The American Revolution in Georgia, 1763–1789

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Published by University of Georgia Press


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ALTHOUGH the failure of the Americans and French to take Savannah in 1779 dealt a severe blow to American military plans, the idea of Savannah's reconquest was not abandoned. Lincoln's headquarters began to plan for the recapture whenever enough Continental troops could be sent south. A Congressional committee recommended that Virginia and the Carolinas be urged to fill their troop quotas and that Washington be directed to send 1,000 troops to Lincoln, but Congress took no action. Washington sent a few troops but not enough to make any real difference.\(^1\)

Before the arrival of d'Estaing at Savannah, Clinton had assembled an expedition with which he hoped to capture Charleston. Its sailing was delayed until the outcome of the action at Savannah was known, for Clinton said he had little hopes of capturing South Carolina or regaining Georgia if Savannah was lost.\(^2\) When the British victory at Savannah was known in New York, the Charleston expedition moved forward again. It sailed late in December, 1779, and arrived at the mouth of the Savannah River at the end of January, 1780. Clinton set up his base and depots on Tybee Island.\(^3\)

Despite local objections, Clinton stripped Georgia and East Florida of most of their British troops and left Georgia outside Savannah pretty much at the mercy of Whig partisans and militia.\(^4\) Governor Wright complained bitterly that from the British viewpoint things were so bad that a Whig assembly could meet at Augusta and elect a full state government, and that Whigs often raided
to within a few miles of Savannah. Wright estimated Georgia's troop needs until South Carolina could be completely subdued at 500 at Savannah, 500 at Augusta, 1,500 to 2,000 operating from Augusta in Georgia and South Carolina back country, 200 at Ebenezer or Hudson's Ferry, 150 at Zubly's Ferry, 70 horsemen for patrols in the Savannah area, and several armed galleys to cruise off the coast. Wright's estimates of troops needed in Georgia were always considered high by the military authorities, and were never filled.

During the Charleston campaign, General Lincoln removed Continental troops from Georgia, despite the protests of Georgia Whigs. The state government asked South Carolina for military help to guard its western frontiers. General Andrew Williamson brought his brigade of South Carolina militia to Augusta in early March and remained until May 29 when his duties were taken over by Georgia militia. Charleston surrendered to Clinton's superior numbers on May 12, and Lincoln and his entire army became prisoners of war.

Clinton and part of his army returned to New York, but Lord Cornwallis and the rest of the British troops were left to complete the conquest and occupation of the Carolinas and Georgia. Throughout 1780-1781 the main fighting in the South was between British troops under Cornwallis and Americans under Gates and Greene in the Carolinas. So far as the military commanders on both sides were concerned, Georgia was out of the main picture and was largely ignored. In spite of the objections by state and colonial civil governments to what they termed insufficient consideration by the military, Georgia secured no more consideration or troops. The British troops taken out of Georgia before the capture of Charleston were never returned; and after Cornwallis moved into North Carolina in the fall of 1780, the Whigs in the back country felt safer than they had since the siege of Savannah the year before.

After the evacuation of Augusta by General Williamson in May, 1780, Tory troops under Colonels Thomas Brown and James Grierson soon moved in and took possession. Brown still remembered the suit of tar and feathers he had received there in August, 1775, and he became the bane of all back-country Whigs in his dual capacity of military commander and Indian superintendent. Throughout June and July both Brown and Governor Wright were of the opinion that resistance in Georgia might really end. Many people took the oath of allegiance to the King, apparently
because they believed that the Whig cause was dead in Georgia and the Carolinas, not because they had any love for the British. People around Augusta, in the Ogeechee country, and along the coast south of Savannah, submitted. Brown reported that several Whig militia officers, including Colonel John Dooly, had offered to surrender their units as prisoners of war. Dooly evidently changed his mind, if he ever intended to surrender, because he was murdered in his home by a band of Tories in the summer.

