. As such, he continued to correspond with the top commanders —Gens. Thomas Sumter, Francis Marion, and, later, Andrew Pickens. Rutledge moved around often, sometimes staying in the camp of Gen. Nathanael

1. Britannica Editors, "John Rutledge," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 28, 2025. https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Rutledge; Walter Edgar, edt., *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Press, 2006) 821.
2. Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 821; Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, eds., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1991) 776.
3. Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 822; Encyclopedia of the United States Editors, *Encyclopedia of South Carolina* (Somerset Publishers, Inc., 1993) 40-41; Greene and Pole, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 776.

Greene, commander of Continental forces in the southern states. In December 1780, he and Greene paid a visit to Sumter as he was recovering near Charlotte from a wound he received at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation in November.[4]

Rutledge remained in North Carolina until he went to Philadelphia in the spring of 1781 in search of supplies for South Carolina troops. He returned that summer as Patriot forces were reasserting control over South Carolina. The Assembly convened again in January 1782, but the British remained in control of Charleston until December of that year. Term limits prohibited Rutledge from serving as governor again, but he was once again called upon to serve as a delegate to the Continental Congress.[5]

After the war, Rutledge continued to represent South Carolina in the Philadelphia convention that drew up the United States Constitution to replace the Articles of Confederation. George Washington nominated him to the Supreme Court in 1789, but he only served about a year before resigning to be chief justice of the South Carolina Court of Common Pleas. George Washington nevertheless gave him a recess appointment to Chief Justice in June 1795. But Rutledge proved to be unpopular and the Senate would not confirm his nomination in December of that year. Rutledge returned to Charleston and retired from public service, aside from serving a term in the state's House of Representatives. Rutledge died in 1800 at age sixty.[6]

4. Walter Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats: The Southern Conflict that Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (Harper Collins, 2001) 50, 159; David Wilson, *The Southern Strategy: Britain's Conquest of South Carolina and Georgia, 1775-1780* (University of South Carolina Press, 2005) 221-222.
5. Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 822.
6. Britannica Editors, "John Rutledge," **https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Rutledge;** Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 822.

1780-10-06 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

[This letter was written to Sumter by John Rutledge, Governor of South Carolina, in exile at Hillsborough, North Carolina. The right side of the original document is damaged. Missing or illegible segments are noted in brackets.]

October 6, 1780

Herewith you will receive a Commission appointing you a Brigadier General.[1]—You will be pleased to embody, as soon as possible, all the Militia of South Carolina, whom you can collect, & hold them in Readiness to cooperate with the Continental line, [text faint] receiving orders for that purpose —In the mean Time, you will employ the men whom you assemble, in such Manner as may ren[page damaged: "render?"] the most effectual service to that State. This must, in a great Measure, depend on Circumstances, & your own Judgme[nt]. Therefore, I will not limit your opera[tions]. However, the immediate Objects of my [text missing] (to which I doubt not you will cons[text missing: consent?] are that our People who are prisoners [page damaged: of?] the Enemy, in S^{o}. Carolina & Georgia, be [page damaged: liber] ated — that such as are in their power, would willingly join the American [text faint] if they could [remove?], be assisted in [text faint] away. That all the enemy's out [posts?] be broke up, & the Several parties whom they have throughout the Country [faint] off. In short, that they be harassed & attacked, in every Quarter, of S^{o}. Carolina & Georgia, where they can be to advantage … & with a reasonable Prospect of success but, your own prudence will restrain you from entering on too hazardous an Enterprise. It will be expedient to apprehend & secure every subject of the State, who held any Office or Commission under his Britannick Majesty. You are not, on any account whatever, to put any Prisoners whom you take that owe Allegiance to the State of S^{o}. Carolina (whatever their Rank or Condition may be) on Parole, but, have them properly confined to be tried, as soon as Courts of Law can be held, for so capital an Offence as taking Part with the Enemy. The pay of your Men, both Horse & Foot, whilst in actual Service, will be what is allowed by the Militia Law. You will give the strictest orders, & use the most effectual Means, to prevent the Shameful practice of Plundering.

You will animate & encourage our Friends, by circulating, throughout S^{o}. Carolina & Georgia, the following Particulars, from me, viz^{t}. that our Affairs in Europe wear the most favourable Aspect —That the Campaign to the Northward has been an inactive one. Gen^{l}. [Henry] Clinton not having chosen to venture an Action, but, having kept his Army in New York, or places adjacent, where [neither?] our Troops, nor those of his most Christian Majesty, which landed on Rhode Island (consisting of 5000) could get at it. That considerable Aid will Soon be sent to the Relief of S^{o}. Carolina & Georgia, on [?]. I expect advices every Moment, & I will transmit them to you. That the court of France, & Congress, are determined to [maintain?] the Independence of all the United States of America, & not to listen to [text missing] -[undeciphered part of a word] of Peace which may require Surrender of any of these States.[2] [text missing] hoped, however, that the good People of S^{o}. Carolina & Georgia, will at a [text missing] Times exert themselves in assisting to [text missing] & in supporting their Liberties. It will be necessary from the peculiar Circumstances of many of our Friends, that they [undeciphered] temporize for a while, & not, as yet take up Arms, but, I shall expect that they will stand prepared, when called on, to join the American Forces, with whom I hope shortly to enter S^{o}. Carolina, & revenge the Injuries it has experienced, from both domestick & Foreign Enemies, and that, all who have been unfortunately compelled to do Duty [for the British], as Militia Men, will evince such Compulsion & their Fidelity to the State, in order that, if they shall appear to have been compelled, if they have not been guilty of atrocious crimes, & if their future conduct shall [text faint], they may be admitted to [text faint] their Country.

You will obtain, from Time to Time, & transmit to me, with the utmost Expedition, the best intelligence you

1. Sumter's volunteer troops had elected him their commander-in-chief in June.
2. Rumors circulated that Congress contemplated ceding Georgia and South Carolina to Britain in exchange for peace.

can procure,[3] of the Strength & disposition of the Enemy in S°. Carolina & Georgia, & of every material occurrence, in those States — also obtain for me, if you can, all the S°. Carolina & Georgia Gazettes, from the 12th of May last[4], & copies of such Acts of Assembly, of Georgia, as affect the People of that State who are Enemies to Great Britain — inform me what was the Result of the Treaty [text faint] Congress, lately held, with the Indians at Augusta — where Mr. [George] Galphin[5] is & whether you can forward some dispatches to him, from me, by a safe Conveyance -

I am informed, that Several Persons have been hanged, & many Houses burnt, in S°. Carolina by the Enemy — that Some …

["The remainder of this letter is unfortunately missing."-- L.C.D.][6]

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

3. If Sumter provided Rutledge with the requested reports, they have not been found.
4. The date of Charleston's surrender to the British.
5. George Galphin was an Indian trader and South Carolina patriot.
6. Note by historian Lyman C. Draper

Kings Mountain

Reassured by the British victory at Camden, Cornwallis began preparing to move into North Carolina. He planned to march up the east side of the Catawba River into Charlotte. Maj. Patrick Ferguson was meanwhile ordered to penetrate into western North Carolina with his provincials and a large force of militia as far as Gilbert Town in order to defend Cornwallis's western flank. Ferguson was acutely aware that Patriot militias in the Carolina backcountry were gaining strength. Of particular concern to Ferguson was the frontier militia from the "over mountain settlements" in present-day Tennessee and Kentucky, led by Col. Isaac Shelby. According to tradition, Ferguson sent a warning across the Blue Ridge Mountains to Shelby and his men. If the rebels did not "desist from their opposition to British arms," Ferguson boasted, he would march his army over the mountains and "lay their country waste with fire and sword." [1]

Shelby immediately sent out a call for volunteers and, on September 25, met with the assembled patriots at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River. After dividing the troops among commanders William Campbell, Isaac Shelby, John Sevier, and Joseph McDowell they set out in pursuit of Ferguson who was attempting to unite with Cornwallis in Charlotte. When he learned that the Patriots were in close pursuit, Ferguson elected to make a stand atop a nearby monadnock known as Kings Mountain. On October 7, 1780, the Patriots reached Ferguson's position. By this time, their ranks had swelled to over one thousand strong and included militiamen from the Carolinas and Georgia.The Patriots divided their forces and proceeded up the mountain. The battle commenced at 3:00 in the afternoon. The Loyalists were quickly surrounded. Ferguson, atop his horse and clad in a checkered hunting shirt, made a prime target for Patriot marksmen. He was struck with eight to ten musket balls and thrown from his saddle. Altogether, the Battle of Kings Mountain lasted about an hour. The Loyalist casualties numbered 157 killed and another 163 wounded. The Patriot victory at Kings Mountain has long been considered a turning point in the American Revolution.[2] Sir Henry Clinton reflected that the British defeat was the "first link of a chain of evils that followed each other in regular succession until they at last ended in the total loss of America."[3]

Sumter was not present at the Battle of Kings Mountain. His exact whereabouts on that day are not known. The letter closest to the date of the battle was written by him on September 23. On that day he was camped at Island Ford on the Saluda River, approximately ten miles northeast of Ninety Six. Writing to North Carolina militia officer Gen. Jethro Sumner, Sumter described sending troops to the Ninety Six area and the potential for engagement with the enemy in that area, as well as at Augusta, Georgia.[4] Meanwhile, other troops that considered themselves as part of

1. David Dameron, *King's Mountain: The Defeat of the Loyalists October 7, 1780* (Da Capo Press, 2003)26-28; Lyman Draper, *King's Mountain and its Heroes: History of the Battle of King's Mountain, October 7th, 1780, and the events which led to it.* (Peter G. Thomson Publisher, 1881); Walter Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats: The Southern Conflict That Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 2001) 113-116; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (Russell and Russell, 1902, 1969) 776-778; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles, Part Three," *Names in South Carolina*, Vol. XXII (Winter, 1975) 38; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (The University of Alabama Press, 1985) 108-117; Phillip Thomas Tucker, *Kings Mountain: America's Most Forgotten Battle that Changed the Course of the American Revolution* (Skyhorse Publishing, 2026) 21-27.
2. Dameron, *King's Mountain*, 28-41, 45-81; Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats*, 116-121; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles, Part Three," 38-39; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 789-805; Hank Messick, *King's Mountain* (Little, Brown & Company, 1976) 101-106; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 117-121; Jim Piecuch, "The Battle of Kings Mountain: New Insights from Forgottn Documents," *Journal of the American Revoution*, Sept. 12, 2024, https://allthingsliberty.com/2024/09/the-battle-of-kings-mountain-new-insights-from-forgotten-documents/; Tuker, Kings Mountain, 45-85, 119-129, 259-264.
3. Dameron, *King's Mountain*, 88; Tucker, *Kings Mountain*, 317.
4. Sumter to Sumner, Sept. 23, 1780, HCL.

Sumter's command remained encamped in the Catawba River region south of Charlotte. They faced a dilemma in the days before Kings Mountain as another officer attempted to assert his authority over them.



Battle of Kings Mountain. *Frederick Yohn.*

Col. James Williams was one of the militia commanders at the Patriot victory in August at Musgrove's Mill in South Carolina. Gov. John Rutledge promoted Williams to brigadier general in response to that victory and Williams wasted no time in attempting to claim some of Sumter's units. Col. William Hill recalled in his memoirs that Williams arrived at "Sumter's Camp, which was then on the Indian Land on the East side of the Catawba River, he had his commission publicly read & required all the officers & men to fall under his immediate command…Your Author then informed him that there was not an officer or man in the whole army that would submit to his command."[5]

As the Overmountain Men drew closer to the forces under Ferguson, Williams rendezvoused with them and attempted to persuade their officers to turn southward into South Carolina instead and attack the British outpost at Ninety Six. William Hill also arrived in the camp and once again placed himself at odds with Williams, arguing that defeating Ferguson was the most critical objective and they should not be detoured by an opportunity for plunder. Hill's appeal was heeded and Williams reluctantly fell in with the column as it headed towards Ferguson's camp at Kings Mountain. The unpopular Williams was fatally wounded at the battle —Colonel Hill wrote that it was "generally supposed & believed that it was done by some of the Americans."[6] See Will Grave's biography of Williams that refutes Hill's accusations.[7]

In spite of the battle's great significance to the course of the war, there is no mention of it in any letters to or from Sumter in the following weeks. It should be noted, however, that no letters written by Sumter for the entire month of October have been found and only two that he received are known.

5. A.S. Salley, Jr, ed., *Col. William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, (The State Company, 1921), 17, 20-23.
6. Salley, *Col. William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution*, 17, 20-23.
7. In his biography of Williams, Will Graves refutes Hill's accusations. Graves, William T. *Backcountry Revolutionary*, (Wordward Corporation, 2012).

1780-10-10 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Hillsborough[1] Oct 10th 1780

Sir,

I shall want a good large, strong cover'd-waggon, with a good team of stout Horses, for my own use — such as there used to be about Ninety-Six [Ninety Six]. There is no getting any here. I wish, therefore, you w^d^. , as soon as possible, procure the best you can, for me, & an honest, careful, drive, & send it, to this place, in order to carry the Supplies of Necessaries, which I shall want for myself & Friends, who I hope will be able to move soon, tow^d^ or into So. Carolina. M^r^. Holzendorf[2] is just setting off for Wilmington -- you shall hear further from me by him, & sooner, if anything material occurs. No news, nor any person, from Philadelphia since your left us.

I am Sir
Y^r^ Most Obed^t^ Serv^t^.
J. Rutledge

Gen^l^. Sumpter

[Outside]
John Rutledge 10 of October 1780 Hillsborough
To Brigadier General Sumter at his Camp

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Hillsborough is northwest of present-day Raleigh, North Carolina, and was one of several towns where the North Carolina legislature met during the war.
2. William Holzendorf served on the Georgia Executive Council.

1780-10-29 – Elijah Clark(e) to Thomas Sumter

Sunday, 29th October, 1780, In Camp Broad River

Hon'd Sir: I gladly Embrace the Opportunity of Doing my Self the Honour of Writing to you on hearing of your Letter to me being on the way,[1] But not yet having the Pleasure of the Perusal. I was Honour'd yesterday with Genl [William] Smallwood's[2] Letter, which was much to my Satisfaction. Informing me you was to Command the South Carolina & Georgia Troops.

I am Informed of a party of Troops at Capt. Woods on Lawson's Fork,[3] which I Shall Join, where I Shall wait your Orders for the Next movement. —- I am to Inform you that the Tories Killed Captns [Edward] Hampton & Stedman at or Near Fair forest [Fairforest].[4] —- I heard of a Party of Tories at or Near Prince's,[5] about 250, but Cannot assert where they are now. —

I hope in a few days I shall get some more of the Georgians with me,[6] as they are much Scattered, and what I have is much fatigued [missing] by Crossing the Mountains and Marching Rapidly to this place, as I have but 2 days been Crossed. —

I must Beg Leave to Trouble you with a Short Journal of my Journey to Augusta. — When I marched into Georgia, I was Reinforced by 300 men from Wilks [Wilkes] County, and Marched from thence to the Place where Col. [Thomas] Brown made all advantages he Could with the Indjans in number betwixt 3 & 400—who felt the Smart of our fire — the men Cut them Down very fast. Together with the whites, Brown himself was wounded & about 30 or 40 of his men killed. 50 or 60 of the Indjans fell — finding themselves not able to Stand our fire they Retreated to an Old Fort where they Intrenched, I laid Close Siege to Them & kept them from water and Provisions three or four days, and Should without Doubt have had them had they not been Reinforced from Ninety Six.[7] I finding the Circumstances of the Times Suited me to retreat from thence, and through much Difficulty got through the Mountains to Nolechuckey [Nolichucky River][8] – from thence here. —

I beg leave to [Conclude?] and am Happy to have the honour of [subscribing?] my Self Your most obedt
[And very?] humble Servt,
Elijah Clerk [Clark][9]

Gen. Sumpter
[Outside]
To the H [?] General Sumpter his Camp Fav. Mr. Whitiker

[The right side of the outside portion of the letter is missing. The following is what historian Lyman Draper transcribed. Whether he saw the full original page or was just speculating is unknown.]

To the Honble Brigadier General Thos. Sumpter at his Camp Favd. by Mr. Whitiker

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. The letter Clark refers to has not been found.
2. Gen. Smallwood of the Maryland Continentals was temporarily in command of the North Carolina militia.
3. A branch of the Pacolet River east of present-day Spartanburg, South Carolina.
4. Fairforest Creek is south of present-day Union, South Carolina.
5. Probably Prince's Fort, eight miles west of Spartanburg, South Carolina.
6. Many refugees from Georgia volunteered to join the author of this letter, Elijah Clark, who was also a refugee after the British seized control of that state.
7. Clark is referring to the unsuccessful siege of Augusta, Georgia, Sept. 12-18, 1780
8. The river is in present-day eastern Tennessee.
9. Col. Elijah Clark (also spelled Clarke) led Georgia militia forces in the patriot victories at Kettle Creek in Georgia on February 14, 1779 and Musgrove's Mill in South Carolina on August 19, 1780.

1780-10-31 – William Candler to Thomas Sumter

Camp at Roses S^{o}. Side B. River [Broad River], Tuesday 31st October 1780

Dear Sir,

I am Just favoured with yours of the 28th and am glad to hear the Enemy are so streight^{d} for provisions, I am sorry I had not Rec^{d}. Your Orders sooner.[1] Our [horses?] are so worn Out & Tender footed they can't march until shod and Refresh^{d}, From Some Acct^{s}. I had Rece^{d} I Expected you were Marching to this River which Occationed me to move to this Place, from Accounts I got last night am informed that Cap^{t} [James?] Bridges who was sent to Col. [Elijah] Clark has returned & says Col^{o}. Clark was to be at the Iron Works[2] yesterday; People are gathering in Many Places in Defence of their Country and a certain W^{m} Cuningham [William Cunningham] with 93 men was Defeated a few days ago by 30 of our Georgians Under the Comm^{d}. Cap^{ts}. Whiteker [John Whitaker] & [Josiah] Dunn. Cuningham [Cunningham] is wounded several of his men kild and wounded,[3] From Some Acct^{s} near 96 [Ninety Six] all appear Ripe for a Revolt and that place very weak, Part of my Ri[Regiment] [missing phrase] Above the Iron Works [missing phrase] Dunn to join the Rigem^{t} [Regiment] as Quick as possible. I shall Imed^{tly} send to Col^{o}. Clark. I shall [March?] to Day abought 10 mile to get our horses shod & there hope to Receive your further orders.

And Am Sir with the Great Respect
Yo^{r} M^{o} Obet. & Hb^{l}. Serv^{t}.
W^{m}. Candler[4]
Com^{g}. Geo. Batt^{l}.

[Outside]
W^{m} Candler
31st October 1780
Brigadier General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter of the 28th to Candler has not been found.
2. Probably Col. William Hill's Iron Works, which were eight miles northeast of present-day York, South Carolina.
3. No documentation has been found for this engagement.
4. Major William Candler led Georgia militia troops in several patriot victories including Kings Mountain and Blackstocks.

1780-11-03 – Thomas Sumter to Maj. Adams Summers

Camp at Stallions,[1] 3d Nov. 1780

I hope you will Cheerfully embrace this oppertunity to which Heaven has favour'd you with to attempt the Release of your oppress'd Country — your Character is such as to leave no Room for me to doubt either your zeal or Vigilence. I therefore Request you will be pleas'd to give the most speedy notice to the people in your Regmt and otherways if Convenient that they are call'd on once more to declare themselves either as friends or Enemies to the State. those who are Reasonable and just enough to offer themselves as friends and demonstrates their sincerity by their good Conduct you will proceed with mildness not with threatnings lit [sic, let] them cooly deliberate what Choice to make. They may depend on being treated accordingly — have the men gathered by monday at or near Shirer's.[2] I shall be Glad that you will direct some propper person to have collected a Quantity of Flour for the use of the army. If you know any thing of the movements of the enemy from ninety six or else where please to let me know the perticulars by express.

I am Sir your most H Servt
Thos Sumpter
Majr. Summers[3] A True Copy

[Outside] Majr Adams Summers

[Transcribed from the original letter at the British National Archives – Cornwallis Papers]

1. John Stallings/Stallions had a plantation on Fishing Creek, just east of present-day York, South Carolina.
2. Shirer's Ferry was on the Broad River in present-day Fairfield County, South Carolina. It was also known as Brierly's Ferry.
3. Sumter was presumably writing to John Adam Summer/Summers of the Fairfield Regiment.

1780-11-05 – Gen. William Smallwood to Thomas Sumter

Camp near Providence[1] 5th November 1780

Dear Sir,

With respect to our Force, we remain in the same situation as when I wrote last,[2] except the Addition of four Hundred Men under General [Allen] Jones,[3] who left us himself two days after joining, being much indisposed. I have heard nothing further of General [Horatio] Gates, or the Continental Troops, except that they had not left Hillsborough on the 30th ultimo,[4] tho' General Jones informed me they had received an ample supply of Cloathing from our State,[5] and were equipped in every Respect. I wrote to him several Times since your Departure in the most pressing Terms, the last Letter on the 31st of October, to come, or forward the Troops: at the same Time pressing the Board of War to move to Salisbury, which measure I thought might be a means of inducing him to come forward, as well forwarding the Board on their Duty, particularly in aiding and facilitating our Military Operations; but hitherto all has proved ineffectual; nor have I heard anything farther of the British in Virginia,[6] which leads some to think Governor Jefferson's Letter was a false alarm; but I still think it probable, as the Embarkation destined against West Point failed, and they could effect nothing to their Northward by retaining those Troops, whilst by sending them to the Southward there would be a greater prospect of availing themselves. If this should really not be the case at present, I think it more than probable it will shortly ensue.

I am happy to find that the measures I have lately taken, have, or may anticipate your wishes expressed in your Letter of this date.[7] Six days ago I ordered Colo. [William R.] Davie with four Hundred Militia Horse and Foot, to scour the Districts of Lynch's Creek, and the disaffected about and below the Waxsaws [Waxhaws], with Instructions to apprehend all he might fall in with, who might be passing to or from the Enemy; and also to intercept their Property about to be removed to the Enemy, and to secure all Forage and Provision in those Quarters, barely leaving a Competency for the subsistence of the remaining Families under that description, detaching upwards of thirty waggons the better to enable him to secure and draw to a safe Point what might be acquired on this tour — ordering General [Daniel] Morgan down with the Continental Cavalry and Light Infantry to the Hanging rock,[8] which they have reached before now, as well to cover and aid Davie, as to attack a Body of Tories who I understand had assembled in that Quarter to the amount of four Hundred to cover and carry off the Property of their Brethren. These operations at present prevent my falling in with your measures (which otherwise I could have wished) in…

[The following segment is from Lyman Draper's transcription; missing in image of original LOC letter]

…sending detachments over the Island Ford,[9] however, the troops will complete the duty comprised in their orders in the course of four or five days, when if it should be necessary, and you will advise me of the expediency of such an enterprise, I will cheerfully adopt it, and can then detach such a powerful body as now have no apprehension if the whole British horse and such infantry as they could mount.

1. Camp New Providence, southeast of Charlotte, North Carolina, was where Continental and militia forces regrouped after Cornwallis moved back into South Carolina following the British defeat at Kings Mountain.
2. This letter to Sumter has not been found.
3. Jones commanded of the Halifax, North Carolina militia.
4. Gates would not return to the Charlotte area until November 23. He would be replaced by Gen. Nathanael Greene on December 3.
5. Gen. William Smallwood was the commander of the 1st Regiment of the Continental Army from Maryland. He temporarily commanded the North Carolina militia as well.
6. On October 20 Gen. Alexander Leslie landed in Chesapeake Bay and raided ineffectually until November 15.
7. This letter from Sumter has not been found.
8. The area is about two miles south of Heath Springs, South Carolina.
9. On the Broad River in North Carolina, about four miles north of present-day Chesnee, South Carolina.

From the idea I have at present, tho' my being a stranger to the country, I'd qualify my judging with precision, I should think of it more eligible for you to defer…

[resume original letter on next page]

…your intended Enterprize[10] 'till I could send over such a Party to create a diversion and if necessary, aid or Co-operate with you, unless you meditate a stroke against their Horse in the Dutch fork,[11] which might be effected without risque. If it should be eligible for Troops to go over, you will send Guides well acquainted with the Country and Inhabitants. I am persuaded an Excursion of that Nature would draw them from their present Position, if the one now in Execution should fail.

I had meditated a stroke against Camden, but the delay in forwarding the Continental Troops, and the dispersion of the Militia (by the Expiration of their service), under General [Henry William] Harrington, who I had it in view should Co-operate with us, has obviated the design for the present, but I shall not lose sight of this object, and I flatter myself [page damaged][12] and Davies excursions will not fail to Alarm and call their Attention [page damaged; to?] Camden.

Your intelligence of men coming forward I fear is premature.

I have never received or heard of the Stores you have understood were transported in the Waggon designed to convey your Ammunition from Hillsborough. I have received neither Medicine or Ammunition yet, but if you should want the latter, I will have Powder brought on from Salisbury, and lead from Guilford; and shall be happy in supplying any Thing you may want farther that may lie in my power to furnish.

With very great regard and esteem, I remain
Your most obedient hble servt;
W. Smallwood

[Lines below appear only on the Draper copy]

The Honble
General Sumter
Pr Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

10. This may be a reference to Sumter's plan to march from Stalling's Plantation toward Ninety Six, which he did about the time Smallwood wrote this letter. On November 8 Sumter camped at Fishdam Ford on Broad River, where he was attacked early the next morning.
11. The area is between the Saluda and Broad River in South Carolina.
12. Lyman Draper's transcription has "that Morgan" for this illegible section.

1780-11-07 – NC Board Of War to Thomas Sumter

[From November 7, 1780 Minutes of NC Board of War][1]

Ordered, that the Following be made out and sent Brigr. General Sumpter:

Sir: Mr. McCullock presented the Board with a Letter addressed to Governor [John] Rutledge,[2] and informed us he had brought a Waggon to him to be loaded. Gov. Rutledge not being present and the Board unacquainted where he is, took the liberty to open your Letter, thinking it might be in our power to give him some Answer; but finding the Letter containing Reference to some immediate Matters only known to yourselves, we have recommended to Mr. McCullock to return, and bear you in the mean time a Load of Twenty-Four Bushels of Salt, an Article perhaps, much wanted by you. Governor Rutledge shall receive your Letter as soon as possible.

General [Horatio] Gates hath drawn out of the public Stores every necessity he could find for the Army. Five Waggons loaded with Goods from Newbern [New Bern] by his Order we expect soon; when they arrive we shall forward on to Camp, to whom you may apply for a distribution of part.

1. *Minutes of the North Carolina Board of War, September 14, 1780 - January 30, 1781, Volume 14*, Pages 376-495.
2. Rutledge was Governor of South Carolina in exile in North Carolina. Sumter's letter to Rutledge has not been found.

Fishdam Ford

The British defeat at Kings Mountain in October 1780 left Cornwallis's western flank exposed to Patriot attack. He was forced to abandon his plans of taking North Carolina and retreated into South Carolina where he established winter quarters at Winnsboro. In early November, Thomas Sumter and his partisan brigade came close enough to Winnsboro to entice part of the British army out of their encampment. Cornwallis dispatched a small force of infantry and dragoons under the command of Major James Wemyss (pronounced "Weems") of the 63rd Regiment to attack Sumter at his camp at Fishdam Ford on the eastern bank of the Broad River.[1]

Wemyss attacked before daylight on November 9, 1780. Sumter's officers had been wary of a possible surprise attack and ordered their men to set campfires and keep their weapons at hand. The British were easy targets in the glow of the fires as Sumter's men opened fire. Several British were immediately killed or wounded, including Major Wemyss. Command passed to Lt. Henry Stark, who ordered the men to dismount for a bayonet charge. This forced some of the Patriots to fall back, but withering fire continued from the woods and the British were finally forced to remount their horses and retreat without their wounded. Sumter, for his part, was caught off guard by the attack and barely escaped from his tent to hide in the woods during the battle.[2]

The battle only lasted about twenty minutes. The Americans suffered four killed and ten wounded. The British had about eight killed and 25 wounded, including Major Wemyss. He was among the 14 captured. Sumter paroled them all and sent them to Charleston.[3]

1. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co. Inc., 2000) 96-98; Walter Edgar, Partisans & Redcoats: The Southern Conflict that Turned the Tide of the American Revolution (Harper Collins, 2001) 128-129; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 114-115; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Four," *Names in South Carolina*, Vol. XXIII (Winter 1976) 32; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (Russell & Russell, 1969) 819-821; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University of Alabama Press, 1985) 126;
2. Bass, *Gamecock*, 98; Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats*, 129-130; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 116-117; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Four," 32-33; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 821-822; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 126;
3. Bass, *Gamecock*, 99; Edgar, *Partisans & Redcoats*, 129-130; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 117; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Four," 32-33; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780*, 823-824; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 126;

1780-11-09 – Thomas Sumter to William Smallwood

[The transcription is from Papers Relating Chiefly to the Maryland Line During the Revolution*, edited by Thomas Balch, 1857, page 122. The original letter has not been found. The book, printed by the Seventy-Six Society, stated that "the larger part of these papers are from the collections of the gentleman who so kindly allowed the Society to print the Massachusetts Papers from his MSS." That person was doctor and philanthropist Alfred L. Elwyn of Pennsylvania. The Sumter Papers project contacted several organizations in an attempt to locate the letter. These included the Maryland State Archives and the Maryland Center for History and Culture. The New Hampshire Historical Society was also contacted, since they hold some of the Elwyn papers. None of the institutions had any knowledge of the letter from Sumter to Smallwood.]*

GEN SUMTER TO MAJOR GENERAL SMALLWOOD[1]

Camp At Fishdamford,[2] 9 Nov 1780

DR GEN'L

I have just time to inform you that I was attacked about three o clock this morning by a party of dragoons and mounted infantry about two hundred in number together with a large party of Tories under the command of Major [James] Wemyss. The attack was as precipitate and violent as can be conceived. They first charged on horseback and were repulsed. The infantry immediately dismounted, formed and charged with bayonet. The cavalry at the same time charged on the right of Col Wemyss division. The horse was again beat back in disorder. The infantry succeeded better, and made the division under Colonel [Thomas] Taylor give way, but not until the whole division had fired and several of the men been bayoneted upon the spot, and for want of the means of defending themselves gave way. At the same instant, so warm a fire was poured upon the enemy from Col. [Edward] Lacey's and [James] Hawthorn's divisions, that they broke and moved off some distance, where they mounted and sent off some of their wounded, who were soon after followed by the whole.

I have twenty five prisoners among which are Major Wemyss[3] wounded, our Surgeon and Sergt Major H, seven killed. A parcel of excellent horses and arms were taken. My loss was four killed; ten wounded. Officers and men generally behaved with a great deal of bravery, reserving their fire until the enemy were within ten steps of them. There was a party who had a person acquainted with me who brought them on through every opposition and enquired for me upon the alarm posts, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I escaped being cut to pieces before the pickets got in. I surprised a party of tories yesterday, killed one and took eleven very bad men prisoners, among which was one Col and some other officers. I am this instant going to cross Broad River. It appears the enemy fortified themselves strongly at Little River 15 miles on this side Ninety Six, but I am not yet satisfied what can be done with that post. I have pretty well cleared Sandy River and Mossley's Settlement[4] of a numerous set of villains, where there is considerable quantity of provisions.

My countrymen may be assured if they will reserve their fire until the dragoons come near that they will beat them with ease.

I have the honor to be (in haste) with the greatest respect and esteem Sir, Your most obdt. h'ble Serv't

THOS SUMTER

MAJOR GEN SMALLWOOD

Papers Relating Chiefly to the Maryland Line During the Revolution, **edited by Thomas Balch, 1857, page 122. The original letter has not been found.**

1. Gen. William Smallwood of the Maryland Continentals temporarily commanded the North Carolina militia.
2. Fishdam Ford was located on the Broad River about two miles east of present-day Carlisle, South Carolina.
3. Wemyss was paroled and returned to Charleston.
4. This was probably Mobley's Settlement, about ten miles southeast of Fishdam Ford.

1780-11-11 – Gen. William Smallwood to Thomas Sumter

Camp November 11th, 1780

Dear Sir:

I sincerely congratulate you on your late success at Fishdam ford in defeating the Enemy,[1] and at the same time admire the firmness of your Men in resisting the violence of the Enemies Attack under a sudden Surprise and every disadvantage. This will have a happy tendency and may favour our future operations and dismay them.

The Continental troops are arrived at Salisbury where they are to wait until General [Horatio] Gates comes up with the Cavalry; the General is recalled and a Court of Enquirey ordered on his Conduct,[2] but he has no official order for it as yet, therefore imagine he will Continue to Act till that arrives.[3] Eleven British regiments arrived at Portsmouth, amounting to four Thousand seven Hundred men. It is probable a detachment from this body have or will shortly sail for Charles Town;[4] the armies to the Northward continue much by the same Situation as when you last heard. The French Fleet and forces still continue Blocked up in Rhode Island. No news of the arrival of the Second Division, but a strong re-inforcement of ships said to be shortly expected.

We impatiently await the arrival of the Continental Troops as there are objects in view which cannot be effected without them, We are now prepared to undertake the Enterprise proposed, but wait for guides under Major [John?] Baker and Capt. Scott. I propose undertaking another Enterprise at the same time that is in execution. Pray give the earliest intimation of Lord Cornwallis's movements or designs as far as you can trace them, as also his numbers.[5] Time admits me of adding nothing farther. Wishing you to prosper and succeed in your views.

I remain, with very sincere regard,

Your obdt hble servt;

W. Smallwood

Genl. Sumter

[Original Letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Sumter had repulsed a surprise attack on November 9 at Fishdam Ford on the Broad River, about 2 miles east of present-day Carlisle, South Carolina. Sumter had written to Smallwood about the battle on the same date.
2. His conduct at the Battle of Camden on August 16, 1780.
3. Gates was formally relieved of command by Gen. Nathanael Greene on December 3rd. He never faced charges for his actions and returned to duty in 1782.
4. British troops under Gen. Alexander Leslie landed at Portsmouth, Virginia on October 20 and raided ineffectually until they departed on November 15. Leslie arrived in South Carolina in January 1781.
5. If Sumter replied to this request, the letter is missing.

Charles Cornwallis

British commander Charles, Earl Cornwallis loomed large in the mind of Thomas Sumter and other patriot commanders in the southern theater of war during 1780 and 1781. Cornwallis was an experienced and capable leader whose movements between the fall of Charleston in May 1780 and his surrender at Yorktown in October 1781 were a constant source of speculation and concern, as evidenced in the letters between Thomas Sumter and Gen. Nathanael Greene.



Charles, Earl Cornwallis. *Nat'l Portrait Gallery, UK.*

Cornwallis was born in 1738 to a prominent London family. Their aristocratic position and connections to the crown allowed Cornwallis to become a member of Parliament at the age of twenty-two. Within two years his father died, and Cornwallis inherited his title and succeeded him as a member of the House of Lords. He was also active in the military beginning in 1757, studying at the military academy at Turin, Italy. He served as an army officer in Europe during the Seven Years' War and won respect and promotions for his performance in several major battles.[1]

Cornwallis was promoted to lieutenant general under Sir William Howe just as the American Revolution was getting underway. His first engagement was the unsuccessful attempt to capture Charleston in June 1776. Cornwallis and Clinton sailed to New York to join Sir William Howe as he faced off against Washington's Continental Army. Cornwallis played a large role in the successful British campaign that pushed Washington out of the New York City region and then New Jersey. Cornwallis continued to trade blows with Washington well into 1778 at major battles such as Brandywine, Princeton, Germantown, and Monmouth before sailing back to England in late 1778 to be with his ailing wife Jemima, who died the following February.[2]

Cornwallis returned to America in time to participate in the 1780 British campaign to subdue the southern colonies. The British assumed that there was more Loyalist support in that region and that the Crown could reassert its control, to the detriment of the other rebellious colonies. Clinton and Cornwallis once again besieged Charleston in May 1780, this time successfully. Clinton returned to New York and left Cornwallis in charge of further military operations in the South.

His first major action was a crushing defeat of a superior force of Continentals and militia under Gen. Horatio Gates at Camden, South Carolina. This August 1780 victory was a severe blow to Patriot strength and morale in the Carolinas. But the British momentum was soon checked in early October by the decimation of Maj. Patrick Ferguson's force of over 1,100 troops at the Battle of Kings Mountain in upstate South Carolina.

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1. Mark M. Boatner, III, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1994) 285-286; Kevin Dougherty and Steven D. Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox: The Leadership Lessons of Francis Marion* (Casemate Publishing, 2022) 29; Richard Middleton, *Cornwallis: Soldier and Statesman in a Revolutionary World* (Yale University Press, 2022) 1-19; Benton Rain Patterson, *Washington & Cornwallis: The Battle for America, 1775-1783* (Lyons Press, 2004) 27-28; L. Edward Purcell, *Who Was Who in the American Revolution* (Facts on File, Inc. 1993) 112-113.
2. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 286-287; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 29-30; Middleton, *Cornwallis*, 22-43; Purcell, *Who Was Who in the American Revolution,* 113.

Thomas Sumter and Francis Marion also continued to chip away at British strength with raids on supply lines and suppression of Loyalists — one of Cornwallis's favorite officers, Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton, was repulsed with heavy losses when he attempted to attack Sumter at the Battle of Blackstock's in November. [3]

In the meantime, Gen. Nathanael Greene had been dispatched to the South to take over command of the Continental Army from the disgraced Horatio Gates. He arrived to find a ragged and dispirited force encamped near Charlotte, North Carolina, only some sixty miles north of Cornwallis's main army wintering at Winnsboro, South Carolina.

Greene soon made the unexpected decision to split his smaller army and send a force west of the Broad River under Gen. Daniel Morgan. Cornwallis dispatched Banastre Tarleton to intercept him, but the brash colonel was soundly defeated on January 17, 1781 by a well-prepared Morgan lying in wait at Cowpens in upstate South Carolina. In the wake of this loss, Cornwallis burned his baggage to make his troops more mobile and resolved to pursue Morgan and free the captured British troops.

When Morgan succeeded in uniting with Greene, Cornwallis attempted to engage and destroy Greene's army. But Greene successfully retreated across the Dan River into Virginia in February in what became known as the "Race to the Dan." Greene returned to North Carolina within a few weeks and faced off against Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse. Cornwallis managed to win the field after a long, see-saw battle that produced heavy losses on both sides. But with his army steadily weakened by combat, lack of forage, and a lack of Loyalist support, Cornwallis marched to Wilmington, North Carolina, in April to resupply.[4]

While in Wilmington, Cornwallis decided to move his army to Virginia in May and link up with other British forces with the object of subduing the state and cutting off supplies and reinforcements to the Carolinas. After arriving in Virginia, Cornwallis was ordered by Gen. Clinton to begin constructing a fortified naval base at Yorktown on the Virginia Peninsula. Seeing an opportunity to trap Cornwallis, Washington moved south with a combined American-French army while the French navy blockaded the approaches from the sea. By late September, Washington was in position and began the construction of siege works. Three weeks of fighting against steadily encroaching American and French forces left Cornwallis in an untenable position. He surrendered his army on October 17, returned to Britain on parole, and never saw action again in the American Revolution.[5]

Although his surrender at Yorktown was the beginning of the end for the British effort to retain their North American colonies, Cornwallis retained the respect and confidence of King George III and his government. This was doubly demonstrated in 1786 when he was appointed Governor-General of India. While in India, Cornwallis implemented many reforms to civilian and military institutions that remained in effect throughout the rest of British rule. In 1798, Cornwallis was appointed Lord Lieutenant over Ireland, where he fended off Irish rebels as well as attacks by the French. In 1805, he was reappointed to his old post in India, but died of a fever within a few months of arriving there. He was buried in India at a site overlooking the Ganges River.[6]

Sumter received a letter from Cornwallis dated November 15, 1780, which follows, in which Cornwallis complains that Sumter's men robbed two of his dragoons who were travelling under a flag of truce. "As I am convinced that this outrage must meet with your highest disapprobation," he wrote, "it is needless for me to make any comments upon it."[7] It is unknown if Sumter replied to this letter or made any restitution for the allegedly stolen horses and weapons.

3. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 287-288; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 30; Middleton, *Cornwallis*, 47-55, 61-65, 70-74; Patterson, *Washington & Cornwallis*, 213-222, 227-251; Purcell, *Who Was Who in the American Revolution,* 113-114.
4. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 288; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 30-31; Middleton, *Cornwallis*, 75-82; Patterson, *Washington & Cornwallis*, 253-288; Purcell, *Who Was Who in the American Revolution,* 114.
5. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 288; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 31-32; Middleton, *Cornwallis*, 87-111; Patterson, *Washington & Cornwallis*, 289-323; Purcell, *Who Was Who in the American Revolution,* 114.
6. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 288-289; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 32; Purcell, *Who Was Who in the American Revolution,* 114.
7. Cornwallis to Sumter, Nov. 15, 1781, British National Archives.

1780-11-15 – [Charles] Cornwallis to Thomas Sumter

Nov. 15th 1780

Sir

I sent on the 12th instant two Dragoons to Landsford[1] on Catawba River with a Flag of Truce, and an answer to a letter which I received from Genl [William] Smallwood, ~~to Lands Ford on Catawbaw River.~~ On their return they reported to me that a detachment of your Corps surrounded White's Mill,[2] where they had stopped to get some refreshment for themselves and their horses, and by force took away their Horses, Saddles, Pistols and Blankets; As I am convinced that this outrage must meet with your highest disapprobation, It is needless for me to make any comments upon it, and I can have no doubt but you will give immediate orders for the restitution of the horses and effects and the punishment of the offenders. I am, sir,

Your Most Obedt. & Most Humble Servant

Cornwallis

[Transcribed from the original letter at the National Archives of the UK (TNA)]]

1. The ford was about seven miles northwest of present-day Lancaster, South Carolina.
2. White's Mill was on Fishing Creek near present-day Lando, South Carolina.

Blackstock's Plantation

Enraged by the defeat of the British and capture of Maj. James Wemyss ("Weems") at the Battle of Fishdam Ford (November 9, 1780), Cornwallis ordered Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton to abandon his pursuit of Gen. Francis Marion and to move westward against Sumter. When Sumter learned of Tarleton's approach, he and his force of 1,000 militiamen were in present-day Union County, South Carolina. On the advice of one of his colonels who knew the area, Sumter deployed his troops at William Blackstock's plantation on the Tyger River. The fences and the buildings made of unchinked logs afforded a strong defensive position for his riflemen.[1]

When Tarleton's troops arrived at the plantation on November 20, Sumter had a skirmish line waiting for them at the base of a hill. Tarleton decided to attack immediately with his mounted troops rather than wait for his infantry and artillery to catch up. The skirmish line fell back, but the British soon found themselves in the sights of Patriot rifles and muskets firing from the farm structures and woods. Tarleton was not able to get any momentum going against the relentless fire and was eventually forced to retreat from the battlefield, leaving scores of dead and wounded. Sumter came forward to view the withdrawal and was severely wounded in the shoulder by gunfire. He was carried away on a litter made of rawhide suspended between two horses. The night after the battle, Sumter's men lit decoy campfires to cover their withdrawal into the night. The Battle of Blackstock's Plantation marked the first defeat of Tarleton's military career. Although Tarleton reported the battle as a victory to Cornwallis, Sumter had only seven casualties while Tarleton had suffered over one hundred.[2] Sumter spent several weeks recuperating in the Charlotte, North Carolina, area and did not return to the field until February 1781.[3]



Detail. Blackstock's Plantation —Sumter shot. *Dale Watson*

In his correspondence, Sumter spoke frequently of being in pain from his Blackstock's wound but there are no existing letters in which he discussed the battle in any detail. He did write to General Gates five days later that "Tarelton's Legion, 71, 63 and some light Companys were sent to destroy my command near seventy miles distance from Lord Corn Wallace high up on the Enoree, he must therefore be in a very weak situation easily taken the advantage of."[4] There are also no letters *to* Sumter that mention Blackstock's, with the exception of Gen. William Davidson's. Two days after the battle, he wrote: "My anxiety for you (least your wound be fatal) is such that I have scarcely spirit to congratulate you on your glorious victory."[5]

1. Robert D. Bass, *The Green Dragoon: The Lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson* (Henry Holt and Co., 1957) 118-119; John Buchanan, *The Road to Charleston: Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution* (University of Virginia Press, 2019) 30; Ann King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 115-121; Terry Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles: Part 4," *Names in South Carolina* Vol 23. (Winter 1976) 33; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in The Revolution* (Russell & Russell, 1901) 822-826. John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University of Alabama Press, 1985) 126-127.
2. Buchanan, *The Road to Charleston*. 30; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 124; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles: Part 4," 33; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in The Revolution,* 829.
3. Bass, *The Green Dragoon*, 119-120; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 121-124; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles: Part 4," 33; Andrew Waters, *To The End of the World: Nathanael Greene, Cornwallis, and the Race to the Dan* (Westholm Publishing, LLC., 2020) 76-86; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in The Revolution,* 826-828; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 126-127.
4. Sumter to Gates, Nov. 25, 1780, NN.
5. Davidson to Sumter, Nov. 22, 1780, DLC.

Banastre Tarleton



Colonel Tarleton. *Sir Joshua Reynolds. The National Gallery, London.*

British officer Banastre Tarleton was a scourge to Patriot forces for the entire duration of the Revolution. Tarleton was born in 1754 to a wealthy Liverpool family that had made its money in sugar cane production and the slave trade. Although he attended Oxford and studied law at the Middle Temple, Tarleton opted for a military career in 1775, purchasing a cornet position in the 1st Dragoon Guards.[1]

Tarleton volunteered for duty in the American colonies at the start of hostilities and served under Lord Cornwallis during the failed attempt to capture Charleston in 1776. He was then placed under the command of Gen. Sir William Howe in New York. Tarleton gained stature and promotions during the next three years with his service at engagements such as Brandywine, Germantown, and the capture of Philadelphia. By 1778, at age twenty-four, he was commanding the British Legion — a force of cavalry and infantry composed of American Loyalists and a few British officers.[2]

Tarleton and the Legion were sent to South Carolina in early 1780 to once again lay siege to Charleston. This time, the operation was successful and Tarleton, now under Lord Cornwallis, quickly moved into the interior of South Carolina to begin the planned subjugation of the southern colonies. On May 29, 1780, Tarleton and his Legion overtook a detachment of Virginia Continentals retreating toward North Carolina. The Continentals, under the command of Col. Abraham Buford, suffered enormous casualties in what some have described as a deliberate massacre. The carnage outraged Patriots throughout the region and motivated many to seek revenge for "Buford's massacre."[3]

Tarleton's string of victories continued in August 1780 with his participation in the crushing defeat of Patriot forces under Gen. Horatio Gates at Camden, South Carolina. Tarleton followed on the heels of this triumph by routing the militia forces of Gen. Thomas Sumter at Fishing Creek, also in South Carolina. But Tarleton's fortunes began to reverse in November, when Sumter successfully repulsed an attack by the Legion and other units at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation.

1. Robert D. Bass, *The Green Dragoon: The Lives of Banstre Tarleton and Mary Robinson* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc., 1973) 11-15; Mark M. Boatner III, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1994) 1087; Walter Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Press, 2006) 948; John Knight, *War at Saber Point: Banastre Tarleton and the British Legion* (Westholme Publishing, LLC., 2020) 1-9; Anthony J. Scotti, Jr., *Brutal Virtue: The Myth and Reality of Banastre Tarleton* (Heritage Books, Inc., 2002) 13-15.
2. Bass, *The Green Dragoon*, 15-22, 32-36, 44; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 1087; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 948; Knight, *War at Saber Point*, 10-19; 29-35, 45-59; Scotti, *Brutal Virtue*, 15-19.
3. Bass, *The Green Dragoon*, 77-83; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 1087; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 948-949; Knight, *War at Saber Point*, 91-97; Scotti, *Brutal Virtue*, 178-179.

Two months later, Tarleton suffered his greatest defeat of the war. Gen. Nathanael Greene, who had replaced Horatio Gates as commander in the southern states, unexpectedly divided his numerically smaller army and deployed troops to upper South Carolina under Gen. Daniel Morgan. Tarleton was determined to vanquish Morgan and, after a forced march, engaged Patriot forces at Cowpens on January 17, 1781. But Morgan was lying in wait with a detailed battle plan for his combined regular and militia troops. Tarleton's army was decimated and he barely escaped capture himself.[4]

The defeat at Cowpens prompted Cornwallis to focus on catching Greene and destroying his army. The two adversaries finally collided on March 15, 1781, at Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina. Despite losing two fingers on his right hand in a skirmish earlier in the day, Tarleton participated in the battle at the head of his Legion.

The British won the field at Guilford but suffered heavy losses and failed to destroy Greene's army. Cornwallis was forced to march his depleted force to Wilmington, North Carolina, and eventually elected to advance to Virginia. Although Tarleton led some successful raids in Virginia after his arrival, he was eventually forced to surrender — along with Cornwallis — as the Americans and French laid siege to Yorktown. Tarleton was paroled and returned to England in 1782.[5]

Tarleton continued to serve in the British army well into the 1800s. He served in Portugal and Ireland and continued to receive promotions until becoming a full general in 1816. Tarleton was also elected to the House of Commons in 1790 and served in that body until 1812. Although he had a lengthy relationship with actress Mary Robinson, Tarleton married Susan Bertie, daughter of Robert Bertie, Duke of Ancaster, in 1798. The marriage produced no children.

Tarleton died in 1833 at age 78.[6]

4. Bass, *The Green Dragoon*, 95-103, 118, 152-162; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 1087-1088; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 949; Knight, *War at Saber Point*, 128-136, 157-174.
5. Bass, *The Green Dragoon*, 169-170, 183-184; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 1088; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 949; Knight, *War at Saber Point*, 189-191, 201.
6. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1994) 1088-1089; Edgar*, The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 949.

1780-11-22 – William Davidson to Thomas Sumter

November 22d 1780

Dear Genl.

My anxiety for you (least your wound be fatal) is such that I have scarcely spirit to congratulate you on your glorious victory.[1] I sincerely wish you a speedy recovery; and in the mean time regret the want of your services in the field, at this truly critical & important juncture. Genl. [Horatio] Gates with the Continental troops will be at Charlotte tomorrow.[2] We lie at the old post for dead weight on the publick. I think I am possessed of all the patience necessary to my profession but I assure you it is nearly exhausted. One of your Officers left in my care near 100000 Dollars of Loan Office Certificates to be sent to you.[3] Youl pleas to given some person an order to receive it. Or let me know by whom I shall send it so as to be safe. The inclosed paper is all I have for your amusement. [4]

I have the Honour To be Dr. Genl.

Your Very respectfull friend & Hbl. Servt.

Wm. Davidson [William Lee Davidson]

November 22d 1780

To Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Davidson is referring to Sumter's wound received at Blackstock's and the victory there on November 20. At the time the letter was written, Sumter was being evacuated northward to recuperate near Charlotte, North Carolina.
2. Gates would be replaced by Gen. Nathanael Greene on Dec. 3, 1780.
3. Certificates from the Congressional Loan Office guaranteeing repayment of loans made by Sumter to finance the war. At this time Continental currency was depreciated to about two percent of face value. (David Ramsay, *History of the American Revolution, Vol. 2* (Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1789), 129.
4. Not found.

Sumter's Recovery In Charlotte —Nov 1780 to Jan 1781

Sumter received a severe bullet wound in the shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780. Rendering him unable to ride, his wound was hastily dressed and he was carried from the battlefield on a litter of raw cowhide slung between two horses. From there, he was escorted to the home of Adam Goudelock located two miles northwest on Grindal Shoals where his wounds were dressed again.

After a short rest, Sumter was taken to the home of Samuel Watson near Steele Creek, about twenty miles from Charlotte, North Carolina, in present-day York County. Shortly thereafter, Sumter was moved a third and final time to the home of John Price. It is here that Sumter spent most of the next two months recuperating.

Price lived in a stone house near the Catawba River west of Charlotte. His sons, John Jr. and Isaac, were blacksmiths who served as "armorers" for Sumter in the manufacture and repair of swords and guns.[1]

In spite of his wound, Sumter continued to receive intelligence and correspond with other military commanders. On November 25, he wrote to General Horatio Gates to suggest that Cornwallis was in a weakened state and vulnerable to attack. Sumter also complained that he was "without medicine or necessarys [sic] of any kind & feel the want of them much." In spite of that, he assured Gates that he was "continually watching [British] movements and you may be assured, sir, of the earliest intelligence."[2]

On December 9, Sumter received a visit from S.C. Gov. John Rutledge and Gen. Nathanael Greene. Greene had recently arrived in the area, having replaced Gates as commander of Continental troops in the South. Sumter continued to correspond with the two men throughout his recovery time in Charlotte, addressing topics such as British troop movements and prisoner exchanges.[3]

By mid-February 1781, Sumter was feeling well enough to take to the field in a campaign through the interior of South Carolina that became known as "Sumter's Rounds." By February 19, he had led his troops all the way to Friday's Ferry on the Congaree River, near present-day Columbia. Yet, Sumter continued to be hampered by pain and lack of mobility over the next several months.[4] On March 6, he complained to Greene: "I Still Labor under the Misfortune of having but little use of my Right hand, and Writing Very painfull."[5]

1. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc., 2000) 108-112; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931), 122-127; Banastre Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America* (Ayer Company Publishers, Inc., 2000) 179; Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock* (Casemate Publishers, 2019) 35-36.
2. Sumter to Gates, Nov. 25, 1780, NYPL; C. Michael Briggs, *The Longrifle Makers of the Mecklenburg School* (Published by the author, 2016), 101-105.
3. Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 127-128; Joseph W. Barnwell, edt., "Letters from John Rutledge," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Vol. 18, No. 1* (January, 1917) 48-49; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock,* 37.
4. Bass, *Gamecock*, 126-130; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 135-158; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 53-54;
5. Sumter to Greene, March 6, 1781, Ct-Y-BR.

1780-11-22 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Nov. 22d 1780

Dr Sir,

Being exceedingly desirous of an Interview with you, on several Points of very great Importance, I request that you will come to Charlotte, or fix on some Time & proper place, for our Meeting, as soon as possible. If Circumstances will not admit of your so doing, quickly, pray send, thither, directly, an intelligent officer, in whom you have the utmost Confidence, that I may fully & freely confer with him, &, thus, be informed of what I wish to know, & communicate, what I am anxious to have known, to you, but, for many Reasons, I should prefer an interview, with yourself, if practicable.[1] Be pleased to look over the Instructions, which I delivered to you, & inform the Gentleman you send, (if you do not come yourself,) fully, on the several Matters about which I desired you to obtain Intelligence. I understand there was found in Major Wemys's [James Wemyss] Pocket, a List of the Houses he had burn'd-- pray send, or bring with you, a Copy of it.[2]

A Gentleman, just came in from Philadelphia, which he left this Day Month, says, General [Nathanael] Greene arrived there, that day, in his way hither, to take Command of the Southern Army, in the Room of Genl. [Horatio] Gates, who is recalled, so that Genl. Greene may be very soon expected here.[3]

I am Sir
Yr. very hble.sServt.
J Rutledge Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]
John Rutledge
To
The Honble Brigadier Genl. Sumter
Charlotte 22d Nov. 1780
Gov. R.

Proposing an interview with Genl. S. at that place

[notation below in a different hand]

Gov. R. –Proposing an interview with Gen. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Rutledge was apparently unaware that Sumter had been severely wounded at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation two days earlier. At the time the letter was written, Sumter was still being evacuated to Charlotte to recover.
2. Sumter supposedly burned the list after looking at it. Anne King Gregorie, Thomas Sumter (Columbia SC: R. L. Bryan, 1931), 117.
3. Greene formally took command in Charlotte on December 3, 1780.

1780-11-25 – Thomas Sumter to Horatio Gates

25th Nov 1780

Dear Genl.

I was honor'd with yours of 15th last Evening[1] but the want of leisure and my indisposition prevents me from particularly attending to it. I am exceedingly happy to find you have mov'd forward with the Conl. Army, as [Banastre] Tarelton's Legion, 71, 63 and some light Companys were sent to destroy my Command near seventy miles distance from Lord Corn Wallace [Cornwallis] high up on the Enoree [River], he must therefore be in a very weak situation easily taken the advantage of, an opportunity which you no doubt Sir woud want to avail yourself of — you will discover by the Inclosed[2] the Improbability of Colo. Tareltons removing without the assistance of a number of waggons for that purpose — it is probable the officer sent to, is not acquainted w [with] his situation, as the Express was taken, but shoud he by a nother being sent, I have detach'd a party to entercept the waggons Baggage &c.—I have likewise sent a Commd to the westwd Ninety Six district, as I have been informed a number of people that way are dispos'd to take up arms in our favour, and it will answer the good purpose of flustrating the enemy and drawing their attention that way —I am Continually watching their movements and you may be assured sir of the earliest intelligence. My hurry & distress I am in wh my wound[3] will I hope sufficiently appologise for my being laconick —I am without medicine or necessarys of any kind & feel the want of them much —

25th Nov 1780

I am Dr. Genl. Wh Respect

Yr. Mo. Obt. Servt.

Thos. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter in the Gates Papers]

1. Gates' letter of November 15th to Sumter has not been found.
2. The enclosure has not been found.
3. Sumter is referring to the wound he received at Blackstock's on November 20.

1780-11-28 – Horatio Gates to Thomas Sumter

To General Sumpter
Charlotte 28 November 1780

D[r] Gen[l].

Your favor of the 25[th], now before me. I am truly sorry for the Misfortune of your being wounded[1] but hope skilful management and proper application will speedily recover you. The medicines you sent for, went off the Day before yesterday from Camp. The probe goes by this Conveyance. Last Night an Express from Gen[l]. [William] Smallwood inform'd me that Ld Cornwallis was upon his march last Friday, if for Camden or down the Country is uncertain as he had not arrived at the Fork of the Road when the informant came away.[2] I shall immediately send more Ammunition to the place you have appointed. I think the sooner you send your preferences to me, the better, as I will dispose of them securely. Should any necessaries, or Accommodations be wanting for your relief I beg you will inform me. Would it not be better you should come here, or go to Salisbury, until you are recovered from your Wound?[3]

With every Sentiment of Esteem & C. I am & C.

HLG [Horatio Lloyd Gates]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter had been severely wounded at the Blackstock's battle on November 20.
2. Cornwallis had been camped at Winnsboro, twenty-nine miles northwest of Camden, South Carolina.
3. At the time the letter was written, Sumter was at Cherokee Ford on Broad River about 4 miles east of present-day Gaffney, South Carolina. Sumter later chose to recover at the home of John Price. It was located near Tuckaseege Ford on the Catawba River, ten miles southwest of Charlotte, North Carolina.

1780-12-01 – Thomas Sumter to Horatio Gates

Camp Col Watson's[1] 1st Decr. 1780

Dr Sir

I have sent you by the Bearer Capt [John] Kinkaid, what prisoners I have, of British & Torys, I thought propper to reduce the number of Tory prisoners by liberating & taking in the cervice as such as was judged to be good Men. Some of the most atrocios offenders has unfortunately made their escape from our guards, the British prisoners taken in at Fishdam[2] were mostly all wounded. I have their paroles with Major [James] Wemyss, a few I have exchangd for good men of the Malitia.

I feel myself something relieved from the Fever this morning but my shoulder still painfull.[3] I have this moment received from undoubted authority that Earl Cornwallis still lays at Winnsborough [Winnsboro] with less than five hundred men & much Exposed some Circumstances indicates a Movement

Movement will shortly take place which I judge will be toward the Congarees.[4]

I am Dr Sir with regard

Your most Obt Humbl. Servant

Thos. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter in the Gates Papers]

1. Col. Samuel Watson lived approximately three miles northeast of present-day York, South Carolina.
2. The skirmish at Fishdam Ford on Broad River, November 9, 1780.
3. Sumter was shot in the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20.
4. Sumter was probably referring to the area around Fort Granby and Friday's Ferry on the Congaree River at present-day Cayce. Cornwallis would remain in Winnsboro until mid-January.

1780-12-02 – William Lee Davidson to Thomas Sumter

Sunday Evening Dec. 2

Sir:

To Morrow [I?] am to go home[1] to prepare for [the?] grand Expedition. I hope to see you in Charlotte on Tuesday night if the state of your wound[2] will admit & to converse with you largely on some particular things. Enclosed you have my latest papers & by the Bearer you have the proceedings of the Board of Officers on the Case of Major Andris [John Andre'].[3]

Yours most sincerely,

Wm. L. Davidson

[Outside] The Honble Genl. Sumpter

Pr. Capt. [?]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. William Lee Davidson was from Rowan County, North Carolina.
2. Sumter had received a gunshot wound to the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation, November 20, 1780.
3. The enclosures and proceedings have not been found. British Major John Andre' was an accomplice of Benedict Arnold. He was captured on September 23, 1780 and hanged as a spy on October 2.

1780-12-02 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Charlotte, Satdy, Dec. 2d 1780

Dr Sir,

Tho' the Weather is bad, and seems as if it wd. continue so, yet, I send my Chair, that you not be detained a momt for want of it, when the Weather will admit of your travelling[1] — The bearer may stay, till you move, & come with you, if you chuse that he should — I send some Tea, Coffee, & Sugar, for present use – I wish better cd have been got, but it could not possibly just now – I hope it may soon — pray desire Mr. Chitty,[2] to come here directly — I hope you will take particular Care that Col. Goodwyn[3] does not play you a Trick – I wd. by no means trust him — We have no Accts. from Morgan [Daniel Morgan], & I believe the Report of his having had an Engagement is entirely groundless — I have not yet opened the Matter to the Gen'l wh. we spoke of relative to a commander & operations, but will, in the Course of the day, tho', I fear, as to the latter at least, with no Effect, for he has just recd a Letter from Col. Few [Benjamin Few of GA] , dated 28th Inst [sic: November 28?] on Tyger River, wh gives Information totally diffnt from what Mr. Wynn[4] brot. viz. that Cornwallis had crossed Broad River, & that the enemy's whole force, i.e. Tarleton & C., was in 3 divisions, within 6 miles of each other, so as to support each Quickly in case of an Attack — also that they had recd. a large Reinforcement — The first & last points I flatly contradicted — the other I gave reasons agst. However, I apprehend that the 2d will have so much Weight, as to prevent any operation just now agst the main army. A gent. From Virginia say Green [Nathanael Greene] had arrived at Richmond.[5] — Govr. Jefferson writes the 19th Inst., that the Enemy had embarked suddenly on the 15th[6] (on the return of vessels supposed to have been sent to C. Town,) they had not sailed the 16th, but I think it probable that our Country is their object — he says the 18 thos [thousand] men shall march as soon as the enemy leaves Virginia — I wish some material Blow cd be struck before Cornwallis' Army is reinforced; but in order that I may make the Application, for an important Blow as soon as possible wth a probability of Success, I request that you will, with the utmost Expedition, obtain the most authentick Acct. on which We may, or rather on wch the Genl, will rely — of the strength & situation of the Enemy, at their sevl different…

[The first two lines are from Draper. Missing from LOC version.]

…posts, & transmit it as soon as may be. The person who brought Few's letter says there were not in Camp above 300 men — their scattering so much is another discouraging Circumstance to the General's ordering any operations wth them, as their numbers are so fluctuating, & not to be relied on. Pray, endeavor to remedy that matter —Col. Martyn [Alexander Martin] is gone down to Smallwood's[7] Camp —But expected here, to day. I shall endeavor, when he arrives, to procure a loan of some of the Salt wh is here, while it can be replaced from below; but perhaps, the application may not succeed, as the army may want the whole to salt meat here --- However, as Col. Polk [Thomas Polk] is exchanging Salt for…

[Remainder of letter is missing]

[Original Letter at the Library of Congress. Missing the last section in both LOC and Draper versions.]

1. Gen. Sumter was being evacuated to recover from a gunshot wound to the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.
2. Possibly Capt. Charles King Chitty, a scout and forager for Greene's army. https://revwarapps.org/sc1340.pdf.
3. Sixteen days later, Sumter would receive an enslaved person, horse, and other items "for the use of the public" from a Col. Goodwyn. Possibly Robert Goodwyn; see https://revwarapps.org/w8861.pdf and Sumter to Gates, December 2, 1780.
4. Possibly Col. Richard Winn.
5. Greene had actually just arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina, on that date. Greene had arrived in Richmond on November 16.
6. Gen. Alexander Leslie left Portsmouth, Virginia for Charleston on November 15 after ineffectually raiding in Virginia.
7. Gen. William Smallwood of the Maryland Continentals was in temporary command of the North Carolina militia.

1780-12-02 – Thomas Sumter to Horatio Gates

Camp at Col. Wattsons [Watson][1] 2nd Decr 1780

Dr Sir

Col. Goodwin [Goodwyn][2] from the Congarees[3] arrived in my camp yesterday morning under difrent pretences all of which I find very trifling, and from Circumstances collected from several gentl. of veracity from the same neighbourhood, find him to be a very dangerous Man. I have therefore thought propper to send him to Charlotte under the Charge of Major Taylor,[4] that you might have him disposed of in the maner you thought Propper.—he has been long known to be unfriendly to us and since the British has been in this state has rather taken an active part with them by persuadeing men to turn out chearfully for them & holding out to our friends the Imposability of obtaining our Independency & from his connection with Lord Rowden [Lt. Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon], believe him to be one of his Emissaries imployed for some ill design here, one great reason urged by Col. Goodwin, that he came to believe his brother & son, who he thought might be in distress, upon his being searched he had no kind of cloathing for them & not more money than was sufficient to bear his own Expenses, he could have had no expectation of seeing either his Brother or son here as they never was in my Camps. I have the pleasure to inform you that my wounds are not altogether so painfull, by Account of yesterday from the westward I've reason to believe that the Enemys forces have retreated back again.

I am Dr Sir your Most. Obt Huml Servt
Thos. Sumter

Major Genl Horatio Gates

[Outside of Letter]
Honr. Major Genl Horatio Gates
By favour of Major Taylor

Charlotte
From Gen Sumpter
Camp at Col Watsons
2nd December 1780

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Houghton Library, Harvard University]

1. Samuel Watson's plantation was about 3 miles northeast of York, South Carolina. Sumter had stopped there after being wounded at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20.
2. Possibly Robert Goodwyn; see https://revwarapps.org/w8861.pdf.
3. The area around where the Congaree and Wateree rivers join to form Santee River.
4. This was probably Col. Thomas Taylor of the Camden District militia.

1780-12-03 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Charlotte Sunday Dec. 3rd 1780

Dr. Sir:

Major Genl [Nathanael] Greene is arrived — I wish you wd. come to, or near to this place as soon as your Health & the Weather will permit.

In Haste

yrs.

J. [John] Rutledge

To

Brigadier General Sumter

At Col. [Samuel] Watson's[1]

[Outside]

To Brigadier Genl. Sumpter at Colo. Watsons

[Original Letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Watson's home was about three miles northeast of present-day York, South Carolina.

1780-12-04 – Thomas Brandon to Thomas Sumter

Camp Near the Mouth of Packlet [Pacolet][1]
4th Decr 1780[2]

Honourd Sir:

I received yours of the 2nd Instant this morning[3] by Col. Hays [Joseph Hayes], and am greatly obliged to you for the Men you sent and shall strictly adhear to the Contents of yr letter. I have sent a party after waggons and am this moment agoing, to Detach off Two parties after provisions — I have not Collected any at this Time, for the British March'd Down Packlet [Pacolet] to Col. [William] Henderson's plantation and was on fairforrest [Fairforest River] within 8 Miles of my house, Colo. [John] Moore and a strong party of Tories March'd trough my settlement, and Rob'd and plundered many people, and myself amongest the Rest — I shall keep post on Broad River — When Majr [William] Farr Returned from yr Camp, and informd me it was yr Desire for me to Collect provisions, I shoud immediately proceeded to that Busyness, but heard of a Party of Tories on Sandy River[4] — I proceeded after them, and fell in with a small party, we killd 3 & Wounded 3, Most nitoriouse Vilains, the British that was at black stocks[5] [Blackstocks] has returned to Cornwallace [Cornwallis].[6] I had Certain Intelligence from Colo. Williams last Friday and there was no British there, and only about Forty Tories, and they Busy Imployed akilling and barreling Beef — I don't believe there is any British of this side of 96 [Ninety Six] — the person who Informd me is a man of Truth — as to the Waggons you sent for it will be out of my Power to furnish with as many as you sent for however I will send as many as I can git, and as soon as Possable — I hope it will be in my Power to Furnish you with a Quantity of Beef and pork — I am Dr Sir —

Yr. Hble Svt.
Thos. Brandon[7]

The
Honble Brigadier Genl
Sumter

1. The camp was near the junction of the Pacolet and Broad rivers.
2. Date taken from Lyman Draper transcription. Not visible on original document.
3. Sumter's letter to Brandon has not been found.
4. The Sandy River Settlement was about 7 miles southwest of present-day Chester, South Carolina.
5. Blackstock's Plantation, where Sumter defeated Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton on November 20, 1780.
6. Lord Cornwallis was at Winnsboro, South Carolina.
7. Col. Thomas Brandon commanded the 2nd Spartan militia regiment and was with Sumter at the Battle of Blackstocks.

1780-12-08 – John Thomas to Thomas Sumter

Jun. 8th Decemr. 1780

Dear General,

I recd. your letter dated the 25th last month[1] which I attempted to answer by an express, who was stopt at Thicketty[2] by an alarm of the enemy's being there. I have been so unwell as obliged me to leave Camp for some days. I desired Col. [Benjamin] Few to give you all necessary information in my absence, but on the Enemys retreat from Blackstocks,[3] the Georgians & Majr McCall marchd. for long Cane[4] without letting me know anything of it — Some of my Regimt staid with Few which he detached down toward Blackstocks under Capt. Robuck [probably John Roebuck] but the Capt. was never able to overtake him, therefore none of my Regimt. is with the Georgians, I am now Collecting them as fast as I can, but I fear I shall be able to raise but few, as some are out of the state, some with their familys & others I believe for fear, I shall keep imbodyd as well as I possibly can untill I hear from your honour, if possible I'd be glad of some powder- and all necessary Orders & instructions which you shall think necessary for me — I am Dear General Your honours very humble Servant

John Thomas Jun.[5] 8th Decemr. 1780

Brig. Genl. Sumter

[Outside]

The Hon.

Brigr Genl Sumter

Favourd. by Lt. Thomas

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter of November 25 to Thomas has not been found.
2. Fort Thicketty was on Thicketty Creek, about 13 miles east of present-day Spartanburg, South Carolina.
3. Battle of Blackstock's Plantation, November 20, 1780.
4. In early December refugees from Georgia under colonels Benjamin Few and Elijah Clarke marched into the Long Cane settlement in present Abbeville County. Major James McCall from the area joined them. On December 12, 1780, they were defeated in a skirmish on Long Cane Creek.
5. Col. John Thomas Jr. was commander of the 1st Spartan Regiment.

Nathanael Greene



Nathanael Greene. *Charles Willson Peale, 1783. National Park Service Collection.*

The chief correspondent with Thomas Sumter during the war years was Gen. Nathanael Greene. Roughly half of the over 300 identified Sumter letters are to or from Greene. All except seven were written in 1781.

The letters provide a valuable insight into a pivotal period of the war in the South. At the time of his first letter to Sumter in December 1780, Greene had just taken over command of a demoralized and impoverished Continental Army at Charlotte, North Carolina. At the time of his last letter in January 1782, Greene's nemesis Lord Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown and the British had been forced to give up control of both Carolinas, except for Charleston.

