

# Historical Background of Cherokee County and Its Natural Connection with Physical Activity

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**Abstract** South Carolina is a state that is rich in American history, and one of the thirteen original American colonies. Cherokee County boasts the unique quality of having three nationally recognized parks including Cowpens National Battlefield, King's Mountain National Battlefield, and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. To understand how special this feature is to Cherokee County, one must first understand the historical significance of this area of South Carolina, including the nature of the South Carolina backcountry, the life of its citizens, and the battlefields themselves. Numerous studies have shown that human interaction with nature is beneficial for health, as well as the community itself. In addition to physical health, walking in historical sites surrounded by nature is also beneficial for mental health. Natural settings offer sensory inputs that are both mentally restorative and foster creativity within the community. Long-distance walking has the potential to be a non-pharmacological, treatment option for mental illness and/or distress. This form of exercise may be especially beneficial for those who have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety. In addition, walking groups have been seen to be associated with a reduction in depression scores suggesting that a viable treatment option for those with diagnosed depression could include group or individual walking. Moreover, the attraction of historical walking tours is a huge economic benefit for communities. Many times, communities can take advantage of history and its connections through the use of festivals and gatherings. There are many things to consider when beginning to plan a heritage celebration community event. Overall, the business plan should be used to organize, design, and schedule every aspect of the community event. These festivals bring local community members together and can become a tourist attraction bringing others in from far away which promotes social, economic, and cultural benefits to an event. This paper aims to demonstrate how American historical events can connect with the promotion of physical and mental health, inspire civic pride and togetherness, and fuel a community celebration event. The history of our American Revolution in Cherokee County, followed by the physical and mental behavioral benefits historical parks and trails can provide, continuing with the importance of cultivating people's pride in regional history and ending with planning successfully for a local Revolutionary War celebration will be presented.

**Keywords:** American Revolutionary War, Cherokee County, South Carolina, physical activity, long distance walking, mental health, planning a heritage celebration community event

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## 1. Introduction

Numerous studies, such as *The Health Benefits of Small Parks and Greenspaces* and *How Community Environment Shapes Physical Activity*, have shown that human interaction with nature is beneficial for health, as well as the community itself. In addition to physical health, walking in historical sites surrounded by nature is beneficial for mental health as well. Natural settings offer sensory inputs that are mentally restorative, as well as fostering creativity within the community [1]. The

attraction of historical walking tours is also a huge economic benefit for communities.

Long distance walking has the potential to be a non-pharmacological treatment option for mental illness and/or distress [2]. This form of exercise may be especially beneficial for those who have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety [3]. In addition, walking groups have been seen to be associated with a reduction in depression scores suggesting that a viable treatment option for those with diagnosed depression could include group walking or individual walking [3].

When it comes to bringing a community together, history can be a very integral aspect of making that happen.

Bernadette Quinn states, “In creating opportunities for drawing on shared histories, shared cultural practices and ideals, as well as creating settings for social interactions, festivals engender local continuity. They constitute arenas where local knowledge is produced and reproduced, where the history, cultural inheritance and social structures, which distinguish one place from another, are revised, rejected or recreated” [4]. History allows people to connect to not only their community, but others they may not have interacted with through a connected history. Many times, communities can take advantage of history and its connections through the use of festivals and gatherings. These festivals bring local community members together and can become a tourist attraction bringing others in from far away which promotes social, economic, and cultural aspects [4].

South Carolina is a state that is rich in American history, and one of the thirteen original American colonies. Cherokee County boasts the unique quality of having three nationally recognized parks including Cowpens National Battlefield, King’s Mountain National Battlefield, and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. To understand how special this feature is to Cherokee County, one must first understand the historical significance of this area of South Carolina, including the nature of the South Carolina backcountry, the life of its citizens, and the battlefields themselves.

Across the United States of America there are many cities and communities each with a unique heritage. Some fund their economies through manufacturing and physical goods, while others through services, tourism, or more specifically, heritage tourism. This brand of tourism focuses on celebrating the historical happenings and culture within an area in an effort to educate both tourists and the community about the heritage of the area [5]. Often in a local economy that relies on heritage tourism, cities and communities will host events that attract people to the location. To implement these events, there are many financial and marketing strategies that could be considered best practices. Carrying out these strategies effectively will provide the community with a successful event that uplifts the overall economy.

There are many factors to consider when beginning to plan a heritage celebration community event. Overall, the business plan should be used to organize, design, and schedule every aspect of the community event. Special emphasis on the four “Ps” of Product, Price, Placement, and Promotion should be used to strategize the overall fundraising and marketing plan when thinking about the cash flows for the event. Employing these strategies when planning an event to celebrate the rich heritage present in a community will ensure success and leave little room for error [6].

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how American historical events can connect with the promotion of physical and mental health, inspire civic pride and togetherness, and fuel a community celebration event. This research will present the history of our American Revolution in Cherokee County, followed by the physical and mental behavioral benefits historical parks and trails can provide, continuing with the importance of cultivating people’s pride in regional history, and ending with planning successfully for a local Revolutionary War celebration.

## **2. Revolutionary War History in Cherokee County, South Carolina: Settling the Backcountry**

In a time when seafaring trade was an essential part of a functioning economy, only the wealthy claimed ownership of South Carolina’s coastal land, setting aside the less desirable land of the backcountry to the less influential settlers willing to brave the frontier to establish a way of life. The settlement of the backcountry was no small feat. According to Steven Pruitt [7] backcountry settlers were “a human barrier of safety for [the colonial elites] and their property.”

