

Cantonment Oglethorpe, Georgia (1826-1834)

Construction on **Cantonment Oglethorpe, Georgia** began soon after the arrival in spring 1826 of two regiments of federal troops aboard the brig *Heroine*, which had births sufficient for 75 men and cabins for officers.^{[1][2]} The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah began earnestly requesting military presence after all US troops had been removed from the city in early 1824.^[3] The fresh soldiers received artillery training at *Fortress Monroe in Philadelphia, PA* (<https://www.nps.gov/fomr/index.htm>) before arriving in Savannah and occupying a portion of 28-acres of dense forest almost a mile outside, of what was then, the city limits.^[1] Of the original acreage, approximately 8-acres^[4] now comprise the southwest quadrant of *Forsyth Park*. Cantonment Oglethorpe was replaced by *Oglethorpe Barracks* (1834-1879), which was located within the City of Savannah on Liberty Street.^[5] The new location was seen as advantageous to mitigate the deaths of soldiers and their staff by diseases that occurred during the warmer months (June through October).^[5]

Over 100-Deaths from Bilious Malignant Fever (1826-1828)

The newspaper, *Savannah Republican*, on February 28, 1829,^[1] republished a *Philadelphia Evening Post* article where residents of Savannah warn of the unhealthy conditions in Savannah causing the rise of a 'bilious malignant fever', (likely malaria),^[6] that had befallen the recently posted troops. According to the article, approximately one regiment had died from the Summer 1826 through the end of 1827. A regiment to replace the deceased troops arrived in April 1828 and by the end of 1828 an additional 51-soldiers, 5-women, and 16-children died from the bilious malignant fever. These deaths are not included within the *Index to Register of Deaths in Savannah, GA*.^[7] The location of the remains of the women and children, and over 100-troops are not yet known.

Richard Wayne, MD.(1804-1858), a native of nearby *Screven County, GA* (<https://www.screvencountyga.com>), received his military commission and served as surgeon at Cantonment Oglethorpe after his training at Medical College in Philadelphia, PA.^[8] Dr. Wayne also served the City of Savannah as Alderman (1828, 1842, 1843), Mayor (1844-1845, 1848-1853, 1857-1858),^[4] and represented "Chatham County in two sessions of the lower house of the Legislature of Georgia".^[8] Dr. Wayne experienced good health until 1840 when he was afflicted by "bilious fever accompanied by hemorrhages from the stomach" after tending to city patients and those afflicted in the rice fields. While Mayor, *Laurel Grove Cemetery* was established, which is the place of his burial (Lot 556).^{[8][9]}

Budget & Design

An initial budget of \$14,452.51 for Cantonment Oglethorpe was included in a letter, January 1827, by the Department of War for the Congressional Military Committee.^{[3][10]} The budget itemized picket fencing and most of the buildings that appear in later plans including a two-story hospital. The washwomen's quarters, magazine, ordinance store house, sutler store, wells and privies are not included in the budget, but they are in the 1829 drawing. A portion of the dimensional lumber necessary for the buildings and perimeter picket fence was requested in a notice published in the *Savannah Georgian*, October 10, 1826, with the request for delivery of: "*ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY TWO THOUSAND FEET OF PINE at the U.S. Cantonment (near Savannah) in pieces of TWENTY EIGHT FEET in length, 8 inches thick and not less than 12 inches in width*".^[11] In addition to timber, Lieutenant John B. Scott also advertised and secured contracts for large quantities of firewood and fresh beef.^{[12][13]}

Three site plans of Cantonment Oglethorpe can be found at National Archives Catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov>). From this site plan, note the building elevations are designed in the regional low-country style.^[14] Dimensions of the buildings and perimeter picket fence are included in another plan dated March 31, 1829. On the reverse of the third plan, rooms within the building are named. This last site plan mentioned appears to be the initial design due to the notation that the perimeter fencing is not complete and that buildings are absent that appear later in the March 31, 1829 plan.

On the site plan dated March 31, 1829, the picket fence encloses the cantonment at right angles.^[15] The northern span of picket fence is an undisrupted 450-feet, the west picket fence is 602-feet with a gate located near a building housing the *quarter master and commissary stores*, the east picket fence extends south 480-feet with the main gate at the approximate midpoint, the *barn and stable* building is located in the southeast corner outside the picket fenced area where the south picket fence then extends west 100-feet with a gate in the approximate middle, then pivots south 122-feet, where then the south picket fence continues again for 350-feet to the west.

Savannah's unique grid of streets and squares, known as the Oglethorpe Plan, dominates Savannah's Historic Landmark District. The streets are at right angles with true north approximately 20-degrees to the west of what Savannahians consider north. The north arrow presented in the cantonment plans has this familiar shift from the right angle of buildings and streets seen on every Savannah map. This would suggest that the main gate on the east side of Cantonment Oglethorpe is aligned with a street or road. The nearest contemporary road following this design is White Bluff Road. The other near by contemporary road, Ogeechee Road, is not at a right angle relative to the city streets.

