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Through the eyes of Calvin J. Candie

American Revolutionary War in Georgia: Through the eyes of Calvin J. Candie

Before the War

I breathe in deeply, and uttered a sincere prayer of gratitude; life has never been better for me and my sister as it is today. I am Calvin J. Candie, fondly called Monsier Candie by close friends. I am 29 years old and I own a tobacco plantation, Candieland, in Jamestown Virginia. I have been blessed, as my plantation is considered one of the elites in Georgia and I do enjoy some strong political connections. My concerns were down to diseases and some Indian killings that occur every year, but even that is kept to a minimum. Life has not always been like this. It was tough at the start. My father came here in 1710 to escape religious persecution in England and has worked to build a tobacco plantation here. By the time I reached 13, my father took me to work in the plantation, and it was tough and difficult. At 18, my sister, Lara Lee Candie - Fitzwilly, and I decided I could get my own plantation with all the hard work and experience I was trained on. It was demanding and stressful at the start, but things eventually got better. And indeed, life was good -- until things started to change.

At the Beginning

There was general unrest around the country in the early 1770s. Georgia actually prospered under the British rule, and this was why we were initially reluctant to oppose the British, even as we are against the British trade regulations. As such, Georgia did not send representatives to the First

Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1774. Congress asked the different colonies to set up a group called the Association to lead the trade ban against Britain. Through my political connections, I learned that we indeed elected delegates to attend the Second Continental Congress, but since the delegates themselves were in conflict with their stands, they declined to attend the congress. Eventually, though, we Georgians took power into our hands when the Second Continental Congress happened on July 4, 1775 in Savannah. we then adopted the trade ban against Britain.

Battles of the Rice Boats

One of the first crises in Savannah happened in January 1776 when British warships docked on the Savannah River. The Council of Safety was convinced that Savannah was to be attacked by the British, and had put Governor Wright under house arrest. Colonel Lachlan then led the defense of the city. What ensued was what will be known as the Battle of the Rice Boats, which happened on March 2-3, 14, 1776. I took part in it, fighting with the militia against the British troops. The British seized the rice-laden merchant ships, which were meant as provisions for the army in Boston, and fled with the fugitive Governor Wright and his cohorts.

Without a governor, the following provincial congress met in Augusta to draft the framework for the Rules and Regulations government. This took effect on May 1, 1776. Archibald Bulloch was made the militia's president and commander in chief. I was called and asked to be a Major General for the militia, both due to my efforts in the war and my political ties.

Shortly after, Georgia sent in delegates to Philadelphia to witness the Declaration of Independence signing on July 4, 1776.

Following this, there have been attempts to invade British East Florida, but all was in vain. These three failed attempts, along with learning self-government, were what the Whigs were busy doing during the first three years of independence. It may not seem much, but keeping the Indians at bay and creating stability was likewise important at that time.

British Army: The Return

Elsewhere in the country, the war was coming to a stalemate. Because of this, the British army tried a southern strategy. By December 1778, the British Army returned through the swamps in Savannah, and a series of encounters ensued. Savannah was eventually reclaimed by the crown by July 1779, and it became the one and only state in rebellion that had been restored to the British crown.

The struggles continued, and thereby ensued the siege of Savannah, fall of Charleston, and the two battles of Augusta. In each of these, our troops strived to reclaim what was rightfully ours. Savannah remained under the British government for the following year. The British evacuated Savannah on July 11, 1782. Wayne's victorious troops into the city were led by Lieutenant Colonel James Jackson. On July 13, 1782, Governor Martin convened the Georgia Assembly in Savannah. As many as 2, 000 white Georgians and double that number of blacks returned to British East Florida. About 400 whites and 5, 000 blacks migrated to Jamaica. The Loyalists in Florida had yet to put their new life to normal when they learned that the

peace treaty of 1783 had returned Florida to Spain. This caused masses of people to migrate to Jamaica, the Bahamas, as well as to Great Britain. The Georgian General Assembly elected Lyman Hall as governor on January 7, 1783. By late May 1783, there have been news going around of the signing of the preliminary peace treaty and this had always been welcomed with glee. The newly independent state of Georgia, maybe poor by most standards, claimed a virtual empire of territory that reached the Mississippi River.

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