Nathanael Greene was born August 7, 1742, to a prosperous and devout Quaker family in Rhode Island. His desire for education placed him at odds with the Quaker faith at an early age. His father reluctantly provided him a tutor to teach such subjects as mathematics, law, and the classics of literature. In his late twenties Greene inherited the family foundry business and built a home in Coventry, Rhode Island, which still stands. Further evidence of his departure from the pacifist Quaker faith was his role in organizing a state militia, known as the Kentish Guards, after Britain passed the Coercive Acts in 1774.[1]

In the wake of armed conflict with British troops at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, the Rhode Island legislature named Greene commander of the colony's "Army of Observation" in May 1775. That summer Greene was appointed a brigadier general in the Continental Army by Congress. Greene participated in the siege of Boston, which lasted until March 1776, and briefly was in charge of that city when the British evacuated it. He then went to join Washington in the defense of New York City. Greene was one of the commanders at the Battle of Harlem Heights in September 1776, the first battlefield success of Washington in the war. Greene was then placed in command of Fort Lee and Fort Washington, both overlooking the Hudson River. The British captured both of those forts in November, forcing Washington to retreat into New Jersey.[2]

Greene faced criticism for the loss of the New York forts, but he soon redeemed himself leading Continental troops into victory at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton. But these victories were followed by defeats at Brandywine and Germantown in Pennsylvania in late 1777, and then the hard winter encampment at Valley Forge in that state. In March 1778, Greene accepted the position of quartermaster general of the army, on the condition that he would still have an opportunity to command troops in the future. Greene performed ably in the position, reorganizing the department and setting up supply depots in strategic areas. He remained in the quartermaster role into 1780 but had a chance to show his combat prowess at the Battle of Springfield, New Jersey, in June of that year. Greene led

1. Mark M. Boatner, III, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1994) 453-454; Kevin Dougherty and Steven D. Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox: The Leadership Lessons of Francis Marion* (Casemate Publishers, 2022) 40-41; Walter Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Press, 2006) 395; Terry Golway, *Washington's General: Nathaniel Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution* (Henry Holt and Company, LLC., 2005) 12-47; Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock: Nathanael Greene, Thomas Sumter, and the Revolutionary War for the Soul of the South* (Casemate Publishers, 2019) 20-24.
2. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 454; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 41; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 395-396; Golway, *Washington's General*, 56-103; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 24-25.

combined Continental and militia troops against a much larger British force intent on attacking Washington's main army at Morristown. Greene forced the enemy to withdraw and effectively ended the British campaign in New Jersey. It would be one of the last engagements of the war in the northern states.[3]

But setbacks in the northern theater of war did not discourage the British from turning their attention to the South. They had embarked on a "Southern Strategy" in 1778 based on an assumption that Loyalist support would be stronger among southerners and the capture and securing of the Carolinas and Georgia would less challenging than the colonies of the north. Savannah was captured in December that year. Then Charleston fell in May 1780 after a prolonged siege. The British next sent a force inland under Gen. Charles, Lord Cornwallis to continue the pacification of the South. A combined force of Continentals and militia under General Horatio Gates faced off against Cornwallis at Camden, South Carolina, in August 1780 and were routed in one of the worst American defeats of the war. Gates was removed from command after this debacle and the Continental Congress replaced him with Greene as commander of the Southern Department of the army.[4]

Greene arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina, on December 3, 1780. He was appalled by the state of the poorly clothed and poorly fed remnant of the Continental Army. On December 12, Greene wrote his first letter to Sumter, who was recuperating in the vicinity from the wound he had received in November at Blackstock's Plantation. Greene lamented that the "state of the provisions in this quarter is such as will oblige me to take some new position."[5] He moved the army down into South Carolina to encamp on the Pee Dee River where foraging prospects were better. In spite of being in an inferior position to Cornwallis, Greene decided to split his army and sent a detachment west of the Broad River under General Daniel Morgan. Cornwallis responded by sending a force under Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton westward to pursue Morgan. Tarleton suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Morgan on January 17, 1781, at Cowpens in South Carolina.[6]

In the wake of Cowpens, Greene moved the main army back into North Carolina to link up with Morgan's forces. Cornwallis burned the baggage of his main army and resolved to hunt down and destroy first Morgan, and then the combined force under Greene. Greene retreated toward the Dan River on the North Carolina / Virginia border and the "Race to the Dan" was won by the Americans by February 14 as they successfully crossed the river in time to escape Cornwallis. But Greene soon returned to North Carolina and faced Cornwallis at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15. The British won the field, but Cornwallis was further weakened to the point he had to withdraw his army to Wilmington, North Carolina, to be replenished.[7]

Greene remained in contact with Sumter, who had recovered enough by mid-February to lead a fruitless campaign, known as "Sumter's Rounds," into the interior of South Carolina aimed at taking British outposts.[8] Greene was also considering taking the offensive in South Carolina, writing to Sumter from North Carolina on March 30 that his plan would "oblige the Enemy to give up their prospects in this State, or their posts in South Carolina, and if our Army can be subsisted there we can fight them upon as good terms with your aid as we can here."[9]

But in spite of both commanders being in South Carolina during the rest of 1781, Greene and Sumter never linked up personally on the field of battle. Greene engaged the forces of Lt. Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon at Hobkirk's Hill, near Camden, on April 25. Like Guilford Courthouse, Greene yielded the field but kept his army intact. Greene's next significant military action was his attempt to capture the British outpost of Ninety Six in western South Carolina. The operation lasted from May 22 to June 18, 1781, but Greene was forced to give up the effort as British relief troops from Charleston under Lord Rawdon approached the area. Rawdon gave chase, but heat and

3. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 454-455; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 41; Golway, *Washington's General,* 107-147; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 25-30.
4. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution,* 455; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 41; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 396; Golway, *Washington's General*, 226-230; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 31-32.
5. Greene to Sumter, Dec. 12, 1780, DLC.
6. Golway, *Washington's General*, 238-247; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 396.
7. Golway, *Washington's General*, 249-262; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 396.
8. *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 49-60.
9. Greene to Sumter, March 30, 1781, DLC.

lack of provisions forced him to turn back. Ninety Six was soon abandoned and, in fact, all of the British outposts in the interior of the state surrendered or were evacuated before the end of the summer.[10]

One of the largest and last battles in the South was fought at Eutaw Springs, South Carolina, on September 8. Greene faced off against the British commander Col. Alexander Stewart with a combined force of over three thousand Continental and militia troops.[11] Like Guilford Courthouse, it was a see-saw battle in which the British finally won the field but at the cost of many casualties. From this point, they remained in the vicinity of Charleston and made no more attempts to reclaim the Carolinas. Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown within a few weeks of the Eutaw Springs battle. The war was effectively over, but it would not officially end until 1783.[12]

Greene resigned his commission as the war concluded and accepted a grant of land offered by the state of Georgia as thanks for his service. Greene's new life in Georgia was cut short, however, when he succumbed to sunstroke in 1786 at the age of forty-three.[13]

10. Golway, Washington's General, 266-274; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 396; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 91-95, 128-135; "A Brief History of Ninety Six", U.S. National Park Service, accessed April 20, 2026, History & Culture —Ninety Six National Historic Site (U.S. National Park Service)
11. See essay on Greene as a tactician in Massey and Piecuch (eds.), *General Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution in the South* (University of South Carolina Press, 2026).
12. Golway, *Washington's General*, 280-290; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 396; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 158-168
13. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 456; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 396.

1780-12-12 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp Charlotte
December 12th 1780

Dear Sir,

Your favour of this day was just handed me with the enclosures. I have no objection to paroling Brewton for Capt. [Thomas] Jenkins[1] and will write by the first opportunity to Colo. [John] Gunby at Hillsborough to that effect. But it must be remembered that the paroles must have no effect in the exchanges that will take place in future.

I proposed to General's [William] Smallwood and [Daniel] Morgan the attack upon Lord Cornwallis.[2] They are both pointedly against it, as being impracticable. I am not altogether of this opinion and therefore wish you to keep up a communication of intelligence, and of any changes of this disposition that may take place.

This state of the provisions in this quarter is such as will oblige me to take some new position. As soon as I have determined upon the place I will inform you.

I am with good wishes for your better health and speedy recovery

Your Most Obedient Humble Servant

Nath. Greene

General Sumpter

[Outside] *[Notes added by unknown person at a later date]*

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Capt. Thomas Jenkins was in the New Acquisition District Regiment and was a prisoner of the British at Ninety Six. The British had proposed exchanging him for an officer named Brewton.
2. Cornwallis was then camped at Winnsboro, South Carolina.

1780-12-12 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Prices[1] 12th Decemr. 1780

Dr Genl.

By the inclosed papers youl see Colo. Cruger of 96 [Ninety Six][2] has made proposials of releasing on parole a certain Capt. [Thomas] Jenkins[3] now a prisoner at 96, provided a Capt. Bruton a prisonr at Hillsborough be permitted to return home on parole; Capt. Jenkins is a good Man a hearty Friend and for some time past has suffered exceed'gly in his confinement, being much indisposed. If you see no Impropriety in and approve of the measure I shall be much Obliged to you to have said Bruton paroled to his plantation as proposed.[4]

I am Dr Genl with the greatst respect

Your most obdt humb Servt.

Thos. Sumter

The Honl. Major Genl. Greene

[Outside]

The Honl. Major Genl. Greene Commander in Chief of the American Forces —Southern Department From Genl. Sumpter Decr. 12th 1780.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. John Price's home, about 8 miles southwest of Charlotte, North Carolina, was where Sumter was recovering from a gunshot wound received at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20.
2. Lt. Col. John Harris Cruger was commandant of the British post at Ninety Six.
3. Capt. Thomas Jenkins was in the New Acquisition District Regiment.
4. Greene received and responded to Sumter's request the same day. "I have no objection to paroling Brewton for Capt. Jenkins and will write by the first opportunity to Colo Gunby at Hills-borough to that effect. But it must be remembered that the paroles must have no effect in the exchanges that will take place in future."

1780-12-14 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp Charlotte
Decemb. 14th 1780

Dear Sir,

I enclose you an extract of a Letter from Lord Cornwallis respecting the violation of a flag by some of the Militia under your command.[1] I have written his Lordship and assured him that you would make the strictest enquiry into this matter, and make restitution & punish the offenders if it appeared that the facts were committed by any of your Militia.

If you know any thing of the transaction I must beg you will inform me thereof, as soon as possible; and perhaps it will be necessary for you to make such an assurance to his Lordship immediately.

I am Dear Sir
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath. Greene

General Sumter

[Margin of Letter]
Charlotte Decr. 14 1780
N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Cornwallis had actually written to Gen. Gates, but Greene was in command when it arrived. Cornwallis had also complained directly to Sumter on November 15 about the detention and robbery of his troops travelling under a flag of truce. If Cornwallis received a response from Sumter, it has not been found.

1780-12-14 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Charlotte Dec. 14. 1780

D. Sr

Major [Samuel] Taylor went with Capts. Flud & McCord,[1] in pursuit of Holzendorf, & is not returned — as soon as he comes, he will take Col. Goodwyn[2] to you — I sent your letter, wch. came wth. Montgomery,[3] to Genl. Greene, who, I presume, will write to you on the subject of it by Major Middleton [Charles Myddelton?].— I refer you to him (Major Middleton) for a State of Affairs this way, as he can fully inform you respecting 'em — I am glad to hear that you are better, & wish, most anxiously, both for the sake of the publick, & yourself, that you were able to take the Field[4] —

I am, Dr. Sir,
Yr. obed. hble. servt.
J. Rutledge

To
The Honble. Brig. Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. William Flood and John McCord of the Orangeburg District militia in South Carolina.
2. Sumter had sent Goodwyn to General Gates in Charlotte on December 2. Sumter suspected Goodwyn was a British sympathizer. Possibly Robert Goodwyn; see https://revwarapps.org/w8861.pdf and Sumter to Gates, December 2, 1780.
3. John Montgomery. Sumter had accused him of insubordination and plundering. See Sumter to Rutledge, December 14, 1780.
4. Sumter was still recovering from his Blackstocks wound at the home of John Price, near Charlotte, North Carolina.

1780-12-14 – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

Mr Prices[1] 14 D' 1780

Dr Sir

I herewith send John Mountgumry [John Montgomery],[2] a Prisoner to Charlotte, Who May be Considered as a Very bad man, I hope Capt Flud [William Flood] will bring back those he is after, as Circumstances Still more unfavorable have Since appeard aGainst them, I have heard Nothing of Col. Goodwyn since, Gel Green [Greene] Complains Greatly for provision and forage,. & as No Material movements is Lightly to Take place Directly, if he thought proper to Send over a party of horse or foot or both, they might be very well Supplyed at My Camp, and woud be of Very Great Service in Supporting the foragers, and unless some movements are made speedily or parties sent over, I shall be obliged to order the Troops away, they are but few in Number and is Exceedingly exposed. There is a Stirr among the Enemy Which Indicate a speedy Movement, I hope the Genl. Will think it advisable to send over a party

I am Dr. Sir your most obdt. hmble. servt.

Thos Sumter

His Excelency

Gov. Rutledge [John Rutledge]

John Montgomery a private person charged with having raised a large party for the Express purpose of robbing & plundering, which infamous practice, he carried to a great height without discrimination and further assumed the title of Major Commandant of sd party,—in direct Violation of Authority he refused to join the regt. to which he belonged, when order'd, and frequently threatened numbers with the most Severe punishmt if they did not join him & party —

Thos Sumter

14th Decem 1780

The Officer having a Charge of Prisoners at Charlott

It is Requisit'd the Prisoner Shoud

be Ironed —

T. S.

[Original Letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. Sumter was staying at the home of John Price near Charlotte as he recovered from the wound he received at Blackstock.
2. The fate of Montgomery is not known.

1780-12-15 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp Charlotte, Decem. 15, 1780

Dear Sir:

Governor [John] Rutledge shew me a couple of notes which you sent him[1], where in you express a desire to have a detachment made from this Army on the other side of the Catabaw [Catawba].[2] The measure you wish I have been preparing for ever since I was with you,[3] and shall have the troops in readiness in a day or two at farthest. The constitution of the Corps I mean to employ in that quarter, and the position I intend they shall take, are part of a plan I have had in contemplation ever since I came to this ground.

I have good intelligence this morning both from Congress and Europe, that this State and Virginia are to be the great objects of british vengeance this winter and spring.[4] Great exertions are necessary to counteract them. You will therefore whet up your sword, to be in readiness to take the field as soon as your wound is healed.[5]

I am dear Sir your most obed humble ser

N. Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
Charlotte Decr. 15th 80
N.G.

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. This note has not been found, but others referred to may include Sumter to Rutledge, December 14, 1780.
2. Sumter was referring to west side of the Catawba. Greene would soon send a large force west of the Catawba under General Daniel Morgan.
3. Greene and S.C. Governor John Rutledge had visited Sumter in early December as he recovered from his Blackstock wound at the home of John Price near Charlotte, North Carolina.
4. John Mathews, corresponding on behalf of Congress, had recently warned Greene that the Southern states would be the "grand theater of war this ensuing winter and spring."
5. Sumter would not return to action until February 1781.

1780-12-16 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Charlotte Dec. 16. 1780

Since writing the within,[1] I have rec^{d} letters from Philad^{a}- [Philadelphia] by which I find, the King of Britain has got a new Parliament, entirely to his mind — so that we have nothing good to expect from that Quarter — our own Exertions, those of our Allies must, therefore, be the greater —Major Lee's Horse[2] are on this side of Roanoke [River]—& it was purposed, in Congress, to send the Pennsylvania Line, to the Southward, but that proposition had not been fully considered —I am afraid the mischief lately committed by the Cherokees in Rutherford County, will prevent our receiving aid from the back counties,[3] & lessen what we sh^{d} have from the neighbouring — a Gent., arrived yesterday, says he saw a man who left C. Town [Charles Town], the 3^{d} Ins^{t}., & that 11 Transports were then carrying over the Bar,[4] (as it was said), wth Troops —I find the British Channel Fleet had gone into port, & that the combined Fleet kept the Sea — so that they will have an opportunity of sending out the 2^{d}. Division, & reinforcing the Troops & Army, now at Rhode Island.

I am D^{r}. Sir yrs
J. Rutledge

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. No enclosure found.
2. In the previous September Henry "Lighthorse Harry" Lee was promoted to lieutenant colonel, and Lee's Legion of cavalry and infantry was assigned to Greene's Southern Department.
3. On the same date of this letter, a force of 700 Virginians and North Carolinians defeated a Cherokee war party at Boyd's Creek in present-day eastern Tennessee.
4. The bar in Charleston Harbor.

1780-12-20 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Decr. 20. 1780

Sr

Dr. [Richard] Pindell[1] goes down, to examine your Wound, & prescribe for your Complaints. I hope the former will appear more favorable than you apprehend, & that the latter will be remedied by what he advises — GenL. Green [Greene] marched today (before Major [Hugh] Middleton arrived) for Cheraws — I think your situation by no means safe after Morgan's departure, & recommend you moving, as soon as possible, (as well on account of safety, as not having the best attendance & advice, there, from Drs. Reid & Waffield [Warfield?], of the Contl. Hospital) to Salisbury —& I wish that you wd. not delay moving[2] —

Genl. [Daniel] Morgan will call on you, in his way to Catawba River, & I am persuaded that your Advice & Hints will not be wanting to him, respecting measures which your present state of Health disables you from executing, in person — I wish he may have what aid he wants from the So. Carolina militia, westward to Catawba — I have wrote to Newbern [New Bern], to have some blank militia commissions printed —In the mean Time, I am making out some written ones, which will be finished to morrow, and which must serve until the others are done. I will send 'em, to you, as soon as they are completed, & you will have 'em properly filled up, according to the arrangements you have made of the Regiments.

I hope you will have the supply from Hampton's store, in your eye, as I am persuaded it wd. be considerable, & I much fear of getting any other of shoes or woollens. Indeed, the supply there, by all Accts, wd. be only ample, but of every thing wanted — If a favorable opportunity, on that point, shd. be present, pray seize it — I wd. have all the Tobacco brot [brought] away, that you can possibly procure in So. Carolina, as quickly as it can be — nothing will answer so well to pay for what No. Carolina may advance, or to procure any Articles from the Northward wch we want — pray, give the necessary ord. on this Head.

I am Dr. Sir

Yr. most obed. servt.

J. Rutledge

Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Pindell was a doctor with the Maryland First Regiment.
2. Sumter remained at the house of John Price west of Charlotte until mid-January

1780-12-21 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Dec. 21. 1780

Dr. Sr.

I inclose an Extract of a Letter from Genl. Washington, & wish you wd. give me, pr Bearer, your sentiments,[1] at large, on the several Queries put by the General, as I purpose writing to him, to morrow, on the subject of it — you will keep this matter to yourself.

I am, Dr. Sir,

Yr. most obed. Servt.,

J. Rutledge

P.S. I send herewith, 42 blank Militia Commissions which you will have properly filled up for the Militia Officers — I will make out 18 now, wch Col. [Richard] Winn said wd. be enough for the present. They are all dated as one day, but you will settle the matter of Rank by filling up the [remainder?] in the margin, agreeable to their respective Ranks. I also send Dr. Weitzel's [John Weitzel's][2] Commn.

Queries:

1st What are the present Resources of So. Carolina as to Meat – Corn – Wheat —Rice &c-- & the Means of Transportation?

2d Is it possible to form Magazines of Either, especially of Salt Meat — where —& in what quantities?

3d What is the force of the Enemy — the Posts they occupy — the state of those Posts, & the Reinforcements that may probably derive from the People of the Country?

4th Which is the best place for debarking Troops in case of an Expedition agst the Enemy in the Southern States.

[Outside]

To

Brigr. Genl. Sumpter

Rutledge Dec 21st 1780

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's reply, if any, has not been found.
2. Weitzel appears as an Asst. Surgeon on the roster of the Lower Ninety-Six District militia and as a Surgeon's Mate in Hammond's Regiment of Light Dragoons

1780-12-25 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Charlotte Dec. 25. 1780

I sent to you, four days ago, 42 blank Militia Commissions. I send, herewith, 48 more —& I request that you will have 'em forthwith properly filled up, & given out to the officers, as far as they will extend — if more are absolutely necessary, immediately let me know the No. wanted, & I will have 'em made out, & sent to you, tho' writing 'em is very tedious, troublesome. I imagine, however, these may suffice, until I can get from Newbern [New Bern] those which I have directed to be printed there, & as soon as I do, I will send you some of 'em. You will fix the Rank of the Officers, by a marginal Note, as wrote on the [one or two undeciphered words]

I wish you wd. think of having Tobacco procured, if possible, from the back country, to pay for what articles we may procure from No. Carolina & Virginia – I think [Daniel] Morgan's March to the Westward will afford an opportunity for obtaining a food supply of necessaries from Hamptons Sto[paper damaged][1] I hope you will not omit that Blow, if practicable. — Commodore [Alexander] Gillon,[2] by letter rec'd a few days ago, dated 25 Sep. at Amsterdam, informs that he has a large Quantity of Woolens, Blankets, & Linens, on Acct of the State, which he purposed bringing with him —& I expect him shortly – Tho' this supply will be late it will be acceptable —

A person arrived here yesterday who came from within a few miles of C. Town [Charles Town] the 14th Instant, says, Genl. [Alexander] Leslie arrived that day with the Troops which had been in Virginia.—He brot. C.T. [Charles Town] Gazettes of the 11 & 12 decr.—in wh [which] nothing is said of their Arrival, or being on the Coast, the latter I think they wd have mentd., if they had been, (as this Man says he heard they were,) sevl. days on the Coast —However, the Authority from which he heard of their Arrival is so good, that I think it is so;

[Final LOC page missing; remainder is from Draper transcription]

Nevertheless, I wish you would Endeavor to get the latest and best intelligence (on which you can rely,) from Town, as soon as possible I am just setting off for the camp at Cheraws.[3] Pray, transmit pr. Express any material and authentick intelligence you obtain. I hope to see you soon in better health.

I am, dear sir,
Yr. most obt. servt.
J. Rutledge

P.S. I wish you would have a full & exact account of all the actions and skirmishes which have happened in No. & So. Carolina since the Surrender of Charles Town [on May 12, 1780], drawn up, and sent to me, as soon as you have leisure. I want to have it printed and made publick.[4]

[Outside of LOC version]
To Brigadier Genl. Sumpter
Decemb 25th 1780

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress and the Draper transcription]

1. Possibly referring to a store run by Wade Hampton at present-day Cayce, South Carolina.
2. Gillon was Commodore of the South Carolina Navy. He was not able to return to Charleston due to the British occupation and instead joined in operations against British shipping in the Caribbean.
3. Gen. Nathanael Greene camped on Hicks Creek near Cheraw, South Carolina on December 20, while sending some troops under Gen. Daniel Morgan southwestward to threaten the British post at Ninety Six.
4. If Sumter composed a report for Rutledge, it has not been found.


SOUTH CAROLINA
1770 1783
Anniversary
250
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1781

1781-01-08 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

[The right edge of the second and third pages are cut off in the LOC image. Phrases in brackets are from the Nathanael Greene Papers.*]*

Camp on the Pedee[1] [Pee Dee] January 8th. 1781.

Dear Sir.

I am impatient to hear of your perfect recovery[2] and of seeing you again at the head of the Militia. General [Daniel] Morgan has gone over to the West side of the Catawba agreeable to what I wrote you before I left Charlotte.[3] But I expect he will have but few men from your Brigade until you are in a condition to appear at the head of them.[4] Your influence in bringing them out is not only necessary, but the means you have of obtaining intelligence is not less important. I lament exceedingly your wounds confining you so much longer than I was flattered with, from appearances at the time I was with you,[5] and I esteem it no less unfortunate for the public, than myself.

If Genl. Morgan don't meet with any misfortune until you are ready to join him I shall be happy, as your knowledge of the Country and the people will afford him great security against a surprize. When I was with you, your soul was full of enterprize. The salvation of this country don't depend upon little strokes; nor should the great business of establishing a permanent army be neglected to pursue them. Partisan strokes in war are like the garnish of a table, they give splendor to the Army and reputation to the Officers, but they afford no substantial national security. They are m[atters which] should not be neglect[ed & yet] they should not be pursued to the prejudice of more important concerns. You may strike a hundred strokes, and reap little benefit from them unless you have a good Army to take advantage of your success.

The enemy will never relinquish their plan, nor the people be firm in our favour until they behold a better barrier in the field than a Volunteer Militia who are one day out and the ne[xt] at home. There is no mortal [more] fond of enterprize than myself, but this is not the basis on which the fate of this country depends. It is not a war of posts but a contest for States dependent upon opinion. If we can introduce into the field a greater army than the Enemy, all their posts will fall of themselves; and without this they will reestablish them though we should take them twenty times. Nevertheless I would always hazard an attack when the misfortune cannot be so great to us as it may be to the enemy.

Plunder and depredation prevails so in every quarter. I am not a little apprehensive all this Country will be laid waste. Most people appear to be in pursuit of private gain or personal glory. I persuade myself though you may set a just value upon reputation, your soul is filled with a more noble ambition.

I tell you in confidence I am in distress: My fears increase respecting subsistance; and if the State of N. Carolina continue to bring out such shoals of useless militia as they have done the last season, it will be impossible to subsist an Army in this Country. Ten of the militia drawn out in classes,[6] are not worth one of your men, whose all depend upon their own bravery. What gives safety to one brings on ruin to the other. If your Militia do not fight their families are exposed. If the others run away their persons are safe.

1. The camp was near Hicks Creek on Great Pee Dee River near present-day Cheraw, South Carolina.
2. Sumter was shot in the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780 and was recuperating near Charlote, North Carolina.
3. Greene to Sumter, December 15, 1780.
4. Sumter never joined forces with Morgan, but many in his brigade did.
5. On Dec. 9, 1780, Greene and Gov. Rutledge of South Carolina visited Sumter at the home of John Price, where he was recovering from his wound received at Blackstock's. The home was west of Charlotte, North Carolina, on the Catawba River.
6. Militiamen were divided into classes, with the members of one class called out for active duty on a rotating basis.

I shall be happy to hear from you at all times, and beg you will suggest such things as you may think will promote the interest and safety of this Country.

I am Dear Sir With esteem
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

[Outside]
Brigadier General Sumter at Mr. Prices near Tuckaseda [Tuckaseegee] ford on the Catabaw [Catawba River]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress and the *Nathanael Greene Papers*.]

Charles Myddelton

Charles Starke Myddelton was a resident of the Orangeburg District in South Carolina. He joined the local militia and advanced steadily in rank during the Revolution as a captain, major, and lieutenant colonel. He also served as a colonel in South Carolina's 2nd Regiment of State Dragoons, under Brig. Gen. Thomas Sumter. Myddelton was an aide-de-camp to Sumter during 1781, as evidenced by letters that he wrote on behalf of his commander.[1]

Myddelton was with Sumter at many notable engagements, including his defeat at Fishing Creek and his victory at Blackstock's Plantation.[2] Following the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation Myddelton wrote an account of the action: "The conflict was warm, and the enemy were repulsed; they rallied, made a second charge, and were repulsed again; they made a third, and the people in front were obliged to yield to the impression, but the fire from the eminence gave them such an effectual check, that they quitted the field in great disorder, and retired with the utmost precipitation.'[3]

Myddelton also had his share of defeat, the worse being at Juniper Springs in present-day Lexington County, South Carolina. The action occurred on June 18, 1781, with Myddelton in command of a detachment of Sumter's troops. He attempted to harass the rear of a British force that was marching to the relief of their fort at Ninety Six. The outpost had been under siege for weeks by Gen. Nathanael Greene. The British ambushed Myddelton's force, inflicting heavy losses. Myddelton managed to escape to fight another day.[4]

There are only two letters from Myddelton to Sumter among the general's wartime papers and both were written days before the Juniper Springs disaster. On June 14, Myddelton reported, "I am not at all afraid of a surprise; I am apt to think that the Enemy's Object is 96 [Ninety Six] as the rout [sic] they take is directly for that place."[5]

The last major battle that Myddelton participated in was Eutaw Springs in South Carolina in September 1781. Gen. Nathanael Greene commanded about 3,100 Patriot soldiers in this large engagement that was the last major battle of the war in South Carolina. Much like Greene's encounter with the British at Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina, Eutaw Springs was a lengthy see-saw battle that caused heavy casualties on both sides and no clear victor. Myddelton, leading the South Carolina 2nd Regiment, is listed among the wounded officers.[6]

Myddelton survived the war and went on to win two terms in the South Carolina House. He also served as a delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1790.[7]

1. Bobby Gilmer Moss, *Roster of South Carolina Patriots in the American Revolution* (Genealogical Publishing Company, 1983) 715; J.D. Lewis, "The Lieutenant Colonels," Carolana.com, accessed May 21, 2026, https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/patriot_military_sc_lt_colonels.htm.
2. Robert D. Bass, Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter (Sandlapper Publishing Co. Inc., 2000) 83, 109
3. Charles Starke Myddelton, "Letter concerning the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation," Library of Congress, George Washington Papers, transcribed by Michael Burgess; Bass, Gamecock, 109.
4. Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931), 166.
5. Mydellton to Sumter, June 14, 1781, DLC.
6. Dan L. Morrill, *Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution*, (The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1993), 165-169.
7. Bailey and Cooper, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House*, 3:521-22

1781-01-11 – Charles Myddelton (Sumter) to Greene

Price's[1] 11th January 1781

Sir,

I am directed by Genl. Sumter to inform you, he late last night received information that Lord Cornwallis had made some movement up Between the two rivers; but being desirous of obtaining Farther accounts of the movements & position of the Enemy Generally, declined giving you any Information until some farther Accounts was Obtain'd, and have Accordingly just received information that Lord Cornwallis encampt on Monday night [January 8] at Lees Old place, and on tuesday morning took the turkey Crick road towards broad river,[2] probably to form a junction or Co-operate with Genl. [Alexander] Leslie, who is encampt at the Long Cane, with fifteen hundred men / this encampment lies fourteen miles westward of Brierly Ferry, thirty five Eastward of Ninety Six,[3] and forty southward of General [Daniel] Morgan, / the Genl. has Also received an Account from Genl. Morgans Camp and it is confidently asserted he has fifteen hundred men.[4]

I am Sir Your Most Obedt. Humb. Servt.

Chas. S. Myddelton

P.S. The movements of the Enemy have occasiond great confusion among the Inhabitants, numbers Endeavoring to move out of their way. The Genl has taken the liberty of Advising the officers on this side of the Catabaw [Catawba],[5] to stop any person from passing, Unless those immediately Imployed in moving their Famalies.

C.S.M.

[Outside]
the Honl.
Major Genl. Nathl. Greene [Nathanael Greene]
Head Quarters
by Express
From Gen Sumter Jan. 11th, 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library, Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter was still recovering from his Blackstock's wound at the home of John Price near Charlotte, North Carolina.
2. In early January Cornwallis moved his camp from Winnsboro northward between Wateree River and Broad River, and on January 16 he camped on the plantation of William Hillhouse on Turkey Creek in present York County.
3. Long Cane Settlement in present Abbeville County was actually 54 miles west of Brierly's Ferry, also called Shirer's Ferry, on Broad river between Winnsboro and present Newberry. Long Cane was about 16 miles west of Ninety Six. The location given by Myddelton would have been near present Newberry rather than at Long Cane. Gen. Alexander Leslie was actually marching west and north from Camden toward Winnsboro, which is about 17 miles east of Brierly's Ferry. See Bill Anderson's, "American Revolution Sites, Events, and Troop Movements by Day," http://elehistory.com/amrev/SitesEventsTroopMovements.htm.
4. Morgan had closer to 1,000 troops.
5. He was referring to the east side of the river.

1781-01-13 – Congress to Thomas Sumter

Saturday January 13th 1781

The committee to whom was referred the letter of December 7th from major general Green [Nathanael Greene], delivered in a report,[1] whereupon, Congress, taking into consideration the eminent services rendered to the United States by brigadier general Sumpter, of South Carolina, at the head of a number of volunteer militia, from that and the neighbouring states particularly in the victory obtained over the enemy at the Hanging Rock, on the 6th day of August, in the defeat of major Wemys [James Wemyss] and the corps of British infantry and Dragoons under his command at Broad River on the 9th day of November, in which the said major Wemys was made prisoner and in the repulse of lieutenant colonel [Banastre] Tarleton, and the British cavalry and infantry under his command, at Black Stocks [Blackstocks], on Tyger River, on the 20th November last, in each of which actions the gallantry & military conduct of general Sumpter and the courage and perseverance of his troops were highly conspicuous. Resolved, therefore, that the thanks of Congress be presented to Brig general Sumpter and the militia aforesaid for such reiterated proofs of their patriotism, bravery & military conduct, which entitle them to the highest esteem and confidence of their country, and that the commanding officer of the southern department do forthwith cause the same to be issued in general orders and transmitted to general Sumpter.

[Outside] Genl. Sumpter
Resolve of Congress 13 Jany. 1781--

[Transcribed from the original document at the Library of Congress]

1. On December 7, 1780, Greene had sent a report to both Congress and Gen. George Washington on the status of the war in the Carolinas. It included reports on Sumter's engagements at Hanging Rock (August 6, 1780), Fishdam Ford on Broad River (November 9, 1780), and Blackstock's Plantation (November 20, 1780).

1781-01-13 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Price's 13th Jany. 1781

Dr Genl.,

By a person just returned, Who I Sent towards Charles Town to meet the late arrived reinforcements of the Enemy, to Discover their Number, movements, & c., I am informed there was Twelve hundred with Genl. [Alexander] Leslie, Which Crosed McCord's ferry[1] & went to Camden, except Seventy five Which was Sent onto Lord Cornwallis[2] — Majr. [Andrew] Maxwell with one hundred men has Taken post at the Congaree Store, Where he is erecting a fort, and improving the other works.[3] These thirteen hundred men is Certainly all that has Marched out of Charles Town up the Country, and is believed to be the Whole of the Reinforcement.

I have also much more perfect accounts from the wesward —I Sent you then that Lord Cornwallis lay on Wednesday [January 10], at McCallister, Eleven miles from the X Roads [Crossroads][4], 40 miles from Charlotte, Col. Tarlton [Banastre Tarleton], Col. [John Harris] Cruger from 96 [[Ninety Six], Majr. McAuthur [Archibald McArthur] from Bayley's ferry[5] & Genl. Cuningham [Robert Cunningham] have formed a junction at the Long Lane,[6] their Whole force not over one thousand.[7]

A Quantity of arms Salted, provisions & Salt, Spirits & C. has been lately Brought up from Town [Charleston] to the Enemy, three of the best Mills upon the Congarees are taken from the proprieters for publick use. Where large Quantities of Meal is barrelling up for the use of the army. I have Nothing perticuler, from our troops wesward, I believe they are lying very Quiet.[8]

I am Dr. Genl.,

With the Greatest Respect your most obedt. Hble Servt

Thos. Sumter

P.S. From accounts just received from Camden I am informed that a party of the Enemy crossd at Nelson's Ferry[9] their number not known So that the number in Camden cannot be ascertained they are carrying on their Works at Camden with great Expedition, and are now Abating.

T.S.

Majr. Genl. Green [Nathanael Greene]

[Outside]

The Honble. Majr. Genl. Greene [Greene],

Commanding the American forces —Southn. Department

by express

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Clements Library, Univ. of Michigan]

1. McCord's Ferry was on the Congaree River where present-day Highway 601 crosses.
2. Cornwallis was moving his camp from Winnsboro northward to the plantation of William Hillhouse on Turkey Creek in present-day York County.
3. The fortification was called Fort Granby and located on the Congaree River at present-day Cayce, South Carolina.
4. Crossroads is now Chester, South Carolina.
5. Sumter may have been referring to Brierly's Ferry on the Broad River, southwest of Winnsboro, South Carolina.
6. sic: Long Cane settlement in present Abbeville County.
7. Sumter was incorrect about the junction of the British forces. Tarleton by himself did have a force of approximately 1,000 marching northward from Brierly's Ferry to intercept Gen. Morgan, who was marching southwest from Charlotte.
8. Many of the volunteer militiamen who attached to Sumter had joined Gen. Daniel Morgan.
9. Nelson's Ferry on Santee River was near Eutaw Springs in South Carolina. The actual site is now part of Lake Marion.

1781-01-16 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp on Pedee [Great Pee Dee River], January 1781

Dear Sir

Your letter of the 11th has this moment come to hand.[1] I suppose the object of Cornwallis's movement is to remove General [Daniel] Morgan from his flanks and to keep the people from collecting confidence, and uniting generally in support of the Common cause. He may also have in contemplation to penetrate N. Carolina again[2] and wish to remove Genl. Morgan a distance to prevent his insulting his rear.

Genl. [William] Phillips is in Virga. with 2500 Men from N. York and was when the last accounts came away almost as high up James River as Petersburg. It is evident from many pieces of intelligence that the British

British mean to make a hard push for the subjugation of N. Carolina this winter, and doubtless will commence their operations speedily in order to form a junction agreeable to their original plan.

I wrote you a few days since by Salisbury which I hope you have received.[3] I beg you will send me every information of the Enemy's movements. And am with good wishes for your perfect and speedy recovery.[4]

Dear Sir Your Most Obedient Humble Servt

Nath Greene

[Outside]
The Honble
Brigadier Genl. Sumter
at Mr. Price's
per Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress] [The letter is undated; the Greene Papers date it as January 16 based on Greene's Letter Book]

1. The letter was actually written by Sumter's aide-de-camp, Col. Charles Myddelton.
2. Cornwallis had arrived in Charlotte on September 26, 1780 with the intention of camping there for the winter, but he was driven back into South Carolina and arrived at Winnsboro on October 29.
3. Since Greene had just written to Sumter the previous day, he was probably referring to his letter of January 8. Greene was camped at the time on the Great Pee Dee River in South Carolina, so "by Salisbury" presumably means that the letter had to get to Sumter by way of that town.
4. Sumter was still recuperating from his Blackstock's wound at the home of John Price near Charlotte.

1781-01-15 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp on the Pedee [Great Pee Dee River] Jany. 15th 1781

Dear Sir

I am favored with yours of the 13th. I am afraid you are not well informed either of the enemies or [Daniel] Morgan's strength.[1] If the Enemy's numbers are not greater than you mention, and Morgan as numerous as you say, they run some hazard in dividing their force. It will afford Morgan an opportunity to strike at one or the other of the divisions; which I have no doubt he will avail himself of, if he thinks his force competent to their numbers.[2]

I am persuaded the object of the movement is to route Morgan from his present position, and to terrify the inhabitants. I think there is nothing else in that Country that can be a military object; nor will the resources of the Country afford them subsistence for any length of time. However, I wish you to watch their motions narrowly and keep me constantly informed.

It is a great misfortune that the little force we have is in such a wretched state for the want of clothing. More than one half of our numbers are naked, so much so, that we cannot put them on the least kind of duty. Indeed there is a great number that have not any cloths on them, except a little piece of a blanket in the Indian form around their waists.

The barreling the meal and other preparations at Camden indicate a serious movement; but I think the present is only meant to pave the way to the other.

I have heard nothing of the troops in Virginia since I wrote you before.[3] Where is Gen. [Wiliam Lee] Davidson? Is he at Charlotte or with Morgan?[4]

I am dear sir
Your most obedient huml. servt.
Nath Greene

Please to communicate with General Morgan it will be of advantage to all parties.

Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]
General Sumpter at Mr. Prices
Pee Dee 15th Jany 81
N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. In his letter of the 13th, Sumter had incorrectly reported that British forces under Tarleton, Cruger, and MacArthur had combined into a force of approximately 1,000 troops. But Sumter's estimate of 1,000 was fairly accurate, as far as Tarleton's command. As for Morgan, Greene had been informed by Sumter's Col. Charles Myddelton on January 11 that Morgan had 1,500 troops. The number was closer to 1,000.
2. Morgan would indeed engage the British two days later at Cowpens in South Carolina.
3. Several hundred Virginia militiamen had been drafted to serve eighteen months as Continentals and sent to join Greene at his camp near Cheraw in South Carolina. See the pension application of Achilis Hoskins, https://revwarapps.org/s1218.pdf.
4. Davidson, commander of the militia brigade of the District of Salisbury, North Carolina, was still in Charlotte, based on his Jan. 16 letter to Greene.

1781-01-16 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

[A portion of Page 2 is missing. Words in brackets are from the Lyman Draper transcription.]

Cheraws Jany. 16, 1781

Dr. Sir

I rec'd. yours, of the 13th Inst., by the Bearer, & am glad to find that the reinforcements, to the Enemy, are not so considerable as was apprehended[1] —

You say the Cause & the State of our Resources are too mortifying to trouble me with, Especially as there is no probable Remedy —I never shall think it a Trouble, to attend to any thing which it is my duty to do, or, for the Interest of the Country that I shd —I wish you wd, therefore, in your next Letter,[2] explain yourself, on that [point and] say what Remedy you wd rec[ommend] as to our Resources.

I request that [you] will, as soon as possible, send to me a complete list of all the prisrs. of war, whom you have taken, or, who, have been taken by others, are in any part of No. or So. Carolina or Virginia — including such as are on patrol, & distinguishing the places where they are respectively — I think it will be best not to discharge any of the Tory prisrs. at Salisbury — I hope good care will be taken to prevent their joining the Enemy —

I am, Sir,
Yr. most obed. Servt.
J. Rutledge [John Rutledge, Governor of South Carolina]

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter of the 13th to Rutledge has not been found. But Sumter also wrote to Gen. Greene on the 13th regarding British reinforcements and that letter exists. It is probable that his letter to Rutledge contained some of these same observations: "I am informed there was Twelve hundred with Genl. Leslie, Which Crosed McCord's ferry & went to Camden, except Seventy five Which was sent onto Lord Cornwallis — Majr. Maxwell with one hundred men has Taken post at the Congaree Store…..These thirteen hundred men is Certainly all that has Marched out of Charles Town up the.Country, and is believed to be the Whole of the Reinforcement."
2. If Sumter replied to this request, the letter has not been found.

The Battle of Cowpens



The Battle of Cowpens. *William Ranney. National Portrait Gallery.*

The severe wound that Thomas Sumter received at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation kept him out of action from November 20, 1780, until the middle of February 1781. As a result, he did not participate in the Battle of Cowpens.

The void left by his convalescence was no doubt part of the calculus by Gen. Nathanael Greene to split his army in spite of its inferior size to the forces of Lord Cornwallis. He instructed Gen. Daniel Morgan to lead a detachment of troops into the Carolina backcountry to "spirit up the people" and force the British to make a counter move.[1]

Cornwallis responded by sending a force under the feared Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton with orders to find and destroy Morgan. Morgan decided to give battle on ground of his own choosing at Hannah's Cowpens[2] in present-day Cherokee County, South Carolina. On January 17, 1781, he deployed his forces in three lines: one of sharpshooters, one of militia, and one consisting of Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware Continental regiments. Morgan ordered the militia, under the command of Col. Andrew Pickens, to fire two volleys and retreat behind the line of Continentals in the rear. They would provide cover for the militia while they reformed and reentered the fight on the British flanks. Some of Sumter's regiments were among those militia troops who placed themselves under Pickens's command.[3]

The militia sharpshooters took a heavy toll on British officers before they made their planned withdrawal behind the Continentals. Tarleton next attempted a cavalry charge, but this was repulsed by Morgan's cavalry under Lt. Col. William Washington. The main body of the British force charged toward the Patriot line, and the 71st Regiment, held in reserve until then, swung about to attack the Continentals' right flank. Lt. Col. John Eager Howard, commanding the Continentals, ordered his two rightmost companies to shift position to face the 71st, but the order was misunderstood and the whole line began to retreat. The soldiers of the 71st broke ranks to pursue, but Morgan and Howard turned the Continentals about. The seasoned Continentals fired a volley, then charged with fixed bayonets.

Seeing the British thrown into confusion, the militia troops reformed on their flanks, advanced and poured additional fire into the British ranks. At this point, the British began throwing down their arms and surrendering. The Patriots had

1. Greene to Morgan, Dec. 16, 1780, *PNG*, 6:588.
2. Sometimes referred to as Saunders' Cowpens.
3. Edwin C. Bearss, *Battle of Cowpens: A Documented Narrative and Troop Movement Map* (The Overmountain Press, 1967) 18-22; Thomas J. Fleming, *Cowpens: Official National Park Handbook* (United States Department of the Interior, 1988) 55-62; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Five," *Names in South Carolina, Volume XXIV* (Winter, 1977) 13-15; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University of Alabama Press, 1985) 133-135; Robert C. Pugh, *The Cowpens Campaign and the American Revolution* (University of Illinois, 1951) 243-251.

killed or wounded over 300 British soldiers and captured nearly twice as many. The victory altered the course of the war in the Carolinas as Cornwallis responded by burning his baggage to pursue Morgan and then making destruction of Greene's army his singular goal.[4]

The triumph at Cowpens is mentioned in several of Sumter's letters. On January 28, Sumter wrote to Morgan to "most heartily congratulate" the general upon the "happy event."[5] The next day he wrote to Nathanael Greene: "Morgan has fortunately relieved you from your apprehensions for his safety, by defeating Coll. Tarleton, a circumstance of great consequence, upon which I must beg leave, most heartily to congratulate you."[6]

4. Bearss, *Battle of Cowpens*, 29-44; Fleming, *Cowpens*, 63-85; Lawrence E. Babits, *A Devil of a Whipping: The Battle of Cowpens* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 89-149; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Five," 13-15; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 135-138; Pugh, *The Cowpens Campaign and the American Revolution*, 257-281.
5. Sumter to Morgan, Jan. 28, 1781, NN.
6. Sumter to Greene, Jan. 29, 1781, *SCHGM*, vol. 16, no. 3 (July 1915), 97-99.

1781-01-19 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp on Pedee [Great Pee Dee River] January 19. 1781

Dear Sir,

I have just received letters from General [Daniel] Morgan informing me of his situation, and representing the difficulty he meets with in collecting provisions, and among other things he mentions some embarrassment which has arisen from an order of yours to Colonel [William] Hill,[1] not to obey any orders from him, unless it came through you.

I imagine there must be some misapprehension about the matter; for I cannot suppose you could give an improper order, or that you have the most distant wish to embarrass the public affairs. It is certainly right that that all orders should go through the principal to the dependants as well for the preservation of good government as to inspire a proper respect. This is a general rule and should never be deviated from but in case of necessity, as when the difficulty of conveying an order through the principal will be attended with a fatal delay. In that case the order should be directed to the branches and not to the principal; and as the head is subject to the order the branches are of course: for it would be very extraordinary if a Captain should presume to dispute an order from his General because it was not communicated through his Colonel.

At the same time that the right is indisputable, it should always be avoided, but in cases of absolute necessity. Genl. Morgan is an exceeding good Officer and understands his duty perfectly well, and I know he has the highest respect for your character, and therefore am persuaded if there has been any interference different from the general principles, which should govern military affairs, it must have happened through inadvertence or from a persuasion that you did not mean to exercise command during the time of your indisposition.

If any thing in his conduct has had the appearance of indelicacy or neglect, I hope you will not suffer it to biass your conduct from that line which has given you weight & influence among your Country men. It is the mark of a great mind to rise superior to little injuries and our object should be the good of our Country & not personal glory.

I find from intelligence through different channels that Lord Cornwallis is at the Cross roads and that Tarlton [Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] is upon Tiger river,[2] but the accounts differ widely respecting their numbers,[3] nor is there a probability of knowing with any certainty the strength of an Army or detachment without knowing the Corps and the strength of each.

Genl. Morgan has about 900 Men with him,[4] Genl. Davidson [William Lee Davidson] is also collecting a considerable force at Charlotte. I have directed them to consult with you the practicability of forming a junction with your force and making a combined attack upon one of the divisions of Lord Cornwallis's Army. You will please to favour them and me with your opinion upon the matter.

General Morgan also proposes a diversion into Georgia and leave you and Genl. Davidson to cover the Country from Broad river to the Catawba. I am doubtful of it's effects and wish your opinion upon that also. I have had no further news from Virginia.[5]

I am with esteem Dear Sir

Your Most Obedient Humble Servant,

Nath Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. William Hill owned the well-known Hill's Iron Works in the New Acquisition District, now York County. He also commanded militia troops from that area. Morgan complained to Greene that he had sent Capt. C.K. Chitty to Hill with a request for a "proper number of men" to assist with gathering supplies, and Hill refused to comply.
2. Tarleton crossed Tyger River on January 14 on his northward march to intercept Morgan. Tarleton was defeated by Morgan at Cowpens in upstate South Carolina on January 17, two days before Greene's letter.
3. Tarleton had about 1,000 men.
4. Morgan's force grew to about 1,900 at the Battle of Cowpens.
5. Several hundred Virginia militiamen had been drafted into the Continental service for eighteen months and sent to join Greene.

1781-01-21 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Sunday Night 9 oClock Jan. [21, 1781][1]

Dr Sr

The Bearer, just now, delivd to me, your Letter of Thursday Night[2]—on asking him, if he had one for Genl. Green [Nathanael Greene], He said, he had deliv'd it, & was returning, with his answer — He was anxious to go on immediately — I therefore will not detain him, tho', I shd have been glad to know, what directions the Genl. has given, in Consequence of your Intelligence to him, which, I presume, is the same as you have communicated to me.

It is very different from our last Information, by a person who left Camden, last Wednesday, viz. that [Gen. Alexander] Leslie was there, on that day, (but I presume you are better informed) wth 1500 Men, whom he bro. from C. Town [Charleston].

I suppose Intelligence, of Cornwallis' & Leslie's Motions, have been communicated or is known to [Gen. Daniel] Morgan. Gen'l Greene and you understand the Matter, with respect to you not having any Command, at present, in a very different Way — as I find on speaking to him a few days ago on that point.[3] However, I presume he has explained himself to you, respecting it — I am sorry to hear that you mend so slowly,[4] &d that the Enemy are plotting to take you, but, I hope, you will escape all their Endeavors & be able, soon, to take the Field & render further important Services to the Country.

I have heard nothing of Mr. Hampton or the Waggons which went to Newb [New Bern].[5] You will send on, to me or them, any orders which the Enemy's Man[euvers] or apparently intended operation, may, in your Opinion, render necesssary or proper —

I rec'd, this day, a Letter from one delegate dated the 13th ulto. — It mentions no other News than that Holland[6] & Portugal had acceded to the League of Neutrality proposed by the Emperess of Russia, & that the latter, Portugal, had forbid British Vessels Entering her Port — also that Col.Jno. [John] Laurens was sent as Envoy extraordinary to France,[7] to solicit Aid sufft [sufficient] to render the next Campaign decisive. Their Letter inclosed some Philada. Gazettes which General Green has borrowed to peruse — I will send them to you, by the next opportunity —

By the Bearer I send You the only news I have, which you have not seen — you will return 'em, when a convent. opportunity offers — Early in this Month the Enemy landed in Virginia 3000 Men, (as it is said, tho' the Number may be exaggerated) under Gen. [Baron Wilhelm von] Kniphausen[8] —

I shd. have wrote to you, on Rect. of your Letter of the 2d Inst.,[9] but never heard of any person going to Charlotte till after he had set off — be pleased to tell Major Middleton [Charles Myddelton] that Dr. Johnson is not come from Camden.

I desired Major Middleton to inform you, that I shd. throw [Lt. Col. John] Marshall's Regiment,[10] as I had done all the other Regiments, on this side of Santee, Wateree, Catawba Rivers, into [Francis] Marion's Brigade — those to the Westward of 'em composing yours —

Every thing in my power shall be done to restrain Plunderers, tho', I fear nothing, official as I could wish can be, till the Courts of Justice can be opened — I shall be glad that you continue to give Gen'l Green & myself the

1. The date is not legible on the original document, but historian Edward McCrady stated that a date of January 21 can be inferred based on the intelligence Rutledge had received the previous Wednesday that British Gen. Leslie was still in Camden.
2. Sumter's letter of January 18 has not been found.
3. Rutledge was at Greene's camp near Cheraw on January 16 where he wrote to Sumter.
4. Sumter was shot in the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.
5. See Rutledge's January 24 letter to Sumter for more on Capt. Hampton.
6. The Netherlands did not join the League due to hostilities with Britain.
7. Laurens, Thomas Paine, and Benjamin Franklin met with King Louis XVI of France to request military aid.
8. Gen. Benedict Arnold, not von Knyphausen, led an invasion of some five thousand troops into Virginia at the end of 1780.
9. Sumter's letter of January 2 has not been found.
10. Marshall commanded a militia regiment from Camden District in South Carolina.

earliest Intelligence of any material Movements of the Enemy, or any accurate Information, reporting 'em, which appr material & you will give such orders, to the Militia in your Brigade, not already in the Field with Gen'l Morgan, as you conceive the good of the Service render most proper & expedient.

I am with great Regard Dr Sir Yr most hble servt
J. Rutledge

P.S. Be pleased to send the enclosed to Genl. Morgan immediately.
Genl Sumpter

[Transcription from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1781-01-24 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Cheraws Jany 24th 1781

Dr Sir

By Letters from Mr. Hawkins & Capt. Hampton, I find, that the Waggons which were sent to Newbern are dispatched, from thence, with sundry Articles, but, what they are, I can't understand — I directed, that the Things I wanted for my own use, shd be brot hither, by way of Cross Creek, but, Capt. Hampton writes, that the Waggoners positively refused to come that Route — I am, therefore, not only at a Loss, but likely to remain so, much longer than I hoped that I shd, or than I need to have done, (by the Perversity of these Waggoners,) for almost every necessary Article, & I can't even know which of what I wrote for are sent —

Be pleased, as soon as you see Capt. [Dennis] Hawkins, (who is to return to you by way of Hillsborough,) or, the Waggons arrive, to order proper Care be taken of all the goods they contain, & have some of 'em made use of, (except the salt necessary for salting up any Beef or Pork which you may think proper to have cured,) until you hear from me, &, either desire Capt. Hampton, to come to me with a List of the goods, or, if he can't come, to send it to me, that I may give directions, with respect to the disposition of 'em — I wd prefer his coming hither, with the List, if possible, & as soon as may be — I believe it wd be best, not to bring the goods, (except the Salt, you will judge where to put that,) lower down than Salisbury, but, to keep 'em, there, under a good guard, that may be depended on, till you hear from me —

I shd be glad to have the Articles, intended for my own use, & some things which were ordered for Genl. [Isaac] Huger & Capt. Odom, sent hither, as soon as possible, together with a Hogshead of the best Rum —&, if you cd send orders, (to meet Capt. Hampton at Hillsborough,) that those Articles shd be brot immediately, from thence, hither, instd of coming round, by Salisbury, or Charlotte, I wish you wd, as, their so doing wd save a long Journey, & I shd receive 'em much sooner —

Inclosed are some Letters from Mrs. Sumpter, [Sumter] which I this Momt. recd. from Genl. Marion[1] — I hope to hear that you recover fast, & will be soon able to take the Field[2] — We have nothing new here, except the Action with Tarlton, [Banastre Tarleton] last Week,[3] which I presume you heard of before We did —

I am wth great Regard Dr Sir

Yr most obedt. servt.

J. Rutledge

Genl. Sumpter

Governor Rutledge Cheraw 24 Jany 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. The letters from Mrs. Sumter have not been found.
2. Sumter was still recovering from his Blackstock's wound at the home of John Price near Charlotte, North Carolina.
3. Rutledge is referring to the January 17 Battle of Cowpens.

1781-01-28 – Thomas Sumter to William Lee Davidson

28th January 1781

Dr Sir

I have Received undoubted Intelegence of the strength and find that their Regular force do not exceed 1,600, the Number of field peaces they have no doubt you are informed of, Lord Cornwallis had 680 men with him before he was join'd by Genl [Alexander] Leslie. Genl Leslie had 578 with him, Total 1,258 — Since join'd a Detachment from Camden near 100; these to gether which Survived Tarlton's [Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] defeat[1] and has fell in, are What I alow to make up the above Number, which is Certainly Making the Most unfavourable Computation — I am Convinced if our force was Collected that they Never wd Gain even their nearest Post, provided any exertions was Made — Some have Doubts that they may Send a party or the whole [to] cross at the Tuckey Segee, [Tuckasegee][2] however this you are the best judge of by the advices you may receve.

I am Dr Sr

Your most obedt Hble Servt

Thos. Sumter

28 Jany. 1781

[Transcribed from original at the British Public Records Office – Cornwallis Papers]

1. Sumter is referring to the January 17 Battle of Cowpens in which Tarleton was defeated by Gen. Daniel Morgan.
2. Tuckasegee Ford was on the Catawba River west of Charlotte. Cornwallis actually chose to cross above there at Cowan's Ford on February 1 while pursuing Morgan and attempting to recapture more than 500 British prisoners captured at the Battle of Cowpens. Cowan's Ford was just below the dam that now forms Lake Norman. Gen. William Lee Davidson, to whom this letter was sent, was killed at the head of militia forces attempting to prevent that crossing.

1781-01-28 – Thomas Sumter to Daniel Morgan

Catabaw [Catawba] River 28th Jany 1781 —

Dr Sr

I have every reason to believe that the Enemy are not more than 1,600 Strong. I have had them Repeatedly Counted, and Could ascertain their Number to a Man if I Knowd what had Escaped the Defeat of Col. Banastre [Tarleton][1], Upon which happy event I Most heartily Congratulate you,

I am Dr Sr,
Your most Obedt Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

Brig Genl Morgan

[Outside] the Honble Brig. Genl. Morgan Sherrels [Sherrill's] Foard [Ford][2]
General Sumter 28 January 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the New York Public Library]

1. Sumter is referring to Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's defeat at Cowpens on January 17. More than 500 of Tarleton's 1100 men were captured. The remnants of Tarleton's force had joined Cornwallis at Ramsour's Mill near Lincolnton in North Carolina on January 24, giving the British a total force of about 2,400.
2. Sherrill's Ford was above Charlotte, North Carolina on the Catawba River. The site is now under Lake Norman.

1781-01-29 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

[Transcription copied from South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine *16, No. 3 (July 1915), 97-99. The original letter is currently missing. The magazine article indicated that it belonged to Arthur Rutledge of Louisville, Kentucky at that time. The Sumter Papers project contacted descendants of Rutledge as well as several Kentucky manuscript collections. None of them had any information on the letter.]*

Mr Price's 29th January, 1781.

Dr Sir,

I have received your favours of the 8th one without a date & of the 15th & 19th Inst.[1]

You express a desire of seeing me again in the field, I am happy to know, that the service for which you most Immediately wanted me, is no longer needfull, & Genl [Daniel] Morgan has fortunately relieved you from your apprehensions for his safety, by defeating Coll. [Banastre] Tarleton,[2] a circumstance of great consequence, upon which I must beg leave, most heartily to congratulate you.

The Methods I use to obtain Inteligence may probably answer, but I am short in very special requisites for that purpose. When I had the Honour of a conference with [you][3] if I discovered any injudicious thirst for enterprise, private gain, or personal Glory, I am sorry for it, and shall be doubly Mortified to find that my endeavours, together with the Good people of South Carolina, have not tended the least Degree to promote the Publick Good; I lament that private Gain is the primary Object with too many, and as much lament that the desire of Fame is not more sought after, as to the Former the world I think will acquit me, but the latter reason & Conscience convinces I have not been arrogant & designing but allways meant to conduct & demean myself, so as to tend most to the Publick Good, & the satisfaction of my superior ofiicers.[4]

The dificulty of writing obliges me to decline being as full as I could wish. The cause of my not sending you an express on sooner, was in hopes of gaining some important Inteligence to Communicate. I believe you have found that my former intelligence Respecting the force of Col°. Tarleton [Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] & Gen. [Daniel] Morgan to be very just. I can with propriety say that Lord Cornwallis' whole does not exceed Sixteen hundred; when they marched from Winnsbourrough [Winnsboro, South Carolina], and encampt at Bull run [Bull Run Creek, January 13], he had but six hundred & Eighty men. With this number he marched to turkey crick broad river, was there joined by Genl [Alexander] Leslie, with a detachment of five hundred & Seventy eight men rank & file, making in the whole twelve hundred & fifty eight, since joined by Eighty from Camden, the remains of Tarleton's scattered troops, together with the Matrosses,[5] which when aded cannot by Any Means exceed the Number above mentioned.

For farther particulars & the situation of the Army, I beg leave to recommend you to Major [Charles] Myddelton, as also that of Camden, Congarees, Ninety Six, Augusta, & the state of things Generally, upon the western Quarter,

I agree with you, & lament the great probability of this country being laid waste by plundering parties, as people Dayly discover a greater avidity to that shamefull practice, I had Adopted measures which would have effectually suppress'd it, by being wounded & other interuptions have been prevented from executing that design,

1. The undated letter was probably the one Greene sent on January 16, according to *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, Vol. VII, pg. 216.
2. Sumter is referring to Tarleton's defeat at Cowpens on Janaury 17.
3. Sumter is probably referring to the Dec. 9, 1780 visit of Greene and South Carolina Gov. John Rutledge to the home of John Price, where Sumter was still convalescing from the gunshot wound to the right shoulder he received at Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780. Note that he was still at Price's when this letter was written. Later in the letter Sumter mentions the "dificulty of writing."
4. In a letter to Sumter dated January 8, Greene had expressed concern that too many in the patriot cause were more focused on "private gain or personal glory."
5. A matross assisted artillery gunners with the loading, firing, and sponging of the guns.

notwithstanding, daring as people appear to be in these practices, yet I am convinced they mought easily be made to subside. A few examples, & a proper abhorrence shewen, would answer every purpose, this conduct I meant to pursue but have not been sufficiently countinenced nor supported.

I confess I have been under some embaressment respecting Gen. Morgans command, & the orders he has given, as I have been concerned but little in either trust, & believe I have been guilty of no Impropriety, and shall allways make a point to correspond & act upon such principles with Gen. Morgan, as is most likely to tend to the publick Good, and have no doubt but he well deserves all the applause you have given him, therefore will not stand upon little punctilos. to the prejudice of the service.[6]

There has been a great change of things in this Quarter of late, & I conceive the Enemy thinks their situations somewhat unfavourable to themselves, as well as to those Inhabitants among which they pass — and notwithstanding, the weak & scattered condition of the So. Carolina Malitia, yet their remaining in the rear of the Enemy may give them uneasy Apprehensions.

Major Myddelton will be Able to give you full satisfactions relative to this Matter. I still find myself but poorly, but have hopes of being able to ride tolerably in a few days, when I shall be happy to receive your Commands. I have the Honr to be Dr Sir

With the greatest respect,
Your Most Obed Humble Servt
Thos Sumter.

Major Genl Greene.

Endorsed:
From Genl Sumter
Jan: 29th 1781.

Transcription copied from *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* **16, No. 3 (July 1915), 97-99.**

6. Greene's letter of January 19 to Sumter addressed the incident of Col. William Hill refusing Gen. Daniel Morgan's request for troops. Hill stated that he could not obey any orders that didn't come through Sumter. Greene insisted that there were occasions when "absolute necessity" demanded that the usual channels of communication be by-passed. He also defended Morgan as "an exceeding good officer" who understood his duty "perfectly well."

1781-01-30 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Oliphant's Mill near Sherrard's[1] Ferry, on Catawba Jan. 30th, 1781.

Dear Sir

I have been so much engaged since Tarlton's [Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] defeat that I have not had time to congratulate you upon the success of General [Daniel] Morgan.[2] Nothing this war has been more glorious or more timely. As you are acquainted with the particulars, I will not trouble you with them. I have this moment received the agreeable news of the surprise at George Town [Georgetown] by Lt. Col. [Henry] Lee. I have not the particulars and therefore cannot gratify you on this point.[3] But I believe it will be a pretty affair and happens very seasonably.

The question is, what is to be done with Lord Cornwallis. He seems to be pushing into the Country with great confidence. Methinks, if the Militia could be generally brought out in aid of the Continental army, he might be ruined.

I have the pleasure to hear by Genl. Morgan that you are all most well enough to take the field. Nothing will afford me greater satisfaction than to see you at the head of the Militia again and I can assure you I shall take a pleasure in giving you every opportunity to exercise that talent of enterprise which has already rendered you the terror of your enemies and the Idol of your friends.

If you are well enough to ride up to Beatty's ford,[4] I should be glad to see you there. I wish to consult you upon a particular plan of operations.

I am With esteem and regard
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

General Sumter
[Outside] Oliphant's Mill Catawba 30 Jany, 81

[Transcription from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Possibly Sherrill's Ford on Catawba River, now under Lake Norman, about 2 miles northwest of Oliphant's Mill and 28 miles north of Charlotte, North Carolina. Greene had rushed from his camp near Cheraw in South Carolina to reinforce Morgan, who was retreating northward following his victory over Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton at the Battle of Cowpens on January 17.
2. Sumter was not at Cowpens, but the term "congratulate" in the 18th century could mean a sharing of good news rather than an acknowledgement of the success or good fortune of an individual.
3. Lee and Gen. Francis Marion made an abortive attempt to capture Georgetown on Jan. 24.
4. Beatty's Ford on the Catawba River was 20 miles north of Charlotte, North Carolina. The site is now submerged under Lake Norman.

1781-01-31 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene -1

Mr. Alexrs, four Miles East of Charlotte,[1] 31th January 1781

Dr. Genl

Maj. Myddleton [Charles Myddelton] was going to you with Letters upon his way heard of your Coming up. and has Sent them back to me, Which I herewith Send to you – [2] he proceeded on to peedee, [Great Pee Dee River] which I am Sorry for as he had many things to Communicate to you — I find Such excessive Difficulty in writing that I Cant possibly be as particular as is necessary[3] —

By the latest accounts, the people in Most parts of So. Carolina appear Disposed to take up Arms against the British, Small Bodies are Colecting in Several places for that purpose — I Shall be well informed of this Matter by the latter end of this week — I am Still but poorely, Make use of Moderate Exercise, and have Great hopes of being able to ride tolerably in a few Days.

I have the Honr. to be Dr. Sr,
Your Most obdt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

the Honble, Majr Genl Greene

[Outside]
From Genl. Sumter Jan: 31st 1781.
General Sumter January 31 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Clements Library]

1. This was probably Hezekiah Alexander, a prominent patriot who lived east of Charlotte. His stone house is still standing on the grounds of the Charlotte Museum of History.
2. It is unknown which letters Sumter is referring to. They may include the one he wrote to Greene on Jan. 29. Greene was "coming up" from his camp near Cheraw on Great Pee Dee River in South Carolina to reinforce Gen. Daniel Morgan, who was retreating northward after his victory at Cowpens on January 17.
3. Sumter was still recovering from the wound he had received at Blackstock's Plantation in November 1780.

1781-01-31 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene -2

Charlotte 31st Jany. 1781

Dr Sir,

I am this moment honoured with your favour of the 30th Inst.—I am happy to hear of your arrival at the Catabaw [Catawba River], and have the Most pleasing hope of your being able to bafle the Designs of Lord Cornwallis. Genl. [Daniel] Morgans Victory, over Col. Tarlton [Banastre Tarleton][1] is Certainly Glorious and timely — and I think presages the Most happy Consequences, the Success of Col. [Henry] Lee is a favourable Circumstance and will Consequently embarris the enemy -[2]

I am Sorry to Say Genl. Morgans information Respecting my Recovery is Rong,[3] I am able to Ride but it is but Slowly, have a fever by Riding yesterday, but if in my power will do my Self the pleasure of waiting upon you the Day after tomorrow.

I am Dr Sir with the Greatest Respect
Your most obdt Servt
Thos. Sumter

The Honble. Maj. Genl. Green [Greene]

[Outside]
[From?] Genl. Sumter Jan 31st 1781
Major Polk 31 January 1781 the Honble. Majr. Genl. Green

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. Sumter is referring to the Battle of Cowpens on January 17.
2. Lee and Gen. Francis Marion made an abortive attempt to take Georgetown on January 24.
3. Morgan had told Greene on January 24 that Sumter was expected to recover soon from the wound received at Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.

1781-02-03 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Light Infantry Camp at the Shallow ford[1] Feb. 3d, 1781

Dear Sir,

I received your letters of the 29th and 31st of January. When I had the pleasure of an interview,[2] I discovered nothing mercenary or illiberal in your disposition. On the contrary I was charmed with the spirit of enterprise which I flattered myself would be no less beneficial to your Country than honorable to yourself. I Still entertain the same sentiments; and I can assure you I shall be equally happy in an opportunity to do justice to your merit as to Genl. [Daniel] Morgan.

In what respect General Morgans command embarrassed you I am at a loss to imagine; but I dare say I could explain it to your perfect satisfaction in a few minutes, could I have the happiness to see you. I consider you both valuable men, as well as brave and good Officers; and I hope the merit of one don't in the least detract from the other.[3]

It is true I wish to see you again in the field; and I have ever considered it a great misfortune that you was wounded on my first coming to the command. I have not time to go more fully into the subject; but we will postpone the matter until we have the pleasure of meeting. The inhabitants are sensible of your merit, and the world does you justice. I agree with you in opinion that if proper measures are taken the enemy may be made apprehensive for their rear.

For this purpose I desired General [Francis] Marion to cross the Santee if possible; and in order to pave the way for this service, I desired Lt. Colonel [Henry] Lee to surprise George town, [Georgetown] that the militia of that quarter might be left more at liberty, to cross the river. Whether General Marion will be able to comply with my wishes I am not informed. Genl. [Andrew] Pickens has orders also to raise as many men as he can in the neighborhood of Ninety Six and Augusta ; and it is my ardent wish you should embody your Militia as soon as your health will permit. This force I think may be usefully employed against the enemy in South Carolina; and Whether it is employed there or with the continental Army when collected, you will have the command of the whole.

Great exertions are necessary. The enemy are doing their utmost to effect the entire subjugation of this State; and I am sorry to inform you that the Continental force is so small as well as in such a miserable condition that without greater reinforcements from the Militia than appears in the field at present, they must accomplish their wishes. another reinforcement is arrived at Wilmington the Corps and Strength I am not well inform'd of.[4] I have got the names and Strength of the Corps, of the Enemy under the command of Lord Cornwallis, and think your intelligence on that head is not good, as I am persuaded his force is not less than twenty five hundred Men.

We could not prevent the Enemy from crossing the Catabaw [Catawba River]. They crossed at McCowens [Cowan's] ford, at which place Genl. [William Lee] Davidson was posted with the greater part of the Militia under his command: and unfortunately fell in the Skirmish with the Enemy in their crossing.[5] We have been obliged to retire over the Yadkin, as no Militia came to our relief tho I hear since there are a few hundred in the rear of the Enemy-

1. Greene was actually at Trading Ford on the Yadkin River, 6 miles northeast of Salisbury, North Carolina. Shallow Ford was 27 miles north on the Yadkin.
2. On December 9, 1780, Greene and Gov. John Rutledge of South Carolina met with Sumter near Charlotte, where he was recuperating from the wound received at Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.
3. In his letter of January 29, Sumter told Greene, "I confess I have been under some embaressment respecting Gen. Morgans command, & the orders he has given, as I have been concerned but little in either trust, & believe I have been guilty of no Impropriety…." Gen. Daniel Morgan had complained to Greene that Col. William Hill had refused his request for troops because it didn't come through Sumter. Greene defended Morgan in a January 19 letter to Sumter and insisted that sometimes it was necessary to circumvent the usual chain of command.
4. These British troops at Wilmington, North Carolina were under Gen. James Henry Craig.
5. The battle at Cowan's Ford was on February 1, 1781.

The Enemy are in Salisbury, and our Army are moving up on the East side of Pedee[6] [Pee Dee River] I am in hopes of forming a junction next day after tomorrow, if the enemy dont push us too hard. The loss of General Davidson is a great misfortune at this time. I staid at one of the places of rendezvous the night after the enemy crossed untill midnight, but not a man appeared; nor did there a single man join us at Salisbury except a few belonging to South Carolina under the Command of Genl. Pickens.