Location of Cantonment Oglethorpe

On April 3, 1827 the United States of America officially purchased the northern-half of Farm Lot 1, Holland Tything, Percival Ward (28 acres, 1.5 rods, 7 perches) for \$800 (Deed 2O-187).^[16] The closest modern references of boundaries of these 28-acres +/- are: Montgomery Street, West; Gwinnett Street, North; the central promenade of Forsyth Park, (then White Bluff Road), East; and Park Avenue, South. Savannah's Mayor and Aldermen encouraged the location in March 1826 due to its proximity being on the Greater Ogeechee Road that headed southwest of the city.^[3] At the time, Ogeechee Road cut through a small portion of the northwest corner of the 28-acres.^[17] Vincent's 1852 map and Colton's 1855 map of Savannah depicts Ogeechee Road traversing from the intersection of Montgomery and West Bolton to approximately the mid-point of the 300 Block of W Gwinnett Street.^{[18][19]}

The acreage was purchased from the estate of Matthew McAllister (Deed 2I-426, with plat^{[17][20]}) to satisfy a portion of debt of the estate. In September 1789, McAllister was appointed Attorney General of the Georgia District by George Washington.^[21] McAllister served as Mayor of Savannah when the City Exchange building was erected in 1799,^[22] which was demolished to build Savannah's City Hall that was completed in 1905.

Charles Seton Henry Hardee (1830-1927) in his book, *Reminiscences and Recollections of Old Savannah*,^[6] indicates the location of the Old Cantonment was located at Park Avenue and Whitaker. He attended a May festival at the location at age of 10. Hardee was the Treasurer for the City of Savannah for over 40-years, and he was noted for fighting corruption.^[23]

Joseph Frederick Waring's book, *Cerveau's Savannah*, accounts contemporary life in Savannah during the time of Cerveau's 1837 painting depicting the city view from atop the City Exchange. Although the cantonment is not depicted in the painting, Waring sites its location as being south of Gwinnett and west of Whitaker Street and that a city dump was located close by.^[24] Waring also revealed that the amusement of an air balloon ascending took place at the cantonment's parade grounds. Admission was required on March 5, 1836 to watch for an hour the air balloon aloft under the direction of by Monsieur Frigent as he was accompanied by a gentleman of Savannah in the car beneath the balloon.^{[24][25]}

Second Regiment of Artillery

The troops at Cantonment Oglethorpe were apart of the Second Regiment of Artillery under command of Brevet Colonel McRae. This Second Regiment of Artillery served within the Eastern Department under the command of Brevet Major General Edmund P. Gaines. Captains Baden and Lyon oversaw Companies I & E of the Second Regiment located at Cantonment Oglethorpe (1828). Other branches of this Second Regiment of Artillery were located in Charleston, SC, Augusta, GA, and St. Augustine, FL.^[26]

Forsyth Park Evolution

The United States of America surrendered the site of Old Oglethorpe Cantonment by Joint Resolution to the City Council of Savannah on January 20, 1853 (3L-108).^[27]

References

1. Georgia, Digital Library of (February 28, 1829). "This Morning's Mail" (<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn87062327/1829-02-28/ed-1/seq-2/#words=Cantonment+cantonment>). *Savannah Republican*.
2. "Contracts -- War Department -- 1826. Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting statements of contracts made by the War Department in the year 1826. February 22, 1827. Read, and laid upon the table | Library of Congress" (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2022687858>). *www.loc.gov*. p. 7. Retrieved 2025-02-16.
3. Harden, William (1913). *A History of Savannah and South Georgia, Vol 1*. Cherokee Publishing Co. pp. 312–314.
4. Gamble, Thomas, Jr. (1900). "A History of the City Government of Savannah, Ga., from 1790 to 1901; Compiled from Official Records by Thomas Gamble, Jr., Secretary to the Mayor, Under Direction of City Council" (https://dlg.usg.edu/record/gsg_docs_1373).
5. Georgia, Digital Library of. "Savannah morning news. (Savannah, Ga.) 1868-1887, March 31, 1882, Image 4" (<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn82015137/1882-03-31/ed-1/seq-4/#words=Barracks+Oglethorpe>). *Savannah Morning News*.
6. Hardee, Charles Seton Henry (1928). *Reminiscences and Recollections of Old Savannah*. Georgia Historical Society. pp. 73–75.
7. Genealogical Committee, Georgia Historical Society (1989). *Index to Register of deaths in Savannah, Georgia : volumes IV, September 1818-1832*. Georgia Historical Society. pp. 179–234.
8. "Savannah physician biographies" (<https://7063.sydneyplus.com/archive/final/Portal/Default.aspx?component=AABC&record=e1dd2a2b-b450-420f-9c64-a6496d06df21>). *Georgia Historical Society | ArchivEra (Final)*. Retrieved 2025-02-08.
9. "City of Savannah" (<https://savannah.cemsites.com>). *savannah.cemsites.com*. Retrieved 2025-02-09.
10. "Barracks, store houses, hospitals, &c. Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting to the Chairman of the Military Committee, a report of the Quartermaster General upon the subject of barracks, storehouses, hospitals, &c. January 25, 1827. Laid before the House by the Chairman of the Military Committee, and ordered to be printed | Library of Congress" (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2022688022>). *Library of Congress*.
11. "Digital Library of Georgia" (<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn83016084/1826-10-07/ed-1/seq-3/>). *Savannah Georgian 1824-1829*. October 7, 1826. pp. Image 3.
12. "Digital Library of Georgia" (<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn83016084/1826-06-27/ed-1/seq-3/#words=BEEF+Canton>). *Savannah Georgian 1824-1829*. June 27, 1826. pp. Image 3.
13. "Contracts -- War Department -- 1826. Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting

- statements of contracts made by the War Department in the year 1826. February 22, 1827. Read, and laid upon the table" (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2022687858>). *Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA*. Retrieved 2025-02-16.
14. Lowcountry Council of Governments. *Historic Resources of the Lowcountry* (1979, 2nd Printing ed.). The Press & Standard, Walterboro, SC. pp. 72–75.
 15. War Department. Office of the Chief of Engineers. 1818-9/18/1947. *Plan of Cantonment, Oglethorpe* (<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/353683936>). Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers.
 16. "USA, Georgia, Chatham County, Superior Court, Deeds Film 008544910 PG 10" (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3QQ-5QXT-1?cat=140778&i=402&lang=en>). *www.familysearch.org*. Retrieved 2025-02-08.
 17. "USA, Georgia, Chatham County, Superior Court, Deeds Film # 008564916 PG 232" (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3Q5-S9WL-B?cat=140778&i=231&lang=en>). *www.familysearch.org*. Retrieved 2025-02-09.
 18. "Vincent's subdivision map of the city of Savannah...shewing all public and private buildings, lots, wards, etc.hmap1852v4" (<https://sclfind.libs.uga.edu/sclfind/view?docId=ead/hmap1852v4.xml;query=maps>). *sclfind.libs.uga.edu*. Retrieved 2025-02-19.
 19. "Colton's the City of Savannah, Georgia, and the City of Charleston, South Carolina" (<https://digital.tcl.sc.edu/digital/collection/sclmaps/id/604/rec/10>). *digital.tcl.sc.edu*. Retrieved 2025-02-19.
 20. "USA, Georgia, Chatham County, Superior Court, Deeds, Film # 008564916 PG 231" (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3Q5-S9HZ-N?cat=140778&i=230&lang=en>). *Family Search Catalog*.
 21. "Item 1: Letters patent appointing Matthew McAllister U.S. Attorney for the District of Georgia" (<https://7063.sydneyplus.com/archive/final/Portal/Default.aspx?component=AABC&record=679e0fed-206e-4918-bddc-7a73c90bb1cf>). *Georgia Historical Society I ArchivEra (Final)*. Retrieved 2025-02-09.
 22. "Savannah City Exchange Plaque" (<https://7063.sydneyplus.com/archive/final/Portal/Default.aspx?component=AABC&record=28fe64c7-a940-463c-969c-e8efabc6ad84>). *Georgia Historical Society I ArchivEra (Final)*. Retrieved 2025-02-09.
 23. Hardee, Charles Seton Henry (1928). *Reminiscences and Recollections of Old Savannah. Savannah*. pp. 38–44.
 24. Waring, Joseph Frederick (1973). *Cerveau's Savannah*. Georgia Historical Society. pp. 23 30 38.
 25. Georgia, Digital Library of. "Daily Savannah republican. (Savannah, Ga.) 1829-1839, March 03, 1836, Image 3" (<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/lccn/sn87062328/1836-03-03/ed-1/seq-3/#words=BALLOON+Balloon>). *Daily Savannah Republican*.
 26. United States; Adams, John Quincy; United States; United States; United States; United States; United States, eds. (1828). *Message from the President of the United States, to both Houses of Congress, at the commencement of the second session of the Twentieth Congress. December 2, 1828. Read, and committed to the Committee on the Whole House on the State of the Union* (<https://www.loc.gov/item/2022687538/>). House document / 20th Congress, 2nd session. House. Washington, D.C.: publisher not identified.
 27. "USA, Georgia, Chatham County, Superior Court, Deeds, Film # 008191846 PG 62" (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3S1-X-KS1-H-F?cat=140778&i=61&lang=en>)

www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSKX-RS2T-1?cat=1407&cat=0&lang=eng.
www.familysearch.org. Retrieved 2025-02-09.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Draft:Cantonment_Oglethorpe,_GA&oldid=1292071642"