

CONGAREE CREEK ARCHEOLOGICAL PARK

A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY



SHARYN KANE & RICHARD KEETON

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FOR

THE RIVER ALLIANCE

&

SOUTHEAST ARCHEOLOGICAL CENTER

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FOREWORD

The residents of Greater Columbia and the state of South Carolina have a unique opportunity to add uncharted heights to an existing mountain of cultural heritage. The River Alliance, a local conservation-advocacy group, has partnered with the National Park Service in exploring a potential gold mine of information on local, state, and national history. The proposed historical research park at Congaree Creek is a unique heritage resource that deserves appropriate protection and interpretation. Located just south of Cayce, South Carolina, west of the Congaree River, and north of Interstate Highway 77, the proposed research park contains the remains of multiple centuries of human activity in the Columbia environs. Locked within its alluvial soils and terraces are the untold stories of the past preserved for the future.

This volume, Congaree Creek Archeological Park, A Historic Opportunity is a compelling account of the known history of the Congaree Creek area. But it is much more than that: it is a guide and prescription for unlocking untold stories of history and the local human saga for over 12, 000 years. The stories are waiting to be told by archaeologists, historians, and teachers about how prehistoric peoples, with limited technology, lived, struggled, and prospered. Locked within archaeological, and as yet barely explored archival records, are important details that will illuminate the history of early colonial South Carolina, including a fortified trading post established in 1718, 18th century economy and settlement, and human activities at plantations owned by Charles Pinckney and others. The important, but as yet, incomplete stories of the American Revolution, such as the movements of colonial and patriot militia, and a British retreat in 1781, wait to be revealed. A zigzag alignment of earthen breastworks in the proposed park marks the location of Confederate defensive actions to delay Sherman's army in 1865. Later historical accounts, such as the travails of post Civil War Reconstruction, the exploits of 19th century steamboats, and the events of the 19th and 20th century textile industry, will be more accurately told following archaeological and historical research at the park.

It has been my privilege to lead the development of this study, composed by award-winning authors Sharyn Kane and Richard Keeton, which eloquently describes the archaeological and historical potential of the Congaree Creek park. Working with Michael Dawson of the River Alliance, and with the invaluable input and support from numerous local and regional colleagues and experts, we are confident that the citizens of South Carolina will seize the unprecedented opportunity described in this book to create a resource that promises to be a fountain of knowledge for enhancing a rich cultural heritage.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have high hopes for a proposed Archeological Park near Congaree Creek and their enthusiasm extended to generously offering their time and ideas to help us write this book. Mike Dawson, executive director of the River Alliance, leads the list of individuals who helped, along with his talented staff, especially Anna Stalnaker and Oz Nagler. Touring the proposed site deep in the woods and brush on a hot afternoon, with Mike hacking the way forward with a machete, was a highlight of our research. In retrospect, it was fitting that Mike made a path where there was none to follow, because he has consistently been a leader on this and other projects to benefit the people and city of Columbia, South Carolina.

Joining us on that expedition near Congaree Creek was John Jameson, an archeologist with the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) of the National Park Service, and our friend and mentor. We have had the pleasure of working on writing endeavors with John for more than twenty years, and without fail, he has worked tirelessly to guide the production of quality publications about archeology and history for the public. His dedication to preserving the nation's cultural resources never flags. Along with John Ehrenhard, the retired chief of SEAC, he has contributed substantially to providing a record of our nation's history. These efforts extend to enlisting the talents of artist Martin Pate, whose vivid and historically precise paintings grace the pages of this book and many other venues. We would also like to thank Kimberly Washington of the National Park Service for all her help and especially her good nature as she has guided us through the maze of government contracting.

The names of many others who provided their insights and ideas are given in the following pages, so we will not repeat them here. We are grateful to each one of them for their assistance. If the vision of the Archeological Park becomes a reality, all of these contributors will be able to point with pride to their parts in shaping the endeavor.

Finally, we wish to thank our families and friends for their encouragement and we would like to express our gratitude to all the people in Columbia who extended their warmth and hospitality to us and shared their justifiable pride in their lovely and historically rich community.

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The proposed Archeological Park area is visible in this aerial photograph. The River Alliance

INTRODUCTION

Becoming disoriented is easy in the forests near Congaree Creek, despite being only a few minutes from busy downtown Columbia, South Carolina. The underbrush grows so thick in places that the unsuspecting hiker is suddenly sealed in, with seeing beyond a few feet becoming difficult. Companions, clearly in sight one moment, disappear in the brush. Sharp thorns jut out like stilettos and bar the way, making a machete necessary to hack a path forward in places. The denseness of the woods enhances a sense of mystery that hangs over this isolated spot. Birds call forlornly from high trees and sunlight filters down in thin streams. Time seems to slow. The forest is still, except for the birds and whispers from the past.

The sensation is enhanced by knowledge of what lies buried in the soil. Scientists have discovered artifacts, objects people made or used, dating back between 11,000 and 12,000 years ago in the land near Congaree Creek. In that long ago era, the last Ice Age was waning. Frequent snows blanketed the ground and dusted the trees. Huge, elephant-like creatures shook the earth as they trudged by on heavy hooves. Hunters, armed with spears, stalked these giants and eventually left behind their stone weapons near Congaree Creek.

The antiquity of the stone objects is just one intriguing aspect about the woods surrounding the South Carolina waterway. In fact, artifacts associated with every major era of human development in North America since the Ice Age ended are buried in the soils. Among the evidence archeologists find are pieces from shattered pots made thousands of years ago by inhabitants just learning how to turn clay into crude containers.

Nearby, researchers sometimes uncover triangular arrowheads, remnants of a time when bows and arrows were crucially important new

inventions on the continent. Scientists also have discovered later objects that were perhaps dropped by Indians living when the first armor-clad Spanish conquistadors passed this way in the 1500s. The Europeans, led by Hernando de Soto, were starving and desperately lost in their futile search for gold and other treasure in the mysterious New World.

The earth near Congaree Creek also holds secrets from more recent history, such as the remains of an early colonial fort. Built when the young colony of South Carolina was struggling to survive and hold on to a thin wedge of land along the coast, Fort Congaree served as a lonely bastion on the edge of the frontier. The wooden structure, built for war, thrived as a trading center with the Indians in the early 1700s.

Later, Revolutionary War heroes fought and camped in the area. Legendary figures with fanciful nicknames, such as Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox", and Thomas Sumter, the "Gamecock", and their guerilla militias combined their forces near Congaree Creek. Revolutionary War hero Nathanael Greene and his regular army marched down what later became known as Old State Road and over the water, while his cavalry, commanded by William Washington, George Washington's cousin, and "Light Horse" Harry Lee, Robert E. Lee's father, galloped ahead to attack the retreating British.

Moving on through time, Confederate cavalry led a last-ditch defense of Columbia on the same ground during the Civil War. A desperate struggle ensued as Confederate defenders were cut off and forced to flee. Rebel soldiers, their horses pulling the last cannons clattering across a wooden bridge spanning the creek, turned and fought against the onrushing Union forces commanded by General William Tecumseh Sherman. Rem-

nants of extensive Confederate earthworks from the dramatic engagement are still clearly visible bordering parts of Congaree Creek.

From mastodons to ill-fated rebels, a rich and diverse panoply of figures has trod the historically rich lands near Congaree Creek. Today, a coalition of enlightened citizens, business leaders and government representatives, led by the River Alliance based in Columbia, are working to

Park off the drawing boards and into existence. By stitching together knowledge gained from preliminary research along Congaree Creek and weaving the details into stories about what likely happened over thousands of years, the following pages will help readers gain insight into the enormous potential the land has for more study. Readers will also learn how this tremendous resource can be tapped for education and recre-



Even a rainy day doesn't prevent visitors from enjoying the outdoors in a River Alliance project in Columbia, South Carolina. Excursions for all ages are among the many plans in the works for a proposed Archeological Park with Congaree Creek as its focal point. The River Alliance

preserve and protect the site. They have drawn up plans to convert some 300 acres into an Archeological Park, with potentially widespread benefits for surrounding communities, as well as the general public.

So far, the coalition has passed the first major hurdle in turning these plans into reality: the current landowner, South Carolina Electric and Gas, has pledged to support the effort. This book is another step toward taking the Archeological

ation, ideally becoming a magnet for visitors from near and far.

Stories about prehistory, the most remote periods in the far distant past, are by necessity merely sketches. So many details are uncertain and continue to be subjects of intense scientific debate. In contrast, the more relatively recent events, such as Spanish treasure hunting, colonial fort building, and battles of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, are described more precisely, al-

though there is still much to learn about every epoch and event.

The following chapters outline some of what researchers hope to discover within the Archeological Park, with the understanding that surprise is the constant companion of scientific study.

Researchers in this new park will conduct in-depth studies into multiple time periods of human occupation. They will sift through soils to learn such diverse information as new details about Ice Age humans to how military strategies changed in the Civil War's closing days. Working on many projects at once, they will attempt to ferret out myriad details about vast epochs of time stretching back as far as 12,000 years ago, perhaps even earlier.

Columbia is notable for the high caliber of archeological talent gathered at the University of South Carolina's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, making the proposed park's location ideal for researchers. There are also prominent archeologists based throughout the South who have conducted important excavations near Congaree Creek. These professionals, who in the words of archeologist Michael Trinkley, are "laboring in the vineyards of both research and public education," will be vital to the development of the proposed park.

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EVERYONE WELCOME

The endeavor will be particularly unusual because the public will be invited to watch and participate in the discoveries. Usually, archeological digs are conducted in hard-to-reach locations and are typically closed to the public. In marked contrast, during the Congaree Creek studies, individuals, including children, as well as groups will be welcome to observe excavations and walk through nearby exhibits showcasing what is being learned from the scientific efforts.

Promoters of the park are just beginning to consider how to make the park accessible to

visitors. One idea is to have a self-guided loop trail leading past important attractions. Paths leading off from the loop trail will end at archeological digs where guides will be on hand to explain the research processes and what scientists are uncovering in the soils.

For example, one such path might lead to remnants of a prehistoric settlement where early inhabitants cooked stews of venison and herbs in earthen pits, heating the stews with rocks from a fire. Another path might lead to an excavation of a Revolutionary War camp, perhaps a site where the "Gamecock," Thomas Sumter himself, might have planned his next assault against the British.

Park promoters think there might someday be various exhibits near archeological digs that help visitors visualize what once existed long ago. Based on what archeologists discover, for instance, workers could erect a replica or a partial model of Fort Congaree, as it may have appeared in 1718. Researchers recently discovered fort remnants twelve feet beneath the ground surface but have not yet begun conducting thorough excavations.

As scientists make new discoveries, any model or fort replica will be adapted to reflect the findings. "You want models or reconstructions to be fluid enough so you can alter them over time as the research is being done and as the archeologists develop new ideas about what once existed," explained archeologist John Jameson of the National Park Service. Another possibility is to someday use computers to create images of what the fort may have looked like that could be viewed over the internet or at exhibits at nearby museums.

Knowledge gained in the excavations will also provide insights into daily life for the fort's inhabitants as well as information about the Indians who frequented the area to trade with the colonists. Informational signs in the park will share some of this knowledge in easy-to-read formats. Another possibility is to have guides and costumed actors, skilled in entertaining story-telling,

to provide further help bringing the local history to life. Scientists conducting excavations might sometimes give brief talks at the site to visitors explaining their methods and findings.

The park would also offer visitors chances to learn about human life in the area during the years before reading and writing began, the periods of prehistory. "You could have a reconstruction, or model, or computer generated views of what a prehistoric community looked like in 3000 B.C. and other similar exhibits to show life in 1000 B.C.," explained Mike Dawson, executive director of the River Alliance. "The archeologists would be at the same time learning even more about each of these time periods."

Dawson also wants to make sure the earthworks from the Civil War are preserved and protected. Park employees might reconstruct part of a bridge over Congaree Creek to show how the structure looked when it was so hotly contested on a cold, rainy February day in 1865. Archeological studies will pinpoint where the two opposing sides both placed cannons, and actual Civil War cannons might be placed in the exact locations. Trained guides one day could lead visitors on tours around the trenches, explaining moment-by-moment what happened during the engagement.

Promoters hope there will eventually be a modern visitor center at the park with an auditorium where guests can see an introductory film about the area's colorful history. Such a film could provide tips about how best to take advantage of the park's various attractions.

Another possibility is to use a visitor center as a staging ground for educational camps. These camps might last a day, a week, or several weeks and be structured for students of varying ages, as well as for teachers and adults seeking to learn more about scientific techniques or history. College students could participate in field schools designed to train aspiring archeologists.

"One of the most fascinating and exciting aspects about the park is that you have archeological sites representing nearly every major episode

in the cultural history of the United States," says Chad Long, archeologist with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. "These time periods are also the focus of national and state education standards." For students visiting the park, Long added, the experience "could make history come alive."

Interested citizens could come to a visitor center to volunteer to help out at archeological digs. They could also find out about how to participate in the digs by visiting a park web site on the internet that likely will be developed.

Another possibility is to have programs at a visitor center for teaching and entertaining children which would allow parents to explore by themselves elsewhere in the park. Park promoters also talk about one day perhaps installing picnic tables, barbeque pits, playgrounds, and a snack bar.

The park could also provide visitors with various ways to enjoy the abundant natural beauty of the area. One option might be to allow visitors to rent canoes to float down Congaree Creek. Following the creek's winding path through the park and adjacent public lands, boaters could catch a glimpse of how the world might have looked to prehistoric Indians thousands of years earlier.

Tannic acid from decaying vegetation still darkens the creek waters as it did long ago and tree limbs still stretch across the creek, touching limbs from the other side, creating a leafy canopy. As Oz Nagler, an urban planner with the River Alliance, put it, "This is a seriously attractive site, a wonderfully visual place. The black water in the creek is gorgeous."

Matthew Lockhart, editor of the *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, points out another reason the park will be a welcome addition to the greater Columbia region. "Although the park's primary purpose will be cultural presentation and interpretation, it will provide much needed green space in the rapidly expanding metro area."

There could also be hiking trails of varying

lengths and possibly a bike trail around the park perimeter. The park could also feature an easy-to-navigate nature trail. Large-print signs along the trail could identify trees and other plants and, when appropriate, explain how Indians used the

soil layers which archeologists read like a book to chart the past. Once soil layers are destroyed, they can never be re-established. And, of course, any historic objects removed without permission could seriously impair future research.



Prehistoric people identified as belonging to the Mississippian culture, because followers first appeared near the mighty river, created various designs for their pottery. This bowl has stamped designs over the entire surface, suggesting the potter was interested in how the vessel looked as well as its usefulness. South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

various species, for medicines, construction materials, paint or food.

For these and other plans to take shape, public support is essential, including cooperation against the unauthorized use of metal detectors or digging for artifacts on the proposed park lands, which are privately owned. Every time someone plants a shovel in the soil, they risk erasing part of the historical record. Digging churns up delicate

The coalition hoping to bring the Archeological Park into existence will also need individuals to write letters encouraging governments and private foundations to back this worthwhile project.

The stories from the past presented in this book should help readers better understand potential secrets buried in the soils near Congaree Creek.

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1 – A TIME OF ICE

In the far distant past, some 11,500 years ago, the area south of Columbia, South Carolina was substantially different from today, although there were similarities. The Congaree River and its tributary, Congaree Creek, both followed paths close to those of modern times. Many other aspects of the environment, however, would surprise anyone who somehow managed to travel back in time. The weather, for example, was colder. Brutally frigid winds swept across the region during long winters, which were marked by frequent snowstorms, not the infrequent flurries that stir excitement today.

The snows of long ago drifted down on forests of hardwoods, such as oaks and hickories, with cold-adapted evergreens of spruces, firs and Jack pines interspersed among them. The forest near Congaree Creek was not unlike forests currently found in upstate New York and in northern New England. The firs and spruces shared a Christmas-tree shape, but had decidedly different textures. Needles on the spruces, for instance, were sharp and pointed, while those on the firs were rounded and softly tipped.

The evergreens were well adapted to the winters of prehistoric South Carolina. When heavy snow fell and settled on the trees, their limbs sagged beneath the weight. If the accumulated snow became too heavy, the limbs simply bent until the snow slipped off to the ground. Then, freed of their burdens, the limbs swung upward in a slow-motion ballet repeated hundreds of times throughout the forest.

For their part, the hardwoods adapted to winter by shedding their leaves. Sap, the trees' life blood, retreated deep within the trunks as temperatures dropped. When warmer days returned, the sap surged forth, energizing the trees

and prompting them to unfold their leaves in spring color.

During this period when hardwoods dominated the forests of central South Carolina, the climate had been gradually warming for thousands of years. The evergreens, once dominant, were dying out as the last great ice age drew to a close. Far to the north, huge glaciers, some more than a mile thick, still blanketed much of Canada. When the ice age was at its coldest, between 27,000 and 15,000 years ago, the glaciers extended deep into the United States, but now they, like the evergreens, were disappearing, as the sun gained strength.

The glaciers had never pushed far enough into the continent to invade South Carolina, but the cold winds pouring across the ice masses did reach the region, colliding with and shoving back warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. Another significant difference between then and now was the smaller size of the Atlantic. Its shores in ancient times were far removed from central South Carolina. The ocean, 100 miles farther from land than today, was slowly rising and advancing inland by 11,500 years ago.

Throughout the ice age, the air was drier in central South Carolina, promoting the growth of vast prairies of grasses, herbs, and shrubs that were surrounded by forests. With the climate slowly becoming more humid, the open areas began to shrink. The hardwoods advanced, dispersing hickory nuts and acorns onto the virgin soils where they took root and grew into trees.

The serenity of the quiet forests could suddenly be interrupted as enormous creatures lumbered by, most prominently herds of the elephant-like woolly mammoths and mastodons. Mammoths stood as tall as 12 feet, but in spite of

their size could move with startling speed. Long, pointed tusks made the giants even more formidable. The bulls, competing for mates, charged each other in explosive bursts of speed, ramming their heads together, their tusks crashing loudly. The bellowing of the bulls must have echoed for miles

To reach its favored food of tender leaves, it simply had to reach high into the trees with claws a foot long. Other large creatures also shared the landscape, including giant tortoises, giant bisons, giant beavers, and fierce bears similar to the grizzlies that now inhabit the American North-



A Clovis spear point represents one of the earliest artifacts people left behind in North America. South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

as they raised their trunks and postured in fights for females.

The giant sloth moved at a far different pace. This creature's metabolism was so slow that the sloth barely generated enough energy to move at all. Still, this was an impressive looking animal. Furry like a bear, the sloth was immense, weighing up to six tons and standing fourteen feet tall.

west. There were also many diminutive animals, some of which, such as prehistoric horses and camels, were much smaller than their modern counterparts but would still be recognizable today.

Human beings arrived in this exotic world that once existed along Congaree Creek sometime about 11,500 years ago. Perhaps they ap-

peared in the region even sooner, according to some archeologists, such as Albert Goodyear of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology in Columbia. Much work remains to be done to substantiate Goodyear's theories, but there is no argument among the experts that humans were in the Congaree area near the end of the ice age.

How did these early people look? They were no doubt lean and muscular from lives spent mostly outdoors in pursuit of food and materials they could use as tools. Their clothing consisted of the skins of animals they had slain with the wooden and stone spears they carried, weapons they relied on for survival, along with the carved stone knives strapped around their waists.

These rugged prehistoric wanderers were adept at using their environment. Hunting animals and gathering plant foods likely occupied much of their time. Hunters probably worked together in pursuit of large prey, especially the woolly mammoths. They would have trailed a herd of the animals, perhaps waiting until the creatures stopped to drink or perhaps immerse themselves in a watering hole. The hunters would have tried to stay downwind to avoid alarming the mammoths as they edged closer.

The hunters, watching for their chance, would perhaps spring into action when an older, weaker mammoth strayed to one side of the herd, sloshed into some mud at the edge of the swamp, and sank up to its knees. Suddenly, the hunters would rush forward, jamming their rock-tipped spears into the animal's leathery belly. The creature certainly must have fought back, menacing the men with its sharp tusks, but the outcome was inevitable.

The mammoth, bleeding and weakened, was eventually felled by repeated jabs, assaults that could have taken place sporadically over one or two days as the hunters trailed the wounded giant. Their efforts were rewarded with enough meat for everyone, as well as the animal's hide

and bones, which the hunters could use for many purposes.

Hunting mammoths, however, was not the only aspect of survival. Fritz Hamer, historian at the South Carolina State Museum, argues that it is probably "overstating the case that early man devoted a good deal of time to hunting big game." Archeologist David Anderson and Joe Joseph think early inhabitants, at least in what we now call the southeastern United States, hunted a variety of animals, both large and small. They also likely gathered nuts, seeds and leafy plants for food, as well as dug up roots.

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SPEAR TALES

Archeologists know that prehistoric people spent time along Congaree Creek about 11,500 years ago because they have found their distinctive stone spear points. Researchers classify people of different cultural eras in prehistory by the artifacts they made. The hunters who crafted the late ice age spear points found near Congaree Creek are called Paleoindians. The wooden spears to which the points were attached disintegrated long ago, but scientists find the Paleoindian spear points where prehistoric hunters either intentionally discarded or lost them.

By examining these rock points and where they appear, archeologists have pieced together pictures of Paleoindian life and developed theories about how these people first made their way to South Carolina. According to most theories, the Paleoindians entered North America by traveling across a narrow land bridge some 1,300 miles long connecting Asia with Alaska. This finger of land surfaced in the Bering Strait because of lower sea levels during the ice age. Archeologists speculate that the early people were following game, a theory supported by the finding of similar animal fossils on both sides of where the land bridge extended.

As temperatures warmed, the great northern glacier began to melt and split in two sometime between 14,000 to 12,000 years ago, opening a wide path leading through western Canada into the western United States. Most archeologists think Paleoindians followed this path south, although some suggest that early people could have arrived on the continent by boat and made their way down the West Coast. Still others speculate that people arrived in North America after traveling by boat across the Atlantic Ocean, and that there may be more than one origin of early populations.

Paleoindians, however, probably moved into the American West from Canada. From there they encountered four great rivers — the Missouri, Platte, Arkansas and Red — all flowing east. Migrating people frequently follow rivers because the waterways hollow out valleys through rugged terrain, supply drinking water, and attract game.

Animal herds wear down paths near the rivers, paths that people can follow, which is what the Paleoindians did, leaving their spear point calling cards along the way. When they reached the broad Mississippi, the river must have seemed to be a nearly impossible barrier. In time, however, early people forded the continent's largest river, perhaps by building crude boats or rafts from small trees they felled with their stone knives.

Once they reached the other side of the Mississippi, Paleoindians slowed their travels for a time, according to archeologist David Anderson. Bolstering his theory are the many early Paleoindian spear points found in Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, and northern Alabama, more than in any other part of the United States.

Paleoindians, archeologists speculate, lived in small bands consisting perhaps of no more than 50 people. Eventually, some of the bands broke off from the cluster of Paleoindians in Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, and northern Alabama and headed toward the far reaches of the eastern

United States. These bands, consisting of men, women, and children, sometimes traveled great distances as they pursued migrating animals, sought sources of their preferred rocks for spear points and tools, and searched for new home territories.

There is no way to know how many generations of Paleoindians lived and died in North America before their descendants reached Congaree Creek. The first arrivals may have been a small group of male hunters on a long exploration trip away from the women and children. Or, perhaps the earliest humans in the area consisted of an entire band that camped beside the creek waters. We know so little about them because, so far, only some rare, few bits of evidence have been found from their existence.

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EARLY CLUES APPEAR

A few spear points discovered near Congaree Creek appear remarkably similar to others left behind by Early Paleoindians across the nation. Often beautifully crafted, these artifacts reveal handiwork of great care and skill.

The hunters exerted considerable effort searching for just the right rocks to make their spear points. They often chose chert, a type of flint, which comes in various forms and colors. Spear points formed from chert in South Carolina can be tan, orange, grey, or black. Archeologist Tommy Charles, tracing some of these rocks back to their sources, discovered that Paleoindians perhaps migrated as far as 200 miles to obtain some of the chert for their weapons.

To make a spear point, Paleoindians struck two rocks together in a process that is far more difficult than it sounds. In unskilled hands, knapping, or tool making, can result in cuts and other injuries. The resulting spear point was shaped like a laurel leaf and could be three inches long. These points often share a feature of slightly

elevated ridges across their surfaces, almost as if miniature waves were etched in the stone.

By studying these artifacts, archeologists have discovered that many of them were actually used as knives. Instead of attaching a spear shaft to the point, the Paleoindians affixed a short wooden handle.

Scientists call these early tools Clovis points because they were first discovered in Clovis, New Mexico. Paleoindians made the points with a pair of shallow grooves in the base of the stones, one on each side, both about an inch long. Called flutes, the grooves helped connect the spear point to a spear shaft. The Paleoindians cut a slit in the top of the wood spear shaft, then slipped this split end into the grooves. They then wrapped binding around the wood and stone, perhaps using dried animal tendons or strong plant fibers. At times, they also applied a sticky tree resin as a glue.

Archeologists have discovered some of these Clovis points at an archeological excavation on the Manning site, which consists of 80 acres bordering Congaree Creek. The land, primarily a raised terrace, is named for its former owner, Burl Manning, who encouraged archeologists to study the property. Later, the SCANA Corporation bought the land and continued to support archeological research. Recently, the company donated part of the tract to the South Carolina Heritage Land Trust, ensuring its protection from development. The land will also serve as a buffer area for the proposed Archeological Park. Depending on how much money is raised to support the park, the Manning site could be included within the park boundaries.

Establishment of an Archeological Park that includes the Manning site will assure that researchers can continue to study the interesting artifacts and other remnants of the past to be found there. This work should prove invaluable because the land is known to hold artifacts from many different periods of human occupation stretching back thousands of years, but also

including historic periods, such as the Colonial era. Evidence about Paleoindians that may be hidden in the soils could be especially enlightening.

Archeologists date the Paleoindian era in South Carolina from approximately 11,500 years ago to about 10,000 years ago (9500 B.C. to 8000 B.C.). A great deal changed during these thousands of years. Besides the climate warming and hardwoods enveloping open land, vast numbers of animals became extinct. Perhaps human hunters helped push some of the species into oblivion. Mammoths, mastodons, *bison antiquus*, the giant sloth, and many other species perished.

As the climate warmed, there were more animal species to hunt and plant varieties to collect for food, but Paleoindians nonetheless had to make adjustments. Jabbing their spears into a gigantic creature was no longer possible. Increasingly, they threw their spears at smaller, faster prey, such as deer, making accuracy vital to their hunting success. As a result, the Paleoindians crafted smaller, lighter spear points. Toward the end of the era, about 8000 B.C., hunters typically made spear points with a concave base. Called Dalton points, these weapons have flared corners at the base. Archeologists studying the Manning site discovered Dalton spear points along Congaree Creek, as well as stone knives, both apparently made by later Paleoindians. These knives, called prismatic blades, tend to be more than twice as long as they are wide.

Finding locations with significant evidence from the Paleoindians is exceedingly rare, making the Congaree Creek area especially important because of the expectation that more early artifacts will be uncovered. Already, archeologists have discovered Paleoindian spear points at another location just west of the proposed Archeological Park at a site labeled 38LX81.

Early artifacts have also appeared to the north at a place called the Taylor site. These findings enhance the tantalizing prospect that intensive

research inside the proposed park will uncover more evidence about Paleoindians and perhaps help unravel the many mysteries about these early people.

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MYSTERIES TO SOLVE

The Paleoindians lived so long ago that any speculation about them can provoke intense scientific debate. Every new discovery from their time period sparks another flurry of theories and counter theories, with years often passing before

of the many advantages to the proposed Archeological Park will be to preserve promising areas for study so that one day deeper excavations may be possible.

Whatever evidence turns up in the proposed Archeological Park about Paleoindians would add to a growing body of research on these early people and help answer important questions, including:

- Were Paleoindians truly the first people in the United States or had even earlier people existed and died out without leaving descendants?

Despite long-held scientific thinking, the



Young boaters today follow in the path of prehistoric Indians who once floated and fished in the waters around Columbia. The River Alliance

any scientific consensus develops. Much of the physical evidence from the Paleoindians, especially the earliest Paleoindians, is scattered widely and usually appears as only one or two isolated spear points. Some archeologists think many of the earliest artifacts are buried deeper in the ground than most excavations usually reach. One

Paleoindians who made Clovis, grooved spear points may not have been the first inhabitants of North and South America, some archeologists suggest. These scientists cite evidence located in widely scattered places that seems to support their speculation.

Albert Goodyear, for example, recently

uncovered stone tools in South Carolina that may date to between 15,000 and 20,000 years ago, when the last ice age was at its coldest. Goodyear located the artifacts – consisting of tiny blades, scraping implements for peeling off animal hair, rocks used as hammers, and other tools – deep in soils near the Savannah River, the natural border between South Carolina and Georgia.

Goodyear discovered these tools in the earth beneath artifacts identified with early Paleoindians. Typically, the oldest artifacts occupy the deepest layer or strata of soils in an excavation.

Goodyear's findings have stirred a great deal of interest nationally, among both scientists and the media. If his discoveries withstand additional scientific scrutiny, they could indicate that people reached South Carolina much earlier than previously thought.

Adding credence to Goodyear's research are similar findings reported in Sussex County, Virginia, near the Nottoway River and the Meadowcroft rock shelter in Pennsylvania.

Other excavations reveal the possibility that humans reached both North and South America even earlier. Scientists working high in the Andes Mountains of Peru, for example, unearthed tools that reportedly date to 20,000 years ago, while research at a bog in Chile and a cave in New Mexico all suggest human existence even earlier

than 20,000 years ago. However, skeptics argue that some of the objects identified as early tools are merely rocks battered and chiseled by natural forces such as glaciers, sand storms, floods, even animals. Others question the validity of dating techniques used at some of the sites and ask why so few of these ancient occupation sites have been found.

Even if the sites do represent much earlier human existence, archeologist David Anderson argues that the people who lived so long ago probably died out long before the Paleoindians appeared. Their passing would have left the American continents devoid of humans until the final stages of the ice age.

● How did the Paleoindian lifestyle change over time?

The environment altered significantly between the time when the first Paleoindians arrived around 11,500 years ago and the end of the era, about 10,000 years ago. Scientists have not determined all of the ways Paleoindians adapted their lives or the different rates of change in various locations.

Archeologists are also unsure how human migrating patterns changed over time. There is some evidence that toward the end of the cultural period Paleoindians spent much more time in one major camp and in vastly reduced territories.

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2- LIFE CHANGES

The small camp near Congaree Creek was busy on an early March afternoon. Four men huddled by the fire on the northwest edge of a clearing near a cluster of huts. Their camp was on a broad ridge that occupied the highest ground in the area. The clearing rose above a swamp, which was fed with fresh water by a small creek winding through it.



Quartz tools, such as this scraper, were often used by prehistoric people in the Congaree Creek area. South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

The men, sitting on logs around the fire, wore soft mantles of animal skins draped over their shoulders to help ward off the cold. While the air was cool, winter's grip was beginning to weaken. A few pastel wild flowers already were visible in the nearby woods. A handful of pine trees grew on the edge of the clearing. Their green needles stood out in the forest dominated by hardwoods that were still mostly bare of leaves, although the oaks showed a hint of spring color, another signal to those gathered on the ridge that it would soon be time to leave their winter home.

The men's hands were in almost constant

motion. There was a persistent clicking sound as they knocked rocks together, making new tools or sharpening old ones. A young man picked up a fist-size piece of quartz that was colored milky white, examined it, then placed the chunk on a large flat rock resting on the ground in front of him. Holding the quartz in place on this work surface with his left hand, he hit the rock precisely with another stone in his right. The hammer stone, made of quartzite, knocked off a big piece of the white rock, which flew off and landed in the sandy soil. The Indian paused only a second, then struck the quartz chunk again and again, chipping off more flakes with every blow. Sparks flew. His hands moved faster. Within minutes, he had reduced the quartz chunk into a shape resembling a spear point.

The debris of many quartz flakes was scattered over the ground around him. Several broken hammer stones also lay on the ground, casualties from the fierce pounding of tool making. Some of the stone flakes were so small that they were barely visible. Others were larger, some bigger than an adult's thumb. Another man leaned over and picked up one of these larger flakes and placed it on a flat rock that was partially buried in the soil at his feet. He struck the stone flake skillfully with a hammer stone, knocking away part of the flake and leaving an edge as sharp as a knife.

A few feet away, two more men knelt over the skin of a freshly slain deer. They used sharpened flakes of stone to scrape off the hair from the hide, which they had stretched on the ground and staked in place.

Someone threw another log onto the fire, stirring a flurry of sparks. Quartz stones, ringing the blaze, had been put in place before the men ignited the flames. These stones had earlier served



Bicycle paths are welcomed by all ages and occupations, including police officers who help ensure the safety of visitors. The preliminary plans for the Archeological Park call for a cycling path around the perimeter of the property. The River Alliance

as tools — hammers, knives, and choppers — until they broke apart. The fire's intense heat now cracked the stones, causing jagged fissures to spread across their surfaces, which were smudged black with soot.

A woman watched the men briefly as she crouched in the low doorway of her hut, a domed structure she had helped build. She turned back inside the circular dwelling and began cleaning, sweeping the dirt floor with a broom she had made from branches and reeds. A circle of stones rested in the center of the hut where a fire had burned the night before, filling the small shelter with light and warmth. Faint wisps of smoke still rose from what remained of the fire, now mostly ashes with a few glowing embers.

The woman stacked some tools that she

wanted to save near the fire circle. This cache included a few spear points, hammer stones, and a larger grinding stone for pulverizing seeds and nuts. Most of the implements were made from chert, a rock the Indians prized for its hardness. Because chert spear points were more durable than those formed from quartz, the hunters often re-sharpened them to prolong their usefulness and because the favored dark gray stone was not readily available near their camp site. They had to trade for it with people who lived farther north on the other side of the Appalachian Mountains, more than 100 miles away.

The woman swept around the pile of tools and rocks, pushing small debris toward the edges of her hut and bending to collect larger pieces of trash. She placed these bits of broken rock,

discarded food scraps, and an old, worn-out mocassin into a basket, which she had woven from materials collected around the settlement. She carried the refuse toward the swamp.

The Indians had chosen this high ground for their settlement because they would be protected from flooding during the rainy season and would have good vantage points for spotting game. When they first arrived, leaves were cascading from the many hardwoods and nuts were scattered across the ground. The women and children spent hours collecting the acorns and hickory nuts, which would supplement their diet and become essential if hunting was poor in the coming winter months.

Another early task was building their shelters. During the warmer seasons when they camped at other locations, the Indians did not use huts. Instead, they erected airy lean-to's that offered some protection from the rain and sun, but also allowed cooling breezes to reach the occupants. Sometimes they slept beneath the stars with no shelter at all. Freezing weather, however, required more substantial huts, which they formed by cutting down small trees and hacking off all the limbs with stone knives. They carried these tree poles to the swamp and dumped them in the water, leaving them to soak for several days until the wood became more pliable.

Everyone cooperated in building one another's dwellings. The men dug holes in the ground, using shovels they made from sturdy sticks tied to deer shoulder bones. They dug a circle of holes for every hut, with the circles about five yards in diameter and the holes about two feet deep. The men placed one of the soaked poles into a hole and held it in place, while the women and older children helped shove and pack dirt around the base. When they had erected a circle of upright poles, some of the taller men bent the poles toward the circle center and tied the ends together, creating the dome frame. Everyone helped pile deer hides onto the frame,

then the women laced the hides together with sturdy vines, twining them through holes they had punched with sharp stones. The women also tied the hides to the frame, leaving a small opening on the northwest side to serve as an entryway with a strategic and pleasant view of the woods.

