

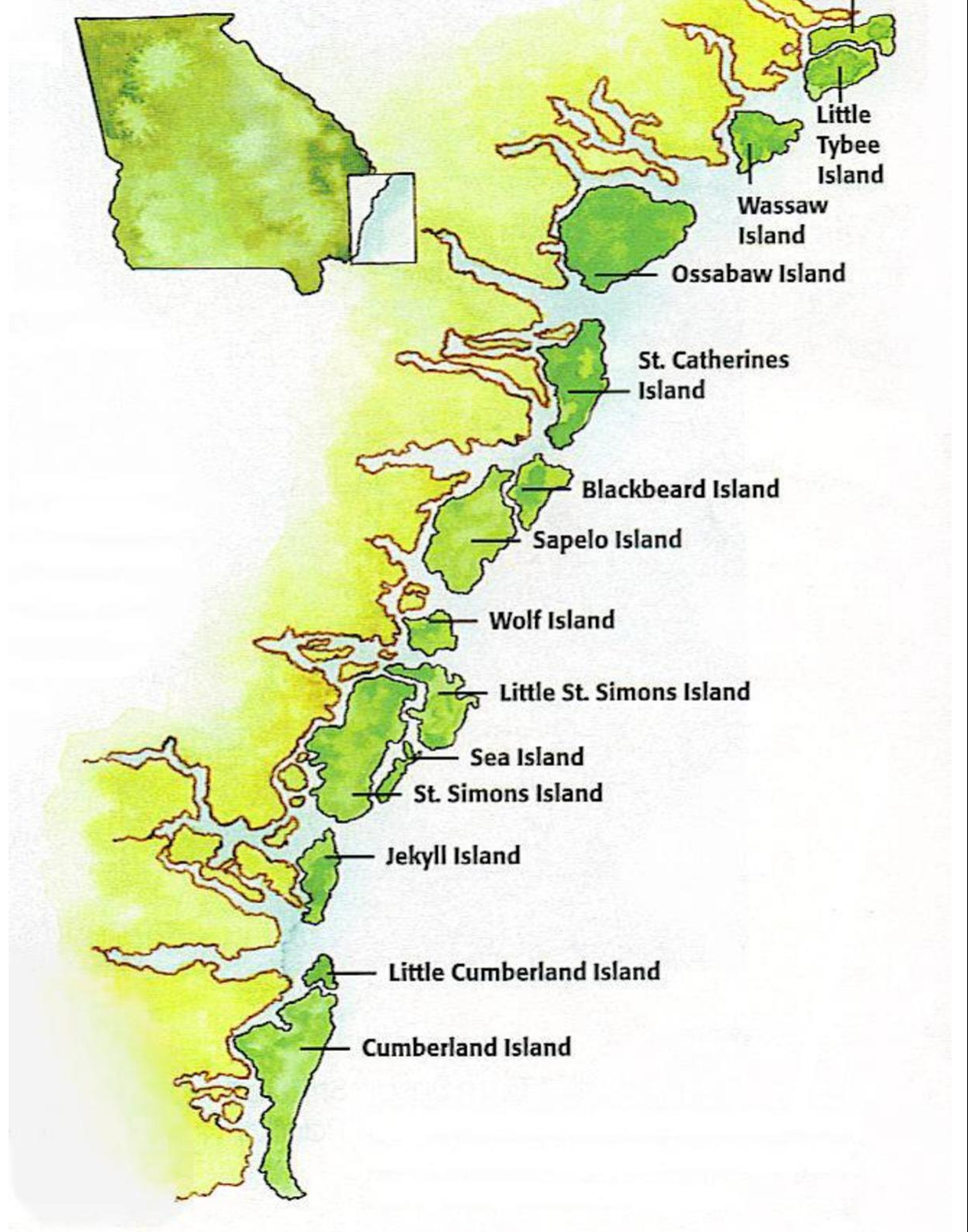


# BLUE AND GRAY DISPATCH

## Generals of the Georgia Sea Islands

*By Norman Dasinger, Sr.*

Off the coast of Georgia lie several barrier islands that have been involved in the military history of Georgia and America. The islands of St. Simons and Cumberland bear special significance and are germane to this commentary. Three renowned early American military officers who were intimately associated with the islands will be reviewed: General Pierce Butler; General Nathanael Greene and General Henry (Light Horse Harry) Lee.



