

CAMDEN, SOUTH CAROLINA



SELF-GUIDED SITE TOUR MAP

*Spend a few  
peaceful hours  
where the  
British spent  
a rough year.*

Do exit right and enjoy our fine  
restaurants and shops in  
downtown Camden and  
our City of Camden Historic District,  
one of four Kershaw County  
historic districts on the  
National Register of Historic Places.

The map also includes the restored houses and other interpretive embellishments to the site.

To date, five historic features have been reconstructed: the town wall, Northeast and Southeast redoubts, Kershaw House and the powder magazine.

#### 8. TOWN WALL

The reconstructed palisade sections flanking Broad Street (then the Catawba Path or Waxhaws Road) are part of the south wall erected by the British in 1780. The village lay to the north and covered about one city block on each side of the road.

#### 9. NORTHEAST REDOUBT

This small fort originally extended across Bull Street. Approximately one third of its dry moat and earthworks have been reconstructed. Noted in President Washington's diary was his inspection of the remains of the "works and redoubts erected by the British" while in Camden.

#### 10. KERSHAW HOUSE

The Kershaw House is a reconstruction of the home of Mr. Joseph Kershaw, considered Camden's founding father. It served as post headquarters for Lord Charles Cornwallis during the British occupation of 1780-81, and over time it became known as the Kershaw-Cornwallis House.

Cornwallis considered his fellow countryman, who was a staunch patriot, to be very dangerous. He exiled Kershaw to Bermuda for the duration of the war.

Before the war, Mr. Kershaw had amassed a fortune from his mercantile business, various

mills, and other successful ventures. In Bermuda, he mortgaged many of his holdings to outfit a ship with supplies for the cause. En route to South Carolina, the British intercepted the cargo ship and confiscated the provisions. The state later denied Kershaw's petition for restitution, claiming his actions had not been authorized.

Joseph Kershaw spent the rest of his 64 years trying to satisfy his creditors. He died in the house on December 28, 1791 and is buried in a family grave nearby.

The mansion passed out of the family in 1805. The years following, it changed ownership several times. At one point it was used as an orphanage school. By the late 1850s, the old house was abandoned.

During the War Between the States, the house served as a storehouse for the Confederacy. It was burned to the ground in 1865 when Federal troops came through Camden. Soldiers from both sides claimed they committed the deed.

In the early 1970s, archaeological investigation of the area revealed evidence of the original foundations of the main house, kitchen, and an outbuilding, also a well and the British palisade defense trench.

Based on the original foundation layout, two early 19th century paintings of the house and an 1858 photograph, reconstruction began in 1977, exactly two hundred years after Kershaw began his. Externally, it is an exact replica the original mansion.

The interior floor plan and architectural

detail, designed by a well-known local architect, represent a blend of generic Colonial Georgian design and the interior layouts of two imposing 1760s Charleston structures, the Miles Brewton and William Washington residences.

Each floor is approximately 2,000 square feet. The rooms on the museum floor are painted in colors known to have been used in Charleston during the 1760-70s. Each room is decorated with period furniture. A few pieces belonging to Kershaw descendants are on display permanently also.

Of importance is the portrait of Andrew Jackson over the reception room fireplace by Ralph E. W. Earl. It is considered the earliest known portrait of the 7th U.S. president and was a gift from the William F. Buckley family.

A feisty young patriot, Jackson was captured by the British in April 1781 and imprisoned in the Camden Gaol for several weeks.

The second floor is closed to the public and includes a research library and collections storage space. The formal garden behind the house is planted with flora typically found in late 18th century South Carolina gardens. The house and garden make an elegant setting for the many weddings and receptions held here.

#### 11. SOUTHEAST REDOUBT

This area was used for landfill for years, and no evidence of the British redoubt shown

on the Greene Map

was found during archaeological investigation. The reconstruction thus follows the design and proportions seen on the Greene map.

#### 12. POWDER MAGAZINE

The 1777 brick powder magazine was built for the State of South Carolina under the supervision of Joseph Kershaw. This replica

supporting buttresses and pillars, typical powder magazine construction of the era.