Out of the murder of Dooly comes the best known and most interesting legend of the Revolution in Georgia, the story of Nancy Hart. Five of the murderers, says the legend, called soon after their gory deed at the cabin of Nancy Hart in frontier Wilkes County and demanded food. While the food was being prepared, they stacked their muskets in the corner and made merry by emptying a well-filled jug. Nancy sent her daughter to the spring for water and to warn the Whig men in the neighborhood that Tories were in the cabin. When the meal began more water was needed, and the daughter was dispatched with instructions to signal the Whigs to come to the cabin. Then Nancy began to slip the muskets through a crack between the logs. The Tories discovered this, but before they could do anything Nancy, musket in hand, warned them that she would shoot the first one who moved. A Tory moved, Nancy fired, and the Tory fell to the floor dead. A second musket was instantly in Nancy’s hands and the daughter returned with word that Whig men would arrive soon. Nancy’s reputation with firearms was well known, but her being cross-eyed made it difficult for her prisoners to know just which one she was watching. If they were to escape, they must do so before the Whig men arrived. Another Tory moved and joined his companion on the floor. The other three accepted Nancy’s demand that they “surrender their ugly Tory carcasses to a Whig woman” and were hanged without further ado when the Whig men arrived. According to legend, Nancy and her fellow Whigs did other notable services in Wilkes County that matched the deeds of Colonel Brown and other fiendish Tories.

Brown joined Wright in distrust of many who had taken the oath to the King, and he reported that some of the turncoats caused trouble to real loyalists despite his threat to hang anyone caught molesting peaceable inhabitants. By July, 1780, it was reported that most of the upcountry had submitted to British authority except some 800 to 900 frontiersmen in Wilkes County who did
not seem disposed to submit. Cornwallis was so sure that Georgia was safe that he sent troops from the colony to St. Augustine in the early summer.

The only part of Georgia left under Whig control was Wilkes County and the upper part of Richmond County. The state civil government, located in Wilkes County, could do little. Wright alternated between the fear that the rebels would show up in force—there were a few British troops in Savannah and Augusta—and the hope that the inhabitants of the ceded lands (Wilkes County, to the Whigs) would submit. He now reduced his troop requests to from 600 to 800 foot and 150 horsemen, and was sure that with these the back country would submit completely. Some people, he said, had not submitted because of the reports that British troops would soon leave Augusta. There were troops only at Savannah and Augusta, hardly enough to control all of the province.

Many Whigs left Georgia for the Carolinas or states farther north. Others on the frontier built stockade forts for protection against bands of roving Tories and Indians. There were bands of Whig and Tory militia and partisans operating throughout the back country. Some of them were more interested in loot and personal gain than in which side eventually won in the bigger struggle. Militia activities resulted from the personal inclination of the militiamen and their leaders—Elijah Clarke, John Twiggs, Benjamin and William Few, James Jackson, and John Dooly for the Whigs and James and Daniel McGirth, Thomas Brown, and James Grierson for the Tories. The Tories got some help from the British commander in Savannah, but it was 1781 before the Whigs got much help from the Continental military commander in the South. This Whig militia must have had a remarkable intelligence system, for its leaders always seemed to know when a band of Tories was nearby and how large it was. The militiamen assembled if there was any chance of success, attacked the Tories, and then dispersed to their homes to become ordinary frontiersmen until there was another chance to strike at the Tories. Sometimes they returned from an expedition to find their homes burned, their families murdered, or their crops destroyed; yet they always seemed ready for the next action. South Carolina and Georgia Whigs fought together on both sides of the Savannah River. There were reports of Georgia militia in many of the battles fought in both the Carolinas during 1780 and 1781.

Georgia militia activity can be illustrated well by Elijah Clarke
and his men in the summer and fall of 1780. In mid-August Clarke and a small band of Georgians joined North Carolinians in a small action at Musgrove's Mill in North Carolina. Clarke's party then returned through Tory-occupied South Carolina to Wilkes County, Georgia. The men were dismissed to go to their homes, see their families, and put their business in order. After about ten days 300 men reassembled and marched with Clarke toward Augusta, which they attacked in mid-September. Before Thomas Brown and his Tories were forced to surrender to the Whigs, reinforcements under Colonel Cruger arrived from Ninety Six, and Clarke's men had to beat a hasty retreat.