South Carolina’s backcountry was a frontier and presented the risks of any untamed land. The settler’s relationship with the land and fauna was one of strife and reward, yet none so complicated as their newfound interactions with the Native Americans who had lived there for generations. Those who arguably held the greatest impact on the Cherokee County area are those for whom the county is named. Shortly before permanent English settlement into the region, it is estimated that “some 22,500 Cherokee occupied approximately 40,000 square miles of Appalachian Mountains in parts of present-day Georgia, eastern Tennessee, and the western Carolinas” [8]. This would, of course, lead to a conflict-ridden living situation between the Natives and their new English settler neighbors. Trade agreements and somewhat peaceful relations would ensue with commerce in this new cohabitation proving essential to both groups. However, this would soon be followed by inevitable bloodshed which the Carolinians deemed the Cherokee War, festering and resurfacing in battles from 1759 to 1761 [9].

The average Carolina settler was not a member of higher society, but an everyday hardworking person who often found themselves being taken advantage of by their wealthier, more powerful counterparts. Historian Verner Crane describes the attitude of these influential members of colonial society as, “Indifferent, seemingly, to the need of re-peopling and extending the ravaged Carolina frontiers, the Proprietors made use of the land as a lever to secure restoration of their powers in government. The colonists naturally confirmed thereby in their anti-proprietary bias.” [10]. Such a sentiment of inequality at the hands of those in power would inevitably spurn the Revolutionary War.

Contrary to popular belief, people of English origin were not the only ones to settle the Carolina backcountry. In fact, a very notable portion of the population to first arrive were Scot-Irish, immigrating to the New World from the rural lands of Northern Ireland bringing with them rich culture and a frontiersmen mentality. As they were described by historian Bobby Moss, “These early settlers were staunch Presbyterians who were noted for being punctual in attendance at all religious services. They were true and just men in all their dealings, devoted to their religious leaders, and God-fearing and despite this, showed high spirits in business, politics, and celebrations” [11].

Yet, as with all people of the colonies, there would be much division among this group over allegiance in the Revolution. In Billy Kennedy’s historical monograph

which focuses on the Scots-Irish and their influence in the Carolinas, it is stated that “Though many of the Ulster-Scots were loyalists, it must be understood that the Scots-Irish fought on both sides. Sometimes father against son; brother against brother, and neighbor against neighbor were in battle.” [12]. Such was the nature of the American Revolutionary War as a whole, wherein even those of the same ethnicity with mirrored values, origins, religious beliefs, and moral practices differed in their views and labeled themselves as patriot or loyalist.

### 3. The Battle of Cowpens

When picturing battle in the 1700s, one imagines a collection of soldiers, some mounting horses, others on foot lined up in an open field one row after the next marching in succession. The image of the well put together soldier, donning their pressed and matching uniforms is one that remains engrained in the almost collective imagination of the American public. These were not the patriots fighting for the cause of American independence in the Battle of Cowpens. While some of the American rebels appearing in this battle belonged to the Continental Army wearing uniforms in various shades of blue and white carrying issued muskets and bayonets, a significant portion of these men were militia, a ragtag group of mismatched civilians called into battle to defend their homes [13].

Daniel Morgan, one of the most prominent heroes of the Battle of Cowpens, was the individual in charge of the rebel troops. He was a frontiersman himself, born in Virginia and dedicated to American independence from early on [14]. He would deliver a speech to some of the soldiers on the day of the battle which would revitalize their resolve, “My friends in arms, my dear boys, I request you to remember Saratoga, Monmouth, Paoli, Brandywine, and this day you must play your parts for your honor and liberty's cause.” [14]. On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1781, he was faced with less than favorable odds of defeating the British army, led by Banastre Tarleton, which sought to extinguish the last few dying embers of rebellion in the South.

Not all living in the American colonies saw themselves as Americans, as there was no United States of America at that time, only Great Britain and its royal colonies. To many, their existence as British citizens was not only accepted but coveted. In the monograph *Choosing Sides* by Ruma Chopra [15], part of the reasoning employed by the loyalists is described as, “worried about an American future under the reign of power-hungry demagogues who conspired against the true freedoms of the British government. They assumed a grimmer picture of human nature, a greater concern with the consequences of a disordered society, and a deeper sense of indebtedness to Great Britain.” This demonstrates a larger, internalized struggle within South Carolina and the American colonies, wherein neighbors might discover themselves on opposite sides of the battlefield due to differences in beliefs over their future.

This was not a war fought on foreign lands, but in the backyards of soldiers and militiamen. It was a cause to which few could turn a blind eye as it embodied the changing times of the American colonies, forever ushering

its citizens either towards independence or a life under the enduring rule of the British crown. The Battle of Cowpens pitted the trained, prestigious officers of the Royal British Army against a motley group of hardly trained men with rifles, more accustomed to use them for hunting wildlife than taking a human life. These opposing wills would clash in a field, Cowpens, in what would one day be Cherokee County, resulting in a significant victory for the rebels. A culmination of various contributing issues, there would be several reasons why the British forces would ultimately lose, sending Tarleton and the remains of his army into retreat, as Lawrence E. Babits explains in his monograph *A Devil of a Whipping* [16], “diet, cold, humidity, psychological stress, and physical exertion- was pronounced, as virtually all British infantry ceased functioning as combat soldiers.” Of course, victory would not come without losses. However, the casualties would fall disproportionately toward the British side, “More than 800 British troops were killed, wounded or captured. The Americans suffered less than 100 casualties” [17]. As these figures demonstrate, this was a surprisingly thorough victory for the side of the Patriots, setting them up for the future of a successful revolution.

