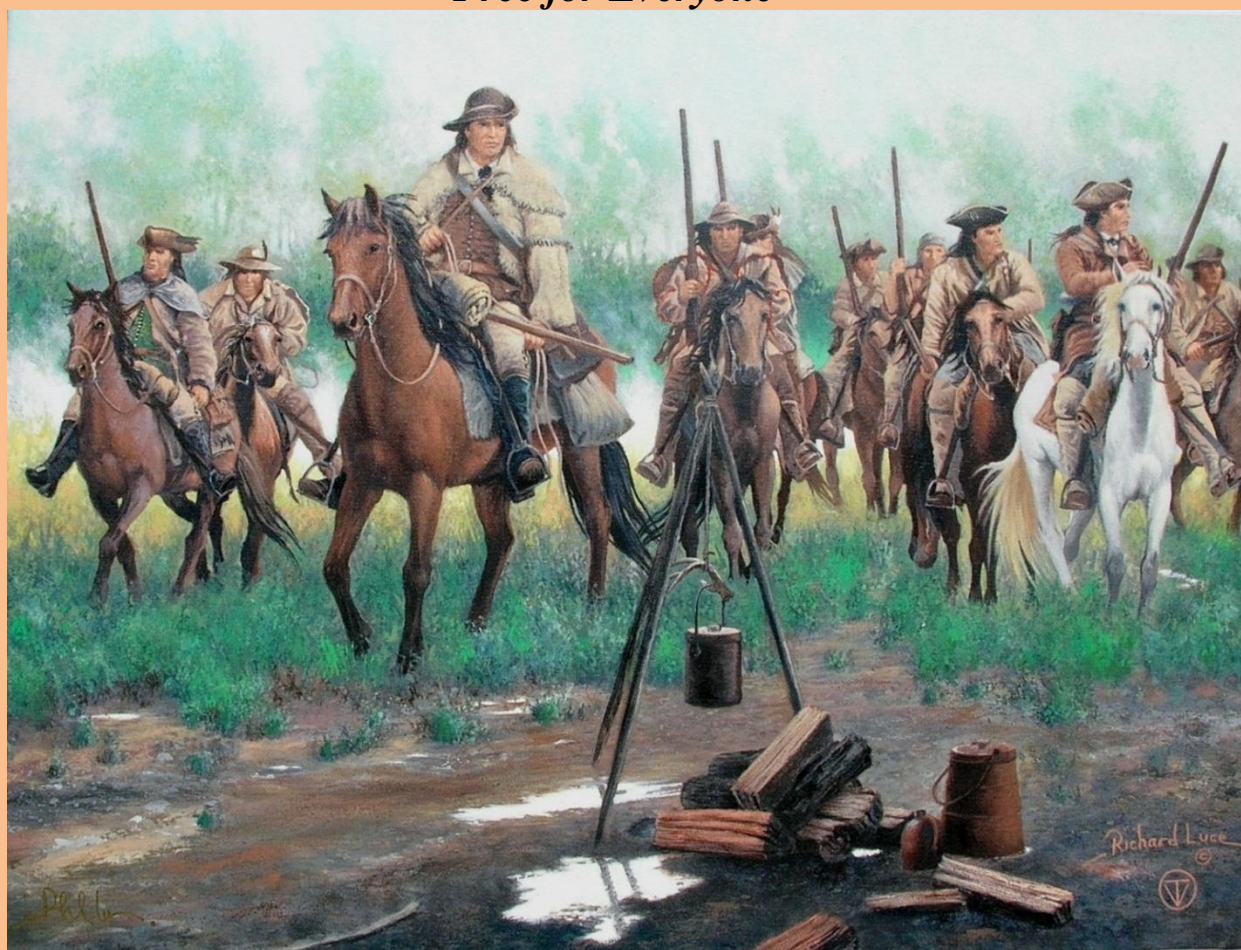


Prelude to the Battle of Kings Mountain: A Lecture Series

**Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Abingdon
Thursday nights, Sept. 1, 8, 15, and 22 at 7:30 p.m.**

Free for Everyone



"John Sevier and the Wataugans" by Richard Luce

Sponsored by the Arts Array cultural outreach series of Virginia Highlands Community College with help from the Town of Abingdon and the Overmountain Victory Trail Association

Tom Costa : “Changing Concepts of Empire: Britain and North America in the 18th Century”

Thursday, September 1, 7:30 p.m.

Costa will offer an overview of the changes in the structure and perceptions of the British Empire that led to the American Revolution. Why did colonists who thought of themselves as essentially British protest against and oppose measures designed to integrate them more closely into a growing powerful empire? How did their initial protests turn into a movement for complete independence? Costa is the Chair of the Department of History and Philosophy at UVA-Wise.

Michael Puglisi : “Backcountry Politics in Virginia in the 1770s”

Thursday, September 8, 7:30 p.m.

This presentation will look at the social structure in the Backcountry of Virginia in the 1770s, the appearance of an elite, and the relative absence of social strife within the population, compared to the Backcountry uprisings in North Carolina and Pennsylvania at the same time. Puglisi is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of the Powell Resource Center at Emory & Henry College and the former President of Virginia Intermont College.

Randell Jones : “The Yelling Boys—a Numerous and Unexpected Enemy”

Thursday, September 15, 7:30 p.m.