As the woman tipped over her basket, tumbling the trash into the murky water, an owl hooted from the top of a dead tree, then swooped low into the forest and out of view. She returned to join other women preparing a meal. The cooks stood near a roaring fire in which they had placed quartz rocks, which were now heated thoroughly. One of the women picked up a stick, flattened at one end, and jabbed it into the flames to upend one of the hot rocks. She expertly maneuvered the rock onto the stick so she could carry it. Slowly, she headed toward a shallow pit, balancing the rock as she walked. The pit, lined with an animal skin, was about ten yards away, far enough to keep burning debris from floating into it and spoiling the contents of meat, herbs, and roots. The ingredients, including the fresh venison the men had provided, floated in enough water to create a stew.

The woman carefully lowered the stick so that the hot rock splashed into the stew, which began to hiss and simmer from the added heat. The rock instantly began cooling and cracking from the rapid change in temperature. A second woman soon arrived with another hot rock, then a third followed. They would have to repeat this process many times until the stew was thoroughly cooked. Even so, savory aromas already wafted over the camp, stirring everyone's appetite.

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AN ANCIENT PRESENCE

A scene similar to this may have unfolded thousands of years ago at the Manning site, adjacent to Congaree Creek, where research by archeologist Lisa O'Steen disclosed a human

presence in ancient times. Major sections of the site not yet studied will be included in a protected buffer zone just outside the boundaries of the proposed Archeological Park and may someday be part of the park.

O'Steen's excavations so far have uncovered impressive evidence of prehistoric human life at this South Carolina location. Some of the most notable findings appeared between six inches and two feet beneath the earth surface. Here she uncovered remnants of a camp dated between 8000 B.C. and 6000 B.C., an era known as the Early Archaic period.

The Archaic cultural tradition, marked by significant changes in human customs and the environment, followed the Paleoindian years. The entire Archaic period spans some seven thousand years and is divided into three eras: Early, Middle (6000 B.C. to 3000 B.C.), and Late (3000 B.C. to 1000 B. C.). Evidence from all three eras has surfaced at the Manning site.

In fact, an unusually large number of places near Congaree Creek have revealed artifacts from the Archaic years, an indication of how important the location was to early people. Preliminary investigations have already uncovered four separate Archaic sites within the proposed Archeological Park.

At least one of these sites, identified with the official archeological number of 38LX80, contains artifacts from many different prehistoric eras. Preliminary research indicates that artifacts from these various periods may be separated by distinct soil layers, a promising prospect. Such layering, which archeologists call stratigraphy, is vitally important to determining how conditions changed over time.

Many archeological sites, especially those in sandy soils, lack easily recognized layers because burrowing animals, tree roots, and human digging churn the soils, making them difficult to read. Even when distinct layers remain, the slight variations in color or texture indicative of differ-

ent periods of human occupation may be almost indistinguishable. Acid in sandy soils and leeching often erase clear stratigraphy and buried stains that help scientists decipher what happened long ago, points out archeologist Michael Trinkley. Acidic soils also often mean that there is, in his words, "little bone preservation and heavily eroded floral remains."

The possibility of so many potential human occupation sites near Congaree Creek, coupled with the many interesting discoveries already made, lends credence to the proposed park's potential. The park will also help preserve sites that may not appear to be significant now but could be revealed to be important when new research techniques are developed for unlocking secrets in the sandy soils.

There are at least twelve places known to hold Archaic artifacts near the proposed Archeological Park. These dozen sites will be part of buffer zones adjacent to the proposed park. Park promoters hope owners of land surrounding the park will agree to conservation easements and deed restrictions allowing future archeological studies.

Already, archeologist David Anderson has excavated a probable prehistoric hunting camp near the proposed park, a site identified as 38LX-64. Such short-term camps reveal fewer numbers and a lesser variety of artifacts than places, such as the Manning site, where early people spent more time. By comparing large sites with the smaller ones nearby, archeologists can piece together data about human migration patterns and social systems.

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MANY TOOLS & USES

What sorts of objects did Archaic people leave behind and how did they use them? Archeologists have discovered a variety of artifacts near Congaree Creek, including:

● Fire-cracked rocks

Like many prehistoric tools, these appear to be nothing out of the ordinary to untrained observers. Careful examination, however, reveals fissures and jagged edges that resulted from sudden temperature fluctuations or exposure to intense heat. Some of the rocks were apparently dropped into cold liquids to aid cooking, while others were used to enclose ancient campfires, facts revealed from red splotches and black soot smudges.

● Scrapers

Prehistoric people often shaped these tools from stone flakes chipped off rocks during spear-point making. Scrapers feature a sharpened edge on at least one side, which the Indians used primarily to remove hair from animal hides. Prehistoric people also used scrapers to shave animal bones, antlers, and wood, which they used in a variety of objects, including shovels, fish hooks, and adornments. During the Archaic era, people sometimes attached wood handles to scrapers, but they also sometimes simply held the stones in their fingers. Archeologists call scrapers without handles expedient tools. Prehistoric people tended to use expedient scrapers once or twice, then throw them away, while they often preserved and reused the ones with handles.

● Wedges

Prehistoric people used these tools (sometimes called *pieces esquillees*) to split bone and wood. Often rectangular, wedges show signs of being battered on one end with a hammer stone. The other end often is blunted, further indication that the wedge was driven into solid objects.

Early people split wood and bone for multiple purposes, including making practical items such as spear shafts, as well as more decorative objects, such as necklaces. They also sometimes split animal bones to extract the marrow, an important source of nutrition, especially when other food was difficult to find.

● Gravers and perforators

These stone artifacts have a projection on at least one side. This stone tip, shaped by early humans, served different functions. Archeologists consider the tool to be a perforator when its tip shows signs of being rotated rapidly. Early people used perforators to drill holes in bone, wood, shell, and hides so they could lace the hides together, string shells into bracelets and necklaces, and make fish hooks from bones.

The stone tips on gravers tend to be shorter and sharper than those on perforators. Early people used these tools to engrave designs on antlers, bone, and wood. Unfortunately, we can only speculate how the designs looked because most of the decorated objects disintegrated long ago.

● Anvil stones and grinding basins

These rocks with comparatively flat surfaces were used as work platforms. Anvil stones (also often called pitted cobbles) feature V-shaped pits or irregular gouges caused by sharp blows from another rock. Prehistoric people hammered out tools on these anvils. They also lodged nuts on the stones so they could crack the shells. Archeologists typically find many hickory and acorn shells near anvil stones at prehistoric winter and fall camp sites. They also often find many stone flakes and broken hammer stones near anvil stones, suggesting they were the likely results of tool making.

Grinding basins have shallow, U-shaped gouges. Early people used these rocks to pulverize plants and seeds to eat. Prehistoric people also used grinding basins to smash and mix pigments for painting their skin, clothing, and other materials.

Anvil stones and grinding basins are often noticeably smoother on one side, indicating that early people lodged these tools in the ground to hold them in place while they used them.

Archeologists classify grinding basins and anvil stones as site furniture because the Indians often left them behind, perhaps because of their

cumbersome size or weight, when they migrated to another camp. If the Indians returned or another group later camped at the same location, they often reused these same tools, taking advantage of the site's "furniture."

- **Spokeshaves**

These stone flakes are identified by a concave notch, which early people used to push and pull thin, round objects of bone or wood through to scrape, shave, and sharpen. Spokeshaves were used to make and maintain needles and other tools.

- **Abrading stones**

Early people often used ferruginous sandstone the way we now use sandpaper. In prehistoric times, people rubbed bone and wood smooth with these abrading stones. Many abrading stones have grooves, perhaps used to sharpen thin pieces of bone. Evidence suggests that prehistoric people also rubbed abrading stones across animal hides to soften them.

Ferruginous sandstone is coarse grained and iron rich. The sedimentary rock was formed under ancient seas and tends to be tinted red. Prehistoric people sometimes gouged the rock to extract red hematite, a mineral they made into paint to dye their clothes and color their skin. The sandstone rocks which appear on the ground surface in many areas of South Carolina's Coastal Plain would have been readily available to Archaic people camped along Congaree Creek who could have collected them nearby or traded for them.

- **Combination tools**

Archaic people sometimes made tools for more than one purpose. For example, archeologists have discovered stone flakes near Congaree Creek that served both as graters and scrapers.

There are also signs that Archaic people altered the uses for some tools over time. Archeologists located one such sandstone artifact near Congaree Creek. Indeed, thousands of years ago, human hands held this particular rock so often that they rubbed parts of it smooth. A

narrow groove on one side suggests where the user's index finger rested.

The artifact was first used to grind up antler or other materials. At some point, a small piece of the rock broke off, leaving a sharp edge. Someone then used this edge as a knife to chop food or other materials. The chopping eventually dulled the edge, so the blade was converted into an abradant used to rub bone or wood smooth. Someone also turned part of the rock into a spokeshave, using a notch in the stone for sharpening narrow objects such as bone needles.

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USEFUL INVENTIONS

Over time, Archaic people developed new tools, including a device that must have significantly improved their hunting success. Perhaps during the Early Archaic era (8000 B.C. to 6000 B.C.) and most certainly during the following Middle Archaic period (6000 B.C. to 3000 B.C.), they began using a tool to propel their spears farther.

Called an atlatl, the wooden spear thrower was two to three feet long, about a third to half the size of a typical spear. A hunter attached the end of the spear to the atlatl's end by means of a hook, made of bone or wood. The spear then lay atop the atlatl and rested on the hunter's shoulder. When the hunter spotted game, he flung the atlatl forward in a motion similar to that of a baseball pitcher. The spear unfurled from the atlatl and flew forward, while the atlatl remained in the hunter's hand. The spear hurtled toward the target with more speed and power because of the atlatl. To enhance the throwing action even more, hunters attached a weight, often a polished stone hollowed out in the center, to the atlatl. Archeologists frequently find these weights, sometimes called boat stones, at Archaic camp sites, but the wooden atlatls, like so many organic artifacts, rotted away long ago. People during the

Middle Archaic years also began using stone axes, boosting their efficiency in chopping wood.

During the Late Archaic era (3000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.), people who camped along Congaree Creek used soapstone slabs to replace irregularly shaped hot rocks for cooking. They cut soapstone, a rock known for its soapy, greasy feel, into flat pieces almost a half inch thick. They then drilled a hole in the top of each slab. These slabs tended to be about six inches long and four inches wide. A cook would place the slab into a fire until

Congaree Creek were involved in trade for soapstone slabs. Studies by archeologists Dan Elliott and Kenneth Sassaman reveal that people living some distance away from soapstone sources tried to repair broken slabs, an indication of how much they valued these items.

Another advancement, the stone bowl, was widely used in subsequent years during the Late Archaic era. Unlike wooden bowls, which people likely used in earlier times, the stone bowls, also made from soapstone, would not burn. This



This stone was used to weight the atlatl, a prehistoric invention hunters used to add thrust to spear throwing. The wooden spears and atlatls long ago decayed. South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

it became red hot, then she would lift it out with a stick poked into the slab hole. She would drop the hot slab into a stew waiting in a cooking pit lined with animal skin.

Found in the Piedmont, not far from Congaree Creek, soapstone often has a greenish tint but comes in a variety of colors. Scientists in the proposed Archeological Park will research whether Late Archaic people living near

allowed the Indians to place the vessels directly into a fire for cooking.

Although softer than most rocks, soapstone required considerable effort to sculpt into the desired shape. Half-formed bowls partially gouged from soapstone boulders are a reminder that someone long ago began chiseling the stone then quit, perhaps out of frustration at the difficulty of freeing the rock from the boulders.

Pottery was by far the most significant innovation during the Late Archaic era. Around 2500 B.C., inhabitants near the Savannah River may well have been the first people in North America to use clay pots. The development of ceramics eventually led to the end of soapstone bowls and hot stones for cooking.

No one knows for sure where or how the invention of pottery occurred. Archeologist Dean Wood speculates that perhaps someone built a fire in a clay-lined pit shortly after a rain, and when the fire died and only ashes remained, he might have noticed that he could pick up some of the clay that had hardened and had a convex shape. Perhaps he dipped the makeshift container in a creek and learned that it would hold water. Before long, he was collecting wet clay and deliberately shaping it into a pot.

Experimentation eventually led to mixing plant fibers into wet clay before fashioning the mixture into pots. This tempering with grasses, roots, or Spanish moss strengthened the final product, a container that could hold food, water or other important substances. When people placed these early pots near fire to harden them, the plant fibers burned away, leaving tiny holes in the surface.

Pottery use spread fairly rapidly to nearby areas of Georgia and South Carolina, reaching people living near Congaree Creek through trade or the exchange of ideas. Within a thousand years, pottery also showed up in many more distant areas of the Southeast, spreading as far west as Louisiana.

Not long after pottery's invention, prehistoric Indians in South Carolina began strengthening pots by mixing sand into the clay instead of plant fibers. Scientists first identified this type of pottery at a place called the Thoms Creek site not far from the proposed Archeological Park

RESEARCH APPROACHES

Research at the proposed Archeological Park can focus on many issues concerning the Archaic era, including:

- How often did the inhabitants move and how far did they travel?

Working along the Savannah River, archeologists David Anderson and Glen Hanson found evidence that Early Archaic people migrated great distances up and down the entire river, covering some 200 miles annually. They contend that Early Archaic people settled into a base camp during the winter near the Fall Line, the juncture between the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain.

Women and children stayed at the camp while older boys and men occasionally left on long hunting trips, according to the archeologists. In the spring, the entire community moved south toward the Atlantic coast. While migrating, the people frequently set up short-term camps, then abandoned them. During these brief stops, the men might leave to hunt, and the women might walk some distance to gather plant foods, but rarely did anyone stay away from camp for more than a day.

In the late Spring and Summer, the people migrated back north, heading into the rolling hills of the Piedmont and perhaps traveling all the way to the Appalachian Mountains.

Researchers do not have enough evidence yet to know whether the practice of moving up and down an entire river was typical of people of this time period. Because of her research near Congaree Creek, archeologist Lisa O'Steen speculates that some Early Archaic people did not migrate such long distances. It is possible that such migrations took place only in the first several centuries of the Early Archaic era or that this pattern of movement existed only along the Savannah River and was not the habit of people along many other rivers in eastern North America. Archeologists must conduct more research before they have definitive answers.

- How do archeologists distinguish between camps used by a single group for a long time and places where many different bands gathered for festivals?

Both types of sites would likely reveal a similar quantity and variety of artifacts, complicating the answer.

Scientists think Early Archaic people, similar to their predecessors, the Paleoindians, organized themselves into bands consisting of extended families numbering perhaps no more than 50 people. These bands probably maintained fairly egalitarian rule, although one or more older males may have exerted the most influence.

Many archeologists theorize that at least once a year different bands quit their separate wandering and came together to trade, choose mates, and exchange information in a festive gathering. A logical place for such events would be near the Fall Line, the boundary between the rolling hills of the Piedmont and the flatter Coastal Plain. The Fall Line passes through central South Carolina.

Here bands migrating upriver from the Atlantic coast encountered large boulders in the rivers for the first time, facilitating crossings. Fall Line areas also offered a rich array of resources. Different kinds of plants and rocks found in either the Piedmont or Coastal Plain were easily accessible and game was abundant.

Because Congaree Creek flows near the Fall Line, some archeologists think some of the large Early Archaic sites found near Congaree Creek served as gathering places for different bands. So far, however, they have not learned how to distinguish between the remains that would be left from such a gathering spot compared to the evidence at a site where a single band stayed for extended periods and returned year after year. Some of the research in the proposed Archeological Park will emphasize better interpretation of such puzzling site differences.

For example, the need for formal, regular gatherings of different bands may have diminished

during the Early Archaic era as the population grew. Some archeologists think that with more people in the region bands encountered one another often enough without needing to make special arrangements to do so. Many archeologists are fairly certain that by the Middle Archaic era (6000 B.C. to 3000 B.C.) all such formal gatherings had stopped. More research is necessary to understand the interaction of different bands over time.

- How significant were environmental changes and growing populations in altering lifestyles?

During the Middle Archaic years (6000 B.C. to 3000 B.C.), people made many more of their tools from quartz and a smaller percentage from other rock types.

They also made fewer tool varieties, with a noticeable decline in the number of knives and scrapers with handles. The emphasis seems to have grown on making tools quickly, using them once or twice, then throwing them away. Archeologists want to know more about what caused these changes, prompting these questions:

Did Middle Archaic people choose quartz more often because group territories were shrinking, brought on by a growing population? With smaller territories, perhaps they found fewer types of preferred rocks readily available. Did trading also decline, limiting their access to a greater variety of rocks? If, as many archeologists think, trade did decrease, what other changes could have resulted?

Many scientists think the environment was changing, with the climate warming slightly and becoming drier. Significantly, pines gained prominence in many areas at the expense of the hardwoods. With the decline of hardwoods, the quantity of nuts would have decreased, reducing game, especially deer, which were so important to prehistoric residents.

In the Piedmont in northern South Carolina, archeologists have uncovered evidence that

Middle Archaic people were almost constantly on the move and rarely left behind many artifacts in any one place. Gone were the winter base camps that many archeologists think people of the Early Archaic era favored.

The same sort of constant movement, however, may not have been the pattern in Fall Line areas near Congaree Creek. Some of the Middle Archaic sites, for instance, are quite large and contain many artifacts. Does this mean that Middle Archaic people near Congaree Creek were beginning to settle down and move less? And if they were, was it because the available resources were so rich? It is also possible, however, that these larger sites near Congaree Creek resulted from small groups visiting the same spots repeatedly, year after year, for hundreds of years.

- How did the way people govern themselves change?

Many archeologists think the climate stabilized and became similar to what it is today during the Late Archaic era (3000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.). The Late Archaic period also saw the return of long-distance trade, which helped spread new ideas and technologies.

Particularly important in this period was the use of soapstone bowls and pottery, which made cooking more efficient and perhaps boosted the nutritional value of meals. If nutrition did improve, almost everyone would have been

healthier and life spans would possibly have increased.

Archeologists Albert Goodyear and John House theorize that Late Archaic people spent more time in one place, perhaps at base camps that lasted for a season, or even longer.

Being more sedentary would have helped boost the population, a fact anthropologists have observed by studying contemporary migrating people. When these groups move less, their birth rates grow. Some archeologists note that Late Archaic people often camped on high ridges near the Congaree River and Congaree Creek, whereas their predecessors during the Middle Archaic years more often camped at the water's edge. This may be another indication that the Middle Archaic period was drier and that during the Late Archaic years residents were concerned about floods destroying their camps.

There is evidence in some parts of the Southeast that different groups sometimes came together to harvest huge quantities of fresh water shell fish or to catch migrating fish such as shad. One of the things scientists will look for at the proposed Archeological Park is whether Later Archaic people in the Congaree Creek area participated in such cooperative ventures. If they did, perhaps this was the beginning of a new form of governance, the emergence of a type of tribal rule headed by chiefs.

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3 — SEEDS OF CHANGE

A young hunter moved stealthily through the forest, tracking a deer. He moved so quietly that he could be mistaken for the animal he was pursuing, which was no coincidence. Antlers rose above the hunter's head and a tawny-colored deer skin covered his shoulders and back. He advanced several steps, crouched, then froze. Perfectly still, he faded into the foliage, seeming to vanish.

It was summer and hot. Low, dark clouds blanketed the sky. Rain had fallen off and on throughout the day, stimulating mosquitoes that swarmed around the hunter, who seemed not to notice. Much of his bare skin was exposed and lathered in bear oil, which provided some protection from the incessant bugs.

The antlers on his head were light because he had carefully hollowed out the insides. He carried little else with him, apart from a deer-skin quiver slung over his shoulder. Arrows he had made from river cane were stored inside. Each arrow had eagle feathers on one end and a sharp point on the other chipped from quartz. The hunter had shaped the arrows to be roughly the same diameter and length, making it easier for him to judge his aim.

He grasped a large bow, which he had fashioned from the wood of a black locust tree. He had polished the wood until it was smooth then lathered it in bear oil, finishing the weapon with a cord of twisted deer hide tightly strung.

Rising to full height, he sighed, discouraged. The animal he had been tracking so carefully had somehow escaped. The young man pushed his way through thick underbrush, looking for tracks, but found none. He had concentrated so hard on following the deer that he had wandered for miles through thick foliage without keeping track of his path. The clouds hid the sun, ham-

pering his ability to determine directions, and now it started raining again, heavily. Rain drummed the nearby leaves and water streamed down his face in sheets. His vision blurred.

This was the first time he had ever been alone this far from his village. A picture of the elders laughing at him flashed across his mind. The young man knew if they learned that he had become lost, even briefly, they would have every right to ridicule him. Good hunters never lost their way. They were trained to pay attention to everything, to memorize what they saw and heard so they could retrace their steps. They noted every tree scarred by lightning, every crack in every bolder, every rotted stump, every nest knocked loose and dangling from a high tree.

How could this have happened? The young Indian searched every direction. He forced himself to concentrate and slowly began to notice important details. Even admitting that he was lost, he was confident that no matter what the weather was, he would not starve. His elders had taught him from earliest childhood to be at ease in the forest. He knew which trees and bushes could nourish him or help him treat any wounds and which ones were potentially lethal. He recognized the edible flowers and knew which berries, although tantalizing in color and plumpness, were poisonous, lessons learned by earlier generations through deadly experimentation. He spotted a cluster of dainty Queen Anne's lace in a clearing. The slender stalks supported white blossoms that floated like clouds but it was what grew beneath the ground that interested him. The roots were a type of wild carrot.

The young hunter also knew the various leaves that were tender and tasty early in the summer but which by now had turned bitter. He identified, almost without thinking, white oak



The dark waters of Congaree Creek have been important elements in human life from prehistoric periods through more recent history. The banks and nearby ground may reveal new knowledge through scientific study, including archeological excavations. The River Alliance

trees, their leaves sculpted into sharp points. He recognized which white oaks produced sweet acorns with far less tannic acid than the red oaks.

He set about building a fire, even as the rain continued. He rubbed two sticks together to light pine-wood powder he dug from a stump. Protecting the powdered pine from rain with bark he stripped from nearby trees, he used the friction from the sticks to ignite the powder into hot coals. The coals set afire a mixture of small cedar bark strips and fluff from cattail plants. He coaxed the fire along by adding splinters of pine wood and when these crackled to life, added twigs. Soon, he placed small logs, then larger ones on the fire.

The Indian knew that even in the rain, pine

logs, once ignited, burn hot and fast. The heat dried his skin as he rubbed his hands above the flames. If it stopped raining, he would add hardwood from oaks or hickories, which would burn slower. Besides, pine left a bitter aftertaste on anything he might cook, while the hard-woods would enhance the flavor. That is, if he could find something to cook.

As the Indian stood in the downpour, he wiped the rain from his face and glanced near his feet, noticing a thin rivulet of water coursing by his moccasins. He quickly scattered the fire and began following the small stream as it flowed down hill and picked up speed and size.

After about a mile, the stream flowed into a wide, slower-moving creek. As the rain subsided,

the young Indian came upon a shallow pool on one side of the creek where he soon spotted a school of fish. He quickly climbed the bank and pulled up a buckeye plant by the roots. Using flat stones, he ground up the roots, carried the residue back to the creek and sprinkled this over the water. Within moments, stunned fish floated to the surface, poisoned by the rotenone-like substance.

That night the rain ended and the clouds drifted away. As he sat around his campfire eating fish, the Indian saw a thin, but bright crescent moon through the trees. He spied favorite constellations and recalled the many stories his elders had told about them. Studying the stars and watching the moon's slow journey across the sky, the Indian now knew with certainty the way North, South, East and West.

The next morning he followed Congaree Creek until it flowed into the Congaree River. He then followed the river south and before long was back in territory he recognized. Within another day, he reached his village.

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SPEARS GIVE WAY

Early writings by European explorers as well as later chronicles demonstrate that American Indians carefully studied every aspect of the natural world, developing extensive knowledge about animal and plant life and using this awareness to aid survival and improve their lives.

Survival was made easier during the Woodland era (about 1000 B. C. to about A. D. 800) because of the bow and arrow. Anthropologists do not know where the bow was invented in North America or when. They do know that the weapon existed much earlier in Europe.

Some think Woodland people were experimenting with bows by about 500 B. C., tipping their arrows with large stone points. The majority of points from this time in South Carolina

formed isosceles triangles (two sides of equal length) with a curved base.

There is a much broader scientific consensus that the bow was being used in the later stages of the Woodland era, after about A. D. 500, when the stone points shrunk dramatically, although they continued to be triangular. These smaller projectiles undoubtedly served as arrowheads, most archeologists suspect.

As researchers explore the proposed Archeological Park, they will try to determine precisely when people living near Congaree Creek began hunting with bows. Pinpointing when inhabitants began to use the bows is important because scientists suspect the weapons fundamentally altered human existence. Certainly, the bow and arrow made hunting more efficient, allowing hunters to stand some 50 yards from their prey, or even farther, while spears demanded much closer contact.

Many people of the Woodland era also improved their lives in another significant way by growing preferred foods. Again, just as with the introduction of the bow and arrow, there is no certainty about when prehistoric North Americans began cultivating plants. Archeologists speculate that the development probably began sometime during the earlier Archaic era. Certainly by then, inhabitants had been eating wild seeds for thousands of years. Women likely did much of the seed collecting, scientists speculate, based on observations of modern hunting and gathering societies in Africa, Australia, and elsewhere.

Perhaps it was a woman who first noticed that when she spilled seeds on the ground and inadvertently kicked dirt on them, they later sprouted. At first, she might have attributed the growth to magic, but over time she saw the same thing happen again and began selecting seeds from favored plants and planting them. Paying close attention, she observed how her plants thrived when she plucked out competing weeds and how they signaled their needs. Leaves curled when the



Early inhabitants cleared the ground near Congaree Creek to make way for their shelters and gardens with stone axes like this one. The wooden handle disintegrated over time. South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

weather turned cold, for instance, turned yellow when there was too much rain, and shriveled when there was not enough. Her knowledge about growing edible plants soon increased and eventually the knowledge was passed down through the generations until large numbers of people over a wide area were tending gardens and depending upon the produce to supplement their diets of game and fish.

Today, archeologists uncover persuasive evidence that gardening was widespread during the Woodland era. The evidence consists of ancient sunflower seeds discovered at occupation sites that are virtually uniform in size and larger than

seeds produced in the wild. This suggests that people long ago were selecting the biggest seeds from favorite sunflowers and planting them.

Prehistoric gardeners did the same thing with sumpweed and chenopodium, considered weeds today, but once cultivated for food. Sumpweed seeds found at some Woodland sites are two to three times larger than sumpweed seeds today. This demonstrates that when humans stopped growing sumpweed and quit collecting prized seeds for replanting, sumpweed reverted to just another wild grass with mostly average-sized seeds.

In the Archeological Park, scientists will

will carefully filter soils through screens and flotation devices looking for old seeds, fossilized pollen, rinds and other remnants of ancient plants. By studying these, they will learn more about early human efforts to domesticate plants.

Typically, when hunter-gatherer societies come to depend more on gardens, they diversify their food sources, promote better health, quicken population growth and make it easier to settle down and remain in one place longer. There is increasing evidence that at least some Woodland people established villages larger than previous settlements. These villages tended to be more permanent, perhaps lasting up to a year, possibly longer. In the Archeological Park, researchers will look for evidence of larger settlements and also for proof that housing became sturdier during this time period. In some parts of the eastern United States, including a site in South Carolina near the upper Savannah River, archeologists have found evidence that dwelling walls consisted of upright logs. These Woodland-era homes apparently had cross beams or rafters supporting cone-shaped roofs. The builders often covered their walls with a wet clay and grass mixture called daub. The hardened daub helped seal out cold winds and kept the interiors cool in summer. Researchers in the Archeological Park will look for residue of daub to learn if longer-term shelters once existed there.

Another research topic in the Archeological Park will concern when prehistoric people expanded their gardens and grew mostly corn, beans and squash. These became vital crops during the final stage of prehistory, the Mississippian era, and understanding the transition to the crops will facilitate a better understanding of how societies evolved.

Scientists will also conduct detailed studies of Woodland-era pottery. People during this time significantly improved their ceramics skills. Unlike earlier efforts, potters almost

always built their pots by coiling ropes of clay resembling small snakes atop one another. They then smoothed the walls of a pot with moistened hands or a paddle. Potters also abandoned making crude fiber-tempered pottery, which tended to have thin, porous walls.

Woodland people strengthened their pots by adding sand or grit consisting of crushed rock. These pots consistently survived the hot flames of cooking fires without shattering, improving food preparation reliability for people who savored thick stews. Woodland people also began expressing more creativity decorating their ceramics. For example, they carved parallel lines (today called simple stamping) into a wood paddle, then pressed the paddle into the wet clay of a newly formed pot. Potters also carved a series of small squares resembling a waffle into a paddle and pressed this check-stamping design into the wet clay. Another favorite paddle design made tooth-like projec-



The brush and undergrowth are dense in the proposed Archeological Park. The lack of commercial or residential development has protected the site. The River Alliance

tions on the pots. Woodland potters also wrapped fabric around a stick or paddle then pressed the implement into wet clay.

By studying fabric-impressed pottery found near Congaree Creek, scientists will better understand how prehistoric fabric looked. Few

examples of fabric from so long ago remain because it deteriorates rapidly. Scientists know, however, that people long ago hand wove plant fibers into fabric because they have uncovered examples in protected environments, such as a Florida bog and a Kentucky cave.

The various swamps near Congaree Creek may hold artifacts, such as items made of fabric, that typically deteriorate in dry soils. Mud often seals out corrosion, and archeologist Albert Goodyear thinks there may be remnants of prehistoric garbage dumps in some of the swamps. After conducting preliminary studies near Congaree Creek, Goodyear wrote, "The implications for preservation of organic....refuse are enormous. If sufficiently covered by moist sediments, such debris as nuts, leaves, wood, bone, pollen, and other charred food remains would be preserved and amenable to laboratory analysis....Either a backhoe or hand tests should be made of the moist swamp margins [of known archeological sites] to test for the possibility of buried deposits."

Even if the swamps hold no significant organic materials, Goodyear argues they can still yield important artifacts because these areas often have never been disturbed by plowing. Many ancient artifacts are shattered or crushed beneath steel plows and consequently lost.

Some of what archeologists consider fabric-impressed pottery may have a textured appearance because of being formed inside baskets. Scientists suspect prehistoric Indians created many baskets, some quite beautiful, but only a few examples survive, again in protected environments such as Salt Cave in Kentucky.

Woodland people also made cord by twisting plant fibers together, then wrapped the cord around a paddle and pressed the paddle into wet clay.

Some Woodland-era inhabitants in South Carolina created even more complex pottery designs by carving squares, rectangles, concentric circles, teardrops and other shapes into pad-

dles. Researchers in the Archeological Park will look for such complex stamping or any hints that residents long ago traded with people who created such decorations.

The more complex pottery designs have in some places been associated with mysterious ceremonies, including building tall earthen burial mounds. Tombs within some of these mounds reveal exotic items, such as copper beads, ax-like tools made from lustrous green stone, elaborate copper ear ornaments, clay figurines, smoking pipes formed into bird and other animal shapes, and panpipe musical instruments made from hollow river cane coated with copper or silver.

There is no evidence so far that such ceremonial burying of the dead occurred near Congaree Creek. Scientists, however, have discovered that Woodland-era people living on what is now the Savannah River Site near present-day Aiken, South Carolina painted some pottery red, a practice associated with ceremonial burials elsewhere. Other Woodland people living near the coast buried their dead in sand mounds a few feet tall. Remains of women predominate in these mounds found on an island off the Georgia coast. Archeologists David Thomas and Clark Larsen speculate that the societies represented by the burials were led by women.

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MANY SITES FOUND

Researchers have already discovered four separate sites in the proposed Archeological Park containing Woodland-era artifacts. They will likely uncover more sites once intensive studies begin. The buffer zones around the proposed park, which someday may be part of the park, include at least eleven other places already identified with Woodland-era remnants.

Even if these areas remain outside the park, private land owners will be encouraged to sign



Recreation spaces are in big demand everywhere, making the proposed Archeological Park a likely favorite spot among nearby residents and tourists alike. The River Alliance

conservation easements and deed restrictions that will allow future archeological research.

Some locations within the proposed park revealing Woodland artifacts also likely contain items from the Mississippian period, the final prehistoric era when society and art became more complex. Scientists will use the Archeological Park to define more clearly when the Woodland ended and the Mississippian began, perhaps learning in the process more about what prompted the changes in human behavior.

The park will enable scientists to seek answers to other questions about the Woodland era, such as:

- Did people change their settlement patterns over time because of an increasing dependence on agriculture?

Archeologist David Anderson, in 1978,

excavated a site identified as 38LX5, which was located west of the proposed Archeological Park and about a half mile from Congaree Creek. He found many Woodland-era artifacts scattered over five acres in a place where sandy hills stand about 50 feet taller than where Congaree Creek courses through the proposed Archeological Park.

At 38LX5, Anderson unearthed multiple artifacts, including spear points, arrow heads, knives, pottery pieces, and sandstone abraders. The site also contained many pitted cobbles that were once used as platforms for making tools or for preparing plant foods. There were also many remnants of ancient campfires.

The numerous artifacts, and the varied materials used to make them, indicate the location could have once been the site of a large Woodland community. Anderson, however, never located

evidence of housing, so it is also possible that the many signs of early life instead represented multiple brief visits over thousands of years by prehistoric people who never established substantial dwellings.

Even though Anderson was unable to make a definitive determination about what actually occurred at 38LX5, he noted the site was far different from two others he excavated nearer Congaree Creek, both in the buffer area for the proposed Archeological Park. These sites each contained a few Woodland artifacts from the first several thousand years of the period and probably represent short-term camps.

This could mean, Anderson speculated, that early Woodland people maintained their primary residences on higher ground in the sand hills away from the low, swampy lands near Congaree Creek and the Congaree River. If future research confirms this theory, then perhaps Early Woodland people ventured into low-lying flood plains only to hunt, fish or collect plant foods. Once they finished their tasks, they retreated back to higher ground.

In the new Archeological Park, scientists will look for definitive proof that such a pattern existed. They will also try to determine whether during the final centuries of the era, when people perhaps became more dependent on agriculture, they moved closer to low-lying rivers to take advantage of more fertile soils enriched by periodic flooding.

- How important was trade during the Woodland era?

At 38LX5, David Anderson also noted that

Woodland people used a great deal of quartz rocks found nearby to fashion knives and other tools. These same people, however, also used many tools made from rocks obtained from miles away, primarily slate-like rocks from the Piedmont to the north and chert from lowlands to the south in the Coastal Plain. This could mean Woodland people engaged in significant long-distance trade, Anderson speculates.

These residents near Congaree Creek perhaps used trade as a strategy to cement alliances with other groups or to prevent disagreements with distant neighbors from erupting into warfare. Whether long-distance trade increased during some parts of the Woodland era and decreased in others will be another topic for research in the park.

- Did Woodland-era people organize themselves differently?

Scientists will also seek to determine whether residents near Congaree Creek developed more complex social organizations, perhaps forming tribes. Whereas earlier bands consisted of one extended family, tribes combined two or more extended families.

As people became more adept at accumulating and storing food surpluses, which probably occurred during the Woodland era, they could afford to designate some people as specialists. For example, tribal leaders might select some followers to spend significant time traveling. These specialists, David Anderson speculates, would have endured long periods away from family and friends visiting far-off places to trade or collect favored rocks for tool making.

