

*Fort
Frederica*

NATIONAL MONUMENT
Georgia

Fort Frederica

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Headquarters for General Oglethorpe's military operations against the Spanish in Florida during the Anglo-Spanish struggle (1739-43) for the southeastern part of the present United States

An old British fortification dating from the early days of Georgia history, Fort Frederica represents Great Britain's determination to occupy these coastal lands—lands claimed by the Spaniards who were well entrenched at St. Augustine in Florida. Built in 1736, enlarged and strengthened during 1739-43, Fort Frederica was said to have been "the largest, most regular, and perhaps most costly, of any in North America, of British construction."

Basing their assertions on discovery, exploration, and colonization, three nations—France, Spain, and Britain—claimed these lands.

Founding of Georgia

Georgia, youngest of the 13 British Colonies in North America, was founded under the leadership of James Oglethorpe in 1733. The previous year King George II had granted a charter to a group of 21 men, known as the Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America. They raised the money to finance the colony, though Oglethorpe was the only one of their number who ever came to Georgia.

Arriving at Savannah, February 12, 1733, Oglethorpe spent a year working with the mother city and outlying settlements. In Jan-

Cover: The Citadel and Storehouse ruins.

uary of the following year he made a trip down the inland waterway to select the site for the fort he planned to build for the protection of his infant colony.

On the western shore of St. Simons Island he picked a high bluff where the Indians had cleared a 30- to 40-acre field. Here the river approached the bluff and made two right-angle turns—a strategic location for a fort. Oglethorpe named this site Frederica, in honor of Frederick, Prince of Wales, father of George III. He then returned to England to get the settlers who would build the town and fort.

Frederica Settlers

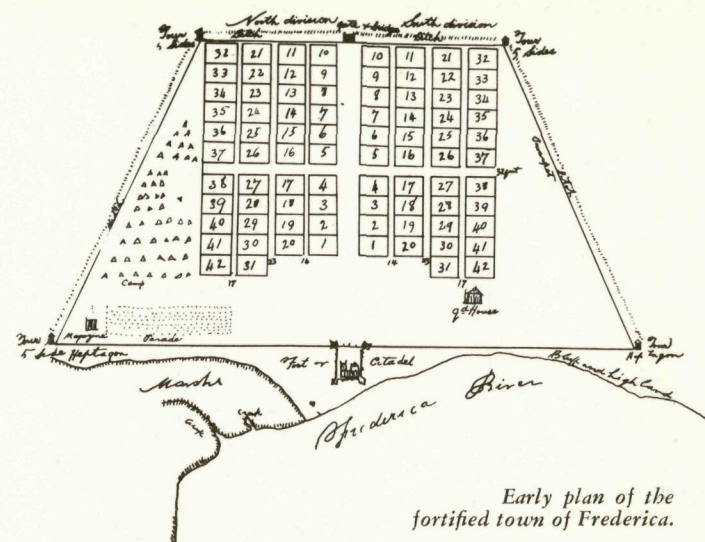
Great care was used to select, as settlers, men who could perform useful services in this new town; in fact, Frederica was a ready-made settlement. Planned in England, it was a typical English village. Frederica, with its outpost, St. Simons, was the most southern settlement made until then by the British in North America.

Accompanying the group as missionaries of the Church of England were John and Charles Wesley, who later became the founders of Methodism.

The first group of settlers consisted of 40 families, numbering 44 men and 72 women and children. Oglethorpe with his Frederica settlers sailed on the *Symond* and the *London Merchant*. Convoyed by the British sloop-of-war, *Hawk*, they made a tempestuous crossing and anchored off Cockspur Island, 20 miles east of Savannah, on February 5, 1736. By small boats they were landed at Frederica on February 18th.

The very next day the men started to work

The new Fort Frederica Visitor Center constructed under Mission 66.



on the earth fort, and a little over a month later its battery of guns commanded the river. Adjacent to the fort they laid out a town with 84 lots, 60 by 90 feet.

The colonists also built Fort St. George on Fort George Island near the north bank of St. John's River and Fort St. Andrews on the northwestern shore of Cumberland Island.