You will please to inform me what force you think you can collect and when your health will permit your taking the field[7] — I am sorry your wound continues troublesome. I was in hopes from the account of several people that you would be in the field in a few days —

I am sir with Esteem,
Your Most Obedt. humble servt.
Nath. Greene

General Sumter

N.B. I have just heard that you are at the head of the Militia in the rear of the Enemy. I wish it may be true.[8]
Shallow ford feby. 3d 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

6. Greene was actually on the east side of the Yadkin River, which is upstream from the Pee Dee.
7. Whether Sumter responded is not known. In a February 9 letter to Sumter, Greene refers to Sumter's letter of the 7th, which has not been found. It's possible that Sumter answered the request in that letter.
8. This report was false.

1781-02-09 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp at Gilford Ct House [Guilford Courthouse] Feby 9th 1781

Dear Sir

I reced your favor of the 7th.[1] The Enemy are penetrating this Country with great rapidity, nor do I see anything to stop their progress. There are few or no Militia with us, nor are there many in the Enemie's rear. I heard by several people that you were with the latter, which gave me great pleasure: but I find I was misinformed. Before I heard of your being out I had sent General [Andrew] Pickens to take the command in the Rear: his character and influence I hope will be useful.

General [Francis] Marion has crossed the Santee [River], and taken the Stores at Watbaw[2] & near forty Prisoners. If you can call out a body of Militia immediately, and employ them in the State of South Carolina, they will render essential service, & may serve to convince the Enemy that while they attempt new conquests they lose their old possessions.

Would your health permit, & the Militia come out in force in the State of North Carolina it would be my wish that you should join the Army. But I am persuaded the fatigues would be too great for you, nor can I flatter myself with any considerable body of Militia collecting to our Aid.

If I should risque a General action in our present situation, we stand ten chances to one of getting defeated, & if defeated all the Southern States must fall. I shall avoid it if possible; but I am afraid it will be out of my power. Our force is so small & in such distress that I have little to hope & every thing to fear. The Tories in this quarter are collecting very fast; and it is highly important that the Whigs exert themselves in every quarter. Col Middleton [Charles S. Myddelton] left me night before last, & can give you a more full account of things than time will permit me to do at present.

I am, with good wishes for your perfect recovery,
Your most obdt. hble serv.
Nath Greene

[Outside]
(On public service)
The Honble Brigadr Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter has not been found.
2. Greene was probably referring to the January 31 raid at Wadboo Bridge by Marion's troops. A detachment under Capt. John Postell destroyed enemy stores and captured 33 prisoners.

Sumter's Rounds

By February 1781, Gen. Sumter had recuperated enough from his wound received the previous November at Blackstock's Plantation to lead a three-week long campaign into South Carolina. This action became known afterward as "Sumter's Rounds."[1] The phrase is seen often in pension applications of the nineteenth century. For example, Stephen McElhenney's 1832 application states that he "entered the Service under Genl. Sumter and went with him [on] what was called Sumter's Rounds."[2]

After the disastrous defeat of Banastre Tarleton's forces at Cowpens on January 17, Gen. Cornwallis resolved to free the British prisoners; failing in that, he attempted to destroy Gen. Nathanael Greene's army and marched his troops into North Carolina for this purpose. He went as far as to burn most of his army's baggage in order to speed up their progress. This action was the beginning of the "Race to the Dan" as Greene retreated to eventual safety beyond the Dan River, at the border of North Carolina and Virginia. Sumter sensed an opportunity for action in South Carolina as Cornwallis moved further away from the state.[3] In a letter to Gen. Greene dated January 29, Sumter declared, "There has been a great change of things in this Quarter of late, & I conceive the Enemy thinks their situations some-what unfavourable to themselves."[4] And two days later, again writing to Greene, Sumter reported that "parts of So. Carolina appear Disposed to take up Arms against the British, Small Bodies are Colecting [sic] in Several places for that purpose."[5]

On February 16, Sumter led a force of 280 out of his camp at the Waxhaws and headed toward the center of South Carolina. By February 19 he arrived at the British outpost Fort Granby on the Congaree River. The garrison of three hundred controlled the river crossing known as Friday's Ferry. Sumter had no artillery and tried to deceive them into surrendering using fake artillery known as "Quaker" cannons (disguised logs). The fort's commander, Major Andrew Maxwell, did not fall for the ruse and refused the demand. Sumter then tried a frontal assault, which was repulsed. Lord Rawdon, commanding British troops at Camden, dispatched a relief force toward Granby. They seized the fords above Granby, assuming that Sumter would retreat back to the north once he was forced to break off the siege. Sumter instead moved down the river toward his next target, Thomson's plantation.[6]

The plantation home of Lt. Col. William Thomson of the South Carolina 3rd Regiment, known as Belleville, was on the north bank of the Congaree River. Thomson had been captured at the surrender of Charleston in May 1780 and his home was later seized by the British. Belleville was turned into a military outpost and surrounded by a stockade. Sumter once again tried a direct assault and once again failed. His troops managed to set some outbuildings on fire, but the defenders quickly doused the flames. Sumter remained there less than a day and moved on to Manigault's plantation a few miles away.[7]

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1. Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock: Nathanael Greene, Thomas Sumter, and the Revolutionary War for the Soul of the South* (Casemate Publishers, 2019), 49
2. Stephen McElhenney, Pension Application S21368, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication M804, transcribed by Will Graves, https://revwarapps.org/s21368.pdf.
3. Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (the R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 135; Waters, The Quaker and the Gamecock, 47-48.
4. Sumter to Greene, Jan. 29, 1781, as printed in *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 16, No. 3 (July 1915), 97-99.
5. Sumter to Greene, January 31, 1781 (letter #1), MiU-C.
6. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc., 2000) 129-130; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 136-137; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Five," *Names in South Carolina, Vol. XXIV* (Winter 1977) 16; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 53-54.
7. Bass, *Gamecock*, 130; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 138; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Five," 16; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 55.

Sumter's fortunes appeared to change at this point as he learned of the approach of British supply wagons. He set up an ambush and some fifteen wagons were captured. They not only contained weapons, ammunition, and clothing, there were also several chests that presumably contained gold coins. The captured goods were placed on boats and floated down the river to be claimed later, but the British at Wright's Bluff fired on the flotilla, recaptured their lost supplies, and stowed them at the nearby British outpost at Fort Watson. Sumter, meanwhile, was being pursued by Rawdon's forces and in danger of being trapped against the river. His men found two canoes and they tediously made their escape by crossing three men at a time and swimming the horses alongside. Undiscouraged by the close call and hoping to recover his lost loot, Sumter decided to attack Fort Watson on February 28. The fort was built atop a Santee Indian ritual mound near the confluence of the Congaree and Santee Rivers. The fort was not large but was well protected with defensive barriers and had recently been reinforced with additional troops. But Sumter yet again chose to make a frontal attack with his smaller force and was soon forced to withdraw under heavy fire.[8]

Sumter fell back to Farr's plantation a few miles away and set up camp. Sumter wrote to Gen. Francis Marion that day in hopes of joining forces with him. But Marion never made that rendezvous and historians disagree as to whether he was wary of the situation and deliberately stayed away, or simply was unable to comply with the request in time due to distance and communication delays. Sumter broke camp on March 2 and headed towards the High Hills of the Santee to retrieve his wife Mary and son Tom. With his disabled wife astride a makeshift mattress saddle, the party set off again back toward the Waxhaws. Along the way Sumter's troops became embroiled in a running see-saw firefight with Maj. Thomas Fraser's Royalists, a Loyalist unit. These actions occurred March 6 in the vicinity of present-day Bishopville, South Carolina. Casualties were light on both sides and Sumter was able to fend off his attackers and continue the march toward the Waxhaws. His party arrived there on March 9.[9]

The Rounds campaign was a failure as far as any material gains for the Patriot cause. Sumter was unable to capture any of the outposts he attacked and he inflicted minimal casualties on the enemy. But the incursion into South Carolina sheds light on the British army's situation in the state in the wake of their January defeat at Cowpens and their stalled push into the southern states.

Only a few weeks earlier, the British had assumed that Sumter had been left incapacitated by his wound at Blackstock's Plantation. Cornwallis had rejoiced that his "greatest plague" was out of commission. But Sumter was not only back in the saddle by February; he was probing deep into South Carolina and threatening multiple British outposts.

All efforts to intercept him failed. The Rounds campaign highlighted the tenuous hold of the British on the state and foreshadowed their abandonment of all interior posts before the end of the summer.[10]

8. Bass, *Gamecock*, 131; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 138-140; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Five," 16-17; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 55-57.
9. Bass, *Gamecock*, 132-135; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 140-143; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Five," 17; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 57-59;
10. Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 124.

Francis Marion



Frances Marion. *Poindexter P. Carter. S.C. Chamber*

Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter were, in many ways, counterparts as they waged war against the British. Both commanded militia forces that operated primarily in South Carolina and, for the most part, they operated independently. They suppressed the Loyalists, disrupted British supply lines, supplied intelligence to Gen. Nathanael Greene, and engaged in numerous firefights with the enemy.

Marion was born around 1732 to a Huguenot family in Berkeley County, South Carolina. The Huguenots were French Protestants who fled their country in the face of persecution from the Catholic monarchy. At age fifteen, Marion signed on to work aboard a West Indies–bound merchant ship. But his interest in that career quickly waned when the ship sank and he and his shipmates spent a week adrift in a lifeboat. Marion returned to South Carolina to help run the family plantation. At age twenty-five, Marion joined the South Carolina militia as the colony's frontier with the Cherokee nation erupted in response to the French and Indian War. His experience fighting the Cherokee no doubt influenced his later use of their ambush tactics against the British.[1]

As hostilities with Britain flared in 1775, Marion once again answered the call to duty. He was commissioned as a captain in William Moultrie's 2nd South Carolina Regiment. His first major engagement was at the successful defense of Fort Sullivan and Charleston Harbor against British attack in June 1776. Thomas Sumter was also involved in this action and the two would not be in the same battle again for another five years. In 1779, Marion's unit was part of a failed Franco-American attempt to retake the city of Savannah, Georgia, from the British. He was recalled to Charleston to help prepare the city's defenses against the British siege. According to legend, he attended a dinner party in the city in which those assembled began drinking heavily while toasting the Patriot cause. The host allegedly locked the doors and, being unwilling to submit to an act of "social tyranny," Marion leapt from a second-story window, breaking his ankle. He went to the countryside to recuperate, a decision that saved him from being captured by the British when Charleston fell in May 1780.[2]

Marion's injury healed enough for him to take the field again as the British were moving out of their base in Charleston to subdue the interior of South Carolina. Fate smiled upon him once again when Continental Army commander Gen. Horatio Gates ordered him to disrupt British supplies and communications in the Santee River area. This resulted in Marion missing the Battle of Camden, where he probably would have been killed or captured. In the wake of that disastrous defeat, Marion and Sumter carried on the fight in South Carolina at the head of their

1. Robert D. Bass, *Swamp Fox: The Life and Campaigns of General Francis Marion* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc., 1974) 1-10; Mark M. Boatner, III, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1994) 675-676; Kevin Dougherty and Steven D. Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox: The Leadership Lessons of Francis Marion* (Casemate Publishers, 2022) 47-48; Walter Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (University of South Carolina Press, 2006) 591; John Oller*, the Swamp Fox: How Francis Marion Saved the American Revolution* (Da Capo Press, 2016) 20-29.
2. Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 11-17, 24-31; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution,* 676; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 48-49; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 591; Oller*, the Swamp Fox*, 35-42, 46-53.

militia troops. Sumter operated in the central part of the state while Marion conducted guerrilla-type raids east of the Wateree River. The constant attacks led British Commander Lord Cornwallis to order the feared Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton to hunt down and eliminate the elusive Marion. But even the brash Tarleton could not corner Marion as he escaped into the swamps. Legend states that Tarleton supposedly declared that the devil himself could not catch that "damned old fox," and this comment is seen as the origin of Marion's "Swamp Fox" nickname.[3]

Marion fought successfully against Loyalist militia as well as British regulars, disrupted British communications and supplies, discouraged Loyalist support, and disrupted any British attempts to establish an interior outpost east of the Santee. Still a Continental officer, Marion accepted the authority of Gen. Nathanael Greene when he arrived in the Carolinas in December 1780 to replace the disgraced Gen. Gates. Marion forged a strong partnership with Lt. Col. Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, and his troops engaged in several actions alongside Lee's Legion in 1781. Together they attempted, but failed, to take Georgetown, though they later captured the British outposts of Fort Watson and Fort Motte in April and May. Sumter joined with them at the Battle of Shubrick's Plantation during the so-called "Dog Days Expedition" in July. Sumter failed to wait for his artillery to catch up and, taking command, ordered a futile assault over open ground against enemy troops who were firing from buildings and behind fences. Marion vowed never to fight with Sumter again. Sumter resigned from the military within a few months, anyway. Marion and Lee, however, would see combat together once more at the Battle of Eutaw Springs in September 1781. This would be the last major engagement of the Revolution in the South and, with Gen. Greene himself in command of 3,100 Patriots, a bloody see-saw battle ensued with about 2,000 British. Much like Guilford Courthouse earlier in the year, Greene had to finally yield the battleground, but the British had once again suffered losses that further weakened their grip on the Carolinas.[4]

Like Sumter, Marion was elected to the South Carolina legislature when it reconvened at Jacksonborough in January 1782. Unlike Sumter, his absence from the military was not permanent. In June 1782, he led his troops against Loyalists under the command of Maj. Micajah Ganey in present-day Marion County. Ganey and his 500 troops surrendered and were promised pardons if they laid down their arms except in service of the Patriots, and returned any plundered property.[5]

The British departed Charleston in December 1782 and Marion focused on rebuilding his ruined plantation, Pine Bluff, and on his service in the state senate. As a senator, he helped write the state constitution and advocated for lenient treatment of the Loyalists who remained in the state. Marion finally became a married man at the age of 54 when he wed his cousin, Mary Esther Videau. He died at his plantation in 1795 at the age of 63. He was buried in Berkeley County at Belle Isle Plantation, which was owned by his brother Gabriel.[6]

There are 25 identified letters between the two officers, all of them written in 1781. Marion was Sumter's third most active correspondent in the war, behind General Greene and Governor Rutledge. The contents of eleven of those letters are unknown, as they are only referenced in other letters. The most common topic is informing each other of their movements and sharing intelligence. Sumter often mentions a desire to link up with Marion, but the two did not see action together in 1781 except for the ill-fated attack on Shubrick's Plantation on July 17.

3. Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 39-43; 79-83; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution,* 676-677; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox,* 49; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 591-592; Oller*, the Swamp Fox*, 85-87.
4. Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 169-195; 206-208; 216-219; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution,* 677; Dougherty and Smith, *Leading Like the Swamp Fox*, 49-51; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 592; Oller*, the Swamp Fox*, 145-160, 172-175, 189-199. Gregory D. Massey and Jim Piccuch, Eds. *General Nathanael Greene and the American Revolution in the South* (University of South Carolina Press, 2012)
5. Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 235-239; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution,* 677; Oller*, The Swamp Fox*, 225-227.
6. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution,* 678; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 592.

1781-02-20 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

Camp at Friday's Ferry,[1] Feb. 20th, 1781

Dear Sir

Hurry of business obliges me to be laconick. I arrived at this place yesterday morning about four o'clock. Shortly after, attacked the fort,[2] with which I have been ever since engaged. Everything hitherto favourable, and have no doubt but I shall succeed, if not interrupted by Lord Rawdon [Lt. Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon],[3] who, I know, will strip his post as bare of men as possible to spare, to obviate which, as far as may be in your power, it is my wish that you would be pleased to move in such a direction as to attract his attention, and thereby prevent his designs.

Timely assistance in this way portends much good to this State. I have also to request that every inhabitant of this State, westward of Santee [River] be permitted to join their respective Regiments, or rather immediately repair to my station. I desired Col. Marshall [Lt. Col. John Marshall of the Camden District Regiment of militia], with what men he could collect to march down, eastward of Camden, and will probably fall in with you in good time.

I wish and beg that you may suppress every species of plundering, as the greatest evils to the publick, as well as individuals, are experienced thereby. You cannot be too particular. The enemy oblige the negroes they have to make frequent sallies. This circumstance alone is sufficient to rouse and fix the resentment and detestation of every American who possesses common feelings. I shall be happy to receive an account of the state of things to the East and Northward. If you can, with propriety, advance Southwardly so as to co-operate, or correspond with me, it might have the best of consequences.[4]

I am, dear sir, with the greatest regards,
Your most obd't, humble serv't,
THOS. SUMPTER.

P. S. — I am extremely short of ammunition: if you are well supplied, should be much oblidged to you to send some into the neighborhood of Buckingham's ferry.

[Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pg 23. The original has not been found.]**

1. Friday's Ferry was on the Congaree River in present-day Cayce, South Carolina.
2. Sumter is referring to Fort Granby, also known as Friday's Fort, near Friday's Ferry, a garrison of 300 Loyalist militia at the river crossing. Sumter's siege of Fort Granby was the first action in the campaign that became known as "Sumter's Rounds." See the headnote for more information on this topic.
3. Rawdon did respond with a force directed at Sumter, but there is disagreement among historians as to who commanded it. See the headnote on Sumter's Rounds for more details. Sumter responded by lifting his siege on February 21. He withdrew southward along the west side of Congaree River to Fort Thomson.
4. At the time Sumter wrote this letter Marion was at Indiantown, 90 miles east-southeast of Friday's Ferry. Sumter apparently thought that Marion was farther north.

1781-02-21 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

[It can be assumed that Greene was writing from Irwin's Ferry on the Dan River near South Boston in Virginia, based on his other letters of that date.]

Irwin's Ferry, 2-21-1781

Dear Sir

I am well informed the post of Camden is very short of provision and & that the destruction of the Mill would reduce the Garrison to the necessity of quitting the Post. It is my earnest desire you should take every prudent measure in your power to effect the destruction of it.

The works are too Strong and the Garrison too large to warrant an attempt upon the post. But if we can prevent them obtaining supplies & oblige the Garrison to detach parties at a distance you will be able to reduce it in a short time. It is confidently asserted by a person well acquainted with the situation and circumstances of the place, that there is not three days provision in the garrison after the mill and its contents are destroyed.[1]

I beg you will exert yourself to rouse the people of South Carolina, and direct General [Francis] Marion to such points, as you may think will effectually promote the public good. Great care should be taken to prevent the parties from plundering But as you are so fully impressed with the pernicious consequences attending this business, I need urge no argument upon the occasion.

Lord Cornwallis has given us a run from the Catawba [River] to Dan river. A reinforcement of Militia have joined us, and more are daily expected. Col [William] Campbell with the mountaineers, and General [Andrew] Pickens with the Salisbury Militia,[2] are on the march to join us. Lord Cornwallis has filed off towards Hillsborough, and it is said is bound to cross Creek [now Fayetteville, NC]. We are in full pursuit, and if our force can be brought to a point in season I am in great hopes of giving him a stroke.[3]

The army is in good spirits, and the Militia also. Our greatest difficulty is the want of provision, and the means of transportation. I am told the enemy have order'd the Militia to be drafted in South Carolina to serve during the war. If this is true, you may improve it to raise the indignation of the people. At all events prevent the draft taking effect if possible, for if they succeed in that the country is inevitably lost.[4] I depend upon your exertions and doubt not matters will wear a more pleasing face in a few weeks.

I am dear Sir
Your Most Obed humble Serv.
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
To Genl. Sumter Feb: 21st 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The British would not be forced to abandon Camden until May 9, 1781.
2. Pickens had been elected as a temporary commander of the Salisbury militia to replace Gen. William Davidson, who had been killed at Cowan's Ford on Feb. 1.
3. Greene did not face off against Cornwallis until March 15 at Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina.
4. Reports of an impending draft by the British were false.

1781-02-26 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

26 Feb 1781 – AM

Dr Sir

Since I wrought [wrote] you this morning,[1] I find by the Bearer that you Desire I should make a Junction with you,[2] on the So Santee [South Santee River]— but Colo. Watson's [Lt. Col. John Watson Tadwell-Watson] force is now on the high hills of Santee at Colo. Richardsons [Richard Richardson, Jr.'s], & have possession of that part of the country, & is too strong for me to remove — I shall however go as near him as possible & Indeavor to cut off any forraging partys, & be in the way of hearing further from you — The Bearer tells me you have failed in your attack on the Post [paper damage and text missing] rees [probably Congarees] & that you have come down [*paper damage and text missing*] Colo. Thomps [*paper damage and text missing*][3]

I had ferget to acquaint you that [paper damage and text missing] men left Geo'r Town [Georgetown] last fryday [February 23]. Crossed over Santee & I suppose it may be intended to reinforce Nelson's ferry or Colo. Thompsons [William Thomson's Plantation].[4]

I wish to hear from you and I shall be the 29th at Scap hor[5] on the head of Black River.

Colo. [William] Harden [says?] there is but one post to the So. Ward & that is at Pocotallage [Pocotaligo River] of 50 men[6] —

I am with esteem Dr Sir
Yr obdt svt
Francis Marion

[Outside]
Genl Francis Marion

The Honble Genl Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter held by RR Auction of Boston, MA. It was later sold to an unknown party.]

1. Marion's first letter has not been found.
2. The letter with Sumter's request has not been found. Sumter's letter of February 20 did express a desire that Marion "co-operate" with him, but no mention is made of the South Santee River.
3. Sumter had failed in his attempt to take Ft. Granby on the Congaree and had moved southward to Col. William Thomson's Plantation.
4. Probably a reference to the King's American Regiment, which arrived at Moncks Corner on February 27 and was attached to the 84th Regiment under Lt. Col. John Small. Small's force arrived at Nelson's Ferry on March 2, and they arrived at Ft. Watson on March 6.
5. Scape Whore Swamp, since renamed Scape Ore Creek. Marion arrived there on March 1, but Sumter failed to join him.
6. The Pocotaligo River is a tidal creek separating present-day Beaufort and Jasper counties. Col. Harden would capture the Loyalist outpost Fort Balfour on the Pocotaligo on April 11.

1781-02-28 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

CAMP AT FARR's[1]
Feb 28th 1781

Dear Sir

I have received your favor of the 26th inst and am extremely glad to hear you are so far advanced this way.[2] I passed the river last night at Mrs Flud's [Fludd's][3] have been at Col [John Watson Tadwell] Watson's station and find that he has collected his whole force at that place.[4]

I think it advisable that we should form a junction or at least approach so near each other as to co-operate upon the shortest notice. Nothing can at this time be more essentially necessary to the interest of this country than to form a well regulated army in the interior part of this State while the enemy's principal force is so far removed.[5] I hope it will not interfere with any plan that you might have laid to come this way.

From the idea I have of the state of things in this quarter I think it expedient for you to proceed to this place.[6]

I shall wait impatiently for the happiness of an interview with you.

I have dear sir the honour to be
Your most obedient humble servant
THOS SUMTER

[Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pg 49. The original has not been found.]

1. Thomas Farr's plantation was north of Santee River near Nelson's Ferry and Sumter's plantation.
2. On February 26 Marion was about 60 miles east of Farr's plantation. At the time this letter was written Marion was at Salem Black River Presbyterian Church about 34 miles north of Farr's plantation.
3. Fludd's Plantation was three miles above Nelson's Ferry on the Santee River. Sumter's men slowly crossed the river using two canoes.
4. Sumter would fail to take Fort Watson on March 1, but it later surrendered to Francis Marion and Henry Lee on April 23, 1781.
5. Most of the British army of the South under Cornwallis was pursuing Gen. Nathanael Greene in North Carolina.
6. On the day after Sumter wrote this letter, Marion marched westward, then southward toward Farr's plantation, but Sumter had left by the time Marion arrived on March 3.

1781-03-04 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

CAMP, MR Bradley's,[1] 4th March 1781

Dear Sir

Yours of 2d instant has this moment come to hand.[2] I am very sorry to be so far out of the way of meeting with you at a time when there is the greatest occasion for it.[3] I made no doubt but your route to me would be by the way of King's Tree or the Ferry[4] and after receiving yours of the 28th ultimo[5] informing me what the number of your men were, I found you to be very weak and the enemy near at hand in force. This determined me to move on to meet with you to concert measures for our further operations which is still absolutely necessary. I shall therefore remain at or near this place for that purpose and beg that you may come this way with all possible speed. If not convenient with all your men to facilitate an interview, please to come with a few.[6]

My horses are so worn out that I can scarce move at all and officers and men quite discouraged finding no force in these parts, not even men enough to join to guide me through the country. But notwithstanding little may be done now, yet much good might be expected to result hereafter from a personal consultation which I hope to have the favour of by tomorrow night. You will readily agree with me that the worst of consequences are to be apprehended from my having to return without seeing you and fixing upon a proper mode for our proceedings in future, and as you are not unacquainted with my inability to go to you I hope you will undertake to do the needful in that case. The accounts you give respecting Lord Cornwallis are very pleasing. God grant a speedy confirmation If you return upon the same side of the River that you now are. Perhaps you may collect men about the hills and take some of the Tories about Black River which I am informed are venturing out near this place. I mean to remain until I hear from you again.

I am dear sir with great esteem
Your most obedient humble servant
THOS SUMTER

[Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pg 27. The original has not been found.]

1. Probably the plantation of James Bradley near Salem Black River Presbyterian Church.
2. Marion's letter of March 2 has not been found.
3. On March 2 Marion was at "Hungres Hole Whites plantations" (the plantation of William White on Hungary Hall Branch) marching to meet with Sumter near Nelson's Ferry about 15 miles to the south, but Sumter left before Marion arrived on the next day.
4. On March 3 Sumter marched from near Nelson's Ferry about 31 miles northeastward to Kingstree. Sumter apparently expected to either meet Marion on the way or that Marion would reach him from Nelson's Ferry.
5. Marion's letter of Feb. 28 has not been found.
6. Marion had given up his effort to join Sumter and marched about 15 miles south before he received this letter from Sumter. Sumter waited for Marion at Bradley's until March 6, then continued northward.

1781-03-06 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters Guilford County March 6th 1781

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 15th ulto. was handed me this moment[1] which is the only intelligence I have had from you since Majr. Middleton [Charles Myddelton] left us. You are fully informed of the operations I wish to have carried into effect in S. Carolina. Genl. [Andrew] Pickens will be detached in a few days to join you.[2]

The enclosed proposals for an exchange were handed me by Mr. [Maurice] Spillard[3] two days since, he is suspected of being employed as a spy. Unless you are under some obligations to conclude the exchange, I wish it might not be effected. In future all exchanges must be negotiated through Major [Edmund] Hyrne, who is appointed D Comy [Deputy Commissary] of Prisoners for the Southern department. I have written the British Commissary to this effect and that no British prisoner is to consider himself as exchanged unless it is negotiated through Major Hyrne.

Commissioners will be immediately appointed to settle upon the principles of a general exchange, which it is expected will immediately take place. I must beg that all prisoners who remain unexchanged may be reported to the Commissary of Prisoners.

This will be sent to Col. Thos. Polk [Thomas Polk] who will forward it by express.

Lord Cornwallis continues on Haw River near Gen. [John] Butler's plantation; it is probable he will file off toward Cross creek.[4] I wish we may be able to attack him on his march.

If Mr. Spillard is not exchanged, I desire his baggage may be sent to Head Quarters, should it be sent out of Camden.

I am with regard Dear Sir
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
Nathanael Greene Guilford County March 6, 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at The Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter of February 15 has not been found. On the day after it was written Sumter left Waxhaws to begin the campaign known as Sumter's Rounds.
2. On the day Greene wrote this letter, the militiamen under Pickens were engaged at the skirmish at Wetzel's Mill. Many of them then left in disgust, believing they had been sacrificed to cover the retreat of Continentals. Pickens apparently did not join Sumter. On March 8 Greene sent Pickens to the Ninety Six District in South Carolina.
3. Details of the proposed exchange have not been found. Sumter does not refer to Spillard in later letters.
4. Cornwallis did not move toward Cross Creek (present-day Fayetteville, North Carolina) until after the Guilford Courthouse battle on March 15, 1781.

1781-03-08 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Camp on Haw River[1] March 8th 1781

Dr Sir:

The present situation of Affairs rendering it impracticable for me to return immediately into So. Carolina — not seeing any prospect of being able to go thither very soon, &, it being impossible, if we cd penetrate that Country, to reestablish the Civil Government for some time, & my remaining here being of no service to our State, I have determined to set off in a few days for Philadelphia, with a view of procuring, if possible, some supplies of cloathing for our Militia (whose distress, for want of it, gives me great Concern) & of obtaining such effectual aid, as may soon restore both Chas. Town [Charleston] & the Country to our possession — my utmost Endeavors for these purposes, shall be exerted, & I flatter myself that I may succeed by personal applications —

I am persuaded of your utmost Attention, & that you will pursue such Measures as may be most serviceable to the State, & I doubt not, that Genl [Francis] Marion (to whom I have wrote) and Genl [Andrew] Pickens, (to whom I have spoke,) on the Subject, will forward your views, to the utmost of their power.

I shall be glad to hear from you, under cover to Genl. Green [Nathanael Greene], when any material occurrence offers, & shall write to you, under cover to him, when I have any material matter to communicate — I have not yet recd the blank Commissions, which I desired Hampton to get at Newbern [New Bern]. However, if I do not receive 'em, before I get to Richmond, I will have some printed there, & transmitted to you — until you receive Commissions, you will give Brevets[2]—& in order that you may carry sufficient authority, over the several officers in your Brigade, you may remove any of them and appoint others in their stead, from Time to Time, as you think proper —

Gen'l Pickens will inform you, of the directions I have given respecting the Wagons & Stores — you will give such further orders respecting their Removal, as you think proper — when they arrive, I wd have the Cloathing distributed, as a free Gift from the State amongst the Militia, of your, & Genls Marion & Pickens, Brigades, according to their Numbers & Services — I wish it was more worth their Acceptance.

The Rum & Salt you will give such orders about as you think proper — I have not seen Hampton, & don't know what Articles he has procured, for you own use, but I fear, he cd not comply with your requisitions, as I believe many of 'em cd not be procured in this State, or southward of Maryland — I therefore request, that you will, as soon as you can, send me a list, pr Express,[3] to Genl Green, (with a request to him to forward it pr Express to me) of whatever you wish to have procured for your own use, & you may depend on my obtaining it at Philadelphia — don't delay this Matter, as I, perhaps, may stay but a little time there — I hope it will not be necessary for me to remain long there[4] —

I am with great Regard Dr Sir

Yr. most obed. Serv.

J. Rutledge

Brigad. Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]

To The Honble Brigad. Genl. Sumter

[Transcription from original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Rutledge was presumably at Gen. Nathanael Greene's camp at High Rock Ford on the Haw River in North Carolina.
2. A brevet was a temporary promotion.
3. If Sumter replied with a list, it has not been found.
4. Rutledge remained in Philadelphia until at least the end of May, 1781.

1781-03-09 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Waxsaws [Waxhaws], 9th March, 1781

Dr Sir

I Marched on Thursday the 16th Ultimo from the Catabaw [Catawba River], with about Two hundred & eighty men for the Congrees [Congarees] — I proceeded from thence to the enemies posts at Col. Thompson's [William Thompson's Plantation], Neilson's [Nelson's] Ferry, Scott's Lake &C, was within fifty miles of Charles Town [Charleston], but finding I Should git no assistance from Genl. [Francis] Marion thought proper to Return, Which I have happily Effected, with Very inconsiderable Loss[1] —

As I Still Labor under the Misfortune of having but little use of my Right hand, and Writing Very painfull[2], therefore Not to Deprive you of a full account of my proceedings, and every Necessary intelligence Respecting the Situation of the Enemy in So. Carolina, have Sent Capt. Hampton[3] a Valuable and Intelligent officer, Who Will wait upon you for that purpose, on whose information you may Rely — and to Whom You may Communicate With Safety — he is fully acquainted With my late opperations and partly with my Designs in futer [future], until your pleasure is Known. Notwithstanding Capt Hampton is Well acquainted with my late proceedings, I Shall in the Corse of a few days Transmit to you a particular account thereof in Writing[4] — a Variety of things I Coud Wish to mention but fear you are not Circumstanced so, as to give the Necessary Assistance I Want, I Say Nothing.

I have the Honr. to be, Dr Sir,
Your most obdt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

N.B.

I am extremely bad off for a little hard money — for which I Can procure every Information I wish for — a Small Sum woud Serve at present, I have a plan in View which I Shall find Difficulty in Carrying into execution without Some —

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at Yale University]

1. Sumter is describing his three-week campaign through South Carolina which became known as "Sumter's Rounds." Click here to read details. Francis Marion had marched promptly to Nelson's Ferry as agreed, but Sumter had departed by the time he arrived.
2. Sumter was still suffering from the wound he had received at Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.
3. Possibly Capt. Wade Hampton.
4. Sumter's account, if sent, has not been found.

1781-03-10 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

March 10. 1781

I send, by Major [John] Bowie,[1] 300 blank Militia Commissions, wth which you will do as I have mentd in the Memorandum inclosed with 'em. — The sooner these are given out, the better —I will, shortly, send some more, as I presume more will be wanted, but, you will take the proper Care not to have too great a proportion of Officers commissioned —

I wrote you a Line by Genl [Andrew] Pickens, the day before yesterday & refered you to him, for Intelligence abt. the Waggons & Stores —I have just seen Major Bowie, who informs me, that the Waggoners have taken out their Horses, & are gone Home —I think [*The following two lines are from Lyman Draper's transcription; they are missing in original.*] the stores may now be moved into So. Carolina with safety. However, you will judge of that [*Resume LOC version*] matter, & give such orders, respecting 'em, as you think proper —If all cannot be moved, at present, I shd. think the Clothing & Articles most wanted may — you had better send the Men for 'em who, has Gen. Greene's orders for Forage —

Inclosed is a List of the several Articles sent — pray, keep the List carefully, till I see you, as I have no Copy of it — you'll observe there are several Articles on it, sent for my own use —I desire that you will take 'em for yours, & the use of Genls [Francis] Marion & Pickens, if they have occasion for, & you can spare any of 'em —I will supply myself with others at Philada. – I mentd., in my Letter by Pickens, what I wd. Have done wth. the Cloathing — all the other articles you will…*[The following lines are from Draper's transcription; they are missing in the original document.]*

…dispose of in such manner as you think most proper.

Our accts. of Feb 20th. From Philadelphia are that Parliament had resolved by 230 agst. 115 to continue the war — that they talked of sending out large reinforcement; but it is not known how they are to be obtained. The British lost a 74 gun ship, and two others dismasted, in the storm of January, off Gardener's [Gardiner's] Island.[2] The Pennsylvania Line are ordered to the Southward, to march at the 18th of next month,[3] and all the forces southward of Pennsylvania inclusive, are appropriated to the Southern service.

Col. John Laurens was to sail the 8th ulto. from Boston for France.[4] The 2nd division was to sail from Brest about the end of last month. Congress have ordered 400 waggons, 10,000 suits of cloaths, 860 tents, 5000 muskets, with bayonets and cartridge boxes, 8,000 knapsacks, 6000 haversacks, 8,000 canteens, 700 camp kettles, 8,000 blankets, ten [*Resume LOC version*] Tons of Musket powder, 5 tons of Cannon powder & 20 tons of Lead, to be procured for the Southern Army —& the Cavalry & Artillery of it to be furnished with the necessary Equipment —& they have Established a Fund sufficient for procuring the sum necessary for this Expense – I hope soon to send you satisfactory Assurances of speedy & effectual Aid to recover our Country completely –

Keep up the Spirits of our Friends. We must succeed & I hope shortly.

I am with great Regard, Dr Sir

Yr most obed servt.

J. Rutledge

Brigr. Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Bowie was an aide-de-camp to Gen. Andrew Pickens.
2. The HMS Culloden ran aground on January 24, 1781 off Long Island, New York, and was abandoned.
3. Gen. Anthony Wayne with 800 Pennsylvania Continentals joined forces with Gen. Lafayette in Virginia on June 10, 1781.
4. Laurens arrived in March and joined Thomas Paine and Benjamin Franklin to successfully lobby the French for military aid.

1781-03-12 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Harrisburgh [Harrisburg, Pennsylvania] March 12:1781

Dr. Sir

Having an opportunity of procuring, in this State, about Two Thousand five Hundred yards of Cloth, (blue, crimson, & white), I have obtained it, for the use of our Militia —Mr. Benja. [Benjamin] Hawkins,[1] the Commercial Agent of this State, in whose Charge it is, at Kingston [now Kinston, North Carolina], will deliver it to your order — one waggon, he says, will carry the whole — in order to get it, as expeditiously as possible, I believe it wd. be best, to store a Waggon Load of the salt in Bedford County[2] & send one of the Waggons, now there, for this Cloathing —

However, you will either do so, or, devise such other mode as you think best, for getting it into So. Carolina, as soon as possible, & you will dispose of it, in such manner as you think will most effectually promote the service of our Country —

I have desired Mr. Hawkins to procure Thread to make up the Cloth —Buttons are not to be had — you can have moulds made, & cover 'em wth. Cloth –

I am Dr. Sir
Yr. most obedt. servt.
J. [John] Rutledge

P.S. Pray acknowledge the rect of this letter, as soon as it gets to Hand, that I may be sure, if it is safe, of its being so.[3]

Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Hawkins represented North Carolina in the Continental Congress that year as well as being the commercial agent for the state.
2. Probably Bedford County in Virginia. See Greene's letter to Sumter, April 15, 1781.
3. If Sumter replied, the letter has not been found.

1781-03-16 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters Guilford County[1] N. Carolina March 16th 1781.

Dear Sir

I have been manuvring in the neighbourhood of the enemy since I wrote you by Genl [Andrew] Pickens[2] untill yesterday morning when Lord Cornwallis advanced upon us in our position at Guilford Court House with his whole Army and they commenced the attack with their usual impetuosity. I was pleased with the conduct of most of our troops, and had the N.C. Militia behaved equal to my expectations we should certainly have totally ruined the British Army.[3] We were obliged to leave the ground and our four pieces of Artillery to the Enemy, with the loss of perhaps 200 killed wounded & missing. But the purchase was made at so great an expence that I hope it may yet effect their ruin. From the best accounts they had near 500 Men killed and wounded.[4] We made a few Prisoners. Several of their field Officers killed. I lament the loss of M[ajor Archibald] Anderson of the M [Maryland] Line who was left dead on the field with several officers of inferior rank. The enemy continue at Guilford C House and it is said they have sent their baggage to cross Creek [now Fayetteville, North Carolina]. Our troops are refreshing themselves at this place and I hope a few days will enable us to fight them with more decided advantage. If they retire they must leave their wounded in our possession.[5] Our Army are in the highest spirits and wishing for an opportunity of engaging the enemy.

By Genl. Pickens you were informed that the British fleet were so injured by a storm that the French Admiral was enabled to detach one Ship of the Line and two frigates to Chesepeak [Chesapeake] bay which had blocked up Mr [Benedict] Arnold at Portsmouth.[6] The Marquis de la Fayette was immediately detached with the Lt Infantry of the A [American] Army to cooperate against the force under Gen' Arnold.[7] And altho' the British have gained a superiority at Sea by the return of one of their missing ships, I have hopes that the Marquis will succeed in the reduction of Mr Arnold.[8]

We have reports from several quarters that Count D Estaing [d'Estaing] on his passage to the W. Indiees [West Indies] with 22 ships of the Line, and a large body of troops had fallen in with a British fleet off the Western Islands and captured 6 ships of the Line, 3 frigates &r 45 transports. We have no official accounts of the affair but it is generally believed.[9]

I am very anxious to hear from you the situation of Affairs in S Carolina. Reinforcements are coming from the Northward which I hope will enable us to free your State from the savage treatment of the Enemy. I am With esteem Your Most Obedient Humble Servant

N.B. I beg you will communicate the account of the action to Genls [Francis] Marion & Pickens

[Outside] To Gen. Sumter March 16th 1781
Ex'd [Examined]

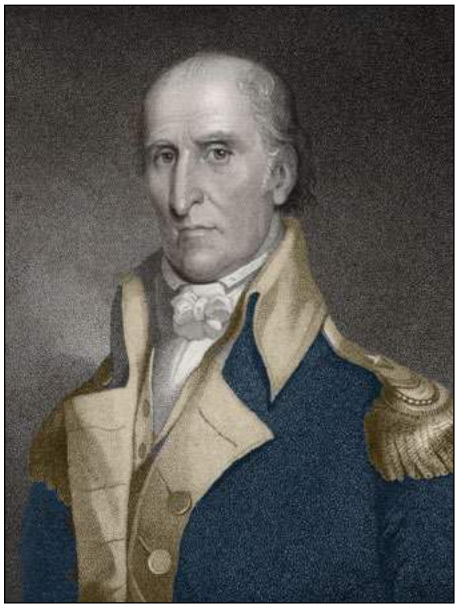
[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Following the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15, Greene retreated to Speedwell Ironworks on Troublesome Creek, approximately 17 miles northeast of the battlefield. The creek is a tributary of the Haw River.
2. The letter via Pickens has not been found. Greene's letter of March 6 stated that "Genl. Pickens will be detached in a few days to join you." So Pickens presumably carried the letter sometime after that date.
3. In his report to Congress, Greene criticized the North Carolina militia for not holding its position on the front line against British Regulars. "They left the ground and many of them threw away their arms."
4. Greene's estimate agrees with present-day tallies.
5. On March 18 Cornwallis left for Wilmington, North Carolina to recover from his costly victory. Greene pursued as far as Ramsey's Mill on Deep River, then turned southward toward South Carolina.
6. Gen. Arnold arrived in Chesapeake Bay on December 29, 1780 and commenced raiding up the James River. A French squadron arrived in the bay on February 13 but was not able to impede Arnold.
7. On March 15 Gen. Lafayette met with Gen. Baron von Steuben to plan a defense against Arnold, but without supporting troops Lafayette left Virginia.
8. On April 29 Lafayette returned to Virginia, but his Virginia militiamen were too weak to engage Arnold. Arnold departed for New York on May 26.
9. These reports were false.

Andrew Pickens

Gen. Andrew Pickens, along with Gens. Thomas Sumter and Francis Marion, became the top leaders of South Carolina's militia troops in the last years of the war. Unlike Sumter and Marion, who preferred to remain independent and fight in their own style, Pickens worked more closely with Continental Army commander Gen. Nathanael Greene and participated in key battles such as Cowpens and Eutaw Springs.

Pickens was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in 1739. In the 1750s, his family moved south to the Waxhaws region, which is below present-day Charlotte, North Carolina. Pickens struck out on his own in 1763 and bought land in what is now Abbeville County, South Carolina, near the Georgia border. He married Rebecca Calhoun, aunt of the renowned South Carolina senator, John C. Calhoun.[1]



General Andrew Pickens. *Thomas Sully. Colorized engraving of James Barton Longacre.*

Like many of his Scots-Irish neighbors, Pickens joined the Patriot cause as hostilities flared with Britain. He already had military experience due to his participation in campaigns against the Cherokee in the French and Indian War in the 1760s.

Before independence had even been declared, fighting broke out between Patriots and Loyalists in late 1775. Pickens served as an officer in the "Snow Campaign" in which Loyalist forces in northwestern South Carolina were defeated and dispersed, weakening their influence in that area. In 1776, he along with Thomas Sumter, joined Andrew Williamson's expedition against the Cherokee who had attacked the southern frontier. Pickens led his militia in several engagements with the Cherokee during this expedition, including the so-called "Ring Fight," the most perilous battle of his military career, according to Pickens. The Williamson Expedition resulted in the destruction of thirty-two Cherokee villages and hundreds of acres of Cherokee agricultural land.[2]

Pickens's next major action was in February 1779. He led approximately three hundred militia troops to victory against a superior force of Loyalists at Kettle Creek in Georgia, about sixty miles northwest of Augusta. The Loyalist cause was suppressed in that part of the country as a result of the battle, but the gains were erased the following year with the British capture of Charleston in May and the overwhelming defeat of American forces at the Battle of Camden in August.[3]

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1. Rod Andrew, Jr., *The Life and Times of General Andrew Pickens: Revolutionary War Hero, American Founder* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017) 3-18; Mark M. Boatner, III, Encyclopedia of the American Revolution (Stackpole Books, 1994) 866; Walter Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia* (The University of South Carolina Press, 2006) 721; William R. Reynolds, Jr., *Andrew Pickens: South Carolina Patriot in the Revolutionary War* (McFarland and Company, Inc., 2012) 12-14, 25-26; Alice Noble Waring, *The Fighting Elder: Andrew Pickens, 1739-1817* (University of South Carolina Press, 1962) 1-5
2. Andrew, *The Life and Times of General Andrew Pickens*, 19-20, 41-43, 44-51; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 866; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia,* 721; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part I," *Names in South Carolina, Vol. XX* (Winger 1973) 22; Bobby G. Moss, *The Snow Campaign, 1775: First Land Battle of the American Revolution in South Carolina* (Scotia-Hibernia Press, 2007) 4-17, 38; Reynolds, *Andrew Pickens*, 22-26, 53-54, 74-75; Michael C. Scoggins, *The Day it Rained Militia: Huck's Defeat and the Revolution in the South Carolina Backcountry (History Press, 2005)* 33-34; Waring, *The Fighting Elder*, 3-4, 11-14, 15-19
3. Andrews, *The Life and Times of General Andrew Pickens*, 64-68; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 866; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia,* 721; Reynolds, *Andrew Pickens*, 111-113; Waring, *The Fighting Elder*, 26-27.

Pickens took a parole oath in 1780 in acceptance of the apparent impending domination of South Carolina by the British. But he returned to service after only a few months in response to the plundering of his home and the burning of some of his outbuildings by Loyalist troops. In January 1781, Pickens commanded the militia units at the decisive Battle of Cowpens in South Carolina. A combined force of Continental and militia troops, under the overall command of Brig. Gen. Daniel Morgan, decisively defeated British Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton and dealt a severe blow to the British campaign for subjugation of the southern colonies.[4]

In April 1781, Pickens raised a regiment of state troops to be paid under "Sumter's Law" with property plundered from Loyalists, primarily enslaved people. Pickens commanded this regiment alongside Continentals under the command of Gen. Nathanael Greene at the Battle of Eutaw Springs. Pickens was wounded during the engagement. As with the Battle of Guilford Courthouse months earlier in North Carolina, the British won the field against Greene, but they failed to defeat his army and were forced to withdraw back to Charleston as their grip on South Carolina continued to loosen.[5]

After recovering from the wounds sustained at Eutaw Springs, Pickens waged two punitive campaigns against the Cherokee. The first, which occurred in early 1782 and lasted less than three weeks, resulted in the death of forty Cherokee and the destruction of thirteen Cherokee villages. Nine months later, he moved against the Cherokee again, this time forcing them to surrender claim to all their land south of the Savannah River and east of the Chattahoochee to Georgia. [6]

Pickens continued in public service after the war as a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives and as a delegate to the state's constitutional convention. He was later elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Pickens died in 1817 in present-day Oconee County, South Carolina.[7]

As far as wartime correspondence with Sumter is concerned, very little exists. Pickens wrote to Sumter on March 20, 1781, regarding the battle at Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina and a later skirmish with Cornwallis. Pickens also refers to a letter from Sumter written the previous day, in which Sumter had made an inquiry about Col. Elijah Clark. That letter has not been found. Sumter also mentions sending a letter to Pickens in an April 13, 1781, letter to Francis Marion but that letter has also not been found.

4. Andrews, *The Life and Times of General Andrew Pickens*, 78, 88, 102-107; 146-150; Boatner, Encyclopedia of the American Revolution, 866; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia,* 721; Waring, *The Fighting Elder*, 37, 41, 43-52.
5. Andrews, The Life and Times of General Andrew Pickens, 146-150; Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 886; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia,* 721; Reynolds, *Andrew Pickens*, 283-289; Waring, *The Fighting Elder,* 67.
6. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 886-867; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 721; Waring, *The Fighting Elder,* 105-106, 111-119.
7. Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, 866; Edgar, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia,* 721

1781-03-20 – Andrew Pickens to Thomas Sumter

Major [John?] Davidson's 20th of March 1781

Dear Sir

Your favor of yesterday is just now come to hand,[1] but I had previous notice of Colo. [Elijah] Clarke's intentions & have sent two Expresses, & also an Officer for the purpose of stoping him till further orders, which I hope will answer the End.[2] I am Truly Concerned for the loss of the Officers you mention —I hope to see you on Thursday if some unforeseen Event does not prevent[3] — I had an account yesterday that our Militia & Light Corps had skirmished with a detachment of Cornwallis Army, & had Drove them into their Main Body, who did not pursue ours when they retreated to Genl. Green [Nathanael Greene][4]—that Genl. [Charles] Ohara was mortally wounded & Colo. Tarlton [Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] shot in the Thigh — that the enemies loss was three hundred killed on the ground.[5] I immediately Dispatched a messenger to Bring the Certainty, who I hourly Expect —I am dear sir with Real Esteem your most obedt. humble servt.

Andw. Pickens

[Outside] [?]
Brig. Genl. T. Sumpter
Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter to Pickens has not been found.
2. Clarke had marched to Ninety Six District, probably intending to attack the British post at Augusta, Georgia.
3. There is no record that they met that day, March 22.
4. Probably a reference to the skirmish at Ramsey's Mill on Deep River when troops under Gen. Nathanael Greene attacked the rear of Cornwallis's army retreating to Wilmington.
5. Pickens is referring to the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15. O'Hara was severely wounded, but survived to surrender of behalf of Cornwallis at Yorktown. Tarleton was actually shot in the right hand at the New Garden Meeting House skirmish prior to the main battle. The British death toll at Guilford Courthouse was actually 93.

1781-03-22 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Richmond March 22.1781

Dr. Sir

I wrote to you, by Genl. [Andrew] Pickens, & Major [John] Bowie,[1] & last Week, from Harrisburg, by an Express going to Genl. Green's [Nathanael Greene's] camp — all which Letters I hope you have rec'd.[2] Those by Pickens & Bowie I make no doubt have got safe; but, lest that by the Express shd. not, I will inform you, here, of its Contents, which were, that meeting wth. an opportunity, in No. Carolina, of procuring abt. 2500 yards of Woolens, I had obtained 'em, for the use of our Militia, & requesting, that you wd have them got into So. Carolina, & properly distributed, for Cloathing amongst them[3]—The Person you send must apply to Mr. [Benjamin] Hawkins, Commercial Agent for No. Carolina, in whose Hands the Cloth is — wd. it not be best to unload one of the waggons wch has salt, & send her for the Cloth? one waggon will carry the whole, I am told —However, you will give such directions as you think proper for obtaining that & all the other publick Stores wch. have [paper damaged and text missing] in No. Carolina.

I am just setting off for Philadelphia, on the Business I mentd. in my letter by Pickens — a fleet of 12 sail of British Men of War are arrived in Hampton Road, & some Cruizers are doing Mischief in the Bay near Annapolis, according to accts recd last night by Gov. Jefferson —Arnold [Benedict Arnold] is still at Portsmouth —& the Enemy occupy Wilmington also —1000 Contl. Troops are arrived at Annapolis in their way to the Southern Army —Great Britain declared war agst. Holland the 6 Jan —& on the 4 Feby, Adml. [George] Rodney took the Island of St. Eustasia, wth. 47 sail of American Vessels, wch. lay there – Genl. Green had an action, this day week, wth Cornwallis, near Guilford Court House, lost the ground & his artillery (4 pieces) but lost few men, in Comparison wth the Enemy's Loss —It is said they suffered considerably —This is all the News this Way, except a Report wch. is asserted, but I can't vouch for the Truth of it, that Count D'Estaing has taken 7 Sail of the Line & 70 or 80 Transports wth. Troops coming to America off the Western Islands[4]—I hope the Exertions of the Enemy will rouse our people to use their utmost Efforts, in Conjunction wth. our Allies, to give the Enemy such a Stroke as may put an End to the War —Maryland has agreed to the Confederation so that it is now perfect[5]—I hope to hear from you soon & am with Regard,

Dr Sir

Yr. most obedt. Servt.

J. Rutledge

PS I could not get any Militia Commissions printed here so that those sent by Bowie must suffice for the present —If not enough, the Brigs. must give Brevets until I can get some more Comms printed & sent on.

March 22nd 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress.]

1. Bowie was an aide-de-camp for Pickens 1780-1783.
2. Sumter did receive letters from Rutledge that were dated March 8, 10, and 12.
3. Rutledge's March 12 letter referred to the clothing supplies.
4. These reports proved to be false.
5. Maryland was the last to ratify the Articles of Confederation on February 2, 1781.

1781-03-23 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp near Guilford Court House
March 23 1781

Dear Sir

I received your Letter by Capt. Hampton[1] and am happy to hear of your successful skirmishes.[2] I lament exceedingly that you did not succeed in getting off the Stores. Capt. Hampton says you are in great want of a field piece to further your operations. One shall be sent you as soon as can be had from Virginia. Orders shall be sent immediately for the purpose: ammunition shall be sent also; and if possible some matrosses[3] to manage the Artillery. Our prospects are flattering in Virginia. They are not discouraging here, but I must refer you to Captain Hampton for particulars.

Prosecute your operations as expeditiously as possible, and may glory and success attend you. Time will not permit me to be more particular.

I am, with the greatest respect
Your most humble sert
Nath Greene

Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]
Near Gd.C house March 23d. 1781
N.G. Nath. Greene
The honble Brigadr, General Sumpter So. Carolina

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. *The Papers of General Nathanael Green*, Vol. VII, Pg. 466, state that Capt. John Hampton was probably the bearer of the letter, but it was more likely Capt. Wade Hampton, who had joined Sumter around February 20 during the Sumter's Rounds campaign and retreated with Sumter toward North Carolina on March 6.
2. Greene is most likely referring to Sumter's letter of March 9. Although that letter does not go into detail about skirmishes or the failure to capture stores, Greene could have received the information verbally from Hampton, whom Sumter commended in the letter as "fully acquainted With my late opperations…"
3. A matross assisted the gunner in loading and firing artillery.

1781-03-28 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

[NEW ACQUISITION: Transcript from Documentary History of the American Revolution *by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pgs 44-47. The original has not been found.]*

[now York County, South Carolina] 28th March 1781

Dear Sir

It was exceedingly mortifying to me, after so much pains taken, to be deprived of a conference with you,[1] a circumstance much to be lamented, as both individuals and the publick are consequently much injured thereby.

Your advice and assistance in framing, digesting and laying down a proper plan of operation against the enemy in future might have produced the most happy events. My unfortunate failing herein and withal finding contrary to my expectation, that you had neither men or surplus of any kind and the force I had with me but small and from many causes decreasing, rendered my retreat at once both necessary and difficult.

I find that the disorders are prevalent in your Brigade which have for some time past been practised in the frontiers with such avidity as to threaten the State with inevitable ruin. To obviate which evil as far as possible I have adopted measures truly disagreeable, such as can only be justified by our circumstances and the necessity of the case. But it is clearly my opinion, unless this or a similar method be immediately carried into effect, that neither the State or the wealth thereof will be in the power or possession of the deserving citizens after a few weeks. The dissoluteness of our pretended friends and the ravages committed by them are as alarming and distressing as that of having the enemy among us. It is therefore necessary immediately to discriminate who are enemies and who are real friends; the former treated as their baseness and perfidy authorize, the latter to be known only by their conduct, that is by bearing arms and doing duty when thereunto required by proper authority, and in case of refusal or neglect both person and property to be treated and dealt with accordingly.

Nothing can be more unwise or impolitic than to suffer all the wealth of our country to be so basely and unfairly appropriated for the sole purpose of accumulating our misfortunes, and finally completing our ruin, when it is in our power at once to check, if not totally prevent the evils and disadvantages resulting therefrom; to which end I propose raising several Regiments of Light Dragoons upon the State establishment.

Agreeably to the enclosed sketch of a plan for that purpose I therefore request that you would be pleased to cause to be immediately raised in your Brigade two Regiments agreeably thereto. I have also to request that you give orders and oblige every person with you to join their proper Regiments or Brigades and that none of the enemy when taken be paroled or set at liberty, but in cases of extreme necessity — that all the property captured or taken from the enemy be securely kept for publick purposes except what is allowed to, and appropriated to and for the use of the troops in service agreeably to the terms proposed.

Nothing can be more essential to promote the happiness and secure the peace and tranquility of the people of this country than treating with the utmost severity all persons who, contrary to orders and to the total subversion of all authority, take upon themselves to form parties to go a plundering, distressing the resources of the country necessary for the use and support of an army. I recommend that too great a number of servants, idle persons, and led horses may not be suffered to follow the army.

You will be pleased to let me know what your present strength is and what you judge it may be ten days hence, what your views are, what is the situation of the enemy, and what position you think will most effectually tend to distress the enemy by preventing their being supported with beef cattle &c, which at Camden they in great need of.[2]

1. In early March, Marion had marched to Nelson's Ferry to meet with Sumter, but Sumter left before Marion arrived.
2. If Marion replied, the letter is missing.

At present it is my desire that you should have a position higher upon Black River which is very necessary to not only prevent the stock from being drove to Camden, but also facilitate my plans and designs on the west side of the Wateree. The more speedy your movements are the better they will answer.

The enemy are taking great pains to raise a number of horse, a circumstance that should by every possible means be prevented. If men were to turn out cheerfully, so that large bodies might pass through different parts of the country, it would at this time materially injure the enemy.

News from the army and I have no doubt you have had. I have just received accounts Col Clark [Elijah Clarke] with a party of Georgians and South Carolinians fell with Capt Dunlap [Maj. James Dunlap] of the Legion near Savannah River, killed made prisoners the Captain and about 70 more out of 80—some add that Capt Dunlap was recruiting for the Legion.[3]

The Governour has probably mentioned something to you respecting stores they were stored up in Virginia and will be of but very little consequence when brought forward, as what little there was been much pillaged the dry goods he requested you might have part of if you choose to take them I am apprehensive that whole will not be sufficient to cloathe one Regiment.

The day I received your letter[4] Col [John] Marshall joined me with about _____ men chiefly North Carolinians chiefly of _____ Regiment that left the Waxsaws with him and deserted some days before. I doubt you will get but few out of that Regiment to join you until you are higher up. after our joining they might perhaps remain if not too leniently treated. they are an untoward set of people. If Col [John or William?] Harden is still with you I think it advisable for him to come this way. General Pickens has gone to take command of his Brigade. Col Harden may be wanted upon some particular occasion.

I heartily congratulate you upon the happy advantage gained by Major General Greene and the army under his command over Lord Cornwallis near Guilford Court House.

I am dear sir
Your most obedient humble servant
THOS SUMTER

NB I shall be happy to hear frequently and fully from you. I shall make some movements in about six days. I write in so much pain as hardly to know my own meaning, or read what I write.

Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pgs 44-47.**

3. Sumter is referring to the March 23 battle at Beattie's Mill on Little River above present-day Abbeville, SC. Modern estimates of Loyalist causalities are 34 killed and 42 captured. Dunlap was later murdered while being held prisoner in Gilbert Town, North Carolina.
4. The letter has not been found.

1781-03-30 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters, at Colo. [Ambrose] Ramsays Deep River,[1] March 30th 1781.

Dear sir

I wrote you from the Iron Works near Guilford,[2] of the Battle which happened on the 15th at that place [Guilford Courthouse]. We lay within ten miles of the Enemy three Days after the Action preparing ourselves to make another attack.

On the 18th they retired to the New Gardens,[3] and from thence to Bells Mills[4] leaving upwards of 70 of their Wounded at our mercy. We have been in pursuit of them ever since, and they left this ground with such precipitation as to leave their dead unburied.

They are on the route to Cross Creek, and probably will fall down the Country as low as Wilmington, but this is not certain. The greater part of our Militia's term of service being out will prevent our farther pursuit; especially as the difficulty is very great in procuring provisions. Indeed, it would be impossible to subsist the Army in the pine Barrens; and as we are obliged to halt a Day or two to collect provisions at this place, it will give the Enemy such a start of us as leave no hopes of overtaking them if they choose to continue their flight, nor can we fight them upon equal terms after our Militia leave us.

All these considerations have determined me to change my route, and push directly into South Carolina. This will oblige the Enemy to give up their prospects in this State, or their posts in South Carolina, and if our Army can be subsisted there we can fight them upon as good terms with your aid as we can here. I beg you will therefore give orders to Genls [Andrew] Pickens and [Francis] Marion to collect all the Militia they can to cooperate with us. But the object must be a secret to all except the Generals; otherwise the Enemy will take measures to counteract us.

I am in hopes by sending forward our Horse and some small detachments of light Infantry to join your Militia, you will be able to possess yourself of all their little out posts before the Army arrives. Take measures to collect all the provisions you can: for on this our whole operations will depend.

I expect to be ready to march in about five Days;[5] and perhaps we may be in the neighbourhood of Camden by the 20th of next month, or earlier. You will please to inform me of your prospects, and the probable force I may expect to cooperate with us.[6]

I am with the greatest respect
Your most obt. humble serv.
Nath Greene

[Outside] public service Brigadier General Sumpter So. Carolina,
N. Greene
Nathanael Greene Deep River March 30th. 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Ramsey operated a mill at this site near present-day Moncure, North Carolina. Greene's troops skirmished with Cornwallis's at this place on March 19.
2. The Troublesome Creek Iron Works operated from 1770 until the early 20th century. The site is about 5 miles southwest of present-day Reidsville, North Carolina.
3. 2.7 miles southwest of Guilford Courthouse.
4. The mill was on Deep River, 2.5 miles above Randleman in present-day Randolph County, North Carolina.
5. Greene's army departed on April 6.
6. Sumter replied on April 7.

1781-04-07 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters Evans's Mill Rocky River[1] April 7th 1781

Dear Sir

This will be handed you by Major [Edmund] Hyrne,[2] who has been kind enough to come on before the Army, which is in the march for south Carolina, to see and consult with you, respecting the force you are likely to collect, to aid our operations. General Polk [Col. Thomas Polk] is endeavoring to collect a body of militia in the district of Salisbury [North Carolina] which I mean to put under your Command; and we have between four & five hundred men under the command of Colo. [James] Read well armed, of the militia of this State, which I mean also to add to your command.[3]

The enemy have fallen down towards Wilmington and were within thirty or forty miles of that place, when the last accounts came away, and were then on their march.[4] If we can get provisions, and you can raise a considerable force to co-operate with us I think we shall perplex the enemy not a little, and perhaps do them an irreparable injury. The enemy must give up their Po…[paper damaged; probably Posts] or leave north Carolina to come and support them, in either case we shall reap an advantage & this is the only manoeuvre that promises any — I wrote you sometime since, on this subject, & hope you are prepared for execution.[5]

In all and every matter you will inform Major Hyrne what I may expect from you, when and where. We shall march towards Camden & perhaps may reach that place about the 20th of this month if no misfortune attends us on the March[6] – Two thousand militia are coming to our aid from the upper Counties of Virginia,[7] and will be in the field in a few days, and are around to Charlotte.

I am with great esteem
Your most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

Head Quarters Evans's Mill Rocky River[8] April 7th 1781
General Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Aaron Evans's mill was 5 or 6 miles south of present-day Pittsboro, North Carolina.
2. Hyrne was an aide-de-camp of Greene.
3. Neither of these units joined with Sumter.
4. The remnants of Cornwallis's army following the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on March 15 was at Carver Creek about 30 miles northwest of Wilmington on April 4. They arrived in Wilmington, North Carolina on April 13.
5. Green had written Sumter of his plans on March 30.
6. Greene arrived near Camden on April 19, 1781.
7. The Virginia troops never arrived.
8. Aaron Evans's mill was 5 or 6 miles south of present-day Pittsboro, North Carolina.

Thomas Sumter's Law

In April 1781, Thomas Sumter devised a recruiting plan that would use captured Loyalist property as an incentive for men to join the Patriot military. Sumter had watched his ranks dwindle as men returned home for spring planting. Others had left in frustration after Sumter's recent "Rounds" campaign, an exhausting foray deep into South Carolina that yielded little in military success. Governor Rutledge was out of the state and the legislature had yet to convene. Sumter, as the top executive authority in the state, took it upon himself to set the rules for military recruitment.[1]

With what became known as "Sumter's Law," new private recruits for the State Troops were promised enslaved people who had been confiscated from Loyalists in the state in exchange for a commitment of ten months of service. Officers would receive even more enslaved people: a lieutenant would be allotted "a slave and a half,"[2] a captain two enslaved people, and so on. In addition, soldiers were to be provided with a horse, saddle, weapons, and clothing, as well as two-thirds of all the plunder they took.[3]

Sumter's Law had a mixed reception among his contemporaries. Some, excited by the new form of compensation, began recruiting fresh companies of state troops. Others, like Francis Marion, vehemently opposed the proposal and refused to have anything to do with Sumter's Law. By incentivizing plundering, Sumter's Law created a vicious cycle of theft and retaliation that eventually forced Governor Rutledge to issue a proclamation officially outlawing the practice. The issue was taken up by South Carolina's General Assembly when it reconvened in Charleston in January 1783. "Sumter's Law" was approved and payment for claims arising from the establishment of State Troops began.[4]

Sumter made several references to his "law" in his correspondence. On April 7, 1781, he informed Gen. Greene: "You may Rely upon my unremitted endeavours to Promote & facilitate Your Designs — this I may be the better enabled to Do by having falen[sic] upon a Plan of Raising Some Cores of horse to Serve under Continental Articles for Ten Months — this I was obliged to Do, at any Rate, or at once abandon the State —I am happy to be informd [sic] by Capt. Hampton that you approve of the Measure."[5] Greene didn't object to the policy, but expressed reservations in a letter dated April 14: "horses, or any other kind of property, whether taken from Whig or Tory, certificates ought to be given, that justice may be done to the inhabitants hereafter."[6] The policy was still on the minds of both men at the end of 1781. Greene asked Sumter on December 12, "Do you intend to get into the General Assembly, and have the approbation of the house upon the measures taken to raise State Troops?"[7] Sumter responded on the 22nd that he was "prepared to Make a True & fair Representation of Matters to the house, perhaps the Result may prove favourable, I have Nothing to urge upon my own account more than to enable me to Comply with the promises Made to the Troops — if they are paid & I am Sensured [sic], My expectations will not be disappointed."[8]

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1. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc., 2000) 144; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 148.
2. An enslaved person over the age of forty or under the age of ten was consider half an enslaved person.
3. Bass, *Gamecock,* 145; A.S. Salley, Jr., edt., *Journal of the House of Representatives of South Carolina, January 8, 1782—February 26,* (Columbia, 1916), 79; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 148-149; Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock: Nathanael Greene, Thomas Sumter, and the Revolutionary War for the Soul of the South* (Casemate, 2019) 68-69
4. Bass, *Gamecock*, 145-146, 204, 222-223; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 182. Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 70-71, 152-153, 182-184.
5. Sumter to Greene, April 7, 1781, MiU-C.
6. Greene to Sumter, April 14, 1781, DLC.
7. Greene to Sumter, Dec. 12, 1781, DLC.
8. Sumter to Greene, Dec. 22, 1781 (2nd letter), MiU-C.

1781-04-07 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Catawba River 7th Apl 1781

Dr Sr —

I received by Capt. Miles [Jonathan Mills] your letter of the 30th Ultimo — And am extremely Glad to find that our Insulting Enemy are obliged once more, to Seek Secourity by flight, and although the Route they have taken May Secoure them from your farther persuit, yet, Should they March through So an inhospitable a Country Round by the Way of Wilming town [Wilmington] it will almost Amount to a Defeat —

But I am apprehensive they Mean to turn in to So. Carolina by the way of the Cheraws, if Not Prevented[1] — Circumstanced as you are, I am of oppinion that Your Plan of opperation to the South Will Disconsert and Injure the Enemy More than any other You Coud have thought of — and you may Rely upon my unremitted endeavours to Promote & facillitate Your Designs — this I may be the better enabled to Do by having falen upon a Plan of Raising Some Cores of horse to Serve under Continental Articles for Ten Months[2]—this I was obliged to Do, at any Rate, or at once abandon the State —

I am happy to be informd by Capt. Hampton[3] that you approve of the Measure, the Disoluteness of the People has of late Given the Enemy Great advantages over us, and thereby Distroying the happy effects that Might have Resulted from your Successfull oppossission — three Regimts in my Brigad is left without a field offr, a Number of other offrs & Men Kild taken & Paroled, by their Imprudently Going upon private & Disgracefull business.

Nevertheless I expect to have Six or Seven hundred Men belonging to My Brigade in the field before the 20th Inst., But it at present appears that I Shall be obliged to Move to the Westward for a few days — the Enemy has by Detachments from Camden, Congerees[4], 96 [Ninety Six], & Tories Collected a body of about Eight hundred men Near the fish Dam Foard[5] Some late Movements indicates their having a Design to Cross to this Side —

By Some unexpected opposission from Certain offrs in North Carolina I Shall or is lightly [likely] to Loose a Number of men that is ingaged in the ten Months Service. the Reasons they asign for their Conduct are in My oppinion Very Trivel & Exceedingly impolitick —& altogether Contrary to the intent & meaning of the laws by which they pretend to act,

The true Cause of the objection is, those Who May Want a Substitute Will have to give More to procoure them[6]—a Number of the people Ingaged with Me Me before I Knowd any thing of the Continental Draft taking place[7]—however this Matter I Submit to your Determination —

I Shall make No use of those enlisted or Suffer any more to be ingaged untill I Know your pleasure — by thursday Next I Shoud have had five hundred ten months men in the field, Chiefly so well Mounted as to perform tollerable Service — and from the activity of the enemy & indiscression of our Militia, I think all the Men that Can by any Justifiable Method be procoured, will Not be two many —Gen' [Andrew] Pickens Men are Much Scattered, he will have but few Out, that is in any Short Time —I expect four or five hundred will be Ready to Join you out of

1. Cornwallis did not return to South Carolina.
2. Sumter's plan was to pay recruits with "Sumter's wages": enslaved people confiscated from Loyalists. Privates received one grown enslaved person; lieutenants received an additional bounty of one child.
3. It's unclear if this was John or Wade Hampton. In his pension application W7700, John Hampton did not say he was in service during this period. Wade Hampton may still have been a captain raising his regiment and possibly not promoted to Lt. Col. until about April 11. (https://revwarapps.org/b231.pdf).}
4. The Congarees was the area along Congaree River between Saluda and Wateree rivers.
5. Sumter was probably at Land's Ford on the Catawba River. Fishdam Ford on Broad River was just south of the crossing of route 72 near Carlisle, South Carolina.
6. Sumter planned to pay recruits to serve ten months as Continentals soldiers with enslaved people confiscated from Loyalists. Those who intended to hire substitutes to serve in their place would therefore be obliged to offer more.
7. North Carolina had instituted a draft of Continental Soldiers in 1781.

Genl Marions [Francis Marion's] Brigade, I have Requested him to take a position high up black river if it Can be Done with Safety, to prevent the enemy from foraging that way, & to have as Much provision as possible provided, I have Wrote Col. Marshell [John Marshel] to the Same effect,[8] —-

I will do every thing in my power in that way, but all the Corn the Country afoards Lies between the Enemies posts. the post at Col Thompsons [William Thomson's Plantation] is Broke up & the Troops Removed to the Congrees [Congarees][9]—Where there is five Two pound peices of artillery[10]—& one Wal piece[11]— the Enemy are useing every possible Means to Raise a Number of horse —

Many of our Country men Downward Gives them Great assistance, both by furnishing with Good horses, &, by Subscriptions —

Nothing in the Summit of my Power Shall be Neglected that may in the least tend to further your opperations against the Enemy.