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4 – THE RISE OF CHIEFS

In the spring of 1540, a small army made its way north toward what would eventually become South Carolina. Hernando de Soto, with much of his considerable fortune backing the expedition, commanded the force. King Charles V of Spain had granted De Soto exclusive right to explore the southeastern part of North America, a significant accomplishment for

With enemies closer to home conquered, Spain turned aggressive aspirations toward north Africa, the Canary Islands and the New World.

Within a generation, Spain conquered many newly discovered territories and subdued vast populations of native people, including the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru. Spain extracted from these conquered people immense wealth,

filling Spanish galleys with gold that returned with the plunder across the Atlantic Ocean. The new-found riches transformed Spain into the world's most powerful nation.

In the process, the Spanish warrior class learned that the path to glory and personal prosperity lay in subjugating others to their beliefs and will.

De Soto readily absorbed these lessons and became an energetic and valiant soldier, a conquistador. He steadily ascended from a lowly page, aged fourteen, to become an esteemed military commander and horseman who always seemed to be in the forefront of any battle. His fearlessness and prowess helped secure Spanish rule over Pan-

ama, Nicaragua and Peru and brought him a fair share of the wealth looted from native peoples.

Then, when he could have retired to luxury, De Soto gambled his fortune and his life on a bold bid for greater riches, power and prestige. The Spanish king granted him exclusive right to explore vast regions in the New World where De Soto would also serve as the governor, a marques. De Soto's new province stretched from Florida to the banks of the Mississippi River and



The last Indians of prehistory, called Mississippians, left this smoking pipe in the area. South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

De Soto, who was born a noble, but to a family of modest means.

De Soto grew up in a society focused on warfare waged in the cause of perceived righteousness in conquering infidels and evil. After decades of struggle, Christian armies finally vanquished Muslin forces, the Moors, from Spain. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella also expelled many Jews and forced others to renounce their faith for Christianity.

beyond. De Soto outfitted an army of 600 soldiers, men like himself who were brave and skilled warriors and, like their leader, expected to share in the rich bounty they were sure they would find. The army sailed from Spain to Cuba and then on to Florida, according to anthropologist Charles Hudson, whose research has significantly illuminated De Soto's story.

The Spanish armada, traveling with a retinue of slaves, arrived off the coast where Tampa Bay, Florida, is today on May 30, 1539. Soon, deck hands were cranking heavy wrenches to lift horses out of the ship holds. The mounts splashed down into the bay's salty water where Spanish soldiers waited to swim some 200 of them toward the shore.

Once the Spanish made landfall, they confronted a forbidding wilderness filled with swamps that tested their survival skills and made finding their way extremely difficult. Soldiers fanned out across the landscape determined to capture native people, whom the Spanish planned to force into being their guides. The enslavements incited outrage among the Indians, who were soon waging hit-and-run war against the invaders.

Indian warriors, agile, fast and well-conditioned, proved a good match against the heavily armored and less mobile Spanish foot soldiers, that is, whenever the Indians could reach them. The Indians were at a distinct disadvantage, largely because the Spanish had horses.

The Spanish horsemen expertly galloped their powerful animals at their foes, breaking the

momentum of the natives' attacks.

The Indian arrows fell on the Spanish in powerful swarms and sometimes hit their marks, but the invaders' metal helmets and body armor of thick cloth and chain metal were formidable



The Mississippian culture featured earthen mounds built by followers to elevate their leaders and temples and also sometimes to bury their dead. Artist Martin Pate shows how such a community would have looked. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

shields against the Indian weapons. The Spanish also had their own fearsome arsenal of crossbows, matchlock rifles and double-edged swords, as well as lances.

The loud booms of the firearms, along with the flashes of fire and clouds of smoke, must have seemed particularly awesome to the Indians who had rarely encountered such weapons.

Whenever the Spanish were attacked, or even if they thought their authority was being challenged, they responded swiftly, often cruelly. For instance, if they perceived that a captured Indian

guide was deliberately misleading them, which was common, the Spanish unleashed their fierce dogs on the offending guide. The dogs included greyhounds, as well as a powerful Irish wolf hound and perhaps several mastiffs, according to anthropologist Hudson.

The dogs wore spiked collars of steel or leather to fend off any attempts to choke them, but victims rarely had the chance. The dogs ran down and mauled their prey with ruthless efficiency, ripping out their stomachs with their teeth. There was no more fearful command, according to Hudson, than when the Spanish yelled to their dogs "Tomalos!", meaning "Get them!" The Indians could be equally brutal, resorting to torture just as the Spanish did.

Besides horses, the Spanish brought hogs with them, which they intended to slaughter only when no other food was available. Whenever possible, they took provisions from the natives, especially stored corn which was vital to the Indians' existence. Some Indians willingly gave the Spanish food and also provided them with porters to carry supplies, but De Soto stole from others and forced some natives into bondage, as well as taking women to satisfy his soldiers' sexual appetites.

The Spanish moved into what is now Georgia in the spring of 1540. The natives in this region had never seen Europeans and were more docile, perhaps because they were unfamiliar with the tactics of the conquistadors or because they were awed by their unusual clothing, powerful weapons and horses. It is also possible that some chiefs genuinely preferred peace to war.

The Spanish encountered a number of powerful chiefs whose spheres of influence extended for miles. These rulers were seen as gods by their followers, who practiced the Mississippian culture, a way of life originating near the Mississippi River. Followers literally often elevated their leaders atop pinnacles of earth that they laboriously built. From atop these flat-topped earthen

mounds, some of which were only a few feet tall but others which soared some 60 feet or even higher, the chiefs ruled societies which increasingly depended upon the growing of corn, squash and beans.

Construction of the larger mounds took months, even years, with Indians carting baskets filled with dirt, dumping the dirt, and tamping it down with their feet. Long lines of workers shuttled back and forth day after day, carrying their loads of earth to add to the emerging mounds, many of which were shaped like pyramids.

Typically, the Indian builders leveled the mound top, applied a layer of clay to retard erosion, then built one or more structures on the surface. The buildings included temples, dwellings for leaders and their families, and ossuaries for storing bones of revered ancestors. When an important chief died, followers enacted elaborate ceremonies to mark his passing. Frequently, the Indians burned down the leader's home or a temple on the mound top. Then they added more dirt to the surface and built another temple or a residence for their new chief.

The Indians considered many of these mounds to be sacred and bowed low when approaching them, revering the earthworks and structures they bore the way Europeans venerated cathedrals. For some groups, the mounds were the focal points of their daily lives. They built their own dwellings nearby and planted food crops within a short walking distance. Other Indians following the Mississippian culture tended to visit mounds only for important ceremonies and spent the rest of their time living in small hamlets or villages farther away.

Unlike earlier natives who practiced the Woodland culture, Mississippian adherents were much more hierarchical, segmented by rank and position. Their chief, usually a man, but not always (as the Spanish soon discovered), inherited the position, as did most others in important

roles. Some men and their mates, however, advanced in rank by demonstrating valued skills, particularly bravery in warfare.

The Indians paid frequent tribute to their chief, offering their valued possessions, such as corn, well-made shawls, cured deer skins, and choice pieces of smoked deer meat. Chiefs, in turn, redistributed food to their people during religious festivals and during periods when crops may have been poor or winters especially severe. Some of the chiefs De Soto encountered influenced inhabitants' lives in vast territories. Lesser chiefs frequently paid tribute to or formed alliances with these paramount chiefs, according to archeologist David Halley.

The Mississippian Indians' cultivation of food crops on a broader and more efficient scale than earlier Woodland-era Indians gave them more time to participate in public works, such as mound building. However, while agriculture was extremely important, Mississippian Indians also continued to hunt and fish and gather wild plant foods.

The tendency of Mississippian followers to live in larger, more concentrated communities than people of the Woodland era also made the availability of warriors greater for them. There is some evidence in parts of the southeastern United States that Mississippian Indians forced their way into areas occupied by Woodland peoples.

Besides their military prowess, Mississippian Indians developed impressive artistic talents, creating finely wrought pottery and jewelry, engraved copper plates, ceremonial weapons, figurines, animal-shaped smoking pipes, and statues of wood and clay.

They also carved gorgets from sea shells. These round or square pendants dangled around the neck and often featured images of animals, human warriors and mythological creatures that were so finely crafted that they seemed almost alive.

The mound building Indians believed in an

elaborate spiritual dimension closely aligned with their own, which included a netherworld often dominated by fearsome creatures. They valued talented healers and storytellers who seemed able somehow to connect to this spirit world for inspiration, and they especially prized oration skills. Indeed, Spaniards recording their interactions with the natives reported that welcoming speeches often lasted for hours.

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A HARD JOURNEY

As they moved north and east in Georgia during the Spring of 1540, the Spanish encountered several chiefs who treated them extremely well, offering the visitors gifts of food, finely woven shawls and soft deer skins. These chiefs also provided porters to carry the explorers' supplies. De Soto responded by ordering wooden crosses erected on the chief's sacred mounds or nearby. Spanish priests provided brief instructions to the natives through interpreters about the meaning of the crosses, then the Spanish departed, trudging deeper into the wilderness. The Indians probably grasped little of these cursory religious teachings, but in at least one instance the natives did bow before a cross, as they had witnessed the Spanish do, according to anthropologist Hudson.

De Soto, moving north and east, sent out orders, summoning to meet him the area's most powerful chief, Ocute. The Indian leader complied, arriving with a group of retainers. Ocute saw to it that the Spanish received generous amounts of food, including cornbread, partridges, two turkeys and many rabbits. He also offered some 2,000 Indians to carry supplies for the Spanish.

This Spanish force, now substantially enhanced with supplies and men, headed east toward what is now South Carolina, following the directions of an Indian teenager named Perico,

who had lived with Indian traders who traversed the Southeast. Perico told the Spanish if they kept going in the direction they were headed they would find a powerful chiefdom ruled by a woman. This woman chief lived in a land of abundance filled with pearls and gold, the boy told the Spanish.

At last, De Soto was finally hearing about the sort of wealth that had compelled him on this

find treasure. They stopped in one final Indian town in Georgia, a community west of present-day Greensboro, near the modern-day boundary between Georgia and South Carolina, before they entered territory other Indians described as deserted. In this last town, the Spanish encountered an elderly chief with a full beard, a rare thing among the Indians. The bearded chief proved, like so many others, to be hospitable to the strangers.



Walkers and cyclists enjoying the Congaree River path may someday soon also be able to follow in the footsteps of prehistoric Indians and other early inhabitants who lived near Congaree Creek. The River Alliance

difficult journey. He quickly became determined to find the woman's chiefdom, which he learned was called Cofitachequi. Warnings from at least one chief in central Georgia that De Soto would soon run out of well-marked trails and that he and his men would starve did not dissuade him.

De Soto's soldiers set out with new resolve to

During their visit in the town, their teenage guide Perico informed the Spanish that they were now merely four days away from the rich chiefdom of Cofitachequi.

The local natives, however, disputed Perico's claim and repeated the earlier chief's warning that a trip to Cofitachequi would be arduous and dan-

gerous. The journey would require many days in an area where the Spanish would find few if any inhabitants and no one to give them food, they cautioned. Even so, the local chief, or perhaps one of his high-ranked relatives, promised to supply the Spanish with Indian warriors for the journey because the Cofitachequi were their enemies.

The discrepancy between the local Indians' accounts of the perils of trying to reach Cofitachequi and Perico's prediction of a quick trip may have made the teenager uneasy, even unnerved him, theorizes anthropologist Hudson. Perico had seen more than once what happened when the Spanish became distrustful of their Indian guides. The conquistadors did not hesitate to beat the offending guides, burn them at the stake or unleash their fiendish dogs on them.

Whatever the exact cause, Perico apparently suddenly crumpled to the ground and appeared to be suffering some type of seizure. His mouth foamed and he screamed so hideously that some of the Spaniards who did not see him fall assumed that they were under attack and ran to grab their weapons and armor.

A priest examined Perico and concluded that his alarming behavior was the result of devil possession. The boy added credence to this assessment by claiming that he had been accosted by a demon and many imps who warned him not to lead the Spanish to Cofitachequi. The priest

prayed fervently for Perico's soul and performed an exorcism. Perico's spell, or whatever it was that troubled him, subsided.

Some Spaniards reportedly thought the teenager looked as if he had been beaten. Anthropologist Hudson speculates that one possible explanation for the strange events surrounding Perico was that he actually was accosted, perhaps by local Indians who did not want to be ordered into participating in the dangerous trip to Cofitachequi.



Spear points such as this one, called a Savannah River stemmed, were obsolete by the time of the Mississippian culture when bows and arrows dominated hunting and diets were supplemented with garden produce such as corn, beans and squash. South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

ui. Perhaps these Indians hoped to silence the boy and prevent him from further fueling Spanish ambitions for treasure.

But De Soto would not be deterred from his chance at more wealth. The Spanish army and their new Indian allies set out on April 13 and soon entered what they began calling "the wilderness of Ocute" or, according to some translations,

“The desert of Ocute.” The area consisted of mixed pine and hardwood forests, similar to land the Spanish had already traveled. In this area, however, they found no villages or people. The region seemed to be abandoned, as others had predicted.

The Spanish endured four days of difficult travel but found no sign of the rich chiefdom of Cofitachequi that Perico had promised was nearby. More significantly, they came across no stores of Indian corn to plunder, and they were running short of food, just as they had been warned would happen.

When they reached the banks of the Savannah River, today’s boundary between Georgia and South Carolina, they found the waterway swollen from recent rains. If they were going to continue their search, they had no choice but to cross, even though the river was at flood stage. The horse-back riders and some foot soldiers waded into the swift currents somewhere near present-day Augusta, Georgia. Here, where they entered the water, the currents swept around two large islands which cut the river virtually in half.

Flat stones covered the river bottom, making footing slippery and hazardous for both men and horses. The cold water rose chest high on the foot soldiers and at times lapped above the stirrups on the horses, even reaching up to the saddle bags. Getting across was so treacherous that most horsemen refused to allow foot soldiers to piggyback rides, although a few did allow the men to grab their horses’ tails or hold onto an outstretched lance.

Most foot soldiers forded upstream from the horsemen where the water was a bit more shallow. They formed a human chain of thirty or forty soldiers, linking themselves with a rope. They struggled and sometimes faltered in the surging current, but finally managed to push across.

The soldiers herding the pigs used dogs to force the frightened, snorting animals into the river, according to Hudson. The pigs resembled

wild boars because of their tusks, even though they were domesticated. They had straight ears and long snouts and were quite muscular, capable of swimming for more than a mile in placid waters. But the river’s strong current overpowered many of the animals and swept them down river. The squealing pigs disappeared from view and were lost.

Once the Spanish and their horses reached the South Carolina side of the river, the search for food became critical. De Soto had already ordered everyone to cut back on rations. He now commanded them to quicken their pace. Instead of the usual fifteen to seventeen miles a day, the explorers began covering thirty miles a day.

Spring rains fell repeatedly, soaking the weary army. Every river and creek they approached seemed at or near flood stage, requiring more strenuous efforts to cross. Sometimes the Spanish halted to build barges, but at other times they just plunged into the water. After six days, De Soto and his soldiers reached the Saluda River, which they crossed, then continued east. Two days later, on April 21, the Spanish came to the Broad River, north of present-day Columbia. Again they found high waters surging around an island. The river was perilously swift and deep, similar to the Savannah River conditions. Nonetheless, the soldiers again plunged in, forcing their horses to swim when their hooves could no longer touch the bottom.

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THE HUNT FOR COFITACHEQUI

When the Spanish made it to the other side, the trail they had been following became indistinct and finally disappeared altogether in the thick underbrush. Their bleak situation seemed to brighten temporarily when a few soldiers reported discovering a small group of Indian huts, but they soon found that the shelters were abandoned and at most represented only an old fishing camp. De

Soto and his army were now within a day's ride of Congaree Creek.

The exact route De Soto took through the Southeast has been difficult to determine because so many years have passed and because diarists on the journey and others who wrote about the expedition later were often imprecise. Researchers, over time, have adjusted the route they think the conquistadors followed, and future investigations may well lead to more changes.

The most recent research, and the best documented, was produced by archeologists Chester DePratter and Marvin Smith and anthropologist Charles Hudson. Their findings show that at times the Spanish army split up and headed in different directions, making tracing the force's exact movements even more difficult.

One of the instances when De Soto sent offshoots of his army in different directions occurred on the eastern side of the Broad River, near Congaree Creek.

The Spaniards, growing increasingly desperate for food, camped in a pine woods near the river, according to Hudson. The soldiers knew they were lost in a vast wilderness with no maps to guide them. No Europeans had ever been in the region before them. Even the Indians accompanying them were at a loss about where to go next, which De Soto found difficult to believe. Nevertheless, the battles these Indians had fought with their enemies, the Cofitachequi, had apparently involved skirmishes between small hunting parties, not large-scale engagements. Also, the clashes appeared to have occurred in the broad buffer zone between the Ocuta chiefdoms in Georgia and the Cofitachequi in South Carolina.

A frustrated De Soto turned his ire on Perico, blaming the boy for the army's predicament. The Spaniard considered letting the dogs terrorize the teenager, but changed his mind. Perico, besides being their guide, served as a translator of Indian languages, and De Soto apparently decided the young Indian was too valuable a resource to

waste. Besides, De Soto had more pressing concerns: his soldiers were facing the growing possibility of starvation.

This was a rare moment of indecision for the Spanish leader. Pondering what to do, De Soto even elicited advice from his soldiers. Some of them argued they should turn back immediately and head toward the region where they knew there was food, but De Soto did not want to retrace their steps and rejected the idea. Instead, according to Hudson, De Soto decided to send scouting parties in several directions with instructions to search the countryside for evidence of human activity and food.

On April 22, nine days after they had left the last village in present-day Georgia, De Soto dispatched four different scouts, each accompanied by eight horsemen. These scouts scoured the nearby countryside and it is possible one of them reached Congaree Creek. While it is difficult to know for sure exactly where all these scouting parties explored, all four groups returned safe and exhausted to camp after thrashing through wilderness. Despite their efforts, none had found any Indians, villages or food.

Over the next two days, De Soto dispatched four more scouting parties. One of these groups, led by Juan de Anasco, headed south along the Broad River. His party of ten horsemen, according to Hudson's calculations, probably passed through land now encompassed by the city of Columbia and then proceeded south along the Congaree River. The Spaniards probably traveled along the east side of the Congaree River on the opposite bank from where Congaree Creek enters the waterway. If any Indians were living along Congaree Creek, they possibly were aware the Spaniards were in the area but none apparently revealed themselves to the strangers.

It is impossible to know whether De Anasco's group explored on the Congaree Creek side of the river. Getting there would have been difficult considering the soggy conditions, but the Spanish

were hardened explorers and were in pressing need of food.

Back in the main Spanish camp, north of present-day Columbia, soldiers grew hungrier and more despondent. Rain continued, raising the rivers and creeks ever higher. De Soto ordered that some of the remaining pigs be slaughtered and that one pound of pork be distributed to every soldier. The Indians accompanying them demonstrated how to find succulent wild plant

down what they thought might be their last meal.

On April 25, Juan de Anasco and his scouting party rode into the Spanish camp with welcome news. They had found an Indian village far to the south, apparently where the Congaree and Wateree Rivers meet. Immediately, De Soto ordered that no more pigs should be devoured and that the army should prepare to move. Before they left, De Soto instructed soldiers to dig beneath a large pine tree and bury a message explaining where the



Preliminary plans for the Archeological Park include allowing visitors to rent canoes to enjoy the waters of Congaree Creek as they course through deep woods. The River Alliance

leaves and edible roots to cook with the meat to enhance the flavor and nourishment. The resulting meals no doubt boosted morale for a bit.

De Soto also distributed the little remaining corn, with each man receiving a mere 18 kernels. One chronicler recorded how a soldier hoarded his 18 kernels in a handkerchief, then took pity on two hungry companions. The three carefully divided the corn among themselves, then each one swallowed his six kernels. The trio walked to a nearby stream to drink the clear water, washing

army was headed for the three scouting parties still out exploring. Juan de Anasco carved a message in the tree trunk, instructing: "Dig at the foot of this pine tree and you will find a letter."

De Soto and his army broke camp the next day, April 26, and headed southwest, again following the Broad, then the Congaree River, apparently passing near Congaree Creek but on the river's opposite bank. The army followed guiding trail marks that Juan de Anasco and his scouts earlier had slashed in the trees.

De Soto rode in front of the main body of troops with a group astride the strongest horses. Toward sunset, De Soto and this advanced party were so exhausted, they let their reins go slack. The horses meandered forward, following their own lead. Sometime before night fall, the horsemen arrived in an Indian village.

What happened next is a matter of historical dispute. According to one chronicler who interviewed some of De Soto's soldiers when they returned to Spain, the Indians from Georgia went on a rampage, looting the village and scalping everyone they could find. Their need for revenge sated, the Indians then departed for home.

Three other chroniclers, who traveled with De Soto, do not mention an Indian massacre, but sanitizing their accounts was not uncommon for the Spanish diarists. According to one of the writers, De Soto was so exasperated by how little help the Indians from Georgia were as guides that he sent them home. They did not leave empty-handed, however. According to this account, the Spaniard gave them parting gifts. Whatever happened, by the time the Spanish army settled into the Indian village at the intersection of the Congaree and Wateree Rivers, there were no natives there. Of more immediate importance, however, the Spanish found bountiful supplies of corn. They called the village Hymahi or Aymay.

To the beleaguered soldiers, the village must have seemed like a paradise. Mulberry trees, loaded with ripe berries, filled the surrounding forest, and there were also other fruit-bearing plants, including plump strawberries. Blooming wild roses filled the air with sweet perfume.

Another scouting party De Soto had earlier dispatched arrived in the village on April 27, with four or five Indian captives in tow, according to Hudson. The scouting party probably had abducted the Indians far to the north, although exactly where they were captured is unclear. De Soto questioned these Indians himself, seeking to learn what they knew about the location of Cofitachequi

and its woman chief. The Indians refused to answer. De Soto ordered one of the prisoners burned alive, trying to prod the others into cooperating. But the other Indians still refused to reveal the location of Cofitachequi, and De Soto ordered them all burned to death.

The next day another scouting party arrived with a captured Indian woman they had found to the northwest, perhaps along either the Broad or Congaree Rivers or possibly even near Congaree Creek. In this woman captive, the Spanish finally had someone they could either persuade or coerce to reveal the direction they should follow to reach the principal towns of Cofitachequi.

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THE INDIAN PRINCESS

Following the Indian woman captive's directions, De Soto and his army headed north along the Wateree River until they stood across the water in sight of an Indian settlement, apparently near the location of present-day Camden, South Carolina. De Soto sent soldiers across the river to summon the Indians' leader, according to Hudson. Soon, natives carried a young woman on a litter covered in white cloth toward the water where she stepped into a canoe and took a seat on cushions laid out on cane mats beneath a shade awning. Male Indians rowed the canoe across, accompanied by several more vessels filled with an Indian honor guard.

When the canoes beached on the opposite bank, the young woman climbed out and sat in a chair her attendants provided. De Soto waited, sitting nearby in his own "rest seat," with which he traveled. The young woman, called by the Spanish the "Lady of Cofitachequi," welcomed De Soto. Her people were respectfully silent and still as she spoke. The Spanish believed she was the woman chief they had heard of, but apparently she was instead a powerful relative of the chief's, perhaps a princess, speculates Hudson.

This “Lady of Cofitachequi,” whom the Spanish later described as beautiful, beckoned her followers to present gifts to the visitors. They brought forward hand-woven cloth and soft animal skins and presented them to the Spanish. Then the “Lady of Cofitachequi” delicately removed a necklace of large pearls from her neck and held out the gift to one of De Soto’s translators, indicating she wished the Spanish leader to have them. The translator instructed her to give them to De Soto herself. The “Lady of Cofitachequi” complied, walking to De Soto and placing the pearls around his neck.

After the gift giving, she ordered her subjects to transport the Spanish across the river in their canoes. She declared that half the homes in the village would be set aside for the Spanish and showered them with more gifts of food, including turkey and deer meat, according to Hudson.

The village, the Spanish noted, featured three earthen mounds, typical of important Mississippian culture centers. The community was neat and orderly, according to the chroniclers, who also remarked about how “civilized” the native people seemed.

“All the Indians went clothed, down to their feet with very fine skins well dressed, and blankets of the country, and blankets of sable fur and others of the skin of wildcats which gave out a strong smell,” wrote one. “The people are very clean and polite and naturally well conditioned.” The writer also noted the Indians wore leather leggings and deer-skin moccasins dyed black. These shoes had color fringes and white laces.

De Soto demanded to see more pearls, as well as silver and gold. The “Lady of Cofitachequi” instructed her people to comply. The Indians returned with lovely fresh water pearls, lumps of copper and pieces of sparkling mica, apparently thinking this is what De Soto sought. The Spaniard was disappointed and expressed some skepticism that there was no gold in the village. The

“Lady of Cofitachequi” insisted, however, that her people had no other precious metals.

A short time later, some of the Indians led Spanish soldiers on a tour of a mortuary where corpses were decomposing in boxes placed on platforms atop wooden posts. The Spanish examined the coffins and found that many of the dead wore pearls on their arms, necks and legs. The soldiers began taking the pearls and carting them away, eventually removing some 200 pounds. Many of the pearls were discolored from heat or from contact with dirt or decaying bodies.

The “Lady of Cofitachequi” asked, “Do you value that?” She proposed taking the Spanish to her sacred town, Talmeco, where there were more fresh-water pearls. The town, several miles away, was largely vacant when the group arrived. The Spanish headed for the most important part of the sacred town of Talmeco, climbing the steep steps to the highest point atop the most sacred earthen mound. There, on the plateau-type surface, they stood in front of a large temple with a high roof of split-cane mats. Strings of pearls and conch shells adorned the rooftop.

The soldiers stormed into the temple, passing between six pairs of fierce-looking wooden statues. The statues, each representing a warrior, became progressively smaller, with all of them seemingly poised to attack. They bore different weapons of war clubs, spears or bows and arrows. Once inside, the soldiers took a few seconds to let their eyes adjust to the darkness, then noted the high ceilings that were decorated with elaborate headdresses, pearls and large sea shells. Some of these adornments dangled from strings and seemed almost to be floating on air.

The Spanish spied two additional lines of statues, perched one above the other, near the rear of the temple. Some of these statues were bare handed, while others grasped weapons, decorated with pearls and colored strings. Along other walls, the Spanish saw ornate chests resting



Mississippian potters sometimes stamped intricate designs on their creations. Archeologists sometimes are fortunate enough to find vessels intact. When they discover broken pieces, they can often reassemble them. The South Carolina State Museum collection, photo by Alt Lee

on benches. These contained the bones of revered ancestors. Above these chests, there were shelves with more statutes of men and women, depictions of those whose bones now rested in the boxes. Between the statutes, there were shields made from river cane. The Spanish, keen observers of weaponry, noted that the shields were sturdy enough to block arrows fired from a powerful crossbow. Breast-plate armor and helmets made from animal-hide also hung on the walls.

The Spanish opened other chests and discovered shawls and furs. In some chests they also found colorful ceremonial clothing resplendent

with magnificent feathers. There were also deer skins, some with painted designs, and luxurious-feeling moccasins, probably used on ceremonial occasions. The Spanish also discovered many freshwater pearls inside some of the coffins. They scooped up the pearls and hauled them away.

The woman chief who ruled these Indians, apparently a relative of the “Lady of Cofitachequi”, had stayed somewhat in the background during the early part of the Spanish visit. At some point, however, she decided she had seen and heard enough of what the Spanish were doing. She concluded they were a threat and fled into the

nearby wilderness. De Soto ordered some of his soldiers to find her and bring her back.

In their search for the woman chief, the soldiers took with them a high-ranking male Indian as their guide. Surprisingly, the “Lady of Cofitachequi” was the person who assigned this male Indian to the Spanish. Whether she did this willingly or not is unknown. We do know the Spanish were impressed with the Indian guide. A proud man, he carried with him a sleek and highly polished bow that gleamed in the sunlight.

When the Spanish search party stopped to rest, after traveling about ten miles, the Indian guide began sighing heavily. This was odd behavior coming from a muscular man who appeared to be only about twenty years old. The Indian’s unusual behavior continued. He carefully began removing arrows from his quiver, one at a time. Each time he removed one of the arrows he held it up so that the Spanish could see how the arrow shone in the sunlight. Then he handed the arrow to the Spanish, who must have been pleased and fascinated.

Each arrow had a slightly different kind of stone tip. Finally, the Indian carefully removed his last arrow and without warning, suddenly stabbed himself with the stone tip. The arrow head probably was smeared with some kind of poison, because the Indian died almost instantly. The Spanish were stunned by his suicide. Anthropologist Hudson speculates that the guide was perhaps torn over whether to follow the instructions of the “Lady of Cofitachequi” to help the Spanish or remain loyal to the woman chief.

Without the Indian’s help, the search party failed to locate the woman chief. De Soto dispatched a second search party, but they could not find her either.

The Spanish were becoming increasingly concerned that the people of Cofitachequi were planning an insurrection against them. De Soto ordered the “Lady of Cofitachequi” enslaved, and took her along for protection as his army headed

north into what is now North Carolina. Later, as the army struggled through the Appalachian Mountains near present-day Asheville, the “Lady of Cofitachequi” asked to be allowed to relieve herself in the forest.

It was a cold day in May. The Indian, noticing that her male guards were inattentive, used the opportunity to flee into the woods and escape, taking with her one female attendant and a box of fine pearls that the Spanish had removed from the Cofitachequi temple. De Soto sent search parties after her, but they failed to find her.

De Soto’s army steadily headed west, fighting a growing number of battles with Indians and never finding any gold. Increasingly despondent, De Soto eventually became ill and died near the Mississippi River. His men, fearing that Indians would be emboldened if they realized the fierce Spanish leader was dead, attached weights to his body and sank the corpse in the river.

After wandering through the wilderness, many of De Soto’s soldiers escaped to Mexico after floating down the Mississippi with angry natives trailing behind in hot pursuit.

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WHAT CAN BE LEARNED?

At least six different sites within the proposed park are already known to contain Mississippian artifacts. Some of these objects are deeply buried, some five to six feet beneath the surface near Congaree Creek. These deep deposits, the result of modern flooding, probably mean there is much more that can be uncovered by extensive excavations.

Scientists have also discovered at least three Mississippian sites just outside the proposed park boundaries, areas that may someday be included in the park.

The park, therefore, should offer scientists and interested visitors intriguing glimpses into this time period, which lasted from about A.D. 800 to

about A.D. 1650. The Indians that De Soto encountered, who followed the Mississippian culture, created more complex societies than earlier Woodland-era inhabitants. The Mississippian period was a time of stratified chiefdoms, elaborate art, growing dependence on agriculture and increasing warfare.

De Soto's soldiers also met Indians who seemingly had no ties to more complex Mississippian societies and who followed a Woodland-era lifestyle, points out historian Fritz Hamer of the South Carolina State Museum. The Indians who lived near Congaree Creek, at least in the early centuries of the Mississippian era, perhaps lived such a Woodland-type existence. They apparently built no mounds and continued to be dependent on hunting, fishing and gathering.

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WAS CORN IMPORTANT?

As they sift through soils, scientists will look for evidence of when people began growing corn, an important aspect of the Mississippian culture. If they find evidence of corn, it will help them better understand the beginnings of extensive agriculture in the area and how crop growing transformed daily life. Archeologists will also attempt to determine how native life changed locally before, during and after the Spanish incursion.

Scientists will carefully examine every Mississippian site they find in the park to try to determine the exact years when Indians were present. For example, they will look for complex pottery decorations associated with the middle part of the Mississippian era (between about A.D. 1150 to about A.D. 1450). Preliminary investigations by archeologist James Michie unearthed at least one pottery piece that appears to have been made about A.D. 1400.

Similar findings could be crucial to determining what happened in the years before the Spanish

arrived in A.D. 1540. Historian Fritz Hamer points out there is a strong possibility that Indians abandoned Congaree Creek, along with much of the surrounding area, perhaps a century before the Spanish appeared.

When De Soto arrived, he discovered a wide stretch of land between central Georgia and central South Carolina that was virtually unoccupied. Scientists still grapple with exactly what happened to the former inhabitants and are trying to determine the causes of their disappearance. Increasing warfare among Indians that led them to build protective stockades and dry moats around many of their settlements, along with a drought that hurt agricultural production, may have contributed to spurring a great migration out of the region, according to archeologist David Anderson.

Whether Congaree Creek was part of this vast uninhabited wilderness requires more research. It is also possible that at least some Indians continued to dwell in the area during De Soto's presence or a short time later when another Spaniard, Juan Pardo, arrived. There is still much to be learned about this crucial time when two vastly different cultures from the Old World and the New World clashed.

Certainly, De Soto's army explored near Congaree Creek during that desperate Spring of 1540 when the Spanish army was lost and running short of food. As extensive investigations are conducted in the Archeological Park, scientists will keep an eye out for Spanish artifacts, such as the copper bells the conquistadors used to decorate their horses. Indians greatly desired these "Clarksdale bells," which became a coveted trade good.

Once the Archeological Park opens, scientists will also seek answers to what happened after the early Spanish incursions in the 1500s. One of the most promising finds inside the proposed park represents a large Mississippian-era village. Archeologists have already completed cursory

surveys of this site, which is spread out over several acres. Not enough research has yet been completed to know exactly when this village was occupied, but archeologist David Anderson has seen enough to speculate it was after the initial Spanish explorations during the later centuries of the Mississippian era.

Because of preliminary research at the site, scientists already know the location contains significant deposits of Indian garbage, which archeologists call midden. Mississippian Indians often buried garbage outside the entrances of their homes or on the outskirts of their communities. These dumps, when well preserved, almost always provide important clues about the people who left them. As they conduct more research at this important site, archeologists will compare their findings with what they may discover at nearby places in the park and just outside the park boundaries where artifacts from the same era likely exist. These comparisons will help them develop a picture of what society was like for the villagers.

Some of the smaller sites near the village may represent homesteads where one or two families lived during at least part of the year. Scientists will look for clues that the residents of these homesteads perhaps traveled periodically to the large village, perhaps to participate in religious festivals or to pay tribute to a chief. Some smaller sites may also represent temporary camps set up by residents of the large village when they were on hunting or fishing expeditions.

After the early Spanish explorations, many years passed before Europeans ventured back into South Carolina's interior in any great numbers. There were a few expeditions in the 1600s.

Then, in 1701, explorer John Lawson visited Congaree Creek.

Sometime before Lawson arrived, the elaborate Mississippian cultural system, established around powerful chiefs, probably collapsed. What happened in Georgia and South Carolina occurred throughout most of the Southeast, with powerful chiefdoms disappearing and the Indians abandoning the mound centers that took so long to build.

Some scientists theorize that the Mississippian chiefdoms were inherently unstable and beginning to collapse before the Spanish arrived. Others point out that the conquistadors wrought irreparable damage to native societies. De Soto stole vital food, killed many Indians and humiliated and enslaved chiefs. Even more damaging, however, were the diseases the Spanish unleashed, such as small pox, for which the natives had no immunity.

Thousands of native people died from this and other illnesses the Europeans introduced. Less centralized Indian societies replaced the great chiefdoms. In South Carolina that meant groups such as the Cherokee, Creek, Yamassee, Santee, Catawba and Congaree Indians took hold. Their leaders rarely controlled more than one or two villages.

