

American Revolution Places to Discover in Augusta

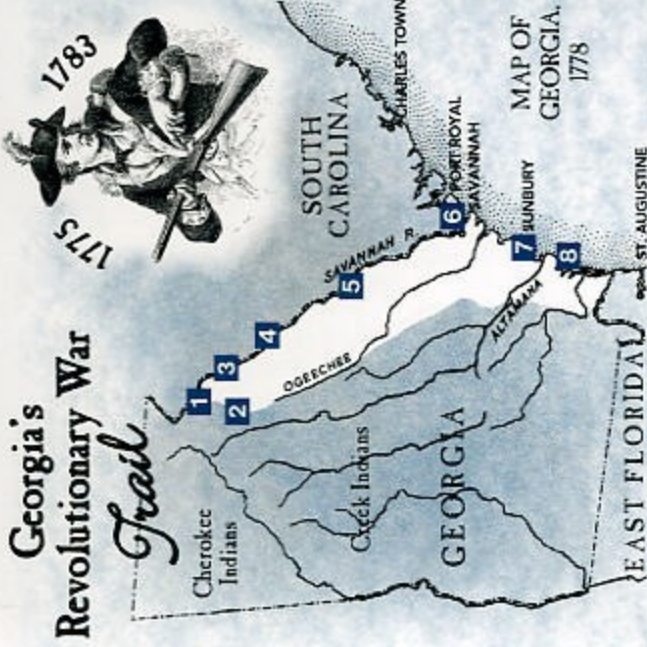
Augusta and St. Paul's Parish (Richmond County beginning in 1777) was a focal point of military and political activity in Georgia during the American Revolution. The small, backcountry town of approximately one hundred families was the site of two major battles for its possession, was where Georgia's first constitution was drafted, and was Georgia's Revolutionary capital after the capture of Savannah. Augusta was also home to one of Georgia's signers of the Declaration of Independence, George Walton, and one of the signers of the U. S. Constitution, William Few. It was here in January 1788, that Georgia was the fourth State to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

- **St. Paul's Churchyard** Located at 605 Reynolds Street. A monument marking Col. William Few's grave is where annually on Constitution Day in September, the Daughters of the American Revolution and Sons of the American Revolution hold a commemorative ceremony. Revolutionary War Patriots Oliver Bowen, John Forsyth, George Mathews, John Wilson and William Young are also buried in the Churchyard. GPS: N33.476 W81.960
- **Fort Augusta - Fort Cornwallis** Historical Marker located behind St. Paul's Episcopal Church which describes these structures and related actions from Colonial times through the American Revolution. GPS: N33.476 W81.961

- **Mayham Tower** Historical Marker located at Eighth & Reynolds Street which describes the structure erected by Patriot forces during Second Siege of Augusta. GPS: N33.477 W81.964
- **Fort Grierson** Historical Marker located at Eleventh & Reynolds Street which identifies the area where action took place during the Second Siege of Augusta. GPS N33.479 W81.970

- **Signer's Monument** Erected on Greene Street in 1848, the granite obelisk recognizes Georgia's three signers of the Declaration of Independence, Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall and George Walton. GPS: N33.472 W81.962

- **Meadow Garden** George Walton's circa 1790 home which is maintained by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Located at 1320 Independence Drive. GPS: N33.475 W 81.980



American Revolution in Georgia

- 1** Elbert County – Fight at Van(n)'s Creek
GPS: N34.162 W82.744
- 2** Wilkes County – Battle of Kettle Creek
GPS: N33.691 W82.886
- 3** Lincoln County – Elijah Clarke & John Dooly; Heroes of the Hornet's Nest
GPS: N33.856 W82.410
- 4** Augusta – Sieges of Augusta and Revolutionary Capital of Georgia
GPS: N33.476 W81.964
- 5** Screven County – Battle of Brier Creek
GPS: N32.811 W81.466
- 6** Savannah – Battles of Savannah, Royal & Revolutionary Capital of Georgia
GPS: N32.076 W81.100
- 7** Liberty County – Sunbury, Fort Morris & Midway
GPS: N31.764 W81.279
- 8** St. Simons Island – Frederica Naval Action
GPS: N31.224 W81.393



www.grwt.gassar.org

Georgia Society Sons of the American Revolution

Design – Ed Fluker, GASSAR



Georgia's Revolutionary War Trail
"Discovering Our Heritage and History"

Augusta in the American Revolution

"A war of extermination became the order of the day."

