

A BGES Revolutionary War Field University Program: Revolutionary War Georgia

With John Derden

The American Revolution is widely regarded as a New England event that spread south and west. Even the, so called, Southern Strategy tends to include only South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. The colony of Georgia was the last of the 13 original colonies and was reorganized to become a crown colony a few generations after it was settled. With a capital along the coast in Savannah the story of Revolutionary Georgia is lost in a history that centers around the development of Marthasville into Atlanta, the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement. With more than 50% of the state's population living in and around Atlanta the significance of Georgia in the American story is often overlooked. This program will fill in that void. Join us as Professor John Derden squires you through a coastal history from Savannah up to and around Augusta following wherever possible revolutionary era roads and period settlements.

Monday, April 17, 2023

6 PM We will meet at the Hilton Garden Inn in Savannah where John will provide an overview of Georgia's pre-Revolutionary history and the politics of the colony during the period leading to the Revolution and while it was fought. I believe the most important lesson from the introduction is to appreciate the lines between Tories and Whigs. The satisfaction and loyalty of people in a colony named for King George II and ambitions of those who believed in self governance is distinctive. As with all such controversies, public opinion sways and Georgia was a colony that was not an active participant in the deliberations of the two Continental Congress assemblies in Philadelphia. However, Lexington and Concord touched nerves that pushed the Tories into activism. We will break for you to get dinner afterwards. Hotel is on your own.

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

8:30 AM—Depart the hotel for our walking tour of Revolutionary War Savannah. As the capital of the colony the unique architectural design known as the Ogelthorpe Plan created an architectural gem that is unique within American towns. Repetitive town squares produced a symmetry that is graceful and admirable even 300 years later. In your walk you will have to work hard to suppress your view of 21st century Savannah and narrow your vision to 18th century Savannah. Derden will drill in on that period and the town in the 1770s. With the river front and modern commerce it is easy to see why the Tories were reluctant to stir up the status quo.

The original Tondee's Tavern at the corner of Broughton and Whitaker Streets was the meeting location for the local Sons of Liberty. It is reported that the new Declaration of

Independence was publicly read there. When visiting the Savannah Visitors' Center you will see the reconstructed Redoubt built to defend Savannah.

You will also learn about the misnamed "Battle of the Rice Boats," The 1778 Battle of Savannah in which the British take Savannah and then Georgia and the subsequent 1779 Siege of Savannah. Near here two Revolutionaries, Casimir Pulaski and William Jasper are killed in the attempt to carry Savannah

While in Savannah, you will visit the Georgia Historical Society—one of the nation's oldest and most important. As we leave Savannah in the afternoon you will see one of the most important and oldest plantation sites in Georgia, Wormsloe Plantation was originally a fortification site built to protect the city against Spanish invasion and later was acquired by Noble Jones in 1736. Successive constructions made this one of the most impressive private homes in the country—you will be impressed by the mile and a half long oak tree canopied approach to the antebellum home site (now a ruin). Our final stop is Fort Morris, a Revolutionary era fortification that was the object of a British sortie during 1778 as they reoccupied Georgia as a crown colony. The British commander demanded the fort be surrendered and when the commander refused the British left without attacking. Lunch is included, dinner and hotel are on your own.

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

8:00 AM: Bags on board as we depart for an overnight trip that ends in Augusta. Departing at 8:15 we will probe to the depths of the Revolutionary era colony, the reconstituted Patriot center of operations and the military engagements that roiled the Georgia colony.

As the southern most of the British colonies, excursions into Spanish East Florida promised to expand the security of Georgia while chastising the renegade Tories operating in exile, men like Thomas Brown who had a strong commercial interest near what today is North Augusta and who organized in opposition to the Rebel movement. This backcountry conflict is at the heart of the so called "partisan operations in South Carolina and the Georgia upcountry that eventually plays out at Kings Mountain in October 1780.

As we head along the old Post Road near the Savannah River, you will get some post-revolutionary history as you see the plantation given to General Nathaniel Greene, Mulberry, it is also where Eli Whitney invented the Cotton Gin, a technological wonder that made Cotton King and expanded chattel slavery in the South during the antebellum years. You will also learn about the early settlement of Ebenezer, a religious refuge established by Oglethorpe. The Salzburgers, as they were known, came from what is today Austria around 1734. Ebenezer was an excellent defensive position where you will see earthworks that were constructed as both sides used it for military headquarters during the Revolution. Waynesboro will be another stop in Burke County, named after Revolutionary General Anthony Wayne, it was the site of an attempted jail break to free Tories being held prisoner by Rebels in 1778.