It was after this action that tradition says one of Brown's most famous cruelties took place. Brown's troops and his Indian allies had been hard pressed and had taken refuge in an Indian trading post, the White House, outside Augusta. Brown was injured and confined to his bed by the time he was relieved by Cruger. According to the story, Brown picked twelve of the wounded Whigs left by Clarke in his hasty retreat and had them hanged from the staircase of the house so that he could watch their dying agonies from his bed. A contemporaneous account by Wright reported the hanging of thirteen rebels who had broken their paroles and fought with the Whigs. These are evidently Tory and Whig versions of the same action.13

Clarke and his men, after their failure at Augusta, went up-country to Little River where they dispersed. When they met again in late September, they found 400 women and children who were trying to escape Tory ravaging of upcountry Georgia. Clarke and his men escorted these refugees to the only place of safety Clarke knew, the Watauga Valley in a section of North Carolina (now Tennessee) unvexed by Tories. Clarke's men returning from this trip helped to bring on the Battle of King's Mountain when the British tried to intercept them.14

Despite the efforts of Brown, Wright, and others, Wilkes County did not submit to the royal government. After Clarke's failure to take Augusta, Brown sent raiding parties through the area that had not submitted, and Wright reported that about 100 plantations or settlements of people who had attacked Augusta were laid waste and burnt. Lieutenant Governor Graham went through the country and forced many to give security for good behavior and disarmed all that he did not trust. A list made by Graham in November of some 723 males from the ceded lands (Wilkes County) area
showed 255 loyal men formed into a militia regiment; 159 left in the area, from whom twenty-one hostages were carried to Savannah; forty-two prisoners sent to Charleston; fifty-seven of unknown character in the area; forty-nine notorious rebels hiding from the British; and 140 who had left with Clarke.\(^\text{15}\) Wright still begged for a troop of horsemen, if only fifty in number, to guard the frontier. He was sure that if Cornwallis took his army into North Carolina, rebels would rise up to plague Georgia and South Carolina.\(^\text{16}\)

By April, 1781, it was evident that Nathanael Greene, now Continental commander in the Southern Department, was preparing to take the offensive in Georgia and the Carolinas. When about 250 men under Colonel Shelby came from Tennessee into Wilkes County in April and killed some forty loyalists, Grierson and Brown did not have sufficient troops at Augusta to go against the Whigs. Wright was sure that there were not enough British troops to oppose the Whigs if they moved in force against Georgia.\(^\text{17}\) Both Ninety Six and Augusta were invested by forces under Greene in May.\(^\text{18}\)

Georgia and South Carolina Whig militia began the siege of Augusta in April, 1781, under the command of Micajah Williamson and Elijah Clarke. About May 20 General Andrew Pickens and Lieutenant Colonel Henry Lee, with some Continental troops, arrived at Augusta and joined Clarke. First the Whigs captured a British supply depot and got some badly needed supplies. The two forts guarding Augusta were captured on May 25 and June 5. At the fall of this second fort, Colonel Grierson, who had been a scourge of many upcountry Whigs, was killed by enraged Whigs after he had surrendered.\(^\text{19}\)

Throughout May many upcountry posts in South Carolina and Georgia were surrendered to the Americans or evacuated by the British. By June 15 Greene reported that the British had evacuated every post they held in the upcountry except Ninety Six, and it was abandoned by the British on July 3, though Greene had raised the siege. But there were still large numbers of Tories to trouble the back country, and Greene strongly urged Georgia to put her militia on a better footing to control these Tories.\(^\text{20}\)

With all the back country in Whig hands, the whole military picture changed. Many loyalists fled to the area controlled by the British, where their economic support created additional problems. Wright formed new militia units out of the back-country
loyalists in the Savannah area but did not think they could oppose the Whigs successfully without regulars.\textsuperscript{21} By December General Leslie, the British commander in Charleston, and Wright had painted so dark a picture to Clinton that he authorized Leslie to abandon Georgia if he thought best.\textsuperscript{22}

But Whigs also were worried about conditions in Georgia. There were rumors that more British troops would be sent to Georgia and that the British were going to retake Augusta. Requests from Greene for help from the state government met with as little success as did those from Wright to Clinton. The Whigs continued to gain ground slowly, and by December were back in Ebenezer.\textsuperscript{23}