The Archeological Park offers tantalizing possibilities for research into the development of these native societies and the coming of the British. At least three sites in the proposed park contain artifacts from both the Mississippian era and from early English colonial times. As archeologists sort through and separate these remains, they should develop a better understanding of how one age evolved into the next.

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5 – COLONY IN PERIL

A decade after establishing a community on Albemarle Point in 1670, the English colonists in South Carolina moved Charles Towne across the Ashley River to the peninsula between the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, which is today's location of Charleston. This site was better suited for defense and commerce, with making money the primary goal of the settlers. Early residents spent a great deal of time and effort experimenting to find the best means to earn a profit. With time, they turned increasingly to two main sources of wealth — growing rice and trading with Indians.

The trade helped cement cordial ties with the natives, who served as the British colonists' early warning system against their enemies. The colonists feared the Spanish, who were tightening their hold on Florida, and the French, who were expanding their influence in Louisiana. Both were developing their own Indian allies.

Charleston residents even encouraged the Yamassee (also called the Yemassee) Indians to move north from Florida because the natives had become disgruntled with the Spanish there. Many Yamassee migrated across the Savannah River, settling in western South Carolina.

The Yamassee, as well as the Creeks, Cherokees, Congaree, Catawba, and other native groups gradually became dependent on trade with the English. They grew accustomed to having European cloth, buttons, metal hatchets, scissors, cooking containers, and wooden trunks. The trunks, for many, replaced their handwoven baskets for storing clothing and other items. The Indians also sought European glass, mirrors, jewelry, liquor, and horses. Increasingly, they also wanted bullets, gun powder, and trade guns.

Trading and the subsequent contact with the Europeans steadily impacted the Indian culture,

changing some of the clothing they wore, how they built their dwellings, and the foods they consumed.

The Indians also influenced some European customs, introducing the colonists to new foods and cooking methods. Some Europeans, particularly those living near the frontier, adopted aspects of the Indian wardrobe, wearing moccasins, for example, instead of shoes. Europeans also learned new warfare tactics better suited to the American wilderness, and many also acquired the addictive habit of smoking tobacco.

South Carolina traders earned most of their profit from buying furs, deer skins, and Indian slaves, a commerce that proved increasingly disruptive to native societies. The deer skin trade caused Indians to neglect deer hunting traditionally practiced as a source of food, clothing, or bone tools, according to anthropologist Charles Hudson. Natives for thousands of years had used virtually every part of slain deer, but in the colonial era they began leaving the carcasses to rot, once they cut away the hides. Indians also slaughtered staggering numbers of the animals. By 1707, South Carolina exported more than 120,000 deers skins.

But the slave trade was by far the most destructive practice. Slavery was important to South Carolina from its inception, introduced by immigrants from Barbados. South Carolina rice plantations thrived because of slaves, with both black and Indian captives toiling in the rice fields. The census of 1708 counted 9,500 people living in South Carolina. Of that number, some 3,000 were black slaves and 1,400 were Indian slaves, a ratio of nearly one slave for every English settler.

Indian slaves proved more difficult to own. Unlike the black slaves, who initially were imported from abroad, the Indians were familiar with their surroundings and tended to escape more often. Slave traders consequently concluded that



With deer skins piled around them, Indians examine the trade guns colonists offer. Hatchets, blankets and knives are also potential goods that the colonists will exchange. This depiction of a scene near Fort Argyle in Georgia by artist Martin Pate could well have played out many times at Fort Congaree as well. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

they could make more profits if they exported Indian slaves to New England or the West Indies where they would not know the environments.

The Indian slave trade at first seemed to be useful for protecting the colonists, with the traders encouraging friendly Indians to attack and capture natives aligned with the Spanish and French. Taking captives was not new to the Indians, who had traditionally obtained slaves in wars against each other. With prompting from the colonists, however, the practice escalated dramat-

ically. Slave raiding parties associated with Indians friendly with the English ranged far, extending into Florida and all the way to the Mississippi River. The French and Spanish also encouraged their Indian allies to conduct raids. Most Indians increasingly thought they had to have trade guns to protect themselves from slave raiders. To obtain guns they had to capture more slaves or hunt more deer.

The proprietors in England, who financed the colony and nominally controlled it, bickered with

the colonists, and factions within the colony argued among themselves about who should control the trade profits and how much the trade should be regulated. Some settlers, especially those living on the colony's edges, saw the devastation the trade was causing and how the practice was poisoning relations with the Indians.

After years of debate, the colony instituted comprehensive trade rules in 1707, including an

South Carolina governor for enslaving Indians friendly to the colony and stealing trade goods. The governor, Nathaniel Johnson, responded angrily, ordering Nairne imprisoned for treason. Nairne soon gained his release, but attempts to regulate the Indian trade floundered.

The number of English traders continued to grow and so did cut-throat competition among them. There were violent disputes, including



Until more archeological research is done, there is insufficient evidence to know for certain how Fort Congaree looked. However, researchers know that there was a moat on at least two sides of the structure, and probably also on a third side, similar to the moats at Fort Argyle in Georgia, shown in this illustration by Martin Pate. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

attempt to reduce bartering in Indian slaves and requirements for licensing all traders. The colony appointed an agent, Thomas Nairne, who frequently lived among the natives and became a forceful advocate for treating them respectfully. Nairne also criticized pervasive corruption and brought charges against the son-in-law of the

murders. The traders tended to be tough and crafty. Many were also unscrupulous and brutal. Taking Indian wives was common among them, and there is evidence that many beat or in other ways treated the women harshly.

Enslaving Indians, even those who were supportive of the colony, escalated. Traders increas-

ingly encouraged friendly Indians to attack each other merely to obtain slaves. Once the traders had the Indian slaves in their hands, they often used them to carry nearly unbearably heavy loads to Charleston. There were also mounting reports of fraud, with traders cheating the Indians in their dealings, by using faulty weights or inaccurate measuring sticks to gauge the worth of deer skins or other items. Traders frequently plied the Indians with alcohol, making them easier targets for deceit.

Many Indians became ensnared in debt. Merchants in England and Charleston encouraged traders to speed up collections, and traders often used beatings or the threat of violence to collect. Taking Indian land became a favored way to cancel debts. Some colonial leaders warned that pressure was building toward an explosion with the Indians, but few colonists realized just how dangerous the situation had become. Leaders from different Indian groups began conspiring in secret, airing complaints and agitating for war.

South Carolina was a relatively small and vulnerable colony, with settlements extending only a short distance inland from the coast. The proprietors in Great Britain were encouraging more settlers to cross the ocean and settle in the new colony, especially individuals suffering religious persecution.

The British saw the immigration as a way to diminish the power of the colonists who were already in South Carolina and who were challenging the proprietors' management. New immigrants began expanding into lands near present-day Beaufort in the western area of the colony on ground that the Yamassee Indians considered theirs.

Rumors that the Yamassee might be planning war against the colonists led the colonial government to send Thomas Nairne to the Yamassee as an emissary, but he was too late to avert disaster. The Indians struck on Good Friday, April 15, 1715, attacking farms in the western part of the

colony, killing or terrorizing men, women, and children.

The Yamassee also wiped out a settlement at Pocotaligo, killing nearly one hundred residents. Only two colonists escaped. The Indians captured Thomas Nairne and tortured him to death, driving wooden splinters into his skin and setting them afire.

The Yamassee raids served as a signal for an uprising among most southeastern Indians. The Creeks, Catawbas, Congaree, Santee, and other groups, including perhaps some Cherokee, joined in the warfare, killing ninety percent of the traders who lived among them, according to historian Walter Edgar.

Terrified colonists spread the alarm. Everywhere settlers abandoned their homes and fled to a few fortified farms or to Charleston. Anyone beyond thirty miles outside the city risked being killed or captured, and there was justifiable fear that even Charleston would be attacked.

Governor Charles Craven rallied the settlers, hoping to stave off defeat. He mobilized the colony's 1,500 white men into a militia and ordered the arming of hundreds of slaves, who were organized into battalions, according to historian Lewis Jones. The governor also ordered construction of fortifications and directed government representatives to offer payment to friendly Indians for scalps they collected from slain enemies.

Other colonies provided some men and supplies, but South Carolina faced the mushrooming menace largely alone. The colonists struck back at the Yamassee, soundly defeating them in two battles near Port Royal and Salkehatchie. Surviving Yamassee fled west into Georgia and south toward Florida.

Despite these victories, the war was far from over. The colony was still imperiled, virtually surrounded by hostile Indians who significantly outnumbered the settlers. Warriors, for instance, launched fierce attacks on the eastern side of the colony, ransacking farms along the Santee River.

Europeans called many of these Indians Catawbas, although the name referred to often unrelated groups such as the Esau, Nassaw, Sugaree and Cheraw, according to historian Walter Edgar. Over time the Catawba developed cohesion and began to see themselves as one nation.

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CHEROKEES ARE CRUCIAL

Colonial officials tried to entice the Cherokee, living to the northwest in the foot hills and mountains, to break with other Indians and wage war against them. The officials promised money and guns and seemed to convince the Indians to help, but the warriors who were expected to join the colonists' fight failed to show up for a rendezvous.

Colonel Maurice Moore and about 300 armed men marched into Cherokee territory in a show of force to convince wavering Indians to join the colonists. Moore had no idea he was moving into a potential deathtrap. Almost simultaneously, hundreds of Creek warriors arrived to urge the Cherokee to launch joint attacks against Moore's force.

The fate of Moore's troops, and perhaps the entire colony, hung in the balance while the Cherokees debated what to do. Powerful advocates detested the English and argued in favor of forming an alliance with their traditional enemies, the Creeks. Other Cherokees argued just as forcefully in favor of the English. The conflict ultimately ended in the murder of some Creek leaders by Cherokee supporters of the colonists. The killings violated an unwritten Indian rule that envoys should be accorded safe passage and unleashed heightened acrimony between Creeks and Cherokees which would endure for decades. The Creek warriors fled, and Cherokee opinion swung in favor of the colony. Soon, some 3,000 Cherokee warriors moved south to wage war, turning the conflict in South Carolina's favor.

The war began winding down by early 1717, although hostile Indian raids continued. While the conflict was called the Yamassee War because it started with the Yamassee attacks, colonial forces had been compelled to wage war against many native groups. The battles obliterated some Indian societies, while the colonists allowed other groups to survive because they accepted peace agreements.

The Congaree Indians joined the uprising and were crushed in the resulting warfare. By one estimate, more than half of the Congaree were captured and enslaved by the colonists, then exported to the West Indies. The Congaree Indians who escaped managed to merge with the Catawba, living near the North Carolina border. Within a generation, few people remembered the Congaree Indians had ever existed. The Congaree were soon one of South Carolina's lost tribes.

The colonists in South Carolina were stunned by the ferocity of the Indian wars, which few had expected would ever happen. Some 400 settlers died in the uprising. Livestock raising suffered in many areas and vast farming acreage, perhaps one-half of cultivated lands, lay fallow and deserted, according to historian Walter Edgar. Some of these lands remained vacant for more than a decade, presumably because settlers were still afraid to return to the frontier. The war's costs also placed colonial finances in shambles, with mounting government debt and inflation.

The collaboration among the Indians against the colonists was unprecedented and ominous for the future. If the colony was to continue to survive, leaders had to act to prevent any further attacks or alignments among the disparate native groups. While some battles were still ongoing, the colonial government seized control of all Indian trade. The government hired agents, called factors, who became the only settlers legally permitted to trade with natives.

Five commissioners managed Indian trade policy in consultation with the governor and other

colonial officials. The commissioners helped decide where trade would be allowed, what exchange rates would be, and who would serve as trade agents. The commerce in Indian slaves, which had already been declining, virtually disappeared.

Colonial officials also ordered the building of forts on the frontier's edge, where settlers could seek protection from attack and soldiers would be stationed to discourage any potential adversaries. The forts would also serve as staging grounds for military operations into Indian territory and as storage depots for trade goods. Natives were to bring deer skins to the forts where government agents would ensure fair exchanges.

As early as July 1716, the Indian Trade Commissioners considered building a fort on the banks of Congaree Creek at a site they called the Congarees. A small colonial settlement had been established at the location prior to the Yamassee War and natives were accustomed to visiting the place to conduct trade. A significant Congaree Indian village had also been located nearby, but was abandoned during the war.

The Congarees site was also well established among colonists as a last stop before entering Indian territory. Anyone traveling from Charleston on foot or horseback followed a well-trod path to Congaree Creek, where the path forked in two directions. Those traveling to Cherokee territory chose the left fork and headed northwest. This Cherokee trail took travelers to Keowee, the first major Indian village in the foot hills, and then on toward the mountains.

Those headed to Catawba territory turned right at Congaree Creek to follow the Catawba trail. This path curved northeast, crossed the Congaree River, and eventually reached the Wateree River, where it turned north. Near the North Carolina border, the Catawba trail intersected another path leading toward Virginia.

As the Yamassee War moved toward a conclusion, colonial officials considered ordering

the Catawba Indians to move south to Congaree Creek. The Catawbas, now subdued, would serve as guardians against future surprise attacks by other Indians, while trade with the natives would be restored to pre-war levels. The officials' objective was to regain trade with the Catawbas, who were increasingly diverting their exchanges to traders from Virginia.

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CATAWBAS RESIST

The Catawbas, however, were reluctant to move, and the Cherokee Indians, their traditional enemies, objected to their foes settling nearby and controlling access to a principal path into Cherokee territory. The colonial leaders subsequently dropped their plans to relocate the Catawbas.

One of the first people to suggest building a colonial fort near Congaree Creek, according to researcher William McDowell, was a well-regarded Cherokee leader, Charite Hayge, who was also known as "The Conjurer."

As the Indian Trade Commissioners began promoting the idea of a fort, they offered the job of building and then managing the outpost to Eleazer Wiggan, a tough frontiersman who had a reputation for skirting government regulations. Wiggan, however, turned down the position. Next, the commissioners turned to Captain James How, a soldier experienced in dealing with Indians.

Captain How accepted, and in January 1718, the commissioners bought for his use a large, flat-bottomed boat with two masts, a *periaugue*. He planned to ferry men and supplies in the vessel from Charleston and eventually travel up the Santee and Congaree Rivers to Congaree Creek.

The boat apparently was not in the best condition because the commissioners had to hire a contractor to make repairs. The commissioners also approved buying oars for the trip, along with various supplies, from Thomas Barton, keeper of the public store. The purchases, according to



Fort Congaree became a major trading post for the colonists and Indians. The Indians arrived on foot and by canoe, bringing deer skins and other animal pelts to barter for manufactured goods, as depicted by Martin Pate. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

researcher James Michie, probably included guns, ammunition, carpenter tools, cooking pots, food, rum, and trade goods.

Captain How, along with eleven militia men and a carpenter, left Charleston sometime in the Spring of 1718, but the boat crew never reached Congaree Creek. Something went terribly wrong along the way, although the exact nature of what transpired never was fully explained in written records. Perhaps the crew members became despondent and lost their nerve as they paddled deeper into a forbidding wilderness. Everyone had to be constantly on guard for a surprise attack by

an Indian raiding party. There is also the possibility that the crew found Captain How to be overbearing, or that they distrusted his leadership.

Whatever the cause, the crew staged a mutiny, stealing the boat and supplies and leaving How stranded. He apparently made his way back to Charleston to tell his version of what happened to the Indian Trade Commissioners who inserted this mention in their records of May 22, 1718: "Since we are disappointed....by the men's running away with the Periaugue, Ammunition, Provisions & c, and we [are] not in Cash [again] to purchase those necessities, can't see how we can at this juncture,

go forward again....” The attempt to build a fort on Congaree Creek came to a standstill.

Soon after, however, the proposed construction gained impetus again because of renewed threats of violence. That summer of 1718, apparently in July, colonial officials received word that the French and Choctaw Indians planned to attack the Cherokees, who had become the colony’s principal native allies. The Indian Trade Commissioners dispatched some fifty colonial troops to bolster Cherokee preparedness and once more ordered the start of fort construction at the Congarees site.

The commissioners authorized on July 16 purchases of another “*Periaugue* and all manner of utensils, stores, provision, and ammunition fitting...for building, settling and defending a sufficient fort.” Soon after, they hired Captain Charles Russell to manage the fort and to serve as trade agent for the Cherokees and Catawba. The commissioners also bought a horse for Russell so he could ride to recruit men for the mission.

The commission’s records are unspecific about how Russell arrived at Congaree Creek. He perhaps traveled with members of his command in the *periaugue* boat. There is also the possibility he rode the horse, accompanying soldiers traveling by land to Cherokee territory. The troops bivouacked at Congaree Creek on their journey. Two historians interpret written records to mean the soldiers’ pack horses hauled materials destined for fort construction, as well as ammunition to be distributed to the Cherokees.

Sometime in the fall of 1718, Captain Russell, along with some 20 men assigned to him, began building Fort Congaree. Cherokee warriors, sent by Charite Hayge, the “Conjurer,” apparently helped with the construction, according to researcher Michael Trinkley.

The fort apparently consisted of a stockade fence enclosing various buildings, according to archeologist James Michie. The builders shaped the stockade in a square or rectangle with the

back fence parallel to Congaree Creek. They also dug a protective dry moat to enclose the fort, except on the side next to the creek.

The South Carolina governor described Fort Congaree in January 1719 as a place to “awe the Indians and prevent their coming within us.” Soldiers at the fort, according to the governor, were ordered to determine what the Indians’ “designs are and to secure our people and goods whilst we trade with them.”

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ENEMIES ABOUND

Fort Congaree existed at a dangerous time when there were multiple threats to the colony. Not only were colonial officials concerned about more Indian uprisings, they were also worried about the French, who were becoming increasingly assertive, seemingly preparing to attack the Cherokees.

Spain would soon declare war on England, and there was evidence the Spanish were ready to send warships from Florida to pillage South Carolina settlements. In addition, pirates constantly threatened shipping to and from England, imperiling a vital lifeline for the colony. Not everyone in South Carolina viewed the pirates as a menace, however. In fact, for many years colonial officials had turned a blind eye to the many settlers trading with pirates so they could obtain cheap stolen goods, but the danger to the colony from the pirates had mushroomed to such a degree that the officials decided they could no longer tolerate the risk.

A growing menace was Edward Teach, known as “Blackbeard,” and his band of cutthroats. They stormed aboard an ocean-going vessel and seized several prominent Charleston residents to hold for ransom. “Blackbeard” defiantly anchored his four ships near Charleston in June 1718, and demanded that the governor hand over expensive medical supplies, or the pirates would kill the hostages. Colonial officials yielded

to the ultimatum. The hostages did their part by encouraging friends and families to pay fist-fulls of cash to the pirates to guarantee their release. Once the hostages were released, "Blackbeard" sailed away, free to kidnap and plunder again.

Colonial anger, not only in South Carolina, but also further up the coast, was mounting against the audacious thieves. Colonists from Virginia finally caught up with "Blackbeard" and made him pay for his crimes with his life.

South Carolina designated warships to track down other pirates who were just as fierce as "Blackbeard." Two of the vessels, commanded by William Rhett, engaged in a desperate, six-hour battle in North Carolina's Cape Fear River with a pirate ship commanded by Stede Bonnet, a well-educated and formerly wealthy and respected citizen of Barbados. During the battle, all three ships ran aground in the shallow waters. They continued firing cannons, filling the air with smoke, but the fusillade accomplished little until one of the colonial ships managed to float free. Bonnet, still trapped in the mud, was forced to surrender.

The colonists put Bonnet on trial in Charleston, where he somehow managed to escape. The outraged colonists quickly caught him, however, and returned him to the court room where he was declared guilty as charged. On December 10, 1718, a large crowd gathered in a Charleston square to watch Bonnet hanged. His death was only one of many for the pirates that year. In all, some forty-eight of the brigands were executed in November and December, according to historian Walter Edgar.

The executions had their desired effect. They eliminated a number of the pirates and discouraged others from further assaults on the citizens. Other dangers to the colony also gradually subsided. Neither the Spanish nor the French launched the feared attacks, and serious problems with the Indians seemed to abate, at least for a while. Fort Congaree never faced attack. Instead,

the fort became an important trade center. Cherokee and Catawba Indians frequently camped on the grounds near the fort walls to peddle deer skins and other trade goods with the colonists, but relations with the natives remained uneasy.

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DAINGEROUS DEALINGS

While Fort Congaree played an important role in the Carolina government's attempts to eliminate abuses perceived as causing the Yamassee War, by 1720 it became apparent that the government's trade monopoly, controlled by five commissioners of Indian Trade, was creating almost as many problems as it was meant to solve. One of those who observed the damage being inflicted was Captain William Hatton, the government's trade agent (or factor) to the Cherokee Indians. Hatton's memoirs, written in 1720, detail how dangerous the life of an Indian trader had become and how difficult it was for him to gain the Cherokees' trust.

Merchants based in Charleston, according to Hatton, were upset by strict government controls over everything they sold destined for the Indians. These merchants raised prices sky high when selling to authorized government agents. The result of the expensive goods, along with precarious government finances, was that shortages soon developed in high-quality goods sought by the Indians.

There was also a shortage of pack horses to haul goods to the Cherokees and bring back their pelts and deer skins. As a result, traders such as Hatton were forced to hire Indians to act as bearers, which he called burdeners. Although they were paid, the Indians resented what they considered menial work. As Hatton put it, the Indians thought the government-sanctioned traders made a "horse [of] them to carry skins."

Using Indian bearers also resulted in severe financial losses for the colony. Entire "packs of

goods,” as much as a third of the cargo, disappeared from Indian caravans because of theft, according to Hatton. And because the guilty bearers were “called at no time to a strict account....they at last was so emboldened in their roguery that they thought it no crime, but would go away” to the Catawba Indians and trade away the stolen goods.

Many trade goods traveled first from Charleston to Fort Congaree over land or by boat, before being traded to the Cherokees or Catawbas. Captain Charles Russell, commander of Fort Congaree, had a habit of intercepting the best goods meant for the Indians, especially gun powder. Russell’s actions and shortages caused by the Charleston merchants’ high prices meant the ammunition available for trade to the Cherokees was “damnified,” according to Hatton. The gun powder “came in lumps as big as a man’s head and as hard as a stone....I was ashamed to offer it to sale.”

Outright abuse by some government-sanctioned agents deepened the ill will between the colonists and Indians. John Sharp, a trader, “used them [the Cherokees] very roughly by beating and abusing them,” Hatton wrote. Sharp even slashed several Indians with his saber and called “them ill names, such as rogues and old women, which there cannot be a greater affront given to an Indian than to call him an old woman.”

When traders from Virginia began dealing with both the Catawbas and Cherokees, government agents such as Hatton found themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Unlike the Virginians, the Carolina traders had to hew to strict prices set by the Commissioners of Indian Trade. The Virginians undercut those prices and offered better quality goods.

They also had no need of hiring Indian bearers because they had hundreds of horses. Perhaps, most importantly, they treated the Indians cordially. The “Virginians used them [the Indians] with all the mildness and moderation imaginable which gained their hearts to their interest and

alienated their affections from Carolina,” Hatton wrote.

As Hatton acknowledged, the Indians were simply being smart to haggle with both Virginians and the Carolina agents to gain “another string in their bow.” The Virginians, however, had such an advantage that the Carolina traders began “to feel their [the Cherokees] slights and indignation, no notice being taken of us, but in derision would often come and tell us the hateful news....that the Virginians [were] very good and had brought them abundance of goods and sold them at such and such prices.”

Some of the Cherokees grew so bold to threaten the Carolina traders. “They did not want us, nor our goods, among them, and if that we stayed....we should be killed. All their cry was that the Virginians was very good, but they valued us of Carolina no more than dirt. This they told us often, and this we daily suffered.”

Tensions steadily mounted, spiking higher when Indians began breaking into various storage buildings belonging to Carolina traders stationed throughout Cherokee territory. “When I made a stir about the stores being broken [into] and threatened them concerning it with the displeasure of our governor,” Indians returned some of the goods and “a few light skins of little value to make satisfaction, but never to the hundredth part of the value,” Hatton recounted.

The tension eventually erupted into violence. A group of Carolina traders was guiding a caravan south from the Catawbas, apparently in the direction of Fort Congaree, when they stopped for the night. Indian warriors attacked the camp and wounded several of the traders.

Charite Hayge, the Conjuror, who was leader (or headman) of the Cherokee village of Tugaloo, initially denied any knowledge of the attack. When Hatton went to see the chief, however, and told him he had proof that Cherokees were involved in “breaking the peace,” Charite Hayge admitted “he did hear some thing of it [the attack].” The chief then claimed that a group of “young fellows” went

out on their own, “unknown to him or any one else.” Neither the Cherokees nor the Carolina government reprimanded the perpetrators, “which gave them good reason to think we was afraid of them, and that we was obliged to take all wrongs they should offer us,” Hatton wrote.

The lack of government response to the attack and growing Cherokee impudence, Hatton believed, were responsible for the murder soon after of a trader named Benjamin Edward. “No one knows how [this happened] except the Indians.”

Despite the mounting dangers, Hatton continued to trade. The number of deer skins he and his assistant factors acquired began to pile up until there were 10,000 of them that required transport to Fort Congaree or they risked being damaged by worms.

“It grieved me to see the skins lay there eaten by worms and, I having no body but myself, it was a thing impossible to keep them clean.” Hatton added, “I was very uneasy at [the skins] being in their [the Cherokee] nation for fire or an enemy or several other accidents might have happened to deprive the public of such a quantity of skins.”

§ § §

HATTON FACES TREACHERY

Hatton rode by horseback to Charleston to obtain permission from the Commissioners of Indian trade to hire Indian bearers “because I durst not proceed to any thing without an order from the Board.”

Permission granted, Hatton returned to Cherokee territory and persuaded enough Cherokees to act as bearers to haul about a third of the skins to Fort Congaree. Some 70 Indians assembled, each carrying about 50 skins, substantially more than the normal load of 30 skins, and some of the “young fellows grumbled at the weight of their packs.”

For their efforts, each Indian was supposed to

be paid a yard and three quarters of blue duffel blanket at the journey’s end.

When the caravan reached Fort Congaree, the fort commander, Captain Charles Russell, provided every Indian with provisions and pay, but the blankets he distributed were four inches short. The Indians were irate and when they returned home immediately complained to Hatton “their measure was not right to what I’d promised they should have....The blame was laid upon me and I was called a thousand rogues and liars, and they told me they would never more carry a skin for us of Carolina unless that I paid them in the [Cherokee] Nation before they went away.”

Traders from Virginia helped stoke the Indians’ discontent, arguing that Hatton had obviously cheated them and urging them never again to haul goods for Carolina agents. Hatton, discouraged, wrote, “This also contributed to the loss of their [the Cherokees] friendship and was a very ill action at this juncture when burdeners was so much wanted.”

Hatton told the Indians an “abundance of fine stories” to the effect that the short pay was not his fault nor the colony’s governor and that “when the governor came to know [what had happened] he would be very angry.” By his fast talking, Hatton persuaded the Indians to make a second trip to Fort Congaree. When they arrived at the fort the second time, they received the correct pay.

Hatton was preparing to dispatch a third convoy when new dangers enveloped Cherokee territory. Creek warriors invaded and attacked the Cherokee town of “Nogoutchee.” The Creeks carried “off an abundance of slaves and killed most of the rest of the inhabitants.” The next day, the invaders also killed three Carolina traders before slipping back to their villages in what is now west Georgia.

Hatton set off for the scene of the attacks to investigate, but before he got there, the trader John Sharp arrived first and kicked down the door of a store house used by one of the deceased Carolina traders. Sharp took “what he thought fit, which he



Dug-out canoes were vital to transportation for the Indians seeking to bring their trade goods to Fort Congaree, as shown in Martin Pate's painting. The Indians made the vessels from entire trees that they hollowed out with fire and hand tools. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

said was nothing, but what belonged to the White man that was dead."

To cloak his actions, Sharp placed at least some of the trade goods in a building the Indians used to store corn "where they lay exposed to all comers and goers to take what they wanted. This he did under the pretense to secure the public's interest, but any one must judge it was to secure an interest to himself since he had no business with anything belonging to the public while I was in the [Cherokee] Nation, especially the breaking open of doors," Hatton recounted.

Despite the growing tension, Hatton continued his preparations for a third convoy to Fort Congaree, intending this time to make the journey

himself. He had no trouble assembling bearers because this time his superiors had given him permission to pay the Indians in advance. Also accompanying the caravan was a revered Cherokee leader, a man Hatton called "the Old King" and 16 headmen (or chiefs) from different villages. These Cherokee leaders planned to stop at Fort Congaree, then travel on to Charleston to present the governor a gift of 130 deer skins and to parlay with him.

Early on, the trip went smoothly until the caravan reached Fort Congaree. "Now Captain Charles Russell, who was commander of that garrison, began to show his authority and unkindness to myself and [the] Indians," Hatton wrote.

Captain Russell would not allow any of the Cherokees, including their leaders, inside the fort, and insisted they set

up camp at least a quarter mile away. Adding insult to injury, the commander granted visiting Catawba Indians free access inside the fort.

Captain Russell was also stingy with food he was supposed to provide the Cherokees, who were short on supplies and hungry after their long trek. Captain Russell dispersed some corn to the Indian bearers, but refused to give any food to the Cherokee leaders or to Hatton. When Hatton argued that the Indians should be treated with more respect and that they were on their way to give gifts to the governor, Captain Russell "immediately fell into a great passion and swore bitterly that they [the Cherokee] leaders" would not have one grain of corn from him even "if they was to starve." Hatton

warned that the governor and the commissioners of Indian trade would be upset, but Captain Russell was unmoved. He said "he did not value neither [the] governor nor commissioners. He would do as he pleased in [Fort Congaree]." He angrily told Hatton to go to Charleston and complain "and be damned."

As the two men argued, it became clear Captain Russell was furious at Hatton for complaining to the commissioners of Indian trade about paying Cherokees from an earlier convoy with short blankets. Captain Russell said he had only been paying the Indians what the commissioners had ordered.

Hatton tried to end the dispute by agreeing that the real fault lay with the commissioners, but the fort commander remained furious. "He told me that," Hatton wrote, "because I was with the Cherokees they should see that it was on my account that he slighted them, thinking I suppose to lessen my credit amongst them."

Hatton and the Cherokee leaders managed to survive the next leg of their journey because the Indian bearers shared corn with them. When the caravan reached Charleston, however, there were more tribulations. Community leaders ordered the Indians to spend the night outside the town walls. When the Cherokees set up camp on designated land, the property owner sent servants to chase them away.

"The little rotten wood which they [the Indians] had picked off the ground to boil their corn with, [the servants] took it from them and threw their things about the camp and drove them away in the night when they was asleep and obliged them to move further a mile or two."

They were then driven from a second camp by a man who "fell to swearing and cursing the governor, and [saying things such as the] government [be] damned and the Indians too." Hatton wrote that when the Indians leaders "saw all these things, [they] told me that this was the first time that ever they was down to see the English governor and it should be the last for they would never

come no more." The next day, however, Governor James Moore and other important citizens treated the Indians with respect. They invited the natives on board a British warship where everyone witnessed naval gun firing and were treated well by the ship's commander.

When the Cherokees returned home, they delivered long speeches about what they had seen. Some of this talk was highly positive, especially with regard to the kindness shown them by a British sea captain, but bitterness also lingered. As Hatton wrote, they "cast reflection enough upon their treatment in town saying they was willing to sleep and parch their corn where the cattle dinged, but the English would not suffer them to [even] do that."

Soon after, Creek raiders killed Charite Hayge, the Indian who helped build Fort Congaree, when he was returning from visiting the colony. Cherokees, in general, blamed the colonial government for having made peace with the Creeks and suspected the British were encouraging the Creeks to carry out such raids. In particular, many Cherokee blamed Hatton because he had encouraged Charite Hayge to travel south into the colony. Indians were "within a bow's shot of" Hatton's house on a mission to murder him when Cherokee leaders whom Hatton had befriended stepped in to order the would-be assassins away.

§ § §

SKINS FOR PEARLS

There are no known documents that tell precisely what deer skins were worth at Fort Congaree. Historians have, however, uncovered a price list from Fort Moore, which existed near the Savannah River at the same time, and researcher James Michie speculates that Fort Congaree traders offered comparable rates.

Typically, an Indian at Fort Moore could buy a pair of scissors for a single deer skin. One skin could also buy a knife or a string of pearls. Three skins fetched a metal hatchet or a hoe. Fire arms

were especially expensive, costing twenty skins for a pistol and thirty-five for a trade gun.

Commerce thrived at Fort Congaree for four years, but the outpost's usefulness waned as colonial officers grew complacent, falsely assuming that the Indians, especially the Cherokee, were no longer a threat. Colonists grew increasingly unconcerned about carefully managing trade as the memories faded about the injustices toward the Indians that flourished before regulations were put in place.

In 1721, colonial officials put a stop to the carefully crafted government monopoly on trade with natives and allowed entrepreneurs once again to fan out deep into Indian territory. At about the same time, colonial officials were chafing at the significant costs involved in maintaining Fort Congaree, according to researcher Michie. So, in 1722, officials ordered the garrison shut.

Captain Charles Russell, still the garrison commander, distributed some of the fort's gun powder, ammunition and other supplies to settlers living nearby. He then apparently packed the remaining weapons and supplies, before making the long trek back to Charleston to turn over the materials to the colonial government.

At least three slaves served at Fort Congaree, and perhaps more. When the garrison closed, the colonial governor ordered the slaves to be sent to Fort Moore, which remained open on the banks of the Savannah River. No research has yet been done about what these slaves' lives were like at Fort Congaree. When the Archeological Park opens, researchers will conduct more study into the slaves' activities at the fort and their contributions to building the young colony.

After Captain Charles Russell and the rest of the soldiers departed, Fort Congaree quickly fell into disrepair. The land continued for a while to serve as a settlement center, with some former soldiers who had served at the fort remaining behind as residents. Private traders probably continued to use the old site as a meeting ground

for exchanges with Indians who still showed up to haggle over deer skins, speculates historian William McDowell, but there are no written records yet found that substantiate his assumption. Future archeological digs may one day find proof that commerce continued after the fort officially closed.

During the 1730s, the town of Saxe Gotha developed a short distance away, north of the fort site along the Congaree River. Patrick Brown was among the prominent landholders outside the town. He owned three hundred acres that included the old fort site. Brown's brother, Thomas, also owned a major swath of land nearby.

The two brothers jointly operated a country store, apparently located on or near the spot where the old fort once stood. The store's location was ideal, adjacent to the wagon trail that stretched all the way from Charleston into Cherokee territory. This was the old Indian trading trail that had been expanded to accommodate wagons.

Not everyone liked having the store in this location, especially some nearby settlers who complained in 1735 that Indians congregating at the store were destroying their crops.

Thomas Brown, one of the store owners, had a son from a relationship with an Indian woman. The son apparently followed in his father's footsteps and also became involved in commerce. The young man was kidnaped in the 1740s by Iroquois Indians, who also captured a trader named George Haig. The Iroquois fled north with their two captives on what must have been a harrowing journey. Eventually the Iroquois released the young Brown, but they murdered Haig.

Settlers near the Congaree River were both infuriated and frightened by the incident. Because of their concern and heightened tensions with Indians, colonists built a new Fort Congaree in 1748. The new fort was further north than the old one and closer to the Congaree River. Many soon forgot there ever was an earlier Fort Congaree.