Our last stop enroute is at the site of the March 3, 1779 Battle of Briar Creek. Here British who had been holding Augusta turned on pursuing Rebels and spanked them in a sharp engagement that permitted the British civil authority to take control again in the colony of Georgia. Some 2,000 men, of all arms, engaged with the Rebels losing nearly 400 men to less than 20 British soldiers. Hotel in Augusta included along with lunch and dinner.

Thursday, April 20, 2023

8:15 AM: Bags on board for 8:30 AM departure. Best known by most people for the Masters Golf Tournament, Augusta is an old and important town—second only to Savannah in state history. Atlanta is still 70 plus years distant. Our most significant discussion this morning is concerning the Siege of Augusta in early 1781. Having taken Augusta in 1780, the loyalists under Tom Brown constructed two forts Cornwallis and Grierson, a third bastion was a fortified home owned by George Galphin. As Rebels assembled in and around Augusta both the positions at Galphin and Grierson fell leaving the garrison at Fort Cornwallis that surrendered in June 1781. We will also visit the site of the Mayham Tower in Augusta. This 30 foot high tower was built for observation and similar instruments were used at Fort Watson in SC and at the Siege of Ninety Six in SC.

We will depart Augusta to return to Savannah with our principal stop being the Battle of Kettle Creek. Fought on February 14th between approximately 1200 militia the Rebels outnumbered by more than 2 to 1 won a decisive victory taking out between 110-150 of the Loyalists who suffered casualties of 25%. The Rebels lost just 25 or so men—about 6% of their force. This success reinforced the British determination to fall back to Savannah which we will now do. Lunch is included. We expect to return to Savannah no later than 4 PM and perhaps earlier.

This immersion in one colony's Revolutionary War will give you a strong grounding in 18th century political intrigue and the stakes in the New World. Here French, British, Spanish and Americans clashed for influence and dominion. It is a great study!

About the Faculty:

John Derden is Professor Emeritus of History at East Georgia State College and is the author of the only full length history of the Confederate military prison known as Camp Lawton. For over 30 years, John has conducted tours related to Sherman's March. As you will see, John is also well versed in coastal Georgia history and the Revolutionary era.

Hotel Information:

The headquarters hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn Savannah Airport, 80 Clyde Martin Drive, Savannah, GA 31408. Group Code is Blue and Grey Education. The rate is

\$139 plus tax. Cutoff date for the block is April 1. The hotel provides an airport shuttle which you must call for. BREAKFAST IS NOT INCLUDED BUT THERE IS A RESTAURANT ON SITE. Call 919-964-5550 or 877-STAY HGI for reservations or the airport shuttle.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Savannah (SAV) whose primary airlines are Delta and Southwest. Savannah has grown dramatically and American, United, JetBlue, Allegiant, Frontier, Sun Country, Avelo Air, Breeze and Silver Airways are also in with limited service. Savannah is easily accessed by I-95 and I-16. Amtrak has 3 trains that stop in Savannah.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. These books are available on line

John Derden.: **The World's Largest Prison: The Story of Camp Lawton**

Robert Dunkerly, **An Explorer's Guide America's Revolutionary War**

Michael Cecere: **March to Independence: The Revolutionary War in the Southern Colonies**

Daniel McDonald Johnson: **Savannah, Augusta and Brier Creek, The Conquest of Georgia in the American Revolution**

Charles Colcock Jones., **The Siege of Savannah 1779**

HW Brands: **Our First Civil War, Patriots and Loyalists in the American Revolution**

Ian Saberton ed. **The Cornwallis Papers Vol. 5, The Campaigns of 1780-1781 in the Southern Theater of the American Revolutionary War**

Registration Form
Revolutionary War Georgia
A BGES Revolutionary War Field University Program
Presented by John Derden
April 17-20, 2023 from Savannah, Georgia

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes one night of lodging in Augusta, three lunches and one dinner, maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director and transportation. We will also provide snacks and cold bottled water.

_____ Registration \$895 single occupancy or \$830 double occupancy

_____ Current BGES member \$825 single or \$760 double

_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of

\$_____ (must be \$75 or more which is tax deductible)

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$300 per person plus full payment for any memberships. Total enclosed is \$

I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$_____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531, or fax credit cards to 434-432-0596 . You may also register on line at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.