Before recounting the military activity that culminated in the evacuation of Savannah by the British, general military conditions for the period 1779 through 1782 will be considered. In December, 1778, Campbell brought between 2,000 and 2,500 British troops to Georgia, and Prevost brought 1,000 from Florida. During the siege of Savannah in September, 1779, there were 2,350 troops of all sorts in Savannah. After Georgia was stripped of British troops to help in the reduction of Charleston, there were about 600 left fit for duty. Throughout 1780 and 1781 this number remained fairly constant but rose to 970 fit for duty by the end of 1781. About two-thirds of these troops were loyalists, about two-ninths were Hessians, and less than one-ninth were British Regulars. There was no appreciable change by May 1, 1782, the date of the last return.\textsuperscript{24}

Sickness accounted for the largest number of absentees among the troops, usually running as high as thirty per cent and sometimes reaching almost fifty per cent. If the complaints of the British and Hessian officers can be believed, most of this sickness was due to the climate. The most constant complainer about Savannah climate was Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich von Porbeck, commander of the Hessians in Georgia throughout the British occupation. He complained of the heat in December and January, said that troops could not be drilled after March 15, and said that troops who remained in Savannah long were permanently weakened and were not fit for full duty. He described various strange diseases, which he blamed on the climate and on Savannah's lack of a sewage disposal system and pure drinking water. Some years, according to Porbeck, 500 to 600 whites died of fever, and a constant supply of convicts from Britain and the Northern colonies was necessary to keep up the population. No white who could afford to leave ever spent a summer in Georgia. The fact that one-
third of his recruits were sick enough to be hospitalized upon arrival in Savannah in no wise affected his opinions of Savannah climate. In every letter he asked for a transfer to the North and said that promotions were the only thing that would improve morale. Since he got neither a transfer nor a promotion, his morale must have been very low the entire time he was in Savannah.25

Governor Wright had numerous dealings with and many complaints about the military commanders in Savannah. General Prevost, in command when Wright arrived in 1779, remained until May, 1780. It was during his tenure that the largest British garrison was in Georgia, that the colony was almost entirely recaptured, and that British military operations were most successful. Prevost seems to have been a competent commander, and Wright got along with him much better than with either of his successors. Prevost was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Alured Clarke as commander of East Florida and Georgia.26 Clarke took part of his troops and went to St. Augustine in April, 1781, when there was fear of a Spanish attack there. Von Porbeck was left as senior officer in Georgia. Wright objected to a commander who did not understand English government and law and who he understood claimed to be totally exempt from civil authority.27 Von Porbeck had complained earlier that there was a civil government in Georgia; and though he made no direct reference to Wright, there is no reason to think that they got along well. Clarke returned to Savannah by June 7, 1781, and remained until the evacuation. During Clarke’s command there were fewer troops in Georgia, the British were on the defensive much of the time, and Wright was generally harder to get along with than when Prevost commanded.

The main trouble between Wright and military commanders (in Savannah, Charleston, or New York) was that they could not see the defense of Georgia as he did and consequently, so he said, did not have the welfare of the province at heart. Wright always put Georgia first, and he was convinced that there were enough British troops available to spare the 500 to 1,000 that he thought necessary to subdue all of the province. If military commanders did not agree, they were shortsighted, and Wright reserved his choicest tirades for them. Wright summed up his opinion of the generals after he had lost hope of getting any more troops:

The Generals &c. have always Set their faces against this Province, as I have frequently Wrote you, and I can’t tell why, unless it is because the King has thought Proper to Re-establish his Civil Government
here—which the Military Cannot bear—and I have long Seen they will do Nothing for us, without a Positive order from Home & which may now be too late.\textsuperscript{28}

The military officers and political officials in London, realizing it was impossible to convince Wright, quit trying, and merely told him that no more troops were available. All military commanders who dealt with Wright must have agreed with Lieutenant Colonel Balfour who said of Wright and his council that they “are the most Absurd of all people."\textsuperscript{29}

Relations between Georgia loyalists and British and Hessian troops were those that usually exist between a “friendly” population and an army during combat. The army took what it wanted, and the civilians complained. In Savannah the barracks built by the Whigs were used by the British until they were destroyed in the siege of 1779. After that soldiers were billeted in private houses in the town. The army said that there was plenty of room for troops and civilians, but the civilians disagreed. Both said the other took the best houses. Outside Savannah and away from the watchful eye of Wright, civilians fared worse. Ebenezer suffered especially from army occupation. It was either a halfway station to Augusta or an outpost, and troops were usually stationed there and were often passing through. The inhabitants complained that the troops took their Negroes, horses, cattle, and wagons and destroyed their farms and homes. The church, schoolhouses, and mills were damaged or destroyed.\textsuperscript{30} Similar conditions existed wherever troops were stationed, and there is little evidence that the army tried to prevent such damage.