Oglethorpe's Regiment

Oglethorpe returned to Georgia in 1738 with a regiment of 650 British soldiers and built another large fort at the south end of St. Simons Island. Still other fortifications built on this southern frontier for Britain's colonies in North America included a fort at Darien where the Scottish Highlanders had been located since January 1736, a lookout at Pike's Bluff on St. Simons, outposts at the present site of Brunswick and at Hermitage on Turtle River, Fort William on the southwestern shore of Cumberland Island in Spanish Florida. Fort Frederica was headquarters for all these fortifications and became the springboard for attack and base for defense against Spanish Florida.

War of Jenkins' Ear

The struggle between Spain and Britain for

control of this Georgia-Florida-Caribbean area is known as the War of Jenkins' Ear.

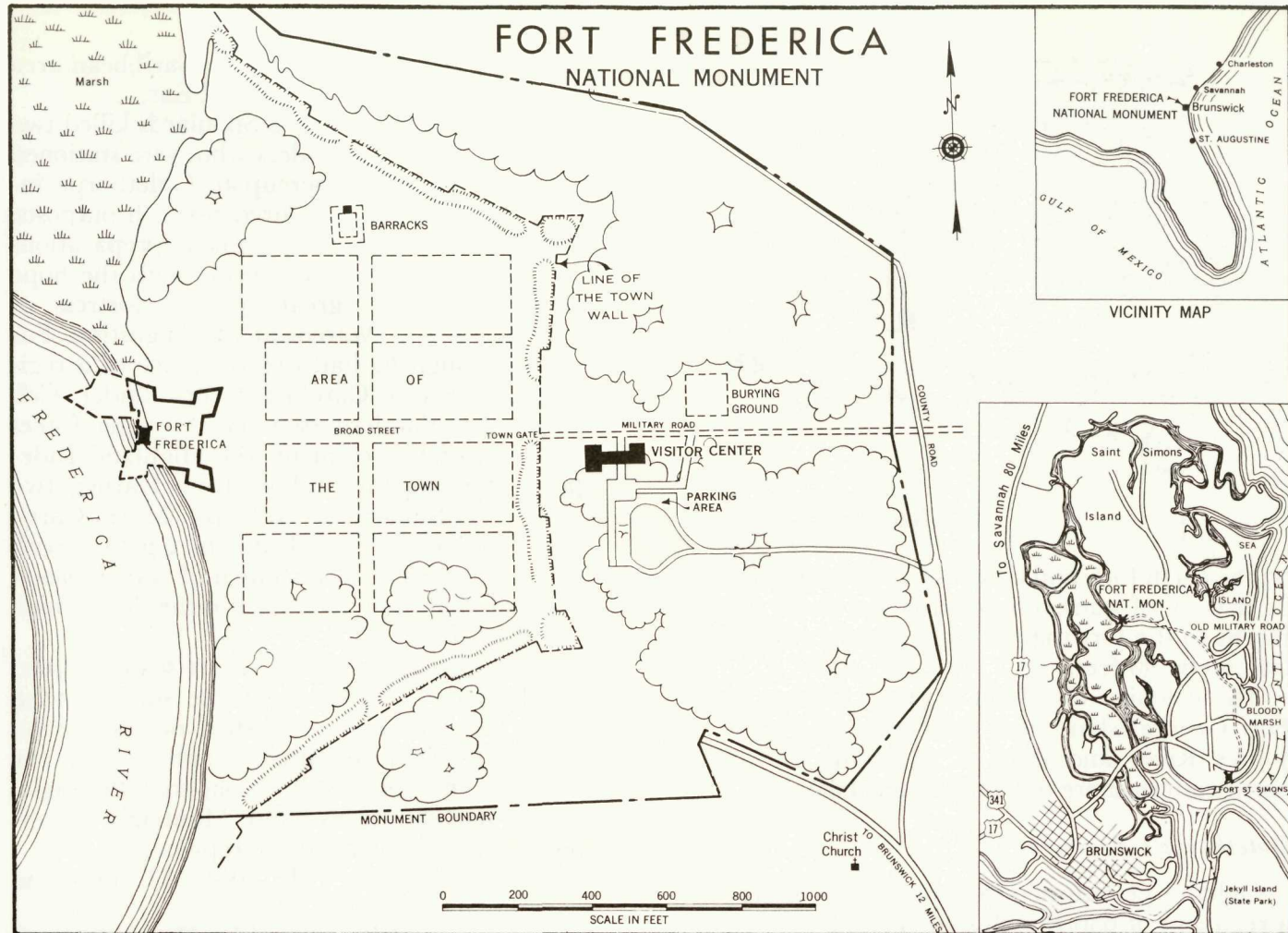
In November 1739, the Spaniards killed two of the Darien Highlanders who were stationed on Amelia Island; thereupon, Oglethorpe invaded Florida and captured Spanish outposts. Returning to Georgia he made preparations for a grand invasion of Florida with the hope of capturing the great coquina fortress of Castillo de San Marcos at St. Augustine. For this campaign he had the assistance of a regiment of South Carolina troops under Col. Alexander Vanderdussen. His Georgia forces consisted of his regiment, the Highland Independent Company of Foot from Darien, two troops of Rangers, and Capt. Mark Carr's Marine Company of Boatmen, together with Indian allies. Two British men-of-war, *Phoenix* and *Flamborough*, took part in the siege which lasted 27 days.