I have the Honr to be Dr Sir
Your Most obedt & Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

NB Please to excuse inaccurcies, I am obliged to Write in Great haste as by holding the pen long Renders my hand useless[12]—

The Honorable Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside] from General Sumpter April 7th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

8. Sumter's request to Marion was written on March 28. His letter to Marshel has not been found.
9. The British had abandoned their post at Thomson's plantation — called Belleville — and seized the nearby plantation of Rebecca Motte for use as a fortified outpost.
10. Cannons firing two-pound balls.
11. Possibly a swivel gun.
12. Sumter was still suffering from a gunshot wound to his right shoulder received at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on the previous November 20.

1781-04-13 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Catawba, 13th April, 1781

Dr Sir

On Tuesday night [April 10] a party of horse & foot to the Number of a bout one hundred & fifty from Camden appeard in the Waxsaws [Waxhaws], they Marched With Great precippitation — as far as the Meeting house [Waxhaws Presbyterian Church], Which they burnt together with Some other houses, Barns &C—

They have Kild Wound & Taken Several persons carried off all Kinds of horses, plundered the Settlement of as much as they Could Carry[1] as Soon as I Received Intelligence of Their approach, I Detached Cols Hampton [Lt. Col. Henry Hampton] & [Thomas] Taylor after them, but as they began to Retreat on Wednesday night, Dont expect they will be overtaken, —

By accounts Just Received from Genl. [Andrew] Pickens Who Wrote me about ten days ago[2] that he had Collected a few Men of his Brigade and also a few Georgians, but was unable to attempt anything against the enemy. I Give orders to the Cols Commanding four Regemts in My Brigade Wesward of broad river to Join Genl Pickens, Which has been Done accordingly, I Requested Genl. Pickens to Move Down & Take a position upon Tyger River Near the fish dam foard [Fishdam Ford][3] to indeavour to Cover the Country, & Collect provision, & if hard presed by the enemy to pass Broad River to this Side, Rather than Retreat to wards the Mountains —

The enemy I find have Retreated to their forts at Williams[4] & Ninty Six [Ninety Six], Notwithstanding Genl. Pickens is, as I am informd by the Barer Capt [Vardry] McBee, Moving upwards with the Men of these four Regemts already Mentioned, Which if With a Design to Take them on to Savanah river [Savannah River], will weaken Me Considerably, but as I Wrote Genl Pickens Very fully a few days ago[5]—Wherin I Mentioned the Measures Necessary to be entered into in consequence of your Movements towards Camden —I am of oppinion that he Dont mean to go far — however, I expect to have Near the Number in the field as Mentioned to Majr Herne [Edmund Hyrne],[6] Shoud I Miss of these four Regemts,

But as I intend to form a junction of all that are imbodyed on Tuesday Next Shall then be able to give you a More Satisfactory account — which I Shall Do without loss of time. I apprehend that a Number of North carolinans Might be Got out at this Time if the officers Were active.

I am Dr Sir

Your most obedt Hble Servt

Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Geene

[Outside] the Honble Majr. Genl Greene Commander on chief of the Southern army; Capt. McBee

From Genl. Sumter 13th April 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. It was during the Waxhaws raid that the Loyalist commander, Major John Coffin, slashed future president Andrew Jackson with his sword for refusing to clean his boots. Jackson was fourteen at the time.
2. This letter has not been found.
3. Fishdam Ford is actually on the Broad River, two miles east of present-day Carlisle, South Carolina. The Tyger River is a few miles west of there. The ford was the scene of a failed surprise attack on Sumter's camp by the British on Nov. 9, 1780.
4. Fort Williams was near Mud Lick Creek in present Laurens Count, South Carolina.
5. It's not clear if Sumter is referring to the same letter to Pickens he mentioned on page one. If this was a second letter, neither has been found.
6. Hyrne was an aide-de-camp for Gen. Greene.

1781-04-14 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Colson's Ferry[1] April 14th 1781

Dear Sir

I receiv'd your letter dated the seventh instant, and am happy to understand that our plan of operations agrees with your sentiments. You will collect your force with all possible speed, and endeavour to take a position, as mentioned by you to Major [Edmund] Hyrne,[2] where you may be enabled to cut off, or interrupt the communication between Camden and the other posts of the Enemy, keeping it in your power to cooperate with, or join this Army, should the movements of Lord Cornwallis render such measures necessary —

Our operations are very much retarded by a defficiency of teams, could you procure about one hundred waggon horses to be sent to our assistance,[3] it would greatly facilitate the movement of the army; but above all things endeavour to procure the best and earliest intelligence from Charles Town. [Charleston]

I am Dear Sir with great respect
Your most obedient humble servant
Nath Greene

Genl. Sumpter

[outside]
public service
The Honorable Brigadier General Sumpter
near Charlotte
Colson's ferry April 14 81
N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Colson's Ferry was on the Pee Dee River west of present-day Mt Gilead, North Carolina.
2. Hyrne was Greene's aide-de-camp.
3. Sumter failed to provide the horses and complained in an April 25 letter to Greene that the country was "very bare of provision, and stripped of the chief of the negroes and horses."

1781-04-15 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

*[Portions of the original letter are missing and were filled in with excerpts from the Lyman Draper transcription, as indicated in brackets with a *.]*

H Qrs Mays Mill,[1] April 15th 1781

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 13th was this moment handed to me by Captain [Vardry] McBee & we are thus far on our way to Camden, and expect to arrive there in four or five days[2] & Lt. Colonel [Henry] Lee is on his march from the Pedee [Pee Dee River] to the Santee [River], and will cross that river some where near Nelson's Ferry, and come up on the other side.[3]

Perhaps you may make your movements co-operate with his and also those of Genl. Pickens [Andrew Pickens.] You will keep in mind that our force when collected is very small; and therefore you should not lose sight of a junction should Lord Cornwallis move this way & if he should not, and the garrison at Camden is not well supplied with provision, it must fall in a few days. I have little hopes of the garrisons falling in any other way, as we have no battering cannon, and too few troops to warrant a storm upon [the post.*]

You will not fail to give me constant intelligence of your force and situation as matters may grow very critical by and by. If the Virginia militia come up, I think we shall fight the enemy to good advantage; but if not, we shall be weak. It will be necessary therefore to have some measures taken to secure a retreat, and a small quantity of provisions should be laid in on the Catawba up in the neighborhood of the Waxaws [Waxhaws]. The Magazine need not contain provisions for more than 3000 men for four days. Another collection should be made at Charlotte, however, this I will [attend*] to; and I have a magazine forming at Oliphants Mill,[4] at which place all of our baggage and stores are collecting.

Colonel [Elijah] Clarke's defeat of [Maj. James] Dunlap will have a most happy effect; and if we are able to improve the blow, the Enemy will be in the greatest distress.[5] The Pennsylvania [Line*] and reinforcements [from Maryland*] and Virginia are coming to join this army; but it will be some time before they can get up with us. If we can hold our ground untill their arrival, I make no doubt we shall have it in our power to drive the Enemy out of the upper Country.

North Carolina is collecting its regular troops also, by drafts agreeable to the late law; and from the present appearances promise a reinforcement of 12 or 1500 men. Encourage the people and let us do all we can, and if providence smiles upon our endeavors, happily we may have it in our power to give relief to this oppressed Country. Much blood has been spilt, and more must be spilt, before this Country can regain its liberty.

Have your stores arrived from Virginia?[6] You must be in great want of them. Altho' I am a great enemy to plundering, yet I think the horses belonging to the Inhabitants within the Enemy's lines should be taken from them; especially such as are either fit for the Waggon or Dragoon service. If we are superior in Cavalry, and can prevent the Enemy from equiping a number of teams it will be almost impossible for them to hold their posts, and utterly impossible to pursue us, if we should find a retreat necessary.

1. Mays Mill was on Jones Creek, which flowed into the Pee Dee River. The site was in in the southeastern part of present-day Anson County, North Carolina.
2. Greene's army was near Camden on the 19th.
3. Lee was on his way to besiege the British post at Fort Watson, which he and Gen. Francis Marion captured on April 23.
4. Oliphant's Mill was near Sherrill's Ford on the Catawba River. The area is now under Lake Norman, north of Charlotte, North Carolina.
5. Clarke defeated and captured Dunlap at Beattie's Mill near Due West in present Abbeville County, South Carolina on March 23, 1781.
6. In a letter dated March 12, Gov. John Rutledge had informed Sumter from Pennsylvania that he was sending a shipment of cloth for uniforms.

But indeed any horses, or any other kind of property, whether taken from Whig or Tory, certificates ought to be given, that justice may be done to the inhabitants hereafter; and if any discrimination is necessary with the people, government may make it, when the certificates are presented for payment.

I am, dear Sir
Your most obdt. Servt.
Nath Greene

Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1781-04-19 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Hd. Qrs, April 19th 1781[1]

Sir

The army has arrived and taken a position within three miles of Camden. The country is barren, and promises us no hope of support. My greatest dependence is on you for supplies of Corn and meal. Both of these Articles are immediately wanted, and unless you can furnish me with them, it will be impossible for me to keep my position.[2] I want to know very much your situation, and how you have disposed of yourself, so as to cooperate with our Army on any particular emergency

I am Sir with great esteem
Your most hble servnt.
Nath Greene

Genl Sumpter.

[Outside]
public service General Sumter
Nath Greene April 1981

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Late on the day this letter was written, Greene camped about three miles northeast of the British fortifications at Camden, now Historic Camden, one mile south of the heart of the present city of Camden.
2. Sumter responded on April 25 that supplies of corn and meal were on the way.

1781-04-23 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp before Camden April 23, 1781[1]

Dr. Sir

I wrote you a day or two ago[2] of our arrival in the neighbourhood of Camden, and desired to know your strength and situation, to which I have received no Answer,[3] and am not a little afraid that it has fallen into the hands of the Tories.

Since I wrote to you I have critically examined the fortifications of this place and find them more superior to what I expected. The Garrison from the best intelligence I can get is also much stronger than I expected; and I had the mortification to hear yesterday that the South Carolina royalists[4] had the Day before thrown themselves into the place from ninety six.

Our numbers are not equal to a full investiture of the place without dividing our force too much to be secure from insult in any part. This will give the Enemy an opportunity to draw what reinforcements they please from other posts. I must depend entirely upon you to secure us on the quarter from ninety six & Charlestown [Charleston] on the west side of the Wateree [River], and General Marian [Francis Marion] on the East side from George Town [Georgetown] and Charles Town [Charleston].

General Marian [Marion] and Colo. [Lt. Col. Henry] Lee are at Nelson's ferry, they have closely invested the fort at that place upon the Lake, but for want of Cannon I am not a little afraid they will fail of success, as the Garrison appears to be well supplied with provision, and the situation don't admit of storming the Works.[5]

I long to hear from you that I may know how to take my measure respecting Provision and other matters. I beg you to keep two or three of your people constantly in Camp with us so that I may have it in my power to forward you the earliest intelligence, and I beg you to get all the information you can from Charles Town [Charleston], as there are flying reports of General Philips [William Phillips] having [saild (NG Papers)] from Virginia to the Southward with 2000 Men.[6] The arrival of the force, if it be true, is a matter highly interesting to the success and safety of our operations to be ascertained as soon as possible.

With esteem & regard, I am Dr Sir

Your most obt. servt.

Nath Greene

N.B. The reinforcements which came in yesterday was from the Congree's [Congarees]

Gen[l]. Sumter

[Outside]

public service; General Sumter; N. Greene

Camden April 23d pr N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene's army was now on Hobkirk Hill, more than a mile north of modern Camden and more than two miles north of the British fortifications commanded by Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon, now at Historic Camden.
2. Greene actually wrote to Sumter on April 19.
3. Sumter would not write a reply until April 25.
4. The South Carolina Royalists were commanded by Maj. Thomas Fraser.
5. Greene was referring to Fort Watson on Scotts Lake, about eight miles up Santee River from Nelson's Ferry. The lake disappeared when Lake Marion was created in the 1940s. Marion and Lee did succeed in taking the post on the same day of this letter, using a Maham Tower to fire down into the fort.
6. This report proved false. Gen. Phillips and Gen. Benedict Arnold were raiding along James River in Virginia.

1781-04-25 – William Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

April 25th 81

Sir,

General Greene wishes you to collect all your force and join him immediately.[1] His Army is too small to maintain his ground before Camden, and therefore it becomes necessary that we should form a junction of our forces.

The Enemy advanced out this Morning and gave us Battle. They drove us some little distance from the field, but we saved our stores, and took a number of Prisoners.[2]

I am Sir
Your most obedient and most hble servt.
Wm Pierce Jr. [William Pierce, Jr.]
Aid de Camp

Head Quarters April 25th 1781

[Outside]
public service
General Sumter
April 25th 81
William Pierce

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter was camped on the Broad River about 40 miles west of Camden and was not in a position to join Greene immediately. See the letter from Sumter to Greene on the same date.
2. Pierce is referring to Greene's defeat by Col. Rawdon at the Battle of Hobkirk Hill, about 2 miles north of the British fortifications at present-day Historic Camden.

1781-04-25 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Camp at Davis', Broad River[1]
25th April, 1781

Dr Sir

My movements are Very Slow which I fear will be attended with many Disadvantages, which would have been avoided if I had been down Sooner — the militia are Coming in Tolerable Well now. I have also a number of Waggons Coming Down & expect to be joined to Morrow by three More well appointed Troops from N. Carolina — as I found Some Delay unavoidable I Marched into Mobleys and Sandy river Settlements,[2] with a view to harass the enemy, which has been effectually Done, & will I hope in a Great measure Relieve our friends in that part of the Country from the unnatural Cruelties that were daily exercised over them.

Some Small Scurmishes has happened. I have lost no men Several of the enemy have fallen & many others Taken prisoners, upon the whole they have been pretty well Scurged. I Shall Send some large parties into the Dutch fork[3] tomorrow to Clear that place also[4] and call out the well Disposed inhabitance, I Shall Move on to-morrow & the Instant I am joind by these Troops behind March for the Congerees[5] [Congarees] with all possible Speed.

I detached Col. [Lt. Col. Henry] Hampton to the Wateree [River] with a few waggons which are to be loaded with provisions if to be got, and Sent to you[6], he will also keep back Small parties of the enemy from going into or Coming out of Camden while there, Genl. [Andrew] Pickens joind me to day he has none of his Brigade with him, Many men belonging to mine gone after Col. [James] McCall who is in the Neighborhood of Ninety Six with a considerable Number of men with him, Genl. Pickens will Set off tomorrow With Col. Hays [Joseph Hayes] Regmt of My Brigade to take command of the Troops in that Quarter — the Georgians are Gone into that State & are Joind, I am informed, by almost every Man in the uper Country,

The enemy have burnt what works they had at Williams[7] & and are Moving toward the Congarees, Numbers of the Tories hiding out until they know what Terms may be offered —I find the Country Very bear of provision, & striped of Chief of the Negroes & horses —I mention by letter to Genl. [Col. Thomas] Polk[8] & many others, the Inhabitance of the Macklinburg [Mecklenburg County, North Carolina], what Straits you were in for provision, in consequence of which I am informed that Twenty odd Waggon loads were very Soon collected and to Start yesterday — I hope by Saturday, to know how things are at the Congarees. and immediately after, Send you Some Meal & Corn -

1. In a June 25, 1781 letter to Greene, Sumter gives the location of Davis's as 5 miles below Lyle's Ford. If this is the same Davis's, it would therefore be near Sandy River in present Chester County.
2. Sumter had apparently marched west and south from his camp at Land's Ford on Catawba River to attack Loyalists in retaliation for Maj. John Coffin's attack on the Waxhaws settlement on April 10. (See Sumter to Greene, April 13.) Sumter's route was apparently through present-day Chester to Sandy River about seven miles to the southwest, then south to the area of Mobley's Meeting House on the West Fork of Little River in present Fairfield County. The skirmish at Sandy River occurred on April 22, and the one at Mobley's settlement on April 23.
3. The Dutch fork was the area between the Saluda and Broad Rivers, above where they join in present-day Richland County. It was named after the Germans who settled the area before the war.
4. There is no record of such an action.
5. The Congarees was the area along Congaree River between Wateree and Santee rivers.
6. Greene had written Sumter on April 19th to request corn and meal. Col. Hampton was probably Wade Hampton.
7. Williams Fort was located on the Little River in present-day Laurens County, South Carolina.
8. No letter from Sumter to Col. Polk has been found.

The Trouble & perplexity I have had to Get the Militia out are inconceivable — but think them pretty well Subdued —I hope you have not Suffered for supplies, and that your expectations & wishes may be fully & Speedily Answered.

I am Dr. Sir
Your Most obdt Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

N.B. I have not as yet Received any accounts from Charles Town [Charleston] Should be Very glad to Know where Ld Cornwallis is.[9]

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside]
The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene,
Head Quarters
From Genl. Sumter April 25th 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harvard University Library]

9. Cornwallis marched from Wilmington, North Carolina toward Virginia on April 23.

1781-04-27 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Broad river near Boyley's ferry[1] 27th Apl 1781

Dr Sir

I am just favoured with yours of the 23rd Inst, I received yours of the 19th and Wrote you immediately[2] after Which I Sent Col. [Henry] Hampton then upon the Wateree to be forwarded to you —

I lament not having it in my power to prevent Majr. Frazier's [Thomas Fraser's] Detachment from Giting into Camden —I have been under Great perplexity — the Detachments from North Carolina & the upper Regemts in the South have Not Yet Joind me.

My force is daily increasing, I move Slow for that purpose. I have parties Dispersed through the Tory Settlements in Both forks to bring in the Militia, Collect waggons & Horses, & Disperse parties of Tories that are Lying out,

I can't possibly assertain what forces I may have in a few days I may be able to do it more to your Satisfaction — But I am Convinced it will not be inconsiderable and have no doubt but I Can pervent your having any Interruptions from the South Side of the Wateree [River], except a Very large force Shoud Come from Charles Town [Charleston].

I am Just Inform'd that the Tories which have fled from above are embodying West of Saluda River. I have prepaird a proper party to Send after them, Which if Dispersed will have all the Back Country open and Secoure, quite to 96 [Ninety Six]. So that the Inhabitants Can have No Good excuse for Not Turning out.

Genl. [Andrew] Pickens Set out yesterday for 96 [Ninety Six] Where there is a Number of men imbayed[3] under Col [James] McCall he will Cut of [sic, off] all Supplies from the Garrison as Soon as he arives — I have Nothing Certain from Charles Town [Charleston] yet.

A Report prevails there that Genl. [William] Phillips is Coming to Virginia with three thousand men[4]—

I have Corn Grinding at the Congrees [Congarees] and Shall be able to Send a Quantity of Meal to you in a few days -

I am Dr Sr your most
Obedt Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

N.B. I have nether paper, wax or wafers[5] if you have any to Spare Shoud be Much obliged to you for Some by any opportunity —I will have proper person engaged for Carrying intelligence. TS

[Outside]
The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene Commander in Chief of the Southern Army Pr Mr. Canty
From Gen. Sumter April 27th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. This was probably Brierly's Ferry on the Broad River, between present-day Newberry and Fairfield Counties. It was also known as Shirer's Ferry.
2. The Nathanael Greene Papers say that Hampton delivered Sumter's letter of April 25. Yet, if Sumter did reply "immediately" to Greene's letter of the 19th, then it's possible that there is an earlier unknown letter dated around April 23. This is based on the four days it took to receive Greene's letter of the 23rd.
3. "Imbayed" or "embayed" in the 18th century meant to be enclosed or surrounded.
4. Phillips had arrived in Virginia on March 20 and remained there until his death from disease on May 13. Sumter may have intended to say that there was a rumor Phillips was coming from Virginia to Charleston. Compare Greene to Sumter, April 23, 1781.
5. A wafer in this context was an adhesive disc used to seal letters. It was a cheaper alternative to sealing wax.

1781-04-28 – William Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Head Qrs. Rugeley's[1] Apl. 28th 1781.

Sir

General Greene has received your Letter of the 25th and desires me to return his thanks for your exertions. As Major Hyrne [Edmund Hyrne] was sent to acquaint you of our situation he declines giving you any particulars. Nothing has happened subsequent to his departure but the move of the Army up to this place. I have the honor to be Sir your most obedient and most humble servt.

Wm. Pierce Jr. [William Pierce, Jr.]
Aid de Camp.

Genl Sumpter

P.S. General Marian [Francis Marion] & Colo. [Henry] Lee have taken Fort Watson, with 6 Officers & 109 Privates.[2]

[Outside]
public service
Genl. Sumter

N. Greene
Rugeley's Mills
April 28th 81
N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Rugeley's Mills was twelve miles north of Camden, South Carolina. It was on a plantation owned by Tory Col. Henry Rugeley, who had been taken prisoner in early December 1780.
2. Fort Watson had been taken on April 23rd after an eight-day siege by Marion and Lee.

1781-04-30 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp at Rugeley's Mill[1]
30th April 1781.

Dear Sir

Major [Edmund] Hyrne return'd this morning, and soon after, Mr. Taylor arriv'd with your letter of the 29th.[2] Both by the Majors report and your letter, I find you think it will be prejudicial to the public service for you to cross the Wateree [River] and join me. Our situation requires it; but as you press so many objections, and I am so desirous to rouse the people in that quarter, I have thought it most adviseable to revoke the order, and leave you at liberty to prosecute your original plan.[3]

General [Francis] Marion, and Col. [Henry] Lee, had orders to cross the Santee [River], and one or both undoubtedly will. If both should cross, I am afraid [Col. John] Watson who is now in George Town [Georgetown], will throw himself into Camden.[4] If they separate I fear one part will be too weak to oppose him. You will keep yourself informed of both his and Major McArthurs [Archibald McArthur's] movements, the latter of whom with the Hessian horse, I fear got into Camden last evening. However, this is not certain.

General Marion has a field piece; but by what I can learn the Fort at Congaree is too strong to be beat to pieces by field Artillery.[5] In some of my former letters I wrote you to procure if possible a considerable number of Dragoon horses, without which it would be impossible for us to keep the field with our little force.—We want a hundred at least; and I beg you take every measure in your power to procure them. Give certificates for the whole, whether taken from Whig or Tory and if any discrimination is necessary, let Government make that hereafter. I am in hopes that the Virginia militia will soon arrive in Camp in considerable force;[6] untill when we shall lay a little farther distant from Camden than we have done.

Push your operations with great vigor, as no opportunity can be more favorable; and you may rely upon it, the enemy will not be idle, and see themselves insulted on all sides. Much depends upon the present moment. Let me hear from you daily, and send me all the provision you can. I mean of bread kind; for Cattle, we have plenty.

Col. Hampton [Lt. Col. Henry Hampton] appears to be a very active officer and deserves credit for his spirited conduct.—Present my compliments to him and Col. Middleton [Charles Myddelton], and believe me to be with great respect and esteem,

Your most obedient humble Servant,
Nath Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Twelve miles north of Camden.
2. Sumter's letter has not been found.
3. Although we don't have Sumter's comments and objections from his letter of the 29th, his letter of April 27 sheds light on his position. He complained of being under "great perplexity" and forced to move slowly as he awaited reinforcements. Sumter also warned that the Tories were "embodying west of Saluda River" and if he could disperse them, it would "leave all the back country open and secure, quite to 96 [Ninety Six]."
4. Watson was able to get his force into Camden.
5. Greene was referring to Fort Granby, which was captured by Lt. Col. Henry Lee on May 15.
6. Virginia troops in "considerable" numbers never arrived.

1781-04-30 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

[Transcript from R. W. Gibbes, Documentary History of the American Revolution in 1781 and 1782 *(Columbia SC: Banner Steam-Power Press, 1853, 64-65). The original has not been found.]*

CAMP CONGAREE, April 30, 1781

Sir:

I have received yours of the 18th inst. wherein you observe that you wrote me on the 6th, which letter is not lost, as you allege.[1] You gave your opinion in that, it is true, with respect to raising troops upon the State establishment, which opinion it appears you have resumed, not from the ill policy of the measure, but because Major [William Clay] Snipes might have disobliged you. Whether he gave a cause of umbrage, I know not; he was acting by no particular direction of me.[2] If he has transgressed, he is amenable, and may, as an officer, be punished with great propriety, notwithstanding there is neither executive nor legislative body in the State; yet I think their powers exist, and whoever denies it is dilating the almost mortal wound our laws have received, and directly admits what Major Snipes may have done to be just, or that what he prevented another from doing, was unjust.

I revere the citizen who is tenacious of the laws of his country. I lament their being so much abused. If I have done it, I think myself accountable, and shall no doubt be called upon by the gentleman to whom you say you shall represent the matter, and if he is unacquainted with my motives and the step I have taken, should be happy to have his opinion upon that head. To his judgment and authority, I pay the greatest respect; but I have not a doubt but that he and all impartial men, will applaud an undertaking which promised so much good to the United States, and this in particular; especially as it was the last and only measure that could be adopted for its security, or possession of even the least part of it. As to the powers by which I act, they ought not to be called in question by any man, until gentlemen whom it might concern had used proper means to obtain information.

I am sorry the party you allude to is not likely to be taken. Gen. Greene wrote me a few days ago, that Col. Lee [Lt. Col. Henry Lee] had made his appearance very near, so that he could take it in a few minutes with a piece of Artillery which he had sent him. Since which, I hear it is taken.[3]

I am, sir,
Your most humble obedient servant,
Thos. Sumter

P. S. Permit the bearer to pass the guards.
Nath. Greene

Transcript from R. W. Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution… in 1781 and 1782* **(Columbia SC: Banner Steam-Power Press, 1853, 64-65)**

1. Neither of the letters have been found.
2. Snipes was taking men into Sumter's Brigade who had been recruited by Col. Abel Kolb to join Marion's Brigade. When Kolb wrote to Snipes informing him of "Marion's orders against such proceedings," Snipes replied on April 16, "I have instructions from Gen'l. Sumter, who commands General Marion, to raise men where I can, and as to Gen'l. Marion's orders, in this case it avails nothing." Gibbes, *Documentary History,* 52-53.
3. Sumter is presumably referring to the capture of Fort Watson on April 23. Greene's aide-de-camp William Pierce had informed him in a letter dated April 28 that the fort had fallen to Marion and Lee.

1781-05-02 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Camp at Congrees [Congarees] 2d May 1781

Dr Sir

Yours of the 30th Ultimo I have received —

I am glad you are So Circumstanced as to permit the Troops with me to Remain In this Quarter, Which I have No doubt but you will find it have an exceeding Good Effect, as it will tend to increase our force Very much, & lessen that of the Enemy excessively, & Secure Resources for our army, Which otherways must have been lost —

Col. Hampton [Lt. Col. Henry Hampton] has Returned, Kild thirteen of the Enemies Guard at Fridays ferry, five of a party going to the fort[1] took a number of horses & Several Negroes; the Hessian horse is Gone Downwards Except Twenty Five that crossed from the fort at Motts [Fort Motte] & went in to Camden with Majr [John] Doyle —

Col. Thomas [John Thomas Jr.] has just Returned from Bush river [in the western part of present Newberry County], where he fell with a party of Tories Kild three & took Twelve Prisoners — four Waggons & Several Negroes —Maj. Maxwell [Andrew Maxwell at Fort Granby] keeps pretty Close — those at Mr Motts[2] Very much So — they are Digging for water,[3] will obtain it with Very Great Difficulty, but may be Cut of [sic, off] from it, with a piece of artillery as it is out Side the fort — I think this place may be taken with a Six pounder[4], two Regulars & Sixteen Tories Deserted the evening before last — the Tories are Very uneasee, & will Numbers of them Desert if opportunity Serves — they are Coming in fast from the Country, & will in my oppinion Chiefly Give up if we Can hold our Ground a little longer —

I am Not Well informed Where Majr. [Archibald] McArthur is at this Time but have No apprehensions that he can Git to Camden without my Knowing it in Time to prevent his Design —

I have Ten waggons on their way to you with Meal, am Doubtful they will Meet with Great Difficulty in passing the Catawba river, if the loading coud be Received by you Commissary any Where below Camden, I can have Sent forward any Quantity of Meal that you May have occasion for[5] — I will use My endeavors to have some horses procoured Suitable for the Purpose you intend them —But it will be with Great difficulty if Not impossible to procure any worth while near here, or in any part of this State upwards, except in Ninety Six district; I urged Genl. [Andrew] Pickens to have Some got for you, Genl. [Francis] Marion is also in the way of geting good horses — but how far I may Succeed by applying to him I know not, upon the Whole I fear the Number you want will not be got in this State, that will Answer the Service —

High up in N. Carolina there is a great many good horses, & Numbers of them carried from this State, the lead from Newbern [New Bern] has not yet arrived am Very Scarce of that article, & not well supplied with powder, if you have it to spare Should be much obliged to you for a small Quantity by the waggons 2,C wt [2 hundredweight = 224 pounds] powder & 3,C of lead woud Serve at present[6]—I have the Honr To be Dr. Sir

Your most obdt. Hbl, Servt

Thos. Sumter

Maj. Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Fort Granby was at Friday's Ferry at present-day Cayce, South Carolina. Sumter would begin a siege of Granby this same day. Without cannon, Sumter soon gave up on the siege and left a small force under Col. Thomas Taylor while he moved on to Orangeburg.
2. Fort Motte was the fortified home of recently widowed Mrs. Rebecca Brewton Motte.
3. Defenders at Fort Watson during the siege in April had dug a well in response to their water supply being cut off. But no record has been found of a well being dug at Mott's.
4. Lt. Col. Henry Lee did employ a six-pounder gun in his successful attack on Ft. Granby on May 15.
5. Greene had requested food supplies from Sumter several times in April.
6. Greene did return ammunition in Sumter's wagons, according to his letter of May 6.

1781-05-04 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp on the west side of the Wateree [River] 7 Miles above Camden May 4th 1781

Dear Sir

Last night intelligence arrived that Lord Cornwallis was moving up towards Cross Creek, and it is thought on his way for Camden,[1] but this is altogether uncertain as our baggage and stores upon the upper route may be his object. The movements of Lord Cornwallis will oblige us to collect all our regular force.

You will please to forward the letters which accompany this to General [Francis] Marion & Lt. Col. [Henry] Lee. I am glad to hear the people are joining you, but am afraid it is a force little to be depended on as they will fall from the first change of [*Last line of page missing.* LOC version has "will fall off from the first change of circumstances"]

I should be glad to know what force you have and what force General Marion can join us with. If our collective strength would warrant an attack up on Lord Cornwallis I should be glad to make it for defeating him will be next to an entire recovery of the Country and every thing else a partial business. If you could possess the fort upon the Congaree[2] [River] with a field piece it can be sent you immediately. But then whatever is done must take place immediately as the enemy will in all probability be upon our backs immediately.

We shall halt upon the 25 Mile Creek[3] until I hear further from you Col Lee and Lord Cornwallis. Send us all the provision you can and direct it by the route to that place. We have some Ammunition which we can supply you with providing you can send for it;[4] but if the field piece should be sent you it may come in the Ammunition Waggon. Don't fail to get us all the good Dragoon horses that you can for we are in the utmost distress for want of them. Marion I am told has got a considerable number on which he has mounted his Militia. It is a pity that good horses should be given into the hands of people who are engaged for so limited time.

I am dear Sir
Your Most Obedt humble Ser
N Greene

General Sumter

[Outside] to Genl Sumter May 4th 1781
Exd [Examined]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Cross Creek is now Fayetteville, North Carolina. Cornwallis was actually about 65 miles northeast of Cross Creek, headed to Virginia.
2. Sumter had Fort Granby on the Congaree under siege.
3. Twenty Five Mile Creek flows eastward into the Wateree River near Camden.
4. Greene soon received a shipment of meal from Sumter and returned the wagons loaded with ammunition.

1781-05-04 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —1

Camp at Congrees [Congarees] 4th May 1781

Dr. Sir

I have this Moment Received an aCount from Charles Town [Charleston] that on Saturday Evening three Vesels arrived at that place from Wilmington, which they left on Wednesday the 25th Ulto. — at the Time of their Departure Lord Cornwallis with the Army was lying there.[1] No accounts of his Moving Soon, Some of his Wounded come in these Vesels — they are repairing the old & Constructing new Works at Charles Town [Charleston].

Two forts, one upon Each River are in great forwardness that to the Eastward nearly Compleat in which are a Number of Cannon Mounted. Majr. [Archibald] McArthur was on Monday below Nelsons ferry,[2] on Which day my informant left Town – Small parties of Tories are troublesome in diferent parts of the Country. Not So as to prevent people from Turning out, which they are doing Very well —

I have Commands upon the wateree [River] to prevent Cattle from being Carried into Camden — for which purpose I find parties of Tories lyes in the Swamps & when opportunity Serves Swim Stock over the River. — I mean to ly as Close to the fort[3] to Night as possible. I find there is two Short twelve pounders mounted —& three or four other Smaller pieces — the Strength of the Garrison not less than three hundred, they Say five — I expect to be full five hundred effective men by the first of the week, many other parties are upon the way which will join Soon after[4] —

I am Short of Ammunition. I Wrote you upon that head by the offr. who goes with the waggons, if you have it to Spare, I Should be much obliged to you to order a Small Quantity, to be Sent by the waggons. Guns, Swords & pistols I also am in Great want of[5] —

If you have any thing late from the Northerward of Consequence & not a Secret, please to favour me with it,

I am Dr Sir
Your Most obedt. Hble Servt.
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside]
The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene
Head Quarter
near Camden
favd [favored] by
Capt. Read

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Cornwallis had actually left Wilmington, North Carolina, for Virginia on April 23.
2. Nelson's Ferry was on the Santee River near Eutaw Springs.
3. Fort Granby at present-day Cayce, South Carolina, under siege by Sumter.
4. Sumter eventually gave up the siege for lack of a cannon, and left a small force under Col. Thomas Taylor. The fort eventually fell on May 15 to troops under Lt. Col. Henry Lee.
5. Greene responded on May 6 that he did receive the wagons from Sumter and was returning them with ammunition, but he had no weapons to spare.

1781-05-04 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —2

Camp at Ancrums,[1] 4th May, 1781

Dr Sir

I had wrote you before I Received yours pr. Mr. Reeves —

If the Acounts I have from Town are facts, & I have No Reason to doubt them, it is probable that yours with Respect to Lord Cornwallis' Movements are Not Just.[2] I Shall dispatch the Same Person to Charles Town [Charleston] in the Morning to Gain farther Intelligence, Who will Return as Speedily as possible —

I Shall detach an offr. with a party in the Morning for the field Piece &c. which you are So obliging as to Say I may have — how far it may Answer is uncertain but I think an attempt Necessary, at any Rate upon the post at Mr. Motte's,[3] Where there is No artillery, one hundred & eight men offrs. included in the fort, & the field piece must Cross the River within four Miles of that place and the Roads good either up or Down —

I am also of oppinion that no time Should be lost in attempts or Designs of this Nature, as there is certainly a probability of a less Vegerous opposession Now, than after assistance Might have Nearly arrived —

I am Dr. Sir with the Greatest Respect
Your most obdt. Hble.Servt
Thos. Sumter

Maj Genl. Greene

[Outside]
The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene
head Quarters near Camden
by Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Ancrum's Ferry was on the Congaree River near present-day Columbia. Sumter had left the siege of Fort Granby at present-day Cayce in the hands of Col. Thomas Taylor.
2. Greene had reported that Cornwallis was on the move and suggested that Camden was a possible objective. Sumter's intelligence, as stated in his first letter of this date, had Cornwallis still in Wilmington. Cornwallis had indeed left Wilmington on April 25, but he was headed for Virginia.
3. Fort Motte was the fortified home of recently widowed Rebecca Brewton Motte. Sumter instead used the artillery in his attack on Orangeburg, after learning that Ft. Motte was under siege by Lee and Marion.

1781-05-05 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp at 25 Mile Creek[1]
May 5th 1781

Dear Sir

I wrote you yesterday that Lord Cornwallis was advancing into the Country on the East side of Cape fear river, and was when the Express came away within forty or fifty miles of Cross Creek. His object and future route remains to be explained.[2]

Should he come this way or go up into the open Country towards Salisbury at which place the Virginia militia are to collect, it would be my wish to collect our force and fight him. On this presumption I beg you to inform me what force you think you could join with me for the purpose; and how far you can depend upon the people you have with you, to fight with regular troops. Much may depend upon a defeat on either side. On the part of the enemy it would be ruinous, on ours it would be a capital misfortune.

Please inform me immediately whether you can possess the post at the Congarees[3] if a field piece is sent you; and how long a time it will take to effect it. Hasten on the Stores to the Army as fast as you can, and as matters are drawing to a critical crisis, I could wish you would send us twenty or thirty people well mounted to serve with us as Expresses.

What is the strength and situation of the Post at Ninety Six?[4] I could wish to be accurately informed.

Nothing could be more unfortunate than our repulse the other day[5] which was entirely owing to an order of Col. Gunbies [John Gunby], ordering the first Maryland Regiment to take a new position in the rear. This impressed the Regiment with an idea of a retreat, and drew off the second regiment with it. The Enemy were all in confusion and retiring at the same time. Victory was ours if the troops had stood their ground one Minute longer, and the defeat would have given us full possession of Camden, as the enemy could not have got back into town.

With esteem & regard I am dear Sir
Your Most Obed humble Ser
N Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene's camp on Twenty Five Mile Creek was about three miles northeast of present-day Lugoff, South Carolina.
2. Cross Creek is a tributary of the Cape Fear River near present-day Fayetteville, North Carolina. Cornwallis was headed toward Virginia.
3. Greene was referring to Ft. Granby on the Congaree River at present-day Cayce, South Carolina.
4. At that point, the British still held the fort with a garrison of over 500 men. Greene would begin a siege of Ninety Six on May 22.
5. Greene was referring to the Battle of Hobkirk Hill near Camden on April 25.

1781-05-06 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —1

Camp 25 Mile Creek[1]
May 6th 1781

Dear Sir

I am exceedingly sorry that Col. [John] Watson has found means to get into Camden, this reinforcement, if Col. [John] Small is with Watson, will enable Lord Rawdon to excel us.[2]

I am also a little apprehensive for the safety of Lt. Col. Lees [Henry Lee's] detachment who is ordered to join this army on this side of the river [Wateree River]. Should the enemy attempt anything against you or him you will form a junction; and for this purpose you will advise Col. Lee of your situation, and point out to him the safest and best route to form a junction with me.

Don't run any great hazard until the Virginia Militia come up,[3] which will enable you to push your operations with rapidity and safety. You will please to forward the enclosed letter to Col Lee as soon as possible.

I am Sir
With esteem
Your most obed & humble Servt
N Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene's camp on Twenty Five Mile Creek was about three miles northwest of present-day Lugoff, South Carolina.
2. Watson brought in about 500 more men.
3. The Virginians never arrived because Governor Thomas Jefferson had recalled most of his state's militia in response to the advance of Cornwallis's army.

1781-05-06 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —2

Camp 25 Mile Creek[1]
May 6th 1781 –

Dear Sir,

I received your two letters of the 4th last evening. My intelligence respecting Lord Cornwallis being in motion you may depend upon. But whether he is moving Northward or coming Southward is not yet fully ascertained as the route and place he was at by the last intelligence [time?] away will admit of his moving either way. I am rather inclined to think that he will leave every thing here and move Northward.[2] I am led to entertain this opinion from its being their original plan and from the Earl's being too proud to relinquish his object.

The meal arrived last Evening and by the return of those Waggons I sent you some Ammunition. Guns, Swords, and Pistols we have none, and are in great want ourselves.[3]

I fully agree with you that vigorous measures are necessary to strike terror into our Enemies and give spirits to our own people. Where ever you employ the field piece take care and have it so supported and covered that the enemy cannot possess it by a sally which you may expect if you invest the forts.

Keep us well supplied with Meal.

With esteem & regard I am sir
Your Most Obed. Humble Ser
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
To General Sumter May 6th 1781 Exp.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Gilder-Lehrman Institute – New York, NY]

1. 25 Mile Creek is about halfway between Camden and present-day Columbia.
2. Greene was correct – Cornwallis was marching toward Virginia.
3. Sumter had requested weapons and ammunition in a May 4 letter to Greene.

1781-05-06 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —1

Camp at Ancrams[1]
6th May, 1781

Dear Sir

Yesterday evening agreeable to the Intelligence sent to you[2] I was informed that Col. [John] Watson was Crossing Santee [River] at Buckenhams Ferry[3] in consequence of which I immediately detached two hundred & fifty horsemen to oppose him, & the party intercepted the Inclosed letters[4] which proves that Col. Watson is Recrossing the River and is Going by way of the high hills[5] to Camden where he may perhaps arrive by to-morrow Noon. I am not well informed of his strength, his men Much fatigued & hungry.

If he gets into Camden it will make the enemy more insolent, they take Great pains to Magnify their late success.[6] How Watson has past and repassed through the Country to the Eastward is to me Very unaccountable without your having Notice of it. It is out of my power to do him any Injury Now. Have recalled the party to the West side of this post. Am taking measures to cross the River.

If you have thought proper to send a field piece, I will endeavor to employ it to the best advantage, but it will be against the post at Motts first.[7]

I am, Dr. Sir
Your most Obdt. Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

The Honble
Majr, Gen. Greene
Head Quarters
Pr. Express

[From Lyman Draper transcription. Original letter not found.]

1. Ancrum's Ferry was on the Congaree River west of present-day Columbia.
2. Sumter's letter regarding Watson's movements has not been found.
3. Sumter was probably referring to Buchanan's Ferry below the confluence of the Wateree and Congaree Rivers.
4. The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, Vol. VIII, pg. 217, state that the enclosures have not been found.
5. The High Hills of Santee are in the area of present-day Stateburg, South Carolina.
6. Probably a reference to the British defeat of Greene at the Battle of Hobkirk Hill on April 25.
7. Sumter actually used the field piece in his May 11 attack on Orangeburg after learning that Fort Motte was under siege by Lee and Marion.

1781-05-06 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —2

Camp at Congerees[1] [Congarees] 6th May. 1781

Dr Sir

I Wrote you this morning that Col. [John] Watson Was Crossing the Santee yesterday from the West to the East Side, that his Route would be by the way of the High hills[2] to Camden — Which Information I hope Went Safe —

Lord Cornwallis Moving to Wards X creek [Cross Creek] is Certainly a matter of moment[3] and Great exertions must Consequently be used to oppose the Enemy effectually in every Quarter, otherways our Situation Will be more Intolerable than ever —

I have now With me five hundred, Men & officers included. I expect to be Eight hundred Strong by the Middle of the Week, perhaps in the Corse of the [month? (word is missing)] one thousand, but this number may not be lasting, as the Distreses of the people Generally are excesive, in So much that at this time I am obl[i]ged to Support a Great Number of families with Bread while the Men are in the field —

It is hard to Say What Number I coud Join you with, provided they had to March out of the State, as by that Means the Whole State Would again Devolve to the British, & those Who Remaind in it obliged to acceed to their Government, in that case few woud leave their families behind, Which would Greatly lessen the Number that otherways Might be in the field, for these & other Reasons it is much to be Wished, that the enemy coud be Met With here, Where there is the Greater plenty of provision Rather than to move out of the State, the necessity or propriety of which I by no means pretend to Judge —

How far the Militia could be Depended upon to act with Regular Troops, I am also at a loss to Determine — But am Rather of oppinion they Woud not behaive well as they have never been accustomed to oppose the enemy openly —

The State Troops, Mounted & equipped as light dragoons —I think will in a Short Time, that is when properly supplied with arms, be equally as serviceable as the Best horse upon the Continent — the men I think preferable to any I ever Saw —Near three hundred have Inlisted for ten Months,[4] these Men will be able to perform good service in a Short time —

I Don't think this fort [Fort Granby] coud be taken under many days, this woud depen[d] much upon the use they can make of their Twelve pound pieces of artillery, & which is very Short.—& Some other Matters Which I am not well Informed of, the post at Mr. Motts[5] I think may be Taken in three or four days —

96 [Ninety Six] is easier Taken than the Post at this place, the Garrison Consists of about one hundred & eight men[6]—three, three pounders & Several Swivels, Not very well Supplied with provision it would be a Great acquisition to have these posts, & woud Tend as much in my oppinion to Bring the War to a Termination as the Defeat of Lord Cornwallis —

I hope his Lordship will not Come very Rapidly upon us. I think his Circumstances Will not admit of it, The Country which he has to pass through is against him in every Respect —

His delays I think are favourable to us — in a few days I Shall be able to form a better Judgement of these Several matters and will write you there upon —

1. The Congarees was the area along Congaree River between the Saluda and Wateree rivers. Sumter was at Fort Granby, then under siege.
2. The High Hills of Santee around present Stateburg.
3. Cross Creek is present-day Fayetteville, North Carolina. Cornwallis was actually marching towards Virginia.
4. Enlistments for ten months into service comparable to that of Continental soldiers was achieved by promising privates a bounty of one enslaved person confiscated from Loyalists.
5. Fort Motte, the fortified home of the recently widowed Rebecca Brewton Motte.
6. The fort at Ninety Six actually had over 500 defenders.

[In margin on page 4, next page]

I will have Some men Sent to you for the purpose you mentioned[7], and Storess Shall be Sent to you as fast as possible.

I am Dr Sir
Your most Obdt Srt
Thos Sumter

N.B. I am concerned my writing is So bad that it must be with Difficulty you can Read it, my hand is still Very Stiff. My Shoulder very uneasie & I fear as the weather grows warmer, Shall be obliged to Retier,[8]

TS

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

7. In a letter written the previous day, Greene had requested "twenty or thirty people well mounted to serve with us as Expresses."
8. Sumter suffered a gunshot wound to the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.

1781-05-07 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters 25 Mile Creek[1]
May 7th 1781

Dear Sir

There is no further intelligence from Lord Cornwallis which convinces me he is moving Northwardly.[2] Before I can determine upon any general plan of operations I wish to have that point ascertained.

General [Francis] Marion & Col. [Henry] Lee are operating against the fort at Motts [Fort Motte] to which place I find you have directed your Artillery. I wish both pieces may terrify the enemy so as to induce them to surrender. Major [Edmund] Hyrne if you are at or near that post will inform you what I have in contemplation. If the people will exert themselves and the Earl [Cornwallis] is gone to the Northward, I am in hopes this Country may be once more unfettered. But much will depend upon themselves. Be in readiness to join us if necessity should require it, but you may depend upon not being called from the Congarees but from the most pressing necessity; for I am as fully impressed with the advantages of your continuing there as you can be.[3]

I think you underrate the post at Ninety Six, is the fort strong or weak?[4] Your writing needs no apology, rely upon it I understand you perfectly and meet with no difficulty in reading you letters. On the contrary they are plain clear and intelligible.[5]

With esteem & regard

I Am D Sir

Your Most Obedt Humble Servant

Nath Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene's headquarters on Twenty Five Mile Creek were about three miles northwest of present Lugoff, South Carolina.
2. Greene was incorrect. Cornwallis was marching towards Virginia, and would begin entering the state on the following day.
3. Sumter had Fort Granby at present-day Cayce, South Carolina, under siege.
4. In his letter of the previous day, Sumter told Greene that Ninety Six had 108 defenders. It actually had over 500.
5. Sumter had complained of stiffness in his hand and apologized for his penmanship.

1781-05-07 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Camp Congrees[1] [Congarees] 7th May 1781

Dr Sir

I dispatched your letter for Lt. Col. [Henry] Lee as Soon as it Came to hand. I had heard Nothing of him but Directed the express to go by Col Thompsons [William Thomson][2] where I had Sent a party of men to inquire after him — at which place he will meet with him, as it appears that Genl. [Francis] Marion & Col. Lee arived before the post at Mr. Motts [Motte's] yesterday fore noon.[3]

The letters I herewith Send I judge are from them — the enemy had two pieces of artillery[4] Delivered by a party of horse on Saturday last at the post at Motts [Mottes]—I am not well informed of the Mettle they carry.[5]

I am Dr Sir
Your Most obdt hble Servt
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The Congarees was the area along Congaree River between Saluda and Wateree rivers. Sumter was at Fort Granby, which was under siege.
2. Col. Thomson was commander of the South Carolina 3rd Regiment and had been captured at the fall of Charleston in May 1780. His home near the confluence of the Wateree and Congaree Rivers was captured by the British and turned into a stockaded fortification. Sumter made a failed attempt to capture the outpost on February 22, 1781. The British later abandoned it in favor of the nearby plantation of Rebecca Motte.
3. Fort Motte, one mile northwest of Thomson's, would fall to them on May 12.
4. Greene only noted one cannon captured in his May 14 report to Samuel Huntington. (*The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, Vol. VIII, pg. 251)
5. "Mettle they carry" may refer to the size of the cannon balls.

1781-05-08 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters Sawneys Creek[1] May 8th 1781.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of yesterday I received, with those accompanying it.

The troops removed to this ground last evening. I have received no further intelligence of the movements of Lord Cornwallis.[2]

I am with esteem & regard
Dr Sir
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
Public Service
Honble General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sawney's Creek begins east of present-day Ridgeway, South Carolina, and flows eastward into the Wateree River above Camden.
2. Cornwallis's army began entering Virginia on the date of this letter In his May 6 letter to Sumter, Greene had correctly speculated that Cornwallis would head north.

1781-05-10 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter —1

10th May 1781

Sr

I wrought you last night[1] that a Number of men was seen at Sergt. Campbell's coming up; my reconoitering partys have not let me know any more of it since & I begin to think it may be a small party, & returned or turned off in the Orrangeburg [Orangeburg] road. I send you this as I fear my last may have prevented your Intition [Intention] on Orrangeburg[2] [Orangeburg] —

I am sr. yr. obt. St.
Francis Marion

[Outside]
The Honble. Gen. Sumter
pr Mr. Davis

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. This letter has not been found.
2. Sumter attacked Orangeburg that same day, so he was obviously not deterred by any previous intelligence he may have received from Marion.

1781-05-10 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter —2

10 May 1781
6 O'C PM

Sr

I recd. a letter from Genl. Green [Nathanael Greene] of yesterday's date — he says Lord Rawdon crossed the Watteree [Wateree River], & came in sight of him but returned the same night. Genl. Green [Greene] is at Colo. Creek [Colonel Creek][1]

Just now I recd. Intelligence from the Hills [High Hills of Santee around present-day Stateburg] that Lord Rawdon has Evacuated Camden;[2] last night was at Swift Creek & tonight is to be at Singleton's Mill[3]—if so, [Maj. Andrew] Maxwell is retreating your way, & will certainly be with you — The Enemy mentioned in my last retreated back to Utaw. [Eutaw Springs][4]

I am yr. obt. St.

Fra^{s}. Marion

[Outside]
The Honble. Gen. Sumter
Orangeburg

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Colonel Creek is northeast of present-day Longtown, South Carolina, and flows into Lake Wateree.
2. Marion's intelligence was correct.
3. Swift Creek is 7 miles south of Camden. William Singleton's mill was on Shanks Creek, 30 miles south of Camden.
4. Eutaw Springs is 33 miles east of Orangeburg. Marion had previously warned Sumter of enemy movements near Orangeburg.

1781-05-10 – Nathaniel Pendleton (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters . Colonels [Colonel] Creek May 10th, 1781 11 oClock P.M.

Sir

General Greene [Nathanael Greene] has this moment received information that the enemy has evacuated Camden.[1] They moved out this morning very early, after destroying the Mill, the gaol, and all their stores, together with many private houses. What may have induced this unexpected and precipitate movement is uncertain; but the General is of opinion that the same motives which have induced Lord Rawdon, to this step, will also induce the evacuation of all the out Posts, which the enemy have at Ninety six, Augusta and on the Congaree [River]. The General begs that you will take such measures, if possible, as will prevent [Maj. Andrew] Maxwell's escaping.[2]

The Army was to move toward Friday's ferry [on Congaree River near Fort Granby] tomorrow morning. It will move that way still, tho perhaps by a different Route and more slowly.

It is uncertain which way Lord Rawdon took his Route. It was either to George Town [Georgetown], or Charles Town [Charleston], but most probably the latter.[3] You will please send an express to the commanding officer before Augusta, & let him know this circumstance, that he may take measures accordingly; as the General is firmly persuaded they will, if they can, leave all their out Posts.[4]

I am, Sir with high respect
Yr. Mo. Obed. Serv.
Nath Pendleton [Nathaniel Pendleton]
Aid de Camp

General Sumpter

[Outside]
Public service

The Honourable Brigadier General Sumter on the Congaree Genl. Sumpter will please to send an express, immediately to Genl Pickins [Andrew Pickens] with a Copy of this letter.[5]

N.P.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Marion on the same day wrote to Sumter informing him that the British under Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon had evacuated Camden and were retreating southward.
2. Maxwell was in charge of Ft. Granby on the Congaree River when it surrendered to Lt. Col. Henry Lee on May 15. He and his men were allowed safe passage to Charleston in exchange for giving up the fort.
3. Rawdon had stopped at Nelson's Ferry on the 13th. He then marched to relieve Ft. Granby, but concern over Gen. Greene's intentions prompted him to move back toward Charleston.
4. Orangeburg, Ft. Granby, and Ft. Motte would all fall within a week.
5. If Sumter forwarded the letter, it has not been found.

Fort Granby and Orangeburg

Thomas Sumter's capture of the British outpost at Orangeburg, South Carolina, in May 1781 was one of his few victories during that year. But any satisfaction he derived from that success was soon nullified by the fall of another enemy stronghold, Fort Granby, at the hands of another officer. Sumter's reactions to both events can be found in his letters of that period.

Sumter had failed to seize any enemy outposts during his fruitless "Rounds" campaign earlier in the year. By late April, he was ready to try again and once more led his troops down to the Congaree River in central South Carolina to besiege Fort Granby, which controlled a river crossing near present-day Columbia. Sumter saw that assaulting the fort without cannon would be difficult and decided to leave the outpost surrounded by a contingent of his troops while he set off toward Orangeburg, some fifty miles away.

Although Gen. Nathanael Greene was frustrated with Sumter's independence and refusal to unite with his command, he nevertheless supplied the Gamecock with a fieldpiece in time for his assault on Orangeburg. The garrison's contingent of British regulars and Loyalists surrendered without a fight on the morning of May 11 as Sumter began blasting away at the brick courthouse and jail in which they had been shielded from musket fire.[1] Sumter wrote to Greene that same day: "I invested this post yesterday evening at Seven oclock, & I have the pleasure to inform that at Seven this Morning it was Surrendered to the Troops under my command." He added that, "Military Stores Not Very Considerable but to us of Great Value."[2]

A much greater prospect for spoils was at Fort Granby — and Sumter soon turned his attention back to it. But Lt. Col. Henry Lee arrived at Granby on May 13 and took over command of the siege. Like Orangeburg, the defenders at Granby preferred to surrender rather than have their defenses reduced by Lee's six-pounder cannon. Their commander, Major Andrew Maxwell, offered to leave the post peacefully if they could keep their property. Lee, concerned that the British might be sending a relief force, accepted the terms on May 15.

Sumter and his men were outraged when they learned of the missed opportunity for plunder.[3] Sumter complained to Greene on May 16 that he found "the discontent & disorder among the Militia So Great as to leave No hope of their Subsiding Soon." Sumter enclosed his commission and declared that attempting to remain in his position was impossible "without doing the Greatest Injustice to the publick [sic]."[4]

Greene returned Sumter's commission in a letter dated May 17 and declared, "I cannot think of accepting it, & … beg you to continue your command."[5] He further attempted to mollify Sumter by promising that all captured enslaved persons would be turned over to him as payment for his troops. Greene also offered Sumter whatever arms and small stores remained at Fort Granby.[6] Sumter resumed his command but continued to be a stubborn and unpredictable commander for the remainder of the year.

1. Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 157-158; Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and The Gamecock*, (Casemate Publishers, 2019), 111; Bass, *Gamecock*, 172.
2. Sumter to Greene, May 11, 1781, MiU-C.
3. Bass, *Gamecock*, 173-174; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 159-161; Waters, *The Quaker*, 114-11.
4. Sumter to Greene, May 16, 1781, MiU-C.
5. Greene to Sumter (letter #1), May 17, 1781, DLC.
6. Greene to Sumter (letter #2), May 17, 1781, DLC.

1781-05-11 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 11th May 1781

Dr Sir

I invested this post yesterday evening at Seven oclock, — & I have the pleasure to inform that at Seven this Morning it was Surrendered to the Troops under my command[1] — it was Defended by one Col., Two Capts., three Lts., one Ensign, one Sergt. Maj. & eighty two privates —

Military Stores Not Very Considerable but to us of Great Value, provisions plenty But No Conveniencey of Moving it –

I am just informed that Camden is evacuated. If So, & Genl. [Francis] Marion was disengaged, his Retreat might be cut of [off], that is he might be prevented from Crossing at Nielsons ferry [Nelson's Ferry][2]—

Maj. [Andrew] Maxwell I think will be Taken Good Care off untill I return.[3] I find upon examination this post to be extremely Strong —& had it been obstinately Defended would have been very Diffculty to Reduce.

I am Dear Sir
With the Greatest Respect
Your Most obdt. Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside]
the Honble Majr. Genl. Greene
Head Quarters

[Below possibly added at later date]

From Genl Sumter May 11. 1781
Orangeburgh taken.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The post at Orangeburg surrendered once Sumter began firing at them with his six-pounder cannon. No casualties were reported by either side. However, some of the prisoners were reportedly murdered by their guards on their way to Greene's camp.
2. Camden had indeed been evacuated by the British on May 10, but no effort was made to cut off their retreat.
3. Maxwell would surrender Ft. Granby to Lt. Col Henry Lee on May 15 and in exchange was allowed safe passage to Charleston.

1781-05-12 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 12th May 1781

Dr Sir

I wrote you yesterday that we were in possession of the post at this place Since which I have not been at Leasure to be more perticuler — I am just favored with Yours of the 12th[1] informing of the evacuation of Camden, which I think a favourable circumstance. You need not in my oppinion have the Least Doubts of the Posts above this not falling or Making their escape, that at the Congrees [Congarees] I think will be taken proper care of. No assistance will be wanted there to keep them Close untill I return with the Troops & field piece,[2] if they Should march out & Should prove Superior to the force we have there yet they Cant Get Clear by any means as I am below them —

Before I return to the Congrees [Congarees] I think to move towards Santee [River], and endeavor to Alarm Lord Rawden [Rawdon] to prevent his Crossing the River, or Removing the post from Nielson's [Nelson's] ferry,[3] untill Genl. [Francis] Marion & Col. [Henry] Lee are Disengaged — as they might if you thought proper have it in their power to take it —

Another Motive I have for taking a turn through the Country, is, I find Many people Braking up & Removing to Town, So that if Lord Rawden [Rawdon] Shoud pass the river or take post at Nielson [Nelson], there is every Reason to beleive the Country will be Striped of every thing that is Valuable. I wish to Deprive them of as Many horses as possible & prevent the Inhabitance [Inhabitants] from Moving, & Carrying off great Quantities of Stock which are Now Collecting —

My movements will be as Rappid as may be —& Shall never be out of the way of cutting of [off] the Retreat of the Enemy from any of their frontier posts — as our officers will know where to Send to me. My Return to the Congrees [Congarees] will be Speedy.

I have the Honr to be, Dr Sir
Your most obdt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl Greene

[Outside]
[Four lines below possibly added later]
From Genl. Sumter May 12th. 1781.
moving in to the front of Rawdon & c

Public Service
Honble Majr. Genl. Greene
Pr Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. This letter has not been found.
2. Sumter was referring to Fort Granby on the Congaree River, which he had besieged since May 2. After four days with no success, he decided to leave a small force there under Col. Thomas Taylor and concentrate on the outpost at Orangeburg. On May 11, Sumter intimidated the garrison into surrendering with minimal casualties on either side. Meanwhile, Col. Henry Lee had assumed command of Sumter's troops at Granby and would negotiate a surrender of that outpost before Sumter could return.
3. Rawdon would destroy the fortifications at Nelson's Ferry on May 14 and continue falling back towards Charleston.

1781-05-14 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

[The original letter has not been found. George Washington Greene states that it was part of the "Greene MSS" and dated May 14, 1781. The letter is also quoted in Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene *by William Johnson – 1822 – Vol. II, pg. 122.*

The Johnson version does not include the first lines of the letter as printed in the G.W. Greene history. Below are the author's comments that prefaced the published portion of the letter.]

> Sumter learnt that Lee was before Fort Granby, at Orangeburg, on his return from what he confesses might appear to his commander-in-chief a "whimsical" tour. From thence he wrote on the 14th of May, a general account of the steps which he had taken to harass the enemy, having "been near to Dorchester and within eighteen miles of Monk's [Moncks] Corner."
>
> [*Below is the partial transcription of Sumter's letter in G.W. Greene's work.*]

I am informed that Colonel [Henry] Lee has gone to the Congarees. I beg leave to say I am much concerned for it, as there is a sufficient number of troops there to prevent the escape of Major Maxwell until I returned, which will be to-morrow, with the remainder of the troops. If I had known that Colonel Lee had been going to these posts, (I) could have employed the troops I command down the country to very great advantage at this time. So great an opening I have never seen.

[*Johnson version begins here.*] I hope it may not be disagreeable to recall Lieutenant-colonel Lee, as his services cannot be wanted at that place, and as to his taking the command as at the post at Motte's, I cannot believe it would be your wish[1] ; and notwithstanding I have the greatest respect for Colonel Lee, yet I could wish he had not gone to that place, as it is a circumstance I never thought of, and I have been at great pains to reduce that post. I have it in my power to do it, and I think it for the good of the public to do it without regulars.[2]

[This line omitted in Johnson transcription.] You will please to pardon the liberty I have taken.

[Johnson has an additional phrase in the last paragraph, indicated below in italics. The final line of the letter is also omitted in the Johnson letter.]

"[A]s it is a circumstance I never thought of, ***his cavalry can be of no service there and may be of greatest here***. I have been at great pains to reduce that post."

[From *The Life of Nathanael Greene: Major General in the Army of the Revolution* **by George Washington Greene – 1884 – Vol. III, pg. 295;** *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene* **by William Johnson – 1822 – Vol. II, pg. 122]**

1. Marion was a colonel in the Continental Line and therefore outranked Lt. Col. Henry Lee.
2. Lee and Marion had already taken Ft. Motte on May 12. Ft. Granby would negotiate a surrender to Lee on May 15 after receiving fire from Lee's six-pounder cannon.

1781-05-15 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 3 oclock . 15 May 1782

Dr Sir

I have just Received accounts that Lord Rawden [Rawdon] is Moving upwards from Neilson's [Nelson] ferry,[1] that at 7 oclock in the evening, he was below Col. Thompson's[2] [William Thomson's plantation] about 20 miles — This account I have no Doubt you have Received before now, I had Several men Reconitering that way. They have not been as attentive as I could have wished —

Genl. [Francis] Marion was in the evening near to the place where Rawden was last Seen.[3] Which way he has gone I know not —I have Repeatedly Mentioned to him the Necessity of a Good Lookout towards the ferry[4]—as I expected that Rawden [Rawdon] woud Move as he has if if he meet with No Interruption at the ferry —I allways thought it unfortunate to find Genl. Marion & Col. [Henry] Lee So high up the River after passing it, So near to Neilson's ferry, a passuage of So Much Consequence and So much in their power —

I am just going for the Congrees [Congarees] where I will act for the best as far as I am Capaple —I think Rawden may be Stoped before he gets there if Genl. Marion has gone upwards —

I am Dr. Sr.
Your Most obdt. Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

[Outside]
the Hon. Majr. Genl. Greene

[Below possibly added at a later date]

From Genl Sumter
May 15th 1781

Ld Rawden crosses the
River and moves up
on the South Side

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Rawdon did head towards Ft. Granby from Nelson's with the intent of relieving it, but turned back south out of concern that Greene might move towards Charleston. Granby surrendered to Lee on this day.
2. Col. Thomson's plantation, known as Belleville, was about 30 miles downstream from Ft. Granby.
3. Marion was at Ft. Motte, about 1 mile northwest of Col. Thomson's.
4. Probably Nelson's Ferry on Santee River.

1781-05-16 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Capt Authers[1] 16th May 1781

Dr Sir

I have been Honoured With your Letter of Yesterdays Date[2]—

I am Convinced your Reasons are Cogent & your observations exeedingly Just, & it has ever been the first Wish of my heart to promote & facillitate the publick Service —

But with the deepest Regret find the discontent & disorder among the Militia So Great as to leave No hope of their Subsiding Soon[3] —

My Indisposition & Want of Capacity — to be of Service to this Country Induces me as a friend to it, to beg leave to Resign My Command — and have taken the Liberty to enclose My Commission Which I hope you will Receive, as I find my inability So Great that I Cant without doing the Greatest Injustice to the publick think of Serving any Longer.

I have the Honour to be Dr Sir,
With the Greatest Respect
Your most obedt Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

Majr Genl Greene

[Outside]
the Honble Majr Genl Greene
Head Quarters
[Below possibly added at a later date]
from Genl. Sumpter
May 16th 1781
offended & resigns

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Possibly Capt. William Arthur, but he was from the Little River District north of Orangeburg. Sumter was presumably still in the vicinity of Orangeburg.
2. This letter has not been found.
3. Sumter and his men were angry that Lt. Col. Henry Lee had captured Ft. Granby on May 15 after they had besieged it themselves. Lee used his six-pounder cannon to intimidate the outpost into surrendering. But rushed by the approach of Gen. Rawdon, Lee allowed the British to leave and take with them goods they had plundered from Whigs. Sumter was confident he could have taken the post himself once he returned from Orangeburg.

1781-05-17 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —1

Camp at Ancrams [Ancrum's] Plantation
May 17th 1781

Dear Sir

I take the liberty to return you your commission, which you forwarded me yesterday for my acceptance; & to inform you that I cannot think of accepting it, & to beg you to continue your command.[1]

I am sorry for your ill State of health, and shall do everything in my power to render your command as convenient as the nature of the service will admit.[2] It is unnecessary for me to tell you how important your services are to the interest & happiness of this Country, and the confidence I have in your abilities [and?] Zeal for the good of the service. Your continuing in command will lay the public in general and me in particular, under a very great obligation; & tho' it may be accompanied with many personal inconveniences, yet I hope you will have cause to rejoice in the conclusion of the business from the consideration of having contributed so largely to the recovery of its Liberty.

With Esteem & respect
I have the honour to be Dear Sir
Your most obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

[Outside]
The Honourable Brigadier General Sumter
on Congaree [River]

Nath Greene
Ancrums May 17 81 N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter did remain in command in spite of his resignation.
2. Sumter had cited poor health as his reason for resigning, but it was actually triggered by Col. Henry Lee capturing Ft. Granby instead of him.

1781-05-17 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —2

Ancrums Plantation on the Congaree May 17th 1781

Sir

You will continue your command at this place,[1] & form and encourage the Militia in all parts of the State, in the best manner you can for co-operating with the American Army. You will carefully watch the motions of the enemy below this place & advise me of all their movements, & should they come out in force towards ninety six, you will take such a Route as to effect a junction with us at that Place. You will have the fortifications at this place leveled, & those of Motts [Motte's] and Orangeburg, if not already compleated, and also those of Camden.

We shall leave part of our spare Stores at this place; should the enemy make any movements this way or towards Ninety six, you will give the officer having them in charge Orders to move up to Wynns borough [Winnsboro] & as much higher up into the Country as you may think necessary.

Such of the negroes as were taken at this Garrison (as are not claimed by good Whiggs, & their property proved,) belonging to the Tories or disaffected you will apply to the fulfilling your contracts with the ten months Troops.[2] Such part of the Arms and stores, as the Commissary General of Military Stores, & the Quarter Master General shall deliver over to you, you will apply as justice & the good of the service shall require.

But above all things pay particular attention to the arranging of the militia, as the safety of the Country in a great measure depends thereon. You will direct General Marian [Francis Marion] to take such a position & employ him in such manner as may most effectually anoy the enemy, & at the same time co-operate with us should occasion require it.

Given at Camp at
Ancrums Plantation on
the Congaree May 17th 1781
Nath Greene

Honourable Brigr. Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Ft. Granby
2. Sumter had promised enslaved people as payment for men who signed up for a ten-month tour of duty.

1781-05-19 – Otho Holland Williams to Thomas Sumter

Camp Saluda River 19th May 1781

Sir,

The infamous [William] Nicholls[1] proposed to make an atonement for his crimes by discovering some Dangerous Enemies to the Country — a party has been out with him and has return'd with old Mr. Biarly[2] and some negroes —

The General considers him as a man incapable of doing much good or harm in the field, except with his plough: and has order'd me to send him to you with the Negroes who are to be disposed of agreeable to the Instructions you have already received.[3]

I am Sir
Yr mo: Obedt. Hble Servant
O [Otho] H. Williams
D.A. Genl.

Honble B. Gl. Sumter

[Outside]
Honorable Brigr. Genl. Sumter Congaree
Mr. Biarly 17 May 1781 Saluda river
Williams

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Nicholls was in trouble for desertion from the S.C. 6th Regiment and was apparently trying to redeem himself. Gen. Greene ordered him court-martialed the next day and he was sentenced to execution on the following day.
2. The *Greene Papers* suggest that this may have been the man who ran Briarley's Ferry on the Broad River.
3. Greene was still trying to mollify Sumter with enslaved people after his threat to resign a few days before.

Ninety Six

After the costly engagement with Nathanael Greene's army at Guilford Courthouse in March 1781, Lord Cornwallis moved his weakened army toward Wilmington, North Carolina, to be replenished. This allowed Greene to turn his attention to South Carolina with one target being the British outpost at the village of Ninety Six in the western part of the state. He hoped this would loosen the British hold on the backcountry and force the enemy back to Charlestown.[1]

Greene began the siege of Ninety Six on May 22, 1781. His force of about one thousand men was a mix of Continental troops and militia units from both Carolinas. Opposing the Patriots were 550 British Provincial regulars and Loyalist militia from the Ninety Six area under the command of Lt. Col. John Harris Cruger. In addition to a stockade surrounding the town, the fortifications included a large redoubt called the Star Fort, protected by a deep ditch as well as by abatis — sharpened stakes facing outward. Greene would spend the next twenty-seven days in a fruitless attempt to capture the outpost. Many different methods were tried by the Patriots such as a sharpshooter tower, flaming projectiles, cutting off the outpost's water supply, and tunneling underneath — but all were thwarted by the resourceful Cruger. When Greene learned that a relief force under Lord Rawdon was on the march from Charleston, he ordered an all-out assault on June 18. But this, too, was repulsed by the defenders in bloody hand-to-hand fighting.[2]

Greene immediately withdrew his army from Ninety Six after the failed attack. Lord Rawdon attempted to pursue Greene, but his sick and exhausted army was not up to the challenge of engaging the Patriots in the stifling June heat. Rawdon fell back to Ninety Six and within a few days concluded that holding the fort was not feasible. Ninety Six was abandoned by the British on June 29. By the end of the summer, only Charleston would remain in British hands.[3]

Sumter was not present at the Ninety Six siege, but his correspondence with Greene during that period illuminates Greene's concern for intelligence and protection from a British relief force. Greene told Sumter on June 10: "Should the Enemy move out in force with a view of raising the Seige [sic] of this place, you will give them all the opposition in your power."[4] But Sumter, encamped near present-day Columbia, was getting conflicting reports of British activity and was not convinced that Ninety Six was Rawdon's objective until it was too late to protect Greene. As late as June 13 he was telling Greene that the enemy had advanced as far as Orangeburg but mistakenly put their strength at one thousand — half the actual force. And he wrongly concluded that if the total was "not more than a thousand, it is not probable they mean to proceed much farther." When Sumter finally did get in motion on June 16, it was too little and too late. Not only was he plagued by desertions, a detachment of his mounted militia under Charles Myddelton were ambushed with heavy losses on June 18 as they attempted to attack the British rear. This was the same day Greene mounted his doomed final assault on

1. Terry Golway, *Washington's General: Nathanael Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution* (Henry Holt and Co., 2005) 270-274; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Six," *Names in South Carolina, Vol. XXV* (Winter, 1978) 29; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1780-1783* (Russell & Russell, 1969) 278-281; John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (The University of Alabama Press, 1985) 209-210.
2. Golway, *Washington's General*, 274; Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Six," 29-30; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution*, 281-300; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 210-214; William R. Reynolds, Jr., *Andrew Pickens: South Carolina Patriot in the Revolutionary War* (McFarland & Company, Inc., 2012) 262-273; National Park staff, "A Brief History of Ninety Six," Dec. 17, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/nisi/learn/historyculture/index.htm
3. Golway, *Washington's General*, 275-276; Terry W. Lipscomb, "South Carolina Revolutionary Battles, Part Six," 30; McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1780-1783*, 301-303; Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 214.
4. Greene to Sumter (letter #2), June 12, 1781, DLC.