### 4. The Battle of Kings Mountain and the Over-the-Mountain Men

The South Carolina backcountry was the birthplace of many skirmishes in the southern campaign of the Revolutionary War. Just three months prior to the Battle of Cowpens, an engagement that would be known as the Battle of Kings Mountain would take place in Cherokee County. The year 1780 would not be an easy one for the American rebellion cause. It was amid the ugliness of war and its inescapable consequences that South Carolinians found themselves faced with seemingly endless conflict. As historian Wilma Dykeman puts it in her monograph *With Fire and Sword* [18] “As accounts of lootings, burnings, and killings circulated through the countryside, fears and hatreds intensified with each embellished version. Vengeance became a way of life.” Such a harrowing environment would set the stage for yet another clash of the wills, pitting the scrappy Patriots against a British commander and his loyalist troops.

Leading the British regiment in the region was Major Patrick Ferguson, appointed by the famed General Charles Cornwallis. He was tasked with recruiting and training Carolina loyalists to prepare them to join British forces in putting down the rebellion in the colonial south [19]. However, it would be the British who would find themselves in retreat as Patriot forces scouted Major Ferguson and his men, seizing the opportunity to go on the offensive. This was a surprising move considering the heavy losses South Carolina had seen in 1780 alone, wherein the important port city of Charleston was lost in defeat to the British [20]. Ferguson's troops were not soldiers from the British motherland, but colonists who had pledged loyalty to the crown instead. The betrayal likely felt by the Patriots toward their Loyalist brethren would heighten the emotion and set the stage for an epic clash of wills.

One such Loyalist who would witness the siege of Charleston and Battle of King's Mountain is Lieutenant Anthony Allaire. He served under the regiment of Major Ferguson, following him dutifully across the state of South Carolina in the southern campaign of 1780. Allaire would leave behind a most helpful look into the experience of the Tories who fought alongside the British troops in his diary entries. This enlightening firsthand account offers a glimpse into Major Ferguson's military techniques, marking on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1780, that, "This day Col. Ferguson got the rear guard in order to do his King and country justice, by protecting friends, and widows, and destroying rebel property; also, to collect livestock for the use of the army, all of which we effect as we go, by destroying furniture, breaking windows, etc." [21]. Such a description allows one to view the Loyalist perspective and motive for participating on the side of the British, as well as their justification of the pillaging of colonial homes and resources. To them, it was a matter of justice, a rightful response to the active rebellion of their colonies and the military tactics of men such as Major Ferguson was a welcome representation of these beliefs.

The battle itself would take place on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1780. As Lieutenant Allaire reported, at mid-afternoon a force of 2,500 rebels would attack Major Ferguson and his men, of whom there were only 800 [21]. It is described as a scene of chaos, with gunfire, smoke, and hand to hand combat taking place on the craggy terrain of King's Mountain. The rebels would pinch their opponents in, attacking from multiple sides resulting in the inevitable fall of Major Patrick Ferguson in his final battle [22].

It would be remiss to recall the tale of the Battle of King's Mountain without the inclusion of one of its most notable and inspiring participants, the Overmountain Men. It is somewhat poetic that one group of Patriots would emerge from the wooded frontier of the mountainside to pose a fiery threat against the British and their loyalist allies. A striking embodiment of the spirit of American patriotism and the Carolina backcountry, this group of men, as stubborn and unruly as the wilderness from whence they came, would take arms in this fateful battle to protect their homes and to secure their freedom from foreign rule. Major Ferguson had secured the Overmountain Men's opposition when he sent warning that he would make their homes his next target if they did not sign oaths of loyalty or cease their assistance to the rebel cause [23]. On horseback and at times on foot, the Overmountain Men would do just what their name suggests, make the difficult and treacherous trek over the Appalachian Mountains to join their rebel brothers, aiding significantly to the victory at King's Mountain and, in turn, the victory of American independence. This weighty contribution is put elegantly by William Caldwell in the *Journal of the American Revolution*, "For the rest of the war, the shadow of Overmountain Patriots haunted the plans of British commanders who sought to hold the western backcountry" noting their lasting impact and legacy [24].

The victory at King's Mountain and the one to follow months later at Cowpens would hold a lasting impact on the momentum of the war. These two tales of war saw opposite circumstances. In King's Mountain Patriot forces would close in on their enemy to deliver a much-needed

win against one of the most hated British military leaders in the southern campaign with the fall of Ferguson and his loyalist troops. Meanwhile, Tarleton's regime had spent much time in pursuit of rebel forces only to suffer defeat in their inevitable confrontation at Cowpens proving the rebel's power against trained British Redcoats as well. Yet, these battles of the American Revolutionary War contributed in the same way toward rekindling the flame of independence. In a sort of domino effect, the victories at King's Mountain and Cowpens would play the part of a virus, irrevocably contagious. The National Park Service credits these decisive events as being "political and psychological victories for the hearts and minds of the population, in effect blunting recruitment of Loyalists", even going on to say that the surge in morale from these battles would be felt greatly in the North as well [25].