Then the approaching storm season forced the English to retire from the surf-pounded coast. They had accomplished no more than destroying Spanish outposts and forcing the Spaniard into his Castillo stronghold. But Oglethorpe had shown his hand. Montiano, Governor of Florida, planned the reprisal.

It came in July 1742. With 51 ships and

The families of Samuel Davidson and Dr. Thomas Hawkins lived side-by-side in this 18th century "duplex," the foundations of which were uncovered in archeological excavations of 1952.





3,000 men, the Governor led the Spanish invasion against Georgia. Oglethorpe's defenders numbered only about a thousand.

The Battle of Bloody Marsh

When the Spanish fleet entered the harbor, Fort St. Simons' batteries opened fire, but the swift-moving ships were elusive targets. English gunners fired 49 rounds, inflicting some damage, but Montiano's fleet finally passed the fort. General Oglethorpe pulled his forces back to Frederica and the Spaniards occupied the fort at St. Simons. On July 7, 1742, Spanish troops advanced along the Frederica-St. Simons road to within a mile and a half of Fort Frederica itself. Late that afternoon at the Battle of Bloody Marsh, a British force of 50 successfully

ambushed 300 of the enemy and turned the tide of Spanish invasion. Montiano's forces returned to St. Augustine.

This was Spain's last important military attempt to gain control of the Georgia territory which she had claimed for two and a half centuries; it was a turning point in the struggle between Spain and Britain for control of the southeastern part of what is now the United States.

Regiment Disbanded

While the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) did not solve the questions of colonial power in the New World, it did bring temporary peace in America and Europe. Diplomats agreed to treat the land between the Altamaha and

Florida as neutral ground. Although Frederica was not considered part of the neutral ground, in 1749 Oglethorpe's Regiment was disbanded and Frederica practically abandoned. About one-fourth of the soldiers, with their families, returned to England; another one-fourth took up lands in Georgia and became settlers; the others continued in military service as members of the South Carolina Independent Companies.

The great fire of 1758 destroyed most of the buildings in the old town of Frederica. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 ended the French and Indian War, and Florida went to Britain. Most of the soldiers who had been stationed here were withdrawn; many of the cannon were removed and used to fortify other parts of Georgia. Frederica became, indeed, a dead town.

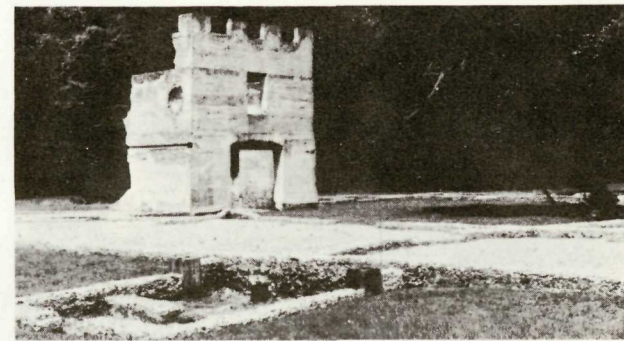
About Your Visit

Fort Frederica is on St. Simons Island, 12 miles from Brunswick, Ga., and U.S. 17. You can reach it by either Brunswick-St. Simons Causeway (toll) or the inland waterway. The park is open daily; hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. during June, July, and August and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the rest of the year. No camping or picnicking facilities are available.

Administration

Fort Frederica National Monument, established September 10, 1945, and containing 215 acres, including the Bloody Marsh memorial, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Barrack ruins.



(Printed by the Fort Frederica Association in cooperation with the National Park Service.)



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