

THE MONTGOMERY EXPEDITION OF 1760

On February 2, 1760, the day following the Long Cane massacre and the day before the first attack by the Cherokee on Fort Ninety Six, word reached Charleston and Governor Lyttelton of the expected assault on the frontier. The governor and council met and agreed that an urgent request for aid be sent to the governments of New York, North Carolina, and Virginia (Meriwether 1940:222-25). Other measures were taken on a local level, such as the raising of the pay of the rangers, and increasing the bounty for male Cherokee scalps to 72 shillings. An additional regiment was attempted to be raised, with Colonel Richardson operating out of Ninety Six in an unsuccessful effort at securing enough men (Meriwether 1940:226-28).

By March 15th word had been received that New York was responding to the plea of Governor Lyttelton for help, and that 600 troops of the Royal Scots and 600 of Montgomery's Highlanders were preparing to embark for South Carolina (SCG, March 15, 1760). On April first these troops arrived in Charleston in:

His Majesty's Ship Albany, ...from New-York, with 6 Tranports and a Victualier having on board 1200 pick'd Men, fent hither by Major-General Amherst to act against the Cherokees, under the Command of the Hon. Archibald Montgomery, Efq., Colonel of the 77th Regiment of Foot. Thefe Troops confift of 600 Men of His Majesty's 1ft. Regiment of Foot called the Royal Scotch, and 600 of Col. Montgomery's Highlanders. (SCG, April 7, 1760.)

On April 6th and 7th these regular troops marched for Moncks Corner. However, it would be seven more weeks before the slowly moving machine would reach Ninety Six and the Carolina back country. Meanwhile, on May 8th, near

Ninety Six, Robert Goudy's son was captured by the Indians. We can imagine what steps Goudy may have taken to have his son released, for he was well acquainted with the Indians through his trading center. Fortunately, for motives we can only guess at today, the boy was released a week after his capture (Corkran 1962:203). In order to help reduce such incidents, the slowly moving mechanism necessary for supporting an army was grinding away at the red tape. In order to assist Montgomery's army with movement of supplies, the assembly enacted an ordinance for impressment of wagons, horses and drivers, and Montgomery's force:

marching by way of the Congarees, reached Ninety Six on the 25th of May. Here preparations were made and the expedition reorganized for the march into the enemy's country. Richardson retired from the command of the provincials and Montgomery took three hundred and fifty rangers and foot soldiers, leaving the others to guard the frontier (Meriwether 1940:228).

Montgomery was at Ninety Six only three days, until May 28th, when he left for the Cherokee country. The expedition consisted of Montgomery's Highlanders (the 77th Highlander Regiment), in full Highland dress with drums and pipes, the First Royal Regiment of Foot (4 battalion companies), and the grenadier and light-infantry companies of these regiments, rangers, provincials, and Catawba Indians (SCG, April 7, 1760; Lawson 1963:74; SCA, The Amherst Letters, Montgomery to Amherst, May 1760: E472), (Frontispiece). From camp at Ninety Six Montgomery wrote Amherst and expressed his opinion of those provincials with the expedition:

We have not A single man with us that is of any consiquence in the Province Their Regt. of 1000 Men consists of about rightly the half or more good for Nothing,...there are About four hundred Rangers here, I intend to carry three hundred of the men with me...(SCA, The Amherst Letters, Montgomery to Amherst, May 24, 1760.)

At the Cherokee town of Little Keowee, which Montgomery's force stumbled on by mistake, the light infantry company of the Royal Highlanders was assigned to enter the Indian houses and put them to death with the bayonet, which they promptly did (SCG, June 10, 1760). In describing the incident James Grant reported that "We came upon them like light'ning", and the action of the Highlanders and Royals on this and other occasions, along with the flashing red of the plaid tartans and other parts of the Highlander and Royal uniforms, prompted the Catawba Indians to refer to Montgomery's force as the "great red warriors" (SCG, June 4, 1760). Sugar Town and other Cherokee Lower Towns were burned and their crops destroyed, and many bear and buffalo hides were taken from the villages by the troops (BPRO in SCA, XXVIII, Bull to the Board, June 17, 1760:373-74, SCG, June 14, 1760).

With the Lower Towns taken care of by his burning and destruction of crops, Montgomery left Fort Prince George for the Middle Towns on the 24th of June (BPRO, XXVIII, Bull to the Board, June 30, 1760:365). On the trip from Ninety Six to Fort Prince George the expedition had Colonel Montgomery marching at the head of the light infantry corps, followed by James Grant's grenadiers, with the First Royal Scots Regiment of Foot and Montgomery's Highlanders in the rear. In front of the army, forming the advanced guard, were over 100 rangers who, it was said, served the army well. When an Indian town was approached, the order of march changed, with the rangers forming in the rear to allow the brunt of the attack to be delivered by the light infantry corps. Now, however, as they left Fort

Prince George for the Middle Towns, there was no road sufficient to allow the use of wagons for transporting baggage and tents for the troops, so these had to be left at Fort Prince George, and everything transported on horseback (BPRO, XXVIII, June 30, 1760:365; SCG, June 14, 1760).