## 5. The Legacy

Inside Cherokee County, three historic nationally recognized parks stand amidst the sprawling community of fields, homes, businesses, and even a limestone quarry or two. The battlefields of King's Mountain and Cowpens are currently under national preservation efforts to maintain the integrity and history of these vastly significant Revolutionary War grounds. Likewise, the Overmountain Victory National Historic trail runs through the heart of Gaffney, winding its way over the original course throughout South and North Carolina, and parts of Tennessee following closely to the original path that the Overmountain Men would have taken on their venture to King's Mountain. Places that once saw bloodshed now remain peacefully undisturbed by the throes of war. These are protected lands that stand as both a reminder of the past and some of the only remaining physical testaments to the combat that defined the very nation they are a part of. Thus, a very important question must be asked: How are these battlefields to be remembered and celebrated?

As the past grows further away, there can be a certain complexity behind keeping points of historical significance as authentic as possible, yet adapting methods by which they might be celebrated to keep these locations contemporarily relevant. The history must be kept alive, constantly reinvigorated but in a manner that retains historical truth. In sacrificing accurate historical accounts of these monuments to encourage entertainment, the legacy of the soldiers who fought upon those grounds, and especially those who lost their lives there, is misrepresented. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that entertainment is an exceptional tool to garner public interest in history. This is a delicate balance to maintain but not an impossible one.

Often the best way to entice someone about a subject that feels removed is to make it into a personal experience. Simply telling someone about something that happened hundreds of years ago will not have the same effect as immersing them into the event you wish to educate them about. Given the strenuous restrictions that surround national battlefields to ensure their preservation, it can be very difficult to orchestrate such an event on the battlefields themselves, but may be better suited to a more centralized location. This does not mean that attendees



would be deprived from a connection to the battlefields which are being celebrated, however. Every National Park has a dedicated and passionate staff who love sharing their knowledge about history. Contacting these staff and requesting a representative's presence at a historical celebratory event would be conducive to making a personal connection. This way, the general public can receive information about the parks from the experts, putting a friendly face with the locations, and, by extension, increasing their likelihood of further exploring everything that these parks have to offer.

With such an event, where history is being brought from the past to the present, the legacy of the Patriots, the Tories, the Redcoats, and the Revolution can be maintained. Cherokee County and other historically rich counties dotting America's Eastern lands, bear the pleasure and responsibility of keeping the legacy of this history alive. The creation of a day to come together in comradery and celebrate the sacrifice and victories that allowed for this nation's continued existence, will allow the Revolutionary War history of Cowpens, Kings Mountain, and the Overmountain Victory Trail to endure through time.

## 6. Connection of Outdoor Space with Physical Activity and Well-being

### 6.1. Health Benefits Associated with Walking and Running

In recent years health officials have become increasingly concerned with the rise in physical inactivity in America. To combat this inactivity, the United States Department of Health and Human Services have claimed that through walking, citizens will reap the benefits of regular physical activity [26]. This public health crusade has been embodied by federal plans and initiatives to increase awareness of the health benefits that are associated with consistent levels of physical activity [27].

Additionally, it has been noted that certain racial/ethnic minorities are at a higher risk for physical inactivity [27]. There are many different factors that induce barriers for these groups like lack of transportation, lack of income, opportunity, and cost [26]. High levels of inactivity lead to a rise in heart disease, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer, and higher mortality rates [26]. To avoid these conditions, there have been many recommendations made to provide options to reduce the risks altogether. The Center for Disease Control have recommended that individuals accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity activity on most days of the week [26]. The world population has become more urban, and in turn has also become more obese and more at risk for chronic disease [28]. Physical inactivity is considered the fourth leading risk factor for mortality [29]. Because of this, physical activity has the potential to play an increasingly important role in the health of many Americans [28].

The findings from Meredith et al. [30] concluded that ten to thirty minutes of walking outdoors was sufficient to decrease blood pressure and markers of stress (e.g., cortisol levels). Findings from this study showed significant positive health benefits from walking in the

urban "green" district on emotional well-being, stress physiology, and faster cognitive reaction times post-walk. Other studies have shown positive effects of walking on health outcomes [31]. Walking has been found to generate positive psychological effects, as well as lower frustration and increase brain activity [1]. Greater walking distances have been associated with higher self-rated wellness and health outcomes [31]. Hanson et al. [32] performed a study on the perceived benefits of walking and extended their findings to include walking groups. The meta-analysis showed that there were significant reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure, resting heart rate, body fat percentage, total cholesterol as well as improvement in depression scores. Moreover, walking is possibly the easiest and least expensive way to get involved in physical activity [33].

It is important to have plenty of locations for outdoor physical activity in a community to help drive healthy active lifestyles. Also important in considering various forms of physical activity that occur in environmental settings is running's effect on physical and mental health. Running is considered to have important positive implications for mental health, particularly depression and anxiety [34]. Studies have shown that runners have a 25-40% reduced risk of premature mortality, as well as significantly lower rates of cardiovascular disease and certain cancers [35].