Even though the first Fort Congaree held a pivotal role in the early colony and was the first major European outpost in the mid section of what

became the state of South Carolina, modern historians and archeologists were long stymied in their efforts to find the fort's location. These historians and archeologists spent days thumbing through old documents and searching the forests and fields near Congaree Creek, looking for some

maps, but these proved to be of little help, because they were either imprecise or wrong. After poring over the maps, scientists could be certain only that the fort stood somewhere in a wide area encompassing Congaree Creek and the Congaree River. This was little to go on, but nevertheless, they set



A close-up view of a painting by Martin Pate shown earlier in this chapter demonstrates how intently both sides regarded the goods they were seeking to exchange. Haggling could continue for a long while until each person was satisfied. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

hint of exactly where the fort once stood, but with little luck.

During their research, scientists located many documents that mentioned the fort, but none provided specific enough details to pinpoint the location. The papers invariably described the fort as being at the “Congarees,” a vague term for contemporary researchers, however well known the designation was in earlier times.

The fort was also depicted on various old

out to try to find artifacts that could be tied to the fort.

The first professionally organized search took place in 1970, conducted by Thomas Hemmings and William McDowell. Hemmings, of the South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, and McDowell, of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, studied ground north of Congaree Creek. They looked carefully for clues, but in the end found nothing they could

tie to the fort. They did locate many artifacts, however, a number of them from the mid-1700s. They determined that these artifacts were remnants of a small settlement called St. John's, built after Fort Congaree was abandoned. Future research in the proposed Archeological Park will likely determine much more about St. John's and the people who once lived there.

The next scientist to examine various spots near Congaree Creek for the fort was Richard Polhemus, again without success. As he searched, Polhemus noted evidence of extensive flooding in recent centuries. Some of the floods must have been powerful enough to scour the land. Polhemus speculated that the inundations could have been extensive enough to wash away any remaining traces of Fort Congaree. If his idea proved true, future attempts to find the fort would prove futile.

Still, other researchers did not want to abandon the search. When state engineers began planning to build the Southeastern Beltway (which became Interstate 77), a new urgency gripped the archeological community. Archeologists became concerned that the proposed highway was probably going to be built through an area where they suspected the fort once stood. Unless they could discover the fort's location quickly, any remains might be bulldozed into oblivion or buried under tons of concrete.

Three researchers, all affiliated with the Archeological Society of South Carolina, were determined to make another attempt to find the fort. They scoured through the old documents, trying to gain new insights, hoping to find something earlier researchers had missed.

These scientists identified an area they thought looked the most promising. They trucked in heavy equipment in 1974 to a site north of Congaree Creek and excavated six long trenches. In the process, they uncovered numerous artifacts, some left behind by prehistoric Indians who lived centuries before Europeans arrived. The scientists also discovered more objects they could

trace to the St. John's settlement, which existed after Fort Congaree, but they found nothing related to the fort itself.

That same year, archeologist Michael Trinkley conducted additional research nearby. He carefully dug small holes in promising spots, but these test holes turned up no artifacts from the fort. Trinkley also examined the soil's mineral content. These tests revealed an area near Congaree Creek with elevated levels of phosphate, which is often a residue of extended human occupation. Consequently, Trinkley thought he had found a place with research potential. Funds for the investigations had run out, however, so all Trinkley could do was recommend that someone else revisit the area in the future.

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PAIR FINDS PLANTATION SITE

Charles Gay, a graduate student, brought a different perspective to the hunt in 1974. Perhaps the fort was not located north of Congaree Creek after all. He studied aerial photographs and noted some distinctive shadings in the earth surface south of Congaree Creek that he thought might indicate where the fort had once stood. Gay also detected what seemed to be remnants of ancient trails converging in the area.

Determined to learn if his observations were accurate, Gay and another archeologist walked through and collected artifacts south of the creek. Their efforts revealed nothing about the fort, but they did make an important discovery. Gay and archeologist David Anderson found artifacts that apparently belonged to the plantation home of Charles Pinckney, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Pinckney was a powerful figure in early South Carolina history, serving four terms as governor of the state. He was also the first governor to serve in Columbia after the city became South Carolina's capital.

While he was governor, Pinckney frequently

traveled to his plantation, which he called Tacitus, using an office there to conduct government business. The plantation lands will be important for future studies in the proposed Archeological Park.

Nevertheless, despite all the potentially significant discoveries being made near Congaree Creek, scientists seemed no closer to finding Fort Congaree. The many important sites being uncovered in the proposed path of the Southeastern Beltway did cause state engineers to shift the highway's route further south. Although this was a welcome reprieve from potential destruction of historic sites, the change in the route had an unexpected consequence. With the threat from construction diminished, research monies became difficult to obtain, and the search for Fort Congaree seemed to stop.

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ONE MORE TRY

Some fifteen years later, however, archeologist James Michie decided to make another attempt to find the fort site. He reexamined the historic documents and maps and concluded that the structure might be closer to the Congaree River than most scientists had earlier thought. To test his theory, Michie visited the river in 1989, using ground-penetrating radar to map contours beneath the surface in a wide area. The radar, capable of detecting artifact clusters and changes in soil density, showed no patterns beneath the surface that resembled a fort layout.

Ground-penetrating radar can miss important clues, so Michie and his crew next went back to the labor-intensive method of digging test holes. As they dug in numerous places near the river, their shovels bit down into thick layers of sand and clay. They extracted these layers of modern-era flooding and continued to dig deeper. When they reached between five and six feet beneath the surface, they began discovering Mississippian

Indian artifacts, no doubt left behind by residents who lived long before Europeans arrived.

As the scientists reached between eight and twelve feet below the surface, they uncovered even earlier prehistoric Indian artifacts. Still, despite the extensive excavations, Michie and his crew found no trace of Fort Congaree. With funds and time running out, Michie decided to switch his search back closer to Congaree Creek. He and his team decided to take another look just north of the creek in an area that archeologist Michael Trinkley had previously suggested deserved more probing.

Merely getting a crew and excavation equipment to the site proved difficult. The many trees and tangled underbrush hindered the archeologists as they approached the spot where they wanted to dig. One crew member drove a backhoe tractor, which lumbered forward, clearing an old, overgrown dirt road. Pine trees bordered the north side of the old road, while large hickories and oaks grew on the other side, between the road and Congaree Creek. It was late Spring 1989, and with the growing season already well underway, vines, brambles and bushes created almost impenetrable barriers in every direction.

Michie decided the best way to attack the area was to begin by digging two trenches in the old road. The backhoe tractor's engine strained as the metal bucket banged down and bit into the earth. It scooped up soil and dumped it to the side. As the minutes passed, the tractor etched out trenches that were about ten feet long, four feet wide and about a foot and a half deep. Michie called a halt to the digging. He did not want to risk going deeper with the machinery, fearful that the digging would destroy valuable soil layering and stains that might reveal earlier human activity.

With the tractor pulled off to one side, the archeologists and their assistants stepped into the trenches with their shovels and began carefully skimming away more dirt, always keeping a sharp eye out for artifacts and changes in the color of the soil.

As they dug deeper, they began finding pieces of pottery, apparently from the mid-1700s, deposited after Fort Congaree had been closed. The scientists dug deeper, down to about three feet beneath the surface, where they uncovered small lumps of iron, probably remnants of old nails. They also found pieces of poorly manufactured bricks, as well as remnants of animals, some of which appeared to be decomposing pig tusks. All of these artifacts dated from the mid and late 1700s.

The archeologists needed to delve deeper to reach soil that once rested on the ground surface in the early 1700s when Fort Congaree was built. As the researchers carefully peeled back layers of earth in one of the trenches, they began uncovering a distinctive line of sandy clay.



Evidence of a dry moat alerted archeologists that they had finally discovered the site of historic Fort Congaree. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

This sandy clay stretched about four-feet wide in places and extended past the trench on both sides. The scientists quickened their pace as they began to suspect they had encountered something unusual. Gradually, they became

convinced they had found a deep ditch which had been dug by humans many years earlier.

The archeologists decided to dig another trench closer to Congaree Creek. When they did, they discovered remnants of the same ditch. The size and depth of this ancient ditch convinced them that they had probably uncovered a dry moat which once protected Fort Congaree. To confirm their findings, the archeologists excavated another series of trenches about one hundred feet away. Here, along what was apparently another side of the fort, they discovered evidence of another dry moat.

There was now no doubt. James Michie and his researchers had at last discovered the site of the first Fort Congaree.

The remnants of Fort Congaree lie deep beneath the earth's surface in the proposed Archeological Park. Scientists so far have been unable to conduct extensive explorations on the site, so they do not know how much might remain of the historic fort. They are sure there are many exciting opportunities for future archeological studies.

The two dry moats discovered by James Michie protected Fort Congaree's east and west sides, both perpendicular to Congaree Creek.

The moat layout seems to coincide with an old drawing found in British

records that apparently depicts Fort Congaree. The drawing shows what appears to be east and west moats, along with another moat on the north side, the part furthest from Congaree Creek. Michie's crew excavated a long trench in search of this third

dry moat, without success. Future excavations may uncover the moat, although its remains could have been erased by farming or flooding.

The old drawing shows no moat on the fort's south side, the part next to and parallel to Congaree Creek. The creek's steep banks protected this area, along with a palisade fence. Michie theorizes that there was a fence on all four sides. The fence, probably about nine feet tall, would have consisted of tall wood posts lined up side by side and sharpened into points at the top.

When the Archeological Park is functioning, scientists will try to determine the exact nature of the fort's defenses. They will search for post molds, which are stains left from rotting wood. Post molds could also help archeologists determine the shape of any bastions which projected from the fort walls. The bastions would have protected soldiers and allowed them to fire their rifles down along the sides of the fort at any approaching enemies. The old drawing researchers think represents Fort Congaree shows two bastions at the corners furthest from the creek. The illustration also shows a triangular bastion jutting from the fort's west side next to the entrance gate.

Michie and his crew did not explore ground inside the site where the fort once stood. When the Archeological Park opens, scientists will study this area, probably by excavating large blocks twenty feet square. Typically, researchers divide these blocks into squares, each about a yard on one side, so they can accurately pinpoint the locations of any artifacts they uncover. Any artifacts revealed and their locations could suggest how a particular spot in the fort was used. For example, if archeologists find an area with beads and gun flints, this could denote where a building possibly once stood housing trade goods. If they uncover many clay pot pieces and animal bones, they may be digging in a former kitchen. An area with dice, coins and smoking pipes could represent a former barracks.

Researchers will also look for post molds indicating foundation poles. Some scientists suspect that fort buildings had dirt floors, but more research is required to make more definitive conclusions about structures inside the fort. Scientists suspect builders constructed fireplaces and chimneys with daub, a mixture of clay and plant fibers. Excavations may uncover pieces of daub, which will help determine the layout of buildings, the locations of fireplaces, and where cooking likely occurred.

Each new discovery will help scientists create a detailed picture of how the inside of the fort appeared and what life was like for the people who lived there. Archeological Park managers will use this information to create a replica of the fort or model the fort's appearance on a computer so modern visitors can view what the scientists have learned.

Because the fort's occupants probably threw some trash into Congaree Creek, the proposed park will also be a promising place to conduct underwater studies. Archeologists will strap on scuba gear and comb the creek bottom for more clues about frontier life.

Excavations in the Archeological Park will also perhaps reveal what remains of the Congaree Indian village which once stood in the area before the fort was built. Scientific studies will also look for remnants of camps built by Cherokee and Catawba Indians who visited Fort Congaree to trade. Some scientists think these Indians sometimes stayed for months at a time just outside the fort.

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ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

In the 1730s, about a decade after Fort Congaree was abandoned, more settlers moved to the area, spurred by government policy. Robert Johnson, the first South Carolina governor appointed by the King of England after the Proprietors lost

control, established nine townships. These were huge swaths of territory on the colony's outskirts. The colonial government then offered immigrants free land in these townships. The government provided other financial incentives to encourage immigration, including a guarantee of no land taxes (called quit rents) for ten years.

Congaree Creek flowed through Saxe Gotha Township. To the north of the creek, along the Congaree River, a town developed that was also called Saxe Gotha. The town's location is not inside the proposed Archeological Park, but the sites of some old outlying farms are. Immigrants received grants of lots within the town, as well as fifty acres per family member outside town, places where they could raise crops, according to researcher Natalie Adams. A letter written in 1735 by Jacob Gallman, a Swiss immigrant, captures the excitement of the new residents:

"We were given an exceedingly beautiful place only half an hour from the town. The whole farm is garden-like ground. It is a good four-and-a-half hundred acres in one piece, all black-brown earth, nary a rock, all even land, wheels need no brakes....Carolina lies under the sun which makes it very warm. The land is real good and fertile....You fell the trees, then you begin to till and sow corn....They do not have fences here, only where things are planted, as everything is left to itself. Cattle, horses and pigs are left to roam."

Saxe Gotha "was settled by German speaking Protestants from its onset," writes archeologist Dan Elliott. "It was a very important non-British part of the Carolina colony."

Archeologist Natalie Adams uncovered pieces of a distinctive pottery with buff-colored paste at the location of Saxe Gotha town and at an outlying area near the proposed park. Similar pottery pieces show up at remains of a German settlement in Georgia called New Ebenezer. These may represent "a potting tradition unique to" Swiss German towns, Adams writes, adding she looks "forward to the results of future excavations" into Saxe Gotha's outlying areas. Researchers in the Archeological Park may find remnants of farm houses and mills built by the German-speaking settlers and will conduct more study into the lives of these immigrants.

Residents of Saxe Gotha, despite the fertile soil and ideal growing conditions, had far from an easy existence. They apparently were afflicted both by disease and flooding, according to researcher James Michie. Some settlers gave up the struggle and moved further south in the 1750s to a new community they called St. John's. They built this small town near the former location of Fort Congaree, which had disappeared many years before.

But St. John's did not flourish either. Within a generation, most residents had abandoned the community, and it soon became one of South Carolina's ghost towns. Archeologists think they have found remnants of St. John's, including at least two house sites, within the proposed Archeological Park.

When the park opens, scientists will conduct more research to learn about this forgotten frontier town and its residents.

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6 – REBELS ATTACK

In the midst of the Revolutionary War, the British surrounded, then took control of Charleston, South Carolina in the spring of 1780. General Benjamin Lincoln, commander of a Continental Army of 5,500 soldiers, surrendered his force in a crushing blow to those in South Carolina who had revolted against Great Britain, then the world's most powerful nation. The defeat also appeared devastating to the broader effort to free all thirteen North American colonies from British control. With the fall of Charleston, it seemed as if rebellion in all of South Carolina, Georgia, and perhaps North Carolina would soon be squashed.

The British appeared magnanimous to the vanquished at first, offering parole to South Carolina rebels who agreed to lay down their weapons and resume civilian life. Many accepted the offer, but the British soon made significant blunders that turned a relatively complacent countryside into a hornet's nest of resistance. They stoked resentment by rescinding the paroles and demanding that South Carolina residents swear allegiance to the British king. Then, adding insult to injury, they also demanded that the rebels be willing to take up arms to defend British rule in the colony. Some British military leaders became increasingly brutal in their attempts to stamp out all resistance. They sought to frighten and intimidate the populace and began confiscating property of accused revolutionaries. Destructive rampages against civilians also occurred.

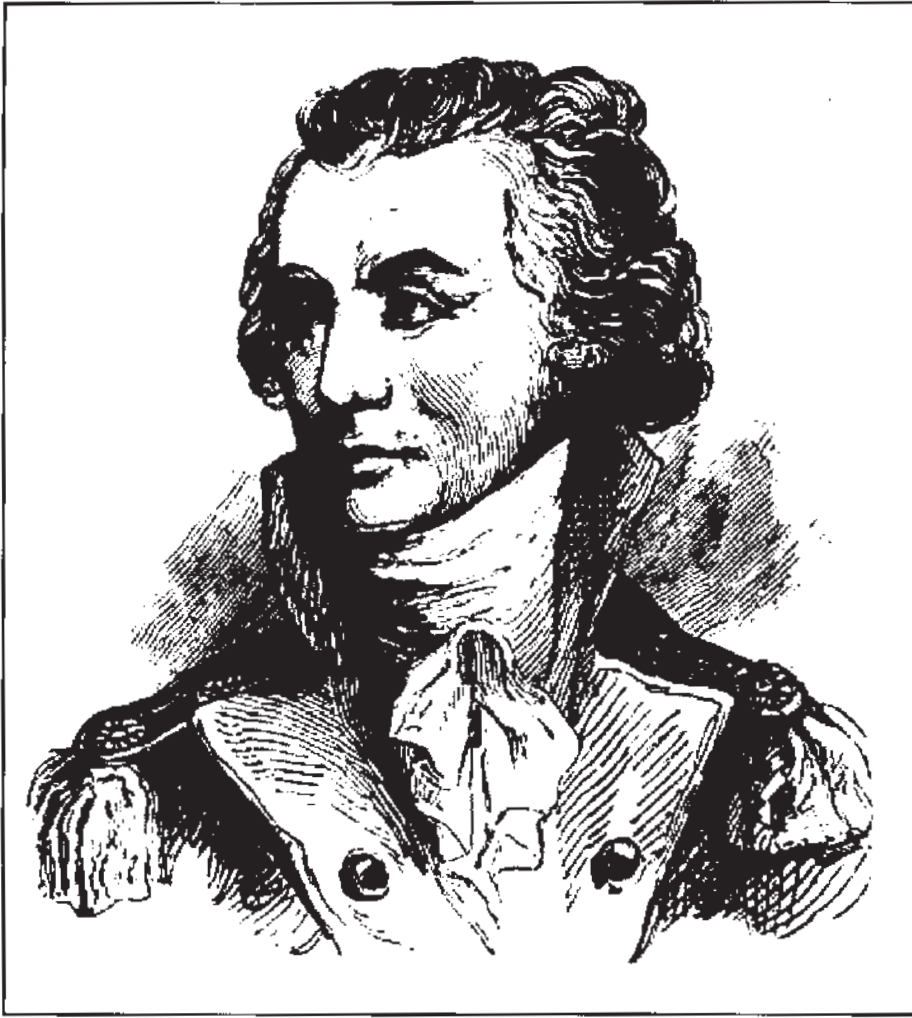
The campaign to conquer all of South Carolina began logically enough. Soon after the fall of Charleston, the British military command dispatched armies into the rest of the colony. These armies were not large by today's standards, consisting of "detachments of a few hundred" soldiers, according to Fritz Hamer, historian with

the South Carolina State Museum. In all of South Carolina, there were fewer than 5,000 British troops, but they faced virtually no organized resistance.

Lord Charles Cornwallis led the most significant force marching into South Carolina's back country. Educated at Oxford, Cornwallis had a razor sharp mind and an encyclopedic knowledge of all things military. Out in front of his superbly-disciplined, red-coated infantry, rode the dragoons, the hard-charging cavalry. Banastre "Ban" Tarleton commanded the dragoons. Tarleton, also an Oxford graduate, had forsaken a promising law career to join the military and proved to be one of Britain's most skilled and feared officers. Handsome and witty, Tarleton also became renown for courage and cruelty.

Tarleton's dragoons wore green jackets, which became emblematic of terror for the colonists. As the dragoons swept north, they hunted down suspected revolutionaries and plundered their homes. Panic spread from neighbor to neighbor as residents raced to escape, taking time, when they could, to warn one another of the danger. Thomas Sumter, at home on his plantation near the Santee River, received such a warning about the British onslaught shortly before the dragoons arrived. Buttoning on an old military uniform, Sumter bid his wife and teenage son a hurried goodbye, then galloped away, accompanied by his slave named Tom.

Earlier in the war, Sumter had served as a rebel officer and participated in a mostly fruitless campaign in south Georgia. Sick from malaria and frustrated by bickering among incompetent commanders, Sumter quit the military and resumed the quiet life of a well-to-do planter. While he continued to dabble in politics, serving in South Carolina's legislature, Sumter seemed to have lost



Thomas Sumter, nicknamed the "Gamecock," was a well-to-do landowner who became the leader of South Carolina militia fighting the British during the Revolutionary War. United States Forest Service

his fervor for military combat. But as Sumter rode north to evade British dragoons and news reached him about what the British were doing to his countrymen, his attitude changed, a shift that would affect the course of the fledgling nation.

When Tarleton's dragoons invaded Sumter's plantation, they stormed through the residence and nearby buildings, knocking over prized possessions and breaking anything fragile in their way. They emptied the storage sheds, hauling away all of the food and supplies.

Sumter's wife, the former Mary Cantey Jame-

son, watched helplessly as the British ransacked her property. Left an invalid by infantile paralysis, she defiantly refused to answer questions about her husband's whereabouts. Soldiers picked up her chair and carried it out into the front yard where she sat watching as the dragoons stormed through her house, then set it afire. Finally, as the soldiers saddled up to leave, one soft-hearted dragoon, according to historian Robert Bass, placed a ham beneath Mary Sumter's chair. Then the dragoons rode away, continuing their drive to the north, leaving behind a determined and implacable foe in Thomas Sumter.

At a time when many rebels lost nerve and hope, Sumter vowed he would never submit to British rule. He fled into swamps near the North Carolina border and onto lands held by the Catawba Indians.

There he began plotting his revenge. He would soon figure prominently in fighting that erupted near Congaree Creek.

As Sumter gathered recruits, his efforts were boosted by his nemesis Banastre Tarleton. Tarleton's more than 200 dragoons galloped north, barely halting for food or rest, traveling some 150 miles in a little more than two days. They soon caught up with a rebel army of Virginians trying to flee the colony.

Despite the exhaustion of his troops, Tarleton demonstrated a determined boldness. On May 29,

1780, he demanded that some 400 Virginians surrender, even though they significantly outnumbered the British. Rebel Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Buford, perhaps suspecting he had the advantage, replied, "I reject your proposals and shall defend myself to the last extremity." Tarleton ordered a charge.

The Virginians held their fire until the British horsemen were almost upon them. Then the rebel muskets exploded in a deafening barrage. The deadly gunfire, however, did not break the British momentum. Horses thundered forward, the British riders charging into the midst of their foes before they had a chance to reload their cumbersome weapons. The dragoons slashed down with long, razor-sharp sabers, tearing into the rebels who were on foot.

The battle became a massacre. Rebel soldiers crumpled to the earth. Others began fleeing while still others threw down their rifles, held up their hands and yelled, "Quarter!" the well-known term indicating surrender and a plea for mercy. One rebel soldier waved a white flag.

What happened next is a point of contention among historians who argue whether Tarleton deserves blame for the ensuing slaughter. There is no doubt, however, that confusion reigned. Tarleton's horse was shot and keeled over, pinning the British commander to the ground and perhaps knocking him momentarily unconscious.

Seeing their commander spilled on the ground and presuming he had been killed, some British troops continued fighting and were caught up in a frenzy. This led some rebel soldiers to pick up their weapons and reload, actions that reinvigorated the British attack even more. The dragoons slashed with their sabers at kneeling patriots holding their hands in the air while they pleaded for quarter and also struck at the wounded lying on the ground.

Major Patrick Ferguson, a Scottish officer in Tarleton's force, was so outraged by the actions of Tarleton's dragoons that he had to be restrained to stop him from shooting them,

according to historian Lewis Jones. Tarleton blamed the wanton killing on "a vindictive asperity not easily restrained." In his official written report, he coldly concluded, "They [the rebels] refused my terms. I have cut 170 off's and men to pieces." The British lost five soldiers killed and 12 wounded.

Andrew Jackson, a boy of thirteen, helped tend the wounded rebels after the battle, his anger rising as he went from man to man. With his brother Robert, he soon joined Sumter in the swamps, his first step in a military career that would eventually lead him to a successful run for the White House. Many others were also infuriated by the Tarleton force's actions and responded to Sumter's call to arms. Soon a ragtag force of determined frontiersmen elected Sumter their leader and brigadier general. Sumter, stern, taciturn and fierce, spoke to his assembled troops, "Our interests and fates are identical. With me as with you, it is liberty or death." The militia already had its battle cry, "Tarleton's Quarter."

The tone was set for a bitter struggle pitting neighbor against neighbor, militia against militia. Atrocities occurred on both sides. Tories, who were colonists loyal to Britain, stole livestock, burned houses, tortured and murdered. The revolutionaries responded in kind.

The British military reacted to the rebels' guerrilla tactics by clamping down on and brutalizing the civilian population. British officers, even more than in their initial campaign, increasingly condoned plundering, house burnings, torture and prisoner executions. In some instances, not even women and children were spared from the violence. Had the British been conducting their campaigns in modern times, international war crime trials would have been justified, according to historian Walter Edgar.

Another tactic the British used to control the countryside was to seize control of established forts in the back country and to build new ones in strategic locations. Fort Granby, located just north of the proposed Archeological Park, was

one of the new British bastions. This war-time fort would become pivotal in the struggle for control of the colony's center.

§ § §

UNUSUAL TRAINING

Thomas Sumter would lead the first assault on Fort Granby, but before he could attack he had to prepare his militia. He undertook the task in an unconventional approach. The militia leader did not emphasize close-order drills and discipline, the usual staples of military training. Instead he encouraged his frontiersmen to participate in vigorous exercise and athletic contests, according to historian Robert Bass. The soldiers swam, ran and jumped, building physical conditioning, individual initiative and *esprit de corps*.

Sumter, dressed in his blue uniform, trimmed in red with gold shoulder epaulettes, reminded two blacksmiths who saw him of a fighting rooster when he was in North Carolina to buy arms. According to historian Bass, the blacksmiths were impressed with Sumter's resolve to battle the overwhelmingly superior number of British forces and began calling him "the Gamecock." The nickname stuck, and was ultimately repeated by friend and foe alike.

Sumter's soldiers soon began launching guerilla raids against small groups of British troops, supply trains, and the hated loyalists. The militia also won victories against larger forces, but their record in major battles was spotty, and they experienced significant setbacks. For their part, the British high command at first was arrogantly confident. Cornwallis wrote in early summer 1780 that he had "put an end to all resistance in South Carolina." Soon, however, Sumter and his unconventional force became a major irritant. The British went to great lengths to eliminate the "Gamecock," offering higher and higher rewards for his capture and designating special squads to assassinate him.

Even when surprised or defeated, however, Sumter proved elusive and resilient. Wounded in one battle, he carried on despite having a musket ball in his thigh. On another occasion, British troops stormed his camp on a frosty night, catching Sumter asleep. As enemy soldiers moved toward the front of his tent, Sumter slithered out the back and began running. Wearing only undergarments, he sprinted through a briar patch in bare feet. While they searched for him, Sumter somehow managed to cling to a ledge and ultimately escaped.

In November 1780, Sumter led his militia of about one thousand men east of the Broad River. Cornwallis sent Tarleton to hunt him down. Now commanding an army of mounted infantry, foot soldiers, and artillery, as well as dragoons, Tarleton advanced into the Dutch Forks, an area between the Broad and Saluda Rivers northwest of present-day Columbia.

Eager to confront Sumter's militia, Tarleton left most of his army behind, ordering them to catch up, while he raced ahead with 270 mounted infantry and dragoons. After riding hard all day, Tarleton and his small force arrived at the foot of the high ground that Sumter had chosen for his defense above the Tyger River on the William Blackstock Plantation.

A cold drizzle fell, as Tarleton deployed his troops on hill tops late in the afternoon of November 20, 1780. He could see Sumter's rebel soldiers outnumbered his own force and held what Tarleton conceded was "unapproachable" high ground. Tarleton decided to stall, choosing to avoid a major battle until the rest of his army arrived. At the same time, he wanted to keep Sumter's rebels from slipping away as they had done so often.

As he faced the rebel militia, Tarleton's right side consisted of 80 red-coated infantrymen. He ordered them to dismount to make them a more formidable defensive force. The British left side consisted of the rest of Tarleton's soldiers, the

dragoons. Tarleton hoped the Americans would remain in place, but what happened differed considerably. Sumter was tipped off by one of his many spies, in this case, a woman, Mrs. Mary Dillard. She rode six miles to the rebel camp to tell Sumter that Tarleton had no artillery and few infantry soldiers with him. Sumter, suspecting that the rest of Tarleton's army could not reach him before nightfall, decided to attack.

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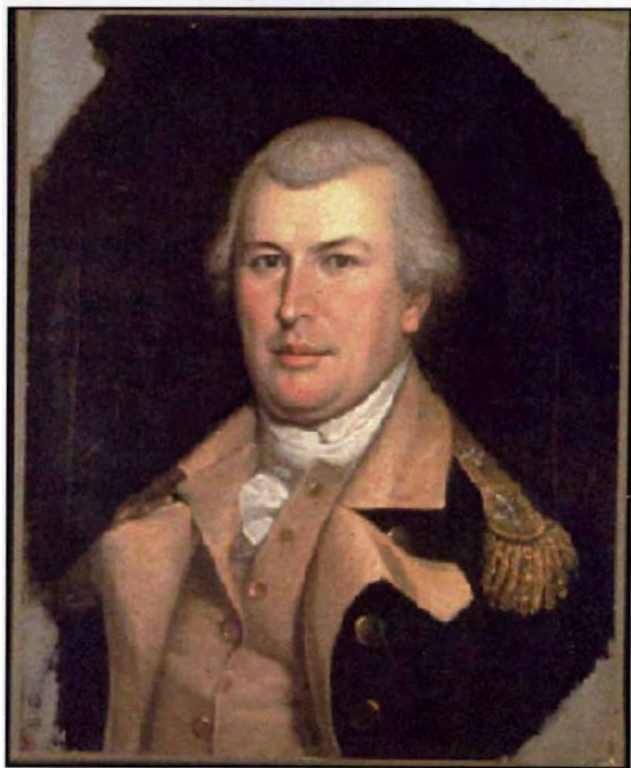
SUMTER ATTACKS

He sent 400 militia men streaming down an open field and then up a hill to confront the British infantry. The militia men were so nervous that they fired their muskets too soon when they were still well out of range. Their gunshots caused no damage and their haste to shoot left them vulnerable to their foes.

A British officer, Lieutenant John Money, spotting an opportunity, ordered the infantry to charge the rebels as they rushed to reload. The militia men, seeing the red-coated British regulars running toward them with raised bayonets, began retreating. The British continued their pursuit, racing within range of a farm house and other log buildings where more rebel militia were hiding. Suddenly, muskets jutted out through every available opening and exploded with gunfire and smoke. British soldiers, caught in mid stride, tumbled to the ground, wounded or dead. The British commander, John Money, was among those seriously wounded.

On the other side of the battlefield, Sumter's mounted militia were attacking the dreaded British dragoons. Rebel musket fire knocked 20 dragoons from their saddles, but the British reformed and drove Sumter's soldiers back.

Tarleton, seeing that his dismounted infantry was pinned down, disorganized and in grave danger, led a number of dragoons in a charge at the heart of rebel defenses. Out in front, Tarleton ignored a blizzard of bullets. As



Nathanael Greene was one of George Washington's most trusted officers in the Continental Army. Washington picked him as his own replacement if he should ever become incapacitated. National park Service

he spurred his horse forward, Tarleton spotted his fellow officer, John Money, lying wounded on the ground. Tarleton reined his horse to a halt, dismounted and bent down to aid the lieutenant, lifting him up onto the saddle and climbing on behind him.

His dragoons faced a steady barrage of gunfire from the rebel militia, who were crouched behind a fence and trees and inside the log buildings. The dragoon charge, however, reinvigorated Tarleton's infantry and helped stabilize the British position. Only the coming of darkness eventually enveloping the battlefield forced an end to the fighting. Tarleton had suffered his first military defeat.

The British lost 92 killed and 76 soldiers wounded in the battle, according to historian Walter Edgar. British officer John Money was

among those who eventually died from his wounds. The rebel militia losses were much fewer with only three soldiers killed. However, the rebels also experienced a stunning blow. During the battle, as drizzle continued to fall, Sumter rode across the battlefield with a few aides. A small knot of British infantrymen spotted unfamiliar horsemen approaching, turned and fired. Sumter shifted in his saddle at the last moment, perhaps saving his life as a musket blast slammed into his side. The projectile missed his heart, but plunged deep into his right shoulder, nicked his backbone, and came to rest in his left shoulder. Historian Robert Bass writes that Sumter tried to conceal the severity of his wounds. Only the sound of his blood dripping on dry leaves alerted a fellow officer of how seriously the general was hurt.

That night, followers sneaked Sumter away from the battlefield on a crude litter of cow hide stretched between two poles and rigged between two horses. A cold rain continued to fall. Sumter's militia built campfires that burned through much of the night, but left them unattended. The rebel soldiers split up, then vanished into the darkness.

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FORT GRANBY

Nathanael Greene was another figure important in the story of Congaree Creek. Greene arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina in December 1780 to command the southern Continental Army. He was one of General George Washington's most trusted lieutenants and, according to historian Joseph Ellis, the officer Washington chose to replace him if he were disabled or killed.

Greene was known as the "Fighting Quaker." Quakers generally were pacifists, but in spite of his religion, Greene joined the military in support of the revolution and was expelled by the Quakers for his decision.

Historian Tom Elmore points out that Greene had no formal military training, but learned quickly.

"He [Greene] came to us the...most untutored being I ever met," according to General Henry Knox, Washington's chief of artillery, "but in less than twelve months he was equal to any General officer in the army, and very superior to most of them."

Greene's involvement in Rhode Island politics, as well as his intelligence, propelled him to high military rank. He also proved to be a brave and capable warrior in Washington-led campaigns at Trenton, Brandywine, and elsewhere. He was with Washington during the hard winter at Valley Forge in Pennsylvania and became his quartermaster general, in charge of securing supplies for the Continental Army, while still commanding troops in the field.

Greene was thoroughly schooled in Washington's viewpoints, including Washington's misgivings about the capability of the militia. Often poorly disciplined, most militia members were extremely independent. "To expect then the same service from raw and undisciplined recruits as from veteran soldiers," Washington wrote, "is to expect what never did, and perhaps never will happen."

In South Carolina, Greene had to deal with militiamen who often served only 60 days, and then returned home. Greene, a firm adherent for traditional drilling and stringent discipline, also had to accept Sumter's more relaxed approach toward the militia.

Sumter, withdrawn and austere, was perhaps bound to clash with the affable Greene, who was prone to lecture his subordinates on proper behavior. Greene also expected Sumter, and all militia leaders, to carry out his orders promptly because he considered the militia to be subservient to Continental troops. This was an inherent conflict because Sumter prized the militia's independence. More than once, Sumter paid little heed to what Greene wanted. Even so, the two

developed an uneasy, but stunningly successful cooperation. Greene overcame his prejudice against the militia and developed a strategy dependent on them. Increasingly he used diplomacy and flattery with Sumter and other militia leaders, often requesting their cooperation rather than demanding it.

Greene controlled some 1,400 troops, although only about 800 were well-equipped regulars. Nearby, Cornwallis led some 4,000 soldiers. To disrupt this British advantage, Greene acted boldly, splitting his forces, sending General Daniel Morgan and a thousand sol-

flags fluttered. The two sides fired at each other at close range.

Morgan used the militia to take advantage of Tarleton's characteristic aggressiveness. After the initial exchange of gunshots, the militia feigned panic and fled. Tarleton's troops followed, and in their rash pursuit, ran smack into Morgan's well-trained Continental soldiers. Morgan, at the precise right moment, also sent in his cavalry, and the British army suffered a devastating defeat, Tarleton's second setback in a month.

Nathanael Greene had attained sufficient



The British were a formidable force against the more loosely trained American revolutionaries. Artist Martin Pate depicts the British Army on the march in South Carolina. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

diers west into northern South Carolina. In a countermove, Cornwallis also divided his army, dispatching Tarleton and about 1,150 infantry and dragoons to shadow Morgan.

Marching with Morgan was much of Sumter's militia, although Sumter was not with them. He was convalescing from battle wounds so painful that he could barely move his arms.

