

Cherokee County - The Roads to Kings Mountain

Two hundred forty years ago, during the first week of October, 1780, what is now Cherokee County was the site of important events in the [American Revolutionary War](#). During that week, both a British Loyalist Army and an American Patriot Army traveled across the county on their way to do battle at [Kings Mountain](#). The American victory at the [Battle of Kings Mountain](#) on October 7 is thought by many historians to be the turning point in the War.

The British Army, under Major Patrick Ferguson, had been in North Carolina in the vicinity of Gilbert Town. He had sent a warning to the mountaineers living across the Blue Ridge. He had threatened that if they did not cease opposing the British forces, he would cross the mountains and destroy them with fire and sword. This threat had been like pouring gasoline on a fire. Instead of being intimidated, the mountaineers decided to gather an army and destroy Ferguson. Ferguson soon had gotten word that a sizable Patriot Army was coming after him. He decided to retreat south and join British General Cornwallis who was in Charlotte. He did not make it to Charlotte. He marched across Cherokee County, camping several times. He crossed the Broad River at Tate's Plantation and Ferry on October 5. After traveling about 15 miles from the Broad River, he stopped the Army and camped on top of [Kings Mountain](#) in what is today, York County.

The "Overmountain Men" had been joined by militia from Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia. By October 6, they had all gathered in Cherokee County, on the future site of the [Battle of Cowpens](#). They decided that they would send 900 mounted men to pursue Ferguson at a fast pace. The rest of the Army would follow them. They traveled all night in the rain, crossed the Broad River at the Cherokee Ford and caught up with Ferguson and his Army the next afternoon.

The [Battle of Kings Mountain](#), fought on the afternoon of October 7, 1780 was a complete defeat and disaster for the British Loyalist forces. The entire battle only lasted for about an hour. It should be noted that there were almost no regular British soldiers with Ferguson's Army except Ferguson himself. All the others, on both sides, were Americans, either Whigs or Tories. The British had 290 killed, 163 wounded and 668 taken prisoner. Ferguson himself was killed, the victim of several rifle shots. He is buried on the battleground. The Americans had 28 killed and 60 wounded.

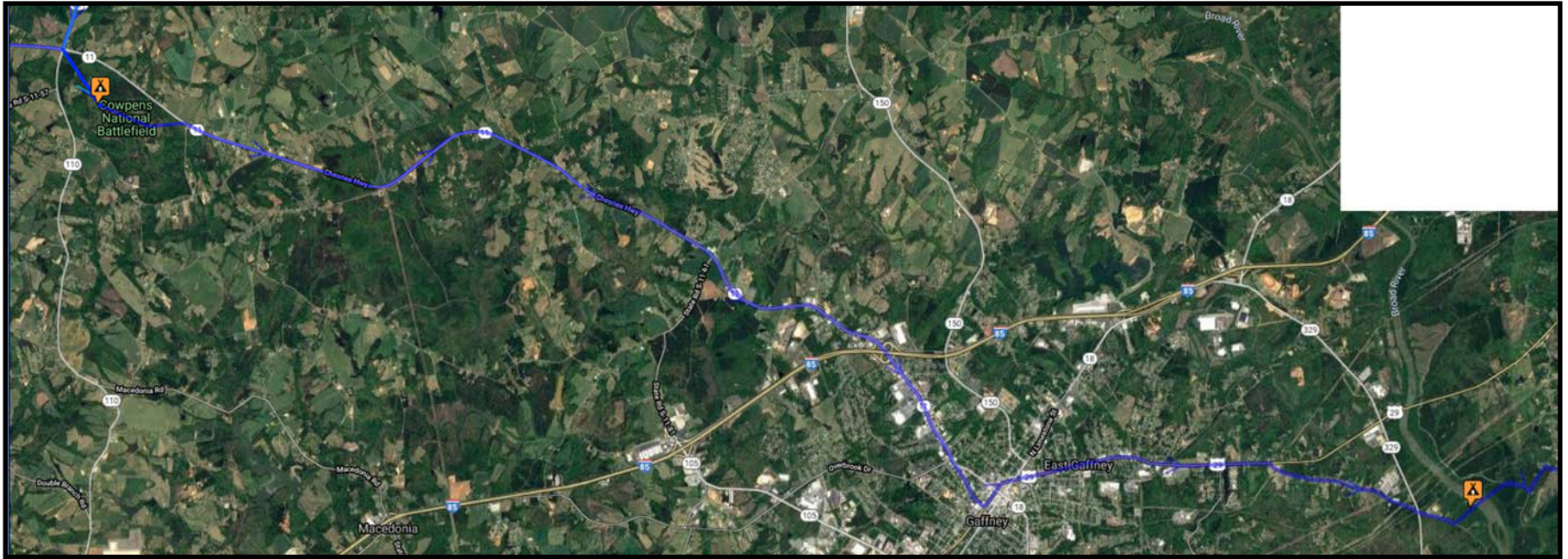
The route across Cherokee County is shown on the next page. The path of the American forces is taken from the site:

<http://www.elehistory.com/amrev/SitesEventsTroopMovements.htm?start=1780-10-20>

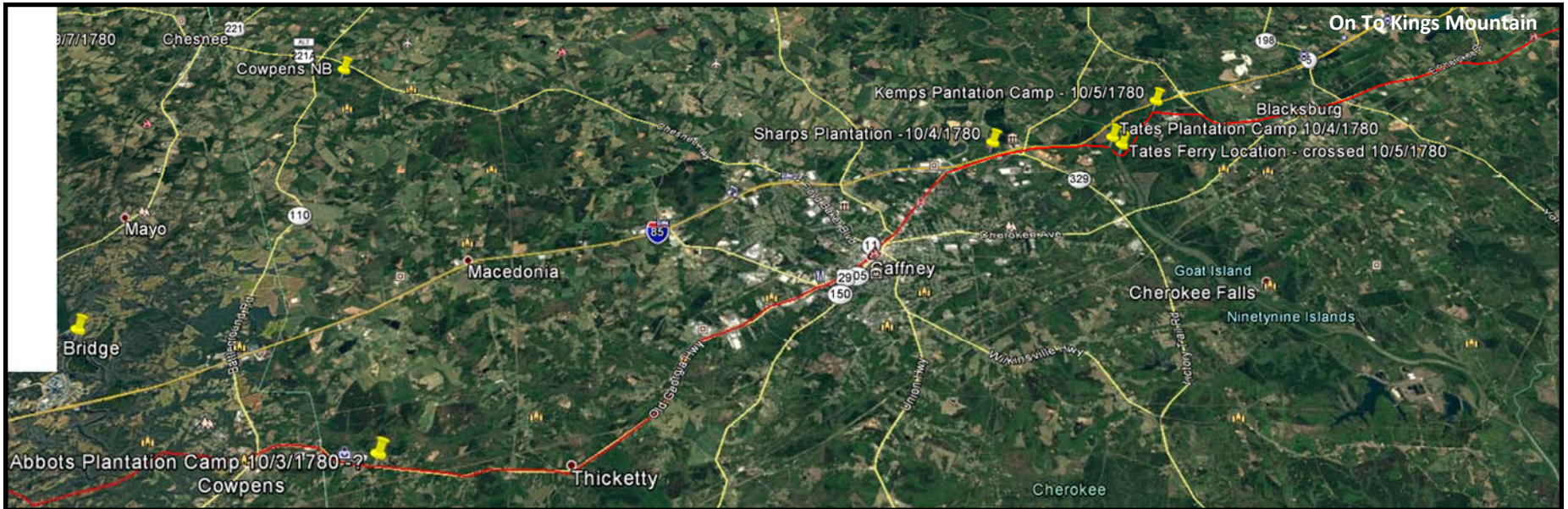
The path of the British forces is compiled from the journal of Uzal Johnson, a surgeon with the Loyalist army.

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The approximate route of the Americans from Cowpens to the Broad River is marked in blue.



The approximate route of the British across the county is marked in red.