MacBride-Stewart et al. [36] examined what the preferential running surfaces and environments were for off-road runners. Testimonies from the participants indicated that the "wilderness philosophy" has a major effect on running participation and adherence. Essentially, exercising in remote areas away from people provides the opportunity for immersion in the beauty and serenity of nature. In relation to psychological considerations, MacBride-Stewart et al. [36] highlights that understanding nature [in relation to exercising] as producing a positive affect for running is consistent with a hedonic approach, which defines well-being in terms of pleasure and happiness. Those who frequently participate in running events deem three aspects of the environment that are considered important for their exercise settings: aesthetics and feeling, exploration and adventure, and flexibility and responsiveness. These concepts are normally seen through off-road trails and running paths. Running in areas of green space and natural landscapes may not only benefit individuals physically and mentally but may also promote preservation and conservation of natural landscapes. This may lead to more positive impacts with regards to litter and other environmental issues that may be prevalent in community parks [36].

### 6.2. Impact of Parks on Health

Parks are important assets that can link recreation and public health [37]. Since they offer so many benefits, there has been increasing recognition of the value that parks and nature provide for human health [26] and there has been a 4% increase in the number of visitors at state parks since 2009 [37]. Features other than size that may influence park activity include accessibility, availability, quantity of amenities, surrounding land use, and organized events. In this same study, it was determined that the greatest way to

serve people in communities through park usage is to host organized events [38].

The experience of nature is an important antidote to stress, which can lead to immune system issues and illnesses [1]. Reviews have identified evidence of health benefits related to exposure to parks and other green spaces including improved mental health, reduced prevalence of type II diabetes, and reduced mortality [39]. By providing opportunities for physical activity, parks can facilitate physical and psychological health benefits [40]. When evaluating the mental health benefits of walking relating to the outdoor environment, Mau et al. [41] identified that long distance walking showed beneficial effects on various aspects of mental disability such as stress, depression, and anxiety. In this systemic review, two theories that explain these phenomena, positive psychology and the “notion of green exercise”, will be highlighted.

Aside from the mental health benefits associated with parks, it has been found that adults that visit parks obtain more physical activity than those who do not [28]. As stated earlier, minorities have lower rates for utilizing parks. Therefore, park outreach and programming may be necessary to encourage these lower income and less active residents to come to parks. Since they have been around for so long, the “parks are valued and recognized as community assets and spaces for both tolerance and distinction” [42]. Parks allow for communities to become united in a single location.

The natural setting of a park offers free nature experiences, and these are found to enhance creativity by evoking new ways of thinking [1]. This outdoor location provides community members with opportunities that distinctly contrast with those offered in indoor spaces [42]. These variation of natural settings of parks can provide respite from the highly focused attention needed for most tasks in school or at work [1]. Parks can be used as locations where families spend time together [42]. In addition, parks offer many options for interacting with the nature outside and other community members who are there. With all the variations offered by parks, they supply diverse opportunity for physical activity as well as mental health benefits [26] and is the reason why parks are perceived as an essential element with a positive impact on the surrounding communities [37]. With all the various activity opportunities, parks transform into social hubs that aren't limited based on age, gender, or race [42]. Because parks allow for this diversity, they have been deemed as strategies for increasing levels of physical activity across many different population sectors [26]. These places provide a safe, easily accessible location where they can thrive. Parks contribute to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of communities [37].

### **6.3. Impact of Local Historical Sites on Physical Activity Engagement**

In the summary article of walking in Virginia Woolf's footsteps, Plate [43] discusses the benefits of history on public health. Historical sites and tourism trails can invite its visitors to tread on the trail of some world-famous or locally known celebrity [43]. These sites are more aesthetically pleasing to participate in walking than

perhaps a regular gym. By exploring history, they are more willing to follow the footsteps of someone famous. The physical act of walking around historical sites adds aerobic activity to the daily routine for individuals, while learning about their home state [33]. The reason these sites are so popular is because there is an “added value of a visit to the writer's sites which is to be found in the physical experience of the space and place” [43]. Tourists get more from physically experiencing the place than just reading about it. These sites not only provide physical value for community members, but also a mental value as well. By experiencing the history in one's culture, they can connect more to the past. This allows for a deeper connection to the community. Plate asserts that physical exercise specifically in historical sites is “allowing the mind free rein” [43]. Many historical sites have turned the cultural product into something “for consumption, enabling them to consume the urban (or rural) landscape as they purchase the tour” [43]. The historical sites go hand in hand with the rise in the economy of communities who can prosper from their rich history. Therefore, historical walking tours are beneficial. They benefit the individual's health, but also the community they are located within. By experiencing these tours, they “give the walker a sense of place in history, culture and the world” [43].

## **7. The Importance of Heritage Celebrations for Tourism and Community Spirit**

Heritage tourism is defined by The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the U.S. as, “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present” [5], and annually Americans spend \$171 billion on cultural or heritage tourism. Bringing tourists to an area grows a community's economy because spending at local restaurants, shops, gas stations, etc. increases while also increasing the property value within the community. Based on this knowledge, communities may consider how to bring heritage tourists to their area and the answer is simple. Plan community events that celebrate the unique culture and history of the area. As quoted by the American Bus Association, “heritage tourists travel to unique destinations... destinations that are off the beaten path” [5]. Therefore, heritage tourists are looking for extremely niche, unique events to attend and interesting ways to celebrate culture, heritage and history.