Without the tents, the troops were forced to sleep without shelter, and at night formed themselves into a square around the little tent of Colonel Montgomery so as to provide the maximum protection for their commander. Even this was not sufficient for complete protection, for the Indians would take long range rifle shots at the little tent pitched in the center of a sea of red from 1000 Highlanders and Royals, with some of the spent balls falling close around the tent (SCG, July 12, 1760).

We will not go into the details of the expedition into the Middle Settlement of the Cherokees on the Little Tennessee River, but some of the reports are of particular value in our interpretation of Montgomery's force as it applies to Ninety Six. For instance, we know that on this expedition many of the Cherokees used arrows instead of firearms, and that the Indians were supplied with better fire-power than Montgomery (SCG, July 19, 1760).

They had vastly the advantage of us, with their rifle-barrel'd guns, which did execution at a much greater distance than our muskets; besides they fought us in their usual way, and we gave them our fire by platoons (SCG, July 19, 1760).

This formalized firing by platoons of the Highlanders was quite a contrast to the Indian's and ranger's method of firing from the cover of trees, and prompted the Indians to remark that it was like shooting turkeys (Meriwether 1940:231).

During the engagement that took place between Montgomery's force and

the Cherokees near the town of Echoe, some of the Indians spoke English and were heard giving forth with some very insulting remarks accompanied by loud cries and whoops. The Highlanders and Royals, however, were no doubt also able to muster some appropriate comments of their own, with cheers accompanied by the waving of their Scotch bonnets in the air.

During the action they endeavoured to frighten us with their yelling, but we turned the cheer upon them, with three whirra's and three waves of our bonnets and hats, which they did not seem to relifh (SCG, July 12, 1760).

In the expedition there were 17 killed and 65 wounded of the regular Highlander and Royal troops and officers, with three provincials killed and ten wounded (SCA, The Amherst Letter, Montgomery to Amherst, July 2, 1760; Meriwether 1940:231). During the engagement, the Indians were able to take two drums and a drummer was wounded, possibly attempting to protect his drum (SCG, July 12, 1760; SCA, The Amherst Letters, Montgomery to Amherst, July 2, 1760). Those killed by the Indians were scalped and mutilated, even the eyebrows being scalped and taken as trophies from dead Highlanders, and their regimentals worn by the Cherokees (SCG, July 12, 1760). We can imagine the mortification suffered by the Highlanders as they retreated from what was to be considered an unsuccessful expedition, when they witnessed Cherokees dressed in regimental tartan and bonnet, perhaps tauntingly beating the military drums taken in battle and flaunting the scalps and eyebrows of a slain Highlander (SCG, July 2, 1760). This scene, of a proud Cherokee warrior offering his unique farewell to Montgomery's Highlanders, against the background of the rugged citadel of the Cherokee mountains, was a sight that few of the Highlanders were likely soon to forget,

symbolizing as it did, the failure of Montgomery's effort to subdue the Cherokees.

On their return to Fort Prince George they stayed only a single night and marched the following day, July 2nd, for Fort Ninety Six. On that day, a soldier of the garrison at Fort Prince George, a man of the Third Regiment of Foot, known as "The Buffs", was strolling about the hill where the army had been encamped, and was shot and scalped by four Cherokees (SCG, July 19, 1760; BPRO, XXVIII, July 20, 1760, 374). His death is significant to us today in that it provides for us the identification of the regiment forming the regular garrison at Fort Prince George. On July 4th Captain John Brown from Augusta arrived at Fort Prince George hoping to join Montgomery's expedition, not having learned of his rather short visit to the Cherokee country. Brown had with him 43 Chickasaw Indians, and 13 white men dressed and painted as Indians, who had come to assist Montgomery in his effort against the Cherokee, but they had arrived too late (SCG, July 19, 1760). Montgomery's attempt to subdue the Cherokees had ended in failure and he marched for Charleston.

On August 11th, 1760, Montgomery's Highlanders and the King's First or Royal Scots Regiment of Foot arrived in Charleston and embarked on the transports awaiting to return them to New York (SCG, August 13, 1760). On the 15th, at the application of Lieutenant-Governor Bull, Montgomery ordered four companies of the Royal Regiment of Foot (Royal Scots) to return to the Congarees to help insure the safety of the country (SCG, August 23, 1760; SCA, the Amherst Letters, Montgomery to Amherst, August 15, 1760). The remainder of his force sailed for New York aboard the transports Amherst, Argo, Two-Friends, Carolina, and Swan, with Montgomery sailing aboard the man

of war Zephyr. The Albany and Thornton remained behind to take the 400 Royal Scots to their next assignment after their duty at the Congarees was over (SCG, August 23, 1760).