Ninety Six.[5]

The letters between Greene and Sumter also indicate that historians have been making a mistake since the 19th century in their assumptions about when Greene was aware of Rawdon's advance. Numerous histories state that Greene learned of Rawdon's approach on June 11. For example, Frances Vinton Greene states in his 1893 biography of Nathanael Greene: "On the 11th Greene received information that Rawdon had begun his march." David Lee Russell asserts in his 2000 book, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies,* that Greene received intelligence from Sumter on June 11 that fresh British reinforcements had landed and Rawdon was on the move.[6]

Yet, the letters from June 11 to June 13 don't support those statements. Greene wrote to Sumter on June 12 that he could "hardly persuade myself yet that they [the British] will venture out thus far into the Country, at a time when the second Division of the French Fleet is certainly on the coast, and probably near Charles Town."[7] The report about the French fleet was false, but Greene not only believed that incorrect intelligence, he also accepted erroneous statements from Sumter received that same day. Sumter had indeed written to Greene on June 11, as stated above, but he calmly noted that the enemy "still Remains in the Neighborhood of Monks Corner" and that he had "no farther accounts with Respect to an arrival of a reinforcement at Charles Town."[8]

Sumter's incorrect information was received with relief by Greene as indicated in his reply of June 13: "Yours of the 11th came to hand yesterday a few Minutes after I wrote you. As you mention nothing of the reinforcement, I hope less is to be apprehended from their numbers than at first was expected."[9] But a second letter to Sumter, issued that same day from Greene's aide-de-camp William Pierce, has a totally different tone: "Genl. Greene desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your two letters by Capt. Linton. He wishes you to throw yourself immediately in front of the Enemy."[10] This would indicate that Greene received alarming fresh intelligence on the British advance after writing the first letter to Sumter.

It is not clear which "two letters by Capt. Linton" Pierce is referring to in his letter to Sumter. Sumter actually sent *three* letters to Greene on June 13. The *Nathanael Greene Papers* state that Pierce probably meant the first two of those letters. That assumes the letters made it to Greene the same day they were written. But based on previous transit times, it took at least a day, sometimes two, for letters to arrive at each other's camps.

There are no existing letters from Sumter to Greene dated June 12. There is only one Sumter letter from June 11. But it is worth noting that several 19th-century histories refer to a June 11 letter in which Sumter warns that Rawdon is on the march toward Ninety-Six. For example, Cecil Hartley in his 1859 *Lives of Lee and Sumter*, states that Greene "was informed by Sumter on the 11th of June that Rawdon was on the march to relieve Ninety-Six."[11] But the letter we have from that date makes no mention of Rawdon and — as discussed above — has no sense of urgency about a move toward Ninety Six. Whether there was indeed a second June 11 letter, or historians of that era were simply mistaken, they no doubt added to the belief that Greene was warned of Rawdon's advance on June 11—a notion which persists to this day.

5. Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 164-166.
6. Frances Vinton Greene, *General Greene* (Appleton and Company, 1893) 255; David Lee Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies* (McFarland & Company, 2000) 245.
7. Greene to Sumter (letter #2), June 12, 1781, DLC.
8. Sumter to Greene, June 11, 1781, MiU-C.
9. Greene to Sumter (letter #1), June 13, 1781, Richard K. Showman and Dennis Conrad (eds.) *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene,* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1995) vol. 8, 385.
10. Pierce to Sumter, June 13, 1781, MiC-U.
11. Showman, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, vol. 8, 386; Cecil B. Hartley, *Lives of Lee and Sumter* (G.G. Evans, 1859) 208.

1781-05-22 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Camp at Ancrum's 22nd May, 1781

Dr Sir

By the last accounts from Lord Rawden [Rawdon], he had halted at the Corner,[1] but have No Certainty of his fortying [fortifying?] that place as has been reported[2] —

Majr. [Philip] Rutherford from Salisbury brings accounts of Lord Cornwallis being upon his Return this Way.[3] Many think it Not So, that the Troops Discovered in Granvil [Granville] was Nothing More than a party of horse Sent after Some Stores in that Country —

The works at Friday's ferry Camden Motts [Motte's] & orange burgh [Orangeburg] I think Tolerably well Demolished, I have Reason to believe the Militia Will turn out Well, especially in the disaffected Regimnts, but have but Very few arms.

Col. [Henry] Hampton has has returned from the Southward, he took a few British prisoners near Monks Corner [Monck's Corner]—among which was two officers, & Was Very Near taking the Commandant from Charles Town [Charleston], he found the Inhabitance [Inhabitants] Very busy in removing their Stocks out of the Way of the Enemy, according to the Directions I had Given, from thence he proceeded to Dolchester [Dorchester], Ashley River Round, O, Edisto [River] & C—Where he took Several prisoners, Kild a Doctr Wilson from this place, & Destroyed his Boat in Which he was Moving to portroyal [Port Royal]. I am preparing to fix Mr. [Robert] McElrath to his business at this place in preference to Charlotte, as all the Materials We have are here —

I am Dr Sir

your Most obdt. Hble. Servt.

Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Monck's Corner was about 30 miles north of Charleston.
2. Rawdon was indeed fortifying Biggin Church near Monck's Corner.
3. The report was false.

1781-05-26 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp before Ninety Six
May 26th, 1781

Dear Sir

Your favour of the 22nd is before me. General Marian [Francis Marion] writes me that Lord Rawdon lies at Monks corner [Moncks Corner] and that he wishes for Liberty to attack the enemy at George Town [Georgetown]. I have refered him to you for an answer[1] resting the matter upon these two points; that if Lord Rawdon is making no preparations, which has the appearance of interrupting the sieges, now going on here and at Augusta,[2] or if his moving to George Town, will not expose you in your present situation, and interrupt the arrangement & preparations you are making, he may attempt the enterprise.

But if Lord Rawdon intentions appear offensive, or you will be exposed upon his moving, not to attempt it, as it is but an inferior object. A fleet is said to have arrived off Charles Town [Charleston] bar. Make the strictest enquiry who, or what they are.[3]

Col. Branum [Thomas Brandon] on his return home, called at this place, & told me he had your orders to bring such a part of the militia to your aid below. For particular reasons I have desired him to join us with all the force he can collect at this place, to expedite the reduction of it, as soon as possible —

My motives I will explain to you more fully hereafter. I am sorry to break in upon your arrangements, but I flatter myself you will be persuaded it is for the good of the service at large tho' it may be a little inconvenient to you for a time. I am glad you are setting Mr. McElroy [Robert McElrath] to work making Arms,[4] nothing will strengthen the hands of the Country, like measures for arming the people. The enemy left many things at Camden, should any of the Articles there be of use to you, in this important business, they may be had for the purpose.

As I have no accounts of Lord Cornwallis's making towards this quarter, I persuade myself Major [Philip] Rutherford's information is without foundation.[5] however if it is true, I shall have information either to day or tomorrow, as one of my aids is gone to Salisbury for that and other purposes. I beg my complements to the Field Officers of your Command & am

With great respect
Your most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

[Outside]
The Honourable Brigadier General Sumter
On Congaree
96 [Ninety Six]. May 26 81

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Marion went ahead and attacked Georgetown without permission. Marion's threatened siege forced the British to abandon Georgetown on May 28.
2. Greene's siege of Ninety Six had started on May 22. Gen. Andrew Pickens, Gen. Elijah Clarke and Lt. Col. Henry Lee successfully besieged the forts at Augusta between May 23 and June 5.
3. The fleet at Charleston Bar at the mouth of Charleston Harbor carried fresh troops from Ireland.
4. McElwrath was employed as State Armorer on May 17.
5. Greene was correct.

1781-05-28 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp before Ninety Six
May 28th, 1781

Dear Sir

I have nothing new to communicate from this quarter. Our approaches are going on but slowly, owing to the want of men to dig; however I am in hopes of being up to the enemies lines in a few days.[1]

Accounts from the North render the arrangement of your Militia necessary as soon as possible to join in further offensive operations. Equip and prepare yourself as soon as you can.

With esteem & regard

I am Sir your Most Obed humble Servt

Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
The Honorable
Brigadier General Sumter
at Congaree
96 [Ninety Six] . May 28th 81

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene began his siege of Ninety Six on May 22 and it would last until June 19.

1781-05-29 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Philada. May 29, 1781

Dr. Sir

Dr. [Peter] Fayssoux[1] being intelligent, & acquainted with publick transactions here, I refer you to him, for an account of 'em —

I shall set off for Gen. Washington's camp To Morrow; Indeed, I shd. have gone, 'ere now, but a variety of Reasons concurred, to render my going sooner, premature — my stay here has been here much longer than I expected it wd. Be; However, it was unavoidable. The favorable Moment, for accomplishing a point, is not always to be found, as soon as one wishes —

I shall return to Carolina, as soon as I can effect the Objects of my Journey hither, or, as I find they can't be effected, Which, however, I will not despair of, for, nothing on my part shall be wanting to accomplish them —

I am with great Regard Dr Sir
Yr most obedt. servt.
J. Rutledge

The Honble. Brigadr. Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Fayssoux provided medical services to the Continental army in the South. In 1780 he was named physician and surgeon general of the Southern Department.

1781-06-06 – Isaac Huger to Thomas Sumter

June 6th, 1781

Dear Sir

Copies of two letters I have just recd from Major [Hezekiah] Maham I have enclosed you which will inform you of the weakness of his Corps, having but fifty men with him, Some of the most active Militia well mounted, would render great services to that part of the Country, and prevent their plundering, & c. 'till stronger parties can be sent to reinforce him. —

Should you hear from 96 [Ninety Six] and any letters for me shall be much obliged for any information pr bearer.

I am Dr Sir

Your hum.servt.

Is. [Isaac] Huger[1]

[Outside]

On Public Service

To Brigdr. General Sumter

in his absence to the Comg. Officer at Congaree

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Although a South Carolinian, Gen. Isaac Huger commanded Virginia Continentals under Gen. Nathanael Greene, because Virginia's generals were captured at the surrender of Charleston on May 12, 1780 and were still prisoners on parole.

1781-06-06 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

Geor. Town [Georgetown] 6th June 1781

Sr

Yesterday I wrought you pr Express that I had levelled all the works here[1] & shoud march tomorrow to Murray's ferry,[2] also that Majr. [Hezekiah] Maham had informed me that Rawdon was at Mullberry below the Corner,[3] their horse frequently come up to this last place that large party was sent round that part of the Country Collecting stock & grain, that Colo. [Elias] Ball with a party of militia was to have marched last Thursday out of Chs. Town [Charleston] to join Col [John] Watson with an Intention to destroy the houses & provisions between Santee [River] and C. Town [Charleston], & that I should not be able to prevent their designs.

This Moment I recd. Intelligence from one of my Offrs. near Haddrell's point that seventeen transports with troops sd to be two thousand had arrived in Chs. Town [Charleston][4] which Information he had from two of our officers who sd they had seen the vessells go in —

I am sr
Yr ob sr
Francis Marion

Brg. Genl. Sumter

[Outside]
On Public service
The Honble Brigr. Genl. Sumter
Express Mr. Ab Poole

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. The British had evacuated Georgetown on May 28 and Marion entered the next day.
2. Murray's Ferry was on the Santee River where present-day Highway 52 crosses.
3. Mulberry Plantation was about six miles southwest of historic Moncks Corner, South Carolina.
4. Haddrell Point is on the Cooper River across from Charleston. Lord Rawdon did receive reinforcements from Britain on June 3.

1781-06-06 – William Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters before Ninety Six, June 6th 1781

Dear Sir

Inclosed is a letter to Col. [Nisbet] Balfour,[1] which Genl. Greene wishes may be sent by a Flag to Charles Town [Charleston] immediately. This place is not yet reduced, nor is it easy to ascertain, the time that it will be.[2] We are carrying on our approaches and have closely invested the Town on all sides. This Night we shall be within their Abattis and perhaps by To-morrow Noon we shall be operating in their Ditch. —

The fate of Augusta is not yet determined.[3]

[Col. Thomas] Brown exhibits great obstinacy, and seems determined to risque the fortune of an escalade. Matters are wrought up to a crisis, and must soon be determined. We have every reason to believe that a French Fleet is, or shortly will be, on our Coast; and we have full assurances that it will give us a decided superiority at Sea.—The news we have from Virginia is of the negative kind; neither good or bad. It is certain that General Philips [William Phillips] is dead, and that the Army in Virginia is commanded by [Benedict] Arnold.[4]

We have accounts that bear marks of authenticity, of the fall of Pensacola, and the reduction of all the Enemy's out Works at St. Augustine.[5] By the same chanel of intelligence we are informed of Admiral Rodneys [George Rodney's] being defeated in a naval engagement in the West Indies.[6]- All this is important, and must give pleasure to a Man who loves his Country as much as you do.

I have the honor to be with great respect and esteem,
Your most obt. serv.
Wm. Pierce Jr. [William Pierce, Jr.]
Aid de Camp.

[Outside]
Brigadr. Genl. Sumter
96 [Ninety Six] June 6 81
W.P. Pierce

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Lt. Col. Balfour was the British Commandant at Charleston.
2. Greene's siege of Ninety Six began on May 22 and would be abandoned on June 19.
3. Augusta had surrendered to patriot forces that same day.
4. British Gen. Phillips had died of a fever on May 13 and was replaced by Gen. Arnold.
5. Pensacola had surrendered to the Spanish on May 8, but St. Augustine would remain in British hands until the end of the war.
6. This report was false.

1781-06-07 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Ancrum's[1] 7th June. 1781

Dr Sir

I Received your favour of the 28th Ultimo, wherein you mention your having ordered Cols. [Thomas] Brandon, Hays [Joseph Hayes] & [John] Thomas' Regmts to Join & Remain with you at 96 [Ninety Six], Col. [Arramanos] Liles has also informed me that his Regemt is also ordered to the Same place, it has to be shure, prevented me from Making the Necessary arrangements & inquiry into the State of these Regemts, & the Temper & Designs of the people, & has also Curtailed my force Considerably, but as you have a Call for them, I am Glad they was in the way of being Serviceable —

I have been through several Regmts, & have the pleasure to inform you that men are turning out Very well, harvest being upon hand, occasions some Reluctance, & for fear of loosing which, I have left particular Persons at home, who, is to assist their their Neighbours —

I gave Col. Richd Hampton [Richard Hampton] a Command of the Disafected orangeburghers —With them he has made an extensive Tour to the Southward & has Done Something very Clever — he Surprised & Kild a Capt. Livingston [Ensign Henry Livingstone] with Several of his party, made some prisoners, Took a number of Negroes & thirty odd fine horses.[2] he also fell in with Col. Colten [John Coffin?] Who had about fifty men with him he Kild & took Some of his party, but by the advantage of a Swamp the Col. Made his escape — opon the Whole, it may be said his party has behaved well,

Soon after your Departure from this, I Received a letter from Genl. [Francis] Marion wherein he expressed a Desire of going against George Town [Georgetown] & said he had wrote to you upon that head[3]—upon which I mentioned that he woud Consequently follow your Direction, untill which I Requested that he woud Cover the Country, & prevent the Enemy from Ravaging it, he however proceeded against George Town [Georgetown], which the enemy Evacuated the first Night after his arival,[4] & left I am told, stores of Considerable Value —

The Enemy has move from the Mulbery their late Station which is six mile below Monks Corner [Monck's Corner], back again to the Corner — with a Design from all appearances to lay waist to the Country behind them — they are Collecting all the Stock of every kind, Destroying the Crops in the field as well as those in the houses — it is said the Col. Ball is ordered out with his & the Charles Town [Charleston] Militia to Burn all the Houses as high as the upper end of St. John's Parish —

Ld. Rawdon is Sick in town Col. [John] Watson Commands at the Corner. Majr. McAurther [Archibald McArthur] at the Twenty three mile house a large Party lies at Wasamasaw [Wassamassaw], an other at Dotchester [Dorchester], their whole force both of Regulars & Militia are Ranged across this Neck, but Not with an intention, in My oppinion, to Move far up the Country —

I have ordered Col. [Samuel] Tate's Regemt to move down & to co-opperate with Majr. Maham [Hezekiah Mayham]—Col. [Thomas] Taylor's is just upon Marching also. This will be Directly followed by Cols. [Edward] Lacey's & [William] Bratton's, the Whole Will move in three Days I Should have Detach some of the State Horses, but I have Reason to think it would have been attended with Some Disadvantage —

1. Ancrum's plantation was near Friday's Ferry on the Congaree River, near present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
2. This action was on June 1 at Vaudant's Old Field, southwest of present-day Columbia.
3. Greene had departed Ancrum's around May 18. There are no surviving Marion letters to Sumter that match the one described here. Greene did receive a letter from Marion regarding Georgetown dated May 20, so his letter to Sumter was presumably the same date or immediately afterward.
4. The British evacuated the town on June 6.

Majr. [William Clay] Snipes, of Col. [William] Polks Regemt, was surprised a few nights ago at the horse shoe by a party of Col. Beninggal [Robert Ballingall's] Horse from Dorchester — he with only three out of Twenty escaped. it is Said, the Rest was all put to the Sword, as is Reported, the Majr. has Not yet Returned to Camp[5]—I have nothing Material from Virginia that can be depended upon. I hope to hear in a few days of your Seige having happily Terminated.[6]

I am Dr. Sr.
With the Greatest Respect
Your most obdt. Hble servt -
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

5. This action occurred June 3 at Snipe's own plantation, known as the Horse Shoe. The site is east of present-day Walterboro, South Carolina.
6. Greene would abandon his siege of Ninety Six on June 19 as a relief force under Lord Rawdon approached.

1781-06-08 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Ancrums[1] 8th June 1781

Dr Sir

I this moment received yours of the 6th Inst. & agreeable to Genl. Greens [Nathanael Greene's] Wishes, will take care to have his letter to Lt. Col. [Nisbet] Balfour[2] forwarded by a Proper Conveyance —

I find by the obstinacy of the Enemy, the Reduction of the Posts at 96 [Ninety Six], & Augusta,[3] is attended with Some Difficulty, but as Success is lightly [likely?] to be the Result of the Siege, we have no cause to Complain —

Your Intelligence with Respect to the operations of the Spaniards & C. is Very agreeable[4] & these Strokes will tend I hope to facillitate the Peace & happyness of this Country —

The Conduct of the enemy I think Coroborates the oppinion of a fleets being shortly upon our Coast. They were destroying every thing the Country affords except what they Carry to town.

I am Dr Sir

Your most obdt Hble Servt

Thos Sumter

Majr Pierce [William Pierce, Jr., Greene's Aide-de-Camp]

[Outside]
Majr William Pierce
From Genl. Sumter
June 8th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania]

1. Ancrum's plantation was near Friday's Ferry on the Congaree River, near present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
2. Balfour was the British Commandant of Charleston at this time. Greene's letter was concerning a prisoner exchange.
3. Augusta had already surrendered on June 5, but the siege of Ninety Six would last until June 19 and be abandoned by Greene in the face of approaching British reinforcements under Lord Rawdon.
4. The Spanish had seized western Florida from the British during May.

1781-06-08 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

8th June 1781[1]

Dr Genl

I herewith Send you a Packet from Genl [Francis] Marion. His information is unfavorable,[2]

I Shall Send Several Detachments through the Country as near the enemies lines as possible to bring off all the Stock & if the enemy advances have it passed over the Santee [River].

I am Dr Sr
Your Most obedt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

[Outside]
The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene
Head Quarters
96 [Ninety Six]
Per Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Morgan Library – New York, NY]

1. The letter was written at Ancrum's Plantation on the Congaree River, based on another letter Sumter wrote that same day to Maj. William Pierce.
2. Marion had written to both Sumter and Greene on June 6 that the British were being reinforced. The contents of the "packet" that Sumter forwarded are not known.

1781-06-09 – Ichabod Burnet (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

June 9th 1781

Sir,

I am directed by Gen. Greene [Nathanael Greene] to request you will please to furnish a sufficient number of men to assist Mr. John Gillard [Gaillard] in collecting & driving cattle for the Army.

I am with respect Sir
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
I. Burnett [Major Ichabod Burnet] Aid de Camp
June 9th 1781

Honorable General Sumter

[OUTSIDE]
The Honorable General Sumter Commanding
Congarees

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1781-06-09 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

Ancrum's June 9th, 1781

Sir:

I have just received your favour of the 6th instant, but have not that which you mention of the preceeding day.[1] I find the enemy disposed to do us every possible injury. I am glad to hear you succeeded against George Town [Georgetown],[2] and that you think of passing the Santee soon which will in some measure check the progress of the enemy. I have two Regiments moving downwards with orders to cooperate with Major Mayham [Hezekiah Maham]—others move to day.

No perfect plan of operation can at present be laid down. I shall be happy to have the earliest advices from you after you pass the river and have obtained proper accounts of the situation of the enemy. I am sorry to hear of a reinforcement having arrived; have hopes it may not be so considerable as is suggested.[3]

The post at 96 [Ninety Six] and Augusta are not as yet taken, they are obstinately defended, but consequently must fall in a few days.[4] We have certain accounts that all Pensacola is in possession of the Spaniards, that all the enemy's out works at St Augustine are possessed by them; through the same channel of intelligence we learn that Admiral [George] Rodney has been defeated in the West Indies[5] and that a fresh fleet is or will be on our coast very soon which will give us a superiority at sea.

I recollect I received yours of the 5th yesterday and sent your packet for Gen'l Greene on immediately.

I am sir Your most obd't servant
THOS SUMTER

[Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pg 93. The original has not been found.]

1. Marion's letter of June 5 has not been found.
2. The British had evacuated Georgetown on May 28.
3. On June 3 a flotilla of 62 ships from Cork, Ireland, with three infantry regiments landed at Charleston. On June 7 Gen. Rawdon marched them toward Ninety Six, then under siege by Gen. Nathanael Greene.
4. Augusta had already surrendered on June 6, but Greene would break off his siege of Ninety Six on June 19.
5. Spain had seized Pensacola, Florida on May10, but St. Augustine would remain in British hands until the end of the war. The report that British Admiral Rodney had been defeated was false, but he did fail to prevent the French fleet from sailing to Virginia.

1781-06-10 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —1

Camp Before Ninety Six June 10th, 1781

Dear Sir

We have but a small part of the Militia Regiments you mention with us, they have been & still are wanted to compleat the reduction of this place the Garrison of which defend themselves by the advantages of the ground, strength of the Works, and number of the Garrison with great obstinacy. However I hope it will fall in a few Days, as we are preparing a mine to blow up their principal Work.[1]

I am happy to hear the Orangeburg Militia have behaved with such spirit.[2] This promises well. Go on with the good business of arranging and arming the Militia as fast as possible. All the Enemy's posts upon the Savannah are reduced. Upwards of 800 men were made Prisoners of different characters at the several posts. Several pieces of Cannon with some military Stores were taken. When this post is reduced the Enemy will have no posts in the two southern States, except Charles Town [Charleston] and Savannah. General [Francis] Marion has reported the evacuation of George Town [Georgetown] before your Letter arrived.[3]

By a Charles Town [Charleston] paper of the 2d, I find a fleet has lately arrived at that place; and it is said with a large reinforcement. As you do not mention any thing of it in our Letter, I imagine you had not received an account of it.[4] Please to make particular inquiry into the matter. The Enemy's laying waste the Country in the neighborhood of Charles Town [Charleston], looks like preparing for a Siege, which perhaps they expect on the arrival of the 2nd division of the French Fleet.

Should the Enemy move out in force with a view of raising the Seige of this place, you will give them all the opposition in your power, that their march may be delayed as long as possible and retire before them so as to form a junction with us, as it is my intention to collect our force and give them Battle. Reports say the reinforcement amounts to 3000, but it is most probable that it is only a few recruits for the different Corps perhaps to the amount of 7 or 800 men.[5]

Our force is accumulating in Virginia. The Pennsylvania Line has arrived, and a reinforcement for the Maryland Line also. Nothing is to be feard from that quarter. Lord Cornwallis had formed a junction with Arnold.[6] General [William] Philips is dead.[7] The People are in high spirits, and all the young Gentlemen in the Country are forming a Corps of Light Horse. Our affairs wear an agreeable face in every quarter. With esteem and regard,

I am Dr. Sir

Your most obt. hble Serv.

Nath Greene

[Outside] Public Service

The honble Brigadier Genl. Sumter

Congaree

N. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene had intended to tunnel under British defenses and set off an explosive charge, but he was forced to give up the siege on June 18 as reinforcements under Lord Rawdon approached.
2. Sumter had sent out a detachment of "Disafected orangeburghers" under Col. Richard Hampton to harass the enemy southward.
3. The British had abandoned Georgetown on May 28.
4. On June 3 a flotilla of 62 ships from Cork, Ireland, with three infantry regiments landed at Charleston. Sumter's letter to Francis Marion the day before indicates that he was already aware of the reinforcement.
5. The actual total was closer to 2,000.
6. On May 20 at Petersburg, Virginia, Cornwallis joined forces with Gen. Benedict Arnold.
7. British General William Phillips died of disease at Petersburg on May 13.

1781-06-10 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —2

Head Quarters before 96 [Ninety Six][1]
June 10th 1781.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter of the 8th accompanying a letter from Genl. [Francis] Marion. I wrote you this morning respecting the reinforcements mentioned, having got intelligence thereof before the arrival of your letter.

In consequence of the information I put [Lt. Col. William] Washington's horse and the Cavalry of [Lt. Col. Henry] Lee's legion in motion. It is my wish if the enemy should advance into the Country that you should collect all the force you can and skirmish with the enemy all the the way they advance removing out of their way all the cattle, means of transportation and substance. It is my wish to have the enemy galled as much as possible in penetrating the country as it is my intention to fight them before they get to this post. Inform me constantly of their motions and be always in a situation to form a junction with us when you get within three or four days march of this place. Collect all the force you can and give positive orders for Genl. Marion's force to join if the enemy attempt to penetrate the Country.

The force from Augusta has arrived at this post,[2] and I think when we are collected we can fight a good battle; and if the enemy's force do not exceed 2,500 we shall have a fair prospect of victory. Forward the enclosed to Genl. Marion. and write Col. Hardman [William Harden][3] to join you. Every thing depends on defeating the enemy. Reinforcements are coming from the northward but they will not be here in time.

With esteem
I am Dr Sir
Your Humble Servant
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene was still engaged in his siege of the British outpost at Ninety Six and would abandon his effort on June 19 because of the approach of reinforcements under Rawdon.
2. Lee arrived on June 8 after capturing Augusta.
3. If Sumter wrote to Harden, the letter has not been found.

1781-06-11 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —1

11th June, 1781

Dr Sir

I Doubt you will think me Very tardy in my movements, Which is Certainly the Case, but altogether unavoidable.

I am just upon the point of Moving with the Whole of the Troops, But not yet in good order[1] — The enemy Still Remains in the Neighborhood of Monks [Moncks] Corner —

Genl [Francis] Marion is about to Return from George Town [Georgetown][2] his force but Inconsiderable — I have had no farther accounts with Respect to an arrival of a Reinforcement at Charles Town [Charleston][3]—the Return of Col. Lawrence[4] [John Laurens], & the speedy arival of a French fleet & land forces, appears to be probable.

About twelve days ago Ld. Cornwallis was at Petersburgh [Petersburg].[5] the Marques [Marquis de Lafayette] eighteen Miles from him,[6] Gen [Anthony] Wayne had at this time crossed the Rapohanock [Rappahannock River]—has no Doubt join'd before this[7]—the Virginia Militia Turn out in Great Numbers —So as to Render a Draft unnecessary[8]—they Stand in Great need of arms, a number of which are near hand — the North Carolinians behave Infamously —

I expect accounts from Charles Town [Charleston] in a few days —Which Shall be immediately Sent to you —

I am Dr. Sir

Your most obdt. Hble. Servt.

Thos. Sumter

N.B.—I am unfortunate enough to find that my Indisposition increases so fast as Not to have any hopes,[9] from the Nature of it, to be able to Remain with the Troops Many Days longer —I Shall endeavor to hold out until you are So Disengaged as to take Measures in consequence of My withdrawing.

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside]
the Honble
Majr. Genl. Greene
Commander in Chief of the Southern Army -
Pr Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter was still at Ancrum's on the Congaree River opposite present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
2. Gen. Francis Marion had besieged Georgetown, which the British evacuated on May 28.
3. British reinforcements from Ireland had arrived in Charleston on June 3.
4. Laurens, who, with Thomas Paine, had been sent in March 1781 on a diplomatic mission to France.
5. Lord Cornwallis arrived in Petersburg, Virginia on May 20 and left on May 24 to pursue Gen. Lafayette.
6. On May 30 and 31 Gen. Lafayette was at Davenport's Ford on the North Anna River awaiting reinforcements under Gen. Anthony Wayne, who was on the Potomac River. Cornwallis was in pursuit of Lafayette, but still about 30 miles to the southeast.
7. Gen. Wayne camped at the Rappahannock River on June 6, and he joined forces with Lafayette near the Rapidan River on June 10.
8. Sumter was incorrect. Virginia had resorted to a draft to bolster the ranks.
9. Sumter was still suffering from the wound he received at Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.

1781-06-11 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —2

We have only one letter from Sumter to Greene dated June 11. Several 19th-century histories refer to a June 11 letter in which Sumter warns that Rawdon is on the march toward Ninety-Six. The letter we have makes no mention of Rawdon or of an advance on Ninety-Six. It's very possible that Sumter received fresh intelligence and sent out a second letter, but we cannot confirm.

The case for two June 11 letters is bolstered by the June 13 letter (following) that Greene's aide, Capt. William Pierce, sent to Sumter. Pierce wrote, "Genl. Greene desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your *two* letters by Capt. Linton. He wishes you to throw yourself immediately in front of the Enemy."

The *Greene Papers* assume that Pierce is referring to the two letters Sumter wrote on that same day. It seems unlikely they would have arrived so quickly, based on delivery times of other letters between the two camps.

1781-06-12 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —1

Camp before 96 [Ninety Six] June 12th 1781

Dear Sir,

By a person who left Charles Town [Charleston] the fifth I have the confirmation of the arrival of the Cork fleet. People differ widely respecting the reinforcement, but all agree some troops have arrived; and the opinion of the Whigs is they are not more than 1500 or 2000. I don't believe them near equal either.

It was reported in Town when this man left it, that part of them were to join Lord Rawden [Rawdon] and march immediately for 96 [Ninety Six]. My not hearing from you induces me to hope the report is not well grounded.[1] I must repeat what I did in my last, that is to forward me intelligence of whatever information you may have got respecting the arrival of the reinforcement.

Our approaches are going on very well; nothing but time is wanting to compleat the reduction of the garrison[2] but to do them justice they behave with great spirit. More or less fall on both sides every day. Should the enemy be advancing, fight them every day, so as to retard their approach as long as possible. [Lt. Col. William] Washington's & [Lt. Col. Henry] Lee's Horse will join in this necessary business.

I am dear sir
Your most obed humble Serv
N Greene

General Sumpter

[Outside]
To Genl.Sumter
June 12th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. The report was true. On June 3 a flotilla of 62 ships from Cork, Ireland, landed at Charleston with three infantry regiments: the 3d (the Buffs), 19th (the Green Howards), and 30th (the Cambridgeshire). On June 7 Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon with two thousand men marched toward Ninety Six, then under siege by Greene.
2. Greene had to abandon the siege on June 19 as Lord Rawdon approached.

1781-06-12 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —2

Camp before Ninety Six, June 12th 1781

Dear Sir

I am impatient to hear from below. If the Enemy should move up this way[1] send Expresses different routes as Letters are frequently intercepted, and intelligence is of the last importance.

Nothing new here. Our approaches are going on with all possible expedition. The Garrison is obstinate and sallies almost every night, by which lives are lost on both sides. I think they will soon get tired of this business.[2]

Give me an account of the force you and General [Francis] Marion will have to operate with us, should the Enemy attempt to penetrate the Country. All the Horse are ordered down to harrass them on their march. But I can hardly persuade myself yet that they will venture out thus far into the Country, at a time when the second Division of the French Fleet is certainly on the coast, and probably near Charles Town [Charleston].[3]

I am
Dr Sir
Your mo obt. hble serv
Nath Greene

Genl. Sumter

[Outside]
public Service
The honble
Brigadier Genl. Sumter
Congaree

N. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Lord Rawdon was marching towards him with a force of 2,000.
2. Greene actually would have to abandon the siege on June 19 as Lord Rawdon approached.
3. This assumption was false.

1781-06-13 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

[Transcription from The Papers of General Nathanael Greene, *Vol. VIII, Pg. 385.* The Papers *state that the original was held by the Clements Library at the University of Michigan. But when contacted by the Sumter Papers project in October 2023, the Clements Library stated that the document could not be found.]*

Camp before 96 [Ninety Six]
June 13th 1781

Dear Sir

Yours of the 11th came to hand yesterday a few Minutes after I wrote you. As you mention nothing of the reinforcement I hope less is to be apprehended from their numbers than at first was expected. A few days more will terminate the seige here[1] after which if they have a mind for a ramble into the Country we shall be prepard for them.

I am distressed at the increasing pains in your wound. I cannot think of your leaving service without the greatest pain.[2] Few people in any Country know how to command and fewer in this than is common. It will be of importance to the public good that you continue to command if you are unable to perform active service, for you may continue to direct tho' not execute. Your name will give confidence to our own people and strike terror into the enemy. This appears to me to be the crisis of this Country and nothing should be left unattempted to give a favorable turn to the minds of the people. I wish you better health and am with esteem,

Your most Obedt. humble Sr.

N. Greene

[Transcription from *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, **Vol. VIII, Pg. 385.]**

1. Greene would continue the siege of Ninety Six until forced to withdraw on June 19 due to the approach of a relief force under Lord Rawdon.
2. Sumter had complained in his June 11 letter of continuing pain from his Blackstocks wound and possible inability to remain in command.

1781-06-13 – Charles Myddelton to Thomas Sumter

Camp Near McCord's Ferry,[1] 13 June 1781

Dr. Genl.

I this moment received certain Intelligence that the Enemy is not above four holes,[2] only a party of Torys [Tories] about six miles below Orangeburgh [Orangeburg]. The Torys in the fork of Edisto[3] is also making head. I shall march up as far as Middleton's plantation, where I shall remain for your farther orders.

Two days would have helped me exceedingly if I could of remained, as I have twenty od swords made, all to hilting & grinding. Allso a good many caps done all to tacking & lining, the foot both of Major Lyals [John Lisle, Jr.] & mine I have left at McCord's Ferry, I have sent out other parties and expect to hear farther in the morning.

I am Dr Genl, yours & c.
Chas. S. Myddelton [Charles S. Myddelton]

[Outside]
The Hon Brig Gen Sumter
pr Express

From
Colonel Middleton [Myddelton] June 13 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. McCord's Ferry was on the Congaree River, where the present-day Highway 601 crosses.
2. Four Holes Swamp, probably referring specifically to Four Holes Bridge, about 40 miles southeast of Orangeburg.
3. The fork of Edisto River is 15 miles south of Orangeburg.

1781-06-13 – William Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Camp before Ninety six[1] June 13th, 1781

Sir

Genl. Greene [Nathanael Greene] desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your two letters by Capt. [John?] Linton.[2] He wishes you to throw yourself immediately in front of the Enemy, & write to General Marion [Francis Marion] to join you, that you may be enabled to harrass and retard their march as much as possible. The Dragoons[3] will act in conjunction with you, and afford you every assistance.

I have the honor to be sir your most obt. serv.
Wm. Pierce Jr. [William Pierce, Jr.]

Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Greene was continuing his siege of Ninety Six, which would be aborted on June 19.
2. The Greene Papers assume that Pierce is referring to the two letters Sumter wrote on that same day. Yet it seems unlikely they would have arrived that quickly, based on delivery times of other letters between those two camps. A more probable explanation is that the two Sumter letters are from June 11. Although we only have the first letter, which makes no mention of Rawdon, several 19th century histories refer to a June 11 letter in which Sumter warns that Rawdon is on the march toward Ninety-Six. It's very possible that Sumter received fresh intelligence and sent out a second letter.
3. Lt. Col. William Washington's Dragoons and Lt. Col. Henry Lee's Legion.

1781-06-13 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —1

Ancrum's[1] 13th June. 1781

Dr Sir

I received your two letters of the 10th Inst., and Shall act agreeable thereto. By advices just Received from below find that Col. [John] Doyle marched from the Corner [Moncks Corner] about five Days aGo with a large party. his Route was towards Dorchester, Some think with a Design to Interrup your opperations aGainst 96 [Ninety Six].[2]

There remains at Monks [Moncks] Corner about three hundred New Levees [levies][3] from Ireland. by the best accounts the late Reinforcements to Charles Town [Charleston] was Six hundred men from the last mentioned place, Commanded by Genl. Gold [Paston Gould] —

Genl. [Francis] Marion is moving up from George Town [Georgetown]—has but few men & Very little ammunition as I am told, he has not acquainted me with any such Circumstances —

Col. Hardin [William Harden] is Not to the Southward. I have a party just Returned from Saltketcher [Salkahatchie River]—which was informed he was gone to Augusta — the whole of our Troops at this place Move this Morning. A late paper from Charles Town [Charleston] Say a peace is lightly [likely?] to take place immediately — by accounts Eleven days from Virginia, we are informed two Very Considerable skirmishes has happened, in which our troops had the advantage.[4]

I have the Honor to be, Dr Sir
Your most obedt Hble Servt.
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl Greene

[Outside]
the Honble
Majr. Genl. Greene
Pr. Express
from Genl. Sumter June 13th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan].

1. On the Congaree River opposite present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
2. Sumter was correct. Doyle joined up with Lord Rawdon's force marching to the relief of Ninety Six.
3. Levies were draftees. These were Irishmen of the 19th Regiment, under the command of Lt. Col. James Coates.
4. These reports were false.

1781-06-13 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —2

[Copied from the Lyman Draper transcription. The original letter has not been found. Draper said it belonged to a "C. King, Jamaica, LI." Presumably this was Charles King, president of Columbia College (now Columbia University). In June 2023, the Sumter Papers project contacted King Manor in Jamaica, Queens. Charles King was one of the residents during its history. They had no information on King's manuscript collection and suggested Columbia University and the New York Historical Society. Inquiries were made to both institutions but neither had the letter.]

Ancrum's[1] 13th June, 1781

Dr Sir

Since I sent off my letter of this date to you, I have received certain accounts that the Enemy was yesterday forenoon near the Four Hole Bridge upon the Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] road:[2] Their force judged to be about one thousand horse and foot.[3]

I have sent to Genl. [Francis] Marion upon the occasion; I have ordered back the troops that belong to my Brigade that had marched.

If I find the Enemy move for Ninety Six, I shall as far as is in my power accomplish your request by harassing them up [on] their march. If the party discovered are not more than a thousand, it is not probable they mean to proceed much farther.

I am, Dr Sir, Your most obedt. Servt.,

Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

Copied from the Lyman Draper transcription.

1. Ancrum's plantation was on the Congaree River opposite present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
2. Four Holes Bridge was about 40 miles southeast of Orangeburg, South Carolina.
3. Rawdon's force was actually closer to 2,000.

1781-06-13 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —3

13th June, 1781

Dr Sir

I have farther accounts of the Enemy advancing & Giving out that they are going for Ninety Six –

I was Not informed where they were but I Judge near Orangeburg —Cant learn positively What their Numbers are the Tories Says four thousand, our friends Says Twelve or fifteen hundred[1] —

I Shall be Satisfied as to this Matter to Morrow. I expect if you thought proper to order Cols. [Thomas] Brandon, Kerseys [Levi Casey's?] & Thomas [John Thomas Jr.] Regemnts out, it is likely a parcel of Good Riflemen might be got out in time.

I am, Dr Sir
Your Most Obdt. Hble. Servt.
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl Greene

[Outside]
The
Honble. Majr. Genl. Greene
Pr Express
From
Genl Sumter
June 13th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. Rawdon's force was actually near 2,000.

1781-06-13 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

June 13th 1781, [Location Unknown]

Sir

I find the enemy still advances, and in all probability 96 [Ninety Six] is their object.[1] That place is not yet taken; to have the siege raised would be of great injury to us.[2]

You will be pleased to disencumber yourself of all heavy baggage and march with all possible expedition on towards 96 [Ninety Six], so as for our whole force to act together if requisite. You will find plenty of meal and corn at Saylor's Mill near the Congaree.

I am sir, with esteem,
Your most obedient humble servant
THOS. SUMTER

Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pg 95. The original has not been found.**

1. Sumter was correct.
2. Greene was forced to abandon the siege on June 19.

1781-06-14 – Charles Myddelton to Thomas Sumter

Camp near McCord's Ferry,[1] 14th June 1781

Dr Genl

I have certain accounts of the Enemys marching up in force by way of Orangeburgh [Orangeburg], the prevailing report is they are going to 96 [Ninety Six].[2]

If so, I need not mention to you that Gen Green [Nathanael Greene] should be informed of it, as I full well know the Quickness of your Apprehension upon all immergent cases. the Baggage & all Unarmed troops I have Order[ed] on the North side the Congaree [River] with the Armed men. I shall change my position for one farther from the river, a defeat in my present situation would prove ruinous,[3]

I have a number of parties out that, I am not at all afraid of a surprise; I am apt to think that the Enemy's Object is 96 [Ninety Six] as the rout they take is directly for that place and they do not send out any parties but make the best of their way on.

I am Dr Genl

Your Most Obt.Huml. Servt

Chas. S. Myddelton

N.B. Col. [Edward] Lacey is just arrived at the River — his Armed Men will cross, the Other will remain on the other side

C.S.M.

[Outside]

Publick Service

The Honl. Brig. Genl. Sumter

pr Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. McCord's Ferry was on the Congaree River where present-day Highway 601 crosses.
2. Lord Rawdon was indeed marching to relieve Ninety Six.
3. Myddelton, with a party of 150 men, was ambushed at Juniper Springs near present Gilbert on June 18.

1781-06-14 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Congaree [River], 14th June, 1781

Dr Sir

I this Moment Received the enclosed letters & have Reason to think the Information Good:[1] as I Sent men to view the enemy wherever they might be. They have not Returned, which Induces me to believe there is none near, if they Shoud advance, you may Rely upon having the Earliest Notice thereof.

I Shall halt the Troops which was Marching to fall in the 96 [Ninety Six] road ahead of the enemy — except a party of Two hundred horse which I mean to Detach upon the Same Road but by a Difrent Route, who will, if the Enemy are moving, fall in with them if they are not, will Serve to Disperse the Tories Mentioned by Col. [Charles] Myddelton —

If the last accounts of the enemy prove to be facts, I Shall this evening pursue my former Intention, that is to March Downwards, with my whole force which is about Six hundred horse & two hundred foot, I beg you will not be apprehensive, that I may be out of place, by this Movement, I Shall make a point of being with you in time if the enemy should advance —

I do not Know Genl. [Francis] Marion's Strength. I rather think him but Weak & badly armd and Very little ammunition. I have Cald for a State of his Brigade.

Col. [William] Washington is here & woud have followed the Troops I had ordered to fall in front of the enemy if needful,

I am Dr. Sr. with the Greatest Respect,

Your most obedt. Hble. Servt

Thos. Sumter

NB

I have not a Sheet of Paper. If you Coud Spare a Little & woud have it Sent by the Bearer I Should be extremely obliged by it. T.S.

Majr. Genl Greene

[Outside]

The Hon.ble Majr. Genl. Greene

Ninety Six

Pr Express

From

Genl. Sumter, June 14th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter had enclosed a June 13 letter from Col. Charles Myddelton which stated that Lord Rawdon's force was further south than it actually was.

1781-06-14 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

CONGAREE, June 14th, 1781.

Sir: I have this morning received accounts that the enemy are not moving upwards;[1] the parties that have been discovered, are said to be Tories, in consequence of which I advise you to halt, until this matter can be clearly ascertained; in the meanwhile beg you may collect as large a force as you can, so that we may act offensively, if the enemy remain and cover so much of the country.

I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon, until which I have nothing further to recommend, but that of gaining the best intelligence you can of the enemy's strength and situation, covering the country and being ready to move, if the designs of the enemy and Gen. Greene's particular circumstances should render it necessary.

The enemy at 96 [Ninety Six] is very obstinate; they sally almost every night, and have suffered considerably by it of late. I don't expect to hear of the reduction of that post for some days yet.[2] The Tories have been troublesome towards the Savannah River. Col. R. [Richard] Hampton has lately seen two of their parties upon Edisto, and near the Salt Ketcher [Salkahatchie River].

I have the honour. to be,

With great respect, sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

THOS. SUMTER.

Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pg 95. The original has not been found.**

1. Sumter's had received a June 13 letter from Col. Charles Myddelton incorrectly stating that the British were still below the Four Holes swamp area. They were actually much closer.
2. Greene would be forced to abandon the siege on June 19 due to Rawdon's approach.

1781-06-15 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp June 15th 1781

Dear Sir,

I am favord with your letters of the 13th & 14th.[1]

I cannot persuade my self yet that the enemy mean to pay a visit to this place.[2] If they attempt it and we can collect our force it may prove difficult for them to get forward or backward.

Keep in front of the enemy that we may have an opportunity to fight them with our collective strength. Equip and arrang as many of the Militia as you can. Those Regiments you mention are ordered out;[3] and I expect General [Andrew] Pickens will be at the head of the Militia of this quarter.

I am Dear Sir

Your Most Obed humble Ser

N Greene

To General Sumter June 15th 1781. Exd

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter had sent Greene three letters on the 13th and one on the 14th.
2. Greene was still attempting to take the British outpost at Ninety Six. Lord Rawdon was on the march at that time with a relief force and Greene would be forced to withdraw on June 19.
3. On June 13 Sumter wrote to Greene, "if you thought proper to order Cols. [Thomas] Brandon, Kerseys [Levi Casey's?] & Thomas [John Thomas Jr.] Regemnts out, it is likely a parcel of Good Rifle-men might be got out in time."

1781-06-15 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Near the Congaree 15th June, 1781[1]

Dr Genl.

I have Certain accounts that the Enemy are Still advancing. a party of their horse was at Orange burg [Orangeburg] yesterday. their foot a few miles back their movements are Very Singular, if 96 [Ninety Six] Shoud be their destination, not only because they march Very slow, but detaches parties, Some of which it is lightly [likely?] are not to be cald in, one of three hundred said to be Gone to Nielsons ferry [Nelson's Ferry], I have been Exceeding embarrassed by their movements, &, with the greatest difficulty, learn any thing of their Strength or even where the main body lyes — the Country is very open & their horse kept out at a great distance.

Genl. [Francis] Marion informs that he thinks their Reinforcement is not much Short of two thousand[2]—this is uncertain, he is at Murries [Murray's] ferry on the North Side Santee [River], is not moving up, as he has but few men, thinks to gather Some more. I have given him positive orders to march with what he has & collect what he can by the way —& other methods —

He is entirely out of ammunition & I have none to Supply him, if you have any to Spare, I woud have it conveyed to him. he also informs that a Detachment of three hundred was going to George Town [Georgetown] —

I have given Col. Washington [Lt. Col. William Washington] notice of the movements of the enemy, have not heard of Col. Lee [Lt. Col. Henry Lee] —

I will do all in my power to Retard the enemy's march, & have hopes of your accomplishing your business,[3] without interruption, as it is yet uncertain what the enemies Views are —

I received yours by Capt. [Willis?] Whitaker of the 12th inst.— I have wrote you three times before this, on and Since that Date — in one of which letters I informed you my force was about 800 —

I am, Dr Sir

Your most obdt. Hble. Servt.

Thos Sumter

the Honble Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan] [Palmer's (from Draper; paper torn on original]

1. On the original, the date is missing. June 15 was assigned by the editors of the *Greene Papers*.
2. Marion's estimate was accurate.
3. Sumter is referring to Greene's siege of Ninety Six.

1781-06-15 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

CONGAREE, June 15th, 1781.

Sir:

I wrote you since the letter of mine, which you mention having received, that the enemy were not advancing.[1] It again appears probable they are, and from the accounts you have of their reinforcements,[2] there is every reason to think they mean to repossess themselves of this country again.

I therefore think it advisable that we keep in the field as large a force as possible. I recommend that you do call out at least three-fourths of your Brigade, and move higher up the River, in readiness to cross, if the enemy continue advancing.

I have but little powder, will divide with you what I have, but cannot send it just now. The uncertain state that things are in puts it out of my power to write accurately, even if I had time. If the militia ____ obstinate and faithless, it will be necessary to make examples of some. Great _____ must be used, which if done, we have little to apprehend from the enemy.

Ninety-Six is not taken.[3]

I am, with esteem,
Your most obd't. servant,
THOS. SUMTER.

N.B. To any person, either officer or private, who may consider himself in my Brigade, I beg you will cause notice to be given that I request them immediately to join their proper Regiments, as nothing is more injurious to public service, than that of people detaching themselves.

Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pg 96. The original has not been found.**

1. Sumter's letter of the 14th stated that "the enemy are not moving upwards."
2. Marion had correctly estimated Lord Rawdon's force at 2,000.
3. Ninety Six would remain untaken as Greene would be forced to withdraw on June 19 in the face of Rawdon's advance.

1781-06-16 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Congaree, 16th June, 1781

Dr. Sir

I have this moment Received yours by Capt. [John] Linton and at the Same Instant

Certain accounts that the enemy are or Rather was twelve Miles above Orangeburg Last Night. Their Numbers in all probability near fifteen hundred, Commanded by Lord Rawden [Rawdon]. They have a considerable number of Cavalry — said four hundred, & eight field pieces — there is scarce a doubt but 96 [Ninety Six] is the place of their destination,[1]

I am just Moving upwards; have been Detaind for some men to Join from below — which are not yet come, I will do every thing in My power to Retard their March,[2] I have Given Col. Washington [Lt. Col. William Washington] Notice of their Movement, & Col Lee [Lt. Col. Henry Lee] also who I have just been informed is in the fork of Saluda & Broad rivers and May Join the other Troops on their way up with ease —

Genl. [Francis] Marion has crossed the Santee & is Moving up but at a Great distance and but weak —

The Enemy take Great pains to Collect the Militia upon their March. They are not Very successful — I have Great hope your business will be Compleated before they arrive —

I am Dr Sir

Your most obedt hble servt

Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl.Greene

[Outside] The Honble. Majr. Genl. Greene

Pr Express

From Genl. Sumpter June 16th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Gilder-Lehrman Institute – New York, NY]

1. Rawdon was indeed marching toward Ninety Six with a force of 2,000.
2. Sumter did not move in time to confront Rawdon's forces and Greene would be forced to abandon his siege on June 19.

1781-06-16 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion —1

Congaree, June 16th. 1781.

Sir:

The enemy are yet advancing, are some distance above Orangeburgh [Orangeburg], their force considerable; Ninety-Six not yet taken; everything with respect to the siege going on well; time is all that is needed.[1]

I wrote to Gen'l Greene for ammunition for you, which, if he furnishes, I will have forwarded to meet you. In one day more the enemy's designs must be known, whether their object is Ninety-Six, or my party, to which they have already given much trouble in marching and counter marching. As their movements have been very singular and with uncommon caution, they are strong in horse.

An express this moment from Gen'l. Greene; the post not reduced, but in a fair way.[2]

I am, sir,
Your most obd't. humble servant,
THOS. SUMTER.

Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by Robert Gibbes, 1853, Vol. II, pg. 97 The original has not been found.**

1. Greene would make a failed assault on Ninety Six two days later and then withdraw in the face of the British advance under Rawdon.
2. In his letter of June 12, Greene declared, "Our approaches are going on with all possible expedition." Note that even an "express" letter was taking four days to transit between Greene and Sumter.

1781-06-16 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion —2

Congaree, June 16th, 1781

Sir:

I have just received yours of the 14th inst.[1] I am glad you are moving up; there is the greatest occasion for forced marches. I wrote you today that the enemy were upon the way to Ninety-Six. They go very slow.[2]

You may join me in time. You will get meal and other provisions at Taylor's Mill, south side the Congaree river, and ten miles from the fort,[3] or at Ancrum's on the 7th.[4] I have left with Col. [Thomas] Taylor some ammunition for you.

This is a great push the enemy is making. I beg you may move with all the force you can and order out at least three-fourths of your Brigade; the whole might be the most eligible, those living high up might pass through the fork, and I am yet at the Congaree.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THOS. SUMTER.

N.B. Please be so obliging as to forward Mr. Davis' letter.

From *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by R.W. Gibbes, 1853, Vol. II, pg. 97. Original letter not found.**

1. This letter has not been found.
2. Sumter misjudged the speed of the British advance and Gen. Greene would be forced to abandon his siege of Ninety Six on June 19.
3. Presumably Fort Granby.
4. Ancrum's was on Congaree River opposite present Columbia. The meaning of "on the 7th" is unclear.

1781-06-17 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —1

Camp before 96 [Ninety Six] June 17th 1781

Dear Sir

Your favor of the 15th was delivered me last Evening. As the Enemy continues to advance, and as the late reinforcements by General [Francis] Marion's account are much more considerable than I expected,[1] it is highly probable they mean to raise the Siege here. The tardiness with which they advance, may be owing to the difficulty of getting provisions and means of transportation, knowing that the ridge affords little or no Forage or provisions of any kind, except Cattle they may be providing a Stock to bring them here. The detachments that are made are perhaps employed in collecting provisions, forage, and Carriages.

Their detaching is rather a proof that they have something extensive in view, and that their force is not inconsiderable. I wish it could be ascertained what is the amount of the reinforcements that came in the other Day. Try to possess yourself of Prisoners, and learn what Troops are out on this expedition; the names of the Corps, and the Commanding Officers.

Captain Rudolph [John Rudulph] who commands the Cavalry of [Lt. Col. Henry] Lee's Legion was only thirty miles from this last Evening, having delayed his march through a mistake of his orders. He is now ordered to march and join [Lt. Col. William] Washington with all possible dispatch.

Ammunition begins to get scarce with us, but I will try to forward a supply of 7 or 8000 Cartridges. By the Bearer we send you some Paper. Let the Militia be constantly galling the Enemy. General [Andrew] Pickens is here, and part of the Militia will be in this Evening, as soon as they arrive he will advance to support you.

I expect also Col. [Elijah] Clarke and Major [James] Jackson with the Georgians to join you.[2] Do not neglect any opportunity to annoy the Enemy, and retard their advance.

I am dear Sir

Your most obt hble servt.

Nath Greene

Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]

public service

Brigadier General Sumter on the Congaree

N. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Marion had correctly estimated the British force at 2,000.
2. This rendezvous did not happen.

1781-06-17 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —2

Camp before 96 [Ninety Six] June 17th, 1781

Dear Sir

I am favoured with yours of the 16th. Inst.

Where can the enemy have collected such a numerous cavalry as you mention?[1] Certainly they must be Militia Horse. I wrote you so fully this morning and in my former letters that it is unnecessary for me to add.

I can only express my wishes to have the Militia constantly employed in galling them as they advance. Send the best account you can in your next. the force you will have to oppose the enemy, besides your state troops, Col. Washingtons [Lt. Col. William Washington's] detachment, & Lees [Lt. Col. Henry Lee's] Cavalry.

It will be impossible to reduce this place for several days to come.[2] There appears therefore no chance of effecting it's reduction, unless we can first beat the enemy.

Detach a small party round into the enemy's rear to cut off supplies and pick up straglers.

I am Dear Sir
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
The Honorable
General Sumter
96 [Ninety Six]. June 17

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter had reported that Rawdon was above Orangeburg with a force that included four hundred cavalry.
2. Greene would attempt an assault the next day. The attempt would fail and Greene would withdraw from Ninety Six on June 19.

1781-06-17 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Martin's ferry upon the Saluda River, 17th June 1781

Dr Sir

I have Just arrived at this place and have just Received your letter of the 15th Inst.—

The enemy encamped last Night at the Seader [Cedar] ponds, which is about the Same Distance from 96 [Ninety Six] as the fort at the Congarees.[1] We took Some prisoners yesterd & the day before by whom we learn their destination is 96 [Ninety Six].

Lord Rawden [Rawdon] commands their Number Near fifteen hundred, but this is Still Rather uncertain,[2] as they prevary in their accounts, Two Says Twelve hundred, one fifteen, an other four or five thousand — they have probably one hundred & fifty good horse, & Two hundred very indifferent — from three to nine field pieces, their teams very Sorry, the army appears to be Subsisted Chiefly upon beef —

Col. [William] Washington Sent after me and Requested fifty or Sixty of the State Cavalry to join & act with him, which induced me to alter my plan, & accordingly Detached about one hundred, offrs. included, and an equal number of Mounted Infantry. Which will make him three hundred & thirty at least, these he will oppose to their advance, this morning I [*paper damaged; text missing —Detached?*] upwards of two hundred more to harass their Rear &c. & thereby weaken their front,[3] which will give Col. Washington more Easy, & give Greater advantages, they are to act So as to Join him if needfull —

Upon the whole I hope, this party in the rear will be found Serviceable — with the Remainder of the Troops I have crossed this River & Shall fall upon your Trail —I am now halted for Cols. Laceys [Edward Lacey], Taylors [Thomas Taylor Jr.] & Tates [Samuel Tate] Regemts to come up with me, as Soon as they arrive I Shall proceed on, with all Speed —

Genl. [Francis] Marion is coming on, & as provision and forage is provided for him, expect he will be up in three Days —I have left a Supply of ammunition for him which has Disfurnished me, & Cannot Supply any that May Join.

I am Dr Sr with great Respect
Your most obdt. Hble. Servt.
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside] the Honble Majr. Genl. Greene Ninty Six [Ninety Six]
Pr
Express
From Genl. Sumter June 17th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. This appears to refer to Cedar Ponds near the present town of Pelion, about 50 miles southeast of Ninety Six. Fort Granby on Congaree River was about 68 miles southeast of Ninety Six.
2. The actual total was closer to 2,000.
3. This detachment, commanded by Col. Charles Myddelton, was ambushed and suffered heavy losses the next day at Juniper Springs near present-day Gilbert, South Carolina.

1781-06-18 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

6 Miles from Wright's[1] Nearly opposite Miller's ferry. 18th June 1781

Dr Sir

I received yours of the 15th this forenoon —I wrote you yesterday that I had Detached with Col. [William] Washington two hundred State horse, yesterday morning I Detached in the Rear of the enemy upwards of two hundred More:[2] the Whole are under offrs that will I hope Make them usefull, the Detachment I Sent in the Rear of the enemy I have [sent?] to, to Join Col. Washington in fron[t]. I have Wrote to him upon this occasion as he May Imploy them for the best —I am Now Sending of another Detachment which will Join him to Night or in the Morning — have been Detaind to get up Some Detachments of Militia that has been thrown behind in consequence of bad intelligence Respecting the enemies Movements[3]—

I have been obliged to order Some force to the Congaree [River] to Repell the Tory prisoners Taken there[4] — Having a prisoner Just Taken from the enemy, a Sutler[5] formerly a Sergt. Majr., who is intelligent, I can now give you some account of the Troops which Lord Rawdon's army is Composed, i.e. the Troops he Commanded at Camden, Col. [John] Watson's & Majr. McAuther's [Archibald McArthur] Commands, 250 hessians, 6 Companies of New levies & a Small Detachment of the 63rd & 7th Regmts., about 60 Hessian Horse, 40 Yourk [York] Volunteers, 4 troops of other horse from 40 to 60 in a Troop — five pieces of Artill'y —& a Number of Tories —Several hundred, but don't know any thing near their Number he is a Scottish Man and Makes his account as large as he can I have no doubt. the Companies he Says, is not very very large, he cant tell the number of Watsons & McAuthers [McArthur] Detachments, perhaps 600—I Shall proceed with all Dispatch. the foot are Very Troublesome, and will push them hard so as to place them in the way of being Serviceable — as to my Self, I can afford you but little —I Send an offr. Who I wish to Return to me again —

I am Dr Sr
Your most obdt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

N.B. I am this moment favored with yours of 17th. I Shall have with me but about three hundred Militia — or little upwards, about 800 the Whole Chiefly now Detached, and is acting against the enemy as you wish, & has been ever since they past orange burg [Orangeburg]—I have ordered out all the Militia of my brigade except the four fork Regmt. which you Wrote was ordered out.[6] T.S.

Majr. Genl Greene

[Outside] from Genl Sumter June 18th '81
the Honble Majr. Genl Greene
Pr Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. "Wright's" may have been a plantation belonging to James Wright, former Attorney General of South Carolina and last Royal Governor of Georgia. Wright owned property on Bush River and Beaver Dam Creek on the north side of Saluda River.
2. This force, under Col. Charles Myddelton, was ambushed with heavy losses on this same date. It occurred at Juniper Springs near present-day Gilbert, South Carolina.
3. Sumter initially misjudged the speed of the British advance and was unsure if Ninety Six was their goal.
4. This presumably refers to prisoners taken at Ft. Granby on May 15 who were now breaking their parole.
5. A sutler was a civilian who sold goods to the military.
6. There was no regiment named Four Forks in Sumter's brigade. There was a Fair Forest Regiment, also known as the 2nd Spartan Regiment, commanded by Col. Thomas Brandon. Greene had ordered Brandon to join him at Ninety Six; see Greene to Sumter, May 26, 1781..

1781-06-19 – William Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Camp before 96 [Ninety Six] June 19th '81.[1]

Sir

The General wishes you to halt with your Troops at General Cunninghams [Robert Cunningham] plantation on the East side of the Saluda River,[2] and there refresh them. You will be met their by this Army, or your movements will be governed by a subsequent order.

I have the honor to be & c.
Wm. Pierce Jr. [William Pierce, Jr.]
Aid de Camp.

Genl. Sumter

[Outside]
To Genl. Sumter
June 19th 1781 Exd

[*Below possibly added at a later date*]
to halt at Gen. Cunninghams on Saluda and wait the advance of the Main Army

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. This was Gen. Greene's last day at Ninety Six. His failed assault on the previous day and the approach of British troops under Lord Rawdon compelled him to withdraw from the area.
2. Gen. Cunningham, a Loyalist, had a plantation east of Ninety Six near Island Ford on the Saluda River.

1781-06-19 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —1

Wrights[1] 19th June 1781

Dr Sir

By the Return of my Spies am informed that the Enemies horse which Crossed this Morning, has Recrossed again. there was about one hundred & thirty over, they Collected Some corn & left at a mill to Grind & Said they Shoud Want it when they Cross the river tomorrow, they gave Notice to the people to go in, that Lord Rawden [Rawdon] was lying by to day to Receive them, they took Several of the Country people & carried them to Camp —I have Small parties Watching their movements & the Mill where the Corn is left, but having Detached all the best of the horse am unable to do but Very little. Col. Myddleton [Charles Myddelton] & Col. R. [Richard] Hampton has Returned with about forty five horsemen.[2] their loss cant yet be ascertained their horses chiefly tiered.

I Shall detach early in the morning, all that is Capable of acting — to ly near the Enemy &C—the foot Militia Complain Much are Very Troublesome & Deserts hourly. Col. [Samuel] Tate & his whole Regemt. has gone back in Consequence of parties of Tories Coming up the Country. Col. [Thomas] Taylor at the Congaree [River] is Very apprehensive & thinks he Shall be obliged to Move the Stores &C. the workmen are already Broke up[3]—

I am impatient to hear from you as it is reported 96 [Ninety Six] is taken,[4] I think the Accounts I Sent you with respect to the enemies force are perfect — they are Corobrated by all the prisoners taken. In my Situation, together with the Great Call there is for Men I Shoud be Glad to Know if you woud not Wish me to Remove towards broad river & hasten in the Militia, &C—

I have a number of horses which Cannot travel for want of Shoes —In fact I find Myself So encumbered with Rubish that I am Rendered Doubly unhappy — as I Cant Render you that assistance I Coud Wish — I intended to have passed the river tomorrow but my Retreat to day has throwned me So far back as not to be able to effect it Now under two days.

I am Dr Sir
Your most obdt.Servt.
Thos Sumter

[Outside]
the Honble. Majr. Genl. Greene
Pr Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. "Wrights" may have been a plantation belonging to James Wright, former Attorney General of South Carolina and last Royal Governor of Georgia. Wright owned property on Bush River and Beaver Dam Creek on the north side of Saluda River.
2. Sumter had Sent a force under Myddelton to harass the British rear as they advanced toward Ninety Six. But Myddelton's men were ambushed on June 18 with heavy losses at Juniper Springs. The site is near the present-day town of Gilbert in Lexington County, South Carolina.
3. Sumter had set up an armory to make weapons at Ancrum's plantation on the Congaree River.
4. Greene had actually broken off the Siege that day as British forces approached.

1781-06-19 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —2

Dutch Settlement Near Wrights[1] 19th June 1781

Dr Sir

I wrote you last night by Capt. Glenn,[2] Since which I have the Disagreeable account of Col. Myddleton [Charles Myddelton] being defeated. the persons who brings the account was in the action & Says Col. Myddleton [Myddelton] fell in with the enemies Rear, about ten oclock yesterday Morng — a few miles above Junaper [Juniper] and Took an offr & Several other offcrs prisonr, & having Sent them off under a guard, drawd up his men and wated to Recieve the enemy, who opposed to his front about 200 mounted infantry which he engaged, at the Same time three cavalry charged him in flank & Rear —& Soon broke him to pieces, but not without considerable opposition — but for want of Swords while So mixed had a very unequal chance, I cannot give any account of the loss, but there is reason to think it was pretty considerable.[3] The Whole Dispearced — the Col. got off, I dont Know the fate of any other offr. I am very Sorry to find the post at 96 [Ninety Six] cant be reduced before the approach of the enemy. the Raising of the Seige is a disagreeable circumstance, but in my opinion will not prove So disadvantageous as Some may think it, if you can avoid a defeat, they are in a fair way to loose more than they will gain by saving the Garrison, & all their Supposed advantage may prove real Injuries.[4] this, I think, there is every probability of.

I mentioned to you that my Militia force was about three hundred. that is what are armed exclusive of the Detachment left at the Congaree [Fort Granby] where there is nearly an equal number left unarmd —Col. [Samuel] Tate's & Two other Regmts in the lower part of my brigade has not Joined me on account of the Tories coming up — this Militia I have out now are not Valuable, as it is the first Tour of Duty they have ever been upon with me & are Deserting fast, upwards of a hundred & fifty has left me already, at different times, several last night, Some of which was upon guard & carried off Some of the prisoners, I have ordered the other classes out & if it was not for harvest being upon hand Should before this have had a considerable force. but there is Scarce a possibility of getting men that has been much in the field out, untill that is Saved —

I have heard nothing of Genl. [Francis] Marion for Some days — but upon the whole if you are not able to fight the enemy to advantage just now, I think you will before long if the Western Militia behave well, & I have no fear of Lord Rawden [Rawdon] over Running the Country while your army is Safe, I hope to have the pleasure of Seeing you Soon when I will Indeavor to point out Some disadvantages the Enemy Labour under[5]—

I have Several waggon loads of corn meal I can furnish you if you are in want for the army —

I am, Dr Sir, your most obedt. Hble. Servt.

Thos. Sumter

[Outside]
the Honble. Majr. Genl. Greene
Pr Express
From Genl. Sumter June 19th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. German settlers in the area were commonly called "Dutch." The "Dutch Settlement" probably refers to the Dutch Fork area between Saluda River and Broad River. "Wrights" may have been a plantation belonging to James Wright, former Attorney General of South Carolina and last Royal Governor of Georgia. Wright owned property on Bush River and Beaver Dam Creek.
2. Possibly David Glyn, who was an adjutant from this area at the time. (https://revwarapps.org/sc3180.pdf)
3. Myddelton's force was ambushed at Juniper Springs near present-day Gilbert, South Carolina, on June 18. Myddelton had 34 killed out of his force of approximately 150 and many of the survivors deserted.
4. Sumter correctly assessed the tenuous British situation, as evidenced by their abandonment of Ninety Six only ten days later.
5. There is no record of Sumter and Greene meeting in this time period.

1781-06-20 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —1

Head Quarters before 96 [Ninety Six] June 20th. 1781

Dear Sir,

I have received your Letter of yesterday, and am in hopes the enemy have not pursued your troops. It is however an additional reason for collecting our force as early as possible. Should not the enemy move after you I beg you will march up and join us.

I am Dear Sir,
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
Nath Greene

P.S. We made two attempts on the 18th, one to escalade their small redoubt, the other to form a lodgement in the parapet of their fort. The former succeeded but we lost about 30 Men in the latter and failed.[1]

The Honorable General Sumter

[From the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene's assault on the Ninety Six fort cost him an estimated 147 causalities compared to 85 for the British.

1781-06-20 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —2

Headquarters 5 miles on the Road from Saluda [River] to Williams's Fort[1]
June 20th. 1781.

Dear Sir,

The enemy at 8 o'Clock this morning were three miles below Saluda old town[2] on the south side of the river, advancing towards Ninety Six. Colonel Washington [Lt. Col. William Washington] & Lee [Lt. Col. Henry Lee] are with the Cavalry on that side of the river. The party which crossed below must have been after forage. I am anxious to collect our force to enable us to give the enemy the most effectual opposition. I beg you will march your troops & form a junction with us at the Cross roads near the fort at Williams' plantation.

N Greene

Genl Sumter

[Outside]
To Genl Sumter June 20th 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter was retreating northward in advance of troops under Col. Rawdon. Col. James Williams, who was killed at the Battle of Kings Mountain on the previous October 7, had a fortified home on Mud Lick Creek, at the border of present-day Laurens and Newberry Counties, South Carolina.
2. Saluda Old Town was the site of a 1755 treaty by the Cherokee that recognized the sovereignty of the King of England over all Cherokees in South Carolina. The Saluda Indians had a village there in the 17th and early 18th centuries.

1781-06-23 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp on Bush River[1] June 23rd, 1781

Dear Sir

Colo. [William] Polk has been with me and represented your situation. I am sorry to find the Militia fall off the manner they do.[2]

At present I can determine on no precise plan of operations. My object will be to oblige if possible the British Army to retire from the district of Ninety Six.[3] Lieut. Colo. [Henry] Lee will move down into the lower Country, and I wish Col. Middleton [Charles Myddelton] to join and move down with him. We shall move towards Liles [Lyle's] Ford on Broad River.[4]

You will continue in the neighbourhood where you are, and collect and arrange the Militia as fast as you can. Should the Enemy move towards us we will form a junction. Genl. [Andrew] Pickens is collecting a considerable force. I am in hopes to see you in a Day or two. If you have any Meal which you would send to this Army it wd be very acceptable. It is my opinion that you had better attempt to equip one half your State Troops as Infantry, the other as Cavalry. Perhaps you may get good Horses for one half, but it will be impossible for the whole. I only suggest it, you will act in the matter as you may think necessary. Colo. Polk informs me your health is [getting?] worse, and your Wound more troublesome.[5] I am sorry on yours, my own, and the public's account, as it will be a great misfortune, especially in our situation:—

Where is General [Francis] Marion?[6]

With esteem and regard I am dear Sir
Your most obedt. hble servt.
Nath Greene

Genl. Sumter

[Outside]
public service
The honble Brigadier Genl. Sumter
N. Greene, Bush River June 23rd 81

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene was retreating from Gen. Rawdon northeastward on a road from Ninety Six that would now be along the border between Laurens and Newberry counties. Bush River, a tributary of Saluda River, is about 19 miles from Ninety Six.
2. Sumter had complained in a June 19 letter to Greene that his men were "deserting fast."
3. The British would abandon their Ninety Six outpost on June 29.
4. Lyle's Ford was 22 miles northeast of the Bush River camp, but not on the route Greene took.
5. Sumter was shot in the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on the previous November 20.
6. Marion was at Ancrum's Plantation on the Congaree River, according to a letter he wrote to Sumter that same day.