Another reason why heritage tourism is considered as the basis for small community events is the importance of preserving history. The American Historical Association affirms, “history must serve, however imperfectly, as our laboratory, and data from the past must serve as our most vital evidence in the unavoidable quest to figure out why our complex species behaves as it does in social settings,” [44]. Understanding why dramatic American historical events such as the Revolutionary War can be grasped through events in small communities, however seemingly small the community involvement. These events involved most of the United States during their time but were

initiated in small towns through whisperings and pragmatic approaches. Without the small communities' involvement, these events would have never come to fruition. Celebrating the history in these areas through small community events will not only highlight the history in these areas, but increase tourists' knowledge of American history as a whole and inspire individuals to have their own part in history with the small things they do each day.

Starting to plan a community event that celebrates the area's heritage will seem daunting at first, but following the steps previously listed will break it down into easy-to-follow steps and strategies. It is recommended that during the process of planning a community event, organizers keep their original goal in mind, to celebrate the heritage in their community, and in doing so, uplift the community. Doing this will help guide decisions that preserve, celebrate, and educate both the community and tourists about the local heritage. In preparing for a community wide historical celebration, having a full business plan followed by a detailed checklist can thoroughly cover all that is important in ensuring a fun and successful event for the participants.

### 7.1. Planning, Financial, and Marketing Strategies in Coordinating a Historical Community Event: Detailed Checklist

Event preparation is a major undertaking, regardless of the size of the gathering. The simplest events need meticulous preparation and coordination. Everything from setting up an exact budget to marketing an event should be carefully considered early in the planning stages. The first step is defining the goals and objectives of the event. Determine how this event will assist in achieving the goals. Make the objectives as clear as possible. It is critical to create a specific set of goals that will help achieve the overall aim plus attract help and support by the local citizens and local government.

As soon as specific aims and objectives are identified, a preliminary plan can be developed to indicate how to meet the objectives set [45]. There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to setting up preliminary event information; however, it is essential to include the following:

- √ Date/s: Pinpoint the specific date/s and identify the best time of year
- √ Prospective attendees: How many people will be there? Is this a local, regional or gathering? When making plans, think about the demographics of the audience. Knowing the target audience is crucial.
- √ Location: Where does the event take place? Outside or inside? Develop a shortlist of locations and venues that are appropriate for your event.
- √ The type of event: Is the event based on celebrating Revolutionary War history in a particular county? Or is it an active event, like a color run?
- √ Event cost: Brainstorm the event cost to guarantee it is happening in the first place. Do not charge an attendance fee if you wish to avoid increasing your license costs or entering into a formal contract to offer products and services with associated risks if they are not supplied or are of poor quality [46].
- √ Budget: Creating a budget is a critical early step. Make a budget and know exactly where your money is coming from so you can set aside a little extra for unforeseen needs. Start by creating a line-item cost breakdown [47]. Being able to financially adapt to event changes during the planning stage is key.
- √ Creative Design: The graphic design for printed and online materials, such as schedules, flyers, collateral, registration, and signage, as well as everything required for an event website or application, is done by creative designers. For bigger events, working with an event design firm is a possible option.
- √ Check-In and Registration: When it comes to registering, these people oversee everything from setting up the system to register for the event to interacting with the future participants.
- √ Sponsors: Attendees report that 74% feel better about the business, brand, product, or service they learned about as a result of attending an event. Make a list of potential sponsors for the event [48].
- √ Exhibitors: An exhibitor package is an option to maintain good connections. A specified amount of space is allocated for exhibitors to occupy, brand, and interact with guests as part of each respective exhibition.
- √ Technology for increasing productivity: Events planners must use project management tools to remain organized. Even if events are difficult to plan, project management software makes the process a little easier. Trello has a variety of event planning templates to help you get started.
- √ Utilizing a smartphone application: According to Hakim et al. [49], event apps are used by 83% of event planners. Using an event app, you may streamline communications while also improving the overall event experience for attendees.
- √ Attendees may use a mobile app, such as the one you can design with Guidebook, to view timetables, create bespoke agendas, and more.
- √ Create a logo: Your event's branding, which includes everything from the name and theme to the website and on-site aesthetics, sets the tone for the planned event. Planners should aim to develop a distinct personality to come to mind when people think of the community event. Sixty percent of millennials in the United States want businesses to provide similar experiences regardless of whether they interact with them online, in person, or over the phone [50].
- √ Post event evaluation: How will you know whether the event was a success?
  - Analyses based on data [51]: What was the total number of tickets sold? How much did it cost each person to attend? How many new customers attended the event?
  - Post-event surveys [52]: Surveys allow the organizers to assess how participants feel about the event, which can help pinpoint the event's strong and poor elements.



- Buzz on social media and the internet: Are attendees using their social media outlets to talk about the event? Also, go through the comments e.g., is there a lot of praise in the comments? Were there any other issues that came up frequently?

Before communicating the ultimate event, it will be important to highlight the benefit to the local community.

- √ Bringing people from different backgrounds and places together: even a low-profile event can bring the local community together by giving a place and focus for activities. Involvement and engagement are important to the success of any event.
- √ Increasing the area's visibility
- √ Giving back to the community and offsetting negative events: in addition to the usual headaches of traffic and parking, a large event might bring increased noise. For every beneficial effect, there will be something that has an adverse effect on local life. Event organizers must be aware of this and compensate by giving back to the local communities via charity contributions and volunteer labor.