#### 13. NATURE TRAIL

The nature trail passes a small pond and bogs on its way to Pine Tree Creek. The waterway supported Kershaw's mills and during high water was navigable to the nearby Wateree River. The markets of Charleston

and the world were only 120 miles down stream, and the merchants relied on the river to deliver the flour, indigo, and other commodities produced in the area. The British also took advantage of the lively little creek.

Visitors are encouraged to walk the 1/4 mile hiking trail. It begins and ends near

*Camden, the oldest existing inland town in South Carolina, was part of a township plan for the colony ordered by King George II in 1730. The frontier settlement, initially named Fredericksburg Township (later Pine Tree Hill), took hold by the 1750s, when the early emigrants were joined by Quakers and Scotch-Irish who had traveled down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Trail, which passed through Camden.*

*Founding Father Joseph Kershaw arrived in 1758 from Yorkshire, England via Charleston and established a store for a Charleston mercantile firm. He and others prospered, and by 1768 the town was the top inland trade center in the colony. At his suggestion, Pine Tree Hill was re-named Camden, in honor of Lord Camden, champion of colonial rights.*

*In May 1780 the American Revolution returned to Charleston. It fell. Lord Cornwallis and 2,500 British troops immediately marched to Camden and set up what was to become the main British supply post for the 1780-1781 Southern Campaign of the war.*

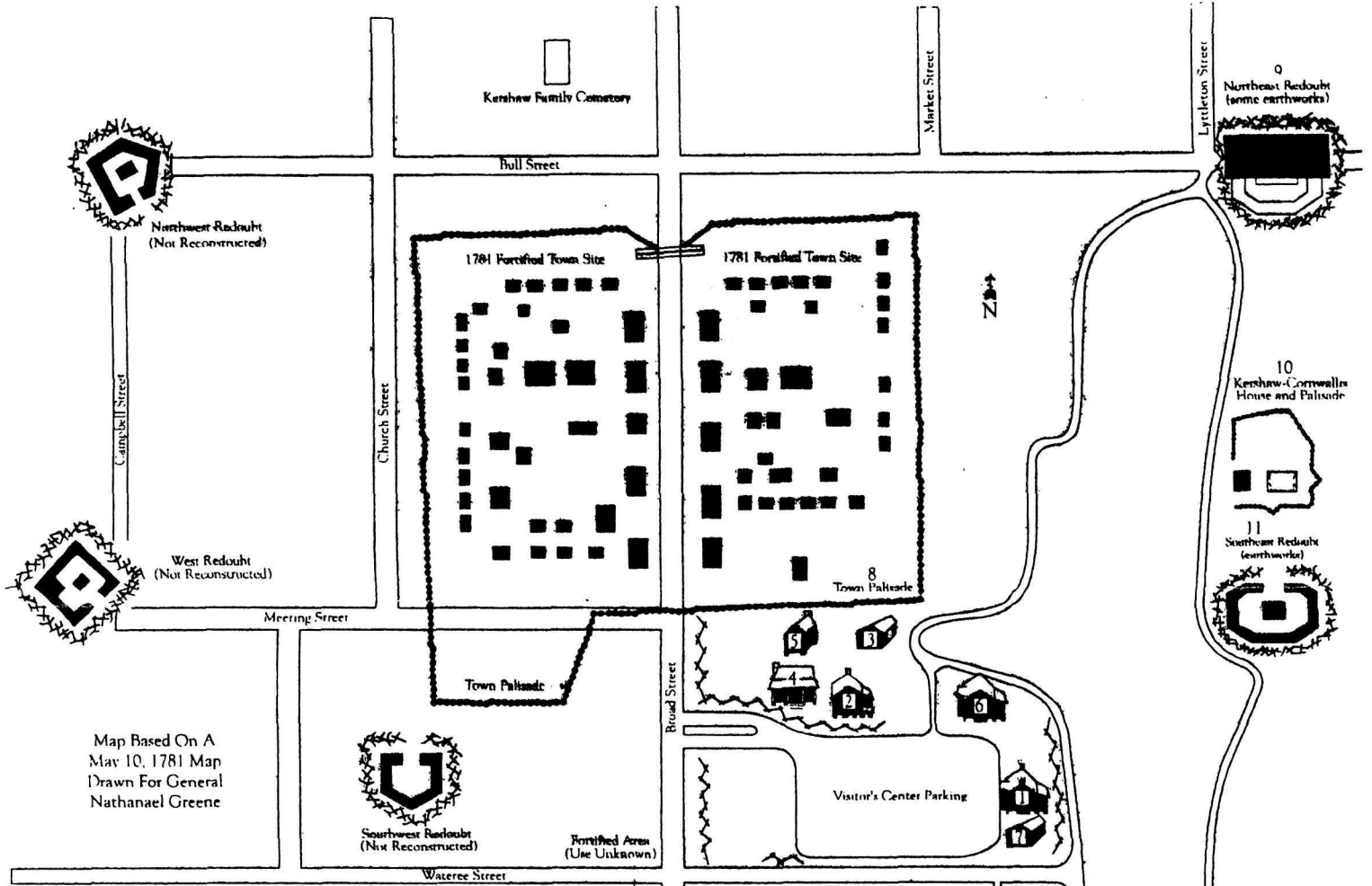
*For 11 months, Camden suffered under British occupation. Two battles were fought nearby: The Battle of Camden, the worst Patriot battle defeat of the Revolution, and the Battle of Hobkirk's Hill, a costly British win, which forced the Redcoats to evacuate on May 10, 1781. The town, left smoldering, was soon rebuilt and remained prominent until the 1820s.*