1781-06-23 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

["Enclosed in preceding" is at the top of this transcription – Draper's note]

Ancrum's, Congarees,[1] 23d June 1781

Sr

Agreeable to your orders[2] I have sent to summon the whole militia of my Brigade to meet me here as immediately as possible. I marched here with a few men — the most deserted me on the road, that I had not more than an escort. I shall wait here to see if they will come to join, or receive further orders from you.

I left Majr. [Hezekiah] Maham with 50 men to watch the motions of the Enemy at Monk's Corner [Moncks Corner]. In an excursion on Four Hole swamp[3] he met with a body of Tories just collected; he cut to pieces nineteen and took six prisoners.

I shall be glad to hear from you and am sir

Yr. obdt. st.
Francis Marion

[Transcription by Lyman Draper. The original letter has not been found.]

1. Ancrum's plantation was on the Congaree River opposite present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
2. Marion is presumably referring to Sumter's letter of June 16 in which he was instructed to "order out at least three-fourths of your Brigade" in response to the British advance upon Ninety Six. It's unclear, though, why it took a week for Marion to respond.
3. Four Hole Swamp extends about 45 miles from north of Orangeburg southward to the Edisto River. The exact location of the skirmish is unknown.

1781-06-23 – Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Camp at Indian Creek[1] June 23rd, 1781

Sir

By intelligence just now received the Enemy have crossed the Island ford upon the Saluda[2] and mean to make this Army their particular object.[3] The General would wish you to collect your force immediately, and march with all possible expedition to his assistance. The Army will wait at fish Dam ford upon Broad River[4] where it is expected the junction will be formed. The present moment is important, and no time must be lost. -

I am sir your most obs

Wm. Pierce Jr. [William Pierce Jr.]

A. D. Camp

Genl. Sumter

[Outside]
To Genl. Sumter
June 23d. 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Greene was retreating from Ninety Six northeastward on a road that runs along the border between Laurens and Newberry counties. The crossing at Indian Creek is about 3 miles northeast of Bush River, where Greene wrote a letter to Sumter on the same date.
2. Island Ford is now under Lake Greenwood.
3. Lord Rawdon left Ninety Six in pursuit of Greene late on June 21 and pursued him as far as Duncan Creek about 4 miles west of present Whitmire. Rawdon broke off his pursuit on June 24 and returned to Ninety Six.
4. Fishdam Ford was 15 miles northeast of Indian Creek, about 250 yards downstream from the crossing of highway 72.

1781-06-25 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Davis' 5 Miles below Liles Foard [Lyles Ford][1]
25 June 1781

Dr. Sir

I have Received your letter of this Date by Which I find the enemy Were Pursuing you untill late yesterday[2] & I lament Exceedingly that we have no better prospect of Making a Stand — every man of Col. [Thomas] Taylors Regemts, [Richard] Winns, [Samuel] Tates & R.[Richard] Hampton have absentd themselves except a few Who are upon Command —

By the Inclosed from Genl. [Francis] Marion you will find No assistance is to be expected from him, at least not Soon.[3] I have Requested him to Return to his Brigade & there use every possible effort to Collect a force, I have also given the Cols. in the Lower Part of my Brigade orders to immbody their Regmts. & March to the High hills, Camden &C.—this I thought expedient as I was Convinced they Coud Not or Woud Not march up through the fork to Make a junction with me — if any Movements downwards Shoud be thought Necessary, I would beg leave to Say the Sooner it took place the beter it woud be as it Woud Stop hundreds that will otherways be out of the State & by our Decreasing & the enemies Increasing I am apprehensive Nothing of an extencive Nature will be in our Power —

I am moving towards the Cross Roads, Where I Shall be happy to Receive your farther Commands.

I am Dr Sr
Your most o bedt. Hble. Servt
Thos. Sumter

[*Below possibly added at a later date*]

From Genl. Sumter
June 25 1781

4 Regiments absent
themselves &c

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Lyles Ford was on the Broad River near the confluence of the Enoree River.
2. Lord Rawdon was turning his army back toward Ninety Six on this day.
3. Sumter is presumably referring to Marion's letter of June 23 in which he complains of desertions while awaiting the remainder of his brigade to join him.

1781-06-25 – Ichabod Burnet (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters Fish dam [Fishdam] ford[1]
June 25th, 1781

Sir.

The Army will move this morning on the Charlotte route.[2] His Lordship encamped last evening beyond the Ennoree [Enoree River], his troops are greatly fatigued & without bread.[3] I hope we shall be in a situation to give him very effectual opposition on the junction of our forces.

The General desires you will form a junction with him as early as possible.

I am respectfully Sir
Your Most Obedient Humble Servant
I. [Ichabod] Burnet
Aide de Camp

Genl. Sumter

[Outside]
The Honorable
General Sumter
Fish dam Ford
June 25 81

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Fishdam Ford was on the Broad River, 250 yards downstream from the crossing of highway 72. Sumter had clashed with the British there on November 9, 1780.
2. Greene had intended to continue northeastward to Charlotte, North Carolina, but he would soon change his mind at turn southward.
3. Burnet was correct about the state of Lord Rawdon's troops. After pursuing Greene as far as Duncan Creek just south of Enoree River, they had turned back to Ninety Six on June 24.

1781-06-25 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp on Sandy Run[1] June 25th 1781

Dear Sir

The enemy have retird. They come no farther than Duncans Creek.[2] I wish you to file off towards the Congaree [River] and prepare to carry into execution the plan you had in contemplation into the lower Country. No time is to be lost and you will endeavor to spirit up the people as much as you can, by informing them I am on the march that way.[3]

General [Francis] Marion is at the Congarees, you will give him such directions as may be necessary to carry into effect the great object of the Maneuver. I shall move on towards the Wateree [River].[4]

I hope General [Andrew] Pickens will bring on a considerable reinforcment:[5] and if the reinforcments from North Carolinia and General Stuben[6] [Baron von Steuben] join us, we shall be strong to effect what we please. Your Manufactory of swords and Arms I think you had better send to Charlotte as it is highly probable the Congarees will be the seat of action.[7] If you can carry into execution what you proposd of sending the provision over the Santee [River] it will be securing a great point.

I am dear sir
Your most obedt humble sr
N Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sandy Run is now Sandy River. Greene was on the road from Fishdam Ford on Broad River about 3 miles toward present Chester when he crossed Sandy River.
2. Duncan Creek is a tributary of the Enoree River near present-day Whitmire, South Carolina. Greene's assessment was correct. Lord Rawdon had indeed turned back toward Ninety Six on the previous day.
3. Greene had intended to march his army to Charlotte, but he decided to join Sumter and Marion in what became known as the Dog Days Campaign.
4. Greene later continued northeast to present-day Chester, South Carolina, then on July 2 he turned south.
5. Pickens did not join Greene in this campaign but skirmished separately.
6. Gen. Von Steuben began marching from Virginia on June 6 to join Greene, but shortly after crossing into North Carolina on June 10 he was advised to return to Virginia to join generals Lafayette and Anthony Wayne to deal with Cornwallis.
7. Sumter had set up an armory to make weapons at Ancrum's Plantation. Sumter instead had swords made at Camden.

1781-06-29 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters June 29th 1781

Dear Sir

By a deserter who came into Camp last evening I learn a quantity of stores under an escort of 400 Infantry & forty horse are moving up the orrangeburg [Orangeburg] road for the use of Lord Rawdens [Rawdon's] army. He left them on Sunday last near the fore [four] holes[1] and says they cannot march more than 8 or 10 miles a day and that they are very sickly and much dissatisfied.

I have ordered Col. [Henry] Lee and the troops with him to move down and intercept them; and have directed Col. [William] Washington to form a junction with Lee at Ancram's [Ancrum's] plantation.[2] You will please to detach Col. Middleton [Charles S. Myddelton] with his Regi to join Col. Washington at that place that the force may be equal to the attempt without risque. The sooner you can move your whole force towards the Congaree the better.[3]

I have not heard from Genl. [Andrew] Pickens; nor can I yet determine whether the enemy mean to evacuate or hold 96 [Ninety Six].[4] We are in a most convenient situation for investing it if they should attempt to hold it of any that we can take. Lord Cornwallis is retreating in Virginia and Genl. Washington has laid siege to New York[5] and the British fleet is certainly defeated in the West Indies.

I am sir
Your Most Obedt humble Ser
N Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Four Holes Swamp, which extends from north of Orangeburg 45 miles southward to Edisto River.
2. Ancrum's plantation was on Congaree River across from present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
3. Sumter had decided instead to move eastward toward the Catawba River and the Waxhaws. See his reasoning in his letter to Greene on July 2. The intended attack did not take place.
4. The British were abandoning Ninety Six that same day.
5. Cornwallis had indeed retreated to Williamsburg from the armies of Lafayette and Anthony Wayne. Washington's army was near New York, but not formally besieging it.

1781-07-02 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Col. Watson's 15 Mile from X Roads[1]
2nd July, 1781

Dr Sir

I received yours Respecting the movements of the Detachment, of the enemy towards orangeburg which will I hope agreeable to your intention be interrupted before they can form a junction with Lord Rawden [Rawdon][2]—

I thought it necessary to take a Turn through the upper Regemts of my Brigade. I flatter myself it may have the Desired effect —Col. [William] Bratton's Regemt will march from this place to Morrow;[3] Col. Lacy's [Edward Lacey] marches to day. Col. [Richard] Winn's & [Thomas] Taylor's[4] emboddies to morrow, & will be ready to march at the same Time —

The want of arms is attended with Great Disadvantages. I have been ingaging & setting to work several artiffishers. Material for Making of Swords are extremely scarce — in order to have numbers of them compleated with dispatch, I Shall go by way of the Waxsaws [Waxhaws] to Camden, & meet with the Troops between the Water [Wateree River] & Congaree [River] on friday [July 6], when I shall be ready to Execute the Plan Purposed, if thought necessary —

Col Mayham [Hezekiah Maham] informed me that a Detachment of about Two hundred & fifty March'd from Monks [Moncks] Corner with Col. [Alexander] Stewart who Commands the Detachment, going for 96 [Ninety Six]— he was Reinforced at Dorchester, but don't know with what Number, a Detachment from Town [Charleston] of about three hundred has taken Post at Beggen [Biggin Church], near Monks [Moncks] Corner. there is also about fifty horse at this post — the Guards at the Twenty Three Mile house Goose creek & the Ten Mile house[5] are from Twenty to thirty men each —

Col Mayham Confirms the Report of the enemy Troops being Very sickly —

I should have been happy in waiting upon you before My Return to the Congaree, but the want of arms, & the Doubts of the Workmen at Camden, not being well Imployed induced me to go the Nearest way to that place — where I expect to arrive on Thursday[6]—

Cols. [William] Hill & [William] Polk will be on with, or immediately after, the Militia of this Place —I am Glad to hear Genl. [Andrew] Pickens is Near & lightly [likely] to form a junction with you to day[7]—the militia of Mecklingburg [Mecklenburg County, North Carolina] has orders to embody & March immediately but I Did not learn where to —

I am, Dr Sir,
Your most obdt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside]
The Honble. Majr. Genl. Green
Pr Express, From Genl. Sumter July 2d. 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. The "X Roads" (Cross Roads) were at or near present-day Chester, South Carolina.
2. Greene had written Sumter on June 29 to request that he move his force toward the Congaree to counter a reinforcement of 400 troops and supplies on its way to Rawdon's army at Ninety Six. But Rawdon had actually decided to abandon Ninety Six that same day.
3. Col. Bratton lived at present-day Historic Brattonsville in the New Acquisition District (now York County) about 11 miles north of Chester. Sumter was apparently in the same district when he wrote the letter.
4. Col. Lacey commanded the Turkey Creek Regiment of Chester District; Col. Winn commanded the Fairfield District Regiment; Col. Taylor commanded the Camden District Regiment.
5. The miles refer to the distance of the two tavern houses from Charleston.
6. Sumter did arrive in Camden on Thursday, July 5.
7. Pickens didn't arrive until July 6.

1781-07-03 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —1

Head quarters near Weymsborough [Winnsboro] July 3d 1781

Dear Sir

Your Letter of yesterday overtook me on the march for the Congaree [River].[1] I doubt not many advantages will result from your visiting the uper regiments;[2] but I fear the opportunity for striking the posts at Monks [Moncks] corner and in that neighbourhood is past. Lord Rawden [Rawdon] is moving down towards the Congaree and it is said with an intention to take post at Frydays ferry [Friday's Ferry]. He has about 1200 men with him besides the force I mentioned in my former letter coming up through Orangeburg which I suppose has formed a junction with him as he was at the Juniper Springs last Saturday.[3]

Col. Chrugher [John Harris Cruger] and Major [John] Doyle are left at Ninty Six [Ninety Six], with about 12 or 1400 Men. From the present disposition which the enemy are making it appears they intend to hold 96 [Ninety Six] and reestablish themselves at Augusta and the Congarees.[4] It is of the greatest importance that we prevent it if possible. For this purpose I wish to draw all our force together at or near Frydays ferry, and oblige the enemy to give up the post, fight us in detachment, or collect their force to a point. If our force is separated we can effect nothing. If it is collected we can oblige the enemy to keep theirs collected; and that will prevent their establishing their posts again.

A matter highly interesting to these States (as I shall inform you when we meet) from the peculiar circumstances of foreign affairs.[5] Having given you a state of matters I beg you will form a junction with us as soon as possible.[6] I have already directed General [Francis] Marion to meet us at frydays ferry without loss of time. The Militia of Salisbury district have orders to march for Camden and from thence they will join us.[7] General [Andrew] Pickens is on the march to form a junction with us, and I hope it will be effected to day or to morrow.[8] This is an important crisis in the affairs of this Country; and I am hazarding every thing to give them a favorable turn; and with your immediate aid, I am in hopes to effect it. If we could get the Enemy from 96 [Ninety Six] and the Congarees into the lower Country it would be gaining a great point.

With esteem & regard
I am sir your humble serv.
N. Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Greene planned to attack Fort Granby near Friday's Ferry on Congaree River.
2. Instead of remaining in the center of the state as desired by Greene, Sumter chose to go to the Waxhaws and then to Camden to oversee the production of weapons there. Sumter's justification, in his letter to Greene the previous day, was that the "want of arms, & the Doubts of the Workmen at Camden, not being well Imployed — induced me to go the Nearest way to that place."
3. Juniper Springs was near present-day Gilbert, South Carolina.
4. The British had actually abandoned Ninety Six on June 29 and would make no more efforts to retake the area between Augusta and the Congarees.
5. This may be a reference to the possibility that in any future peace negotiations Britain could claim possession of South Carolina unless they were driven from their posts.
6. Sumter joined Greene on July 9, by which time Rawdon had left Fort Granby and marched to Orangeburg.
7. The Salisbury militia would not join Greene for several months.
8. Pickens would arrive on July 6.

1781-07-03 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter —2

Camp at Cockrells[1] July 3d 1781

Dear Sir

Since I wrote you this morning I have got a letter from Col Washington [Lt. Col. William Washington], who is at Col Taylors [Col. Thomas Taylor's] on the Congaree [River], informing me of the arrival of Lord Rawden [Rawdon] at Frydays ferry [Friday's Ferry] last night about 11 oClock. This is what I expected; and not a moments time is to be lost in collecting our force to that place; otherwise his Lordship will fix himself so firmly, that there will be no possibility of moving him.[2] Than which nothing can be more injurious to the interest and happiness of this Country.

Had I the force sufficient to authorise an attempt with out you, I would not delay a moment; but unfortunately for our cause I have but a shadow of a force, much less than you imagine. I write you thus plainly that you may not be deceived by common report. I wish you not to go by the way of Camden if it will delay you a single hour.[3]

I am with great esteem
Your Most Obedient humble Servant
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
on public service
General Sumter
N. Greene
Cockrells July 3d 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Cockrell's was near the present-day White Oak community above Winnsboro, South Carolina. Greene had left the Cross Roads near present-day Chester on the previous day, marching to attack Fort Granby near Friday's Ferry on Congaree River at present-day Cayce.
2. Rawdon had actually just departed Friday's Ferry and was headed southeastward toward Fort Motte on the way to Orangeburg.
3. Sumter received this letter the next day and nevertheless continued on to Camden, arriving on July 5.

1781-07-04 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Near the hanging Rock.[1] 4th July. 1781

Dr Sir

I have Just Received your two letters of the 3d Inst, by the contents of which I am fully convinced that the Greatest Injuries will result from Lord Rawden's [Rawdon] reestablishing himself in the Country again. Which appears to be his Design if not Vigorously opposed.[2]

As it is your wish that I Should Not go by Camden,[3] I am very sorry I am so far advanced or that I have so Much reason to go that way; but upon account of arms & some Detachments that are gone on & withall some Directions Necessary to be given, together with the little Difrence it will make in Point of time, with Respect to my Joining you, Induces me to proceed, which I hope, as Matters are you will not Disaprove of —

Not a Moments time shall be lost, you May Rely upon there being great occasion for the Tyersum Round I am Taking.

I am Dr Sr with the Greatest Respect
Your most obedt. Hble. servt
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside] the
Honble. Majr, Genl Greene
From Genl. Sumter July 4th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The Hanging Rock is a geological feature 2 miles south of present-day Heath Springs, South Carolina. Sumter was on his way southward to Camden, 23 miles farther south.
2. Rawdon had actually withdrawn from the center of the state and was headed southeastwardly towards Fort Motte on his way to Orangeburg.
3. Greene's second letter of July 3 demanded that Sumter not go to Camden "if it will delay you a single hour."

1781-07-06 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Camden 6th July 1781

Dr Sir

I arrived here yesterday & find by the late alarm but little work has been Done and things Generally in Disorder[1] — I intended to have Set out this Morning for your Camp, but the Movements of the enemy & the Troops having Crossing [having crossed] the river, I thought it probable, that you might wish me to Pass the river also, as Soon as the Militia & Remainder of the State Troops Coud be Marched Down —Shall therefore Proceed to Marshalls Mill or Col. Taylors [Thomas Taylor's] Camp[2] Near there, & wait your farther orders — I have wrote to Col. [Edward] Lacey &c. to wait upon you for orders, &, if you think proper, for him to March down wards. he is to do it with all possible Expedition.

There was about two hundred & fifty of the Enemy from their Post at Beggen [Biggin Church] Marched to Santee [River] a few days ago — it appears to me to be Difficult to know what Lord Rawdens [Rawdon] Intentions are, as it appears Col. [Alexander] Stewart, at Dorchester, still Means to Move up & Join him[3] — If the Troops were once Collected, I mean all the horse, I think his Lordship may be made Very uneasie & forced to Retreat or Run the Risque of the Posts below Suffering — however, in a short time we shall be better informed of the Movements Strength & Designs of the enemy — the Reinforcets I judge was little Short of eighteen hundred men[4] —

I am Dr Sir
Your most obdt. Hble. Servt
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside]
the
Honble. Majr. Genl. Greene Per Express
From Genl. Sumter July 6th. 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter informed Greene in a letter dated July 2 that he intended to set up weapons manufacturing in Camden.
2. This was the Cedar Creek area east of present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
3. Col. Stewart with the 3rd Regiment (The Buffs).
4. Rawdon's total force, even after reinforcement by Stewart, was closer to 1,600 in strength.

1781-07-07 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Mrs. Motts[1] [Rebecca Motte] July 7th 1781

Dear Sir

Lord Rawden [Rawdon] is retiring towards Charlestown [Charleston].[2] The Cavalry of the Army and part of your State Cavalry with General Marions [Francis Marion's] Militia are at and in the neighborhood of this place and will go in pursuit of him.

The infantry of our Army will follow from Ancrums[3] this afternoon; and all the rest of your State troops at that place. You will please to collect all your Militia and the remainder of the State troops and follow on to give us support should it be necessary. Where this will meet with you I cannot tell and therefore leave you to take such route as you may think proper to bring you to a point of support in the shortest time.

I have reason to hope that 96 [Ninety Six] is or will be evacuated.[4] I rely upon your exertions and hope it will be in your power to give us great assistance.

I am with great esteem
Your most obedt. humble Ser
N. Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
General Sumter
Mrs. Motts July 7 81 N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Motte's home was formerly Fort Motte until its capture by Gen. Francis Marion and Lt. Col. Henry Lee on May 12.
2. Rawdon had been at Motte's the day before and was actually marching to Orangeburg.
3. Ancrum's plantation was on the Congaree River across from present-day Columbia, South Carolina.
4. Ninety Six had been abandoned by the British on June 29. Lt. Col. John Harris Cruger was marching from there with 1,400 troops to join Rawdon.

1781-07-07 – William Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

July 7th, 1781

Sir

I am desired by General [Isaac] Huger to acknowledge the receipt of your letter this Day.[1]

As General Green [Nathanael Greene] expected that Colo. [Thomas] Taylor was to supply this Army with Provisions,[2] he took the liberty of ordering Colo. Taylor to send in a party of his Men to relieve Colo. [Edward] Lacey, who had directions to join you as soon as the releif came. The General was induced to send for Taylor's Men because they were better able to serve this Army from their knowledge of the Country than any others. He proposes to detain 12 of Col. Lacey's Men for the necessary purposes of Camp, and should be glad to have them relieved by as many of Colo. Taylor's.-

No Barriers will be thrown in your way to [*text missing – Draper has "obstruct"*] the execution of your plan, & our best [*text missing —Draper has "wishes attend"*] you for success.

I have the honor to be
Your most [*missing in LOC – Draper has "obt. servt."*]
Wm. [William Pierce, Jr., Aide de Camp]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter had sent a letter to Greene the previous day.
2. Gen. Isaac Huger had written Greene on July 6 that Taylor would soon arrive with provisions.

1781-07-08 – William Pierce (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Howell's ferry Congaree 8 July 1781

Sir

By a letter from Genl. Greene to General [Isaac] Huger we are informed that an opportunity may shortly offer to strike at Lord Rawdon,[1] he therefore desires that you will hold yourself in the most perfect readiness to co-operate with us.—

General Huger desires me to inform you that he is in want of 15 or 20 men, who may be acquainted with the Orangeburg Road, to reconnoitre the Country between that and the Juniper Springs[2] agreeable to instructions received from General Greene.

The object is important, and no delay can be admitted. Much depends upon the success of our operations, and much credit will be the reward of those who may exert themselves at this very interesting and important crisis. I again repeat to you that General Greene expects that you will hold yourself in the most perfect readiness to cooperate with this Army. We shall halt at Beaver Creek for to Day perhaps.[3]

I have the honor to be
Your most hble serv.
Wm. Pierce Jr. [William Pierce, Jr., Aide de Camp of Gen. Greene]

Howell's ferry,[4] July 8th 1781

[Outside]
public service General Sumter
Howell's ferry Congaree 8 July 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. The Nathanael Greene Papers state that this letter has not been found.
2. Juniper Springs was near present-day Gilbert, South Carolina, in Lexington County.
3. Beaver Creek, now Big Beaver Creek, is a tributary of the Congaree River and is 20 miles north of Orangeburg.
4. Also known as Russell's Ferry, it was located on the Congaree River near Big Beaver Creek.

1781-07-08 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Near Russel[']s [Russell] ferry,[1] 8th July 1781

Dr Sir

I received yours of yesterdays date — the State Troops with Col. H. [Henry] Hampton are to pass the River after & will Move in with Genl. [Isaac] Huger, agreeable to your orders I Shall remain here until Cols. [William] Hill & [William] Bratton arrives which I hope will be in the Course of this Day, when I will Instantly follow. Cols. [Edward] Lacey, [Richard] Winn is with me with a part of their Regemts.—the Remainder of Wins [Winns] will be at Camp by the Middle of the Day —

If Hill & Bratton was up, the Whole woud form a pretty Detachment & you May Rest Assured I Shall press forward with all Possible Dispatch the moment I am able to Comply with what appears to be your Design — the Situation of Lord Rawden [Rawdon] is certainly against him —& probably so favourable an opportunity of attacking him Might never offer again — provid[ed] the Troops Moving were Collected —

I am Dr. Sir
Your most obedt. Hble Servt.
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Outside] the Honble. Majr, Genl. Greene Per Express
From Genl. Sumter July 8th 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Also known as Howell's Ferry. Located on the Congaree River near Big Beaver Creek.

1781-07-14 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

[The Nathanael Greene Papers assign a date of July 14, 1781, based on the docketing. Other Greene letters of that same date indicate that he was camped at "Mackherd's Ferry." This was most likely McCord's Ferry on the Congaree River near Fort Motte.]

Dear Sir

I have just got a letter from General [Andrew] Pickens from which I find Col Chrugher [John Harris Cruger] must have arrivd at orrangburgh [Orangeburg] yesterday.[1] No time is to be lost, therefore push your operations night and day. Keep a party to watch the enemies motions at orangburg [Orangeburg] as they move down.[2] Should they move in any other direction I will advise.

Keep Col [Henry] Lee and General [Francis] Marion advisd of all matters from a bove and tell Col Lee to thunder even at the gates of Charlestown [Charleston]. I have high expectations from your force and enterprise. Nothing can deprive you of compleat success but the want of time. As soon as I shall form a junction with the Salisbury Militia[3] and General Sumners [Jethro Sumner's] brigade of regular troop, we will seek the enemy where we can find them unless they take sanctuary within the gates of Charles town. Don't neglect to have your boats in readiness for crossing your artillery over the Santee [River] should it be necessary.

Most respectfully yours,
N. Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Cruger was still in command of the troops which had abandoned Ninety Six on June 29.
2. Sumter had joined Greene, Gen. Francis Marion, Lt. Col. Henry Lee and Lt. Col. William Washington at Beaver Creek 25 miles north of Orangeburg on July 9, planning to attack Gen. Rawdon at Orangeburg before Cruger could reinforce him. On July 12 Greene abandoned the plan after concluding that Rawdon was too well situated. Greene then decided to send Sumter with Marion and Lee to attack the British in what became known as the Raid of the Dog Days. The campaign lasted until shortly after the Battle of Shubrick's Plantation on July 17, 1781.
3. The Salisbury militia would not arrive until August.

1781-07-15 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

15th, July 1781 . Camp at Rocks.[1]

Dr. Sir

I have this Instant recevd Accounts from Col. [Hezekiah] Maham, who has been Detached, as a party of observation; That the post at the Church [Biggin Church] near the Corner [Moncks Corner], has been lately reinforced wt. about a Hundred foot & a field peice; And all the Horse they could possibly collect, Supposed to amount to One Hundred & fifty, from Dorchester;[2]

This together with the large Detachment I have out, occasions me to move wt. the greatest causion & all the Allacrity in my power — have large Detachments, easterly, to prevent the enemy getting further Succor, & to throw every impediment in their way Shou'd they Attempt to retreat.

I make not the least doubt but Colonels [Henry] Lee & [Wade] Hampton will Expedite their business, which will bring on a Junction & enable me to Invest them with force;[3] Should time admit —I make not the least doubt, but I'll give a good Account of them, & not withstanding my forces are so considerably divided: I continue to proceed, & am using my utmost exertions against them —

Every precausion has been & Still is used in securing a retreat; it is a matter Sir that Claims my earnest Attention; as well as that of observation parties — large Detachments are out, who is to Approach, & Attack the Enemy, in the neighbour of their post this forenoon — from whom I expect to hear in a few hours & gain a more certain Account of them — a person is gone to Colonels Lee & Hampton to hurry them, So that I may expect them Shortly;[4]

I have also Sent to Colo. Henry Hampton to desire him to destroy the four Hole Bridge, & maintain that pass to the last Extremity;[5] to retard the Enemy as much as possible, from coming down to the relief of the post to which I am destined —

I am Sir most respectfully
Yr. very obdt. Servt
Thos. Sumter

NB [*cont'd next page*]

1.Rocks Plantation was on the south side of Santee River about 6 miles downstream from Nelson's Ferry. Greene had taken his army to rest during the worst heat of summer to the High Hills of Santee around present Stateburg, sending Sumter, Gen. Francis Marion and Lt. Col. Henry Lee to the south in what became known as the Raid of the Dog Days.

2. In early June while Gen. Rawdon was marching to the relief of Ninety Six with fresh recruits from Ireland, he left eight infantry companies of the 19th Regiment under the command of Lt. Col. James Coates at Moncks Corner. This regiment was later joined by the South Carolina Royalists, a provincial cavalry regiment under Maj. Thomas Fraser, a company under Capt. Colin Campbell, and a small troop of Queen's Rangers under Capt. John Saunders. Coates's total force was about 400 infantry and 100 to 150 cavalry. Coates later moved more than a mile to the northeast to St. Johns Berkeley Parish Church, usually called Biggin Church. With walls three and a half bricks thick, the church offered a better defense, and the British added further protection from attack by enclosing it in two circles of abattis — felled trees with sharpened branches.

3. On the day Sumter wrote this letter, he had sent Col. Lee to raid at Dorchester while Col. Hampton raided as far as the Quarter House within 6 miles of historic Charleston.

4. Lee and Wade Hampton joined Sumter the following day, after Sumter had marched from Rocks Plantation about 22 miles southeast to camp about 2 miles north of the British post at Biggin Church.

5. Hampton had taken the bridge by this date and it would be held by the patriots until the British evacuated Charleston in December 1782. The bridge was about 15 miles northwest of the town of Dorchester and on the most direct route for Rawdon's force at Orangeburg to attack Lee and Wade Hampton.

Shou'd have been forwarded with the Artillery had I not rec'd. Accounts the Enemy were at Murry's [Murray's] Ferry,[6] in consequence of which I Detach'd 300 this morning; Since which I am informed they are gone again —

This caus'd Some detention or shou'd not have been here now. T.S.

Since the conclusion of this I am informed the Enemy have constructed Some new works at Biggin [Church], but cannot learn particularly what they are —

T.S.

[Outside]
The Hnble Major General Green [Greene]
per Express from Genl. Sumter July 15th 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

6. Murray's Ferry was on the Santee River about 15 miles northeast of Rocks Plantation.

Dog Days & Shubrick's Plantation Battle

After his failure to capture the British outpost at Ninety Six in June 1781, Greene moved his army to the High Hills of the Santee in July to recuperate and avoid the summer heat. But the militia troops of Sumter and Francis Marion remained in the field, along with the cavalry of Lt. Col. Henry Lee. Greene was hopeful that these forces could keep up pressure on the British, who were slowly being forced back to their Charleston stronghold.[1] On July 14, Greene wrote Sumter: "Keep Col Lee and General Marion advisd of all matters from above and tell Col Lee to thunder even at the gates of Charlestown. I have high expectations from your force and enterprise. Nothing can deprive you of compleat success but the want of time."[2]

With combined forces of over a thousand men now available to him, Sumter seized this opportunity to move in the direction of Charleston. Capturing and disrupting any British assets, short of invading the city itself, was his mission. Sumter's move against the lower posts came to be known as the "Dog Days Expedition."[3] The phrase was made popular in 1855 thanks to a work of fiction called *The Forayers, or the Raid of the Dogdays* by William Gilmore Simms. The work was part of a set of eight novels devoted to the Revolution in the South.[4]

Sumter ordered Marion, Lee, and other commanders to fan out ahead of him and seize key bridges and river crossings. He advanced slowly along the Santee River with the main body of troops, ensuring that he had sufficient boats in his rear in the event a hasty retreat became necessary.

"Every precausion [sic] has been & Still is used in securing a retreat; it is a matter Sir that Claims my earnest Attention; as well as that of observation parties," he wrote to Greene on July 15. Sumter was intent on taking the enemy outpost at Moncks Corner, approximately thirty-two miles north of Charleston. The British anticipated the attack and fortified the nearby St. John's church at Biggin Creek. The three-foot thick walls of the church were further supplemented with a double row of abatis, sharpened stakes buried in the ground and facing outward. On July 16, troops under Lt. Col. Peter Horry clashed with South Carolina Royalists under Major Thomas Fraser at Biggin Creek bridge. Fraser and his dragoons were pushed back, but relief arrived as Lt. Col. James Coates and the British 19th Regiment of Foot came up from Moncks Corner. Sumter also arrived on the scene and formed for battle with Coates. But Coates was leery of engaging Sumter and instead ordered Biggin Church to be burned along with their stores. Coates then began withdrawing in the direction of Charleston.[5]

Elements of Sumter's army pursued Coates some eighteen miles and the British took up a position at Shubrick's Plantation, posting men in outbuildings and behind fences. General Francis Marion and his troops arrived on the scene before Sumter, and Marion decided to delay an attack until Sumter arrived with artillery. But Sumter had left the artillery behind so as not to slow him down. Marion advised against a frontal assault, but Sumter ordered the troops to divide into three sections and begin the attack from different angles. Marion lost several men as they attempted to advance over open ground. The battle dragged on with the British stubbornly holding their positions. With daylight fading and ammunition running low, Sumter was forced to break off the attack. Many of Marion's men left for home afterward, angry at Sumter's rash and costly tactics. The loss of troops and the possibility of a

1. Andrew Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock* (Casemate Publishers, 2019), 139-143.
2. Greene to Sumter, July 14, 1781, MiU-C.
3. The period known as the "dog days" occur during the hottest part of the summer between July 3 and August 11. It is immediately preceded by the rising of the dog star Sirius, thus the name "dog days."
4. Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co. Inc., 2000) 195; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (The R.L. Bryan Company, 1931) 171; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 143; W. Gilmore Simms, *The Forayers or The Raid of the Dog-Days* (Redfield, 1855)
5. Bass, *Gamecock*, 195-198; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter,* 172-176; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 143-144.

British relief force from Charleston compelled Sumter to retreat from the area the next day.[6]

Sumter initially planned to remain in the region and look for another opportunity to strike. He reported to Gen. Greene on July 21 that he had "strong observation parties watching the motion of the Enemy & Shou'd [sic] an object offer that I am any wise addaquate [sic] too, shall immediately strike."[7] But Greene requested a few days later that Sumter head back north to "take your position at the Congaree, and remove all the grain from the south side of the river."[8]

Sumter, instead, complained of his old wound and made his way to North Carolina. The "Dog Days" campaign was over and the fiasco at Shubrick's would be his last action in the war. Like "Sumter's Rounds," the expedition was militarily a failure. But, like the Rounds, it did serve to highlight the weakening position of the British as they collapsed back toward Charleston.

6. Bass, *Gamecock*, 198-201; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 175-178; Waters, *The Quaker and the Gamecock*, 144-147.
7. Sumter to Greene, July 21, 1781, MiU-C.
8. Greene to Sumter, July 27, 1781, DLC.

1781-07-17 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene (incl. add'l notes, 07-18 & 7-19)

[This letter includes additional comments made on the 18th and 19th]

Biggin [Church] 17th July 1781 Dr Sir/

I arrived here this morning four oclock & found this post Avacuated, the Church, Stores &ct. Burnt; Some Waggons left unconsumed & a little Baggage which seemingly they had not time to throw into the flames;[1] have not been able as yet to ascertain, or even gain the least knowledge of their Rout; notwithstanding I have had the most vigilant Officers out with parties on every Quarter — many of whom are perfectly acquainted wt. the ground & Neighbourhood for Miles round; I am persuaded they have taken nothing off with them but what they had on their Backs;[2] — The Considerableness of their late Reinforcement added to that of their Superiority in Cavalry together with the large Detachments I had out retarded me some in my approach, till I cou'd hear from Colo. [Henry] Lee & [Wade] Hampton; which I did not till yesterday; Sunday [July 15] I sent off a strong party of observation down on their lines, in order to obtain a more accurate Account of their position strength &ct. Also to destroy Wadpoo [Wadboo Creek] bridges & force a Picquet [picket] they had thereatt — the business was effected with respect to the Bridges[3] but the Enemy being apprised of the parties approach they failed in the latter; Colo. [Hugh] Horry Commandant of the party tarried within about three miles of Biggin all Day Yesterday, in the afternoon about 5 OClock the Enemy's cavalry under Major [Thomas] Fraser came out in force & full charge on Colo. Horry; but fortunate for us they made a most confused dastardly Attempt. for notwithstanding our brave fellows were taken somewhat unawares; they repulsed them immediately, & drove the Heroick Major & his terrified Clan into their amazed Brethren at Biggin — killing Some & taking two Subs [subaltern officers] & eight Dragoons, of Colo. Inns's [Alexander Innes's] Corps; noble Militia what think you Sir of their charging British Dragoons with Rifles & pursuing them too their lines — in short the Command is highly praise worthy, & nothing but the fleetness of their Horses saved them — both Officers & men discovered the greatest Intrepidity — After this Scirmish Col. [Hugh] Horry discovered the Enemy advancing in force, in Consequence of which he retreated to fall in with me, I was then approaching; but when informed of this I thought it advisable to retrograde a little to a defile which I left in my rear, & wait their coming up, it being a very advantageous position; but to my mortification it turned out to be a covering Manuevre for they avacuated in the Night —By intercepted

Letters it appears they were strong, & intended avacuating that post, to form a Junction with Lord Rawden [Rawdon] to enabled him to have Commanded & gain'd Extensive possession of the Congarees; this plan I flatter myself this plan is compleatly frustrated; on the 14th Inst. by a return it appears, they drew 900 Rations 900 & forrage for 250 horses — I am just informed of the Enemys rout [route]—they are gone for Scots Ferry leading to Charles Town [Charleston], shall pursue Instantly —

18th In:

I came up with them at Shubrick place[4] where I Attack'd them about five OClock in the Afternoon, fought till near Sunset — a very warm Engagemt. indeed — their position was the most Advantageous that could have fallen in their way, lodged in a long line of Houses on an Emminence; my troops had some of them small coverings such

1. Sumter had arrived about 2 miles north of Biggin Church the day before and took up a defensive position to await reinforcements from Lt. Col. Henry Lee and Col. Wade Hampton. British commander Col. James Coates ordered the post evacuated during the night.
2. The British had gone across Wadboo Bridge, which Lt. Col. Hugh Horry was supposed to have destroyed, and continued southeast about 15 miles to Quinby Bridge. Contrary to Sumter's belief, they took with them several wagons of provisions and a howitzer.
3. The British crossed Wadboo Bridge with several wagons, so it was obviously not destroyed.
4. The plantation of Patriot Capt. Thomas Shubrick, also known as Quinby Plantation, was 4 miles west of the community of Huger. Sumter arrived shortly after a skirmish at Quinby Bridge that forced the British to retreat about a half mile to the buildings of Shubrick's Plantation

as fences and a few small Houses; & notwithstanding the distance was only from 40 to 80 yds, they did very little damage:[5] my loss is seven killed & Twenty wounded all the latter I have brought off; the Enemy must certainly have Sustained a considerable loss; a calm & well directed fire was kept up for an hour, they behaved with the greatest deliberate Intrepidity; Officers & Men merit Encomiums for their distinguished valour; not a man left the field till their Ammunition was entirely exhausted; which compell'd me to Order a Retreat —They Came off in good order, lamenting their Situation — they stuck Close to the Houses the Horses cou'd not Act at all, they were not engaged, was I not in such a predicament, together wt. their being within 20 miles of Town & a most convenient pass open for Succor coming by Water, I shoud have renewed the Attack this morning but situated as I am compels me to return — about sixteen cavalry 12 of Colo. Lees & 4 Volunteers charged their Rear & brought off fifty odd prisoners a Capt. [Colin] Campbell of the Nineteenth Infantry was the only Officer —& a considerable quantity of Baggage[6]— two Schooners was burnt at Wadpoo wt. Stores[7]—the Bridges mentioned in this was not so Effectually destroyed as they ought to have, for the Enemy soon mended them up again by which means they got off. — previous to any transaction mentioned in this —Col Wade Hampton, wt. his Dragoons charged a party of the British at the Quarter House[8] & brought 20 odd prisoners & a considerable quantity of Stores with the loss of only a Capt [John] Wright – Excuse the briefness of this narrative & expect fArther particulars per the first opportunity —I'm in hast Sir Most respectfully

Yr very obt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

Major Genl Greene

19th In

NB: The Enemy were on the ground late yesterday & had not gone 100 yds out, such is their Apprehension, it appears they were more than twice my numbers; Genl. [Francis] Marion's Brigd. diminish'd fast from the time I left you, when we overtook the Enemy, he had Scarcely 100 left;[9] our hasty pursuit exposed the Stores & Baggage; a great part of which was by that means lost; Amonst other things was taken a pay master's trunk — which I inspected last Evening, for the purpose of securing any thing of Value as the Cart it was by some means got in the rear; it contained different purses of Specie to the amount near 800 Gus. [Guineas][10] & a great quantity of Cloaths, &ct.—I have just recd Accounts, the British are moving down,they were at the Sypress [Cypress] yesterday & had turn'd off to a Road leading to Monks [Moncks] Corner, whether to forrage or come that Rout, I cant say; have Sent a strong party to demolish the works at Biggin am moving up to Nelsons Ferry, but Shall take a position 11 or 12 miles below; Men much fatigued & Horses quite broke down; the Artillery goes over this day.

T.S.

The Honble Majr. General N. Green [Greene]
Head Quarters
per Express
General Sumter July 18th 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

5. Sumter was criticized for not waiting for his artillery to arrive before beginning the attack. Francis Marion complained in a July 19 letter to Gen. Greene that the houses at Shubrick's had clay walls which were "very difficult to penetrate without a field piece" and that the cavalry had no room to operate.
6. Lee's capture of the baggage wagons occurred before the skirmish at Quinby Bridge and the battle at Shubrick's Plantation.
7. The two schooners ware actually burned by Col. Wade Hampton on Cooper River at Lewisfield Plantation just south of Moncks Corner.
8. On July 15 Hampton attacked the Quarter House, an inn frequented by the British in present-day North Charleston.
9. Many of Marion's men had left the area in anger, blaming Sumter's tactics for causing unnecessary casualties in their ranks.
10. Sumter distributed the coins to his men, which sparked resentment among members of other South Carolina units.

1781-07-21 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters high hills Santee July 21, 1781

Dear Sir

I receivd your letter of the 19th containing a report of your operations in the lower Country.[1] The gallantry of the Troops deserves the highest commendation. I only lament that the exertions had not been crowned with more deserved success. I beg you will communicate my very particular thanks to the officers and men of the respective Corps.

Tho our advantages are not as great as our prospects once promised, they nevertheless will have their advantages, and reflect honor upon your command. The damage the enemy have sustain'd in the loss of Stores, horses and &c &c will have its influence upon their Army and serve to damp their spirits while it will cheer the hopes and brighten the prospects of ours. You will please to give in a regular report of all the articles taken and secur'd. Such of the horses as were taken and are not fit for the Dragoon service I wish you to reserve for the QMG's[2] department as our waggon horses are failing dayly and the army will not be able to move in a few weeks unless we can recruit in this way.

I propose your troops should take their old position at Frydays ferry [Friday's Ferry][3] on the uper side of the river and to get over as soon as possible all the grain from the lower side of the River. This will prevent the Enemy from establishing a post on the Congaree [River] unless they cross the River and that will put it in our power to attack them to advantage and improve a defeat to their ruin.

If the Enemy should have left Orangburg [Orangeburg] and gone downwards you may continue where you are; otherwise you will immediately move to the position and take the measures as before directed.

General [Francis] Marion with his Militia I propose to take a position at or near Nelsons ferry; and both of you must take charge of all the boats & have them at your entire command. You of those upon the Congaree, and General Marion those upon the Santee [River].

As soon as our reinforcements arrive and the Troops have had a little opportunity for relaxation, we will draw our force to a point and attack the enemy where ever they may be found.

With esteem and regard I am Sir
Your most obedt humble Ser
N Greene

To Genl. Sumter
July 21st 1781.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter's letter actually spanned July 17-19. In it he described the evacuation of Biggins Church by the British, the battle at Shubrick's Plantation, and other operations in the area.
2. Quartermaster General – The officer in charge of supplies.
3. Sumter would delay marching to Friday's Ferry until late July.

1781-07-21 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

21st July 1781, North side Santee [River]

Dr Sir/

I arrived yesterday morning at Nelsons Ferry —& began in the Afternoon to crossing my Troops over in different places, so as not to induce Lord Rawden [Rawdon] to take a position upwards, had I have remained on the other side might probably have drawn him up in force — he was yesterday morning at the Widow Braughtons[1] about ten miles from Dorchester — with all his force.

I shall take a position between Manigaults & Nelsons ferrys,[2] or the high land, this side, in Order to refresh my people & recruit[3] their Horses, which are considerably reduced — have lost very few of my Brigade as yet — but immagine they'll want to go shortly —Genl. Marions [Francis Marion's] are most or all gone home — After this Day I hope to be at leisure to give you a full Account of the late Expedition, the perpetual Motion I have been in, for some time past, I offer as an apology for my Silence & Breifness in my last — have strong observation parties whatching the motion of the Enemy & Shou'd an object offer that I am any wise addaquate too, shall immediately strike —

I am sir, very respectfully
Yr most obdt. Hble. servt.
Thos. Sumter

Honble
Majr. Genl. Green [Nathanael Greene]

[Outside]
The Honble Major Genl. N. Green [Greene] High Hills Santee per Express
from Genl. Sumter 21st July 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Possibly Ann Broughton, widow of Andrew Broughton.
2. Manigault's Ferry was about where I-95 now crosses Lake Marion, 9 miles northwest of Nelson's Ferry.
3. "Recruit" in the 18th century could mean to refresh or replenish.

1781-07-22 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Camp at Purces Ponds, Santee[1] 22d July 81 /

Dr Sir /

On Friday 13th Inst I Detached four large parties; In order to Cut off all communication & Succor from Town [Charleston], & give a general Shock below;

Colo. H. [Henry] Hampton, to the Westward with near two Hundred men as a covering party, he was to have fallen in the Rear of Col. [Henry] Lee near Dorchester; after leaving a strong observation Detachmt. at the four Hole Bridge; which party he posted & proceeded in quest of Colo. Lee, but not finding him he returned to the four Holes to Annoy & check the Enemy at that pass had they have come down;[2] —

Colo. Lee was to have taken the Dorchester Rout have done what he cou'd there, & proceeded down to Chas. Town [Charleston] Gates, but he altogether failed in this business — Colo. Lee appointed to let Colo. W. [Wade] Hampton hear from him at Goose Creek Bridge; after Colo. Hampton's waiting there sometime & being altogether disappointed by Colo. Lee, he procedded down;

Capt. Read [John Reid] of his Regimt., who was the advance, with twelve Men, discovered some British Dragoons drawn up at the Quarter House;[3] upon which he immediately made so Gallant & Spirited a charge as broke them; & being follow'd by the main body, they kill'd, wounded & took the whole saving two; our loss was one man killed — a Capt. [John] Wright of the Militia whose fall is much to be regretted, in him we have lost a brave Intrepid Officer, a good Soldier, & Staunch Friend;

Some of Colo. Hamptons party proceeded down within two Miles of Town, but the detention he had met with at Goose Creek Bridge, apprised the Enemy of his approach — the Alarm being fired in Town, & having captured at the Quarter House twenty odd British, a number of Horses, & some Waggons;—he thought it most prudent to come off; he also Burnt two schooners, one loaded wt. Inigo [Indigo], & took thirty odd prisoners at the Strawberry[4]—

In short, the Officers & Men of the Detachment merit the greatest applause for their Intrepidity & Activity during the Command —

In Mine of the 17th Inst relating to the Scirmish between Colo. [Peter] Horry and the Enemys cavalry under Maj. [Thomas] Fraser; I omitted Colo. [Edward] Lacey who broke the Enemy's charge with the Riflemen of his Regemt., himself & men merit the greatest applause for their Spirited behavior on that occasion; as does also the whole of the command; for certain it is that nothing but the fleetness of the Enemy's Horse saved them; I have to add their position at Biggin [Church] was very advantageous; strong double Abbattees [abattis], & the church Walls three Bricks & half thick;

Further that the charge made by the gallant Capt. [James] Armstrong of Colo. Lee's Corps said to be on the Rear of the Enemy, is somewhat Erronious; whereas it was thro' their whole line of march, in which he lost 2 Dragoons killed & two Horses;[5]

1. In his letter to Greene on the previous day, Sumter stated that he would move to high land on the north side of Santee River between Manigault's and Nelson's ferries, so this location was presumably in that area.
2. Four Hole Bridge was between Col. Rawdon's force at Orangeburg and Lee at Dorchester.
3. The Quarter House was a tavern approximately six miles north of Charleston. The skirmish occurred on July 15.
4. Strawberry was an area near the confluence of the East and West branches of the Cooper River. The two schooners were actually burned near Lewisfield Plantation more than 5 miles up the West Branch from Strawberry. Remnants of one of the boats can still be seen, and a cannon and swivel gun from the schooners are on display at the Berkeley County Museum and Heritage Center.
5. The charge by Capt. Armstrong was across Quinby Bridge on July 17.

Colo. Mahams [Hezekiah Maham's] Horse was shot under him,[6] the Enemys loss is supposed to far greater — this Heroick Exploit needs no colouring — had the whole of the Cavalry gone thro' with the charge, it's most probable they would have captured the Enemy[7]—Their Strength & position at Shubricks was as heretofore related; only that they had one field piece, which I believe I omitted mentioning. The conduct & Behaviour of the Troops surpassed my Expectations, never did militia or any sort of men) behave better —

I am now recruiting my fatigued Troops & rode down Horses, so as to enable me to pay them a visit downwards shortly[8] —

I ask Capt. Singletons[9] pardon for not taking notice of him Earlier; his Attention & Activity during the Expedition merits my particular notice, & claims my warmest thanks —

I'm sir very respectfully
Your obed. S.
Thos. Sumter

Major Genl. Green [Greene]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

6. Col. Maham's horse may have been shot under him during the battle at Shubrick's Plantation immediately following the skirmish at Quinby Bridge.
7. Some 19th century histories of the war, such as William Johnson's 1822 *Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Green*, inflated this statement to say, "If the whole party had charged across the bridge, they would have come upon the enemy in such state of confusion, while extricating themselves from the lane, that they must have laid down their arms." Since Johnson had put the sentence in quotes, it initially raised the prospect that there was an unknown Sumter letter. But Johnson also referred to this statement as part of Sumter's "official communication" on the skirmish. But this letter appears to be Sumter's "official" report to Greene on the matter, and the language is more consistent with Sumter than the embellished "quote" offered by Johnson.
8. Sumter would actually head north toward the Congarees.
9. Probably Capt. Anthony Singleton of the 1st Regiment of Continental Artillery of Virginia.

1781-07-23 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Camp at Purces Pond[1] 23rd July 1781

Dr. Sir, Just as I enclosed my last,[2] I receiv'd yours of the 21st Inst.—

In obedience thereto shall have an Inventory made of all the Stores & ct. captured, during my late Expedition, shou'd have done so earlier, but had not, nor have I yet been able to collect the whole together; shall transmit you the same without delay ---

Colo. [Henry] Lee has some Waggons with Stores on with him;[3] shou'd be glad he was directed to send them immediately, to enable me to take an Accurate Account of the whole — I am Extremely sorry your Waggon Horses has faild, which reduces you the necessity of calling on me,[4] being much distressed for Horses myself, the cavalry many of them on foot, & Waggons without Teams — the greatest abuses has been perpatrated on the captured property owing to our precipitant pursuit, & the different detachm. necessarily despatch'd; which put it out my power to pay proper attention to the whole —I make not the least doubt but there is near as much lost as we have in possession —

I had form'd a design of moving down against the Enemy again as soon as my Troops & Horses were refreshed a little; but decline that, & pursue your Instructions —

With Esteem & Respect

I am Sir

Yr most obdt. Hble Servt.,

Thos. Sumter

Major Genl. Green [Greene]

NB:

The Accounts of the Enemys all leaving Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] is imperfect, am just inform'd, a large forraging party was out yesterday near Browns Mills from Orangeburgh

TS

[Transcribed from the original letter at the South Caroliniana Library – Univ. of South Carolina]

1. Lyman Draper read it as "Pierce's Pond." A location has not been determined under either spelling, but Sumter was on the Santee River, based on his letter of the previous day.
2. Sumter was presumably referring to his letter of the 22nd.
3. The wagons were captured by Lee on July 13 at Dorchester and on July 17 before the skirmish at Quinby Bridge.
4. Greene had asked Sumter to provide him with any horses "not fit for dragoon service" as his wagon horses were "failing dayly."

1781-07-25 – Thomas Sumter to William Ransom Davis

[Only the final page of the original of this document still exists. It is held by the Sumter Museum in Sumter, South Carolina. The remainder of the transcription is from Edward McCrady's History of South Carolina in the Revolution *(1902) pg. 429. McCrady said the orders to Davis were "still extant in the possession of a descendant of Captain Davis." By the time Gregorie's* Thomas Sumter *was published in 1931, it was in the possession of T.E. Richardson of Sumter. It is unknown when the Sumter Museum acquired it or if they ever had the entire letter.]*

CAMP AT GREAT SAVANNAH[1]
25 July 1781

DEAR SIR: With a detachment of the State troops under your command you are requested forth with to proceed to George Town [Georgetown] with all expedition & there by every possible means in your power secure all articles of property belonging to the enemy & all persons abetting or in any wise acting inimical to the interests of the United States of America.[2]

And all articles so obtained you'll be pleased to transport with the utmost expedition to this place You are hereby authorized to impress negroes teams wagons oxen & every other requisite to expedite & carry this business into execution.

You are to move or cause to be removed all the Indigo salt hospital stores & all other articles suitable & wanted for the army from every person without distinction except so much as may be necessary for family use. You are to observe that all property or articles sold by the enemy still vests in the public which is to be taken & disposed of accordingly the situation & nature of the service requires the utmost circumspection & vigilance the worst of consequences is to be apprehended from delays.

To the end that friends may not be injured or enemys go unpunished you'll [Begin transcription from original document] endeavor to make the necessary discriminations & act Inflexibly — You'll inform me as Early as may be of your proceedings, the progress you have made & prospects in view,[3] so that if necessary timely succor & support may be afforded you —

I am sir
Yr most obdt hble servt
Thos Sumter

Capt. W.R. Davis [William Ransom Davis]

Transcription primarily from Edward McCrady's *History of South Carolina in the Revolution* (1902) pg. 429.

1. This area was near Nelson's Ferry on the north side of the Santee River.
2. Gen. Nathanael Greene complained of Sumter's actions in a letter to Col. Henry Lee on July 29. "General Sumter taking the goods of Georgetown I think to be wrong, but it is too late to prevent it."
3. If Davis complied with this request, no letters from him to Sumter have been found in this period.

1781-07-25 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Gt. Savanah [Great Savannah] 25th July 1781

Dr Sir

I here with Send you an Inventory of the articles lately Taken from the Enemy[1] together with an account of the Number Kild. & wounded on our Side, & the Kild & prisoners on that of the enemy — at the Quarter house on the 15th Inst., we lost one Man, an offr. Kild — at the [Biggin] Church on the 17th [sic: 16th] one wounded — at Shoebricks [Shubrick's Plantation] the 18th [sic: 17th]

Twelve Kild & Twenty two wounded —Total Kild —13

Wounded —23

The loss of the enemy certain, is one offr. & 9 privates Kild — one Capt. 8 Subs —1 Conductor of Artily, 5 Sergts, 4 Masters of Vessels, & 123 privates british, & 8 Tories.

Total Kild — 10

Prisoners — 141

This Exclusive of their loss Kild at Shoebricks, which undoubtedly was very considerable, & by the best accounts was upwards of 70 men Kild —

Notwithstanding the loss of the enemy at this place was considerable, yet it must be alow'd they were fortunate as nothing coud have Saved them but a Situation more advantageous than can be conceived — they were in possession of a number of large houses upon an eminence, the approaches such as to Render cavalry useless — partly upon their left was Some Negro houses & out buildings — in their front some X fences — on every other Quarter there was a very little cover — upon the Right leading to the Bridge Col. [Hugh] Horry Commd., Next to him was Cols. Myddeltton [Charles S. Myddelton], [William] Polk, [Thomas] Taylor, & Lacy [Edward Lacey] who possessed & acted under cover of the Negro houses & fence before mentioned — they was advanced within forty yds of the Enemy — where they Remaind untill every ounce of their ammunition was Expended —

Genl. [Francis] Marion was upon the left & Suffered considerably by Soposing the enemy coud not fier upon his men, when moving up in a certain direction — he Soon found his mistake, but had his men brought of [off] in Good order & behav'd well upon every occasion. our ammunition being exausted the Troops was ordered to Retreat which was Done in Good order, no confusion, or symptom of fear apeard. The whole woud with pleasure have Returned to the attack, had they been in a Situation proper — being thus circumstanced I thought proper to Retreat, and accordingly fell back three miles, with a Design of Renewing the attack in the morning if Capt. Singleton,[2] who was coming up with the fieldpiece had any Spare powder, which happened not to be the case, I could have got powder ball sufficient, at this time we was was within twenty four miles of C. Town [Charleston] from whence boats comes to Bonau's ferry in one tide, which ferry was but four miles from our Camp[3]—this together with Col. Lees [Lt. Col. Henry Lee's] marching off early in the morning, at once Determined me to Retreat, leaving a feeble enemy behind, which coud have been Subdued in twenty minuets, if we had been well Supplied with ammunition — so as to have acted with the artillery.

Genl. Marion had but few men with him, the Remains breaking off which has furnished a pretext with my Brigade that they ought to go home also —Some has taken this liberty. I had a Desire of employing them for a few days upon another Tour before they was Discharged. The Enemy once more pushed & Alarmd in the lower parts, I think woud have a Good Effect. This can be done by horse only, and that by a considerable boddy —

1. Greene had asked Sumter for an inventory of captured items in a letter dated July 21.
2. Probably Capt. Anthony Singleton of the 1st Regiment of Continental Artillery of Virginia.
3. Bonneau's Ferry on the East Branch of Cooper River, was 21 miles from Charleston.

Lord Rawden [Rawdon] himself is Gone to Town [Charleston], his Troops at Dorchester — the Tories at Blakes house Two miles from Dorchester — some troops are Still at Orangeburg — but don't know the number, the cause of My Not advancing and immediately attacking the enemy at the Church is obvious — as their Infantry alone was Quite Superior to my whole force —

I therefore think it needless to Say anything with Respect to their works or Situation, which was undoubtedly proof against all my force even when collected —I therefore wished them to Retreat by way of Monks [Moncks] Corner & to oblige them to take that Route if they did Retreat. I attempted to Destroy the Bridges upon the east Side of Cooper River, & if it had been Done as effectually as the offr who had Directions to do it Assured me it was,[4] their Retreat must have proved their Ruin — they thought that you with your whole army was there —

Col. [William] Harden & Several others has lately been made prisoners by a Col. Leachmore [Nicholas Lechmere?]. Hardin [William Harden] writes me that he has Received no Directions from Genl. [Andrew] Pickens for a very considerable time; he considers himself at liberty to act.[5] The enemy Say he Gave his word & honour to consider himself a prisoner on parole — it was a Small party of Sixteen from port royal Island that took him — it is a Great Misfortune that the militia to the Southward are So indifferently employed — the Georgians are neglectful of their lower Settlements. They Suffer parties to come from Savanah [Savannah] forty Miles up the River & even pass it, & carry off Stock of every kind in abundance.

I have the Honour to be Dr Sr
With the Greatest Respt &c
Thos. Sumter

[Inventory below is from the Draper transcript]

Return of Ammunition & Stores taken by Brig. Genl. Sumter, July 15th, 16th & 17th 1781.[6]
6 barrels & 1 chest containing 13,200 musquet cartridges
1 bb gun powder
1 barrel containing 3500 flints
45 musquets & 34 bayonets
19 cartridge boxes
50 canteens
120 valices with mail, pillions, straps, etc.
250 knapsacks
1 drum & case
1 dozen camp colors
2 bell tents

[Transcribed from the original letter at Duke University]

4. Lt. Col. Peter Horry.
5. The letter from Harden has not been found.
6. The inventory does not include 720 guineas, which Sumter ordered "to be divided among his Troops as a reward for their bravery," according to a letter by Greene dated July 26, 1781.

1781-07-26 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

26th July 1781

Sr

Yours of this day's date I received[1] and have the pleasure of Informing you I have not the least service for Capt. W.R. Davis [William Ransom Davis], and look on him as belonging to your Brigade. I find the service you are going to send Capt. Davis on in George town [Georgetown] may interfere with my Command but suppose I must submit[2]—I only informe you I have an Officer which Commands there & have sent this Day Lt. Col. Hugh Horry with my orders respecting that part of the [*paper torn: country?*].

I am, sr,
Your Obt. [Servt.]
Fran. Marion

H.B. Gen. Sumter
[Outside]
The Honble. Brigr. Gen. Sumter from Gen. Marion

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter has not been found.
2. Marion protested Sumter's decision to send Capt. William R. Davis into Georgetown to seize property of all descriptions. See Sumter to Davis, July 25, 1781.

1781-07-27 – Ichabod Burnet (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters high Hills of Santee
July 27th 1781

Dear Sir,

General [Nathanael] Greene directs me to inform you that he has received intelligence which renders it necessary for you to take your position at the Congaree [River], and remove all the grain from the south side of the river. It is probable the enemy may make an attempt to establish a post at that place before you can remove the corn.[1]

I am respectfully
Your Most Obedient
Humble Servant
I. [Ichabod] Burnet aid de camp

Genl. Sumter

[Outside]
Public Service
Honorable General Sumter near Nelson's ferry
H Hills Santee 27 July 1781 I. Burnet

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Greene had just received word from Gen. Isaac Huger that the British were intending to fortify a post at Orangeburg and then move on the Congarees. Neither of these reports proved true.

1781-07-28 – Robert Lusk (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters high hills Santee[1] July 28th 1781

Dear Sir

I desired my aid Major [Ichabod] Burnet to write you yesterday, that by late intelligence I found the enemy were fortifying at Orangeburgh [Orangeburg], and were to move up to the Congarees as soon as they had completed their works,[2] And to desire you to move to Frydays ferry as soon as possible and get all the grain from the lower to the upper side of the River.

From fear that letter may miscarry I embrace this opportunity to repeat it by Capt. Robert Lusk,[3] and to desire you to be as expeditious as may be in moving the grain which I persuade myself will do more to defeat the enemies plan than any other measure. Care should be taken to refresh your Cavalry as fast as possible as we shall no doubt have severe duty in a few days. The Militia should be warned to be in readiness at a moments warning to turnout.

Is there no possibility of drafting one third of the Militia for three or four Months?[4] A greater proportion I suppose could not be armed. Please to let me have your opinion on this subject and also of the practicability of drafting from the Militia to fill up the Continental battalions.

With esteem I am sir
Your humble serv.
N. Greene [Gen. Nathanael Greene]

General Sumter
[Outside]
To Genl. Sumter July 28th 1781.
[Followed by notes taken by unknown person at a later date]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The high hills of the Santee were around present-day Stateburg, South Carolina.
2. The Congarees was the area along Congaree River between Saluda River and Santee River. The "works" probably refers to fortifications at Fort Granby near Friday's Ferry at present Cayce. Greene's concerns for Orangeburg and the Congarees would prove unfounded.
3. Sumter did receive Burnet's letter of the 27th.
4. At this time there was no government in South Carolina with legal authority to authorize a draft of militia. Sumter had recruited men to serve for ten months as state troops with the promise of payment in enslaved people confiscated from Loyalists. Many of his troops, although called militia, were actually volunteers.

1781-07-28 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

St Stephen[1] 28 July 1781

Sir

Yours of yesterday's date[2] came to hand,

Inclosed is a return of the men in the Action of the 17th Instant[3]—

I sent an Officer & some men yesterday for the Ammunition & hope they will be Dispatched, as I am in a Defenseless situation for want of it — I received a letter from Mr. Frazier, Commisary of prisoners mentioning a small portmanteau[4] of Cloaths which was sent to Captn. Campbel [British Capt. Colin Campbell], which Col. Coats [British Lt. Col. James Coates] Desires may be sent to him by the first flagg going to town Charleston], which I suppose may be with some of your Brigade, for I never found any thing of it before —

The Accounts I recd. by the return of my flagg who went as far as Nightingale in Town neck [Charleston Neck], say that Col. Coates lost fourteen men killed & twenty wounded. They got in town the Sunday after the Action.[5] On Thursday last five hundred men with a great many Waggons came out of town suppose gone to Dorchester as they was not on the road to the Corner [Moncks Corner] yesterday.

I am sr
Your Obt sr
Fran. Marion

H.B.G. Sumter

[Outside]
The Honbl. Brig. Genl. Sumter by [?]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. The St. Stephen parish was in present-day Berkeley County, South Carolina, and is now a town.
2. Sumter's letter has not been found.
3. Marion is referring to the battle at Quinby Bridge and Shubrick's Plantation. The enclosure has not been found, but Sumter sent a similar return to Greene on July 25.
4. A portmanteau was a leather suitcase.
5. Coates was in command of British troops at the Quinby Bridge and Shubrick's Plantation battles of Tuesday, July 17.

1781-07-28 – Thomas Sumter to Ichabod Burnet

Great Savanah[1] 28th July, 1781

Dr Sir

I just Received yours of the 27th and agreeable to Genl. Greens [Nathanael Greene's] wishes will put the troops in motion tomorrow morning.

They will pass the river near this place in order to facilitate the moving of the corn you allude to[2]—

I Donte march with the Troops, having Some necessary matters of business to attend to before I leave this — Indisposition also interfering Rather too much.[3]

As Soon as possible intend myself the Honor of waiting upon Genl Greene.[4] — the enemy are not very Strong at Orangeburg. the Tories constitute their principal force there & by them all the Damage has hitherto been done. Since [Col. John Harris] Cruger came from 96 [Ninety Six] there is a Strong party at Dorchester, one hundred Infantry at the Qtr. House,[5] Frazers [Maj. Thomas Fraser] horse upon the neck [Charleston Neck] below them — the Enemy ly much exposed, let their Designs be what they may.

I am Sir
Yr most obdt hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Burnett [Ichabod Burnet]

[Outside] Majr. Jno. Burnett [Ichabod Burnet] head Quarters Pr Express
From Genl. Sumter 28th July 1781

[*Followed by later notes from unknown person*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at The University of North Carolina's Southern Historical Collection]

1. Great Savannah was on the north side of Santee River near Nelson's Ferry.
2. Greene had requested on the 27th that Sumter move north to the Congaree River and remove all grain south of there.
3. Sumter continued to suffer from a gunshot wound to the right shoulder received at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on the previous November 20.
4. Sumter would not meet with Greene until November.
5. The Quarter House was a tavern 6 miles north of historic Charleston.

1781-07-30 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Great Savanah [Savannah] 30 July 1781

Dr Sir

I received Majr. Burnets [Ichabod Burnet's] & your letter Respecting the Troops Marching & taking a position near Fridays ferry[1] & Secouring the Corn on the South side of the Congaree river — all the best mounted State Troops, except Such as was upon Command, to the number of two hundred & eighty, begun to pass the river yesterday. but for the want of Conveniency did not all git over untill nine oclock this morning.

Col. [Charles] Myddelton, who Commds, will proceed immediately to Mr. Myddeltons Plantation in order to have the Corn &c moved agreable to your orders. — I am not Clear that he will not meet with Some Interruptions on his march as there was a large party of the enemy fifteen miles on this Side of orangeburgh [Orangeburg], & within eight of his Route, yesterday morning. as he has timely notice of them & has a number of good Spies & guides, well acquainted with the Country, he may either meet with or pass them as he may judge necessary —

The Remainder of the State Troops except as aforesaid, are under the commd of Col. Henry Hampton, marching up to Fridays, by the way of Simmons ferry. I have Directed him to Send to you to know if it was your pleasure to have the prisoners Carried to and left at your Camp. there is forty Six Sent up. I have a Sergt. with me who I am going to Send Downwards. there is nine left by the way that was unable to travel. the Sergt. Takes the names of the whole to the Number of fifty Seven, for which he is to Bring a Receipt, which if aproved of by you will be Received, if not it will be Returned and the prisoners kept, —

Agreeable to your Directions have ordered the militia of my Brigade to hold themselves in readyness to march at the Shortest notice — With Respect to Drafting or engaging the militia to Serve three or four months, notwithstanding the number Required might be Small, yet I Doubt the measure woud not take, as the law Requires them to Serve but two months, and Short as the Tour is, they Seldom Stay one half of the time,[2] My Brigade turned out tollerable well, upon the late occasion, but Discovering the Indolence of their neighbours, and that of the People of the adjusent States, made them complain of Injustice, in point of service, &, therefore uneasie to go home —In which by one means or an other, they are all gratified.

I think there is no probability of filling up the Contl. Batton. by Drafts from the militia untill acts of Assembly, or Resolves of Convention, are made for that purpose, or by a Genl. Order, which I think woud Answer the Same effect — provided, the first offending against the Same, was Instantly punnished with Severity —Without which no order law, or method, will be of the least validity, or, advantage Result therefrom, in the corse of a few weeks —

By a Deserter from Ld. Rawden's [Rawdon] Core [corps], which I have just Sent on to you, I find that about fifteen waggons, besides Retainers to the army, has lately Gone to Orangeburg; Escorted as far as four hole bridge by a Strong Detachment, which there separated. Majr. Mcauther [Archibald McArthur] with one part went back to Dorchester, the other under commd. Of Majr. Abbercrumby [James Abercromby]went on. —

I think to do my Self the honour of waiting upon you in a few few days — as I look for the party I Sent to George Town [Georgetown] to Return tomorrow —

I have the Honour to be Dr Sir

Yr most obdt. Hble. Servt.

Thos Sumter

N.B. [*cont'd next page*]

1. The ferry was on the Congaree River at present-day Cayce, South Carolina.
2. Greene had asked on July 28 if a third of the militia could have their terms of service extended.

It is lightly [likely] that Lord Rawden [Rawdon] is going for England[3]—the Soldiers marched out to the releife of Col. Coats [James Coates] mutinied.[4] Several died upon the march with heat & want of water. three of his party is Said to have died upon their march down.

By another deserter with me who left Charles Town [Charleston] Since they went Down says that they had upwards kild, wounded, & Empressed, as he Terms it, than is those made prisoner[5]—I have people employed in bringing cattle to this Side of the River. Some in this business has hitherto be Rather too careful of hunting & bringing over their own Stocks & guarding them.

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

3. Rawdon, in poor health, did indeed depart for England after officiating at the hanging of Col. Isaac Hayne on August 4. He was captured at sea by the French and later exchanged.
4. British sources make no mention of a mutiny.
5. Sumter appears to be referring to British casualties at the skirmish at Quinby Bridge and the battle of Shubrick's Plantation on July 17.

1781-08-01 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters high Hills of Santee
August 1st 1781.

Dear Sir

Your Letter of the 30th was handed me last Evening.

I find by your Letter and other intelligence that the Enemy at Orangeburg are in motion; and that it is doubtful which way they are directing their course. If they conceive themselves strong they will come to M,Cords [McCords Ferry],[1] but if otherwise they will go to Charles Town [Charleston]; and I am more inclined to think they will go to the latter place than the former from little anecdotes lately come to hand.