Not only did Wright complain that there were insufficient troops in Georgia, but he also complained because there were no mounted troops to protect loyal inhabitants against rebel raids. Infantry were quite ineffective in opposing these raids, which were hit-and-run affairs often carried out by mounted men. The British army was never convinced and refused to send horsemen to Georgia. After the siege of Savannah, Wright got his council to approve mounted militia patrols. General Prevost agreed to pay these patrols but refused to ration them.\textsuperscript{31} During the Charleston campaign, Clinton approved pay and rations for militia patrols. Later Wright paid similar patrols out of his own pocket and had trouble collecting from the army.\textsuperscript{32} The British commanders usually opposed such special provincial troops that were not directly under
their command and claimed that they did as much looting as they prevented.\textsuperscript{33}

After the fall of Charleston, Clinton ordered all young unmarried men to be formed into active militia units subject to service half of the time and to be paid and rationed by the army while on duty. Besides this, the regular militia was to continue for local areas. Wright objected that these regulations could not apply to Georgia, where a civil government existed, and again he demanded his troop of horsemen, which had been approved by Clinton but never raised. Cornwallis opposed the horsemen but could never convince Wright that they were no longer needed.\textsuperscript{34}

After the unsuccessful siege of Augusta by the Whigs in 1780, Wright called a special assembly session to consider defense. Upon his recommendation a bill was passed that allowed the drafting of slaves to work on defenses and the arming of Negroes in time of extreme danger. The entire militia system was tightened. Wright immediately ordered out some 400 Negroes to work on the defenses of Savannah.\textsuperscript{35}

Early in 1781 Wright and the council authorized three patrols of twenty mounted militiamen each, and two months later raised a troop of horsemen to protect the back country. The British government approved this use of horsemen and ordered the army to pay for it. Two troops of horsemen were actually raised and put into the field, and British officers tried to recruit dragoons for service in Georgia.\textsuperscript{36}

To turn from British to Whig troop activity is in many ways to repeat a similar story, especially as regards a troop shortage. The Whigs probably had more trouble keeping their units filled than did the British; certainly they had fewer regular troops. The Continental Congress approved a total of four battalions of infantry and one regiment of light dragoons for Georgia. Only the first battalion of infantry and the dragoons were raised in Georgia. The other battalions were raised in the Carolinas, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Troops enlisted from out of the state complained about low pay, the small value of Georgia currency, distance from home, and hot climate. Probably these battalions were never up to strength. Few replacements could be secured for men who deserted or went home when their enlistments expired. In 1779 Congress ordered a reduction to one battalion of infantry and one regiment of horse. Early in 1780 there was a recommendation of two bat-
talions with one to consist of Negroes, but the original reduction held. No Negro troops were ever raised, and in 1782 the Continental troops were further reduced to one battalion. 37

From the time of the capture of Savannah by the British until mid-1781, the state government was too weak and irregular to be of any real assistance in military matters. After the upcountry was freed of British troops, a revived state government began to do what it could to raise militia and state troops to cooperate with the Continentals. The best known state unit, the Georgia State Legion or Jackson's Legion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Jackson, was raised at the suggestion of General Greene in the summer of 1781. 38 It, like other state units, was to be composed of people who wanted to transfer their allegiance from Britain to the United States now that the war seemed to be going against the British. Other state troops were ordered raised, usually for a short time to help the Continentals or to do frontier guard duty. Often such troops were to furnish their own arms and mounts, since none could be procured by the state. State troops proved no more satisfactory than they had before 1779 and continued to be more a hope than a reality. The greatest trouble about state troops was that the state government had no funds with which to pay them. It resorted to such expedients as land, mounts, Negroes, clothing, provisions, salt, and anything else that it could get its hands on (usually from confiscated Tory estates). But for the need of many to prove their loyalty to the United States, it is doubtful if there would have been any state troops worth mentioning. 39

