

**THE SIEGE OF SAVANNAH, BY THE
COMBINED AMERICAN AND FRENCH
FORCES, UNDER THE COMMAND OF
GEN. LINCOLN AND THE COUNT
D'ESTAING, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1779**

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P R E F A C E .

THE unfortunate Issue of the Enterprize undertaken in 1779, to recover Possession of the Capital of Georgia, has left a gloomy Page in our Revolutionary History, not only from its Failure as a military Movement, but from the melancholy Casualty which deprived our Army of one of its most talented Leaders, the Polish General Count Pulaski.

The Depression of the Patriots of the Revolution by these Reverses, was destined to be still further increased by the subsequent Success of the British Arms in the Southern Colonies, while it afforded Cause of Exultation among the Loyalists, who confidently predicted the speedy and effect-

ual Restoration of the Royal Authority throughout the revolted Colonies.

The Columns of the *Royal Gazette* bear Witness to the Strength of this Hope, while they at the same Time exhibit the Feeling of Bitterness which they cherished towards those who had begun the War, and in which the Insurgents had already achieved Success on many Occasions.

The following Pages present the Accounts that were published in Mr. Rivington's Paper, upon the Subject of the unsuccessful Attempt of the combined American and French Forces to capture the City of Savannah, in the Months of September and October, 1779.

According to the Plan proposed for this Series, we have briefly stated the Circumstances which preceded and attended the Event, before presenting the Documents that embrace the Details; and have placed in the Appendix, such other Statements and Papers, as would more fully present the Subject in all its Bearings, and under every Point of View.



INTRODUCTION.

THE Manifestations of Sympathy with the Revolution in the Colony of Georgia, although perhaps not less earnest, was less aggressive than in the North, and did not attract the Notice of the British Administration as requiring particular Effort on their Part in the earlier Years of the War. Although the Patriots of that Section entered into the Measures aiming at a Reform in Government with great Zeal, it was doubtless believed that when once the Armies in the North were vanquished, the whole Country would acquiesce in the Necessity of Obedience to the British Rule, without the Trouble of sending costly Armies and Navies to receive the Submission of the late Insurgents.

The Number of Sympathizers with the British Cause, was relatively much larger than in the northern Colonies, and in Proportion as this Cause prevailed, large Numbers of the Colonists lent their willing Aid in its Support, or passively yielded their Acquiescence to its Terms.

There were however, many earnest and vigorous Advocates of the Revolution, especially in the Upper Country, and the partizan Warfare which they continued to maintain long after the Cities on the Coast had been apparently settled as permanent Dependencies of the Crown, furnishes some of the most brilliant Passages in our Revolutionary History. The Contest became in some Parts a War of Extermination, and it appeared as if one Party must be entirely rooted out, before the other could live in Peace.

The Events of the War having shown that the Presence of a British Army was necessary to the Maintenance of the Royal Cause, and probably in the Expectation that

with this Encouragement, the loyal Portions of the Population, would venture to Rally in Force around the British Standard, an Expedition was fitted out from New York towards the Cloſe of 1779, to eſtabliſh themſelves at Savannah.

The American Force at that Place, then conſiſted of between fix and ſeven hundred Continentals, and a few hundred Militia under the Command of Major General Robert Howe.

The official Report of the British Officer who led this Expedition is embraced in the following Letter addreſſed to Lord George Germain, dated "Savannah, January 16, 1779:"

"In conſequence of Orders from Sir Henry Clinton, to proceed to Georgia with his Maſteſty's 71ſt Regiment of Foot, two Battalions of Hefſians, four Battalions of Provincials, and a Detachment of the Royal Artillery, Colonel Archibald Campbell embarked at Sandy Hook on the 27th November, 1778, and arrived off the Iſland of

Tybee on the 23d December, escorted by a Squadron under the Command of Commodore Parker. On the 24th, the greatest Part of the Transports got over the Bar and anchored in Savannah River. On the 27th, the Balance of Commodore Parker's Fleet joined him. During the Time occupied in bringing the last Division of the Fleet over the Bar, from the Provincial Battalions, were formed two Corps of Light Infantry, the one to be attached to Sir James Baird's light Company of the 71st Highlanders, the other to Captain Cameron's Company of the same Regiment. Having no Intelligence that could be depended upon with respect to the military Force of Georgia, or the Dispositions formed for its Defence, Sir James Baird's Highland Company of Light Infantry, in two Flat-boats, with Lieutenant Clarke, of the Navy, was dispatched in the Night of the 25th, to seize any of the Inhabitants they might find on the Banks of Wilmington River. Two Men were taken, from whom the Enemy derived In-

formation which they considered Satisfactory, and induced them to resolve to land the Troops the next Evening at the Plantation of Mr. Gerredeaux, twelve Miles further up the River, and two Miles from the Town of Savannah. The Vigilant Man-of-war, with the Comet Galley, the Keppel armed Brig, and the Greenwich armed Sloop, followed by the Transports in three Divisions, in the Order established for a Descent, proceeded up the River with the Tide, at Noon. About four o'clock in the Evening the Vigilant opened the Reach to Gerredeaux's Plantation, and was cannonaded by two American Galleys.

“ The Tide and Evening being too far spent, and many of the Transports having been grounded at the Distance of five or six Miles below Gerredeaux's Plantation, the Descent was delayed until next Morning. The first Division of Troops, consisting of all the Light Infantry of the Army, the New York Volunteers, and the first Battalion of the 71st, under the Command of