*Historic Camden Revolutionary War Site opened its doors in 1970. Today the museum includes 107+ acres of the original town site, five historic buildings and reconstructions of some of the military fortifications and the Joseph Kershaw House, which served as British headquarters during the occupation.*

*Since 1982, the museum has been designated an affiliated area of the National Park Service. It is governed by the Historic Camden Foundation, a private non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Camden from first inhabitation to 1825, with emphasis on Colonial Camden and the British occupation years.*

Open Tuesday-Sunday, except major holidays

- Tuesday-Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm; Sunday 2:00 - 5:00 pm.
- Self-guided Tour, Daily: Log Cabins, orientation film, grounds, gift shop, nature trail and picnic area. Recommended donation: \$3 adults; \$1 6-15).
- Guided Tours: Tuesday-Friday: 10:30 am and 3:00 pm; Saturday: 10:30 am - 12:00 and 1:30 - 4:00 pm; Sunday: 2:30 - 4:00 pm.
- Kershaw House Guided Tour: Adults/\$5, Seniors (62+)/\$4, ages 6-15/\$3
- Group Tour Rate: 10% discount for 15 or more; step-on bus tours guides of local historic districts available. Call (803) 432-9841.
- Kershaw House & site rentals available. Call for an appointment.
- Information: Historic Camden Revolutionary War Site P.O. Box 710, Camden, SC 29020 • 803-432-9841; fax 803-432-3815
- E-mail: [hiscamden@truvista.net](mailto:hiscamden@truvista.net)
- Website: [www.historic-camden.net](http://www.historic-camden.net)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/revwar](http://www.facebook.com/revwar)



Map Based On A  
May 10, 1781 Map  
Drawn For General  
Nathanael Greene

### 1. CUNNINGHAM HOUSE

The tour headquarters, Exchange Shop, and administrative offices are located in the Cunningham House, circa 1835.

The house was a gift of the Nicholas Gaffos family. In 1971, it was moved to the site from the southeast corner of Market and DeKalb Streets and restored for its current use.

The Federal-styled residence, initially a two-room structure, exhibits the fine craftsmanship of the early 19th century Camden builders. The original interior woodwork includes the molded chair rails, baseboards, two fireplaces with simple heart pine mantles, and paneled doors with four-light transoms (note the original trim color covered by Plexiglas on the door frame between the rooms). The two back rooms, now staff offices, were added in 1850.

Tradition says this charming cottage was given as a wedding gift to Mrs. Joseph Cunningham, hence its name.

### 2. CRAVEN HOUSE

A prime example of Camden Colonial Georgian architecture, this white frame house, circa 1789, is one of two remaining houses built in Camden in the 18th century. The other, relocated to Mill Street, hosted a reception for President George Washington during his visit in May 1791.

The house, a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lloyd, originally stood at

816 Mill Street and was built for John Craven, who came to Camden after the Revolution.

Little is known of Mr. Craven. Apparently he was a patriot, unmarried, popular, well-lettered, and also handled the affairs of Mr. Joseph Kershaw. City records of 1817 indicate a suit against "the committee for John Craven, a lunatic."

