**Standard 8-2:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the causes of the American Revolution and the beginnings of the new nation, with an emphasis on South Carolina’s role in the development of that nation.

**Enduring Understanding:**

The events surrounding the American Revolution transformed British colonists into American citizens. To understand South Carolina’s pivotal role in this process, the student will …

**8-2.5 Summarize the role of South Carolinians in the course of the American Revolution, including the use of partisan warfare and the battles of Charleston, Camden, Cowpens, Kings Mountain and Eutaw Springs.**

**It is essential for students to know:**

Key conflicts of the American Revolution took place in South Carolina and affected the state and the outcome of the Revolutionary War.

American forces thwarted the British attempt to split the colonies and won a victory at Saratoga. This victory was a turning point in the war because it led to an American alliance with France. Soon after their defeat at Saratoga, New York, the British turned their attention to South Carolina, where they hoped to find a large number of Loyalists. Although the first attempt by the British to capture Charleston had been thwarted by the tides and the resilience of the palmetto log fort that became known as Fort Moultrie, the British were successful the second time around. Charleston was under siege by the British land forces for many days. Charleston harbor was blockaded and supply lines were cut off. Patriot troops, trapped on the peninsula, were forced to surrender to the British [May 1781]. Other Patriot forces in South Carolina also surrendered and were paroled. The British hoped that South Carolina Loyalists and the large numbers of South Carolinians who remained neutral would help them control the state and contribute to their winning of the war. However, the British soon changed the terms of the parole, requiring Patriots to take up arms against their countrymen at the same time that British and retaliatory Tory forces treated South Carolina harshly- burning churches, looting or confiscating homes and harassing and exiling citizens. This behavior turned many South Carolinians against the British and they formed partisan bands. Soon Patriot partisans led by Francis Marion, Thomas Sumter, Andrew Pickens and William Harden were fighting both the British regular troops and Loyalist forces using hit and run tactics all over the state.

The Battle of Camden was a major defeat for the regular Continental Army because it signified that almost all of South Carolina was controlled by the British. The South Carolina militia was not prepared and turned and fled in the face of the regular British forces. Horatio Gates’ command of the southern arm of the Continental Army was then transferred to Nathaniel Greene, who understood the need to coordinate with the work of the state’s partisans in order to fight a destructive war of attrition [termed today a “mobile war”]that would unbalance and eventually destroy the British war effort.

Loyalist forces and British regulars that had been rampaging through the backcountry were stopped at the Battle of King’s Mountain. Mountain men from both North and South Carolina were tired of the behavior of the British/Tories and determined to stop it by attacking the mostly-Tory forces from behind rocks and trees, inflicting heavy casualties. Although the British tried to surrender, they were offered no quarter by the Patriots in retaliation for harsh treatment of Patriots by the British. King’s Mountain is considered a turning point because the British began to retreat from the Upcountry.

Soon after, the Battle of Cowpens showed the cooperation of the regular Continental Army and the irregular partisan forces. Partisans had a reputation among the British regular forces of turning tail and running. The American commander counted on this reputation for his battle plan. The partisans, under the leadership of Andrew Pickens, led the attack and then fled the field, tricking the British regulars into thinking that the Americans were again retreating. Instead, the partisans lured the British forces into the guns of the regular American army. The British were soundly defeated, the first time in the war that an American army defeated a force consisting of mostly British regulars. Cornwallis and the British retreated northward into North Carolina to fight, then wait for supplies, eventually moving on toward Virginia while leaving the remainder of their forces posted in the SC backcountry to be evacuated or systematically reclaimed by partisan troops and/or Greene’s Continental forces as they moved toward the coast.

When partisan parolee Col Isaac Hayne was captured near Charleston in July 1781, the British decided to stem the tide of Patriot progress by making his fate an example. After a brief trial, Hayne was hanged as a traitor to the crown. Greene immediately issued a proclamation stating that he would retaliate and, after the Battle of Eutaw Springs, he had enough British officers as prisoners to insure that no more executions would take place. While the Battle of Eutaw Springs was neither the last of 137 battles fought in the state, nor a technical victory because of the unsoldierly plundering behavior of the hungry and nearly naked Continentals, the irreplaceable British troop losses made it strategically the final major battle in the beleaguered state. While current sources often disagree in their final assessment of who won the battle itself, there is no question about its evaluation by the Patriot cause. American contemporaries viewed the Battle of Eutaw Springs in the very least as a Pyrrhic victory for the British because it marked the clearance of the British from the battleground state and region (with the exception of a few coastal enclaves that were finally evacuated after

Yorktown and during the peace proceedings in 1782) and thus the demise of the British southern campaign. At most, newly-minted Americans patriotically viewed the battle as a victory because of its positive tactical results. This can be seen both in the striking of a commemorative medal and the commissioning of a tribute door panel of the Capitol building in the early years of the new republic.