The Commissary of Prisoners Major [Edmund] Hyrne will give directions respecting the Prisoners you mention.[2] A balance is due the Enemy for ours lately sent from Charles Town [Charleston], and I immagine those will apply to the discharge of it.[3]

Governor [John] Rutledge is arrived,[4] and I hope will take measures for regulating the Militia upon a proper footing, & also for raising Continental and State Troops for a longer time than these are engaged for serving with you. Something is necessary to be done to put a stop to the horrid practice of plundering. Colonel Wade Hampton writes me from the Congaree [River] that parties are employed there belonging to North Carolina in collecting plunder and carrying it off into the Upper Country.[5] I have directed him to send them to Camp for tryal. I beg you will keep up the strictest discipline among your Troops, and confine all without distinction detected in conveying away property without a proper passport for the purpose. The Country is inevitably ruined, and the Inhabitants will be universally disgusted, if, instead of protection they are exposed to the ravages of every party. Colo. [Jonas] Beard says the People tremble every time a party appears.

I wish I could ascertain the loss of the Enemy in our attack the other Day at Shoebricks [Shubrick's] plantation. You forget to mention the number reported by the Deserter. By every account, I think it is pretty certain their loss was considerable.[6] You will please to have a return made of your whole State Troops; and of all the Horse that are public property. As I am going to make a report to Congress of the State of the War, and the force of the respective States is this department.. You will be very particular in this matter.

I am dear sir
Your most obt. humble servt
Nath Greene

Genl Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. McCord's Ferry was near Fort Motte on the Congaree River. The British did soon send a force to the ferry.
2. Sumter had several dozen prisoners and had asked Greene in his July 30 letter if he should keep them or send them to him.
3. Prisoners taken at the surrender of Charleston on May 12, 1780 and elsewhere were exchanged according to a "cartel" agreed to on May 3, 1781. There were more American that British prisoners, so the prisoners held by Sumter were to help make up the difference.
4. Rutledge had fled the state after the fall of Charleston.
5. Hampton, writing from Friday's Ferry on July 29, complained that "almost every person that remained in this settlement" had committed "base and inhuman" robberies.
6. The British actually only had six killed and 38 wounded at Shubrick's Plantation and the nearby Quinby's Bridge action on July 17.

1781-08-14 – William Henderson to Gen. Nathanael Greene (Sumter Orders Incl)

[The undated orders below were sent from Sumter to Col. William Henderson. Henderson enclosed a copy in a letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene at the High Hills of Santee dated August 14, 1781.]

Memorandum from Genl. Sumter to Colo. Henderson.

That the Troops be immediately moved from the River swamp [Great Swamp on the north side of Santee River], & encamp from three to 5 miles at least from the River on a Bluff where there is good water — the Horses sent into the river swamp with a guard which the Genl. wishes should be composed of the Militia,[1] which shall serve them as a Tour of duty. The Genl. wishes the Troops to have a respit from service untill the first of October[2] & as many of them fourloughed home from time to time as the service will permit off [of] & that Colo. Henderson apply to Genl. Green [Nathanael Greene] for that purpose. The consolidation of the Regiments to be immediately put into execution —

[Below are Henderson's comments to Greene]

Dr Sir

Since my letter Was Closd, Recd the above memorandoms from Genl. Sumter maney of them Realy serprises me, that I should Cum here for no other purpose but to furlow a parsel of Troops: & that When the Enemy is at Our Very Doors: & there horses To be Guarded by militia: No Readier a way To Dismount the men Could be Devisd; Should be much Obligd To you for your Opinion on Evry Subjects;[3]

From your Hum Sert
Wm. Henderson

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter's Brigade comprised both militia, who served tours of a few months unless they volunteered for longer service, and state troops, who served for ten months.
2. The respite from service lasted only until September 8, when Col. Henderson led Sumter's Brigade in the Battle of Eutaw Springs.
3. Greene replied to Henderson on August 16. He called Sumter's decision "extraordinary" and made without his consultation or consent.

1781-08-18 – Thomas Sumter to John Barnett

18th augt 1781

Mr. [John] Barnett of the Waxsaws [Waxhaws] Will be Pleased to deliver to Wm Shields of Col. W. [Wade] Hamptons the Negro fellow Which he has belonging to the Publick — [1]

Thos Sumter

[From the original document in the National Archives. From pension application W6025 of Mary H. Shields, the widow of William Shields.]

1. On September 21, 1841, Thomas Alexander gave the following testimony in support of the pension application of Mary H. Shields: "Wm Sields [sic] brought home a negro boy at the expiration of the ten months campaign — which he said he obtained as a compensation in part for his services." Payments in enslaved persons confiscated from Loyalists for ten-months service were known as "Sumter's wages."

1781-08-24 – Edmund Hyrne to Thomas Sumter

Camden 24th August 1781

Sir

I will esteem it a singular favor if you will forward me by the earliest opportunity, the paroles[1] of such British officers as have come to your hands, and also the receipts for prisoners sent in, with whatever lights you can throw on the state of the prisoners to be accounted for on either side.[2]

I have the honor to be sir
Your most obedt. humble servant
Edm. [Edmund] M. Hyrne
D.C.G.P. [Deputy Commissary General of Prisoners]

[Outside]
public
Brigadier General Sumter
Charlotte
North Carolina[3]
Express

24 August 1781
Hyrne

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. A parole was a written pledge by a prisoner not to aid the enemy, as a condition for being released from confinement.
2. It is unknown if Sumter replied to this request.
3. Sumter had left his camp for North Carolina the first week of August.

1781-09-03 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Camden, September 3rd, 1781

Dr. Sir

You will be pleased to have such of the Woolen Cloth as is suitable for Clothing of the State troops, applied to that purpose — what will not do, I think you had better barter, for other Articles of Cloathing for those Troops, tho' I hope all the Woolens will be found useful, for the Troops _ you may also Barter for linnen (as you say Woolens are not to be got) three cases of sugar ____ Keep what sugar & Coffee you want for your own use, and send the Remainder of the sugar and coffee, also the Box of shirting linnen, in good Covered Waggons, with careful drivers, and a proper Conductor, immediately to Captn. WM [William] Richardson's, at the High Hills of Santee[1]. You will be pleased to give the conductor a list of the particulars he brings, and inclose another to me by him. I hope both he & the Waggoners will be trustier fellows than those who were charged with the stores which came from Newbern [New Bern, North Carolina] and of which so many were Embezzled ___ If they are not, & the goods they may deliver do not correspond with your list of those sent, I shall certainly have them treated very roughly ____

I wish to have an accurate Acct. of the following particulars relative to the State troops, as soon as possible _ Viz; what number have been raised, with a proper return of the men[']s names, both officers and privates, and of the several corps to which they respectively belong __ distinguishing who are in the field, who sick, on Furlough and where; who have been furnished with the whole, or part, & what part of the Articles promised to them, so that it may be known what is due to them, respectively, also, a list of the Negroes which have been taken, & from whom, for supplying this Brigade, or any other publick purpose & how they have been disposed of __ and an Acct. of stores, & all other articles, which have been so taken, and of their disposition __ and I request that you will have such an Acct. made out, and transmitted to me, at Head Quarters, by a trusty person, as soon as possible. Without it, I shall not have a competent knowledge of the true state, which it is necessary I should have, of these troops __ as I understand there are some uneasiness among them. Upon a suggestion that your Engagements would not be complied with, I wrote to Col. [William] Henderson, desiring him to assure the men, that they certainly should be made good, as soon as circumstances would admit, and that the necessary measures would be taken for that purpose without delay

But, it is requisite, that I should know what has been done, in order to know what remains to be done, and take the necessary steps to have it accomplished __ therefore, you will not fail to furnish me with the above information __ for 'till I receive it, things will be at a stand, at least, no final or conclusive step can be taken in the Business ____ Last Week a Mr. Howe brought me the inclosed Petition __ I told him I would send it to you, not doubting that you would have Justice done to the Petitioners, as to their shares of Plunder, if they had not rec'd, & were entitled to any[2] ____ I am persuaded you will do so ____ I am sorry you have been so disappointed in your Expectations, but believe the manufactories you speak of might be set up here with safety[3] ____

The Enemy left [Col. William] Thomson's[4] last Tuesday morning, and are on the way to Monk's Corner [Moncks Corner][5] ____ I have heard nothing about the gaol at Waxsaws [Waxhaws] ____ I have appointed Col. [Frederick?] Kimball Sheriff of Camden District and requested him to inform himself what steps you have taken

1. Gov. John Rutledge had appointed Capt. Richardson as Commissary General for the State of South Carolina, and he set up his Commissary/Depot at his own plantation of Bloom Hill, ten miles west of present-day Sumter, South Carolina.
2. Col. William Bratton's regiment had sent a letter to Rutledge complaining that they had not received their share of confiscated goods. The petition has not been found.
3. Sumter's letter to Rutledge on the topic of "manufactories" has not been found. But in previous letters to Gen. Greene, Sumter expressed his frustration at being able to keep his army supplied with weapons and proposed Camden as a suitable site for manufacturing.
4. Thomson had a plantation that was on the Congaree River near Fort Motte.
5. British troops under Lt. Col. Alexander Stewart went from Thomson's plantation to Eutaw Springs on August 30 and camped there until they were attacked by Greene on September 8. The next day they proceeded to Moncks Corner and then to Charleston.

about getting it Built, and to see and have it finished immediately, for there are several People whom I should have had apprehended, 'ere now, if there had been a proper gaol to confine them in ____ The Allotment of the several brigades was made in a hurry __ I think it is a bad one, and that a fourth might be made to the Southward ____

I wish you would consider the matter well, & give me your sentiments of the best manner of laying off four Brigades, as I would wish to do it in such a way as may be most agreeable to the several Brigadiers, and serviceable to the public ____

I am, with great regard, Dr Sir,
Yr. very hble servt.
J. [John] Rutledge

Gen. Sumter

[Outside]
Honorable
Brigr. General Thomas Sumpter
Near Charlotte per Express

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1781-09-04 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

[A portion of the original letter is missing. Lyman Draper's transcription is used for that segment, as noted in brackets.]

Camden Septr 4th, 1781

Sir

I rec'd yours, of the 1st Instant,[1] last night, after closing my Letter of yesterday's date, which accompanies this, & to which I refer, as an answer to the several parts of your Letter, to which it applies —

You have been misinformed, with respect to any Complaint against you, having been made to me, unless it is the Petition from [William] Bratton's Regiment,[2] &, as to that, you see I have refer'd the Matter to yourself, assuring the person, Mr. [?] Howe, who brought it, that I had no Doubt of their receiving justice from your Hands —

If any Complaint had been made, I certainly would have made it known to you, & to no one else, until I had heard what you had to say about it —Common Justice, to your Merit and Services, would require, & my own disinclination to credit any Matter to your prejudice, would lead me to take such a step, & I should, most certainly, have suspended any judgment, or even Suspicions, of improper Conduct, until I had heard from you on the matter —

If you come down to Camden, I think it would be as well to have the Woollens brought down, as well as the other articles ment'd in my Letter, of yesterday —They can as well be made up for, or given out, to the Troops here, as at Charlotte, or Salisbury, &, indeed, much better, & in sooth, I do not think 'em safe there —I am determined to take every Method in my power to suppress Plundering —I think [?] Sutton's Conduct very extraordinary, & Mr. [?] Lock's more so —Inclosed is an open Letter to Governor [Thomas] Burke on that subject[3] – you will seal, after reading it —& send some Man in…

[Page 3 – LOC version missing; begin Draper transcription] …whom you can confide, after him, & with the letter to the Governor, who, I doubt not, will order him, if found in No. Carolina, to be delivered up to the persons who go for him, and afford every assistance that may be necessary for bringing him and his plunder into this State, where he shall undergo a legal trial, and, if convicted, he shall certainly be made an example of.

Pray have this business immediately attended to, for not a moment should be lost about it, and send men on whom you can depend to bring Sutton and his plunder, for they must not be suffered to slip thro' our hands. I request that you will furnish me (as soon as you can have it made out) with an accurate alphabetical list of all persons having property in your Brigade, who came under the following heads or descriptions — viz; 1st Such as have held or hold British commissions, remarking what the commission is. 2nd Such as have gone over to, and adhere…

[*Page 4 – Resume LOC version*] …to the British Government, or, whose conduct has manifested them to be notorious & dangerous Enemies to their country. 3rd British subjects residing abroad.[4]

I am, with great Regard Dr Sir
Yr most hble. servt.
J. Rutledge

Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter has not been found.
2. Bratton's regiment had complained of not receiving their fair share of confiscated goods.
3. The letter to Burke, governor of North Carolina, has not been found.
4. If Sumter replied with the requested information, the document has not been found.

Eutaw Springs

On September 8, 1781, General Nathanael Greene's army clashed with British forces under Lt. Colonel Alexander Stewart at Eutaw Springs in present-day Orangeburg County, South Carolina. The battle involved over four thousand troops and was the last major engagement of the war in the Carolinas. Thomas Sumter did not participate in the battle and was in the vicinity of Charlotte, North Carolina, according to a letter he wrote to Greene on the 10th. Still unaware of the action at Eutaw Springs, Sumter told Greene he had been trying to identify sites where weapons could be manufactured in the Carolinas. He had made inquiries in the Salem and Salisbury communities of North Carolina and found no prospects of workmen or facilities. Sumter did have some success procuring "a considerable Quantity of Steel suitable for swords."[1]

After the failure of his lengthy siege of Ninety Six in June, Greene moved his exhausted army to the High Hills of the Santee to rest and recuperate. By late August, he was on the march again, now with a combined force of 3,100 Continentals and militia. Sumter's brigadier general counterparts, Andrew Pickens and Francis Marion, headed up the South Carolina militia forces. Officers that had formerly fought under Sumter were among them, including colonels William Hill, Richard Winn, and Edward Lacey.[2]



Battle of Eutaw Springs. *Alonzo Chapel.*

Lieutenant Colonel Stewart had assumed command of British forces in South Carolina after the departure of the ailing Lord Rawdon. By this time, Charleston was the only British outpost left in South Carolina. Stewart had taken his force of approximately 2,000 British regulars and American Loyalists far into the South Carolina interior. Lt. Col. Henry Lee and his Legion cavalry shadowed the British, and recognizing Stewart's vulnerability, Lee urged Greene to attack.

Stewart had no idea that Greene was approaching until the morning of September 8, when the armies finally came to blows at Eutaw Springs, a wooded area along the banks of Eutaw Creek.

Stewart had established his camp there near the plantation of Loyalist Patrick Roche.[3] For approximately four

1. Sumter to Greene, Sept. 10, 1781, MiU-C.
2. Zachary Lemhouse, "Battle of Eutaw Springs," *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington* (The George Washington Presidential Library, 2025) https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/battle-eutaw-springs; David Lee Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies* (McFarland and Company, Inc., 2000) 248; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution: 1780-1783* (Russell & Russell, 1902) 441-443.
3. Lemhouse, "Battle of Eutaw Springs;" Gregory D. Massey and Jim Piccuch, Edts. *General Nathanael Greene and the American*

hours, the two forces did battle in the sweltering heat. The Patriots eventually pushed the British into the Roche Plantation where they took positions in the outbuildings, walled gardens, and a two-story brick house on the property. The withering fire from this defensive position eventually pushed the Patriots back. With hundreds of casualties on both sides, Greene finally yielded the field to the British and made an orderly withdrawal. Much like Guilford Courthouse, both sides claimed victory.

However, Stewart's "victory" came at a high cost. With nearly half of his army killed, wounded, or missing, he was forced to retreat to Charleston, where he would remain for the duration of the war The British failure to defeat Greene once again made it increasingly apparent that their plan to subdue the Carolinas was failing.[4]

Eutaw Springs is mentioned in letters to and from Sumter in the days following the battle. Greene wrote Sumter on September 16 of his "pleasure to inform you that we had a most bloody and obstinate action with the enemy on the 8th at the Eutaw Springs in which we were victorious."

Sumter replied on the 19th and offered his congratulations on "the Glorious Victory obtained over the enemy on the 8th of this instant, which is more to be admired from the Situation of the ground, which I am perfectly acquainted with,[5] & know it to be much against you."[6]

Revolution in the South (University of South Carolina Press, 2012) John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University of Alabama Press, 1985) 217; Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies*, 248

4. R.W. Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution, Consisting of Letters and Papers Relating to the Contest for Liberty, Chiefly in South Carolina* (Banner Steam-Power Press, 1853), 153-155; Henry Lee, *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States* (Peter Force, 1827) 331-336; Lemhouse, "Battle of Eutaw Springs;" Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 217-221; Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies*, 250.
5. Before the Revolution, Sumter had owned a plantation and operated a store near Eutaw Springs on the south side of Santee River.
6. Sumter to Greene, Sept. 19, 1781, MiU-C.

1781-09-10 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Catawba river[1] 10th Sepr 1781

Dr Genl.

Upon examination found the Moravian town would not Answer my Design as there was Nether houseroom or workmen to be obtained there,[2] Nether was there at Salisbury. but the want of provision and forage woud have forced me out of the State provided I had met with no other obsticles — By sickness and Moving have not had much done, but have procured a considerable Quantity of Steel suitable for swords, also a Quantity of lether, shoes, home spun & Ready made shirts —

I find the Militia are backward in turning out, which I am exceedingly sorry for, as it is probable if the enemy was pursued by a Good body of men, we Might have a full Representation of Country members — if they do not embody soon I will go among them and endeavour to have them Collected and marched off, or if you think it necessary I will go over the Mountains & endeavor to execute any Design you may have in that Quartr., I am far from being harty, but Riding agrees Very well with me & together with the air and water might prove Rather an advantage to me in point of health — If I should be honoured with your Commands, they shall be as fully Complyed with as May be in my Power.

I am Dr Sir with the Greatest Respect
Your most obdt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Gen. Greene

[Outside]
from Genl. Sumter Septr 10th 1781
The Honble Majr. Gen. Greene
pr Express Congaree

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter may have been at the home of John Price, west of Charlotte. He had recuperated there after being wounded at the Battle of Blackstock in November 1780.
2. Sumter had sent representatives to the Moravian settlement of Salem, North Carolina, to enquire about the possibility of manufacturing weapons. He concluded that the area would not support their requirements. (Gregorie ,*Thomas Sumter,* p. 184)

1781-09-14 – John Sandford Dart (Rutledge) to Thomas Sumter

Congaree [River], September ye 14th 1781

Sir/

The governor [of South Carolina, John Rutledge] being very unwell, desires me to request that you will not fail to order down, with the utmost Expedition to Capt. [William] Richardson's on the High Hills of Santee,[1] the Sugar & Coffee, which he wrote to you to have sent thither when he was about to remove from Camden, some of these Articles being immediately wanted and absolutely necessary for the sick & wounded soldiers.

The men who were wounded at the Action of Eutaw [Eutaw Springs], are in great want of Linnen for Dressings and Bandages.[2] if you could possibly procure a quantity of Linnen for this purpose, he begs that you will without delay and have it sent down to Capt. Richardson by a trusty person —He is persuaded that you will use your utmost Exertions in this matter, as you will thereby render essential service to the Brave Distressed —

He flatters himself that from the Benevolence of the People, or from purchase a large Quantity of Linnen might be procured —

I am sir
Your humb servt
John Sandford Dart

Honble Brigd Genl Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Rutledge had appointed Capt. Richardson as Commissary General for the State of South Carolina. Richardson set up his Commissary/Depot at his own plantation of Bloom Hill, ten miles west of present-day Sumter, South Carolina.
2. Nearly 400 Patriot troops had been wounded in the Eutaw Springs battle, which occurred on September 8.

1781-09-16 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters high hills Santee Sept 16th 1781

Dear Sir

I have just received your favor of the 10th. I have the pleasure to inform you that we had a most bloody and obstinate action with the enemy on the 8th at the Eutaw Springs in which we were victorious, and was very near taking the whole army prisoners; however we took 500 prisoners officers included and killed and wounded a much greater number.[1] We also took near a 1000 stand of arms and have driven the enemy to the neighbourhood of Charlestown [Charleston]. I also have the pleasure to inform you that a large french fleet of near thirty sail of the line have arrived in Chesapeake bay with a considerable land force all which are to operate against Cornwallis and General Washington is coming there to take the command.[2]

But it is apprehended Lord Cornwallis will endeavor to make good his retreat through North Carolina to Charles town.[3] To prevent which I beg you to collect all the state troops you can and have as many of our brigade of militia collected as can be brought out, the whole to be got in readiness without loss of time: for if his Lord Ship attempts to make a retreat through North Carolina his movements will be rapid and immediate. I have written to Colonels Shelby & Severe [Isaac Shelby and John Sevier from western North Carolina] meet me with all the riffle [rifle] men they can bring at Charlotte as soon as possible.

I am dear Sir
Your most obed humble s-
N Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]

[*Added at later date by unknown person*]
To Genl Sumter Sept 16th 1781.

Proposes to oppose Cornwallis; if he shd retreat.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Morgan Library – New York, NY]

1. British Lt. Col. Alexander Stewart was the last to leave the Eutaw Springs battlefield, so technically he was the victor. Many of the British prisoners were actually foragers who had been captured right before the battle.
2. Gen. Washington and French Gen. Rochambeau had learned of the approach of the French fleet at Chesapeake Bay, and on August 14 they decided to march from New York to join generals Lafayette and Anthony Wayne to trap Cornwallis's army at Yorktown. The French fleet of 28 ships under Admiral Comte de Grasse arrived at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay on August 30.
3. Cornwallis would remain in Yorktown until his surrender ~~in~~ on October 19.

1781-09-19 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Congaree [River] Sep. 19th 1781

Dr. Sir/

I wrote to you, from Camden, on the 4th Instant, by Express — not having heard from you, on the subject of my Letter, I conclude it may not have got to Hand[1]—I therefore, repeat the directions contained in that letter, viz; to barter 3 boxes of the sugar — take what sugar & coffee you want for your own use, have the Woolens made up, if they would answer for Cloathing, if not, barter 'em for Linen, & send the remainder of the sugar & coffee, & also the whole of the linen, under the charge of a careful person, as soon as possible, to Capt. Wm. [William] Richardson's at the high Hills of Santee,[2] & I now desire that you will not fail to do so, immediately.

I am, Dr Sir,
Yr very honble. Servt.
J. [John] Rutledge

P.S.
Send 600 yards of the Woolens also, to Capt. Richardson's, at the same time that you send the other articles.

Genl. Sumpter [Thomas Sumter]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. While numerous wartime letters from Rutledge to Sumter survived, there are very few letters from Sumter to Rutledge that exist. There are none in the latter part of 1781.
2. Rutledge had appointed Capt. Richardson as Commissary General for the State of South Carolina. Richardson set up his Commissary/Depot at his own plantation of Bloom Hill, ten miles west of present-day Sumter, South Carolina.

1781-09-19 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

[Draper notes, consistent with the text, that the letter is not in Sumter's handwriting except for the signature.]

Sugar Creek[1] 19th September 1781

Dr Sir/

I am at this moment honour'd with the receipt of your favor of the 16th and Sincerely Congratulate you on the Glorious Victory obtained over the enemy on the 8th of this instant,[2] which is more to be admired from the Situation of the ground, which I am perfectly acquainted with,[3] & know it to be much against you —

The very important & Interesting intelligence of a French Fleet having arrived in Chessapeake [Chesapeake] Bay, gives me infinite pleasure, even at a time when Scarce anything else is Capable of affording me the least —Shall endeavour to forward the letters to Colos. [Isaac] Shelby & Severe [John Sevier] with all Possible Dispatch[4] ____

I have it to lament, that my present indisposition renders me incapable of carrying the whole of your requisition into Execution, being scarce able to Sign my name;[5] but rest assured that everything in my Power Shall be done to promote your designs —

I am Dear Sir, with much Esteem,
Yr obedt & very Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

The Honbl Majr. Genl. Greene

[*Outside has notes made at a later date by unknown person*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sugar Creek is below Charlotte, North Carolina, and flows into the Catawba River.
2. The battle at Eutaw Springs in South Carolina.
3. Before the Revolution Sumter had owned a plantation and operated a store near Eutaw Springs on the south side of Santee River. During the war he lived on the north side of Santee River.
4. Greene had written to Shelby and Sevier on September 16 to report on the battle at Eutaw Springs and to request they send troops to Charlotte, North Carolina, in anticipation of Cornwallis possibly returning to the state.
5. Sumter was presumably still suffering from the gunshot wound to the right shoulder he had received at the battle of Blackstock's Plantation in November 1780.

1781-09-26 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

September 26th, 1781

Sir

I am informed, that several Persons, liable to do Militia duty, have found Substitutes, to perform it for them, and that others have paid Money, to Officers to procure Men, in the Continental or State Service — by which means, such Persons have been excused, by their Officers from Militia duty —

As this Practice has introduced, and must occasion, great Irregularity & Confusion, I think proper to issue a special & particular Order, on this Head, and to give Reasons against the Practice above mentioned, and for the propriety of the Order —The Law does not allow any Man the priviledge of sending a Substitute[1]—Nor does it exempt him, from Militia duty, by paying such a Sum, as his Officer may think proper to receive, either in Lieu of Personal Service, or to find a Continental Soldier, or for any other purpose —Therefore, an Officer's taking upon him, to give an Exemption, from Militia duty, to one who provides a Substitute, or pays money to procure a Regular Soldier, is illegal and unwarrantable —Such Conduct never did, or will receive, my Sanction or Approbation —

The Militia are to be divided into three Classes —In one, or other, of which every Man must be.—Each of these Classes is liable to be called out, for two Months.—This makes every Man liable to march twice a year. (I mean those who are above eighty miles from the Enemy, for, within that distance, the draught may be greater, and the Term of Service longer). If he refuses or neglects to march, he is liable to a Fine, not exceeding One Hundred & Fifty Pounds Specie, being about the Specie Value, (at the Time when the Militia Act of the 13th February 1779 was passed), of Five hundred pounds Current Money, and, to a further Fine, not exceeding a third part ,in Specie, of Treble the amount of his Tax.- Such third part being about the Comparative value, (upon the principle above laid down), between Specie and Paper Money —In the latter of which, he was liable to be fined, not exceeding treble his Tax.-

The only Alternative, then, is to do Militia Duty, or, undergo his Trial, by a Court martial and pay such Fine, in Specie, (not exceeding the amount above mentioned), as they adjudge for his neglect or refusal.- You will give the necessary orders for observing this Rule, within your Brigade.- No other Regard is to be had, to those who have found Substitutes, or paid Money, to procure Men, or, for Publick Service, than if they do not Chuse to perform militia duty, to allow them Credit, on Account of their Fine, for the specie value of what they paid, to procure a Substitute, or, for Publick Service.-

You will order a Regular Account to be kept, of all money received, or to be received, on the Score above mentioned — which is to be paid , into your Hands, by those who originally received it —And be pleased to make a Return, to me, of what Money has been received,[2] and, every two months, of all which may be received, that a proper disposition of it may be ordered.—I hope these Instructions, and those of the 17th Instant,[3] are sufficiently clear & extensive —I will endeavor to make them so, if any doubt should remain, or arise, or any Explanations be requisite, upon your communicating them to me.

I am Sir Yr most hble. servt.

J. Rutledge [John Rutledge]

Genl. Sumpter [Thomas Sumter]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. The policies of military conscription, including the use of substitutes, was left up to the states and varied greatly.
2. If Sumter responded to this request, the reports have not been found.
3. No letter to Sumter of that date has been found.

1781-09-27 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Congaree [River] Sept. 27, 1781

Dr Sir /

I have allotted to your Brigade, the following regiments, – vizt: Colo. [William] Bratton's, [Edward] Lacey's, [Richard] Winn's, [Thomas] Taylor's, [James] Postell's, & [Wade] Hampton's — you will receive, herewith, a number of blank commissions —

Be pleased to have the Regiments fully, & properly, officer'd, & muster'd, & class'd, or draughted, as soon as possible —& march one third of them, with the utmost expedition, to Head Quarters, or such other place as the Honbl. Major General [Nathanael] Greene shall direct; to do Duty, under his Orders, for two months, from the time of their Arrival thereat.[1]

Inclosed are such Extracts, from several Laws, as are necessary to be made known to the Militia — you will have each Colonel furnished with a Copy of 'em, & order, that he cause them to be publickly read, at the head of his Regiment, & a copy taken by each of his Field Officers, & Captains, that none may pretend ignorance of them —

The Militia Laws may certainly be made much better than they are, but, as they now stand, if the officers do their duty, I am persuaded the Laws would be found much better than they are generally supposed to be — you will, therefore, appoint the most proper Men, in the Brigade, for Officers, & & the Laws carried, strictly & steadily, into Execution —

My proclamation of this Date suspends, until ten days after the next Meeting and Sitting of the General Assembly,[2] the Acts which make Continental & State Money a Tender in Law —All Fines must therefore be paid in Specie —By the Militia Laws of 1778 & 1779, Offenders are liable to be fined, in sums not exceeding those which are therein mentioned —As they are imposed in Current Money, & the fines, hereafter to be levied, are to be paid in Specie, it is necessary to ascertain to what amount, in Specie, the Court may fine —

In 1776, the Militia were entitled to ten shillings Current Money [*end of sentence missing – Draper has "per day"*] There was, at that Time, no difference in the Value of Specie & Paper Money. In March 1778, the pay of the Militia continued the same — it is therefore to be presumed that no difference had, then, taken place between Paper Money & Specie — at least there is no Legislative acknowledgment of any depreciation —

But, in February 1779, the pay of the Militia was raised from 10s. to 32/6 per day, the Paper Money having, & being admitted, by the Legislature, to be, depreciated, in that Proportion. From these observations, We may fix the Following Rule, as the most just & equitable, for determining how far the Court may fine in Specie — viz: for Fines imposed by the Act of 1778, to the Amount of the Sum mentioned in the Law — thus, £100 in Specie, (according to the old Current Rate of gold & silver), for £100 Currency —

But, for Fines under the Act of 1779, they must not exceed one third, in Specie, of the Sums therein mentioned, as £150 Specie, (according to the old Current Rate of gold & silver,) or £500 Currency — you will order all offenders who may be condemned to the Continental Service, to be sent under a sufficient Guard to Head.Quarters.

Persons against whose Bodies Executions issue, are to be committed, to the Gaol at Waxaws [Waxhaws]— you will give orders that no person be suffered to pass from this State, into any other, through the district of your

1. Greene's headquarters were in the High Hills of Santee around present-day Stateburg, South Carolina. In a letter dated July 28, 1781, Greene asked Sumter about the possibility of extending the term of service from two months to three or four months for at least a third of the militia. Sumter replied on July 30 that it was already difficult getting them to stay two months.
2. The Assembly would meet again on January 8, 1782.

Brigades, without a Permit from me, the General commanding the Continental troops, one of his Aids, or a Brigadier of Militia, & that all Persons taken Prisoners, or stop'd, on suspicion, be thoroughly searched to prevent the enemy's carrying on a Correspondence by their Means —

I am, with great Regard Dr Sir,
Yr. most obedt. servt.
J. Rutledge

P.S. You will direct that the Men come on Foot — for they are to do duty as Infantry —& their Horses cant. be kept in Camp, nor can any draughted Men be spared to convey them back —If the Number of Commissions herewith sent are insufficient, let me know how many more are wanted, & I will send them as soon as they can be printed —In the mean time you will give Brevets to Officers for whom there are no commissions —

Gen. Sumpter

P.S [*On Page 1*]
Col. Postell has since writing this Letter vizt. abt. the [20th?] Sept. resigned his Comsn. to which his Lieut. Col. [Frederick] Kimball succeeds.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1781-09-28 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters
high hills Santee
Sept 28th 1781

Dear Sir

Your letter of the 19th

I have received and am exceeding sorry to find you so very unwell, but I hope your indisposition will be of no long standing. Col [William] Henderson got wounded in the late Action[1] and is not likely to be fit for duty again for a long time to come. Since we crossed the Santee the enemy have been up as high as [Henry] Laurens Plantation[2] and are collecting all the negroes they can. They are now down about Murray's ferry,[3] and & it is said they have constructed a number of boats, I suppose with a view of plundering on this [north] side of the river if they can.

I am very desirous of driving them into town [Charleston], and for this purpose wish to collect as large a force as possible especially the regular troops, I beg you will order therefore all the State troops to join their respective commands except such as are employed in the Artificers service. The Governor has ordered into service one third of all the militia,[4]

If your health will permit I hope you will have those of your brigade in readiness by the time. A few weeks nay a few days and the sickly season will be over in the lower parts of this country, when the Army may take a position nearer Charles town [Charleston], which will soon straighten the enemy in the articles of supplies, and prevent their plan plundering this country further.

The little time the State troops have to serve and the very high wages they have, renders it necessary to keep them well employed, otherwise people will be apt to complain that they don't earn their bread, and you know how apt people are to murmur even without cause, and how necessary it is to give as little occasion as possible.

With good wishes for your better health

I am dear sir

Your most obed humble servt

Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Henderson, who commanded in place of Sumter, had been wounded at Eutaw Springs on September 8.
2. Laurens's plantation is now Mepkin Abbey on the West Branch of Cooper River, six miles below Moncks Corner. Laurens was then a prisoner in the Tower of London.
3. Murray's Ferry was on the Santee River where present-day Highway 52 crosses.
4. Rutledge had also given this order to Sumter in a letter dated September 27.

1781-09-29 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

29th Sepr.1781

Dr Sir

At the Time of my Receiving yr orders of the 16th Inst. or untill Now I have not been able to attend to them — and as it appears Lord Cornwallis is not coming this way,[1] Shoud be Glad to Receive yr. further Directions with Respect to embodying the Militia, what proportion &C –

Please to let me know if I am to take any Notice of the four Regmts lately Commd by Col. [William] Henderson[2]—I will use my endeavors to have the Men turned out agreeble to yr. wishes and have Great hopes of being able to march with them. but at present am not able to mount my horse[3]—as to the State Troops, you May Rely upon every endeavor being used to Render them Servicable when Cald out again —

I immediately sent on by a safe hand yr letters to Cols. [Isaac] Shelby & Sever [John Sevier][4] -

I have the Honr. to be Dr Sr
With the Greatest Respect
Yr. Mt obt Hble Serv
Thos. Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene
[Outside] from Genl. Sumter
Septr. 29th 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania]

1. Greene had wanted to prepare for the possibility of Cornwallis marching back into North Carolina en route to Charleston. Sumter was correct, as the siege of Yorktown had begun the day before.
2. Col. Henderson was severely wounded at the Battle of Eutaw Springs on September 8 while commanding Sumter's brigade.
3. Sumter was still suffering from a gunshot wound to the right shoulder at the Battle of Blackstock's Plantation on November 20, 1780.
4. Greene had expressed in his orders of the 16th his desire that Shelby and Sevier rendezvous their forces with him at Charlotte to thwart any movement south by Cornwallis. Shelby and Sevier recruited several hundred men from western North Carolina (now Tennessee) for a three-months tour and began their march over the Blue Ridge Mountains to join Greene at about the time Greene wrote this letter. They would eventually join Gen. Francis Marion and participate in a raid on the British post at Fair Lawn Plantation near Moncks Corner on November 17.

1781-10-03 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters
high hills of Santee
October 3d 1781

Dear Sir

I am favored with yours of the 29th. I must refer you to Governor [John] Rutledge's letter respecting the Militia. I believe he has given orders for one third of the whole to be embodied for three months, but his letters will inform you fully on that head, and the other matter you mention respecting the four Regiments.[1]

Cornwallis has not yet attempted to escape thro' North Carolina, but when he finds that he has Nothing to hope but only from that attempt, he may still be induced to try the experiment; especially as he may gain but cannot lose by it.[2] It is our duty and interest therefore to be in readiness to meet him, and prepare for the worst. besides which it is necessary to have a force in readiness readiness to drive the enemy into Charles Town [Charleston] if possible, that they may be as early shortened in the articles of supplies as possible, & prevented from committing further ravages upon the Country.

These are objects sufficient for calling out the militia, if there were no others. let all the State troops be got together as fast as possible, & put under close & strict discipline, that they may be prepared for the most serious service.

With esteem and Regard
I am Dr Sir
Your Most obedient humble servant
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
public service
The Honourable Brigadier General Sumter near Charlotte H. Hills 3d October 1781 – N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Rutledge had actually asked for only two months' service from the militia in his orders to Sumter dated September 27.
2. The siege of Cornwallis' forces at Yorktown had been underway since September 28.

1781-10-09 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Oct. 9th 1781

Dr. Sir.

Lest you should mistake the purport of my Orders of the 26th Septr., I think proper to explain my intention which was, not to bring to a Trial, by a Court Martial, (in order that they might be fined, in Specie), such Persons, as have refused to do Duty —My Desire is, that the Regiments be mustered, & classed, or draughted, & the Extracts of the Militia Laws, my Orders respecting the Militia, & the Proclamation suspending the tender Acts, read, at the head of each Regiment, in order that they may be publicly notified, & no Person hereafter pretend Ignorance of them. This being done, the Instructions are to operate against all future offenders, whether they have found Substitutes in the Militia, provided regular Soldiers, or paid money, for those or other purposes — but, until this is done, Persons who have refused to do Duty, are only fineable in paper money, & I am rather of opinion, that it is most expedient, not to enquire into past offences, but to begin, upon the new plan, which I have laid down as to Persons, who have found Substitutes, or done any other Acts, which they were made to believe would exempt them, from Militia Duty, &, who have, therefore, refused to perform it, the bringing them to a Court Martial, for such past offences, would be extremely hard if the Court should fine largely, and might give Umbrage to many Officers who probably conceived that they had a right to receive Money, or Substitutes, for Exemptions from Duty, & that, in so doing, they were rendering the most effectual Service to their Country: but, it is likely, under such Circumstances, the Courts would either acquit the Party, or fine him in a very small Sum — for these reasons, I would recommend the overlooking all past offences, or neglect of Duty, & you will, therefore, make your orders to the Commanding officers of the Regiments in your Brigade conformable to this explanation, but, enjoin the strictest & steadiest execution of Orders, in future. —

My idea is, (tho' I presume no doubt has arisen with you, on this head) that no man, that is, within the District of any Regiments, out of Charles Town [Charleston], shall be excused from Militia Duty under a pretense, that he is on Parole, or a British Subject, unless the former has been fairly taken, in Arms, & paroled as an officer —Any other Men, who are on Parole, or insists on their being British Subjects, & therefore refuse to do Militia Duty, may take their choice, either of doing it, or going into the Enemy's Lines, & if they will not go & refuse to do Duty, they must be tried & fined, as is directed, with respect to others.*—I find there are many gentlemen riding about the country, under the description of volunteers, who render no service to it — this practice being very injurious, should be immediately suppressed, & no man is to be excused from doing Militia Duty, in the District of the Regiment to which he belongs, unless he is actually enrolled & obliged to serve in some regular Corps of Cavalry, not merely as a Volunteer, but to do the same Duty, & subject to the same Articles, as the rest of that Corps are obliged to do, or are subject to, & that for some particular Term.

I am Sir yr very hble. servt.

J. Rutledge

[The following segment was written in the left margin of Page 2] (Private) *You will not, however, consider this instruction (it being a general one), as any prohibition to you, to suffer such persons in either of the predicaments last mentioned, as you may think proper, to permit to remain out of the British lines, without doing any militia duty at all, for some more valuable purposes. This being a matter which I leave to your discretion.

Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1781-10-10 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

October ye 10th, 1781

Dear Sir /

Inclosed are several printed copies of the proclamation of which I, some time ago,[1] sent to you a written Copy, offering pardon to the persons therein described ____ You will be pleased to have them as generally circulated as possible, that all who may be desirous of taking the Benefit may be apprized of it, and enabled to do so, within the time limitted, for surrendering themselves, as I have no Intention of Extending that time ____

You will have an exact Account kept of all such as surrender themselves to you within that Time, and, as soon as it is Expired, have such Account transmitted to me.[2]

I am, sir,

Yr. very hble serv.

J. Rutledge [John Rutledge]

Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Rutledge had sent the proclamation to Sumter on September 27. It granted pardon to Loyalists on the condition of serving a six-month term of militia duty. A copy of Rutledge's proclamation dated September 27, 1781 is in R. W. Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution… in 1781 and 1782,* (Columbia SC: Banner Steam-Power Press, 1853), 175-178.
2. If Sumter complied with this request, the document has not been found.

1781-10-11 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

October ye 11th, 1781.

Dear Sir /

Lest upon the Construction of the Militia Act of February 1779, which makes Offenders liable to pay a sum not exceeding what is there in mentioned, and treble their last Tax, a Doubt should arise, about what Tax is meant, whether, the last which was paid previous to the passing of the Law, or, what is paid since it passed, that being the last Tax which has been paid —

I think it necessary to intimate, to you, that the law must be construed to mean the last Tax which was paid, antecedent to the passing the Act, and not that which has been paid since. You will therefore, have this Explanation properly made known throughout your Brigade, as a rule by which Courts Martial are to be governed in their determinations.[1]

I am, Sir,

Your Humb. Servt,

J. Rutledge [John Rutledge]

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Rutledge had written several letters to Sumter beginning September 26, 1781, that addressed issues such as compulsory military service and the hiring of substitutes. The Militia Act of 1779 prescribed fines for those who failed to meet their obligations for militia service.

Yorktown

In spite of his lopsided defeat of the Continental Army at Camden in August 1780, Lord Cornwallis led a depleted and exhausted army to Wilmington, North Carolina in March of 1781. From there, he marched his army to Virginia to link up with other British forces with the object of subduing that state and shutting off supplies and reinforcements to the Carolinas.

After his arrival, Cornwallis was ordered by General Sir Henry Clinton to begin constructing a fortified naval post at Yorktown on the Virginia peninsula. Seeing an opportunity to trap Cornwallis, Washington moved south with a combined American-French army while the French navy blockaded approaches from the sea.

By late September, Washington was in position and began the construction of siege works. Three weeks of fighting against steadily encroaching American and French forces left Cornwallis in an untenable position. He surrendered his army on October 17, effectively ending the British attempt to hold on to their North American colonies.[1]

Gen. Nathanael Greene and Governor John Rutledge both expressed their joy in the victory over Cornwallis in letters to Sumter. Rutledge simply wrote on October 28, "I congratulate you on Cornwallis' surrender."[2] Greene exulted on November 2: "I congratulate you on the glorious news from Virginia, the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his whole Army. Official information arrived last night. The particulars are yet to come; however, the account says the british [sic] Army marched out with furled colours [sic] and grounded their Arms. This is glorious for America and a sweet revenge for the fall of Charles town."[3]



The Surrender of Cornwallis. *John Trumbull.*

1. Mark M. Boatner, III, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Stackpole Books, 1994) 1231-1248; Dan L. Morrill, *Southern Campaigns of the American Revolution* (The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1993) 171-183; Benton Rain Patterson, *Washington & Cornwallis: The Battle for America* (Lyons Press, 2017) 301-329; David Lee Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies* (McFarland and Company, Inc., 2006) 281-299.
2. Rutledge to Sumter, Oct. 28, 1781, DLC.
3. Greene to Sumter, Nov. 2, 1781, MiU-C.

1781-10-20 – Edmund Hyrne (Greene) to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters[1]
October 20th 1781

Sir

General Greene directs me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter by Express, two days ago[2]—He has nothing material to communicate, but requests the favor of you to forward the enclosed to Col. Lock [Francis Locke] at Salisbury.

I have the honor to be Sir
Your most obdt. humble servant
Edm. [Edmund] M. Hyrne
Aid de Camp

Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. At the High Hills of Santee around present-day Stateburg, South Carolina.
2. Sumter's letter has not been found. Greene received it on the 18th, but the day Sumter actually wrote it is not known.

1781-10-28 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Oct. 28. 1781.

Dr Sir/

I congratulate you on Cornwallis' surrender[1]—Be pleased to have the enclosed Proclamation circulated within the district of your Brigade[2]—you will consider my order respecting those who have furnished men, or money wch. procured men, for Col. [Peter] Horry's & Mayham's [Hezekiah Maham] Corps, as revoked —Those who have done so are to have the Benefit of the Exemptions, from Militia duty, which were given to them, for that Consideration; but this is only to relate to what is past — none who may, in future, offer to provide men, or money to find men, for those Regiments, are to be exempted, on that acct., from Militia Service, nor is this to affect the order respecting the non-admission of substitutes, in the militia.

I am, Sir
Yr. most hble. servt.
J. [John] Rutledge

Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]
Genl. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown on October 19.
2. This presumably was his proclamation of September 27, 1781, which offered pardons to Loyalists who agreed to serve in the militia.

1781-11-02 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters
November 2nd 1781

Dear Sir

I find from the reports of several people, the Tories are getting troublesome and insolent in the neighbourhood of Orangburgh [Orangeburg], in the forks of Edisto [River], and even up as high as the ridge towards Ninty Six [Ninety Six]. It is said the Cattle of that Country affords them subsistence, and is the object of keeping them in that quarter. To check their insolence and prevent supplies from going to Charles town [Charleston], as well as to be in a position to aid and succour the Regiments and Inhabitants upon Ponpon,[1] I have it in contemplation to establish a post at Orangburgh. The Tories will be afraid to go above it, and if they should steal parties into the Forks of the Edisto, they cannot get off the Cattle without the greatest difficulty and hazard. It will shorten the Enemy in the article of supplies not a little, and check the depredation of the Tories, which are more distressing and cruel than all the rest of the British Army.

I wish to know what force you can collect to take post there of the State Troops and Militia, including such of General [Andrew] Pickens brigade, as are assembled at the Congaree [River]. Some reports say General Cunningham has gone up toward 96 [Ninety Six].[2] If so he is upon some important scheme, to defeat which no time should be lost in taking a position at orangburgh [Orangeburg], providing your force is equal to the thing, and supplies can be had there or may be drawn from the Congaree or else where sufficient to support your party.

General [Francis] Marion and the rifflemen he has with him, will add great security to your position, as the enemy will be afraid to detach unless in very strong parties, and even then for fear if they seperate their force they may be beaten in a divided state. The Enemy still hold a post at Dorchester but it is occupied but by a small party.

I congratulate you on the glorious news from Virginia, the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his whole Army.[3] Official information arrived last night. The particulars are yet to come; however the account says the british Army marched out with furled colours and grounded their Arms. This is glorious for America and a sweet revenge for the fall of Charles town.[4]

I am sir
Your Most Obedt humble ser
N Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The Ponpon River is now known as South Edisto.
2. There were several prominent Loyalist leaders named Cunningham, but Greene was probably referring to Gen. Robert Cunningham, who commanded the Loyalist militia of Ninety Six District.
3. Cornwallis had surrendered on October 19, 1781.
4. Cornwallis had to accept the same terms at the surrender that were imposed on Americans at their surrender of Charleston on May 12, 1780.

1781-11-08 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Novr. 8th 1781.

Dr Sir

I hope some of the steps which I have taken to procure Salt for the Inhabitants, as well as the Troops, will succeed, & that they may all be soon furnished with a sufficient Quantity of that necessary Article. Be assured, that, as soon as I have any at Command, the State Troops shall have a proper Proportion of it —

You may make use of the Buildings on Mr. Wm. [William] Moore's Plantation. I wish they were not so indifferent —

Col. [Lewis] Morris arrived at Head Quarters last Monday,[1] but, he left the Army in Virginia ten days before Cornwallis's surrender: So that we have no Accts [Accounts], as yet, what the future operations of the combined Army wd. be —He says Col. J. [John] Laurens is daily expected here[2]—by him we shall know with certainty what we have to depend on —

A Man just arrived from Geo. Town [Georgetown] says a Fleet of 20 Sail were seen off that Place on the 6th Inst; supposed to be a French Fleet but I know not how far this Intelligence may be relied on. I have Letters (recd. this day) from our Delegates in Congress, dated 28th Septr., but they contain no other material Intelligence than that France & Spain had insisted on the admission of an American Plenipotentiary, at the Congress in Europe —G.B. had preemptorily refused it — perhaps the Affair of Cornwallis[3] may make her alter her Tone.

I am, Dr. Sir
Yr. most hble. servt..
J. [John] Rutledge

P.S. I wrote to Col. Wade Hampton abt. 10 days ago, requesting him to send me some Flour, (if he had any to spare), for the use of myself & the Council, & some other Gents & he informed me that he wd. send 4 Barrels in a Waggon, to your House,[4] informing you of their Destination, & requesting that they might be sent on, here, & that I might expect 'em, here, last Sunday —I shall be much obliged to you to give orders, when this Flour arrives, for sending it hither. We have very little & that exceeding bad.

Gen. Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Morris was an aide-de-camp of Gen. Nathanael Greene.
2. Col. Laurens had been under the command of Col. Alexander Hamilton at the Siege of Yorktown, and he helped draw up the terms for Cornwallis's surrender.
3. Rutledge was referring to the recent defeat of Cornwallis at Yorktown.
4. Sumter's house was on the north side of Santee River across from Eutaw Springs.

1781-11-14 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Harrispergers[1] 14th Novr 1781

Dr Sir

The Troops crossed the Congaree [River] on Monday [November 12]; at three oclock the following morning Majr. Blewford [William Buford] with 70 Mounted Men was Detached after a Capt. Gusentanner [Henry Giessendanner][2] who I was informed had just arrived in the Neighborhood of Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] with some wagons escorted by Sixty men, however the Majr. found but two men at Gusentenners who fired at him & Made their Escape. Majr. [John] Moore, who folowed with the Remainder of the state Troops & was to have Joind Majr. Blewford at the last mentioned place, passed on to orangeburg from thence set out for Col. Roes[3] [Christopher Rowe] but presently fell in with Genl. Cunningham[4] with a large party lately from C. Town [Charleston], an engagement insued; the enemy Gave way at first, but their Superior Numbers soon obliged Maj. Moore to Give way in turn; his Troops being throwd into disorder by a heavy fire from a Swamp, which the enemy lay in — some of the scattered Troops fell in with Majr. Blewford and with him Joined me at this place eight miles from orangeburgh last night.

Majr. Moore with about thirty men has just come in. The Number missing will be inserted here after. I sent out a Reconoitering party this morning. Capt. Jacob Barnett of the State Troops has just Returned & Reports that he was thought to be of Genl. Cunninghams party by the orangbourgers [Orangeburgers] who informed him that Cols. [James] Lawrence and [Hezekiah] Williams had Joind Genl. Cunningham who had upwards of five hundred men, that they had one hundred and eighty, that the whole was lying at Roes place about a mile from orangeburgh [Orangeburg]; but before he had ended his enquiries a party of the provincial horse came upon him which obliged him to Retire. he sustained no Damage —

I am at a loss to Conceive what the Intentions of these Troops are unless to Counter act the Designs of yr establishing a post at orangeburgh — I am altogether undetermined how to act. The Militia I have are trifling, consisting of the worst men and arms in the Brigade. Neither is the State Troops equal to what I expected. Considerable desertion has taken place among the Militia — only two hundred and eighty five Remains, fifty seven of which are without arms, notwithstanding forty stand has been served out, of the State Troops one hundred & Ninty are present —My whole force 418—2 Sergts. & 10 Privates of the State Troops are Missing; 1 Wounded — it is probable most of those Missing are Neither kild or taken ____

I have the Honour to be Dr Sr

Yr Most Obedt Hble Servt -

Thos Sumter -

[Outside]

The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene pr Express [*page also contains notes added at a later date by unknown person*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. John Harrisperger's plantation was about 9 miles north of Orangeburg, South Carolina. Sumter was marching toward Orangeburg in compliance with Greene's letter of November 2.
2. Capt. Giessendanner commanded a company of Orangeburg Tory militia in the regiment of Col. John Fisher.
3. Col. Rowe had formerly commanded the Orangeburg District Militia Regiment. His plantation was on the North Branch of Edisto River 3 to 4 miles south of Orangeburg.
4. Sumter probably meant Tory Major William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham. His cousin Robert Cunningham was actually a Tory general, but William Cunningham was in the Orangeburg area at the time and preparing for a raid into the backcountry known as the "Bloody Scout." Sumter biographer Anne King Gregorie says Sumter meant Robert, but the Greene Papers concluded it was William (*The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, Vol. IX, pg. 576).

1781-11-17 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters high hills Santee
November 17th 1781

[*Illegible notes added at a later date*]

Dear Sir

I am sorry that Major More [John Moore] fell into the Enemies ambush, as dispersing that party will give them new confidence.[1] Before this can reach you, you must have come to some determination of advancing or retreating.

General [Francis] Marion has crossed the [Santee] river at Murray's ferry, and I expect the Legion[2] has crossed and is on the way to Orangeburgh [Orangeburg]. The Army marches to morrow, and will cross at McCords [McCord's Ferry][3] Being acquainted with these circumstances you must govern your own conduct as occasion may require, keeping me informed of your situation and of the enemies movements. If a retreat can be avoided without exposing your party too much, it will be best, as a retreat will have a disagreeable effect on the people.

You will receive by this Express packets for yourself, General [Andrew] Pickens and Col. [Leroy?] Hammond. Please to forward the two letters as soon as possible.[4]

I am dear sir

Your most obedient humble serv.

Nath Greene

If you think you can give the enemy a deadly blow by General Marions joining you with part or all of his party, please to inform him thereof, and desire him to second you in an attack.

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter had reported in a letter dated November 14 that Moore's force had been repulsed by Loyalist militia in the vicinity of Orangeburg.
2. Lt. Col. Henry Lee's Legion was under Maj. Joseph Eggleston while Lee was conferring with Gen. Washington in Virginia. It arrived near Murray's Ferry on November 14 but did not proceed to Orangeburg.
3. Greene's army crossed Congaree River at McCord's Ferry and arrived at Patriot Col. William Thomson's plantation on November 19, joined by Lee's Legion, two depleted Maryland Continental regiments and Capt. Robert Kirkwood's Delaware company, two Virginia regiments, the North Carolina brigade, a detachment of field artillery, and the remnants of the 3d Continental Light Dragoons.
4. The letters have not been found.

1781-11-17 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Rickenbackers Near Orangeburgh [Orangeburg][1]
17th Novr. 1781

Dr Sir

The Enemy Passed the edisto [River] immediately after the Scirmish they had with Majr. [John] Moore,[2] but Detached a party back which lay upon this Side [east side of the North Fork of Edisto River] untill the Next evening. They was Commanded by Cols. [sic, Major William] Cunningham & [Hezekiah] Williams, their Number upwards of three hundred exclusive of Col. James Lawrence's party which lay in the fork — it is Said they are going to 96 [Ninety Six] or the [Cherokee] Indian Nation.[3] I have wrote Genl. [Andrew] Pickens informing him of their Movements — The Gentleman you sent to the Edisto is furnished with a party & is just Seting out to the Sawmills —

Provisions of every kind is scarce in the neighbourhood of Orange [Orangeburg], but am informed that Cattle are Plenty upon the So. fork of edisto. A Capt. Rump [Jacob Rumph][4] and several of his Compy. has Come in —

I have the Honour to be, Dr Sir,
Yr Most obedt. Hble. Servt.
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library —Univ. of Michigan]

1. Henry (Heinrich) Rickenbacker's plantation was on Four Hole Swamp near Orangeburg.
2. Sumter had described Moore's engagement with Loyalist forces in a letter dated November 14.
3. Cunningham was indeed headed toward Ninety Six and would engage in several skirmishes with Whigs in the upper part of the state.
4. Rumph commanded a patriot militia company from the Orangeburg area.

1781-11-23 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Nov. 23. 1781.

Dr Sir

Herewith you will receive a Writ of Election for a Member of the Senate for the parishes of St Matthew & Orange, & a Writ for Electing Members of the House of Representatives, for the parish of Orange[1]—

I request that you will insert, in each Writ, the Names of three proper persons to manage these elections, which may be done by the same persons at the same place, & then forward the Writs to those persons, or one of 'em, that they may proceed to the Execution of this Business —

I am sir

Yr. very hble. Servt.

J. Rutledge [John Rutledge, Governor of South Carolina]

Gen. Sumter

[Outside]
[?] 1781
the young man
with Thornton
sends under Guard

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Rutledge was sending out election writs in preparation for the reconvening of the state assembly. This would occur on January 8, 1782, in Jacksonboro. The town was approximately 30 miles west of British-occupied Charleston.

1781-11-23 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 23d Novr 1781

Dr Sir

I have Just Received yrs of the 17th, Inst.

Nothing very Material has happened since I wrote you last. I am informed that Cuninghams' [Maj. William Cunningham] & [Col. Hezekiah] Williams' Parties Separated at the Ridge — one went to the Saluda [River], the other to Savannah rivers;

[Col. James] Lawrence with his and Several Capts. with parties Still Remain in the forks of the Edistoes [Edisto River].

Cols. [Lt. Col. William] Young & [Thomas] Pearson are stationed at Dorchester.

Capt [James] Yarborough, Legg [Benjamin Legge] & Rhym [Joseph Rhem] with their New raised Cores of horse are also in the Neighborhood of Dorchester. Col. Edmund Fanning Rendyvous near Ashley Ferry. The whole of these provincial Cores when Collected will exceed three hundred,[1]

The enemy are Carrying on their works upon Charlestown [Charleston] Neck with Great Vigilance. They have Several Pieces of heavy Artillery mounted upon a work throwed up near Capt. Read's Brick house.[2] In a few days I expect to have a more Satisfactory account of their works upon the Neck ____ Several persons from town Say there is a fleet lying off the barr [Charleston Bar at the mouth of Charleston Harbor], but no one dare Say they are French even if they were confident it was So.

Several persons are confined for Saying Lord Cornwallis had Surrendered to Genl. Washington — the Tories are treated with Great Coldness & Some with severity who Refuse to enter in to the Provincial Cores for three years — they was at first engaged for three months — they are now urged to Continue thirty three Months longer, for which they receive three Guineas Bounty and a Redundancy of fine Cloathing.

The outlying parties through this Country are numerous and troublesome —I have about forty that Surrendered, they go at large and are very Much threatened by their Bretheren in the Swamps — On Wednesday I had a big Drive & came upon two Small encampments. three was kild & three made prisoners. Some horses, arms &c. was taken, yesterday they Retallyated upon a foraging party of fifteen, out of which they kild & took four, & twelve horses; the waggons and loading was all Saved —

I know very little of the situation of the enemy towards Monks [Moncks] Corner, but am of oppinion the Posts in their rear are exposed and that a large body of horse, properly disposed of Might do them very considerable Damage. The troops I have are not equal to the undertaking, as the Militia are all foot, and the distance & Situation of the enemy Such, as to leave it in the Power of horse only to do them an injury and retreat in Safety ---

I have this day wrote to Genl. [Francis] Marion and Sent a proper offer to Confer with him upon Several points Respecting practicability of Striking a blow that may not only Disturb the Repose of the enemy, but Sensibly weaken them[3]—by the time and when this offr returns, I Shall be enabled to form a proper Judgement of the propriety of an attempt of this nature —

You Mention having Sent two letters with the packets for Genl. [Andrew] Pickens. One only came with them which was forwarded this morning —

1. Provincial corps comprised Americans who served in much the same manner as British regular troops.
2. This presumably was patriot Jacob Read's home at Hobcaw Plantation on the Wando River above Charleston. Read had been imprisoned by the British at St. Augustine, Florida.
3. On November 17, Marion's troops under colonels Hezekiah Maham, Isaac Shelby and John Sevier burned Colleton House near Moncks Corner, which the British had been using as a hospital and depot. As a result, the British abandoned a nearby redoubt now known as Fort Fair Lawn.

I am Dr Sir
Yr Most Obdt Hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

N.B.

We are every day in the Swamps in one Quarter or another, So that the outlyers begins to Suspect danger in their retreats. Lawrence & Williams, his Companion, has just Sent in to know if they would be received & their lives Spared.[4] T.S.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

4. If the request was sent in writing, it has not been found.

1781-11-23 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

[Transcript from Documentary History of the American Revolution *by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pgs. 213-214. The original has not been found.]*

ORANGEBURG, NOV. 23, 1781.

Sir:

I have some reason to think Gen. Greene don't mean to move downward until the lower posts are well explored, and the number and situation of the enemy accurately ascertained.

I am perfectly unacquainted with the enemy's position and strength towards Cooper River; to know which and to confer with you upon several other points of consequence, I send Major Bleauford [William Buford], the bearer hereof, to wait upon you, in whom you may confide, and to whom I beg you would give your opinion upon such matters as I have directed him to mention to you;

The most profound secrecy is absolutely necessary ; certain disappointment and ruin would attend our operations to have the design known. The enemy in this quarter are numerous in horse, but not formidable. I refer you to the Major for particulars, as he is able to give you the fullest account of the state of things.

I am, sir, with great respect,
Your obedient humble servant,
THOS. SUMTER.

Transcript from *Documentary History of the American Revolution* **by Robert Gibbes, 1853, pgs. 213-214.**

1781-11-24 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 24th Novr. 1781

Dr Sir

By accounts I have just Rec'd., it is probable the enemy at Ravenell's [Revenel's][1] are two thousand Strong, exclusive of Cavalry, that a few days ago Seven hundred Tories was Served with necessaries for the Support of their families, in consequence of their having promised to embody and act as the Commant. of Charlestown [Commandant of Charleston, Gen. Alexander Leslie] Should direct —

The Brest work at or Just below Dorchester is finished in which is about eighty Hessians.[2] Some works at Stono[3] are also Nearly Completed. I am Still of the oppinion that a large Boddy of horse passing by the out Post and going as far downwards as they coud, would tend to Disorder and weaken the enemy Considerably — prov[id] ed the measure was entered into without their being apprised of it —

I am convinced you have no Idea of the Number of Tories that is between this and Charlestown — which when collected will be a Great Reinforcement to the enemy, which advantage they are Shore of, if Methods are not adopted to cut them off or bring in to our Measures before our army Marches downwards —

I had a party out yesterday which took a few prisoners. The offrs. that was out informs me that they think there is Not less than fifteen hundred persons of one kind or another between this and the South fork of the River [between the north and south forks of Edisto River], which is but fifteen miles distance, all lying in deep Swamps, close upon the banks of the river which they pass in an Instant either upon logs or by Swiming from one Side to the other as occasion May Require —

I am apprehensive that but few will pay any Regards to the Proclamation[4] that Nothing but the Sword will Reclaim them. I expect to hear from Genl. [Francis] Marion in three days[5] —

I am Dr Sir your
Most Obedt hble Servt
Thos. Sumter

Maj. Genl. Greene

[Outside]
Publick
The Honble. Majr. Genl. Greene
per Express
[*The page also contains notes added at a later date by an unknown person.*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The British were at Daniel Ravenel's Wantoot Plantation, about 20 miles southeast of Eutaw Springs.
2. Hessian Soldiers participated in the capture of Charleston in 1780 and had manned British defenses since then.
3. Stono Ferry, 13 miles west of Charleston.
4. Governor John Rutledge had issued a proclamation on September 27 that promised amnesty to Loyalists who swore allegiance and served six months of militia duty.
5. No letters from Marion to Sumter have been found for the remainder of 1781.

1781-11-25 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters 1781 Bucks head[1] Novem 25th

Dear Sir

I am favor'd with your letter of the 23d. & 24th. I am but too sensible that the Tories are numerous, but how shall we lessen them is the question. I think you will do well to employ some of those that have lately come in, to carry letters of invitation to them as the last mode; and inform them that General [Arthur] St. Clair with the Pennsylvania and Maryland troops are on the march to join us and will be with us in a few days[2] and that Wilmington is evacuated by the enemy[3] and all the North Carolina Militia and State troops are soon expected here, when they may expect to be driven out of every hiding place from one end of the state to the other.

Inform them also that I wish to show them mercy, but if they continue obstinate after all these favorable overtures they may expect to suffer all the miseries that war can inflict. These people will have it in their power to be so troublesome to us, that it is worth while to take some pains to draw them off from the enemies' interest. I perfectly agree with you that a party moving down before the Army will have a good effect and I propose to go down with a party with a view of reconnoitering the Country. How many Cavalry could you furnish me for the purpose with out exposing yourself? Please to inform me as soon as possible.

Count Rochambeau is posted in Virginia for the winter.[4] These are facts if you impress properly upon the enemy will have a good effect.

I am dear Sir
Your Most Obedt. humble serv
N [Nathanael] Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Buckhead Hill, overlooking McCord's Ferry on Congaree River, was the site of Fort Motte.
2. After the victory at Yorktown, Washington had ordered Gen. St. Clair to march south and join Greene. He wouldn't arrive, however, until January 4, 1782.
3. The British under Maj. James Craig evacuated Wilmington, North Carolina on November 18.
4. Rochambeau would remain in Virginia until January 1783.

1781-11-27 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 27th Novr 1781

Dr Sir

I am hon'd with yr letter of the 25th Inst.—

Agreable to yr desire will endeavour by every possible means to induce the Tories to withdraw from the British — I Cant easily determine what number of men Might be detached from this post without Risque. I have about three hundred & twenty effective men exclusive of offcrs. Two-hundred & twenty of which are State troops — half of them Cavalry — Upwards of one hundred & fifty Militia has deserted lately. I have to forage at fifteen miles distance, So that large parties are obliged to go upon that Service, but if the horse is detached less forage will Serve. I have no doubt but the Whole of the Cavalry, which is one hundred & ten, might be withdrawn, or Detach'd from this post for Some days without danger, or any other damage being Suffered by it, than the want of forage[1] —

I am Sir
Yr Most Obt Hble. Servt
Thos. Sumter

Maj. Genl. Greene

[Outside] The Honble Majr Genl Greene Comr in Chief Southern Army
Per Express
[*The page also contains notes added at a later date by an unknown person*.]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. A reply from Greene the next day confirms that the cavalry was detached under Col. Wade Hampton.

1781-11-28 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Mr. [William] Heatly's plantation[1] November 28th, 1781

Dear Sir

Your favor of yesterday was delivered me at this place last evening. Col. [Wade] Hampton left me yesterday in the afternoon to go to Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] to take command of such of the Cavalry as you found convenient to detach. If the difficulty of foraging is as great as you mention and the horse are not necessary for your security from the insults of the Tories, the absence of the Cavalry will as you say be rather a relief to you.

Don't spare any pains to take off the Tories from the british interest; for tho we have great reason to hate them, and vengeance would dictate one universal slaughter, yet when we consider how many of our good people must fall a sacrifice in doing it we shall find it will be more for our interest to forgive than to prosecute.

This was always my opinion and if the war continues in this Country, unless we can detach those people from the british interest, we shall feel more inconvenience from them than from all the british army: Indeed we do now. Besides the benefit which will result from a principle of policy, I think the measure more consistent with the principles and feelings of human nature, and the practice of civilization. But if I did not think the peace and safety of the Country depends upon the business, I would not urge the other too to the prejudice of our political establishment.

These parties of Tories that went up the other day from Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] are doing great mischief upon the Saluda, and in the neighborhood of Ninety Six. General [Andrew] Pickens is in pursuit of them.[2] We are on our March for four holes.

I am dear Sir
Your most obed huml servtt.
N. [Nathanael] Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
public
The Honble Brigr. Genl. Sumter

Nath Greene Orangeburgh [Orangeburg]
Hetly's Plantation November 28 81 N.G.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Heatly's plantation was on Four Hole Swamp.
2. Greene was referring to a raiding party led by Maj. William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham, which would range as far north as present-day Union County, South Carolina.

1781-11-30 – Thomas Sumter to Otho Holland Williams

Orangeburgh 30th Novr. 1781

Sir

I have yours of this date —I am sorry for the detention of the army,[1] and wish it was in my power to obviate the inconvenience complained of, but I cannot do it without injury to the Troops I command. I have but fifteen waggons for the Accomadating Nine Regemts., and for other purposes, for which three teams are made up with horses belonging to the Soldiers.

If I had known, or coud have conceived that the army was to be Supplied with waggons by me, I woud have been better provided — however, I will have inquiry made if none in the neighborhood can be fitted up, and if possible, will Spare you Some — of which you shall be informed this evening or early tomorrow morning.

I am Sir
Yr Most obedt. Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

[*The following note was written by Williams*]

I applied in person and procured, by fair means, what I wanted. The more consequence you impute to some men the more they will exert themselves to serve you.

Col. Williams

[*Page also contains notes at a later date by an unknown person.*]

[Outside]
Col. O.H. Williams Commanding the army Col. [Christopher] Rowes

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania]

1. Col. Otho Holland Williams had complained that a lack of wagons and teams forced him to halt south of Orangeburg.

1781-11-30 – Otho Holland Williams to Thomas Sumter

30th Novr. 81

Sir

For want of Waggons and teams to transport provisions we are obliged to halt the army to day. The same reason may exist tomorrow, but must not operate; I propose to march early in the morning, but without a prospect of carrying provisions with us, or of receiving it in time, unless you can lend half a dozen Waggons to the Comy. [Commissary] to be return'd as soon as others can be procured.[1]

I am Sir,
Yr. most Obt. Hble Serv.
O.H. Williams

Gl. Sumter

[Outside]
To
B. Gl. Sumter

30th Novemr. 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Pennsylvania Historical Society] At Colo. [Christopher] Rowes[2]

1. Sumter replied the same day that he was short of wagons himself, but would attempt to spare some.
2. Col. Rowe's plantation was south of Orangeburg, South Carolina.

1781-12-02 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Camp near Dorchester[1]
Decem 2d 1781

Dear Sir

I find the difficulty of subsisting the Army upon the four holes [Four Hole Swamp] will be so great that I have concluded for it to take post at the round O,[2] and for you to occupy the post of Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] and four holes bridge;[3] and as forage is scarce at the four holes you will send nothing but dismounted Infantry there, and you must subsist them from above. As the Army will be in the neighborhood of four holes and not a very great distance from Orangeburgh [Orangeburg], and as the greater part of the Tories are now pent up in Charles town [Charleston] and will be kept pretty close there by the flying party which I mean to form for the covering of this Country, you will not have occasion but for part of your Cavalry; therefore I wish you to form a detachment of about fifty of the best to be commanded by Colonel [Wade] Hampton. And I think you had better dismount a great part of your infantry and send their horses away. As the enemy have no longer the command of the Country it is our interest to change the plan of the war and, as subsisting a great body of horse is expensive as well as distressing, the sooner they can be lessened the better — if it can be done consistent with the general security of the Country. The present disposition I am making I expect will be of no long standing, but the nigher we get to Charles town the less number of horse will be wanted.

Should you find a difficulty of subsisting the detachment at four holes I imagine we shall have it in our power to assist you from the round O. — Continue to invite Tories to surrender as they will be troublesome in our rear.

Col. Hampton made a charge upon a party of the Tories in Dorchester which drew out the British horse. They were driven in with such precipitation as produced an evacuation of the place that night. We kiled and wounded and took prisoners about twenty or thirty in the different skirmishes and all their horse had a narrow escape. The british Army are very respectful.

I am dear Sir
Your most Obedt. humble servt.
N Greene

General Sumter

[*The outside of the letter has notes made at a later date by an unknown person.*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Greene's forces had occupied the British fort at Dorchester after it was abandoned by the British the day before. This followed a skirmish with a detachment commanded by Col. Wade Hampton. Greene describes this on page 3.
2. Greene's Round O camp was near present-day Walterboro, South Carolina.
3. Four Holes Bridge crossed Four Hole Swamp 35 miles southeast of Orangeburg and 15 miles northwest of Dorchester, South Carolina.

