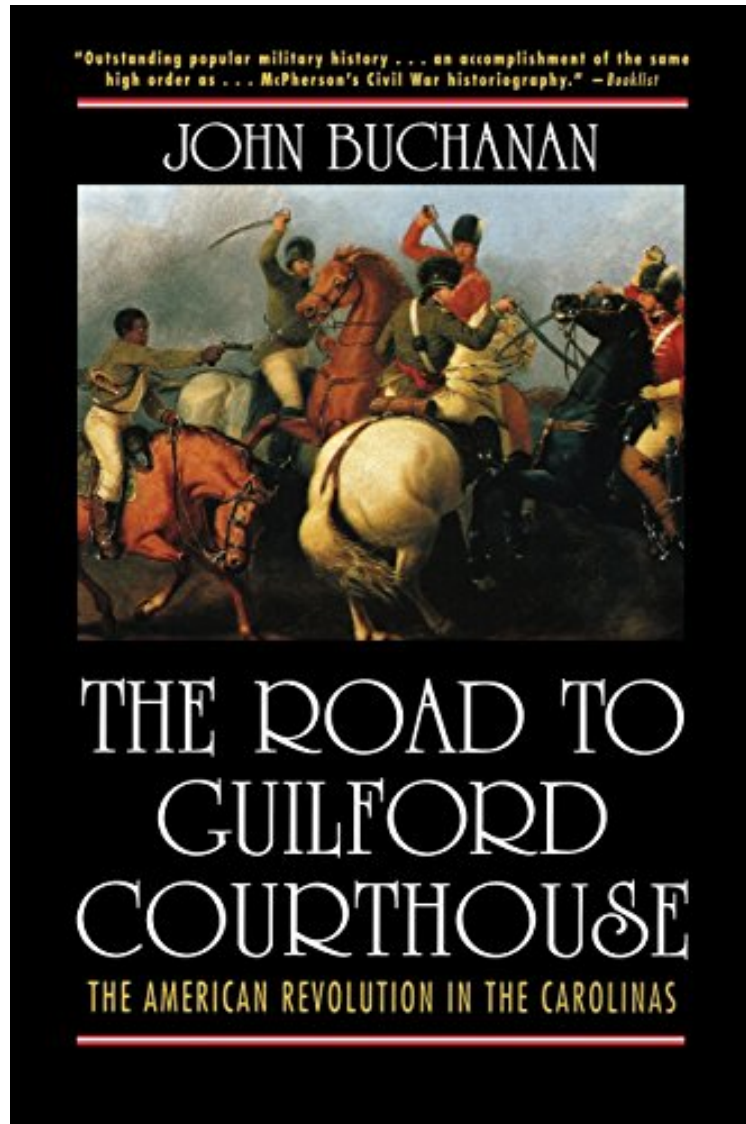


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The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas

John Buchanan

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A brilliant account of the proud and ferocious American fighters who stood up to the British forces in savage battles crucial in deciding both the fate of the Carolina colonies and the outcome of the war."A tense, exciting historical account of a little known chapter of the Revolution, displaying history writing at its best."--Kirkus Reviews"His compelling narrative brings readers closer than ever before to the reality of Revolutionary warfare in the Carolinas."--Raleigh News Observer. "Buchanan makes the subject come alive like few others I have seen." --Dennis Conrad, Editor, *The Nathanael Greene Papers*."John Buchanan offers us a lively, accurate account of a critical period in the War of Independence in the South. Based on numerous printed primary and secondary sources, it deserves a large reading audience." --Don Higginbotham, Professor of History, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

.com Most of us are familiar with the role that North and South Carolina played in the American Civil War: if nothing else, every grade-schooler knows the significance of the 1861 bombardment of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. But to popular historian John Buchanan, "that tragedy is of far less interest than the American Revolution. The Revolution was the most important event in American history. The Civil War was unfinished business." And the Carolinas, Buchanan convincingly argues, were the most critical theater in that conflict, with their wild Back Country seeing "a little-known but savage civil war far exceeding anything in the North." *The Road to Guilford Courthouse* is no less than a tour de force of pop military scholarship, an exhaustive battle-by-battle account of the Crown's grinding march to wrest the Carolinas from the resourceful Rebels. Beginning with Colonel William Moultrie's valiant defense atop the palmetto ramparts of Fort Sullivan against an outnumbering force of British men-of-war to the final "long, obstinate, and bloody" exchange at Guilford Courthouse, Buchanan meticulously recounts each skirmish, battle, and shift of strategy in the campaign. Relying on copious primary and secondary sources, he brings the combatants to life, from the worthy but somewhat obscure, such as Nathanael Greene, whom George Washington considered to be his successor should he fall, to soon-to-be legends such as Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox. --Paul HughesFrom BooklistThis outstanding popular military history covers the American Revolution in North and South Carolina. More divided than any other region between patriot and Tory, the Carolinas were the scene of a two-year British campaign (1780-81) to raise the country for the crown. Lord Cornwallis began well by taking Charleston but subsequently found himself facing an assortment of American generals who could not win but refused to submit. Cornwallis was also hindered as much as helped by the Tories, whose militia efforts were never as successful as those of their patriot counterparts. Eventually, lack of supplies rather than actual defeat drove Cornwallis into Virginia and on the road to Yorktown. Buchanan writes with superlative clarity and considerable wit, providing character sketches better than many novelists', while maintaining balance in judgment and thoroughness in research (the annotated bibliography is valuable to beginning and entrenched students of the Revolution alike). Altogether, an accomplishment of the same high order as Robinson's *Good Year to Die* (1995) and McPherson's *Civil War* historiography. Roland GreenFrom Kirkus sA sweeping yet richly detailed history of the American Revolution in the Carolinas, chronicling the 1780-81 campaign of British forces to reclaim those two colonies. Buchanan (former archivist at Cornell and the Metropolitan Museum of Art) reminds us that the war for the southern colonies, a struggle "long, bloody, and obstinate," was of crucial importance to the revolution's outcome, yet it has received less attention than some of the northern campaigns. Determined to regain the rich Carolina farmland, the British, under Lord Cornwallis, combined their forces with considerable numbers of local Tories. They eventually captured Charleston and destroyed the American forces at the battle of Camden (largely because of the inept leadership of General Horatio Gates). Tarleton's hated British Legion rode roughshod over the countryside, launching repeated swift, brutal attacks against civilians and militias, burning homes, confiscating livestock, and hanging some who resisted. The violence only rekindled opposition among Carolinians, who flocked to such ingenious guerrilla chiefs as Thomas Sumter, Dan Morgan, and Francis (the "Swamp Fox") Marion. Their groups constantly harassed both the crack British regulars and the Tory militia.

Buchanan vigorously describes the nature of guerrilla warfare in the South, and traces the series of skirmishes waged by rejuvenated American forces, culminating in the great American victory at Kings Mountain. The battles of Cowpens and Guilford Court House, although technically victories for the British, proved to be the last gasp for the Crown's badly damaged forces. Buchanan provides fine sketches of the many remarkable men who fought on both sides during the campaign, and vivid descriptions of 18th-century warfare. A tense, exciting historical account of a little-known chapter of the Revolution, displaying history writing at its best. -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.