Pierce Butler was born in Ireland in 1822. His nobleman father bought Pierce a commission in the British army when he was just 11 years of age. Later, as a British officer, he was involved in some early confrontations between the British Army and American patriots. He married a daughter of the very prominent Middleton family of South Carolina. Through that marriage he acquired the beautiful and very productive Middleton plantation. He then sold his commission in the British army for enough money to buy another plantation in South Carolina.



PIERCE BUTLER.  
Nat-1744 — Ob-1822.

He became a strong supporter of the American Revolution and was commissioned general in the Continental Army by George Washington. He preferred to use the title of major, not general, since major was his rank as a field officer in the British Army. His involvement in the American Revolution proved to be a financial disaster for Butler but, following the war, he overcame his losses and bought plantations in Georgia. As a consequence of the success of his St. Simon's and other plantations, Pierce Butler became one of the wealthiest men in America. He owned over 1000 slaves making him one of the largest slave owners too. Although he had numerous plantations, he also spent much time in Philadelphia. He died there in 1844 and is buried there.

Following the War Between the States, and the destruction of his properties by Yankee soldiers, his grandson and great granddaughter tried to bring his St. Simon plantation back to productivity but were unsuccessful.

Major General Nathanael Greene was born in Rhode Island in 1742. He was George Washington's most gifted and dependable general officer and was responsible for Washington's Southern strategy. Greene was commander of the Continental Army in the Southern theater. His success greatly contributed to the final defeat of the British army.



Nathanael Greene



Greene is buried under this large monument in Johnson Square, Savannah Georgia

Following the revolution, Cumberland Island, Georgia, became one of Greene's homes. The property was awarded to him as recognition of his contributions to the victory of the Continental Army. His plantation on Cumberland Island was named Dungeness. General Greene resided at another of his plantations, Mulberry Grove, outside of Savannah. He considered the weather too hot and humid for permanent residence on Cumberland Island. He died in 1786, at Mulberry Grove and initially buried in the Graham Vault in Colonial Park Cemetery but was later moved to Johnson Square in Savannah where a tall monument was placed over his grave in tribute

Major General Henry (Light horse Harry) Lee III, was born in Dumfries Virginia. After graduating from Princeton in 1773, Lee was anxious to support the Revolution and as an expert horseman, joined a Virginia dragoon unit. He was later promoted to Major and given command of light cavalry and infantry that became known as "Lee's Legion". It was his daring horsemanship and battlefield successes that caught the eye and admiration of George Washington. They remained friends until Washington's death. Congress asked Lee to deliver a tribute to Washington at the funeral in which he said, "*First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen*". After receiving severe injuries in a civil unrest incident in Baltimore Maryland, Lee traveled to the West Indies in 1812 to recover his health.



Henry "Lighthorse Harry" Lee

Lee was returning to the United States after several years of absence when he became very ill aboard ship. The ship put ashore at Cumberland Island where Lee hoped to recuperate at Dungeness, the home of his old friend Nathanael Greene. He was cared for there by Greene's daughter Louisa. Unfortunately, Lee did not recover and died on March 25, 1818. He was buried with full military honors in a small cemetery at Dungeness.

In 1913, Lee's body was disinterred from Dungeness and moved to the Lee family crypt in Lee Chapel at Washington and Lee University, Lexington Virginia. He is buried there with his wife Anne Carter Lee and one of their sons (and his family). That son was none other than the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War, Robert Edward Lee.

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