Militia continued to be a main source of military manpower, especially on the frontier and in the partisan fighting in the back country. At the time of the capture of Augusta there were militia reported present who had been in the field for a year but who had received little pay or subsistence. 40 Such long term militiamen in many ways were more like partisans than militia. They remained in the field because of their hatred of the British, because of their regard for their leaders, because they considered military duty safer than civilian life with the unsettled conditions in the back country, or because they might possibly get a better living from the state (if it had any provisions and supplies) than they could hope to produce upon their own ravaged farms. The state authorities usually opposed long terms for militia because of the interruption of farming, but the Continental commanders often called for militia because it was the only source of additional manpower available. The
old troubles of militia undependability remained. On April 22, 1782, a return of Burke and Richmond county militia serving with the Continental troops showed eight officers and twenty enlisted men present, and twenty-three deserters.\textsuperscript{41}

The matter of Indian cooperation continued to be one of importance to both sides in the struggle. Despite the failure of anticipated Indian help upon the initial conquest of Georgia, the British continued to cultivate Indian allies. The Indian Department tried to keep several hundred Indian allies ready to cooperate with British troops when they were needed. Thomas Brown, in his dual capacity as Indian superintendent and commander at Augusta, especially used Indians to supplement his military actions. While the British sought active Indian allies, the Whigs usually tried to frighten the Indians away from friendship with the British into neutrality. By 1779 the Whigs had little to offer the Indians to get any active assistance from them. Whenever the British had special need of Creek help, the Whigs would send out a threatening expedition toward the Creek country to frighten the Indians into remaining at home for self-protection. Despite Whig accusations about British cruelty in using Indian allies and encouraging scalping parties, it is probable that the British policy of encouraging Indian cooperation with white soldiers actually lessened Indian cruelties. It was usually possible for the British to get Indian allies for a short campaign or single action if they had plenty of gifts, but it was very difficult to keep Indians in camp if there was no action.

After the foregoing treatment of general military conditions the specific happenings of 1782 will be recounted. After the defeat of Cornwallis at Yorktown in October, 1781, the Continental army in the Southern Department got more consideration than previously. General Greene wanted to keep the British shut up in Charleston and Savannah but saw little chance of capturing either without reinforcements. In early January, 1782, Brigadier General Anthony Wayne, who had come south after Yorktown, was sent to Georgia as Continental commander to reinstate the authority of the United States. A regiment of dragoons and a detachment of artillery were sent with Wayne, and Georgia and South Carolina troops and militia were to be under his command.\textsuperscript{42} At the same time General Leslie in Charleston ordered 200 British troops to Savannah and promised 300 more if needed. This brought British strength to 1,000,\textsuperscript{43} while Wayne had about 500. Despite Wayne’s shortage in troops,
he immediately took the offensive, forced the British to withdraw from several points a few miles from Savannah, and began intercepting Indians coming to aid the British.\textsuperscript{44}

When Greene sent Wayne to Georgia, he requested the cooperation of Georgia's new governor, John Martin, and suggested that the state take steps to win wavering people from British to American allegiance. Martin ordered out half the militia, which he estimated at about 300 men, to act with Wayne and took steps to procure food for men and horses in the areas recently abandoned by the British.\textsuperscript{45} Wayne showed more determination than any Whig had exhibited for many months in Georgia, and Martin cooperated fully. The Whigs now seemed ready psychologically to drive out the British even if they did not have the military resources. The British strengthened the defenses of Savannah and brought in Indians.\textsuperscript{46} Wright's letters took on the note of pessimism of a man who knew that he was doomed.\textsuperscript{47}