1781-12-04 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Decr. 4, 1781

Dr Sir

I request, if you have not forwarded to Genl. [John] Barnwell,[1] the Packet which Genl. [Francis] Marion writes to me, that he sent to you, in order to be forwarded, that you will be pleased to send it immediately on Receipt hereof, to him, by a trusty Express —

It contains Writs of Election for the Southward Parishes,[2] & their reaching the returning Officers speedily, is a Matter of Importance. I therefore repeat my request, that you immediately forward 'em, if they are not already sent, wch, however, I hope they are.[3]

I am, with great Regard Dr. Sir,
Yr. very hble. Serv.
J. Rutledge [John Rutledge, Governor of South Carolina]

Gen. Sumter

[Outside]
The Honble Brigr. Genl. Sumter
at Orangeburgh [Orangeburg]
at Mr. Villepontoux

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Barnwell was commander of the SC 4th Brigade.
2. A writ of election is a formal order to hold an election. Elections preceded the reconvening of the state legislature on January 8, 1782, at Jacksonboro, South Carolina. The legislature had not met since the British captured Charleston in May 1780.
3. It is not known if Sumter complied with this request.

1781-12-05 – Otho Holland Williams to Thomas Sumter

Rumps [Rumph] Plantation[1] 5th Decr. 1781

Sir

Capt. [Ebenezer] Finley who was detached to North Carolina with apiece of Artillery is returned to Congaree [River] & there waits for orders. I have inclosed a note to him, and will be much obliged to you Sir to send it with a Small Detachmt. to escort him to Fergusons Mill.[2] Genl. [Nathanael] Greene informs that you will order a Detachment of your Troops to occupy the Post at four hole Bridge and I have orderd Capt. [Robert] Kirkwood to remain there till you have him relieved.[3]

I am Sir

Your obed hble servt

O.H. Williams D. A. Gl. [Col. Otho Holland Williams, Deputy Adjutant General]

Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]

To Gl. Sumter 5 Decr. 1781. To Genl. Sumpter 5th Decr. 1781

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Harlan Crow Library]

1. The plantation was in the vicinity of Orangeburg, South Carolina.
2. It is unknown if Sumter complied with this request.
3. Greene had instructed Sumter to occupy Four Hole Bridge 35 miles southeast of Orangeburg in a letter dated December 2. Capt. Kirkwood commanded the remnants of the Delaware Continentals who were attached to the Maryland Continentals.

1781-12-07 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 7th Decemr, 1781

Dr Sir

I Rec'd. yr. favr. of the 2nd- Inst.

It has been hitherto out of my Power to detach a party to the four holes bridge by Reason of my having detached a large party, previous to the Receipt of yr letter, to go in pursuit of [Col. Hezekiah] Williams, who with two hundred men, was in the vicinity of this place[1]—he Separated the 2d Inst. From [Maj. William] Cunningham twenty miles up the [Edisto] River; probably to elude the pursuit of Genl. [Andrew] Pickens — As Soon as this party Returns, which I hourly expect, yr orders Shall be complied with — eight or ten families came in yesterday, and are going to settle at their former habitations.[2] I am just informed that a Number have lately moved & settled, or Rather taken post wesward of the So. Fork of the edisto [River], but I expect they will Soon find themselves insecure there, and will come in or pass the River Savanah [Savannah], which has been done by Several of late —

I have the Honour to be Dr Sir

Yr Most Obedt Hble Servt

Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene —

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Morristown, NJ, National Historic Park]

1. Col. Hezekiah Williams and Maj. William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham had embarked on a series of raids against patriots in western South Carolina, known as the "Bloody Scout," that would last until the end of the year.
2. Sumter had been encouraging Loyalists in the area to surrender and return home. Gen. Nathanael Greene had approved the policy, stating in a November 28 letter, "… we shall find it more for our interest to forgive than to persecute."

1781-12-09 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburg [Orangeburg] 9th December 1781

Dr Sir

I wrote you yesterday by Capt. Backer [Baker?] that in consequence of [Maj. William] Cunningham & [Col. Hezekiah] Williams with their Respective Commands having been for some days past near this place, I had not detached any party to four holes Bridge,[1] but as Majrs. [Francis] Moore & Blewford [William Buford] have Returned with their Commds., I Shall immediately prepare a detachmt. for that Service —

Unluckily Williams has escaped. Notwithstanding he has been Chaised Six days by the above mentioned Commands in conjunction with a large Command from Genl. [Andrew] Pickens Brigade.[2] These parties was often Close at his heals, but allways prevented Geting up with him by the Swamps —

Nothing of Consequence has been done except Alarming the outlying Tories, who are much terified by So many parties being out, which has induced them to Resorte in Considerable Numbers this two days past to this place for Security. I have Sent a Considerable Number to their former habitations, that is, Such as Donte belong to my Brigade, but from the Temper of the people and the Countenance they have from their offrs, I fear many of them will be privately Injured —

Capt. [Ebenezer] Finley[3] has just arived at the place with his piece of Artillery —

Some waggons with Cloathing Come by. I thought them in danger, and Sent an escort with them until they was out of it — I herewith Send two packets which just come to hand —

I am Dr Sir
Your most obdt Hble Servt
Thos Sumter
In haste

Majr. Genl. Greene —

[Outside]
Public
The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene
Commang the
Southern Army
Express

[*Also has notes made at a later date by an unknown person*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Greene had instructed Sumter to occupy the post at Four Holes Bridge in a letter dated December 2.
2. Cunningham and Williams both eluded capture and eventually returned to the safety of Charleston.
3. Capt. Finley belonged to the Maryland Continental Artillery.

1781-12-11 – William Ballantine & John Robinson to Thomas Sumter

To the Honble General Sumpter &C &C

The proposal of Collonel [William] Ballantine of the 2d Regmt. Of Royal Militia and Major Jno. [John] Robinson of Do. [ditto] Militia.[1]

That if they may be restored to their Former Rights & Privileges their private Property restored taken for Private Use and free and full Pardon given & granted for all former crimes (Murder Excepted) they are Willing to Return and as Many as can Serve (Offcrs Excepted) are willing & ready to do it in their due course and to behave in all respects as becometh them in their several stations and Functions, a Distinct & full answer given to this proposal clear and free of all ambiguous Terms and a Pass given for Mrs. [blank space] to Travel to and from Charlestown [Charleston] being given to the Bearers will (if agreeable) ansr. the Ends proposed[2] _____

Given at Charlestown Dec. the 11th 1781 -

[Outside]
Honourable Generl. Sumpter

[*Notes also added at a later date by unknown person*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Capt. Ballentine (or Ballantine) commanded the Camden District 2nd Regiment.
2. This request was forwarded to Gen. Nathanael Greene. In a reply dated December 20, Greene declared their request for amnesty to be "of a civil nature" and "not in the power of any military to grant…."

1781-12-12 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

[Portions of the original document are missing. [Segments bracketed in bold below are from the Draper transcription.]

[Head Quarters Round O[1]] Decem 12th 1781

Dear Sir

Your favors of the 7th & 9th I have received. I am sorry Mr. [Col. Hezekiah] Williams got off, but I think he has been so hunted that he will not hazard another manoeuver in your neighbourhood.[2] The post you hold and that of the four holes are exceeding distressing to the Tories and must soon break up their whole nest.

Go on with the good work of trying to bring them in, it will save the lives of so many people, and perhaps hereafter they may prove good citizens. Colonel Hamptons [Wade Hampton's] command is returned; but if you have not occasion for all your horse, part of them I wish might be detached for the support of the State of Georgia, as the enemy have lately sent a detachment to Savannah; and if you send a party I wish Hampton to command [**as I have the highest** opinion of his spirit and good conduct. [Send?] them to Genl. [John] Twiggs.

Do you intend to get into the General Assembly, and have the approbation of the house upon the measures taken to raise State Troops?[3] Nothing like the time present when gratitude is warm and danger not past, to get business of the sort approved?

What think you of besieging Charlestown [Charleston]? Can it be reduced without a superior ordnance, or naval cooperation? Please to give me your opinion and keep the matter to yourself. It is evident they are preparing for a siege in Charlestown [Charleston], without the least prospect of acting offensively. They have killed a great number of their horses lately.[4]

Have you dismounted your Infantry? [**It will save a great deal of**] expense, and that [**is a great**] object in our poor condition of [**subsistence**] should we move nearer [**the**] enemy as I expect soon to do, I shall want you to join us. General [Arthur] St Clair with the Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania troops are near at hand.[5] When they arrive we shall be very strong.

I am dear Sir
Your Most Obedt humble Sert
Nath Greene

General Sumter

[Outside]
Public
The Honble Brigadier Genl. Sumter pr Express Orangeburg

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress.]

1. Gen. Nathanael Greene's Round O camp was near present-day Walterboro, South Carolina.
2. Sumter's letter of the 9th had mentioned the failure to capture Col. Williams, who was conducting raids in the vicinity of Orangeburg.
3. Sumter responded that it was "probable I may serve if elected" in a reply dated December 22. Sumter was indeed elected as a state senator from the Camden District in January 1782.
4. Greene had just received a letter from Lt. Col. Henry Lee stating that the British had "killed two hundred of their horses to save forage."
5. Gen. St. Clair's forces would not arrive until January 4, 1782.

1781-12-13 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 13th Decemr 1781

Dr Sir

I have Detached a party of Sixty men under the commd of Capt. [Francis] Moore to take post at the four hole bridge[1] --- Another detachment was also Sent out to join Col. [Wade] Hampton — out of the whole he was to have picked fifty to Remain with him agreeable to yr directions,[2] Since which Capt. [Jacob] Burnett with the former detachment has Returned, by whom I Received a Note from Col. Hampton informing me that he Should be up in a few days, which induces me to think that it is not yr design that the detachmt of fifty Cavalry as heretofor ordered Should march untill further directions are given –

However if I don't hear from you in two or three days time, I Shall Send that detachmt on to Head Quarters — agreeable to yr Recommendation I am about Reducing the three state Regemts to two, one of Cavalry & one of Infantry.[3] it is not easie to Reconcile the Troops to this Measure, and the undertaking more disagreeable by Reason of their being so much Neglected by the publick ---

About forty tories has surrendered within this four days & I expect several in to day and on Saturday — I have no Certain accounts where [Col. Hezekiah] Williams is — the most probable are that he is high up in the South fork of the Edistoe [Edisto River][4] — I am very Scarce of Ammunition and Shall be in great want in a few days to supply the Second division of Militia, which are now Coming out —

If I knowd where to apply, I would Send for Some in time —

I have the Honour to be Dr Sir
Yr Most obedt. Hbl. Servt
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl Greene
[*Page 2 is overwritten with notes later written by an unknown person.*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The bridge was 35 miles southeast of Orangeburg, South Carolina.
2. Greene had requested on December 12 that part of Wade Hampton's cavalry be made available to support Gen. John Twiggs in Georgia.
3. Sumter had been instructed in Greene's letter of December 2 to "dismount the great part of your infantry and send the horses away."
4. Col. Williams and Maj. William "Bloody Bill" Cunningham had embarked on a series of raids against patriots in western South Carolina that would last until the end of the year.

1781-12-15 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters[1] Decem 15th 1781

Dear Sir

I have just received your letter of the 13th. — I was persuaded you would meet with difficulty in reducing your battalions and in dismounting them; but the good of the service requires you should persevere in both. It is true the public have neglected them; but what have they had it in their power to do?[2]

Poverty and want stares us in the face on every side. But never mind little difficulties; we have gone through greater, and I persuade my self we shall triumph at last, and your Country, if they have any justice and gratitude, will not fail to bless and reward you for your exertions made in the darkest hours they ever felt. I shall always bear testimony to your services and don't fail to tell the people how much you did when many others hid their heads.

When I wrote you to detach Col [Wade] Hampton I forgot your elections were coming on. I wish you therefore to send another officer if the Colonel has in contemplation getting into the Assembly, which I think he ought.[3]

We have not a bit of ammunition here.[4] Some is expected; and as it passes Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] you will apply and get a small supply. Proceed on the business of bringing in the Tories. I am not without hopes of seducing them from another quarter.

I am dear sir
Your Most Obedt humble Ser
N Greene

Let such of the Cavalry as you can spare be sent to Georgia immediately and give the Officer pointed Orders not to plunder.

[Outside]
General Greene would be glad if you would send the letters for the Governor and Council on to him immediately.
Public
Brigadier General Sumter
Orangeburgh
Nath Greene December 15th 1781 NG

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. At Round O near present-day Walterboro, South Carolina.
2. Sumter had complained in his letter of the 13th that it was "not easy to reconcile the troops" to giving up their horses and it was exacerbated "by reason of their being so much neglected by the public."
3. Wade Hampton did indeed serve in the South Carolina House when it reconvened on January 8, 1782. He was elected as a representative from Orangeburg District.
4. Sumter reported a lack of ammunition in his letter of December 13.

1781-12-19 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 19th Decemr 1781

Dr Sir

I have been honoured with yours of the 12th & 15th, Since which I have been, and am Still So much engaged as not to be able to Answer them fully, but Shall I expect in Two or three days, as I have just Completed the Arrangements of the two Regemts of State Troops,[1] Maj [Francis] Moore with upwards of one hundred Cavalry Rank & file, which are well appointed, are this Instant going to March[2] —

Upwards of two hundred men have Surrendered, and about fifty has been made prisoners, there is Still a great many lying out, before I detach any more Infantry to the four holes [Four Holes Swamp], I think it Necessary to make an incursion over & up the South fork of the Edisto [River]—upon which I mean to Set out this evening or tomorrow morning. At my Return I Shall be able to give you the State of things in this Quarter —

Several have Surrendered themselves Since the Govrs. proclamn expired,[3] I Shall Continue to Receive them and prevent their doing Mischief or from Going off until further orders. The Number and Retchedness of the Women & Children Can't be Conceived. Utterly out of the power of Many to Move or Subsist Much longer where they are — We are extremely in want of Salt, have applied to the Govr Without Success,—

I have the Honour to be Dr Sir
Yr Most obedt. Hl. Servt.
Thos Sumter

Majr. Genl. Greene

NB

I have here with Sent a Brigade Return I don't think it all together perfect.[4] Will have one accurately Made & Given in as Soon as possible —

T.S.

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Three regiments were being combined into two regiments.
2. Greene had asked Sumter to release a portion of his cavalry to support Gen. John Twiggs in Georgia.
3. Gov. John Rutledge's September 27 proclamation had offered amnesty to Loyalists who surrendered and accepted a six-month term of service in the militia. Their families would be allowed to return to their property.
4. This item has not been found.

1781-12-22 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —1

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 22d Decr, 1781

Dr Sir

In consequence of your Recommendation, I have reduced the Three State Troop Regements to two, Vizt —

The 1st Cavalry Commanded by Lieut. Col. Wade Hampton consisting of four Troops in the whole 128 Rank & file — compleatly Officer'd.—

2d Infantry- Commanded by Lieut. Col. Charles Myddelton consisting of four Companys Compleatly Officer'd: cannot ascertain the particular Numbers at this Juncture, their being at present many out upon Furlow by Colo. Hampton who has them engaged for his new raised Corps. – others on various Detached service.

The whole of the Cavalry (saving a few with Col. Hampton) are march'd under the Command of Major [Francis] Moore to Join Genl. [John] Twiggs in Georgia.[1] —

Ninety of the Infantry are Detach'd to four Hole Bridge & Occupy that post.[2] Nothing Material has happen'd Recently, but the Return of [William] Cunningham, [Hezekiah] Williams, Chene [Bailey Cheney] & [James] Lawrence, the former of whom I'm informed past downwards a few days ago.—the latters are still lurking about the Neighborhood of this place with large parties; some considerable Robberies were committed within ten miles of this, by those Insurgents a few Days ago.—

In consequence of the above Depredations & some threats used by those parties, I'm induced to continue some Infantry mounted a while longer. so soon as I can get those posts entirely dispersed, shall dismount the whole of Infantry, & send off the horses. — Upwards of three Hundred of the out lying enemy have come in since my Arrival at this post & are disposed of accordingly, notwithstanding the time is expired, limited by the Proclamation,[3] for the reception of Persons therein described, they still continue to come in.

I receive them with these assurances: that shou'd they be excepted to hereafter, they are to be sett at large. The Principle upon which I act on this occasion, is this —It's drawing them from the British Interest, as also weakening the out lying Tories. — In consequence of Cunninghams passing through this Neighborhood, upwards of twenty of of these latterly Received, have withdrawn themselves, & keep entirely out of our way, whether gone down with him, or sculking in the Swamp, I cannot pretend to say.—

By the Return of a Command sent out this morning, I'm in hopes to be able to ascertain particulars relative to those last mentioned Elopers.

I am Dr- Sir with great Respect
Yr Most obedt. Hbl. Servt
Thos. Sumter

Major General Greene

[*Also includes notes written at a later date by unknown person.*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Greene had asked Sumter to send cavalry to Gen. Twiggs in a letter dated December 12.
2. In a letter dated December 2, Greene had requested that the outpost at Four Holes Bridge be secured by a detachment of unmounted infantry.
3. Sumter was referring to the September 27, 1781 proclamation by Gov. John Rutledge which granted amnesty to Loyalists under certain conditions. The offer expired in thirty days, but Sumter had continued to allow Loyalists to surrender and return to their homes.

1781-12-22 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene —2

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 22d- Decemr- 1781

Dr- Sir

I Received yours of the 12th & 15th Inst-- parts of Which is answered by letter of this date —

In the former of these You asked if I did not intend to get into the General Assembly, it is probable I may Serve if elected,[1] but as I never have Solicited any public appointment I Cant think of doing it now, notwithstanding I have the Matter you have Mentioned very much at heart, but if Men are lost or Callous, to every Sentiment of Gratitude & Justice, my Weak Reasonings although found'd in the Strictest equity will not prevail, however I Shall be prepared to Make a True & fair Representation of Matters to the house, perhaps the Result may prove favourable, I have Nothing to urge upon my own account more than to enable me to Comply with the promises Made to the Troops — if they are paid & I am Sensured, My expectations will not be disappointed —

With Respect to Reducing and Dismounting the battalions of State Troops, it is by No means the trouble or difficulty that may attend the undertaking that is Reguarded, but the equity and pollicy of the Measure, it is however fully Complied with — but at the Same time not without Reluctance, and I am extremely Sorry I Cant with propriety or effect urge the Reasons you Gave for it —

I woud most cheerfully adopt Such Measures as would tend to lessen the public expence and encourage and force others to Submit whenever it May be attempted upon Sound principles. I therefore beg leave to observe that the State Troops was Raised as light dragoons, of Course Mounted, and Shoud have been equiped as Such, but has been hitherto totally neglected by the public, which has never the less been Submitted to without much murmuring — but when they See themselves dismounted, Notwithstanding they was promised the use of their own or public horses, and at the Same Time Chief of the Militia upon Service in the State, My Brigade excepted, Suffered to do duty as horse or Mounted infantry, Gives Great cause to think, to Spare the the public expence is Not the Reason for their being dismounted[2] —

The Militia of my Brigade also think themselves Much injured by being obliged to perform a two months & ten days tour of duty on foot, Not even Suffered to Ride from home & Send their horses back, when at the Same time they are told that Gov. [John] Rutledge Suffers other divisions of the Militia to do duty as horse or Mounted Infantry & Remain but one Month in the field before Relieved,

If this be the Case, they Certainly Complain with propriety — and Such partiallities Cant fail to prejudice the Service exceedingly, and I find has been the Cause of desertion having been So prevailent —

It is with Regret I have to acknowledge that the public is poor but nevertheless is very liberal, if not profuse, upon many occasions, upon the whole it is evident that the Brigades I Comm. has been Neglected with design & not through inability, and has been ludicrously treated insomuch that he who would any longer submit to it Might Justly be Charged with Meanness & pusillanimity, in consequence of Which I have wrote his excellency Gov. Rutledge who I hope will take Measures to prevent any further Complaints —

With Respect to the Practicability of Reducing the Garrison of Charles Town [Charleston] without having Superior ordnance or a Naval force is a matter I donte think my Judgement Competent to, as I know but little of either the the Number of men or artillery that you can employ upon that occasion.[3] Cant therefore throw any lyght upon the Measure, however if you have men enough and all the Munitions Necessary for the Sege, except heavy

1. Sumter did serve in the legislature, which met on January 8, 1782. He represented the Camden District in the Senate.
2. In a December 2 letter, Greene had instructed Sumter to "dismount a great part of your infantry and send the horses away."
3. Greene had asked Sumter in his December 12 letter if he thought Charleston could be "reduced without a superior ordnance, or naval cooperation."

Artillery and a Naval force, I think the place may be taken, if not prevented Carrying on your approaches by the Waters filling the Trenches, the exterior works of the enemy, I mean at the Quarter house[4] I think may be easily taken if not very Seriously flanked by their Shiping- the possession of the [Charleston] Neck is Certainly of Great importance to the beseiged, I am therefore inclined to think they will endeavour to hold it, which will prove their Ruin if you Can turn their flanks which May easily be done, as I before observed, if not Secoured by Shipping — Your Notice and Generous acknowledgement of my having done anything advantageous to the public Confers the Greatest obligations upon me — at the Same time I am perfectly persuaded my Country had a Right to expect Whatever I may have attempted in her favour —

I have the honour to be Dr Sir
With the Greatest Respect
Your Most Obedt Hble Servt
Thos Sumter

Majr Genl Greene

[Outside]
Public The Honble Majr. Genl. Greene Commanding the Southern Army
Pr Express

[*The page also has notes added at a later date by an unknown person.*]

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

4. The Quarter House was a tavern about seven miles north of the city.

1781-12-24 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Dec. 24. 1781

Dr Sir

I request that you will procure an authentick & exact List to be taken, & returned to me, as soon as possible[1] (by the time the [General] Assembly will meet, if you can) of all the Houses which have been burnt, & all the Men who have been hanged, by the Enemy, within the district of your Brigade, distinguishing by whom, respectively, those acts have been committed.

I am, dr. sir,
Yr. very hble. serv.
J. [John] Rutledge

Gen. Sumpter

[Outside]
To
The Honble Brigr. Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's reply, if any, has not been found.

1781-12-25 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

Dec. 25. 1781

Dr Sir

I have recd your Letter of the 22nd Instant, by the Bearer.[1]

I think it would be best to send the Horses you mention to the Rice Country, to be fatten'd, & when they are in good order they may be disposed of (if not wanted for publick use) to much greater Advantage than in their present Condition —&, if wanted for publick service, they will be fit for it —

With respect to the twenty odd Negroes ment'd in your Letter of the 4th Instant,[2] they shd. be kept in Charge of some person, of honest Character, who will use 'em well, take the best Care, in his power, that they do not escape to the Enemy, & be responsible for them, (barring unavoidable accidents), when called upon by the Publick or proper Authority.

The Man who brought that Letter was directed to call for an Answer as he returned from your House,[3] to which he said he was going, & promised to do so in a day or two after, but never did, otherwise an Answer would have been sent by him —

I don't observe any other Matter in your Letter, which there was occasion for me to give any Directions about, & on which I did not — as to the Families mentioned in your Letter of the 22nd Instant, I do not see any Objections to their returning to their former places of Residence, & remaining in the Country. However, I will give no Promise of Government for their being suffer'd to remain, as the Legislature are to [meet?] soon, & the Case of such People will probably be a Subject of Deliberation.[4]

I do not understand the Passage of your Letter which says, "The State Brigade is too little the Object of public Attention, &, in various Cases" "ludicrously treated" — I am not conscious, of having treated any Man, or Body of Men, ludicrously, nor, do I know what Attention Government could, & should have paid, which it has not, to that Brigade — My orders to all the Brigadiers of Militia, with respect to the Tours of duty, are in the same Terms, nor do I know of any other difference in the Mode of your Brigade's, & any other's, doing Duty, except that my Instructions which at General Green's [Nathanael Greene] particular Recommendation, directed the Several Draughts to come on Foot, instead of coming on Horseback to Camp, was alter'd by General Green's Recommendation, as to Genl. [Francis] Marion's Brigade.[5]

We have no late or material News from the Northward.

I am, sir,
Yr. most obedt. servt.
J. Rutledge [John Rutledge, Governor of South Carolina]

Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter of December 22 has not been found.
2. Sumter's letter of December 4 has not been found.
3. Sumter's house was on the north side of Santee River across from Eutaw Springs.
4. Sumter had been allowing Loyalists to return to their homes past the 30-day expiration date of Rutledge's September 27 proclamation of amnesty.
5. In his December 22 letter to Rutledge, Sumter appears to have echoed the complaints he had lodged with Gen. Nathanael Greene on the same date. He stated this his troops were "totally neglected by the public" and that they believed Rutledge "suffers other divisions of the militia to duty as horse or mounted infantry & remain but one month in the field before relieved…."

1781-12-27 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan] [Right edge of letter is missing. Words in brackets are from the Nathanael Greene Papers transcriptions.]

Round O Decemr 27 [1781]

Dear Sir

I do not know of any partia[lity] respecting the Militia, nor did I give any o[rders] in the matter; but General [Francis] Marion being ne[ar] the enemies lines I suppose led to the indu[lgence] if any was granted.[1]

You know the nature of service must always govern the mode of equi[pp]ing troops. At the time you raised your State Troops, the circumstances of this country was widely different from what it is at present; and to have more Men Mounted than is essential to service, is distressing both to the inhabitants and the rest of the Cavalry, independent of the expence.

It is for these reasons that I wished your Moun[ted] infantry to be dismounted; and besides which you can dicipline them much better on foot [than] horse back. I should be glad to know whether [the Tories join you in duty or whether they deliver up their Arms and go home.] [*Line is illegible — taken from* Greene Papers *transcription.*] It is something of a doubt with me, wh[ether] they are to be so depended on as to be trusted with [arms] and whether Government would not be more [be]nefitted from their neutrality than their ser[vice.][2] I beg your Opinion on this matter, being [fully] persuaded no Man can judge of the matter as we[ll] as you can.

Let me beg of you not to suffer any little incidents or even neglects or partialities, whether real or imaginary, to divert you from the same line of conduct you have been pursuing. You remark justly your Country has a claim to your best services and tho an individual may neglect you, that cannot cancel the obligation. But I cannot persuade my self that the Governor would willingly injure your feelings nor do I believe ultimately your Country will be ungrateful.[3]

I expect we may have much to do this Winter, for by good inteligence I learn near three thousand Men are expected from Ireland and almost two from New York; and it is confidently affirmed they were within three days [sail of] Charles Town [Charleston] on the 24th. Should it be [true], and I much fear it is, we shall have much [to] do and little to do it with.[4]

I entirely approve of your plan of receiving the Tories.[5] I think it perfectly consistent with humanity and sound policy. Give your Officer commanding [at four] hole bridge strict orders that if any party [of] the Enemy should attempt to pass there, to take up the bridge and defend it to the last, as that pass is very important to our communication. Desire Col. [Wade] Hampton to move the Dragoons from Mr la Counts there being no more [forage in] that quarter than will be wanted for the post at Camden.

N Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. Sumter had stated in a December 22 letter that his men were unhappy about having to give up their horses and they were also believing reports that other units had shorter service obligations.
2. Gov. Rutledge's proclamation of September 27, 1781 had offered amnesty to Loyalists in exchange for a six-month term of service in the state militia.
3. Sumter had complained in his second letter of December 22 that his troops had been "ludicrously treated" and that he had written to Governor Rutledge in hopes that he would "take measures to prevent any further complaints."
4. The British reinforcement which arrived in Charleston was actually closer to 550 men.
5. Greene is referring to Sumter's first letter of December 22.

1781-12-31 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head Quarters 1781 at the round O December 31st

Dear Sir

I am happy to inform you that the reinforcement expected from Cork turns out to be only sixty artillery men; and all the reinforcement the Enemy expect is three regiments from New York.[1]

When I last wrote you I was so strongly impressed with the reinforcements being very formidable that were coming, that I thought proper to Detain the governor's proclamation for the [General] Assembly's setting at Jacksonborough [Jacksonboro], until I was more fully informed of the matter.

But as I find the reinforcement much less than I expected, I have sent out the the proclamation for the assembly to meet agreeable to the Governor[']s first order;[2] and if you had detained any of them in consequence of my letter, I beg you to have them forwarded without loss of time.

I am with great esteem dear Sir
Your most obdt humble ser.
N Greene

Genl Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. In his letter of the 27th, Greene had warned Sumter that "good intelligence" indicated that thousands of reinforcements were headed toward Charleston from Ireland and New York.
2. The legislature did convene in Jacksonboro on January 8.

1781-12-31 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

[Round O?[1]]
Decr. 31. 1781

Dr. Sir

If you can spare two or three Waggons, or have as many procured, in the Neighbourhood of Orangeburgh [Orangeburg], I will be much obliged to you, for sending 'em with the Bearer to my Plantation on Edisto River,[2] to assist in the Removal of my Negroes from thence.

I am, Sir,
Yr. most obedt. servt.
J. Rutledge [John Rutledge, Governor of South Carolina]

Genl. Sumpter

[Outside]
To
The Honble Brigr. Genl. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. In late December 1781, John Rutledge traveled, often under the protection of Gen. Greene toward Jacksonborough. After Eutaw Springs, Greene was encamped at Round O.
2. Rutledge owned land on Penn Branch and the Edisto River below Orangeburg. The grant is dated August 28, 1767.

1782 /1783

As 1782 began, Sumter's focus shifted from military service to his upcoming term in the state Assembly. The final letter that we have from Sumter to Nathanael Greene is dated January 4, 1782. He requests to be excused to attend the Assembly and cryptically adds, "I hope to be indulged and Beg Not to be honour[ed] again with any of your Commands untill a proper inquiry Can be Made whether I am worth of them."[1] It indicates a concern that the Assembly might find fault with his policy of using captured enslaved people as a method of paying soldiers. Greene was aware of this pending issue and had broached the topic of "approbation of the house upon the measures taken to raise state troops" in a letter to Sumter dated December 12, 1781.[2]

The state Assembly convened on January 8, 1782, in Jacksonboro, a village about thirty miles from Charleston. Sumter's fellow military commanders filled several of the seats in the House and Senate, including Francis Marion, Andrew Pickens, Wade Hampton, and William Hill. Any concerns that Sumter may have had over his system of paying soldiers with enslaved people were quickly dispelled in February as the House proposed using enslaved people confiscated from Loyalists as an incentive to recruit Continental soldiers with Sumter responsible for their distribution. Newly elected Governor John Mathews wrote to Sumter on March 4, "Your undertaking to recruit men for our Continental battalions would be rendering your country a most essential service."[3] Mathews also refers to a letter he had just received from Sumter in which the General proposed establishing an armory. Sumter's letter has not been found and it may have been the last one he wrote in his capacity as a military commander. Sumter resigned his commission immediately after the adjournment of the Assembly on February 26. [4]

1. Thomas Sumter to Nathanael Greene, Jan. 4, 1782, MiU-C.
2. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter, Dec. 12, 1781, DLC; Robert D. Bass, *Gamecock: The Life and Campaigns of General Thomas Sumter* (Sandlapper Publishing Co., Inc., 2000) 216.
3. Mathews to Sumter, March 4, 1782, DLC.
4. Bass, *Gamecock*, 217-219; Anne King Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter* (R.L. Bryan and Company, 1931) 195-196;

1782-01-02 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 2d January 1782

Dr Sir

I have Received yours of the 27th & 31st. Ult — but am at present incapable to answer them fully. But with Respect to the Treatment of the Tories, I am of oppinion the Most Eligible Mode will be to let them Retain their arms,[1] whether they do duty or no, and because they are so Very essential to the Support of families and the Tenaciousness of people for that article, and the degradation of parting with them so Great, that I conceive no Measure woud Give Greater Umbrige — but I think there will be found Many advantages to arise from their doing duty, provided they are treated as people in our Service ought to be —

I have upwards of one hundred of these men Who have Surrendered themselves since I Come to this place, who are well equiped, that I Shoud not be in the least apprehensive of their Joining the enemy, provided they was to march through their Settlements, &—for this Reason, in order to Render them the more Conspicuous and obnoxious to the enemy, I appointed offrs of the best characters from among themselves, Keep them detached and frequently upon Command, so that Whatever the enemy Suffers is Charged to them. They have kill and Taken several, Some of which were the Greatest offenders in the State, and of So much Consequence to the enemy, that those who kild and made Prisoners of them will have every thing to apprehend if they fall in their hands —

In order to have the Pass at four hole bridge,[2] and others upon the Water corse well Guarded, I have ordered all the State Infantry there, I think the Militia Sufficient for this post —I have, and Shall in a few days fix them so, as to enable them to do their duty with ease & safety — as the [General] Assembly is to Set Soon,[3] I Beg leave to Quit this place —I am happy to find your information Respecting the enemies having Received large, [illegible] or Rather expecting them, were not facts[4] —

Majr. [John] Jenkins is just Going to Head Quarters, to whom I beg leave to Refer you for farther particulars.

I have the honr to be D. Sir
Yr most Obedt. Hble. Servt.
Thos. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. In his letter of December 27, Greene expressed concerns over Sumter's policy of allowing Tories to keep their weapons after they had requested amnesty.
2. The bridge was 15 miles northwest of Dorchester, South Carolina.
3. The Assembly convened at Jacksonboro, South Carolina on January 8, 1782.
4. Greene warned of a large British reinforcement headed for Charleston in his letter of December 27, 1781, but he retracted it in his letter of December 31.

1782-01-03 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

[Some words in the original document are obscured by a stain. They appear in the Lyman Draper transcription and are indicated in brackets.]

Jany 3d, 1782

Dr Sr

Mr. [Samuel] Mathis, the Quarter Master at Camden, having frequent occasions, to send Expresses, from thence, on Continental. & State account, I request, that you will give the proper order, for exempting, from their Tour of Militia [duty, the] Persons whom he may [fix on] for this Business, & whose names he will send to you –

I am Sir yr
Very hble servt
J. [John] Rutledge

Genl Sumpter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1782-01-04 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Orangeburgh [Orangeburg] 4th Jany 1782

Dr Sir

In Consequence of some Intelligence just recived from Col. [Jonas] Beard, I have Stoped the State Troops Who was just Setting off to the four holes to March up the River by the way of Bull Swamp to the head of the Congaree Creek and as much farther as may be Requisite —

Capt. Rump [Jacob Rumph] has just sent in Some prisoners & informs me he can Venture No farther until Reinforced —

The Troops I have ordered will Clear that Part of the Country and Give peace to the Congaree Settlements and Inable those at Suladia [Saluda River] to defend themselves In futer —

I herewith send a packet which just Came to hand[1] —

In my last I took the liberty to Request permission to with draw from this place upon private Business or Rather to Prepare to Attend the [General] Assembly. I hope to be indulged and Beg Not to be honour[ed] again with any of your Commands untill a proper inquiry Can be Made whether I am worth of them.[2]

I am Dr Sr
Yr Most obedt. Hble. Servt.
Thos. Sumter

Maj. Gen. Greene

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. The Greene papers state that the contents of the packet are unknown. (*The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, Vol X, pg 160).
2. Sumter biographer Anne King Gregorie suggests that Sumter's remark was in anticipation of the legislature investigating and possibly censuring his use of plunder as payment to his troops. (Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, pg. 194).

1782-01-08 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

Head quarters round O January 8th 1781 [1782]

Dear Sir

What you observe respecting the Tories has great weight and I believe you are right in the measure you have adopted. Divide and conquer is a well established maxim and your plan is upon that principle.[1]

I propose soon to draw the force or at least the greater part of it into the lower Country some where near Goose creek. You will appoint an officer there therefore to command in your absence who may hold the troops in readiness to follow such orders as the service may render necessary to give.

I imagine a small part of the Militia must be left at orangburgh [Orangeburg] for some time to come in order to keep down the Tories and preserve order there; but I am in hopes but a small part will be requisite for that service.

I do not comprehend you fully in that part of your letter where you desire not to be honored with any further commands from me until a proper enquiry can be made whether you are deserving of them or not. I have heard no person intimate anything of the kind nor do I believe an enquiry is either wished or desired respecting any part of your conduct.[2] In Military matters none but Military characters are competent judges. If there are any complaints of a civil nature errors in these matters is no absolute disqualification for Military command. I hope and doubt not you will find matters and things more to your mind upon investigation than you seem to apprehend and I hope you will meet in the Senate and [General] Assembly in perfect good humour and that harmony & concord will prevail among you.

You have my full consent to attend the house of Assembly and I beg leave to recommend an early attendance and that you lay your business before the house with as little ceremony as possible as much formality always carries with it an air of design and that something is concealed under the form.

I am with esteem dear Sir
Your Most Obed humble Sr
N Greene

General Sumter

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Clements Library – Univ. of Michigan]

1. In his letter of January 2, Sumter had described his policy of making militia officers out of Tories of "the best character" as a way of dividing and weakening their resistance.
2. Sumter's letter of the 4th requested that Greene refrain from issuing him further commands until a "proper inquiry" had validated his worth as an officer. He was presumably referring to the prospect of his methods being reviewed by the upcoming legislative session.

1782-03-04 – John Mathews to Thomas Sumter

March 4th: 1782

Sir/

I received your favor yesterday afternoon by Express.[1] I had attended to the business mentioned in the first part of your letter, & fixed on the persons to undertake the business, but had no opportunity before to give them the necessary information.

I herewith send you the letters to two of those gentlemen, & request you forward them with dispatch. Their names are William Henderson, Thomas Jones, & William Moore, of Ninety six. I [can not determine about (Draper)] our disposing of the Captured articles on hand until I know what they are. I therefore would be glad you would have a return of them made to me as soon as possible, that the whole of this business might be closed.

The establishing an armory is certainly a very desirable object. I will consider of your proposal, and acquaint you with the result as soon as I can. Your undertaking to recruit men for our Continental battalions would be rendering your country a most essential service. I therefore request that you would proceed on that business with every possible attention and inform Gen. [Isaac] Huger of my desire that you should engage in this important business.

The Commissioners for confiscation[2] are busy in making their arrangements. They wish to get rid of the Negroes as fast as possible, so that there will be no difficulty procuring them as the men are recruited. I think the best plan would be, when twenty men are recruited, have passed muster, & been delivered over to a continental officer, to give them an order on me for a Negro each, & let them come down to receive them under the command of an officer, who is to see the men safe returned to their quarters.[3] If any better should strike you, you'll let me know it.

I am Sir
Yr. Most Obedt. servt.
Jno. [John] Mathews[4]

Thomas Sumpter Esqr.
Orangeburgh [Orangeburg]

Gov. Mathews March 1782

[Transcribed from the original letter at the Library of Congress]

1. Sumter's letter has not been found.
2. The Confiscation Act, passed by the legislature on February 26, 1782, called for the seizure of the real and personal property of more than 200 Loyalists.
3. Early in 1781 Sumter began recruiting men for ten-months terms as state troops by offering a bounty in enslaved persons confiscated from Loyalists. This method was apparently being extended to recruit men into Continental service.
4. Mathews had been elected governor on January 29, replacing John Rutledge.

1782-04-17 – Pay Endorsement by Thomas Sumter (& William Polk)

Apl 17th 1782

These may Certifie that Mr. Isaac Alexander has served five months in my Regt. as Sergt & then was transfered into the Commisaries Department.

N.B. Mr. Alexander was forgit in Wm Polk [Lt. Colo] the Regimental Returns Apl 17th 1782
M.

I do Certify that Mr. Isaac Alexander is Justly Intitled to the full pay of A Sergt. — Thos. Sumter

[Transcribed from the original document at Harvard University]

1783-01-14 – Edward Lynah to Thomas Sumter

Santee, 14th Jany. 1783

Dear Sir

Pardon the freedom by which an exile addresses you, and presuming on our former friendship which I sincerely wish, & hope, still exists, have taken the liberty (in the hour of distress) to entreat your interest at the meeting of the Honorable House of Representatives of this State, being one of those unhappy people on the Confiscation Act.[1]

However, I bear with resignation whatever situation my countrymen are pleased to place me — well knowing their general philanthropy, and your benevolence of heart.

With a contrite heart for my past error, and resolving in my mind the lines of conduct I pursued since that cursed day I went within the sycophant Hecates of Hell's lines, resolved to throw myself on their mercy, hoping when there is a full investigation of my character, I will not appear the person I have been represented; for which purpose my friends have set on foot a Petition, which my son will hand you, with one from the prisoners of war, for your perusal before they are sent into the House.

Your advice & kind assistance on the occasion will confer a lasting obligation on him who begs leave to subscribe himself with real esteem,[2]

Sir, your much distressed friend,

And most obedt. hble. Servt.

Ja. Lynah[3]

To

The Honble. Brigdr. Genl. Sumpter

Chas. Town [Charleston]

favd. Doct. Edwd. Lynah[4]

[Transcription by Lyman Draper. Original letter not found.]

1. On 26 February 1782, the South Carolina legislature passed The Confiscation Act, which seized the real and personal property of over 200 individuals. Special commissioners were appointed to confiscate and sell the affected Loyalist estates.
2. It is unknown if Sumter responded to Lynah.
3. On March 20, 1782 *The Royal Gazette* of Charleston printed "a correct list of those persons whose estates have been confiscated by an act of the Rebel Assembly at Jacksonburgh [Jacksonboro]. They are divided into six classes." "Dr. James Lynah" was in those who "have borne commissions, civil or military, under the British Government, since the conquest of this Province" [by the British in May 1780]. On January 24, 1783 Lynah petitioned Hugh Rutledge, Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives, for relief from confiscation, explaining that although he received a blank commission from the British, he never filled it out, and that the reason he did not take advantage of Gov. John Rutledge's offer of amnesty and remained with the British so long in Charleston was that he was injured in two falls from his horse and was unable to travel or perform service. (https://revwarapps.org/sc3786.pdf) The name of Dr. James Lynah is on a 1788 list of "Persons whose Estates have been released in part to their Wives and family for a provision and Maintainance." His name is also on a list of "Persons who have been specifically restored to their Estates in Kind before sale by the Commissioners." Lynah is said to have served with the Americans early in the war and to have extracted the bullet that fatally wounded Gen. Pulaski. (A.S. Salley, "Dr. James Lynah, a Surgeon of the Revolution," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 40, no. 3 (Jul 1939): 87-90.)
4. Dr. Edward Lynah served in the American cavalry of Col. Daniel Horry. https://revwarapps.org/s18959.pdf.

1783-02-27 – Peter Bounetheau (SC Senate) to Thomas Sumter

In the Senate the 27th February 1783

Resolved,

That the thanks of this House be given to Brigadier General Sumpter, for his eminent and conspicuous services to this country.

By order of the Senate

Tet: [Peter] Bounetheau[1] / C.S.

Personal notification of a resolution passed by the S.C. Senate February 26, 1783: "Resolved, That the thanks of this House be given to Brigadier-Generals Thomas Sumter, Francis Marion, and Andrew Pickens, for their eminent and conspicuous services to this State, and to the cause of America."

1. Peter Bounetheau was the notary public for the state and later became postmaster of Charleston.

1783-02-27 – John Lloyd to Thomas Sumter

Charlestown [Charleston] February 27th. 1783.

Sir,

In obedience to the command of the Senate of the State of South Carolina, I have the honor to transmit you their unanimous thanks for your eminent, and your conspicuous Services to this Country.—

Your merits, Sir, being worthy of the high acknowledgments of so respectable a body, it is with inexpressible pleasure that I convey their thanks to you, and I present them with the sincerest heart-felt satisfaction from having a perfect knowledge, that you most justly deserve the applause of your grateful Countrymen for your great, your glorious, and your distinguished conduct in the hour of their distress and danger, and for your noble exertions in contending for their rights and liberties against a powerful, enraged, and vindictive Enemy.

I have the Honor to be, very respectfully, Sir,
Your most obedient & most humble Servt.
John Lloyd[1]
President of the Senate

Brigadier General Sumpter

[Outside]
Speaker of the
Senate
Feby 27 1783

[Transcribed from the original document at the Library of Congress]

1. John Lloyd (1735–1807) was a Charleston merchant and planter who served as president of the South Carolina Senate from 1783 to 1788.

Conclusion

With military and Assembly duties behind him, Sumter could return to his plantation and begin to rebuild. In spite of heavy losses in enslaved people and cattle, Sumter began to recover quickly as evidenced by his ability to sell beef to the army that fall. He also kept his hand in politics and was reelected to the Assembly in 1782, this time as a member of the House. The British evacuated Charleston on December 14, 1782, allowing the Assembly to convene in that city the following January. That body presented its thanks and gold medals to Sumter along with fellow generals Marion, Pickens, and Huger. In his acknowledgement of the award, Sumter declared it a vindication of "the justness and correctness of my Views, and affords me a pleasure that is difficult to express."[1]

After the war, Sumter continued to divide his time between building his personal wealth and serving in the House — and often managed to overlap those two interests. Delegates from the interior of the state were pressing for a new capital in a more central location. Sumter began developing the village of Stateburg near his plantation as a candidate. He invested in a store and hotel and lobbied for its consideration. But Stateburg lost out to a tract of land across the Congaree River from the site of Fort Granby that would be christened Columbia.[2]

Despite the Stateburg setback, Sumter continued to gain in stature in both politics and business. He continued serving in the South Carolina House until 1789 and was then elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Historian Robert Bass described Sumter's political principles as a member of Congress to be "limitation of federal powers, economy in government, and justice to the claims of veterans and widows of veterans."[3] But Sumter's time in Congress was not without controversy. General Nathanael Greene died of sunstroke in 1786 at the plantation awarded to him by the state of Georgia. His widow applied to the federal government for financial relief from debts that Greene had incurred during the war. In order to supply his troops, Greene had personally endorsed the transaction with John Banks and Company, a firm with an unsavory reputation in the business community. The company went bankrupt after the war, leaving Greene's estate liable for its debts. Sumter opposed using tax dollars to settle the debts, asserting that Greene's deal with Banks was unwise and unnecessary, and that all the state grants awarded to him after the war should have been more than sufficient compensation. Sumter's opposition was also motivated, at least in part, by his anger at comments made by Greene that he learned from a book published after the war.[4] Greene had written to a Col. Reed of Pennsylvania that the men who followed Sumter and Marion were more interested in plunder than fighting for independence. In spite of Sumter's efforts, Congress did approve compensation for the debts.[5]

Sumter served in the U.S. House from 1789 to 1793 and from 1797 to 1801.[6] Another controversy had caused him to lose his seat in the mid-1790s. Congress passed a law that allowed the holders of federal debt certificates from the war to be paid even if they were not the original owners of the instrument. Sumter, along with many other speculators, bought the certificates at a discount from those in need of cash with the confidence they would later sell them at full price. Sumter's political opponents seized on this and he was turned out of office amid accusations of what in present times would be called "insider trading." But Sumter vigorously defended himself as he launched

1. Bass, *Gamecock*, 220-222; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 200-202
2. Bass, *Gamecock*, 223-225; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 203-205
3. Bass, *Gamecock*, 235.
4. The book, entitled *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independent United States of America*, was published in 1788 by Reverend William Gordon. Gordon had used Greene's private correspondence as a source base.
5. Bass, *Gamecock*, 234; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 228-233.
6. Jack P Greene and J.R. Poole, eds., *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1991) 783; Michael Scoggins, *Relentless Fury: The Revolutionary War in the Southern Piedmont* (Culture & Heritage Museums, 2006) 8.

another campaign in 1796 and was able to reclaim his seat in the House. As party divisions began to emerge in the political world, Sumter aligned himself with Thomas Jefferson and Republicanism. This paid off for him in the form of a Senate seat in 1801. Jefferson had appointed Senator Charles Pinckney as ambassador to Spain and the Jeffersonians in the South Carolina General Assembly had the votes to award the seat to Sumter.7

As for Sumter's personal life, his wife Mary was now in a wheelchair as a consequence of her lifelong paralysis and could not accompany him to Washington. But in spite of her affliction and the deprivations of the war, her health was good and she and Thomas both lived into their nineties. Their son, Thomas Jr., took over management of the plantation in his twenties when his father began serving in Congress. He entered politics in his thirties and served as Lt. Governor of South Carolina from 1804 to 1806. He then entered the diplomatic service, thanks to his father's influence with the administration. Tom served as ambassador to the Portuguese court from 1810 to 1819 while it was in exile in Brazil—the royal government had moved there to avoid being deposed by Napoleon. Tom married Natalie de Lage de Volude, whose family was of the French nobility.[8]

Thomas Sumter remained in the Senate until his resignation in December 1810. His last two decades were spent attending to plantation business, which proved to be a challenge on many fronts. He gave financial assistance to his son Thomas, who struggled to keep his own plantation afloat. The Panic of 1819, bad weather, and low crop prices also drained Sumter's accounts. Loans and lawsuits became regular occurrences. Sumter nevertheless remained a hero to South Carolinians and was frequently invited to rallies and dinners, most of which he declined. Sumter was nearly ninety-eight when he died in 1832, the last surviving American general of the Revolution.[9]

Many tributes were offered to Sumter, during and after his life. In spite of all his frustrations with Sumter, one of the best of them came from General Nathanael Greene.

In one of his last letters to Sumter, Greene wrote:

> "I persuade myself [sic] we shall triumph at last, and your Country, if they have any justice and gratitude, will not fail to bless and reward you for your exertions made in the darkest hours they ever felt. I shall always bear testimony to your services and don't fail to tell the people how much you did when many others hid their heads."[10]

7. Bass, *Gamecock*, 235-240; *Gregorie*, *Thomas Sumter*, 234-249
8. Bass, *Gamecock*, 239-240; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 247-249
9. Bass, *Gamecock*, 245-255; Gregorie, *Thomas Sumter*, 263-282
10. Greene to Sumter, Dec 15, 1781, DLC.

APPENDIX A

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Our search for the correspondence of Thomas Sumter, as is true with most historical documents, cannot possibly be totally exhaustive. Previously unknown collections from private sources are donated to historical centers, museums, and university libraries every year, including the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the New York Public Library. Digitization of many of these documents is ongoing — the Fold3 (now a part of Ancestry.com) digitization of Revolutionary War era microfilm/microfiche records for individual soldiers, and the collaboration of the National Archives and National Park Service to transcribe and tag pension applications are major examples of the work being done.

As noted in the Preface, a number of missing letters are referenced, both in transcriptions done by The Southern Revolutionary War Institute (SRWI) staff and prior transcriptions of the Draper Manuscripts, housed at the Wisconsin Historical Society and other locations. The approximate dates and details of these missing letters, taken from the correspondence in which they were mentioned, are listed by month and year on the following pages. We welcome your help in searching for these originals.

Again, the SC250 Commission's digital versions are purposely dynamic — in other words, easily updated with new information as it is found. Please let us know if you become aware of the location of these missing letters and correspondence of any kind *in the period 1770-1782* that do not appear here in any form — orderly books, letters to/from Thomas Sumter, family documents, resolutions, etc., so we may review and update *The Wartime Papers of Thomas Sumter.*

Email us at:

publications@southcarolina250.com

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Col. William Hill indicated in his memoirs that he had written to Sumter in June 1780 regarding preparation for the Battle of Ramsour's Mill in North Carolina.[1] *This letter has not been found.*

June 1780

"About this time I was informed that Col. Sumter was then in Salisbury with a few men waiting for a reinforcement. I then wrote to him, informing him of our situation & that there was a probability of our making a handsome stand and that we were about to form a junction with Genl. [Griffith] Rutherford. in N. Car, that we were going to attack a large body of Tories that had collected at a place called Ramsours Mill…"[2]

1. At the Battle of Ramsour's Mill on June 20, 1779, Col. Francis Locke defeated Loyalist militiamen under Lt. Col. John Moore. Sumter marched but did not arrive in time.
2. Salley, A.S., Jr., ed., *Col. William Hill's Memoirs of the Revolution* (The Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1921), 8.

1780-10-28 – Thomas Sumter to William Candler

Sumter's letter of October 28, 1780 to Maj. William Candler has not been found. Candler referred to it in his letter to Sumter dated October 31[1]:

"I am Just favoured with yours of the 28th and am glad to hear the Enemy are so streight[d] for provisions."

1780-10-? – Thomas Sumter to Elijah Clark(e)

Col. Elijah Clark's letter to Sumter dated October 29, 1780,[2] refers to an undated letter from Sumter that he was expecting. The letter has not been found. "I gladly Embrace the Opportunity of Doing my Self the Honour of Writing to you on hearing of your Letter to me being on the way."

1780-10-? – Sumter to Davidson/Rutledge

The minutes of the North Carolina Board of War of November 7, 1780,[3] refer to a letter that Brig. Gen. William Davidson sent them on October 31, 1780, in which he had enclosed a letter from Sumter to Rutledge. The date of the letter was not noted and that letter has not been found.

"Ordered that the Following be made out and sent Brigr. General Davidson: Sir: Yours 31st Ulto. was delivered the Board by Captain Carter, together with General Sumter's Letter enclosed. We are sorry that your complaints are so justly founded, and that we have it not in our power at present to relieve them."

1. Candler to Sumter, Oct. 31, 1780, DLC.
2. Clark to Sumter, Oct. 29, 1780, DLC.
3. *Minutes of the North Carolina Board of War, September 14, 1780 - January 30, 1781, Volume 14*, Pages 376-495.

1780-11-05 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. William Smallwood

Gen. William Smallwood[1] wrote to Sumter on November 5, 1780,[2] and referred to a letter that Sumter had sent him that same day. The letter has not been found.

"I am happy to find that the measures I have lately taken, have, or may anticipate your wishes **expressed in your Letter of this date.**"

1780-11-? – William Smallwood to Thomas Sumter

Gen. William Smallwood wrote to Sumter on November 5, 1780,[3] and referred to a letter he had previously written to Sumter. That letter has not been found. "With respect to our Force, we remain in the same situation as **when I wrote last**."

1780-11-? – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

The North Carolina Board of War sent Sumter a letter dated November 7, 1780,[4] in which they state they had taken the liberty of opening a letter that Sumter had intended for Gov. John Rutledge of South Carolina. The letter has not been found.

"Ordered, that the Following be made out and sent Brigr. General Sumpter: Sir: Mr. McCullock[5] presented the Board with a Letter addressed to Governor Rutledge, and informed us he had brought a Waggon to him to be loaded. Gov. Rutledge not being present and the Board unacquainted where he is, **took the liberty to open your Letter, thinking it might be in our power to give him some Answer; but finding the Letter containing Reference to some immediate Matters only known to yourselves, we have recommended to Mr. McCullock to return.**"

1780-11-15 – Horatio Gates to Thomas Sumter

Sumter wrote to Gen. Horatio Gates on November 25, 1780,[6] and referred to a letter he had received from Gates on November 15. The letter has not been found.

"**I was honor'd with yours of 15th** last Evening but the want of leisure and my indisposition[7] prevents me from particularly attending to it."

1780-11-25 – Thomas Sumter to John Thomas

Sumter wrote to Col. John Thomas Jr. of the Spartan Regiment on November 25, 1780, according to a letter he received from Thomas dated December 8.[8] Thomas also noted a failed attempt at an immediate reply. Neither letter has been found.

"**I recd. your letter dated the 25th last month** which I attempted to answer by an express, who was stopt at Thicketty by an alarm of the enemy's being there."

1. Smallwood commanded the Maryland Continental Line but temporarily also commanded the North Carolina militia.
2. Smallwood to Sumter, Nov. 5, 1780, DLC.
3. Smallwood to Sumter, Nov. 5, 1780, DLC.
4. *Minutes of the North Carolina Board of War, September 14, 1780 - January 30, 1781, Volume 14*, Pages 376-495.
5. Possibly John McCullogh, Deputy Commissary General of South Carolina. https://revwarapps.org/b414.pdf.
6. Sumter to Gates, Nov. 25, 1780, NHi
7. Sumter is referring to the wound he received at the Battle of Blackstock's five days before.
8. Thomas to Sumter, Dec.8, 1780, DLC.

1780-12-02 – Thomas Sumter to Thomas Brandon

Sumter wrote a letter to Col. Thomas Brandon on December 2, 1780, according to a reply from Brandon dated December 4.[1] See below. Sumter's letter has not been found.

"**I received yours of the 2nd Instant** this morning by Col. Hays [Joseph Hayes], and am greatly obliged to you for the Men you sent and shall strictly adhear to the Contents of yr letter."

1780-12-? – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

In a letter to Sumter dated December 15, 1780,[2] Gen. Nathanael Greene states that Gov. Rutledge of South Carolina had shown him "notes" in which Sumter had recommended to the governor that a portion of the Army be sent to the western part of the Carolinas. See below. No date was given and the documents have not been found.

"**Governor Rutledge shew me a couple of notes which you sent him**, where in you express a desire to have a detachment made from this Army on the other side of the Catabaw [Catawba]." The measure you wish I have been preparing for ever since I was with you, and shall have the troops in readiness in a day or two at farthest."

Greene would issue orders the next day for Gen. Daniel Morgan to lead a detachment of troops west of the Catawba to "spirit up the people" and "annoy the enemy in that quarter."

1.Brandon to Sumter, Dec. 4, 1780, Draper Manuscript Collection, WHi.
2.Greene to Sumter, Dec. 15, 1780, DLC.

1781-01-02 – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

Gov. John Rutledge's letter to Sumter dated January 21, 1781,[1] refers to a letter Sumter sent him on January 2. That letter has not been found.

"I shd. have wrote to you, **on Rect. of your Letter of the 2d Inst.**, but never heard of any person going to Charlotte."

1781-01-13 – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

Based on a reply to him from Rutledge dated January 16[2]: "**I rec'd. yours, of the 13th Inst.**, by the Bearer, & am glad to find that the reinforcements, to the Enemy, are not so considerable as was apprehended," Sumter wrote a letter to Gov. John Rutledge on January 13, 1781.

Sumter also wrote to Gen. Nathanael Greene on January 13 regarding British reinforcements. So it's very possible that he shared this same information with Gov. Rutledge. From the letter to Greene:

"By a person just returned, Who I sent towards Charles Town to meet the late arrived reinforcements of the Enemy, to Discover their Number, movements, & c., I am informed there was Twelve hundred with Genl. [Alexander] Leslie, Which Crosed McCord's ferry & went to Camden, except Seventy five Which was sent onto Lord Cornwallis — Majr. [Andrew] Maxwell with one hundred men has Taken post at the Congaree Store, Where he is erecting a fort, and improving the other works. These thirteen hundred men is Certainly all that has Marched out of Charles Town up the Country, and is believed to be the Whole of the Reinforcement."

1.Rutledge to Sumter, Jan. 21, 1781, DLC.
2.Rutledge to Sumter, Jan. 16, 1781, DLC.

1781-02-07 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

In a letter to Sumter dated February 9, 1781,[1] Gen. Nathanael Greene stated, "**I reced your favor of the 7th**." Sumter's letter has not been found.

1781-02-15 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

In a letter to Sumter dated March 6, 1781,[2] Gen. Nathanael Greene states that he had just received a letter from Sumter dated February 15. Sumter's letter has not been found.

"**Your favor of the 15th ulto.** was handed me this moment which is the only intelligence I have had from you since Majr. Middleton [Charles Myddelton] left us."

1781-02-26 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

Gen. Francis Marion sent two letters to Sumter on February 26, 1781.[3] We only have the second letter, which makes mention of the first.

"**Since I wrought you this morning**, I find by the Bearer that you Desire I should make a Junction with you, on the So Santee."

1781-02-26 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

In his second letter to Sumter dated February 26, 1781, Gen. Francis Marion acknowledges a request by Sumter to link up with him on the South Santee River. Marion's first letter has not been found.

"**Since I wrought you this morning,**[4] I find by the Bearer that you Desire I should make a Junction with you, on the So Santee.[5]"

1781-02-28 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

Sumter's letter to Gen. Francis Marion on March 4, 1781, refers to a letter sent by Marion on February 28. This letter has not been found.

"I made no doubt but your route to me would be by the way of King's Tree or the Ferry and **after receiving yours of the 28th ultimo** informing me what the number of your men were, I found you to be very weak and the enemy near at hand in force."

1. Greene to Sumter, Feb. 9, 1781, DLC.
2. Greene to Sumter, Mar. 6, 1781, DLC.
3. Marion to Sumter, Feb. 26, 1781. Originally held by RR Auction, Boston, Mass. Current owner unknown.
4. Marion's first letter has not been found.
5. Sumter's letter of February 20 to Marion did express a desire that Marion "co-operate" with him, but no mention is made of the South Santee River.

1781-03-02 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

Sumter's letter to Gen. Francis Marion on March 4, 1781,[1] refers to a letter sent by Marion on March 2. This letter has not been found. "Dear Sir, **Yours of 2d instant** has this moment come to hand. I am very sorry to be so far out of the way of meeting with you at a time when there is the greatest occasion for it."[2]

1781-03-19 – Thomas Sumter to Andrew Pickens

Gen. Andrew Pickens wrote to Sumter on March 20, 1781,[3] and stated, "**Your favor of yesterday** is just now come to hand." Sumter's letter has not been found.

1781-03-? – Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter (via Andrew Pickens)

In a letter dated March 16, 1781,[4] Gen. Nathanael Greene stated that he had sent a letter to Sumter via Gen. Andrew Pickens. "I have been manuvring in the neighbourhood of the enemy **since I wrote you by Genl Pickens**."

The letter via Pickens has not been found. Greene's letter of March 6 to Sumter stated that "Genl. Pickens will be detached in a few days to join you." So Pickens presumably carried the letter sometime after that date.

1781-03-? – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Gen. Francis Marion dated March 28, 1781,[5] Sumter refers to a letter received from Marion: "**The day I received your letter** Col Marshall joined me with about _____ men chiefly North Carolinians." The letter from Marion has not been found.

1781-03-? – Thomas Sumter to John Marshel

In a letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene dated April 7, 1781,[6] Sumter states that he sent letters to Gen. Francis Marion and Col. John Marshel instructing them to take up positions on the Black River. The letter to Marion was sent March 28, but the letter to Marshel has not been found. "I have Requested him [Marion] to take a position high up black river if it Can be Done with Safety, to prevent the enemy from foraging that way, & to have as Much provision as possible provided, **I have Wrote Col. Marshell [John Marshel] to the Same effect**, —

1.Sumter to Marion, Mar. 4, 1781. Gibbes, Robert W. *Documentary History of the American Revolution.*(Columbia, S.C.: Banner Steam-Power Press, 1853), 27.
2.On March 2, Marion was at "Hungres Hole Whites plantations" (the plantation of William White on Hungary Hall Branch) marching to meet with Sumter about 15 miles to the south, but Sumter left before Marion arrived on the next day.
3.Pickens to Sumter, Mar. 20, 1781, DLC.
4.Greene to Sumter, Mar. 16, 1781, MiU-C.
5.Sumter to Marion, Mar. 28, 1781. Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 44-47.
6.Sumter to Greene, Apr. 7, 1781, DLC.

1781-04-06 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Gen. Francis Marion dated April 30, 1781,[1] Sumter refers to a letter of Marion dated April 6 which supposedly went missing. Sumter denied that the letter was missing, but it has not been found.

"**I have received yours of the 18th inst. wherein you observe that you wrote me on the 6th, which letter is not lost, as you allege.**"

1781-04-? – Thomas Sumter to Andrew Pickens

In a letter to Gen. Francis Marion dated April 13, 1781,[2] Sumter refers to a letter he had sent to Gen. Andrew Pickens. That letter has not been found.

"**I Wrote Genl Pickens Very fully a few days ago** —Wherin I Mentioned the Measures Necessary to be entered into in consequence of your Movements towards Camden."

1781-04-18 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Gen. Francis Marion dated April 30, 1781,[3] Sumter refers to a letter of Marion dated April 18. That letter has not been found.

"**I have received yours of the 18th inst.**"

1781-04-29 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

In a letter dated April 30, 1781,[4] Gen. Nathanael Greene referred to a letter he had received from Sumter dated April 29. That letter has not been found.

"Major Hyrne return'd this morning, and soon after, **Mr. Taylor arriv'd with your letter of the 29th.**"

1781-04-? – Thomas Sumter to Thomas Polk

In a letter dated April 25,[5] Sumter told Gen. Nathanael Greene that he had written to Col. Thomas Polk, among others, regarding Greene's need for provisions. The letter to Polk has not been found.

"**I mention by letter to Genl. [Col. Thomas] Polk** & many others, the Inhabitance of the Macklinburg [Mecklenburg County, North Carolina], what Straits you were in for provision."

1. Sumter to Marion, Apr. 30, 1781. Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 64-65.
2. Sumter to Marion, Apr. 13, 1781, MiU-C.
3. Sumter to Marion, Apr. 30, 1781. Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 64-65.
4. Greene to Sumter, Apr. 30, 1781, DLC.
5. Sumter to Greene, Apr. 25, 1781, MH.

1781-05-05 – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Sumter wrote to Gen. Nathanael Greene on May 6, 1781,[1] that he had sent him intelligence the previous day regarding British troop movements. The letter has not been found.

"Yesterday evening agreeable **to the Intelligence Sent to you** I was informed that Col. [John] Watson was Crossing Santee [River] at Buckenhams Ferry."

1781-05-09 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Sumter dated May 10, 1781,[2] Gen. Francis Marion stated that he had written to him the previous evening. The letter has not been found.

"**I wrought you last night** that a Number of men was seen at Sergt. Campbell's coming up."

1781-05-12 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene dated May 12, 1781,[3] Sumter acknowledges the receipt of Greene's letter of that same date. This letter has not been found.

"I am just favored with **Yours of the 12th** informing of the evacuation of Camden, which I think a favourable circumstance."

1781-05-15 – Gen. Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene date May 16, 1781,[4] Sumter refers to a letter from Greene dated the previous day. That letter has not been found.

"Dr Sir I have been Honoured With **your Letter of Yesterdays Date**."

1781-05-20 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene dated June 7, 1781,[5] Sumter refers to a letter he had received from Gen. Francis Marion after Greene's departure from Ancrum's plantation around May 18.

"Soon after your Departure from this, **I Received a letter from Genl. Marion** wherein he expressed a Desire of going against George Town [Georgetown] & **said he had wrote to you upon that head.**"

There are no surviving Marion letters to Sumter that match the one described here. Greene did receive a letter from Marion regarding Georgetown dated May 20, so his letter to Sumter must have been the same date or immediately afterward.

1.Sumter to Greene, May 6, 1781, Draper Manuscripts Collection, WHi.
2.Marion to Sumter, May 10, 1781, DLC.
3.Sumter to Greene, May 12, 1781, MiU-C.
4.Sumter to Greene, May 16, 1781, MiU-C.
5.Sumter to Greene, May 7, 1781, MiU-C.

1781-06-05 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Sumter dated June 6, 1781,[1] Gen. Francis Marion referred to a letter he had sent Sumter the previous day. That letter has not been found.

"Sr

Yesterday I wrought you pr Express that I had levelled all the works here[2] & shoud march tomorrow to Murray's ferry."

1781-06-14 – Francis Marion to Thomas Sumter

In his second letter to Gen. Francis Marion dated June 16, 1781,[3] Sumter refers to a letter from Marion dated June 14. That letter has not been found.

"Sir:

I have just received yours of the 14th inst. I am glad you are moving up; there is the greatest occasion for forced marches. I wrote you todav that the enemy were upon the way to Ninety-Six."

1. Marion to Sumter, June 6, 1781, DLC.
2. The British had evacuated Georgetown on May 28 and Marion entered the next day.
3. Sumter to Marion, June 16, 1781. Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 97.

1781-07-06 – Thomas Sumter to Edward Lacey

In a letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene dated July 6, 1781,[1] Sumter stated that he had written to Col. Edward Lacey with instructions to await Greene's orders. That letter has not been found, nor any of the others that were in the "&c." group mentioned by Sumter:

"**I have wrote to Col. Lacey &c.** to wait upon you for orders, &, if you think proper, for him to March down wards. he is to do it with all possible Expedition."

1781-07-26 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

In a letter dated July 26, 1781,[2] Gen. Frances Marion begins by acknowledging receipt of Sumter's letter of that same date. Sumter's letter has not been found.

26th July 1781

Sr

"**Yours of this day's date I received.**"

1781-07-27 – Thomas Sumter to Francis Marion

In a letter dated July 28, 1781,[3] Gen. Francis Marion refers to a letter Sumter had sent the previous day. Sumter's letter has not been found.

"St Stephen's 28 July 1781

Sir

Yours of yesterday's date came to hand."

1781-07-29 – Wade Hampton to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Gen. Nathanael Greene dated July 29, 1781,[4] Col. Wade Hampton expresses concern at the general lawlessness in the state and seeks Greene's comments on the matter. He also states, "**I have wrote to General Sumter on this subject**." The letter to Sumter has not been found.

1781-07-? – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Benson J. Lossing's *Field-Book of the American Revolution* refers to an intercepted letter that Sumter forwarded to Greene. If Sumter sent a letter with this document, it has not been found.

"While Rawdon was thus preparing to abandon the upper country, Sumter intercepted a letter to that officer from Colonel Balfour at Charleston, informing him that he had recalled Stewart after he had commenced his march for Friday's Ferry. **This letter was sent to Greene**, who immediately directed his hospital and heavy baggage, then at Winnsborough, to be forwarded to Camden, while he prepared to pursue Rawdon with all his force."[5]

1. Sumter to Greene, July 6, 1781, MiU-C.
2. Marion to Sumter, July 26, 1781, DLC.
3. Marion to Sumter, July 28, 1781, DLC.
4. Hampton to Greene, July 29, 1781, *GP*, Vol IX.
5. Benson J. Lossing, *Field-Book of the American Revolution, Vol 2* (Polyanthos, 1972) 488.

1781-09-01 – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

In a letter to Sumter dated September 4, 1781,[1] Gov. John Rutledge of South Carolina refers to a letter that Sumter sent on the first of the month. Sumter's letter has not been found.

"Camden Septr 4th, 1781
Sir
I rec'd yours, **of the 1st Instant**, last night, after closing my Letter of yesterday's date, which accompanies this, & to which I refer, as an answer to the several parts of your Letter, to which it applies."

1781-09-17 – John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter

In a letter to Sumter dated September 26, 1781,[2] Gov. John Rutledge of South Carolina referred to instructions he had sent Sumter on the 17th. That letter has not been found.

"I hope these Instructions, **and those of the 17th Instant**, are sufficiently clear & extensive."

1.Rutledge to Sumter, Sept. 4, 1781, DLC.
2.Rutledge to Sumter, Sept. 26, 1781, DLC.

1781-10-? – Thomas Sumter to Gen. Nathanael Greene

Maj. Edmund Hyrne, Gen. Nathanael Greene's aide-de-camp, sent Sumter a letter on October 20, 1781,[1] in which he refers to a letter from Sumter that was received two days before. That letter has not been found.

"Head Quarters
October 20th 1781
Sir
General Greene directs me to acknowledge **the receipt of your letter by Express, two days ago**."

1.Hyrne to Sumter, Oct. 20, 1781, DLC.

1781-12-04 – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

In a letter to Sumter dated December 25, 1781,[1] Gov. John Rutledge referred to a letter he had received from Sumter dated December 4. That letter has not been found.

"[W]ith respect to the twenty odd Negroes **ment'd in your Letter of the 4th Instant**, they shd. be kept in Charge of some person, of honest Character."

1781-12-22 – Thomas Sumter to John Rutledge

In a letter to Sumter dated December 25, 1781,[2] Gov. John Rutledge referred to a letter he had received from Sumter dated December 22. That letter has not been found.

"Dec. 25. 1781
Dr Sir
I have recd your Letter of the 22nd Instant, by the Bearer."

1.Rutledge to Sumter, Dec. 25, 1781, DLC.
2.Rutledge to Sumter, Dec. 25, 1781, DLC.

1782-03-? – Thomas Sumter to John Mathews

In a letter to Sumter dated March 4, 1782,[1] Gov. John Mathews refers to a letter he had received from Sumter the previous day. That letter has not been found.

"March 4th: 1782

Sir/ **I received your favor yesterday afternoon by Express**. I had attended to the business mentioned in the first part of your letter, & fixed on the persons to undertake the business, but had no opportunity before to give them the necessary information."

1.Mathews to Sumter, Mar. 4, 1782, DLC.

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