## 7.2. Planning, Financial, and Marketing Strategies in Coordinating a Historical Community Event: Business Plan

It is a good idea to start with creating a business plan. Matthew Wolf, the head of advisory and senior consultant for Joorney Business Plans reveals that a business plan, “forces you to think critically about how your business will achieve success, while also keeping you accountable,” [53]. Planners should begin a rough idea of how they would like the community event to go, as well as what they will feature there. They need to think about what will make the event successful, or, in other words, how the event will positively impact the community. Planning the event through this lens keeps a standard of benefitting the community and aids them in decision making processes. The CEO of Sunrise Banks, David Reiling, believes that in a business plan, “you should be able to clearly state who you are, what you do, and why you are relevant,” [53]. Similarly, in a business plan for a community event the planners should describe the why for the event, what the event will be, and the value it will add to the community, or its relevance.

According to McKeever [54] in “How to Write a Business Plan” business plans help to improve the odds of success. He mentions, “most new, small businesses don’t last very long. And most small businesses don’t have a business plan.” While a community event is not a small business, running it like one can be an effective strategy to give the event a good chance of success. It is often difficult for the planners of a community event to become and stay organized and starting with a business plan can aide an organization effectively. As a result, there are key parts of a regular business plan that should be considered for a community event. These include the executive summary, event description, industry analysis and trends (for the type of event), target market, competition, strategic position and risk assessment, marketing plan,

operations, management and organization, development, milestones, exit plan, and the financials [55]. Although the executive summary comes first in the business plan, it should be written last. The executive summary gives an overview of all the planning for an event and entices those who may be interested in being involved or investing to do so [55].

The next step in a business plan is the company description. But for an occasion, it would be an event description. A company description details the legal status, ownership, products or services, company mission, and milestones achieved. For an event this could be restructured to detail the planners and planning behind the gathering, what the event will produce or provide for the company and its mission, and what has already been implemented to work towards the event goal [55].

After the event description, the business plan should include an industry analysis, description of the target market, competition, strategic position, and risk assessment. While this would be extremely detailed for an actual business, most of these components could be summarized in a S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the historic event. Event planners must think critically about the various factors affecting the event performance. Then, organizers can decide which factors they have a greater degree of control over and plan accordingly [56]. Within the S.W.O.T. analysis, internal factors (cash flow, labor, resources, etc.) will be categorized under strengths and weaknesses, while external factors (weather, competition, supply chain issues, general location, target market etc.) will be opportunities and threats [56].

As soon as the S.W.O.T. analysis is complete, the next portion of the business plan will detail the marketing strategy. As the marketing strategy is established, it is necessary to consider marketing theory. This proposes that for a business (i.e., community event) to achieve superior performance, there are two marketing activities that must take place, “the adoption of appropriate strategic behaviors and targeting of the appropriate marketing segments,” [57]. In other words, developing the most effective promotion methods, and promoting the occasion to the appropriate audience is essential. The success of the event depends on the correct analysis of these factors as well as the target market’s available access to the marketing medium.

To market a community celebration of heritage, the event coordinators, specifically the marketing or advertising team, should first consider the marketing mix. The marketing mix is typically broken down into the four components of Product, Price, Placement, and Promotion. Thinking within the framework of the marketing mix helps advertisers to think more deeply about their event and what they will want to convey to their captive audience. As the marketing team thinks of the first “P,” product, they should think about the product that will be offered, who to sell it to, and their new product policy [6]. To tweak this for a community event, the planners should think about what the participants will gain from the event, who the event appeals to, and based on research, how they expect their event to perform in the given region.

As far as the second “P,” price, planners should consider the price point for participation as well as the



possibilities of a blanket price or varying price that is dependent on age, student status, gender, or many other factors [6].

While planning a community occasion placement is another major factor in marketing to consider. The correlation between participation and ease of travel to an event is high. People are less likely to attend an event that is difficult for them to travel to. There are many other factors to be considered for the event location in addition to ease of travel such as safety and overall affluence of the area. Based on the image and experience desired from the heritage celebration, planners should carefully pick the event location so that is accessible, safe, and possesses an enjoyable feel. [6].

Promotion is the last “P,” of the marketing mix and of high importance. Without promotion, no one in or outside of the community will know about the community event. When marketing community events, many different channels of promotion should be used and specifically tailored for the target demographic. If the event is targeted towards a crowd that is 40 years of age or older, local radio stations, television stations, newspapers, and Facebook should be used. On the other hand, if the target demographic is younger than 40 years old there should be more emphasis on a variety of social media platforms and community groups that are held online, with a lighter emphasis on television, radio, and newspaper.

For each advertising medium there are important benefits and best practices to consider. First, social media is different than any other marketing medium. Often, it is easy for marketers to become discouraged when social media posts do not perform well. However, many more people will see social posts and take in the information than will actually interact with them. For example, Levi Strauss has used social media to offer deals that only pertained to certain regions, and in these posts interacted with 400 people. However, 1,600 participants would show up to their event, showing “social media’s word-of-mouth effect” [58]. Although Levi Strauss had much less engagement than they hoped for, ultimately their social media presence brought in higher revenues. This was a result of their consistency, which is the main ingredient for social media success. Consistent posts make the captive audience feel as if they are interacting with the organization and encourage engagement which will ultimately grow the social media account. Another important aspect when using social media marketing is to be unique. Social media users are bombarded daily with post after post. Therefore, if an organization wants their community event ad to stand out, it must be unique.

