

Tennesseans in the American Revolution

5.32: Explain the importance of Tennesseans (ie., Overmountain Men) in the Battle of Kings Mountain during the American Revolution.

A group of local militia members decided to organize a large militia and set out to find and fight the British. They called themselves Overmountain Men. The **Overmountain Men** were American frontiersmen from west of the Appalachian Mountains who took part in the American Revolutionary War. While they were present at multiple engagements in the war's southern campaign, they are best known for their role in the American victory at the **Battle of Kings Mountain** in 1780. The term "over mountain" refers to the fact that their settlements were west of, or "over", the Appalachians —the range being the primary geographical boundary dividing the 13 American colonies from the western frontier. The Overmountain Men hailed from parts of Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and what is now Tennessee. The land they gained on the frontier helped open the door to mass westward migration in decades to come.



These men had spent years in the mountains and were very skilled in finding hiding places and just knowing their way around the caves, mountains, and hollows. The British were not used to fighting in or even traveling in this type of terrain. The Overmountain Men fought "Indian Style," meaning they could walk so softly through the forest that no one could hear them. Their years of fighting the Cherokee helped them gain those skills, which helped them to be successful when they fought the British.

The Overmountain Men and their families began to prepare for war. They gathered, or mustered, volunteers to fight. These men intended to protect their land. They mustered over 1,000 volunteers from Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Those that came from Tennessee numbered about 240 men and were led by **John Sevier**. The women also help them get ready for battle. They sewed clothing, and packed and prepared food. They knew that the Overmountain Men might be fighting in the winter so additional clothing and provisions were made ready.



When all of their preparations were done, they met at **Sycamore Shoals**. They didn't have uniforms - they wore their hunting clothes. They carried hunting knives and rifles. Before they left, a minister said a prayer with them and gave them a blessing.

In September of 1780, the Overmountain Men began their journey to find the British army. At **Kings Mountain**, in modern day South Carolina, they found about 1,000 British soldiers. British Major Patrick Ferguson was certain that his troops could defeat the ragged looking volunteers from the mountains. He was very wrong. The Overmountain Men hid behind trees, rocks, and ledges. The Overmountain Men pushed up the mountain and finally, after the third time, they trapped the British army on a ridge. Although both sides fought hard, the settlers defeated the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain on October 7, 1780. The defeat of the British army on Kings Mountain was a surprise to many. This victory discouraged the Loyalists and the British army. This was a turning point for the Revolutionary War in the South.

Resources:

www.ck12.org

<https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/>