It is not known if this structure was a residence or an office. Later additions to the building were removed before it was relocated and restored in 1970.

Most of the interior woodwork is original. Of note: the fireplace wall, which features pine paneling with original closets. Paint samples of the original pickled mahogany wainscoting and the Bayberry green of the rest of the trim are preserved under Plexiglas.

The last owners of the house reported numerous strange happenings, which led to an article entitled "A Haunted House in South Carolina," in *Fate Magazine* in 1961.

### 3. DOG TROT

The architectural term "dog trot" refers to an open-air passage between two rooms that share a common roof (where the dogs trotted). This replica of an old-style dog trot barn contains the film room and rest rooms. Both are wheelchair accessible.

Visitors taking the guided tour will see a

10-minute slide show on the early history and development of the site in the film room.

### 4. BRADLEY HOUSE

This early 19th century log structure contains exhibits depicting Camden from first inhabitation through the beginning years of the Revolution. It is typical of the houses built by the backcountry settlers.

The cabin, a gift of the Catawba Timber Company, was built about nine miles east of Camden by an unknown builder. Since it was constructed on land granted to John Bradley in 1775, it was designated the "Bradley House" by the museum.

The one-room house was transported to the site by truck after the old porches, roof and stone chimney had been dismantled. Its rebuilding included the need to

cover all but the porch-side pine logs with clapboard because of deterioration. Of interest: the flat sandstones used for the chimney construction (rare for area); the fine dovetailing of the hand-hewn logs at the building's corners; and the two 2 x 12-inch ventilation slits on each side of the upper chimney wall.

The simple interior features a large room. All but eight of the 12-inch wide pine floor boards are original. Floor and wall nail holes show where stairs to a loft, now closed over, once began.

### 5. DRAKEFORD HOUSE

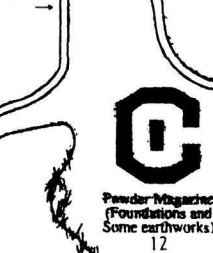
Mr. Richard Drakeford, who built this house about 1812, was recorded as being a "gallant patriot soldier." At his death in 1825, he had become a man of some means, and his house inventory included walnut tables, cupboards, four sets of bedroom furniture, a pine writing table, mirror, eleven chairs and two sets of fireplace equipment.

The cabin originally stood about twelve miles north of town and was given by Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Drakeford. It was dismantled and rebuilt here in 1970, much of the work being done by inmates of the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

The floor plan features a main room below and sleeping loft above (closed to the public). The L-shaped staircase is original. While the interior is more refined than the Bradley House, the exterior workmanship shows less care.

Exhibits here relate to Camden's role during British occupation, the development of the museum, and the site's archaeological projects.

Be sure to study the magnificent diorama depicting Mr. Joseph Kershaw's house as British headquarters in 1780. Can you find the



blacksmith shed featured a traditional forge and a small demonstration area, which were built by members of the South Carolina Blacksmith Association. Four to six times a year Association members ply their trade at the forge. Also here a British cannon and two smaller French cannons. Rendered inoperable by the British, they were abandoned during the evacuation of Camden on May 10, 1781.

### 6. McCAA HOUSE

Dr. John McCaa (1793-1859), a native and prominent physician of Camden, used this residence, circa 1800, as his office. Originally located near the Mills Courthouse on Broad Street, the house was transported to the site on a flat-bed truck in 1991. It was a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Beard.

Architecturally, the clapboard house is a transitional design between Georgian and Federal styles and not common for the area. While funds are sought for interior restoration, the building is crudely interpreted as a late 18th century tavern (Dr. McCaa's father, John McCaa, owned one of Camden's early inns located on Market Street in 1794).

7. BLACKSMITH SHED  
This replica of an early 19th century

### ARCHAEOLOGY

When you finish your tour of the lower grounds, do walk or drive to see the reconstructions located along the dirt driveway.

Since 1970, the site has been committed to investigating the town's history through archaeology. Every effort has been made to base all reconstructions on unearthed discoveries.

A 1781 map showing occupied Camden that was drawn by a military engineer for General Nathanael Greene has proved most accurate in the location of the historic areas of the site (\*see a contemporary version of the map above!).