The next section of the business plan is the operations, management, organization, development, and exit. One of the most important parts is to assemble a successful team. A study by the Association for Computing Machinery indicates, “Our results confirm the importance of team diversity with respect to player roles and show that diversity has varying effects on team effectiveness” [59]. Diversity should be a priority during the team building process. Each person has a different perspective on the event and can handle areas during the planning process that pertain to their expertise. Within a team, responsibilities should be divvied up into sub-teams. Sub-teams can be based upon the forte of each individual,

which ensures each team member has a responsibility that plays to their strong suit. By dividing the team into sub-groups, there can be many different plans for the operations and exit plan of the event. This assures that each seemingly miniscule portion of the event has been planned and thoroughly thought through.

The final and possibly most important portion of the business plan is the financial section. Without good financial practices for an event, it likely will not occur. First, the organization, company, group, etc. that is initiating the event must consider their ability to contribute financially. Then, costs should be accounted for. There are often hidden fees that organizers may not consider. For example, the event may require first responder assistance the day of or before, and clean-up crews or maintenance fees from the event facility as well as the city or county. Insurance for vendors, and whether or not the organization will cover these or not, should be considered. There are many possible expenses that the planners may not initially think of, so discussing financials with a city official, an accountant, an individual with knowledge of the city’s requirements, and someone who has planned a similar event are highly recommended.

In the case of a negative budget projection, fundraising and donations should be considered. This should begin with a fundraising audit. The components of the fundraising audit analyze where financially the event is now, what financial goals are in place for the event, and the methods that will be put in place to achieve these goals [60]. Then, the organization should complete a P.E.S.T. analysis (political, economic, sociocultural, and technological), discussing the factors that have a probability of affecting their fundraising endeavors [60]. For a small community event based around historical tourism, the list may be small or non-existent in some areas; however, it is vital that the group takes an honest look at all big picture occurrences that their fundraising efforts may depend upon. Examples of political factors would be decisions the city or county council have made regarding heritage tourism or this particular kind of event. Economic factors could be the number of businesses located within proximity to the event that will donate, or the overall wealth of the community and their willingness to donate. Sociocultural factors to be considered are the openness of the community to the event. Additionally, planners should consider the extraneous events happening in the community and how that may affect attendance at their event. Lastly, technological factors that affect fundraising efforts are the methods through which money can be collected. Is the fundraising target demographic open or willing to use Venmo or PayPal, or are they more inclined to write a check, and how will that donation be processed regardless of the method?

When fundraising, it is important to remember that there are other ways to donate besides monetarily. Event organizers must consider how they can ask people to donate their time to work the event. In addition, there may be physical goods needed for the occasion and a local business in town may be willing to provide these for free. For example, if snacks or drinks are needed, often grocery stores will provide these items. Lastly, the organization needs to decide how they will reinvest any profits made from the event. As the event will be focused on historical

tourism the group needs to think of any historical organizations they can give back to in the community, or how they can reinvest the money to increase overall historical knowledge about and within the community.

## 8. Summary

**Revolutionary War History in Cherokee County, South Carolina.** Cherokee County has a very valuable Revolutionary War history within which the Battle of Kings Mountain, the Battle of Cowpens, and the Overmountain Victory Trail all took place. One of the ways in which the county may benefit from this heritage is through creating an annual event in the National Parks. Overall, the goal is to get the community together and encourage learning and healthy activity. This event could also lead to cultural tourism as it continues to grow and develop. It would enrich the community in its history while also bringing attention to the City of Gaffney.

**Walking and Health.** Fewer than half of Americans engage in sufficient physical activity [38]. The Center for Disease Control recommends that individuals get at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day. Walking is a low impact, easy, accessible way to achieve this goal. Walking helps reduce the risk of chronic conditions, facilitate creativity, and reduce stress. Therefore, it is important to have locations that foster physical activity. This is where natural park settings come into play. Parks provide locations where individuals can enjoy physical activity in nature as well as allow people to feel closer to their community. With more parks becoming available, there has been massive support and recognition as these locations are valuable to the benefit of human health. One of the reasons parks are so highly regarded is that they offer greater variation compared to indoor locations. It has been found that adults that visit parks obtain more physical activity [28] due largely to the natural setting parks provide. Historical sites in natural settings can also be extremely beneficial in attracting public interest. The National Park Service is aiming to get the communities active while advocating the rich history behind the park. Along with their new health initiatives, the National Parks Services are also tailoring to the younger generation and getting them involved. O'Dell [61] specifies that, "Connecting young people with our country's great outdoors will provide opportunities for learning and fun ways to get active, as well as opportunities to connect to art, literature, and history in the parks".

**Historical Ancestry and Tourism.** For the historical significance of an area to resonate with visitors, it needs to be a memorable experience. A city like Gaffney, SC has many historical attractions, and community employees and members should work to create tourist attractions that drive people to the historical landmarks within the community, thus growing the city economy. Heritage tourism invites sightseers to plan an excursion to celebrate the history in a particular area. To grow heritage tourism, historic locations, landmarks, and happenings must be identified within the region. This may be historic battlefields, farms, buildings, or simply a rich, longstanding culture within a community. Experiencing a community's local heritage can be achieved by holding a

community event that highlights the heritage in a unique way while increasing historical tourism. When planning and coordinating a community event that celebrates their unique history, the first step is to get organized and decide on an event planning approach to accomplish all that is necessary to plan for an up-and-coming public occasion.

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