Morgan and Tarleton's armies collided on January 17, 1781 on fields used by frontier families to corral cattle. Called the Battle of Cowpens, the clash was the sort favored by regular armies, with troops marching in orderly columns to face one another as drums beat and

confidence to consider deep strikes into South Carolina. As part of his planning, he met with Sumter, who had recovered enough to resume active command, although he was still greatly hobbled by injuries.

Sumter outlined an audacious strategy. He would launch a lightning quick raid with his militia against Fort Granby near the Congaree River. The element of surprise would be on his side, he argued.

The British military had built Fort Granby on high ground at an important trading post which had existed since 1765. The prominent location was near the intersection of an important wagon

trail to Augusta, Georgia and the Cherokee Trail, which led north into Indian territory. The Cherokee Trail eventually became known locally as Old State Road.

The British military seized the trading post because of its excellent location and vantage point above the Congaree River, according to Leo Redmond, director of the Cayce Historical Museum. The trading post, and the subsequent fort, assumed greater importance because of being positioned next to a major river crossing known as Friday's Ferry, named for the original owner Martin Fridig. The ferry likely consisted of a flat boat capable of carrying a horse-drawn wagon and passengers.

The village of Granby sprang up near the ferry and the trading post, attracting settlers, many of whom moved north from the old town of Saxe Gotha, which was plagued by flooding and disease. By the time of the Revolutionary War, Granby had become an important commercial crossroads and a way station for weary travelers. The city of Columbia, which one day would thrive across the river, did not yet exist.

To establish Fort Granby, the British built a palisade fence around several buildings, including the large two-story structure built as a trading post by James Chesnut and Joseph Kershaw which became fort headquarters. (Today, the city of Cayce celebrates early history at the Cayce Historical Museum, an exact replica of the original 17-room building.)

At Fort Granby, troops kept constant watch, patrolling ramparts behind the stockade fence. Altogether some 300 British troops and loyalist militia were stationed at the fort with weaponry that included at least two cannons, making this a formidable outpost. To further protect the fort, soldiers dug deep dry moats outside the palisade fence.

Sumter thought he could capture the fort quickly, then move south to attack other British outposts. Greene did not think much of Sumter's plans and said so, according to historian Robert

Bass. But Sumter was undeterred and called out his militia anyway. On February 16, 1781, he set out with 280 armed men on a long ride south to Fort Granby. Allowing themselves little time to rest, the militia rode hard, covering some 90 miles. At about four in the morning on February 18, Sumter's men reached the Congaree River. Just before dawn, they forded the river and attacked Fort Granby in a frontal assault. But instead of catching the British and loyalists off guard, they came under heavy fire, forcing Sumter's men to retreat. Soldiers inside the fort, commanded by Major Andrew Maxwell, had been tipped off by a spy about Sumter's intentions. They had securely boarded the gates and were armed and alert when the militia assaulted.

Sumter regrouped his men and resumed the attack, but this time using cover. The militia shielded themselves behind large rolls of dried tobacco leaves which they pushed in front of them as they advanced. When they were within range of the fort, they hastily built additional barriers by piling logs atop each other. Behind these shields the militia kept up steady gunfire at the fort, but the soldiers inside showed no signs of yielding control.

§ § §

THE FIRST SIEGE

The militia settled into a siege, intending to outlast the British. Sumter maintained patrols along Old State Road and placed guards to control access to Friday's Ferry, the main route across the river. His militia also kept an eye on the Congaree River to insure that no British supplies came anywhere near Fort Granby.

The siege tactics might have worked if they could have been kept in force long enough, but Sumter had little time. He was deep in enemy territory in an area where much of the population supported the British. Hostile militias and British armies were nearby, already on the move to relieve the beleaguered troops of Fort Granby.

With pressures building on them to succeed, Sumter and his men built a tower from wooden fence rails where sharpshooters could position themselves to shoot down into Fort Granby, the first time such a strategy was used in South Carolina. Still, the British refused to surrender. Sumter's militia was beginning to run short of ammunition.

Sumter's plans seemed to be falling apart as an army of Irish soldiers commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Welbore Ellis Doyle swept toward the outpost. On their march, the army sealed off all major passageways across the Congaree and the Broad Rivers because they expected Sumter to flee north in that direction toward his usual hiding places. With the trap set, the Irish troops closed in.

Sumter, however, slipped out of the tightening noose by doing the unexpected – he broke off the siege of Fort Granby and headed south. He and his militia galloped down Old State Road, passing through an area which will be included in the proposed Archeological Park. The rebels kept on going, heading deeper into territory thought to be under British control.

The militia rode thirty-five miles on the morning of February 21, 1781, reaching the vicinity where the Congaree and Wateree Rivers meet. Sumter then boldly attacked another fort, a stockade built around a house at Belleville Plantation.

§ § §

SUMTER ESCAPES

Again, Sumter's men sealed off access to the fort and captured all boats on the nearby Congaree River. Through much of the rest of the afternoon Sumter's militia exchanged scattered gunfire with troops inside the fort. Then the militia charged the stockade. Sumter's men scaled the walls and reached the ramparts, but were thrown back by determined defenders. Sumter ordered his troops to sling burning

wood over the stockade and onto the house, but every time the flames ignited the structure, British soldiers doused them with water. Thick smoke curled across the fort walls, but the house remained intact and the garrison refused to surrender.

Sumter left part of his militia to maintain the siege, then pulled back the core of his force. A British supply train consisting of twenty wagons and fifty British guards rumbled toward them. Part of Sumter's militia attacked. The British soldiers put up a spirited defense, getting off seven rounds of musket fire, according to historian Robert Bass. The battle seemed to be at a standstill when additional rebel militia charged on horseback.

Seeing they were about to be overwhelmed, the British raised a white flag, but the rebel militia ignored the sign of surrender. Galloping directly toward the now helpless British, the rebels fired, killing seven British soldiers and wounding seven more. The incident was another bitter episode in a war during which both sides were angrily accusing the other of brutality and ignoring the rules of combat.

Soon after, Sumter returned with his entire force to try to subdue the fort at Belleville Plantation, but another British army was bearing down on him. The 64th Regiment, consisting of veteran infantry, moved rapidly south from Camden, accompanied by dragoons on horseback and at least one mobile cannon. This dangerous British force suddenly appeared late one afternoon within sight of the Belleville fort. The defenders inside the bastion began celebrating — jumping, shouting, singing, and firing their weapons into the air.

Despite the jubilation of their foes, Sumter's militia did not panic. He turned his men to face this new threat and arranged them into tight battle formations. The British commander, deciding he was not ready for combat, ordered a retreat. His force backed up about four miles.

Sumter's bold gambit had bought his troops

some time, but he knew the militia was in an untenable position. Once again, his troops had to flee, and once more Sumter headed south. There were now two separate regiments of British troops closing in on the rebels. There were also Hessians, hired German soldiers, and a number of armed loyalists in hot pursuit. As Sumter's men rushed south, they moved farther and farther away from their usual hiding places near North Carolina. Ahead lay the road to Charleston, which was about sixty miles away. The city was a British stronghold, bristling with troops.

Sumter had to change directions. He could try to swing right and attempt to sweep far to the west around the major British outpost at Ninety Six. Or he could turn to the east and attempt to cross the Santee River, which was at or near flood stage. Sumter chose the latter course, choosing to face the rampaging river. South of the town of Eutaw Springs, he brought his troops to a halt on a high bluff overlooking the surging brown waters. His soldiers began scouring the banks, looking for some way to get across. They knew they had little time before the British closed in on them.

Some soldiers discovered a cypress-wood canoe that was sturdy enough, but quite small. Only four men could fit in the vessel at a time, with three soldiers making the crossing and a fourth to paddle the boat back, according to historian Robert Bass.

§ § §

PERILOUS CROSSINGS

Sumter ordered his men to start fording the river. The small craft bobbed and dipped in the swift currents and seemed to take forever get-

ting to the other side. The men's horses swam near the craft, straining against the current. A round trip required a half hour, an agonizingly slow passage for each group of soldiers. By nightfall, at least half of Sumter's militia still had not made the crossing. These soldiers were now especially vulnerable if the British attacked. Dawn arrived, however, with still no sign of the British army. The militia continued the feverish crossings. Finally, everyone was safely across the water. Sumter staged another quick attack on a British fort, then made his way to the house where his invalid wife and teenage son were staying. Sumter quickly explained that they needed to ride with him to flee the danger.

Soldiers strapped a mattress across a horse to serve as a soft saddle for Mary Sumter and a black slave rode behind her to help keep her on the horse. The militia rode hard across the pine tree barrens in central South Carolina, with the British army scouring the countryside searching for them.

Now down to 200 soldiers, because of battle losses and desertions, the militia rode all day, covering some forty miles. Sumter held the reins of his horse in one hand and leaned back with his painfully stiff right hand to hold the reins of his wife's horse.

Finally, the militia reached the safe haven of the wilderness they knew so well in the northern part of the state, but not before charging loyalist militia and driving them into a swamp.

The first phase of the struggle for forts in the central part of the colony was ending. After three weeks of campaigning, Sumter had failed to dislodge the British and their sympathizers from Fort Granby, or from any other stockades. But Sumter had survived and would try again.

§ § §

7 – THE FORT FALLS

General Charles Cornwallis's British army pursued Nathanael Greene's Continental soldiers across North Carolina, with Greene managing to keep his men just out of reach in the early Spring of 1781. He willingly relinquished territory while luring the British far from their supply depots on the coast. Greene sought to exhaust the British in long marches in unfamiliar territory while he waited until his own troops were ready for battle. During this deadly cat and mouse game, according to historian Walter Edgar, both armies sometimes covered as many as thirty miles a day.

Finally, Greene chose ground to his liking at Guilford's Courthouse where he waited with some 4,000 soldiers for the British to attack. The British army, consisting of some 2,400 troops, made up for its smaller size with military prowess. The British began the battle by shelling the rebel army with artillery. Cornwallis then marched his infantry straight at Greene's forces. The British soldiers in their snappy red coats looked almost too well attired for the nasty business of warfare, but their razor-sharp bayonets and precise formations gave hint they were an efficient killing machine. When the British were within range of the rebels, each side fired. Men dropped to the ground, wounded or dead. Other soldiers behind the first lines fired the next round. Smoke drifted across the battlefield as more soldiers crumpled to the ground.

Some rebel troops, overcome by fear, ran. These were primarily militia, untrained for the rigors of set formation fighting. Most soldiers on both sides, however, stood their ground, displaying discipline and courage. When they ultimately engaged in hand-to-hand combat, according to historian Henry Wiencek, Cornwallis ordered cannons fired into the grappling mob, despite

objections from his own senior officers. In the ensuing chaos, the Continental Army's right flank began to buckle. Then the entire rebel force began retreating, although there was little panic. Greene and his lieutenants skillfully shepherded their troops so that they departed in fairly good order.



Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton, painted by John Trumbull, was a controversial figure during the American Revolution because of his harsh battle tactics toward the rebels. National Park Service

When the fighting stopped, the British controlled the battlefield and called themselves victors. Their assessment, however, came at a heavy cost. Dead and dying soldiers littered the grounds. Many of the British who remained standing were exhausted, stunned by the ferocity

they had experienced from their foes. As Cornwallis later wrote, "I never saw such fighting since God made me."

Nearly one-fourth of Cornwallis's soldiers, more than 500 men, were killed or wounded in the battle. While such a loss would be considerable for any army, the number was especially significant for the British, because replacements would have to sail from England in the long voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Cornwallis now could no longer safely pursue Greene's Continentals without risking serious defeat. He ordered his troops to march toward the coast and Wilmington, North Carolina, a secure British stronghold where they could obtain fresh supplies, treat their wounds and reassess strategy.

The British departure left Greene, who suffered about half the casualties as the British, in control of central North Carolina. But Greene also faced a hard decision about where to find food for his men. The two armies had stripped bare North Carolina's pine-studded landscape of any provisions, with hungry troops butchering farmers' livestock and raiding their crops.

§ § §

A MESSAGE ARRIVES

A messenger galloped into Greene's camp. The rider, Captain Wade Hampton (whose grandson would distinguish himself in the Civil War as one of Robert E. Lee's top Confederate lieutenants), had traveled far from the south, dispatched by General Thomas Sumter. Sumter, still hobbled by a wounded shoulder and right hand, was unable to write lengthy accounts about his plans or his recent campaign, so he sent Hampton to speak for him.

Sumter had managed to write a short introductory note to Greene, in which he described Hampton. The captain, he wrote, was "a valuable and intelligent officer...on whose information you may rely — and to whom you may communicate

with safety. He is fully acquainted with my late operations and partly with my designs in [the] future."

While there is no detailed account of what Hampton verbally reported to Greene, he no doubt recounted Sumter's attacks on Fort Granby and other British bastions, which his force had almost toppled. Hampton must have also stressed that the rebels could have captured all the forts, if only they had just one cannon, because soon after, Greene wrote Sumter with a pledge that he would send a field piece as soon as possible.

Greene also altered his own strategy. Once opposed to the idea, he now encouraged the militia to attack Fort Granby and other small forts. Greene further decided, according to historian Walter Edgar, to abandon North Carolina altogether. In a letter to General George Washington, Greene wrote that he was "determined to carry the war immediately into South Carolina."

Greene planned to use his Continentals to attack the British bastions at Camden and Ninety Six, while Sumter's militia would simultaneously move south along the Congaree River, attacking various British forts. Meanwhile, Francis Marion, known as the "Swamp Fox," would lead his militia against British forts further south along the Santee River and then move north.

Marion, as his nickname suggests, was already something of a legend among the rebel forces. Standing less than five-feet tall, he was physically unimposing, yet commanded attention with his determination, toughness, and resourcefulness. He slept on the ground with his men and shared the same meager food, often nothing more than a few sweet potatoes. When no fresh water was available, he drank from the fetid swamp, mixing in vinegar to create a toxic-tasting liquid that he hoped would ward off any diseases lurking in the water.

Marion had spent many hours as a child exploring the swamps near Georgetown on the

South Carolina coast and knew the territory well. While still a young man, he proved his courage in battles against the Indians and learned from them the guerilla fighting tactics which he would eventually use with great success against the British. Early in the Revolutionary War, he fought in key battles in Georgia and South Carolina. He narrowly escaped capture in 1780 when he fell from a second-story porch and had to leave Charleston to recuperate from an injured ankle shortly before the British captured the city. This minor accident ultimately helped shape colonial history.

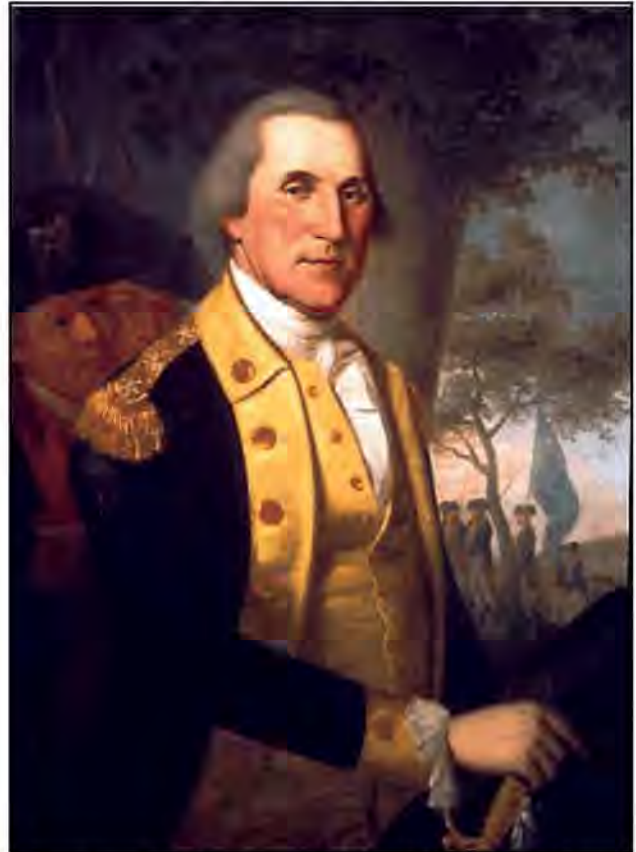
Like Sumter, Marion continued to wage war against the British after Charleston's surrender when the rebel cause seemed hopeless. With a small band of militia, sometimes consisting only of some twenty men, while at other times numbering as many as 200, Marion perfected hit-and-run raids that harassed supply trains and hemmed in large numbers of British troops. Frequently riding all night before launching dawn attacks, Marion's force would abruptly vanish like ghosts into swampy hideouts, repeatedly baffling foes. Some of his ragtag militia did not even own guns, fighting instead with crude swords fashioned from saw-mill blades, according to historians Kay Cornelius and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Despite their prowess, the "Swamp Fox" and Sumter were both hampered in their military campaigns because they had only part-time armies consisting of militia members who served briefly when danger was apparent, then left to protect their families and homes and to tend their farms.

Colonial law required militia members to serve only sixty days, and even this rule was not strictly enforced. Sumter proposed remedying the situation by providing a bonus for those willing to stay longer with their military units. He would give slaves to soldiers who agreed to serve ten months, with the captives taken from British Loyalists. He would award one "mature" slave (defined as being between ten and forty years old) to any private enlisting for the longer duration,

with more slaves offered to higher ranking soldiers. The militiamen would also receive a portion of two-thirds of all other plunder, including horses, with the rebel government retaining rights to the rest of the goods.

Marion, the "Swamp Fox," quickly rejected Sumter's plan, which came to be called Sumter's Law. Marion's militia included free African-



Painter James Peale portrayed General George Washington as a dignified aristocrat, with other soldiers literally looking up to him. National Park Service

Americans, which is perhaps one reason he called Sumter's scheme "inhumane and subversive of morality." Marion had grown up among slave-owning planters and understood how disturbed they became when either side in the Revolutionary War used slaves as pawns. He also feared that Sumter's bonuses would be used to lure away

some of his own soldiers to other units, and, according to historian Robert Bass, that is exactly what happened.

Tension had already been mounting between Marion and Sumter, who was technically Marion's superior, because Marion refused to rush to Sumter's aid when summoned. The "Swamp Fox," like Sumter, highly prized his independence.

Despite Marion's opposition, Sumter carried through with his plan and distributed slaves to recruit soldiers, whom he planned to use in a second assault on Fort Granby. About the same time, Nathanael Greene decided to bolster Marion's small force for attacks further south along the Santee River. Greene had two key cavalry officers, William Washington, George Washington's cousin, and Henry Lee, also known as "Light Horse Harry" Lee. Both Virginians had served George Washington as trusted officers in some of the northern campaigns against the British.

Greene decided to dispatch Lee and his horse-mounted regular troops to join the "Swamp Fox's" guerrillas. Lee had already gained renown for his hit-and-run attacks. Later, after the war, he fathered Robert E. Lee, commander of Confederate forces during the Civil War.

With some 400 troops, Marion and Lee besieged Fort Watson near the Santee River on April 15. The siege went poorly, with small pox spreading quickly in the squalid rebel camps. Even among those who escaped the disease, the idle hours waiting for the British to surrender took a toll. Marion himself reportedly sank into a deep depression which Lee tried to lift.

The rebels' fortunes brightened on the night of April 22, 1781, when, directed by Major Hezekiah Manham, they finished building a tower of pine logs, similar to the structure Sumter had used to attack Fort Granby. Sharp shooters then fired down from the tower into the fort at dawn, creating havoc among the British inside. Lieuten-

ant James McKay surrendered the post within hours.

Two days later, on April 25, a major battle erupted between Greene's Continental Army and the largest British force in northern South Carolina consisting of some 900 soldiers commanded by Lord Francis Rawdon. Rawdon, an Irish lord, marched his troops out of their fortress at Camden and surprised Greene's soldiers camped nearby in pine trees on Hobkirk's Hill. Many of the rebel troops were having breakfast or carrying out routine chores at the time.

§ § §

VICTORY AT A HIGH PRICE

When the British began firing, the rebels rushed for their weapons, but showed little panic. Greene and his lieutenants calmly organized their troops into a stout defensive line, then ordered the artillery to open fire. British soldiers tried to storm the artillery, according to historian Bass, but were repelled.

Greene, observing that the British lines were fairly compact, spread out his own forces in hopes of attacking the British from the front and on both sides. Lord Rawdon countered the American moves by pulling in reserves and expanding his own lines to prevent them from being outflanked.

While advancing and enduring heavy fire, some troops at the center of the American forces began faltering. Colonel John Gunby ordered his Maryland troops to back up so they could reorganize. This movement, along with mounting casualties, unnerved more rebel soldiers. As panic spread, the British pushed through the hole opening up in the American lines and stormed to the top of the ridge. The entire rebel army was close to buckling, but Greene and his officers managed to restore some order and prevent a rout.

The British had once more captured a dis-

puted hill, but again at a heavy price. They lost 258 wounded, dead and captured British soldiers, all of whom would be difficult to replace. The rebel force suffered 19 killed and 115 wounded.

Greene, worried that he had too few men to fight another engagement with the British, sent an urgent message to Sumter urging him to bring in his militia to bolster Greene's forces. Sumter, however, had his own plans. He was busy raiding Loyalist properties near the Broad River and preparing to attack Fort Granby. He refused to obey Greene's order. Greene became so angry that he considered arresting Sumter, according to historian Bass, but eventually reconsidered because he feared alienating the militia, which remained fiercely loyal to Sumter.

"I find you think it will be prejudicial to the public service for you to cross the Wateree [River] and join us," Greene wrote Sumter. "I am so desirous to rouse the people in that quarter [near the Broad and Congaree Rivers], I have thought it most advisable to revoke the order [for you to join me] and leave you at liberty to prosecute your original plan [to attack Fort Granby]."

On April 30, Sumter led some 500 troops south along the Congaree River then camped on the east side of the water at a plantation owned by George Ancrum, a Loyalist. From there Sumter ordered his cavalry, commanded by Henry Hampton, to attack soldiers guarding Friday's Ferry. Once they drove away the guards, the cavalry splashed across the river and fanned out around Fort Granby. Henry Hampton, Wade Hampton's brother, then began the second siege of the fort.

§ § §

THE SIEGE UNFOLDS

Some 300 soldiers, consisting of colonists serving in British units and Loyalist militia, were hunkered down inside the bastion walls, which bristled with muskets trained on the surrounding rebels. British Colonel Andrew Maxwell ordered

the fort's two cannons fired. Loud explosions punctuated the crackling of small arms. The rebel militia fired back. For all their noise, these initial skirmishes did nothing to change the balance of power. The fort remained in British hands while



Francis Marion became known as the "Swamp Fox" because he eluded capture by hiding in the swamps. Tom Elmore

the rebels waited just beyond the walls, determined to choke off the occupants from resupply.

Sumter spent the impasse in his plantation headquarters across the river, dispatching militia units into the nearby countryside to raid Loyalist-owned properties. The militia burned many frontier homes into smoking ruins, first seizing clothes, supplies, and anything else of value, including livestock. The fierceness of the militia campaign persuaded many Loyalists to surrender and seek pardons. Public opinion in the back country was beginning to shift toward the rebels. Sumter boasted in a letter to Greene that all Loyalists in the area would lay down their weap-

ons “if we can hold our ground a little longer.” Nonetheless, despite his confidence, how much longer Sumter could continue the attacks was in question.

Greene was growing increasingly concerned because spies reported that Cornwallis’s army was leaving Wilmington, North Carolina. If Cornwallis headed into South Carolina and linked up with other British forces, Greene’s soldiers would probably have to flee or risk being overwhelmed by them. Greene again summoned Sumter’s militia to join his regulars, but once more Sumter failed to obey. Instead of moving his soldiers toward Greene, Sumter crossed the Congaree River and took command of the forces tightening their grip on Fort Congaree. Just when the battle of wills was escalating again between Greene and Sumter, the crisis passed. New scouting reports reached Greene that Cornwallis had turned north and was heading into Virginia. Greene again backed away from demanding that Sumter commingle the militia with the regulars. “Be in readiness to join us if necessity should require it,” Greene wrote Sumter, “but you may depend upon not being called from the Congaree [and Fort Granby] but from the most pressing necessity....for I am as fully impressed with the advantages of your continuing there as you can be.”

For his part, Sumter repeated his urging for Greene to supply him with a cannon to help topple Fort Granby. “I will endeavor to employ it [the cannon] to the best advantage,” Sumter promised.

Meanwhile, the 400 troops commanded by “Light Horse Harry” Lee and Francis Marion, the “Swamp Fox,” advanced toward Fort Granby from the south, stopping first at Fort Motte, near the juncture of the Congaree and Wateree Rivers. This bastion, erected around a colonial mansion, was fortified with a stockade fence and a moat. The fort served as a stopping off point for wagon trains laden with supplies that were traveling

north from Charleston toward Fort Granby and other British outposts.

The assault on Fort Motte had settled into a monotonous siege when suddenly on the night of May 11 the defenders inside the fort began shouting and celebrating. The faint flickering of campfires in the distance ignited their glee, because they knew this signified that a major British army was approaching.

The rebel commanders also saw the campfires and decided to intensify their efforts to take the fort. The next morning, Lee went to see Rebecca Motte, the owner of the plantation which had been transformed into the fort. Since forced from her home, she had been living in a frontier cabin. Lee asked her permission to burn her mansion. Apparently, without hesitation, Mrs. Motte answered defiantly: “If it were a palace, it should go.” She even handed Lee a bow along with some arrows, the prized gifts from a sea captain, according to historian Robert Bass. “This will serve your purpose,” Motte reportedly told Lee.

Soon after, rebel soldiers began flinging burning wood inside the fort and firing flaming arrows from bows, including the one supplied by Mrs. Motte. Other rebel soldiers used a giant slingshot to loft a burning ball of tar and sulphur onto the mansion roof.

§ § §

CONFIDENCE GROWS

Beneath this rain of fire, pandemonium erupted inside the fort. Defenders dashed about, throwing water on the flames. When soldiers crawled out on the roof to try to snuff out the fires, rebel sharp shooters drove them back. Soon the entire house was engulfed in flames. When the heat became unbearable and rebels kept firing into the fort, the British began throwing down their weapons. In a subsequent report about the loss of Fort Motte, a British general wrote, “It was a simple redoubt....Lieutenant [Charles] McPherson

had maintained it gallantly till the house in the center of it was set in flames by fire arrows, which obliged his men to throw themselves into the ditch, and surrender at discretion."

Further north near the Congaree River, Sumter's 500 soldiers had Fort Granby cut off from resupply, and more militia were reporting for service daily. Sumter, expecting soon to have 800 or possibly 1,000 men under his command, had every reason to be confident that they would force the fort to fall. However, he was also increasingly pained by his battle wounds, which were aggravated by the onset of summer. He wrote to Greene, "My hand is still very stiff....My shoulder very uneasie [sic], and I fear as the weather grows warmer, [I] shall be obliged to retire [from the war]."

Greene dispatched a cannon to Sumter, no doubt thinking the weapon would deliver the punishing blows Sumter needed finally to conquer Fort Granby. But Sumter, now so close to victory, suddenly did the inexplicable. He rode away from Fort Granby, accompanied by a large body of his troops, taking the cannon as well.

Sumter left behind a contingent of militia commanded by a top lieutenant, Colonel Thomas Taylor, to continue besieging the fort. Sumter and his other soldiers galloped south down Old State Road through the area of the proposed Archeological Park, then turned toward the town of Orangeburg, a hotbed of Loyalist support. Loyalist troops were stationed in fortifications centered around the town's brick courthouse and jail, but a few well-placed shots from Sumter's new cannon caused the garrison to surrender.

"I have the pleasure to inform you that at 7 this morning it [Orangeburg] was surrendered to the troops under my command," Sumter wrote Greene on May 11, 1781. The triumph, however, cost Sumter a much bigger prize, one he had long coveted, Fort Granby. He lost the chance to capture the fort because, instead of returning immediately to resume the attack, Sumter instead

sent his troops raiding the nearby countryside to root out Loyalists and to ransack their properties. Many Loyalists fled into nearby swamps, remaining hidden for at least five days, according to Bass.

Sumter, perhaps fearing his abandonment of the Fort Granby siege might lead to another rebel force stepping in and taking the victory, wrote Green, "No assistance will be wanted there [at Fort Granby] to keep them [the defenders] close until I return with the troops and the field piece."

§ § §

LEE TAKES CONTROL

Greene, however, possibly again exasperated with Sumter, ordered "Light Horse Harry" Lee to ride with his regular troops to Fort Granby, where, on May 13, Lee took command of the siege. Militia officers were incensed at being shunted aside and quickly sent a messenger down Old State Road toward Orangeburg to inform Sumter of Lee's arrival.

Sumter appealed to Greene to call off Lee's regular troops and to let his militia finish capturing the fort. "Not withstanding I have greatest respect for Colonel Lee, yet I could wish he had not gone to that place [Fort Granby] as it is a circumstance I never thought of. His cavalry can be of no service there...." Sumter added, "I have been at great pains to reduce the [Fort Granby] post, I have it in my power to do it, and I think it for the good of the public to do it without regular [troops]."

Greene would not relent and neither did Lee, who had bigger concerns than the bruised feelings of the militia. Spies reported that Lord Rawdon and a powerful British army were advancing toward Fort Granby. Lee had little time left if he was going to capture the fort. He initiated negotiations with the fort commander, Andrew Maxwell, offering generous terms. Maxwell agreed to surrender with the promise that his troops could



The British retreated after surrendering Fort Granby to the rebels. They traveled along Old State Road through the proposed Archeological Park. Their red coats are in stark contrast to the green garb of the rebels in the foreground of Martin Pate's illustration. Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service

safely leave the fort and take their horses and much of their plunder with them. According to the agreement, Lee's victorious Continental troops would then provide the defeated force with a safe-conduct escort until they linked up with Rawdon's army.

The deal almost collapsed, however, when militia members learned of the agreement and saw Lee's soldiers strutting around in captured British uniforms. The militia clustered in angry groups, with some grousing, according to historian Bass, that Lee had granted such lenient terms to their enemy only to steal the victory from Sumter.

Their anger escalated to the point that some of the militia became so agitated that they considered attacking Lee's regular troops, overpowering them, and then murdering their British prisoners of war. Cooler heads prevailed, however, and nothing came of the plot. The captured soldiers passed safely south along Old State Road, traveling through the area of the proposed Archeological Park, and eventually reaching the safety of Rawdon's army.

The militiamen's anger still raged when Sumter arrived at Fort Granby on May 16 after a hard ride from Orangeburg. Furious that his hope



Henry "Lighthorse Harry" Lee, a Revolutionary War hero, fathered a son, Robert, after the war who became a famous Confederate general in the Civil War. Painting by Charles William Peale, National Park Service

of conquering Fort Granby had been thwarted, Sumter wrote a letter to Greene resigning from military service and enclosing his brigadier general's commission. Sumter cited his war wounds as a primary reason for quitting. "My indisposition and want of capacity to be of service to this country induces me as a friend to it, to beg leave to resign my command...." But Sumter's letter also revealed the deep hurt he and his troops felt: "...with the deepest regret I find the discontent and disorder among the militia so great as to leave no hope of their subsiding soon."

Greene, camped just across the Congaree River from Fort Granby, waited overnight before writing Sumter to reject his resignation. "I take the liberty to return to you your commission, which you forwarded me yesterday....I cannot think of accepting it and beg you to continue your command," he replied.

Greene went on, expressing sympathy for Sumter's "ill state of health," adding, "It is unnecessary for me to tell you how important your services are to the interest and happiness of this country; and the confidence I have in your abilities....Your continuing in command will lay the public in general and me in particular, under a very great obligation."

The commander also took other steps to mollify Sumter. He issued orders and notified other militia leaders that Sumter was in charge, meaning that Frances Marion and Andrew Pickens, another militia leader, had to heed Sumter's orders. Overcoming his distaste for plunder to reinforce Sumter's Law, Greene further commanded that all slaves captured at Fort Granby should be given to Sumter's troops as pay for their longer

enlistments. Greene also saw to it, according to historian Bass, that any confiscated guns and supplies from the fort went to Sumter's militia.

His pride restored, Sumter agreed to rescind his resignation and return to command. One of his first acts was to order the fortifications at Fort Granby to be rendered unusable. "The works at Friday's ferry....I think tolerably well demolished," Sumter wrote before crossing the Congaree River with his troops.

Greene also left the area, marching his army on May 18 north toward the British fort at Ninety

Six, about seventy-five miles away. The Continental Army there began a siege that proved to be the longest of the entire war. The siege became a bloody battle of nerves, which eventually would lead to the final battle for Fort Granby.

At Ninety Six, Greene's more than one thousand soldiers labored long hours, digging trenches and edging closer to the fort where 550 Loyalists from South Carolina, New York, and New Jersey held out day after day. "Light Horse Harry" Lee and his troops captured the nearby stockade, but little else went according to the rebel battle plans.

Rebel soldiers tried tunneling by candlelight underneath the fort in hopes of blowing it up, but Loyalists ambushed them, killing some of the soldiers and driving the others away. Greene's force also built a tower thirty feet tall to shoot down into the bastion, but Loyalist soldiers piled

up sand bags to protect themselves. When the rebel army fired flaming arrows into the fort, the defenders knocked away the burning shingles. Repeatedly, the Loyalists resisted "bravely, ably, and obstinately," according to historian Lewis P. Jones.

Greene received word that more than 2,000 British reinforcements, most of them fresh recruits from Ireland, were marching north toward Ninety Six under the command of Lord Rawdon. As a last-ditch effort, Greene, on June 18, attempted two direct assaults on the fort. But even hand-to-hand combat failed to dislodge the defenders, and the attackers were thrown back with heavy losses. Rawdon's forces were now just two days away, having successfully outmaneuvered members of Sumter's militia who tried to stop them.

Greene had to abandon the siege and with-



The Cayce Historical Museum is housed in a building that replicates the structure that was in the center of Fort Granby. Cayce Historical Museum

draw. Rawdon soon marched his troops into Ninety Six, paused only briefly to leave weak and ill soldiers, then set out in pursuit of Greene, who continued retreating.

Greene's withdrawal effectively exhausted many of the British troops, who had never before experienced the searing heat of a South Carolina summer. The biting mosquitoes, chiggers, and ticks added to their misery.

Rawdon, himself recovering from malaria, finally gave up and ordered his army, now numbering about 1,200 soldiers, to quit pursuing Greene. The British began moving toward Fort Granby. Greene was determined to prevent the British from reestablishing the fort, which had already proven so difficult to conquer. He was frantically sending out messages to his scattered commanders and militia leaders, trying to coalesce all his forces at Friday's Ferry for an all-out assault on the British. "If our force is separated we can expect nothing," Greene wrote. "If it is collected we can oblige the Enemy to keep theirs collected and that will prevent their establishing their posts again."

The British reached what remained of the fort late at night on July 2, according to historian Bass. Some or all of the stockade fence and parts of the outer moat had probably been destroyed earlier by Sumter's militia, but the two-story house at the center of Fort Granby still stood, and this is where Rawdon made his headquarters, according to Leo Redmond, director of the Cayce Historical Museum.

Greene pushed his army to catch up with the British at Fort Granby. "Not a moment's time is to be lost in collecting our force to that place," Greene wrote Sumter on July 3. "Otherwise his Lordship will fix himself so firmly that there will be no possibility of moving him."

Rawdon, however, had no intention of taking a stand at Fort Granby and ordered his troops to evacuate and move south along Old State Road. As Greene's Continental Army advanced on the

fort, they fired a cannon. The cannon ball smashed through the house, according to Redmond. Soon after, on July 4, 1781, Greene's army took control of what remained of Fort Granby.

