

NINETY SIX

National Historic Site • S.C.

To

INDIANS AND COLONIAL TRAVELERS, A CAMPSITE ON THE CHEROKEE PATH

FRONTIER SETTLERS, A REGION OF RICH LAND, A TRADING CENTER AND A FORT FOR PROTECTION AGAINST INDIAN ATTACK

RESIDENTS OF THE NINETY SIX DISTRICT, A COURTHOUSE AND JAIL FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

PATRIOTS AND LOYALISTS IN THE REVOLUTION, A BONE OF CONTENTION

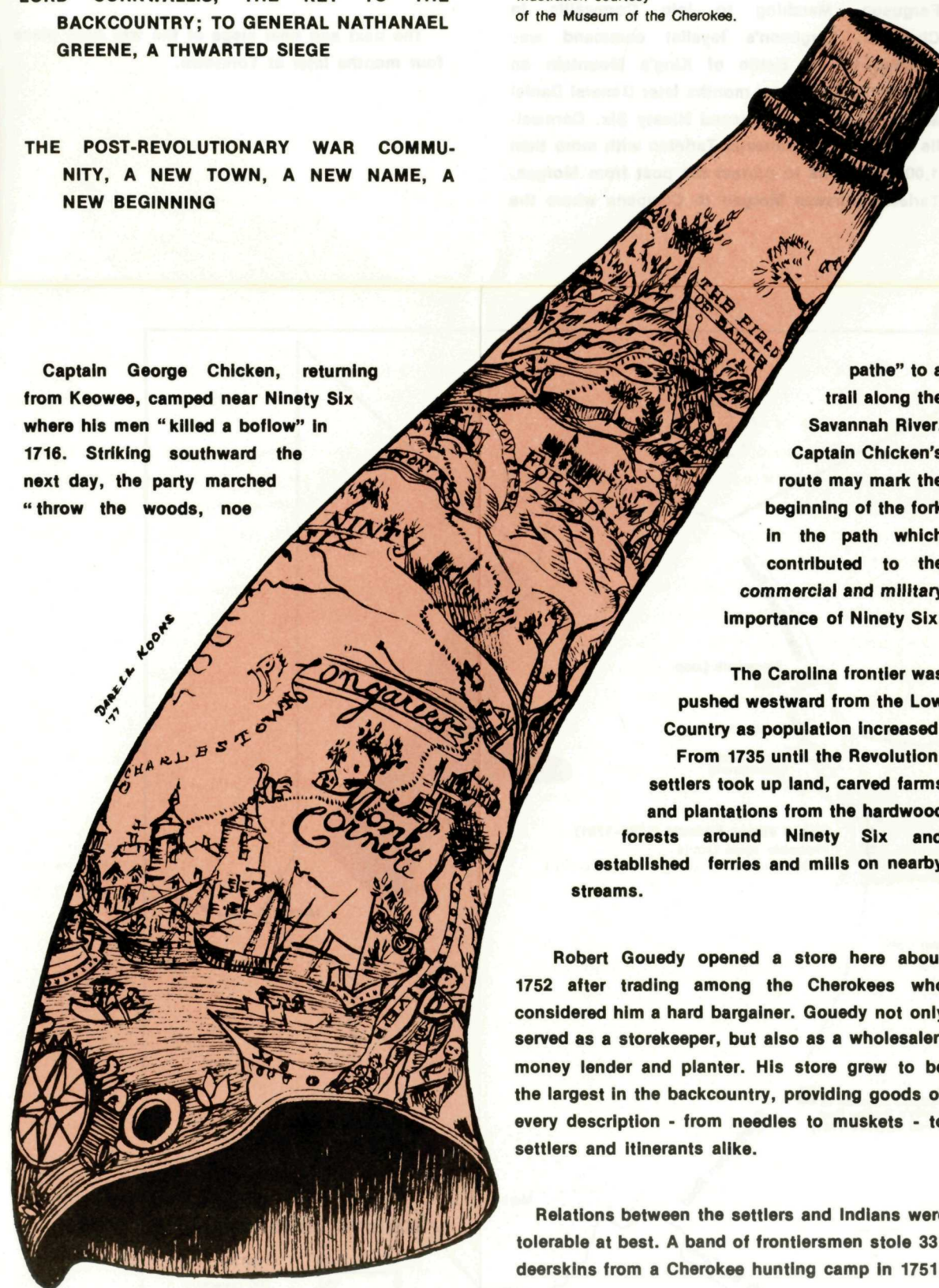
LORD CORNWALLIS, THE KEY TO THE BACKCOUNTRY; TO GENERAL NATHANIEL GREENE, A THWARTED SIEGE

THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY WAR COMMUNITY, A NEW TOWN, A NEW NAME, A NEW BEGINNING

This powder horn is illustrated with the only known map of Lieutenant Colonel Grant's 1761 campaign against the Cherokees. Although it is unsigned, the elaborate detail and accuracy of the engraving indicate that the powder horn was inscribed by a soldier, probably an officer, who marched with the expedition.

Grant, leading a force of 2,800 regular and provincial troops, marched from Charlestown northwestward along the Cherokee Path to attack the Indian towns. An advanced supply base was established at Ninety Six. The Grant campaign destroyed 15 villages in June and July, 1761. This operation forced the Cherokees to sue for peace, thus ending the French and Indian War on the Carolina frontier.

Illustration courtesy of the Museum of the Cherokee.



Captain George Chicken, returning from Keowee, camped near Ninety Six where his men "killed a boflow" in 1716. Striking southward the next day, the party marched "throw the woods, noe

pathe" to a trail along the Savannah River. Captain Chicken's route may mark the beginning of the fork in the path which contributed to the commercial and military importance of Ninety Six.

The Carolina frontier was pushed westward from the Low Country as population increased. From 1735 until the Revolution, settlers took up land, carved farms and plantations from the hardwood forests around Ninety Six and established ferries and mills on nearby streams.

Robert Gouedy opened a store here about 1752 after trading among the Cherokees who considered him a hard bargainer. Gouedy not only served as a storekeeper, but also as a wholesaler, money lender and planter. His store grew to be the largest in the backcountry, providing goods of every description - from needles to muskets - to settlers and itinerants alike.

Relations between the settlers and Indians were tolerable at best. A band of frontiersmen stole 331 deerskins from a Cherokee hunting camp in 1751;

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Ninety Six was designated a national historic site on August 16, 1976. While there is much archaeological and historical study, planning and development yet to be done in this new area of the National Park System, we welcome you to Ninety Six and invite you to enjoy the activities which are now available.

The mile-long interpretive trail takes about one hour to walk and includes several strenuous grades. The earthworks and archaeological remains here are fragile. Please do not disturb or damage them.

The site abounds in animal and plant life, including poisonous snakes, poison oak and ivy. We suggest that you stay on the trail.

The Ninety Six National Historic Site is located on Highway S.C. 248, two miles south of Ninety Six, South Carolina. The site is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily except December 25.

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

The explorer, Hernando De Soto, was one of the first Europeans to travel through the Ninety Six region. The Spaniards marched from the Savannah River to the Cherokee towns in May, 1540. A part of their route followed a "highway"--probably the trail later called the Cherokee Path.

Over a century passed before the English founded a permanent colony at Charlestown in 1670. The colonists explored the interior, establishing contact and trade with the Indians during the late 1600's.

Trade with the Cherokees, a large and powerful Indian nation in the Southern Appalachians, became vital to South Carolina's prosperity within a few decades after the colony was settled. The main route to the Cherokee towns was the path which ran northwestward from Charlestown to the mountains.

Colonists who traveled into the Carolina backcountry gave descriptive names to landmarks along the way and often used creeks as mile markers. Ninety Six received its name because it lay on a stream ninety-six miles down the Cherokee Path from Keowee, the major Cherokee town in the Blue Ridge foothills.

this theft precipitated a series of attacks and raids that summer. Hostilities broke out again in 1759 when Cherokee warriors, probably influenced by French agents, attacked and burned many isolated farmsteads. Answering pleas for help, the royal governor marched on the Cherokee towns with 1300 troops. At Robert Gouedy's plantation, the expedition constructed Fort Ninety Six - "a true American Fort, a pitiful Palisade thrown round a Barn." The fort withstood two Indian attacks in February and March, 1760, and served as a supply depot for later campaigns against the Cherokees who sued for peace in the fall of 1761.

Settlement of the backcountry increased dramatically after the end of the "Cherokee Troubles." English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, French and German immigrants came to farm or ply their trades.