Well before the consequential Battle of Kings Mountain, militiamen of Southwest Virginia had become experienced fighters. During the preceding six years, they had challenged and resisted Shawnees and Cherokees, developing the fighting skills that garnered them the fearsome nickname, “the yelling boys.” Author and storyteller Randell Jones will recount episodes from the experience of the militiamen of Southwest Virginia, including Lord Dunmore’s War and William Christian’s campaign of 1776, which prepared them for the events that became the Battle of Kings Mountain.

Randell Jones: “The Shirtmen Are Coming”

Thursday, September 22, 7:30 p.m.

In addition to honing their fighting skills on the frontier against Shawnees and Cherokees, Virginia’s patriot militiamen confronted enemies in the East. They fought against the armed forces of their own royal governor and against their neighbors whom the British embraced as “friends of government.” Author and storyteller Randell Jones will share accounts of the involvement of Virginia militiamen in the battles of Great Bridge and Gwynn’s Island as well as William Campbell’s campaigns against the Tories along the New and Yadkin rivers.

Activities at the Abingdon Muster Grounds

DAR Marker Dedication September 19, 6 p.m.

“A Call to Arms” Colonial Backcountry Education Program

Colonial Rd., Abingdon, September 21-23, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

“A Call to Arms” is a Colonial Frontier Education Program for 4th graders in Washington, Russell, Smyth and Scott Counties, as well as the City of Bristol and all private and homeschooled children in those areas. Since September 2005, the Town of Abingdon; the Overmountain Victory Trail Association (OVTA); the Black’s Fort Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution; and the General William Campbell Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution have portrayed “Life in the Back Country” to educate the children and educators on an aspect of Colonial history rarely touched on in history textbooks. Stations are set up to teach activities ranging from the African-American experience, Colonial geography, rifle loading and firing, surveying, and other skills common in the Colonial Backcountry. In addition, the OVTA leads the way with entertaining lectures on the importance of the Battle of Kings Mountain, giving those in attendance a sense of pride in the importance our area played in securing America’s independence.

About the Overmountain Victory Trail Association

The purpose of the Overmountain Victory Trail Association (OVTA) is to recognize the historical significance of the men and women who in September 1780 assembled at Abingdon and Sycamore Shoals, Tennessee, and together marched over the mountains to be joined by additional forces and went forth and successfully defeated the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain; and to develop, protect, educate and promote the route associated with the events through presentations, distribution of literature, hikes, tours and continuing research and at associated sites commemorated by the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

The Battle of Kings Mountain

The Battle of Kings Mountain, October 7, 1780, was a decisive Patriot victory in the Southern campaign of the American Revolutionary War and according to some historians the turning point of the war. Frontier militia loyal to the United States, the Overmountain Men, overwhelmed the Loyalist American militia led by British Major Patrick Ferguson.

Major Ferguson had been appointed in May 1780 to organize the Tory population of the Carolina Back Country to counter increasing Patriot sentiment. In September he issued a challenge to the Patriot leaders to lay down their arms or he would "lay waste to their country with fire and sword." Patriot militia leaders Isaac Shelby and John Sevier (from today's Northeast Tennessee) met after receiving Ferguson's "fire and sword" message and agreed to lead their militia against him. They sent a message to Virginia militia leader William Campbell to join them. Campbell's cousin Arthur brought 200 more Virginians, who mustered in Abingdon on September 24. Some 1,100 volunteer "Overmountain Men" (so named because they had crossed over to the far side of the Appalachians to settle) from Southwest Virginia, Western North Carolina, and present-day Northeast Tennessee mustered at Sycamore Shoals near present day Elizabethton, Tennessee on September 25, 1780. The Patriot force named William Campbell the nominal commander of their "pickup army."

After the group joined with militias from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, they marched after the Loyalist army and found it camped on the top of Kings Mountain in northern South Carolina, completely unaware that the Patriots had caught up to them. Except for Ferguson, the Loyalist militia consisted entirely of Americans. They had constructed no fortifications. The Patriot army fought in independent units, firing on the Loyalists from behind rocks and trees. Loyalist casualties were heavy. After Major Ferguson was killed, the Loyalists began to surrender. The Battle of Kings Mountain lasted 65 minutes. The Loyalists suffered 244 killed, 163 wounded, and 668 taken prisoner. The Patriot militia suffered 29 killed and 58 wounded.

In *The Winning of the West*, Theodore Roosevelt wrote of Kings Mountain: "This brilliant victory marked the turning point of the American Revolution." Thomas Jefferson called it "The turn of the tide of success." Herbert Hoover's said at the commemoration of the battlefield park, "This is a place of inspiring memories. Here less than a thousand men, inspired by the urge of freedom, defeated a superior force entrenched in this strategic position. This small band of patriots turned back a dangerous invasion well designed to separate and dismember the united Colonies. It was a little army and a little battle, but it was of mighty portent. History has done scant justice to its significance, which rightly should place it beside Lexington, Bunker Hill, Trenton, and Yorktown."

About the Cover Image

The cover painting is "John Sevier and the Wataugans," done by artist Richard Luce. Luce is from Yonkers, New York, and has devoted his life to portray the history he loves. He specializes in western art, especially images of American Indians. In recent years he has become fascinated by the Overmountain Men and has developed several images after hiking the Overmountain Victory Trail in 2008. Giclee prints of "John Sevier and the Wataugans" can be purchased on canvas or paper online at richardluce.com.