Rebel cavalry commanded by "Light Horse Harry" Lee and William Washington, along with mounted militia commanded by Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox," pursued the British down Old State Road, staging hit-and-run attacks. British



Exhibits in the Cayce Historical Museum include displays of artifacts discovered in the area, which has been occupied since early prehistory and figured in both Revolutionary and Civil War battles. Cayce Historical Museum

soldiers fired back as they retreated. Some of the skirmishing perhaps took place in the area to be included in the proposed Archeological Park, although not enough research has yet been done to be sure.

As Greene moved his infantry down Old State Road in pursuit of the British, all of his available forces were finally gathering together from the surrounding countryside. Many of these rebel soldiers moved through the area encompassed in the proposed Archeological Park.

About twenty miles south of Friday's Ferry, near Beaver Creek, Sumter and Marion, along with their militias, joined Greene and his regulars. For the first time since he had entered the war in the South, Greene had almost all the state's

militia under his immediate command, according to historian Bass.

With his forces bolstered, Greene advanced toward Orangeburg where Rawdon and the British army were now stationed. On the morning of July 12, Greene, accompanied by Sumter, Marion, and Lee, looked down on the British encampment in Orangeburg.

Because of the strength of the British position, Greene opted not to storm the enemy. Instead, the Continental Army and militia spent the day firing at the British, defiantly proving that with the fall of Fort Granby the revolutionaries now controlled much of the northern half of the colony.

That summer the main opposing armies spent time recuperating, but momentum was increasingly flowing with the revolutionaries. On September 5, 1781, Greene's army, after dominating early, was ultimately driven from the battlefield at Eutaw Springs. The British, however, according to historian Walter Edgar, again suffered irreplaceable losses.

On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia to George Washington. The following December 14, 1782, the British military, along with 4,000 Loyalists and 5,000 slaves, evacuated Charleston, leaving all of South Carolina free of British rule.

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MUCH TO LEARN

Researchers have uncovered little about the Revolutionary War through excavations so far in the proposed Archeological Park. Nonetheless, with all the troop movements through the area, there is surely much to be discovered. "Light Horse Harry" Lee and William Washington rode with their cavalries through the area pursuing the British army. They were aided by the "Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, and his militia. Archeologists may be able to uncover evidence of the

skirmishing that occurred as the British retreated toward Orangeburg.

Thomas Sumter, the "Gamecock," traveled Old State Road with his militia several times. Archeologists might find evidence of Sumter's camps or other evidence that they can tie to the rebel militia. There may also be remnants of campsites used by the British or their Loyalist allies. By carefully excavating different types of sites, archeologists may be able to piece together a great deal about the habits and strategies of the combatants during a crucial stage of the Revolutionary War.

Another topic for future research, according to archeologist Dan Elliott, concerns the Loyalists. Residents in this part of the colony (including the proposed Archeological Park) perhaps overwhelmingly supported the British, Elliott points out. "Were they Germans from Saxe Gotha? Their story should not be ignored. Indeed, perhaps it should be a focal point." Researchers will delve into the Loyalists' experiences and motivations.

After the Revolutionary War, planters turned much of the Archeological Park area into cotton fields. Creation of the park will provide scientists with opportunities to flush out details about the plantation economy and its impact on white residents and the black slaves who labored in the fields. Researchers will trace what happened to individuals through census records, agricultural reports, probate wills and land titles to determine family histories, as well as the tragedies and triumphs of everyday existence.

Preliminary research concerning the plantation owned by Governor Charles Pinckney, for example, reveals his two-story house had a small porch in front with columns (a portico). The structure sat on high ground near Congaree Creek and was surrounded by tall poplar trees.

Pinckney maintained a small, brick office nearby. This building had a dome on top, a cupola. Despite having contributed many ideas

which were incorporated in the U. S. Constitution and having held numerous high offices, Pinckney was apparently deeply in debt when he died in 1824. His plantation, named Tacitus to honor a Roman historian, was near bankruptcy at the time.

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A DARING GIRL

As Nathanael Greene's Continental troops pursued the British commanded by Lord Francis Rawdon in the summer of 1781, both armies were exhausted. The British forces, which included many soldiers from Ireland, were debilitated by the incessant heat and discouraged by their inability to catch Greene's Continentals. For their part, Greene's troops were also disheartened because the long siege at the town of Ninety Six had failed to dislodge the Loyalist defenders. Greene realized that he would have to rally his forces to attack the British to keep them from re-establishing Fort Granby near the Congaree River.

Greene's forces were too weak to face the British without help from large numbers of militia, who had done much of the fighting in South Carolina. The key to bringing about the needed consolidation of the rebel forces was for Greene to get word to Thomas Sumter, the militia leader commanding the most troops.

Sumter was about one hundred miles away near the Wateree River, according to historian

John A. Chapman. Greene needed to find a courier willing to make the long journey and pass through British lines.

Emily Geiger, just eighteen years old, volunteered for the dangerous task. She apparently rode south, planning to ford the Congaree River at or near Friday's Ferry, but was stopped by suspicious British troops on July 3, 1871. They took Geiger to what remained of Fort Granby, according to information supplied by the Cayce Historical Museum, and there she was interrogated by Lord Rawdon himself. The young girl did her best to appear innocent, but Rawdon was not convinced and locked her in a room until she could be searched. Either before she was captured or while she waited to be searched (sources differ on the details), Geiger memorized Greene's message. She then ripped the incriminating paper into small shreds and swallowed the pieces.

When a woman loyal to the British arrived to search Geiger, she found the teenager was concealing nothing treasonous and Rawdon finally released her.

A British soldier escorted the girl to a friend's house a few miles away where Geiger ate and rested before setting out again on horseback, this time with a guide sympathetic to the revolution. She rode all night and much of the next day, eventually reaching Sumter to deliver Greene's message about a suggested meeting. Sumter and Greene did eventually join forces, and pursued the British to Orangeburg.

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8 – WAR GETS CLOSER

During the winter of 1864, the once seemingly invincible army commanded by General Robert E. Lee was pinned down in trenches protecting Petersburg, just south of Richmond. The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, so often the



Union General William T. Sherman was bearing down on Congaree Creek during the Winter of 1865 after taking, Savannah, Georgia. National Park Service

aggressor, was now indisputably on the defensive, with troops afraid even to raise their heads above the earthworks for fear of being shot. Union sharpshooters trained their powerful rifled guns with telescopic sites on the Confederate positions.

The bitter cold enveloping Virginia added to the misery of the Confederate troops, many of whom were barefoot and dressed in tatters. Disease stalked their trenches, in part because so many of the men suffered malnutrition from a diet consisting mostly only of hardtack, an insubstantial mixture of flour and water.

Both the Confederate and Union Armies in Virginia had suffered devastating losses earlier in the summer of 1864, when nearly 100,000 troops were killed or wounded in a single month. The Union Army, commanded by General Ulysses S. Grant, suffered the most, with 65,000 casualties. Grant reportedly took to his cot and wept because of the awful carnage. The general was losing an average of one thousand men a day to Confederate guns.

Unlike Union generals before him, however, Grant persisted, despite the human cost. He hammered away at his foes. While he made mistakes and was at times outmaneuvered by Lee, Grant remained relentless, pushing his enemy's death toll higher. And the Confederate losses, even though they were only about half of those experienced by the Union, were more devastating, in part because they included so many important officers. Gone were many of Lee's most trusted lieutenants who had been instrumental in his force's effectiveness.

Lee's army was also weakened because of the many veteran soldiers who fell that summer, fighters who could not be easily replaced. Recruiting efforts had stalled in the South where dodging military service became more acceptable, as men worried about protecting their families from hardships and invading armies. Others refused to enlist because they considered the war a lost cause or saw the conflict as merely a way to protect the slave-holding interests of the upper

class. The Union Army, in contrast, had little trouble replacing fallen troops, even though there were bloody riots in the North, sparked by the draft, as well as nonviolent opposition to the war. There were still plenty of inductees available, along with a surge of volunteers, many of them African-Americans eager to fight because of President Abraham Lincoln's proclamation freeing slaves in the South.

Another enormous advantage favoring the



Confederate General Robert E. Lee sent some of his best cavalry officers and soldiers to South Carolina to fend off Union forces led by General William T. Sherman. National Archives and Records Administration

Union was a steady stream of equipment and supplies being funneled to the army. Boxes of rifles, many of them better than anything produced in the South, stacks of clothing, wagonloads of food, and herds of fresh horses were

readily available. In contrast, mounts belonging to the Confederate Army, like the troops, were starving.

During the long winter, there was more bad news for the Confederacy. Another powerful Union Army, commanded by Grant's protégée, General William Tecumseh Sherman, stormed through Georgia, after capturing Atlanta in September. By late December 1864, Sherman marched triumphantly into the coastal city of Savannah, which Confederate forces abandoned without a meaningful defense. From there, Sherman prepared to head north into South Carolina.

For Lee's shivering soldiers pinned down in Virginia, reports of Sherman's rampage added to the gloom spreading through the Confederate ranks. Morale plummeted as letters arrived from home describing depredations caused by Sherman's invasion and the tightening Union naval blockade of Southern ports. Some Confederate soldiers, intent on surrendering, risked being killed by Union sharpshooters to flee to the other side. Many more stealthily drifted away to return home.

Despite these losses and defections, Lee still retained a number of hardcore veterans who remained out of loyalty to their commander and confidence in their own abilities. Their belief in themselves was rooted in a long string of successes.

Throughout the long war, Lee and his soldiers had repeatedly pulled off bold maneuvers in the face of superior forces. Even now, with only bleak options apparent, Lee decided to send one-fourth of his prized cavalry, an entire division, to South Carolina, primarily to collect men and horses to be brought back to Lee for the Spring campaign and also to help organize and inspire a defense against Sherman.

Fewer than 1,500 cavalymen would be involved, but their number included some of the Confederacy's most skilled soldiers. Earlier, Lee had also dispatched about one thousand

infantrymen to help bolster South Carolina defenses, according to historian Tom Elmore.

Along with the cavalry, Lee decided to send two of his veteran officers from South Carolina — Major General Wade Hampton and Major General Matthew C. Butler. Hampton, at the time, was being hailed throughout the South as a hero because he continued to win victories, even as the Confederacy's fortunes soured. Daring and



General Ulysses S. Grant's Union Army pressed hard against Confederate forces near Richmond, Virginia, at the same time that Gen. Sherman's forces were moving toward Congaree Creek. Library of Congress

brilliant, Hampton commanded all of Lee's cavalry, a role once held by J. E. B. Stuart, who was killed earlier in the war. Lee decided that no one could better bolster South Carolina morale than native son Hampton. He hoped that the major general would be able to help stop or at least slow Sherman's advance north. If Sherman's and

Grant's forces could somehow be delayed from joining ranks, perhaps Lee could devise some maneuver to avert disaster. Lee also thought Hampton could prevent the cavalry he was sending to South Carolina from being absorbed into another, larger cavalry unit already in the state, according to historian Elmore.

Major General Matthew C. Butler served as the direct commander of the Confederate cavalry division headed to South Carolina. He, too, had often proven himself under fire but was less well known than Hampton, who had been his superior officer for most of the war.

Notably, Butler was instrumental in J. E. B. Stuart's famous second ride around the Union Army in 1862, a harrowing 130-mile journey that nearly resulted in a catastrophe. Butler commanded the rear units near the end of the punishing escape, as Union soldiers closed in from every direction. Separated from the rest of the Confederate cavalry, Butler's horsemen were almost given up for lost. Behind enemy lines and seemingly completely cut off, Butler never considered surrendering. Instead, he and his men galloped along a ridge, taking heavy fire on three sides. With sabers raised and pistols blazing, they fought their way through the encircling Union Army and splashed into the Potomac River to the sounds of wild cheers from comrades massed on the other side. Butler did not lose a single soldier in the daring ride.

Like Hampton, Butler had been severely wounded in battle. A cannon ball blew off his foot during the 1863 Battle of Brandy Station, but after recuperating he returned to combat and continued to distinguish himself.

The departure of Hampton and Butler and the cavalry from Virginia was shrouded in secrecy. Lee, hoping to avoid alerting spies and reporters that he was diverting such an important force, did not address the soldiers or in any public way acknowledge their mission, according to historian Douglas Southall Freeman. Once the cavalry

reached South Carolina, however, in late January 1865, word quickly spread about their presence, and they were enthusiastically welcomed as heroes. The celebrations, however, were brief. South Carolina faced a looming crisis, although many residents were unaware of the full extent of the danger. Newspapers and public officials tried to soothe concerns and build confidence but South Carolina was ill-prepared to defend itself, and Sherman's forces had already begun moving into the state.

Hampton and Butler soon found themselves thrust into defending the capital city of Columbia, where local leaders were in disarray. One observer sharply criticized the state legislators for their "levity," comparing their behavior to "the recklessness of sailors when shipwreck seems inevitable." Governor Andrew Gordon Magrath, anticipating the danger facing his state, had begged for more troops from Lee, Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, as well as the governors of nearby states. But with the exception of Butler and Hampton and the cavalry they led, along with a handful of regular infantry, there would be no additional help. South Carolina had to face Sherman with the scattered forces already at hand.

Pierre G. T. Beauregard was the chief military commander in South Carolina. He had com-

manded Confederate forces during the battle for Fort Sumter and later led soldiers defending Charleston when it was under siege, making him popular in South Carolina, according to historian Elmore. Early in the war, Beauregard had also been the victor at the first Battle of Manassas in Virginia, but his record since was not especially notable.



President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation prompted free blacks to enter the Union Army at the same time that Confederate forces were dwindling. National Archives and Records Administration

Once brimming with confidence and grandiose plans for victories, Beauregard seemed to have lost his nerve. Mary Chestnut, the distinguished Civil War diarist, described Beauregard as suffering from "melancholy." Other observers, according to historian Elmore, also worried that Beauregard was emotionally and physically ill. Despite these concerns, efforts to replace him were unsuccessful until it was too late.

Even if Beauregard had been a better general, he faced daunting odds. Compared to Sherman's 60,000 battle-tested veterans, Beauregard had only about 20,000 regular soldiers. Many of these forces — between 10,000 and 15,000 infantrymen, commanded by Lieutenant

General William J. Hardee — guarded the coastal city of Charleston, where Hardee and many others expected Sherman to strike first. The Confederates had fired the first shots of the war at Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, making the city a tempting avenging plum for the Union general. In

fact, Union forces had been besieging and bombarding Charleston for a year and a half from ships and outposts on the edges of the harbor. The assault had reduced many of Charleston's stately homes to abandoned hulls. The same Union guns were now available to reinforce Sherman, should he decide to attack the city.

The Union general, however, had other plans, which he tried to keep secret from the Confederates whom he wanted to keep guessing about where he would attack. Columbia, besides being the seat of state government, was another likely target for him because of its importance as a manufacturing center and railroad juncture. Beauregard dispersed most of the remaining Confederate forces in and around the city, reserving some to send to Augusta, Georgia, another tempting objective for Sherman because of its manufacturing plants and large armory.

Hampton, given charge by Beauregard of Columbia's defense, urged that all available military forces be consolidated in the city where they could confront the Union Army. Beauregard apparently agreed, but precious time was lost before the Confederates could assemble. Because of these delays, the cavalry was Columbia's only hope of defense. Some regular infantry soldiers were also available, along with militia units consisting of individuals too old or too young for regular units and factory workers who drilled in their spare time. There were few other potential soldiers, with Columbia Mayor Thomas Goodwyn estimating that only some 1,500 able-bodied men lived in all of South Carolina who were not in the military.

The Confederate cavalry, although comparatively few in number, was still formidable. The troopers fought well on foot, primarily with rifles, and also excelled on horseback, where they could use pistols, rifles, and sabers. Highly mobile and skilled, the cavalymen throughout much of the war had out rode and out fought Union horsemen. Sherman, who developed an intense distaste

for Confederate cavalymen, nonetheless grudgingly respected their capabilities, calling them "young bloods of the South." He described them as "splendid riders, first-rate shots, and utterly reckless."



Confederate General Joseph Wheeler used guerilla tactics against the Union force led by General Sherman. National Park Service

Two separate cavalry units defended Columbia. Butler's division, numbering fewer than 1,500, had fought in almost all of Lee's major battles. The division soldiers were celebrated in the South because they had served under both J. E. B. Stuart and Wade Hampton. Butler's horsemen fought ferociously, were well-disciplined, and could continue fighting with almost no sleep and little food.

Many of Butler's men hailed from South Carolina and were familiar with the terrain they were asked to defend; others were from Georgia, Kentucky, and Mississippi.

Wheeler's Cavalry Corps, which had also reached South Carolina, was made up of more than 4,000 horsemen who were just as tough and wily as Butler's men, but not as well known because they were not associated with Lee. They had spent much of the war in the central Confederacy under the command of Major General Joseph Wheeler from Augusta, Georgia. Nicknamed both "Little Joe," because he was only five feet, five inches tall, and "Fighting Joe," because of his fearlessness, Wheeler had been wounded three times. He had fought in many engagements and was considered especially adroit at garnering accurate intelligence about the enemy.

As the threat to South Carolina mounted, Butler's and Wheeler's cavalry were thrown together and forced to cooperate. They were not yet unified under a single command, which happened later, but both units were represented at the Battle of Congaree Creek, the key confrontation on the outskirts of Columbia. The unfamiliarity of these two contingents with each other perhaps contributed to missed communications during the battle.

Wheeler's cavalry had become the most effective force opposing Sherman after he conquered Atlanta. As Sherman's soldiers drove on toward Savannah, Wheeler's troopers harried them with guerilla tactics, picking off Union stragglers and attacking foraging parties sent to strip farms and plantations of food and supplies. Wheeler's cavalry struck suddenly, then fled before the Union commanders could summon reinforcements.

Wheeler's men learned to live off the land, accepting food from sympathizers, as well as scavenging abandoned plantations and farms and plundering Union supply wagons. In fact, the cavalry had been cut off for so long from Confederate Army resupply that many of them no longer wore uniforms. Some were in rags, too embarrassed to ride into towns because of their appearance, while others wore navy blue overcoats

stolen from Union troops. Wheeler's soldiers continued to fight ferociously, even though, according to historian Elmore, they had not been paid since mid-1864.

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WHEELER'S TACTICS

Wheeler's Southern troopers grew accustomed to functioning without orders from distant commanders, making them virtually independent operators. They carried a wide assortment of rifles and pistols, many of them captured from Union soldiers, from whom they also took bullets. Wheeler's command also included a number of Texans who preferred carrying shotguns. These firearms were ineffectual at a distance but at close range were terrifying and deadly. Besides the Texans, Wheeler's force consisted of men from Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, and Arkansas.

Some of Wheeler's forces, disguised in Union uniforms, became adept at slipping into enemy camps without being detected. More than once, these Confederates walked out of enemy encampments leading fresh horses, displaying a characteristic recklessness that sometimes resulted in their capture. Some Southern newspapers and Confederate officials maligned Wheeler's troopers as undisciplined, criticisms which may have been based primarily on the cavalry's often disheveled appearance and unorthodox tactics.

Sherman's troops began moving into South Carolina from Savannah in early January 1865. Some of the Union soldiers traveled by boat to Beaufort, South Carolina, chosen as a staging ground.

From there, the troops would launch a feint toward Charleston to mislead the Confederates about their true target: Columbia. Other Union forces moved into South Carolina on foot from north of Savannah, crossing the Savannah River at Sisters Ferry on a pontoon bridge.

These early Union movements toward South Carolina were not trouble free. Soldiers, among other challenges, had to disassemble wagons to fit aboard the boats bound for Beaufort, vessels which were at times also dangerously crammed with troops and equipment. Cold rains were frequent and heavier than usual for midwinter, with blinding downpours forcing the pontoon-bridge crossings to halt. This left units separated and bogged down on both sides of the Savannah River. It rained 28 of the first 45 days of 1865, according to historian Elmore.

Even so, by February 1, 1865 Sherman's powerful juggernaut was moving north. To further confuse his opponents and to speed the advance, the general divided his army into two wings, which at times traveled along different routes. He also sent cavalry racing toward Aiken, South Carolina, to create havoc by destroying Southern supplies and railroad tracks. Sherman hoped his cavalry would further confuse the Confederates about his ultimate destination, but the tactic backfired when Wheeler's cavalry ambushed the Union horsemen. The resulting gun battle turned into a rout, with the Union cavalry hastily retreating five miles before escaping.

The real threat to South Carolina was the Union infantry, which aimed straight at Columbia, although their journey was also far from easy. Rain soaked the soldiers and turned the dirt roads into slippery mud. Creeks, rivers, and swamps rose, with some becoming treacherous to cross. The Confederates further hampered their foes' progress by felling trees across the roads, often near water crossings, and burning bridges. Small clusters of Confederate cavalry would then attack as the Union troops halted at these obstacles.

These skirmishes, however, were only temporary setbacks for the Union forces and usually ended as quickly as they began, when the Confed-

erates galloped away and disappeared into the countryside.

Confederate troops did mount a major battle at Rivers Bridge on the Salkahatchie River in the southwestern part of South Carolina, but even this did not seriously impede the Union advance.

As Sherman's soldiers closed in on Columbia, anxiety increased in the capital, where many women and children seeking protection from the war had congregated. The city's prewar population of 4,000 had mushroomed to about 20,000, with refugees crammed into every available living space. Women, at the time, outnumbered men 40 to one in Columbia, according to historian Elmore.

Although Sherman's soldiers were still several days away from the city, his lead troops, Union General John Logan's XV Corps, were on a direct path toward Congaree Creek. Logan's First Division of some 5,000 soldiers spent several days near the small town of Bamberg, ripping up tracks of the strategically important Augusta to Charleston railroad. They burned the wooden ties in bonfires and melted and bent the metal rails so that the enemy could not easily reassemble the track. Twisting track rails was such a common Union practice that the mangled results were called "Sherman's neckties."

By February 11, 1865, the First Division crossed the South Edisto River. At this point "...the movement on Columbia was fairly inaugurated," wrote the Union commander Logan. On February 12, Governor Magrath ordered all state documents in Columbia to be packed and removed from the city for safekeeping.

Word of this action further fueled anxieties, with rumors abounding that Sherman was already just outside the city. One resident, Harriet Middleton, wrote, "There was wild hurrying to and fro, pale agitated faces, intolerable anxiety"

9 – BATTLE AT THE CREEK

On the night of February 14, the Union XV Corps's First Division camped at a plantation about five miles from Congaree Creek. The Corps's three other divisions were close behind, with all of them camped within about two miles of one another. Union scouts reported that the Confederates were massing at Congaree Creek, leading Union officers to expect a major battle the following day. A steady rain fell that night. The sound of gunshots interrupted the quiet and there were bright flashes, as Confederate cavalry rode into the fringe's of the First Division's camp. There they captured three Union guards and an officer, then withdrew into the darkness.

The First Division broke camp about seven the next morning, February 15, and began moving north on Old State Road. Rain continued to fall and fog blanketed the landscape, spreading out from the nearby Congaree River. Most of the approximately 5,000 Union troops moved along the main road in long columns that trailed off into the mist. Uneasiness permeated the ranks, with the lead soldiers able to see only a short distance ahead of them. Broad, mostly bare farm fields spread out on both sides of the road. The fields were even muddier than the road, forcing the troops to keep the cannons and wagons on the road.

Because of repeated Confederate attacks, protective skirmishers walked in front of the Union column. These soldiers, keeping about two arm lengths apart, formed two parallel lines, one directly behind the other, that stretched across the road into the fields on either side. Keeping their rifles at ready, they were prepared to go into battle at a moment's notice. Their eyes combed every bend in the road, searching foliage, bridges, any place that might conceal the enemy.

Suddenly, gunshots erupted and bullets whizzed through the air. The Union soldiers crouched as Confederate cavalymen fired rifles at them from a stand of trees. The long Union column halted while the skirmishers in the front quickly returned fire. The engagement ended as abruptly as it began, with the Confederates melting away into the fog and the Union column soon lumbering forward again. A short time later, the Confederates opened fire once more.

The day had also begun before sunrise for the Confederate soldiers. Milton Overley, a member of Wheeler's cavalry, camped with others from Kentucky a short distance ahead of the Union Army. As he began to stir, Overley was surprised by a mysterious early-morning visitor, an officer he did not recognize. The visitor turned out to be Major General Matthew C. Butler, recently arrived from Virginia. "I do know the General [Butler] or an officer who passed for General M. C. Butler [who] was at our outpost on the morning of the 15th of February," Overley later wrote, adding that Butler arrived without guards or aides, which was unusual for such a high-ranking commander. Butler ordered Overley to conduct a raid behind Union lines during which his troops should attack supply wagons and capture at least one prisoner for interrogation.

Overley argued against the action, explaining that he already had orders to hold his position "till relieved or till driven away by the enemy." Butler insisted that despite those orders some of the Kentuckians should raid the Union Army. Soon after, Butler left the Kentucky camp, expecting his command to be carried out. He was mistaken. "Of course, I did not obey the order," Overley later wrote. It was a telling incident, suggesting the resistance that some of Wheeler's men felt toward Butler, even though he was a high ranking officer.

Wheeler, their usual commander, was some miles away with a significant portion of his corps. Butler was "an aristocratic South Carolinian recently detached from Lee's army" in Virginia and Wheeler's men "were rough, rural fighters from an unorthodox command," explains historian Joe Long of the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Museum in Columbia.

Butler apparently did lead many Confederate cavalymen that morning in battle against the Union Army, combining elements of his own



Confederate Major General Matthew C. Butler led a cavalry division sent by General Robert E. Lee to defend South Carolina. National Park Service

cavalry with some of Wheeler's. "After a sharp encounter, in which I compelled Sherman's column to deploy and disclose its strength," Butler wrote, he began a slow retreat toward Congaree Creek.

Dr. John Lewis, a member of Wheeler's 9th Kentucky Cavalry, participated in the early morning combat. "Without waiting to complete even

our scanty breakfast, which we were preparing when the firing began, we were ordered to move out of camp rapidly....We went to the front at double-quick, going into battle on the edge of a wood confronted by a cornfield," he later recalled.

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THE FIRST CASUALTIES

Fighting mostly on foot and shielding themselves behind trees, the Confederate cavalry fired their rifles. Union troops crouched along the road and returned fire. "Our men took shelter as best they could and refused to be driven," Lewis wrote of the Confederate response. The Confederates "held their ground firmly until overwhelming numbers forced them to retire. Our loss in killed and wounded here must have been quite heavy."

Confederate James W. Stoner, an acting adjutant, a low-ranking officer, was hit by gunfire, crumpled in his saddle, and fell from his horse. A fellow Confederate remembered hearing the general moan piteously, "Oh, my mother! My mother." Soldiers carted the injured man away, and he was eventually transferred to Columbia, where he died. Stoner's aide, a Lieutenant Hill, (first name unknown) also suffered serious wounds in the early morning engagement. Hill survived, but never returned to active duty.

The Confederates fell back from these early morning attacks and began assembling at Congaree Creek, where other Southern troops had spent the night. By about nine that morning, some 2,500 Confederate soldiers were massed near the water, anticipating a major confrontation with the approaching Union forces.

Old State Road passed over the creek by way of a wooden bridge. Confederate soldiers piled timbers on the bridge so they could set it ablaze to hinder the Union advance. The rain-swollen creek ran fast and high beneath the structure, with sticks and other debris swirling in the rushing water, then sweeping by.



Confederate forces fire a cannon at the approaching Union forces in this illustration by Martin Pate. The cannon is positioned on the side of Congaree Creek closest to Columbia. The dark semi-circle of earth crossing the road on the opposite side of the creek at the far right represents the rail and log defensive barrier erected to protect the Confederate cavalry. National Park Service

Behind the creek, on the northern side, Confederate soldiers stood or sat behind earthworks, which consisted of a series of deep ditches and dirt barricades. These earthworks extended at least a half mile, perhaps further, along the creek, paralleling the water. The creek banks on the northern side were high, rising some seven to eight feet above the water in some places, forming a long ridge. The Confederates, helped by slaves, had built the earthworks above the ridge so that the soldiers occupying them would have the advantage of looking down on anyone approaching from the creek's other side. The earthworks also shielded at least one Confederate

cannon, and possibly two others, trained on the approach to the bridge.

The soldiers checked their rifles, talked, and waited. Everyone knew the Union columns were close. Perhaps joining Confederate soldiers already in the earthworks were some of Butler's cavalrymen who had participated in the early morning raids. The written records are unclear whether these veterans from Virginia campaigns were in or near the trenches, and if they were, how many of them were present.

In front of the creek on the south side, the Confederates had erected a barricade of logs and fence rails. This obstacle blocked Old State Road

and spread out on both sides, forming an arc, according to archeologist Wayne Roberts. The military term for such an obstacle is *tete-de-pont*, a French phrase meaning at the head of the point or, more loosely, the tip of the spear.

The Confederates probably positioned this long barricade so that it ended on both sides of the road near forests that hugged Congaree Creek. They had also cleared trees from areas near the road, leaving only stumps, so they would have a clear view from behind the barricade of the road and open fields on either side.

They also placed two cannons behind the barricade near the road. Stationed behind this forward barricade was a division of Wheeler's cavalry, consisting of more than one thousand troops from Kentucky and Tennessee. These men expected to bear the initial brunt of the Union onslaught, so they were especially on guard.

As the Confederates faced the road, to the right of the barricade, the right flank, there was additional protection from a heavily wooded swamp, which merged into Congaree Creek and one of its tributaries.

As the Union Army edged closer, some of the Confederate cavalymen, who continued to stage quick assaults, galloped back to Congaree Creek. Riding through small gaps in the barricade, they dismounted and handed their reins to handlers, who led the horses a short distance to the rear. The cavalymen then hurried to positions behind the barricade, joining their fellow troopers who were preparing to fight on foot. The horses, damp with sweat, remained saddled, ready for the soldiers to mount in a hasty retreat over the bridge to the earthworks on the other side. Other cavalymen had no horses behind the forward barricade. When the time came to flee, they would have to escape on foot over makeshift bridges they had built over the fast-moving creek.

Colonel George Dibrell commanded the troops stationed behind the forward barricade. A successful Tennessee farmer and merchant before

the war, Dibrell was one of the most trusted officers in Wheeler's cavalry, but he was unaccustomed to reporting to Butler, his new superior at Congaree Creek. With the Union Army fast approaching, the two had little time to become acquainted.

Butler met with Dibrell sometime early in the morning behind the forward barricade. Butler reported that he had examined the defenses on both sides of the creek and was well satisfied. The Confederates, he predicted, could hold their position no matter how many Union soldiers attacked. If Sherman's men tried to circumvent the defenses, Butler wanted there to be reserves behind the creek ready to respond to counter any such Union move. Butler's comments about the fortifications were based upon his experience in Virginia where he had participated in battles from behind extensive barricades at Petersburg. "Petersburg was the pinnacle of this sort of warfare in the 19th century (the 1800's)," according to historian Joe Long.

For his part, Dibrell worried that the bridge behind his troops would not catch fire as intended when they were forced to retreat over the creek. Rain continued falling and Dibrell noted that the wooden structure was thoroughly soaked. Another worry was the trampling by horses and soldiers moving back and forth across the bridge, which had caused the surface to become slippery and coated with mud.

Dibrell ordered soldiers to stack even more timber on the bridge. He hoped there would be enough fuel to ignite a bonfire that would thoroughly consume the structure. But if the fire failed, Dibrell commanded a group of cavalymen to be ready to sever the bridge from its moorings. Once all Confederates were safely across, these cavalymen would have little time to topple the bridge into the creek.

The fog began to lift by about nine that morning, although the rain continued. Dibrell's cavalymen were able to spot the Union soldiers advancing.

ing from some distance away, but the blue-clad soldiers failed to see the Confederates immediately. Their first impression was of the tall trees bordering Congaree Creek. Troops from Illinois who were out front slowed their advance when they spotted the barricade blocking the road. They could barely make out the outlines of Confederate soldiers in the darkness behind the barricade. The woods were eerily silent, except for a few birds singing.

Suddenly, a Confederate cannon boomed. The shell sailed through the air, landed in a field and



Confederate Colonel George Dibrell led a division of Wheeler's cavalry that suffered the brunt of the Union attack in the Battle of Congaree Creek. National Park Service

exploded, kicking up dirt, and hurting no one. Almost immediately, the Union troops heard the crack of small arms fire and could see bright flashes from the Confederate rifles behind the barricade. The Union troops halted, hunkered low, and waited for orders.

Colonel R. F. Catterson was in charge of the lead troops, the Second Brigade, consisting of

some 1,400 men, whom he began to deploy. Some of these Second Brigade soldiers, Illinois infantry, moved off to the right of the road and began advancing straight toward the Confederate barricade. These Illinois troops formed several parallel lines, one behind the other. The soldiers in each line were about two arm lengths apart. They crouched and ran forward, yelling and firing their rifles. When they reached within about 100 yards of the Confederate barricade, the Union skirmishers halted but continued shooting. They could now clearly see their foes, who were bobbing up and down behind the barricade and firing back. Up to this point, there were no fatalities.

Next, Catterson dispatched some Ohio troops to circle to the right of his skirmish lines. These soldiers sprinted into underbrush and trees bordering Congaree Creek, where they soon found themselves off to one side of the Confederate barricade in front of the creek. Confederates positioned at the far end of the barricade turned and began shooting at the Ohio soldiers hiding behind the trees and bushes.

The Ohio troops seemed to be in an ideal spot to create havoc, but then they realized they were being shot at from two directions. They looked up to see scores of Confederate rifles high up on the creek's opposite bank firing down on them. The Ohio troops were caught in lethal crossfire. They shielded themselves as best they could, but some were wounded and lay moaning on the ground. A few were killed almost immediately.

Catterson sent a courier back to the commander of the First Division, Brevet Major General Charles Woods, describing the Second Brigade's deteriorating situation. Woods responded with orders for Catterson to begin shifting troops further to the right, downstream, to find a way around the Confederate defenses on the other side of the creek.

Woods also moved his First Brigade, some 1,400 troops, forward on Old State Road to act as a reserve, ready to storm into action if needed. He



The Battle of Congaree Creek grew steadily more desperate for the Confederates as they tried to hold their positions against the unrelenting assault of the Union forces. The gunfire and smoke are clearly visible as the soldier in the foreground stops to reload his weapon in this illustration by Martin Pate. National Park Service

then ordered his Third Brigade, another 1,400 troops, to swing left from Old State Road. These soldiers, commanded by Colonel George Stone, ran across an open field and plunged into the swamp. The soldiers began “wading through mud and water up to their waists,” according to Union Major General John Logan.

One of the Union soldiers, John Rath, later recalled that as he splashed through the cold water he worried about alligators, although there was no evidence that he saw any. As they turned and moved toward Congaree Creek, Rath and his fellow soldiers held their rifles high because they were up to their belts in the fetid water. At the same time, these Union troops were coming

under fire from Confederates behind the barricade and also from across the creek. Confederate cannons also zeroed in on the swamp. As Union Major General Logan wrote, “The enemy opened quite briskly with artillery and musketry upon Colonel Stone’s advance....”

Every time one of the Confederate cannons boomed, a shell hurtled through the air, then exploded, crumpling trees or crashing into the water, sending geysers into the air. Acrid smoke from the gunpowder drifted across the swamp as the Union troops forged ahead, stopping only briefly from time to time to shoot back at the Confederates.

Behind the Confederate barricade out in front

of the creek, the officer in charge, Dibrell, grew increasingly alarmed. More than 2,000 Union troops were now swarming around his position on three sides. His soldiers were outnumbered by at least two to one and under attack on both flanks. The situation was becoming untenable. Dibrell sent couriers racing across the bridge with urgent appeals to his superior, Butler, seeking permission to retreat. Minutes ticked by, but there was no reply. Dibrell dispatched another courier. While he waited, Dibrell paced behind the barrier, firing his pistol and shouting encouragement to his beleaguered soldiers.