The region, however, was still a frontier where "squatting, poaching, and sneak thievery" were commonplace and outlaw gangs committed larceny, robbery and even murder with impunity. Consequently, in 1769, Ninety Six was established as the seat of one of seven judicial districts created to more conveniently administer justice in the province. A courthouse and jail were constructed shortly thereafter. On the eve of the Revolution, these public buildings stood at the center of a small, thriving village destined to be caught up in the coming war.

DURING THE REVOLUTION

Trouble between Great Britain and her American colonies erupted at the end of the French and Indian War in 1763. Many Americans resented British efforts to tax the colonies. The Tea Act of 1773 brought open rebellion in Boston, Annapolis and Charlestown. When Parliament reacted with political and military force, the American Revolution began.

As Great Britain and the colonies drifted toward war, American sentiments were divided. Those colonists who favored independence were patriots; others who opposed a break with England and supported the King were loyalists.

Although the Ninety Six grand jury adopted resolutions critical of British policy, many residents of the area were "quite comfortable under British rule" and were "passively, if not actively disaffected from the Patriot cause." Militia Colonel Thomas Fletchall, Major Joseph Robinson, Robert Cunningham, and Thomas Brown emerged as leaders of the backcountry loyalists.

The arrest of Robert Cunningham by South Carolina patriots provoked a battle between the opposing factions at Ninety Six. Led by Andrew Williamson, 563 patriot militia threw up a rude fort near Ninety Six courthouse. They were attacked on November 19, 1775, by 1,890 loyalists

commanded by Joseph Robinson. The three-day battle, the first major engagement in the South, ended with an inconclusive truce, but a patriot campaign in December 1775 destroyed all organized loyalist resistance in South Carolina.

Patriot control of the province was not threatened again until 1780 when the British turned their attention to the Southern colonies. After the fall of Charlestown in May, 1780, British and loyalist forces quickly seized control of South Carolina.

Lord Charles Cornwallis regarded Ninety Six as the key to the backcountry, stating that it "must be kept at all events and I think no reasonable expense should be spared--besides Georgia depends entirely upon it." Consequently, Ninety Six was heavily fortified and garrisoned by loyalist veterans from New York, New Jersey, and South Carolina.

The post was used as a recruiting depot for loyalist militia commanded by Major Patrick Ferguson. Marching to join Cornwallis in Charlotte, Ferguson's loyalist command was crushed in the Battle of King's Mountain on October 7, 1780. Four months later General Daniel Morgan's cavalry threatened Ninety Six. Cornwallis sent Colonel Banastre Tarleton with more than 1,000 dragoons to protect the post from Morgan. Tarleton pursued Morgan to Cowpens where the

patriot army routed the British force on January 17, 1781.

A few weeks later General Nathanael Greene began his campaign against the British outposts in Carolina which lasted throughout the spring. Greene laid siege to Ninety Six from May 22-June 19, 1781 with about 900 Continental and militia troops from Delaware, Maryland, the Carolinas and Virginia. Under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Thaddeus Kosciuszko, siege trenches and a mine were dug and artillery and rifle batteries raised. On June 18 Greene ordered an assault on the Star Redoubt and a vigorous push against the "stockade fort on the right." The attack failed and Greene, threatened by a British relief column of 2,000 regulars under Lord Francis Rawdon, withdrew toward Charlotte.

Although the American siege was thwarted, Ninety Six was isolated, and Lord Rawdon ordered the post evacuated. The garrison burned the village, destroyed the fortifications, assembled loyalist refugees and marched for Charlestown. The last British stronghold in the interior was abandoned.