It soon looked as though Wayne's presence in Georgia might come to naught. The South Carolina state troops that came with him had but thirteen days of their enlistment left and went home promptly at the end of this period. As late as February 6, no Georgia militia had joined Wayne because of a campaign of Elijah Clarke against the Cherokees. Only 130 state troops and militia reported during February. General Leslie was sure that Wayne could do nothing but annoy the loyalists outside Savannah.\textsuperscript{48} Wayne himself said,

\begin{quote}
The duty we have done in Georgia is more difficult than that imposed upon the children of Israel. They had only to make bricks without straw, but we have had provision, forage, and almost every other apparatus of war to procure without money: boats, bridges, &c. to build without materials except those taken from the stump: and, what was more difficult than all, to make Whigs out of Tories. But this we have effected, and have wrested the country out of the hands of the enemy, with the exception only of the town of Savannah. How to keep it without some additional force is a matter worthy of consideration.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

Wayne exerted himself in every possible way to get men to fill his depleted ranks. He urged the state government to do everything possible to fill its Continental quota: increase the bounty offered for enlistments, raise a Negro corps, encourage desertions from the British, and restore any Tory or absent citizen to good standing if he would enlist.\textsuperscript{50} On February 20 Governor Martin
issued a proclamation aimed at securing desertions from the Hessians, who were especially dissatisfied because of the prolonged service in Georgia. The proclamation, circulated in German, increased Hessian desertions. The Germans at Ebenezer helped persuade the Hessians to desert. Von Porbeck said, "The women are the best recruiting agents for the rebels." It was reported that any Hessians stationed outside Savannah immediately deserted. Patrols of Indians and Negroes roamed the woods beyond the British lines at night and brought in Hessian deserters for which they were paid two guineas each, dead or alive. Hessian deserters from Georgia are said to have migrated as far as North Carolina where they settled permanently. Loyalists and militia also deserted in large numbers, probably with the idea of saving their property from the Whigs. Some months desertions reached a total of fifty. Sir Patrick Houstoun, noted for being loyal to whichever side was in power in Savannah, surrendered at Wayne's headquarters on February 21 with a group of Hessian and loyalist deserters. On March 10 a group of thirty-eight mounted loyalist militia reported to Wayne's headquarters and joined the Georgia volunteers for duty until the British left Georgia.

Throughout the spring there was little change in the military situation. Wayne was usually able to intercept the Indians trying to get into Savannah to help the troops there. The state tried hard to raise troops and militia to help but secured few men. Wayne, continuing to strike the enemy whenever he had a chance, had some successes, and kept the British effectively penned up in Savannah.

On May 21, General Leslie, having received official notice of the progress of peace negotiations, proposed to Greene a cessation of hostilities; but Greene refused any such move without instructions from Congress. On May 29 General Clarke and Governor Wright in Savannah suggested to Wayne a cessation of hostilities, but Wayne referred the matter to Greene. Nothing came of these requests.

In April, Clinton called on Leslie for 2,000 of the 6,000 troops in South Carolina, Georgia, and East Florida. Rather than weaken the British position in South Carolina and East Florida, Leslie suggested that Georgia be evacuated. Just at this juncture, Clinton was replaced as British commander in North America by Sir Guy Carleton, who was instructed to withdraw the British troops from New York, Charleston, and Savannah. Carleton informed Leslie
that Savannah was to be evacuated immediately and Charleston soon. Wright and the royal assembly expressed amazement at this evacuation of Georgia and insisted that it was unnecessary and that only a few troops could protect the province. They first suggested that the St. Augustine garrison be brought to Savannah; finally they asked that East Florida remain in British hands until loyalists could make arrangements as to where they would go to begin life anew. Wright protested the evacuation strenuously, but his strongest objections came after his return to England. In "A Concise View of the Situation of the Province of Georgia for 3 Years Past" he set forth in detail Georgia's progress after its recapture in 1778, the lack of military protection to loyalists, the lack of necessity for abandoning the province, and the hardships undergone by the loyalists as a result of the evacuation.

No destruction, even of fortifications, was allowed in the evacuation of Savannah; and new fortifications, thrown up on Tybee Island just before the evacuation, were apparently temporary protection for refugees awaiting transports. On July 10 and 11 the last of the British troops left Savannah, and Whigs took possession. Lieutenant Colonel James Jackson of the Georgia troops received the keys to the city and was the first Whig officer to command the city since December, 1778. British troops remained at Tybee for ten to twelve days, and Thomas Brown's loyalists were near the town as late as July 31 before they went to St. Augustine overland.