– Lt. Colonel Henry "Light-horse Harry" Lee



Siege of Fort Cornwallis, Second Battle of Augusta 1781
(Mayham Tower in left background)

Augusta in the American Revolution

In 1774, Augusta's inhabitants were opposed to rebellion against England, but news of the fighting at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts on April 19, 1775, swayed many to support an Association of the Colonies seeking redress of grievances. When the Provincial Congress met in Savannah in July 1775, Augusta sent delegates, including George Walton who was elected Secretary. From this date forward, Georgia had two competing governments- one, Tory or Loyalists with allegiance to the King and the other, Whig or Patriots focused on Independence. In December 1775, George Walton was elected President of the Council of Safety which supervised the affairs of the Whig government.



One prominent local resident, Thomas Brown, announced his loyalty to the King and refused to sign the Association. In August 1775, he was tarred and feathered, the soles of his feet were burned, and he was driven out of town. Sometimes referred to thereafter as "Burnt foot" Brown, he would return to Augusta with a vengeance.

The arrival of British warships in Savannah in January 1776, drove the Provincial Congress to convene in Augusta where they created Georgia's first constitution, called "Rules and Regulations." This provided for an elected executive but still recognized the King of England as head of state. Later in 1776, George Walton was one of Georgia's three signers of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia.

Georgia became a State in February 1777, with the adoption of a Constitution, election of a Governor and establishment of eight Counties, including Richmond where Augusta was located. A British expedition from New York took possession of Savannah in December 1778, and red-coated

troops marched into Augusta without any opposition on January 31, 1779. With them was Lt. Col Thomas Brown with a regiment of Florida Rangers. When threatened by Patriot Militia, British Lt. Col. Archibald Campbell withdrew from Augusta after only two weeks. This withdrawal, welcomed news to backcountry Patriots, was followed by the Patriot victory at Kettle Creek in February. But only two weeks later, the rout of the Patriots at Brier Creek allowed the re-establishment of Georgia as a Royal Colony.

The Whig government collapsed in May 1780, when Gen. Andrew Williamson evacuated Augusta and withdrew to South Carolina. The British returned to Augusta in June, this time with Thomas Brown as commander of the Loyalist-Indian garrison, determined to bring all the backcountry under Royal control.

In September 1780, Lt. Col. Elijah Clarke led his Georgia and South Carolina militia in an attack on Brown's garrison. Approaching Augusta from the west, Clarke surprised an Indian camp on September 14, and drove the warriors into a trading post known as the "White House." The Indians were joined there by Brown, Col. James Grierson, commander of the Richmond County Loyalist Militia, and a company of Rangers.

Clarke besieged Brown for four days and cut off the water supply, but he was not able to take the position by assault. On September 18, a British relief force appeared on the Carolina side of the Savannah River. Clarke had to break off the siege and was forced to leave behind many wounded of whom thirteen were hanged by the Loyalists. In addition, the British held twenty-one Patriots in irons in Augusta for several months.

Then Elijah Clarke led seven hundred men, women and children with limited rations more than 200 hundred miles to the Carolina mountains for refuge. His withdrawal was instrumental in luring British Maj. Pat-



Clarke

rick Ferguson and his troops to their defeat at Kings Mountain in October 1780.



By the spring of 1781, Patriot fortunes had improved in the Carolinas and the new commander of the Southern Department, Continental Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene ordered another attack on Augusta. Elijah Clarke and Gen. Andrew Pickens of South Carolina led their respective Patriot militias. Lt. Col. Henry "Light-horse Harry" Lee brought his Continental Legion to join the militia with a battalion of North Carolina troops under Maj. Pinketham Eaton.

Following the British defeat at Kings Mountain, Thomas Brown built Fort Cornwallis, near St. Paul's Church, to house his garrison, and James Grierson fortified a house about a half-mile west of Cornwallis. Lee first captured nearby Fort Galphin in South Carolina on May 21; and Fort Grierson was captured in an assault on May 24, an event in which Major Eaton lost his life. Brown in Fort Cornwallis held out until June 5. He was finally induced to surrender when Lee's men mounted a cannon on a "Mayham Tower" that fired over the high wall into the fort.

The liberation of Augusta freed the Georgia backcountry from British control. In August 1781, the Georgia Assembly re-established the state government in Augusta. The city remained the state capital, on and off, until 1796, where the new U.S. Constitution was ratified by Georgia in January 1788.

William Few, a Richmond County resident, served as a Colonel in the Georgia Militia, and was a delegate to the Continental Congress beginning in 1780. He was one of Georgia's two signers of the U.S. Constitution. After it was signed in 1787, Few returned to Georgia to aid in the Constitution's ratification in 1788.



Few

Prepared by Dr. Russell K. Brown, William Few Chapter; Edited by Bill Ramsaur, Marshes of Glynn Chapter, Georgia Society Sons of the American Revolution

"Siege of Fort Cornwallis" Courtesy of Augusta Museum of History; George Walton and Elijah Clarke, Courtesy of Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Univ. of Georgia Libraries; Henry Lee and William Few, Courtesy of Independence Hall NHP