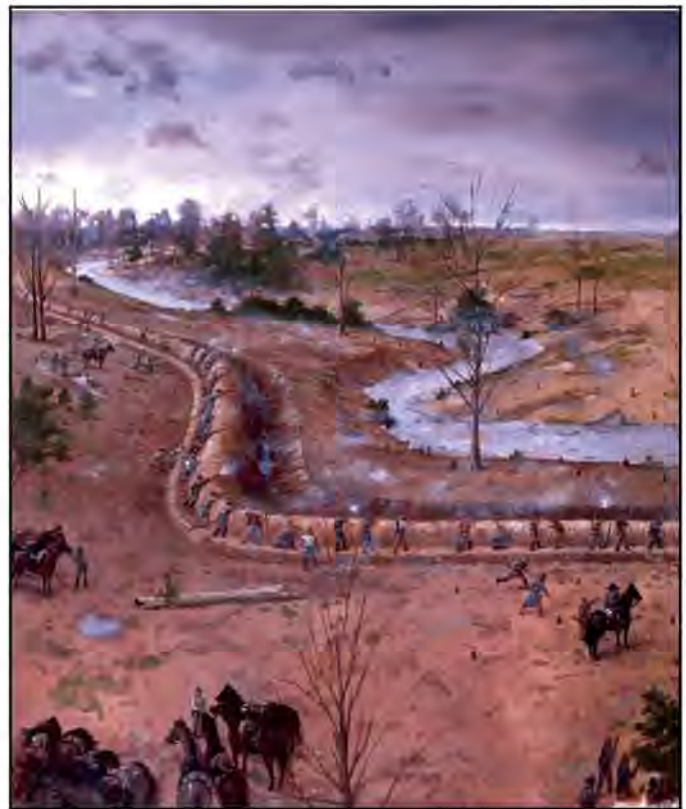
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THE CAVALRY RETREAT

Thirty minutes passed, then forty-five. Union soldiers now seemed to be almost everywhere, as the battle intensified. Dibrell still heard nothing from Butler. If he did not move his troops soon, they would be trapped, then annihilated. Finally, after an hour without any word from Butler, Dibrell ordered a retreat.

On command, the Confederate cavalymen on foot sprinted toward makeshift bridges where they could cross the dangerously swollen creek. Others leaped into their saddles and began a wild dash for the bridge. Horse hoofs flew, kicking up mud. Riders leaned low, trying to make themselves smaller targets as bullets whizzed by them. Several cavalymen led horses that dragged the cannons, one right after the other, toward the bridge. The artillery wheels clattered on the wooden structure, the racket joining the sounds of gun fire and shouting men.

Dibrell waited with a cluster of his cavalymen until the last possible moment behind the barricade. This rear guard, now mounted, held their horses in check while they continued to fire their pistols and rifles, trying to hold off Union troops who were edging ever closer. Dibrell finally shouted a command. The cavalymen yanked their



Confederate soldiers use a high earthen berm to mount their rifles and shield themselves as they fire down on Union troops in this painting by Martin Pate. National Park Service

reins and the horses spun around, almost in unison, then began galloping toward the bridge. As they rode, the Confederates twisted in their saddles and fired back over their shoulders. The horses thundered across the bridge while several riders tossed lit torches onto the pile of timbers.

The wood burst into flames just as the last Confederate horse cleared the bridge. Dibrell's soldiers rode a short distance beyond the bridge, then turned off the road where they jumped from their horses and ran to the earthworks. There they took their places beside other Confederate soldiers who were firing at the Union troops now swarming toward the creek.

A few daring Union soldiers dashed toward the bridge, hoping to scatter the burning timbers and save the structure. At first, these men ignored the torrent of gunfire peppering the ground around

them. But then Confederate cannons unleashed a barrage on the bridge approach, ripping craters out of the earth and spewing curtains of hot shrapnel. These artillery blasts sent the Union soldiers racing for cover. For precious moments, the Confederates kept the Union troops away from the bridge while the fire continued to burn.

Some distance away, however, on both sides of the bridge, Union troops were making headway. Some of Catterson's Second Brigade soldiers had moved far enough downstream to reach an area where Confederate forces on the other side were considerably thinned. Safe from enemy fire, the Union Second Brigade soldiers began chopping down trees. The thud of their axes was muffled by the noise of battle. Soon, one of the trees shuddered then fell, its crown crashing onto the other side of the creek. A second tree fell, then another. The Second Brigade now had makeshift bridges to pursue the Confederates. Catterson sent a courier to his superior, Woods, seeking permission to begin crossing Congaree Creek.

About the same time, far upstream, Union Third Brigade troops made similar progress despite having to navigate the swamp and ford a tributary of Congaree Creek. Iowa troops, reaching an area where there were no more Confederate trenches on the other side of Congaree Creek, rushed across on bridges they hastily made from trees. They then charged the Confederates in their ditches from the side. With no barricades to defend against this flank attack, the Confederates began fleeing.

All along the creek, Confederates pulled out of the earthworks. Some panicked and ran, but many backed away deliberately, firing their rifles and preventing the retreat from becoming a rout. In most cases, the infantry left first, while cavalrymen mounted their horses and continued to shoot, forming a protective shield for the infantry and artillery men as they made their escape.

The fire on the bridge was dying. Flames

flared here and there, but the structure was too wet to be consumed. Dibrell considered ordering his men to cut the bridge down, but time had run out. Union cannons now plastered the Confederate side of the creek, making any attempt to reach the bridge almost surely suicidal. Dibrell decided the effort would cost too many lives and ordered his cavalrymen to ride away.

Within minutes, Union troops with the Second Brigade charged the bridge. They quickly scattered the burning timbers and snuffed out the remaining flames. More Union soldiers then streamed across the blackened structure to the vacated earthworks. Wisconsin troops led mules pulling a cannon across the bridge. The Battle of Congaree Creek was over.

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BATTLE QUESTIONS

The preceding account explains how the battle may have unfolded. The description is based on information from historians and the sometimes contradictory versions penned by participants, some of whom wrote about the battle years later when their memories may have been clouded. Historian Joe Long of the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Museum also helped by developing a step-by-step sequence of what may have happened by synthesizing various accounts.

So much time has passed since the battle, however, that no retelling could capture accurately everything that happened, and many unanswered questions remain. The battle lasted some five or six hours, according to Dibrell, the Confederate commander. Dr. John Lewis, one participant, estimated the battle began about nine in the morning and ended around 2:30 that afternoon. Another account indicates the fighting continued until about four in the afternoon.

Despite the fierceness and length of the battle, there were apparently relatively few casualties. Five or six Union soldiers were killed. Most, if not

all, of these casualties involved the Second Brigade, caught unexpectedly in a crossfire from Confederates behind the forward barricade and other Confederates positioned in the earthworks on the other side of the creek. At least seventeen Union soldiers suffered serious wounds in the engagement.

One of the last Union soldiers to die was a Sergeant Cherry of the 100th Indiana Regiment, according to historian Tom Elmore. Cherry (first name unknown) had a reputation for being brave enough when he was involved in combat, but frequently became panicky beforehand. During the Battle of Congaree Creek, Cherry headed for the rear to get away from the fighting when a Colonel Johnson encountered him and yelled, "Get up...Go to your company and show yourself a man for once."

Cherry apparently replied, "I will go, Colonel, since you insist, but I am sure if I go up there I shall be killed." Colonel Johnson yelled back, "You had better be killed than have the reputation of a coward." Within some ten minutes, Cherry was dead, hit by one of the final bullets fired by the retreating Confederates.

At least one Confederate died at or near Congaree Creek, and he was a drunken colonel, according to one source. There may have been other Confederate deaths and probably were many wounded soldiers, but it is difficult to know for certain. The battle occurred late in the war when Confederate record keeping grew notoriously haphazard.

One explanation for the relatively few casualties is that soldiers on both sides had become extremely cautious because of the long and bloody war. These "are hardened, experienced campaigners who do not unnecessarily expose themselves to fire," explains historian Joe Long. "Instead, the jockeying [in battle] is for superior tactical position, which, once attained [by the Union], the Confederate officers, like chess players, acknowledge a forfeit rather than the

senseless waste of diminishing forces. The Confederates are fighting for time, which they achieve when they force the enemy to deploy. Union soldiers, on the other hand, can afford to be patient."

Existing records provide no explanation for what happened to Major General Matthew Butler during the battle and why he and Colonel George



Confederate Lieutenant General Wade Hampton, grandson of a Revolutionary War hero, was among the last defenders to leave Columbia. National Park Service

Dibrell failed to communicate during a crucial part of the fighting. Butler, normally in the thick of any shooting, may have been engaged in combat or shifting his troop positions to counter Union attempts to circle Confederate defenses. Certainly, the unfamiliarity of Butler and Dibrell with each

other delayed the Confederate retreat across Congaree Creek and contributed to the Confederates' failure in destroying the bridge.

In a report filed shortly after the conflict, Dibrell seemed defensive about the issue: "Had I been allowed to retire from the barricade [in front of the creek] when I requested it, my intention was to cut the bridge down. I feel that I am not responsible for the failure to destroy the bridge and know that the officers and men under my command are not. They displayed great gallantry...." Ill will persisted between members of Butler's and Wheeler's cavalry long after the war ended and resulted in conflicting written accounts about which unit did what in the final months of combat.

Even if the Confederates had succeeded in destroying the bridge over Congaree Creek, their efforts to defend the earthworks there were surely doomed anyway. The estimated 2,500 Southerners could not possibly have fended off the hordes of Union troops surging toward them on Old State Road.

There is still much to be learned about the Battle of Congaree Creek, one of many compelling reasons for preserving the battlefield. Extensive remnants of the Confederate earthworks still exist within the proposed Archeological Park. These earthworks are important assets, especially because so many Civil War defensive structures in South Carolina and across the South have been obliterated.

Confederate Major John Niernsee, architect for South Carolina's State House, which was under construction at the time of the battle, designed the earthworks at Congaree Creek. Most of Niernsee's records were destroyed in fires that consumed Columbia after the battle, but a report he filed late in the war survived and recently turned up in a document search by Patrick McCawley of the South Carolina Archives and History Center.

Niernsee describes how Governor Andrew

Gordon Magrath ordered him to begin work on Columbia's defenses in late December 1864. At that time, a Confederate Army surveying party had already been at work for several weeks and "considerable progress [had been] made in their reconnaissance" of areas west of the Congaree River, apparently including Congaree Creek.

Before construction began, Niernsee, who was the state engineer, requested that the governor help secure "engineers, assistant engineers, tools, teams [of animals] and other implements and materials and 2,000 Negro laborers [slaves] and the necessary subsistence stores." The laborers, however, arrived slowly so that work began with only 12 slaves.

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SLAVES BUILD DEFENSES

"After a week or ten days time, hands came in more rapidly and tools were collected and engaged....in sufficient numbers to supply the increased force" so that three days before the battle some 750 laborers were engaged in creating earthworks. Niernsee thought these workers "would have no doubt been largely augmented to probably the original required number of 2,000....if some further time for their arrival could have been obtained."

But with time running out and using "this comparatively small force," Niernsee managed to establish two defensive lines west of the Congaree River. One set of trenches, about two miles from Columbia, stretched along Caseys Creek from its juncture with the river. The outermost defenses, about five miles from downtown, consisted of more than four miles of trenches adjacent to Congaree Creek and then continuing along Six Mile Creek, according to Niernsee's written recollections.

As a part of the Congaree Creek barricades, "there were five strong batteries [for cannon] completed," Niernsee wrote, adding that laborers at

both defensive lines participated in “the clearance of extensive and heavy masses of timber.”

Had he been given another “two weeks labor with the increasing forces expected,” Niernsee thought he could have completed all defenses west of the Congaree River, but the Union Army’s rapid advances cut the work short. Niernsee had also begun digging trenches east of the river.

Even though not all planned construction was finished, Niernsee expressed satisfaction with what he accomplished. “Besides the testimony of our own generals, I may but add (although reluctantly) the....observations of several of the enemy officers in command who after the capture of the city observed that even with the incomplete work on these lines, if properly manned by an adequate numerical force of men and guns, they would have offered sufficient resistance to [cause Union forces] to abandon their design of a direct and persistent attack on Columbia.”

Records seem to agree that Union officers were impressed by the Confederates’ Congaree Creek defenses.

For example, Union Brevet Major General Charles Woods, commander of the XV Corps First Division, wrote that the earthworks were “strongly constructed and most admirably adapted

to the defense of the crossing.” Union praise even came from General William Tecumseh Sherman, who wrote that the Confederates had “a strong position” with “a well constructed fort.”

There are indications that Confederate infantry with the 58th North Carolina Regiment and the Pettus Alabama brigade arrived at the creek on February 14, the day before the battle, and helped

fortify the defenses. A Major Harper (first name unknown), one of the North Carolina troops, remembered being in the earthworks the next day and looking down on the battle. “On February 15th, the enemy deployed in large force in the open bottoms in plain view of our position, and we witnessed here the skirmishing by our cavalry....with the enemy’s infantry. The cavalry moved as orderly as on parade, squadrons frequently charging the foe’s advance.” Historian Joe Long, however, thinks this account is inflated and perhaps never happened at all, suggesting this may be an example of inaccuracies that sometimes occur in remembrances.

At least one historian has questioned whether there were any Confederate infantry involved in

the battle. Historian Elmore and archeologist Wayne Roberts, however, both contend that infantry mingled with cavalry in earthworks north



This light-weight saddle shows how deft Civil War horsemen were in riding their mounts over great distances and into battle. The saddle is displayed in the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum. Photo by Alt Lee

of the creek. Dibrell, the Confederate commander, wrote, "As soon as we were driven across the bridge, it was set on fire. Our men retired to the earthworks, and the enemy kept away from the bridge until all the rails...upon it had burned up, and until the enemy had effected a crossing elsewhere, and the infantry supporting our left flank had been withdrawn."

Archeologists and historians involved in the Archeological Park will conduct extensive research to determine exactly which units participated in the battle.

Archeologists have already conducted preliminary investigations of what remains of the earthworks and have determined that much of the construction is well preserved. In one section, a wide ditch extends about one hundred yards long above the banks of Congaree Creek. This ditch is several feet deep, according to archeologist David Anderson, and about twenty-five feet wide. Behind the ditch, Confederate workers piled up enormous amounts of dirt, forming a barricade some thirty feet wide at the base and about fifteen feet wide at the top.

Confederate soldiers stood behind the barricade during the battle, leaning their rifles across the earthen top. Any Union troops approaching from across the creek would have had to climb up steep banks, drop into the ditch, then climb up about ten feet to reach the top of the barricade, an almost impossible task with Confederate soldiers shooting down on them.

Other, less elaborate earthworks today stretch out in both directions along the creek for hundreds of yards. Because of thick vegetation, the full extent of these remnants will not be disclosed until more extensive archeological investigations can be conducted. Mike Dawson, director of the River Alliance, and John Jameson, National Park Service archeologist, have already located earthen platforms that perhaps supported Confederate cannons. If additional archeological studies confirm these findings, cannons will be placed at

these spots to give visitors a realistic view of how the artillery was positioned during the battle.

Archeologists will also carefully map the existing earthworks. After studying these maps and historic records, they will make detailed estimates about how far the defenses originally extended and how many of the defenses have been lost because of erosion, farming, and drainage ditch construction.

Relic hunters, using metal detectors and shovels, have already stripped the unprotected battlefield of shells and other Civil War materials. Nevertheless, if the site is shielded from further depredations, archeologists will conduct excavations that could uncover additional artifacts. In recent years, similar studies elsewhere have disclosed a great deal about how battles unfolded. For example, Douglas Scott, a National Park Service archeologist, traced the precise movements of troops at the Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument in Montana from bullet fragments he unearthed.

Similar studies at Congaree Creek could provide new information about the Civil War battle and insights about how to restore sections of the earthworks to resemble how they appeared on February 15, 1865. Once the Archeological Park becomes a reality, interpreters will use information gathered by scientists to weave a compelling story. These interpreters will walk visitors along paths through the earthworks and explain what happened at each stage of the battle. The earthworks could also be used to stage battle re-enactments or other forms of living history.

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COLUMBIA BURNS

The Battle of Congaree Creek was the last major effort to protect Columbia, which is another persuasive reason to preserve the site. The Confederate defeat led directly to Columbia's devastation, although the city was not lost immediately.

After being overwhelmed at Congaree Creek,



This engraved nameplate identifies a weapon that belonged to Confederate Major General Matthew C. Butler of South Carolina. The artifact is one of many displayed in the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum. Photo by Alt Lee

Confederate forces, including parts of Wheeler's cavalry, retreated to a high ridge about a mile away, while Union troops pursued them at a measured pace.

"As we fell back slowly in front of Sherman's advancing army, we witnessed on the clear plain between Congaree Creek and Columbia one of the grandest pageants of arms that it was my privilege ever to see," wrote Dr. John Lewis, a member of Wheeler's cavalry.

"Several thousand men of Sherman's army advanced over this plain in line of battle, artillery thrown out in front, with long lines of skirmishers in front of the artillery, and bands were playing and flags flying. It was a scene so impressive as never to be forgotten."

More shots were exchanged between the two sides, but the significant fighting was over for the day. In Columbia, where the sounds of the Congaree Creek battle had reverberated like distant thunder, news of the Confederate defeat turned already prevalent anxiety into outright panic. A Confederate cavalryman, William Stokes, who was in Columbia, wrote, "There is much excitement in the city, and the people are leaving in every direction — such moving of cattle, hogs, sheep, etc., I never saw the like before, nor never want to see again."

Governor Magrath imposed martial law and sent armed patrols into the streets, declaring, "The enemy has appeared in front of the capital of state. His objective is its capture."

That night, Confederate soldiers, members of Butler's cavalry, retreated across the Congaree River into Columbia, setting ablaze the one bridge spanning the river after they crossed. The roaring fire quickly enveloped the wooden structure. Soon, only the broad stone bridge pillars partially buried in the river remained, jutting out of the fast current.

Confederate soldiers fired cannons across the river into Union camps that night, lighting up the sky with brilliant flashes. Clement Saussy, a member of the Confederate artillery battery, remembered aiming at Union campfires that flickered near the banks of the river. "After our third shot, every campfire was [put] out, but we had the range and annoyed them all night." At least some Union camps targeted by artillery were on or near what is now the Cayce boat landing, according to historian Tom Elmore.

The thunderous cannon blasts signaled Confederate defiance, but accomplished little, except for killing one Union soldier. The cannon fire also angered Sherman, who wrote, "This provoked me much at the time, for it was wanton mischief....I have always contended that I would have been justified in retaliating for this unnecessary act of war, but did not...."

The next day, February 16, Sherman's troops advanced, without meeting any significant opposition, north along the Congaree River. The Union troops could see the frenzied activity across the water in Columbia. Residents, wagons, and hand carts clogged the streets, while Confederate soldiers tried to maintain order. Even so, looting was already occurring.

Out of Union sight, on the far side of town, the one rail station that remained open was a scene of bedlam. Throngs of frantic citizens tried desperately to catch the last train, which was soon packed. Some, who could find no room in the train cars, clung to the sides from railings as the locomotive chugged out of the station, according to historian Elmore.

Union troops made no move into the city, although their artillery did shoot across the water into Columbia, further unnerving the populace and, according to one report, killing two people. Some shells crashed inside the new capitol building, the State House, which was under construction and



This Civil War-era holster belonged to Confederate Major General Matthew C. Butler. South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum. Photo by Alt Lee

had no windows or roof. Shells hit the new walls, blasting out chunks of gray granite. The impact points today are marked with six stars.

Sherman's officers concluded that the Congaree River was too broad, deep, and swift to build a pontoon bridge for safe crossing. They were also apparently concerned about Confederate artillery on the other side. The Union army advanced instead to the Saluda River north of the city. There, Union troops charged to the top floor of a textile mill, the Saluda Factory, where they stood

guard with long-range rifles equipped with telescopic sites. Fellow troops marched across the river on a newly constructed pontoon bridge to an area now owned by Columbia's Riverbanks Zoo and Garden. Once the crossing was well underway, Union soldiers torched the Saluda Factory.

Confederate forces, in one last act to slow the inevitable fall of the city to the Union forces, destroyed the bridge spanning the Broad River, a gateway leading toward the north part of Columbia. The bridge caught fire quicker than expected, catching part of Wheeler's cavalry on the other side. Captain Andrew Sea, a Confederate artillery officer, described the structure as "an old fashioned wooden bridge, weather-boarded and roofed."

a few of our extreme rear guard had not gotten out..."

Cavalryman John H. Watt recalled "...we were ordered to fall back immediately, the rear part of the command having to run through the blazes of fire from twenty to fifty feet or more, so that some of our men were badly burned....some of our friends had to be carried from the bridge."

Twenty Confederate soldiers suffered serious burns, according to historian Elmore. Major General Joe Wheeler was the last man to make it across the bridge, his horse galloping through the flames. The fire singed the horse's mane and Wheeler's hair.

Soon after, Union troops forded the Broad River, the first group by raft followed by others on



The Sharps Carbine was used by many Union and Confederate cavalrymen during the Civil War. South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum. Photo by Alt Lee

Before the Confederates made their final crossing, Captain Sea set cannon in place pointing at the bridge. "To make assurance doubly sure [that the structure would burn]," Sea wrote, "I scattered a little straw against the sides of the bridge at my end, and stood there with a torch to fire it when our men had gotten through. The cannoneers were instructed to fire on the rear end [of the bridge] when they saw me throw my hat into the air, because I know a word of command could not be heard." But something went wrong. Sea ignited the bridge fire too soon and was "greatly distressed to find out I had failed to see

a pontoon bridge. On the morning of February 17, they marched into Columbia, escorted by Mayor Thomas Jefferson Goodwyn, who surrendered the city on instructions from Confederate Lieutenant General Wade Hampton, who had just been promoted.

Some minor skirmishing occurred between the Confederates and some of the first Union troops to enter the city, but although various Confederates considered engaging in intensive street fighting, their superior officers, primarily General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, prevented major combat, apparently out of concern for civilian casualties.

Hampton, Wheeler, and Major General Matthew C. Butler watched from just blocks away as Union troops and the American flag advanced steadily into the heart of the city. The cavalry officers, lions of the old South, then wheeled their horses around and rode away. Some Confederates soldiers set a railroad depot on fire as they departed the city. This was "the last official act by the Confederate States in Columbia," according to historian Elmore.

One Confederate soldier, Edward Wells, years later wrote about the sadness troops felt "leaving behind their near relatives, or dear friends: all were parting from kindly acquaintances. As they [the soldiers] had marched through the town, many a woman's pale face was seen at windows watching the retreating column, and no one with the heart of a man could feel otherwise than pained and humiliated at being obliged to leave under such circumstances."

That night, fires, stoked by gale-force winds, transformed the city into a hellish nightmare. Historians continue to debate whether General Sherman purposely caused the destruction. Early blazes likely had different sources, whether ignited by the retreating Confederates, joyous blacks celebrating their newfound freedom, riotous ruffraff, former prisoners of war bitter over their treatment, or victorious Union soldiers.

Certainly, Union soldiers, emboldened by their triumph, angered over what they considered Southern atrocities, and many of them inebriated by easily available alcohol, bore a large measure of blame. Groups of victorious soldiers spiraled out of control. Sometimes led by immediate superiors, they rampaged through the city, ransacking, stealing, burning and terrorizing, before they were finally disciplined or simply returned to their camps.

"First-hand accounts by former Union prisoners, a New York reporter and citizens" clearly demonstrate that Union soldiers were setting

fires, according to Frank Knapp of the Greater Columbia Civil War Alliance. One woman resident described the scene: "Such an awful sight! The...street filled with a throng of men, drunken, dancing, shouting, cursing wretches, every one bearing a tin torch or a blazing lightwood knot. The sky so dark a half hour before, was already glowing with light, and flames were rising in every direction."

§ § §

BITTER TIMES

Multiple fires erupted in different places and quickly spread. Wagons, loaded with cotton and readied for flight out of town by the Confederate military, stood unprotected in the streets and added fuel to the flames. Streets were also strewn with debris, remnants of the looters (some of them Confederate soldiers) and fleeing residents. Gusting winds swept burning bits of cotton, cinders, and other fiery objects skyward, creating an incendiary blizzard.

Residents and former slaves cowered in parks and open spaces to escape the searing heat and collapsing buildings. A Union officer remembered, "The broad beautiful streets were lighted as if it were day. The heat in almost every direction was overpowering. The thousands of shade-trees that adorned the city were twisting and twining like serpents."

From the beginning, according to historian Elmore, some Union troops fought fires and heroically protected private property. Sherman, exhausted from so many days of arduous marches, apparently slept through the early stages of the conflagration. He and his highest-ranking officers eventually took decisive steps to subdue unruly troops and to try to contain the blazes, but their efforts came too late. By morning, at least one third of the city, consisting of entire blocks of buildings, was reduced to smoking ruins.

While there are tantalizing hints that some high-ranking Union officers, perhaps including Sherman, planned the torching of Columbia, there is no definitive proof of such a strategy. Some evidence even suggests that Sherman had no such intentions, only planning the destruction of factories and government buildings. There is little doubt, however, that by the time of the South Carolina campaign hatred ran deep on both sides of the conflict. Once a glorious crusade for many Northerners and Southerners, the Civil War had descended into a bitter, ugly struggle that had dragged on for years.

Fueling the enmity were several specific instances. Northerners were incensed, for example, when escaped Union prisoners of war began telling of the horrid conditions at the Confederate prison at Andersonville, Georgia, where thousands of captured Union soldiers died. Confederate officials, including President Jefferson Davis, argued that they provided the best conditions possible for the captives, considering invading armies and the Union naval blockade, but nothing could assuage Northern outrage. Some United States senators and top-ranking military officials called for retaliation. Union soldiers discovered another grim, though smaller war prison, Camp Sorghum, on the outskirts of Columbia.

Sherman also became furious when his troops stumbled on land mines planted by Confederates outside Savannah. The general considered these devices to be beyond the bounds of civilized rules. "This was no war, but murder and it made me very angry," Sherman wrote. He ordered Confederate prisoners to walk in front of his army, risking their own maiming or deaths to remove the explosives.

Southerners, for their part, were livid because Sherman targeted civilians for punishment. In the southern part of South Carolina, for example,

Union troops burned major portions of at least eight smaller towns, according to researchers at the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Museum.

While his troops apparently committed few acts of physical harm against civilians and burned a relatively small percentage of houses after leaving Atlanta, Sherman's foragers stripped many residences of all food, farm animals, and supplies, leaving families, who were already suffering, desperate. What the army missed, clusters of Union deserters trailing Sherman often took. Wheeler's Confederate cavalry also gained a reputation for stealing.

During the South Carolina campaign, Sherman's troops discovered eighteen dead Union soldiers, whose throats were slit or heads bashed. Some of these corpses wore signs saying, "Death to all Foragers." Sherman blamed the Confederate cavalry for the killings and wrote a letter to Wade Hampton promising retaliation. In the letter, Sherman defended his troops' foraging as "a right as old as history."

Both Hampton and Wheeler denied any knowledge of the throat-slitting incident. Hampton wrote back to Sherman, threatening to shoot two Union soldiers for every Confederate killed in retaliation for the atrocities. Hampton also complained about the harm Sherman was causing women and children and promised that his soldiers would shoot any Union soldier caught burning a house. "This order shall remain in force so long as you disgrace the profession of arms by allowing your men to destroy private dwellings," Hampton wrote.

Sherman did not reply, but told one of his officers to ignore Hampton's concerns about "...warring against women and children. If they [the Confederates] claim to be men, they should defend their women and children and prevent us reaching their homes."

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CONCLUSION

Little research has been conducted inside the proposed Archeological Park about what happened on the land after the Civil War. If the park becomes a reality, however, scientists will examine various documents — census records, property deeds, U. S. Army reports, agricultural surveys, estate reports, and Freedmen's Bureau correspondence — to learn more about what transpired.

Researchers will want to determine how some white land holders overcame high taxes, scarcity, and disrupted transportation systems during Reconstruction to regain prosperity and prestige, while others were devastated by ruined crops, mountainous debt, and the loss of slaves.

Studying what happened to freed slaves will be more difficult. Documents prior to the war frequently listed slaves only by their first names, while after the conflict, freed slaves often were omitted entirely from public records. Even so, by combing through records that do exist, researchers will be able to document some aspects of African-American life. They will also conduct oral history interviews with descendants of both whites and blacks who lived in the area to better

understand the life stories of various individuals. When documents are scarce, the verbal record passed from one generation to the next can help fill in some of the gaps in information.

Other studies will focus on steamboats, vital to transportation on the Congaree River before

and after the war, but gradually supplanted by railroads. Wide-spread modern transportation of jets and automobiles has made arrivals and departures commonplace today, but in earlier times travel was much more difficult and momentous. For example, a steamboat arrival at a landing, with the belching smoke, blowing whistles and clanging bells of the vessel, stirred excitement and often sparked celebrations on shore. It is easy to imagine passengers craning their necks and waving as they spotted friends and families waiting for them on the landing.

Steamboats often docked at Friday's Landing, near the proposed park, which was once the last stop for boats traveling up from the Atlantic coast. The big vessels were prevented from traveling farther north by treacherous shoals and boulders. Even in safer waters, steamboat



Historic artifacts such as this antique goblet can reveal a great deal about earlier inhabitants. Archeologists may find many surprises from the past in the soils of the proposed park. South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum. Photo by Alt Lee

captains had to be smart and alert, able to memorize the location of every obstacle, sandbar and shallow in the water. The most experienced captain could still be surprised by concealed snags and sunken trees beneath the water, obstacles that could rip open the hull and send a shudder through the entire craft, sinking the boat in moments.

In fact, steamboat accidents were common. Cotton bales, stacked high on the decks, frequently caught fire, ignited by sparks from the smoke stacks. Other fires were caused by the boilers, which exploded, sending terrified and burning victims diving into the river to escape.

Some scientists based at the Archeological Park will focus on studying local steamboat history. Again, digging through records will help them learn about accidents that occurred near the park. They will then try to pinpoint the exact locations of the mishaps, and when they find significant remains of the vessels and adequate funds are available, archeologists will don scuba tanks to continue their research underwater. Recovered steamboat artifacts could then be displayed at the South Carolina State Museum or other local museums, where there would be explanations about how the research was conducted and what the findings mean.

In fact, this emphasis on informing and involving the public will dominate every aspect of the park. For example, visitors will be able to watch an excavation of a prehistoric community thousands of years old, then walk a short distance to see scientists scraping away dirt from artifacts recovered from the time of the Revolutionary War. They might examine a cannon ball just unearthed in a Civil War dig as a scientist explains its significance, and gather around a guide explaining what archeologists are finding in the remains of a Native American village that existed about the time that the Spanish conquistadors first traveled through the interior.

"I've seen people wearing uniforms all over



Families with young children and visitors of all ages will find enjoyable and educational activities in the proposed park. The River Alliance

the world doing different re-enactments, but at this park an additional attraction will be watching scientists doing research," explained Oz Nagler, an urban planner with the River Alliance. "People are fascinated watching archeologists at work, and one great aspect about the park will be visitors will always have the promise of some unknown thing being discovered before their eyes." The other remarkable aspect about the park is the incredible sweep of prehistory and history that will be represented — perhaps 12,000 years, or even longer. "The continuity of time, the multiple components of this place are pretty unique," Nagler said.

As best can be determined, nothing like the proposed park exists anywhere, explained archeologist John Jameson of the National Park Service, which is offering advice on park development. "The potential of this place is fantastic. It sounds just too good to be true. It will be a gold mine as far as the number of sites from different eras available for research," Jameson said.

Another purpose in preserving and protecting areas rich in cultural resources is that scientists continuously create new strategies for coaxing information from the earth. Scientist Albert Goodyear recently wrote about one spot that may eventually be included in the Archeological Park: "Such sites of extreme scientific significance should be studied over a long period of time taking advantage of new developments in archeological method and theory and [such sites] should be studied from several [scientists'] points of view."

Many visitors to the park are expected to come from Columbia and surrounding areas. To spur interest, park managers will coordinate efforts with local museums and professional organizations, possibly mounting traveling exhibits or sending speakers to schools and civic groups.

These programs about history and archeology could draw on a wealth of talent available at the South Carolina State Museum and the Confederate Relic Room and Museum, the South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, the South Carolina National Guard Museum, the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, the Lexington County and Cayce Historical Museums, and the Congaree National Park.

"Once we begin to pull all the resources together, we can then figure out how best to use them to inform the public," explained Mike Dawson, executive director of the River Alliance.

"This book about the park, for example, could be a great resource for teachers."

A recent study conducted by David Pearlman and The Institute for Tourism Research also suggests that the park will stir interest in



A shell fragment from the Civil War was found near Columbia. Artifacts like this could help researchers trace the movements of soldiers at the Battle of Congaree Creek. South Carolina Relic Room and Military Museum. Photo by Alt Lee

surrounding states. Already 86 percent of the people who visit historic places or museums in South Carolina are visitors from other states. Many of these tourists travel from the adjacent states of Georgia and North Carolina, but more than half arrive from farther away, according to the report.

In fact, heritage tourism is mushrooming in popularity throughout the country. One-fourth of American adults report they regularly travel to a historic place or museum. Such visitors already spend more than \$581 million dollars annually in South Carolina.

There are distinct economic advantages to the local community in attracting visitors interested in history. For example, heritage tourists spend

more money than other visitors, according to the Pearlman report. They “are more educated, more environmentally aware and more sensitive to unique and fragile community cultures. They are interested in the authentic, real, natural and interesting and do not need or want contrived offerings or invented activities.” And the Archeological Park’s appeal will likely not be limited only to residents of the United States. “People in Europe, South America, Africa and Asia are increasingly interested in visiting the United States and learning about its fascinating history,” according to Nagler, the urban planner with the River Alliance.

Another reason this park will generate so much enthusiasm is because similar properties once rich with historical resources elsewhere have already been destroyed through development such as housing, strip malls, and office buildings. “This is the kind of place that is frequently bulldozed before it can be preserved,” explained Dawson of the River Alliance. That is why the River Alliance and a coalition of interested individuals and government officials are moving rapidly to establish the park and preserve the land. The creativity and planning that has already taken place inspires hope that the park will soon become a reality. The current landowner, South Carolina Electric and Gas, is also encouraging.

Nevertheless, potential stumbling blocks lie ahead. One serious obstacle to park development

could come from untrained and unauthorized people who dig up archeological sites. These unauthorized “pot hunters” can destroy the historical record forever. The pitted ground they leave from their digging is symbolic of the destruction they wreak on potential knowledge of the human past.

As the Pearlman report put it, “Careful planning of the (park) site must ensue to deter theft and public degradation.” Planners are already developing ideas for deterring such trespassers and are asking everyone to join in the goal of saving the site. Individuals are also welcomed and encouraged to lend their support to this rare chance to preserve a place so rich in history and full of opportunities for study, education, and recreation.

The distinguished archeologist Stanley South recently wrote that this book does “a remarkable job of synthesizing the archeological and historic periods represented in the [proposed] park.” The information presented in these pages, however, recounts only what is now known, and there is so much more to discover.

The Archeological Park will open up vast opportunities for enhancing knowledge and sharing what is learned with anyone curious about the past. As Stanley South put it, “Congratulations to the River Alliance and to the National Park Service for your efforts to create this unique archeological park.”

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