



# The American Revolution

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Sons of the American Revolution

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Article 4

## After Boston

**General Clinton Strikes Charleston and Washington; Secures New York**

General Clinton Strikes Charleston and Washington Secures New York: The readers should be aware that it is not the intention nor design of this author to cover all of the battles and events of this war in graphic detail. We will focus attention on a few highlighted events, which characterize the nature of this conflict, and will give the reader a fair “big” picture of what took place. That being said, it became obvious to General Washington that the British fleet had not gone away very far [actually to Halifax, Nova Scotia], and would soon be returning, but to where? Washington’s worse fear was that the British would focus their next attack upon New York. So, 4 April 1776, finds Washington moving his army down out of New England and into the New York colony in preparation for anticipated hostilities.

Washington's army would attempt to secure the New York area and he had appointed General Charles Lee to head up a southern army to oppose any British attempts to attack farther down the coast to the South. The British had organized such an expedition, just as Washington had feared, and would have been active earlier had not bad weather and other logistical misfortunes not delayed them. So, the month of May, 1776, finds part of the British fleet accompanied by Admiral Peter Parker and Major General Henry Clinton just off the coast of the North Carolina colony in the Cape Fear area.

The plan in North Carolina was to land a British force, which would join a Scottish Loyalist force of Carolinians and press an attack on the North Carolina colony.

Major General Charles Cornwallis with a 2,000 man force of Irish "volunteers" was to join this already considerable force. Weather became a factor in this operation as did locating a safe anchorage. General Clinton met with royal governors Josiah Martin of North Carolina and William Campbell of South Carolina to determine a strategy for the coming invasion. General Clinton learned from the royal governors that the Scottish Loyalist force had been met by a Patriot militia force in battle at Moore's Creek bridge and completely routed by the Patriots. In May, 1776, Clinton, Cornwallis and Parker deemed Cape Fear to be an undesirable landing location and had Admiral Parker search the southern American coast for a better location. Admiral Parker recommended Charleston, South Carolina.

Admiral Parker's surveillance ships were spotted by many South Carolinians and reported to John Rutledge, the president of the colony's General Assembly. Rutledge had Colonel William Moultrie begin assembling defenses and organizing armies. Col. Moultrie acquired three infantry regiments, two rifle regiments, an artillery company for

a total force of 2,000 men. This force was soon joined by the arrival of Continental Line army regiments from North Carolina and Virginia totaling 1,900 men. In the coming weeks, this force had its ranks swelled by volunteers pouring in from the back country and totaling about 2,700 in number. General Charles Lee accompanied the North Carolina and Virginia troops, and took over command of the Patriot army upon arrival in Charleston.

It should be clear to the reader at this point, that the initial strike of British forces was to be directed to the southern American port of Charleston, and that a major contest was brewing. So read on, in our next installment and learn about how Britain's strike to The South proceeded.