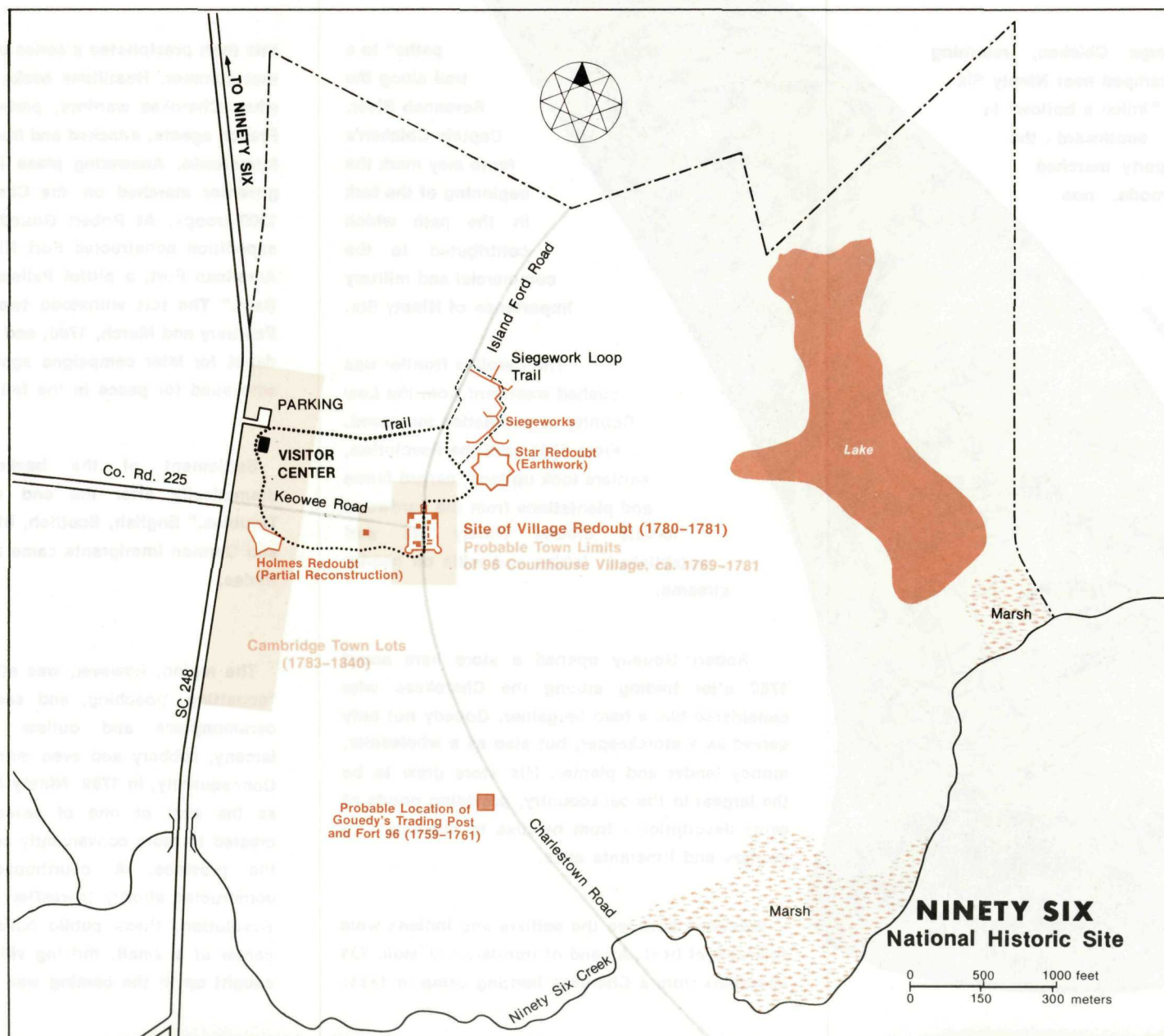
The next and final siege of the war took place four months later at Yorktown.

AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Colonial Ninety Six lay in ruins during the final months of the Revolution. A new town, however, was laid out a short distance west of the original site in 1783, the same year that the British formally recognized our independence. Many residents of this community [renamed Cambridge in 1787] were newcomers, replacing the loyalists who had fled as refugees.

Cambridge boasted a population of lawyers, doctors, teachers, merchants, shopkeepers and skilled tradesmen to serve the surrounding farms and plantations. The town flourished under the new republic until it was stripped of its courthouse in 1800. Cambridge began to decline, losing business and trade to rival communities. An epidemic struck in 1816 and the town gained a reputation as a unhealthy place to live. Within a decade or two Cambridge was little more than a memory.

As you walk the trail through the site, think of those who lived and worked here almost two centuries ago. Remember that despite their courage and perseverance, the community they established disappeared. The memory of the thriving trading post, bustling villages and lively military engagements now lingers only in legend, archaeological remains, and the pages of history. After all, two hundred years hence . . .



ADMINISTRATION

The Ninety Six National Historic Site is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is P. O. Box 496, Ninety Six, S.C. 29666, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.