

The Southern Campaign, 1778–1781



New Hope for the American Revolution

By the time the Battle of Cowpens was fought, the lower South had become the decisive theater of the Revolutionary War. After the struggle settled into stalemate in the north, the British mounted their second campaign to conquer the region. British expeditionary forces captured Savannah in late 1778 and Charleston in May 1780. By late that summer, most of South Carolina was pacified, and a powerful British army under Lord Cornwallis was poised to

sweep across the Carolinas into Virginia. This map traces the marches of Cornwallis (*in red*) and his adversary Nathanael Greene (*in blue*). The campaign opened at Charleston in August 1780, when Cornwallis marched north to confront Horatio Gates at Camden. It ended at Yorktown in October 1781 with Cornwallis' surrender of the main British army in America. In between were months of some of the hardest campaigning and most savage fighting of the war.



The Continental Congress voted to award a gold medal to Morgan and silver medals to Howard and Washington for their service at Cowpens. The medal here (*front and back*) is a reproduction of the one given to Morgan. The original has been lost.