Wayne allowed the merchants in Savannah six months to dispose of their inventories, adjust their affairs, and leave the state. They were ordered to turn in an inventory of their stocks to Wayne so that the Whigs could get needed supplies. This agreement was approved by Governor Martin, the state assembly, and the Continental Congress. Loyalists who had aided the British and who wished to remain in Georgia could clear their past conduct by enlisting in the Georgia Continental battalion for two years or for the duration of the war. Two hundred had joined by July 12.

The British troops evacuated from Savannah were sent to New York and Charleston. Greene, afraid that Leslie would undertake an offensive action in South Carolina with these reinforcements, ordered Wayne and all his Continentals, except the newly-enlisted Georgia battalion, to report to his headquarters outside Charleston at once. Although the presence of Brown's loyalists and sickness of Wayne's troops delayed this departure, pleas from the Georgia government and from Wayne that the troops be left were of no
avail. The Georgia battalion under Major John Habersham and Jackson's legion were all the troops left to defend the state. Loyalists who wished to leave Georgia were promised transportation to other points in the empire, but insufficient transports were sent to Savannah and many loyalists were forced to go to St. Augustine overland or via the inland passage in what small vessels they could procure locally. About two-thirds of the transports sent to Savannah were used to transport troops and military stores to New York and Charleston. The remaining 3,500 tons of transport space was divided about equally between loyalists going to St. Augustine and to Jamaica. There are no exact figures of how many loyalists left Savannah. Just before the evacuation, Wayne said that there were 6,000 people, black and white, encamped at Savannah, awaiting transportation out of Georgia. Governor Tonyn said that refugees began to arrive in East Florida early in the spring of 1782 and were still coming in November, probably from South Carolina that late. A return of Georgia loyalists in East Florida in December, 1782, lists 911 whites and 1,786 Negroes. An undated return received from General Leslie in July, 1782, lists 1,042 whites and 1,956 Negroes, a total of 2,998. It lists heads of families by name and the number of people in each family. Tonyn said that the great majority of refugees were very poor back-country people, but there were a few people of quality. Governor Wright requested transportation to Jamaica for 2,000 Negroes, and General Carleton said that ten families with 1,568 Negroes went from Savannah to Jamaica. An unidentified return dated Charleston, December 13, 1786, says fifty white men and 1,600 Negroes went from Georgia to Jamaica. The slaves of William Knox, Governor Wright, and other large slave owners were reported in Jamaica. Taking the highest estimate given above makes about 3,100 whites and something over 3,500 Negroes who left Savannah at the evacuation. Almost 5,000 of these went to East Florida, and some returned to Georgia when the British evacuated East Florida in 1783-85.

James Jackson said that no less than 5,000 to 6,000 Negroes were taken away at the evacuation, and others said that between three-fourths and seven-eighths of the slaves of the state were taken away. Both the total number and percentages seem excessive. Though the slave population had decreased during the war, it had been 15,000 in 1773 and could hardly have declined by one-half. Both Leslie and Clarke seem to have tried to prevent the tak-
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ing away of slaves not the *bona fide* property of loyalists.\(^71\) Negroes who had served in the British army were not considered American property but loyalists entitled to evacuation. Carleton said that any who had been promised their freedom for army service must be freed, and he left the status of all doubtful Negroes to be determined by Leslie.\(^72\) There were some Negroes in Savannah whose army services entitled them to their freedom, but probably not very many. Three free Negro families were on the East Florida refugee list.\(^73\) The biggest Negro problem came out of the confusion about ownership that resulted from confiscation laws, conflicting governments and their court decisions, abandoned property, escapes, and the general confusion of the period. The state assembly directed that negotiations be entered into for the purchase by the state of the Negroes about to be carried away, but it refused to let individuals make purchases. It also requested Governor Martin to allow Whigs who had property within the British lines to go into Savannah and claim this property before the evacuation.\(^74\) No agreement was reached about the purchase of the slaves by the state, and it is extremely doubtful that individuals were able to reclaim property that was also claimed by evacuees. Thus, a badly needed labor supply was carried out of the state and would make itself felt for several years to come.