

# Ninety Six National Historic Site

Every other year, hundreds of reenactors converge on a site unknown by many today, but critical in the waging of the war for American Independence. The story began on the eve of the Revolution, in Ninety Six, S.C., a thriving village of 12 houses, a courthouse and a jail. Some 100 people lived in the vicinity. However, on Nov. 18, 1775, some 1,800 Loyalists attacked a group of Patriots only one-third that size who had gathered at Ninety Six. The attack has been called the first major land battle of the American Revolution in the South.

In 1778, as the war for independence waged on, it became clear that a quick end was doubtful. The British rekindled their plan to put down the rebellion by controlling the Southern Colonies, then swept north for total victory. By the summer of 1780, British control of South Carolina seemed assured, and Ninety Six was secured as a base of their operations. But the tide turned that fall as Patriot militia dealt Patrick Ferguson and his corps of Loyalists a crushing defeat at the battle at Kings Mountain. Meanwhile, Gen. Francis Marion was fighting Loyalists in the Lowcountry, Thomas Sumter was waging warfare against Loyalists in the Upcountry and Gen. Nathanael Greene, the new commander of American forces in the South, had split his

army to move more widely through the Carolinas.

Lord Cornwallis, fearing for Ninety Six and losing overall British control of South Carolina, sent units to remove the Patriot threat. The Patriots held however, dealing the British a major defeat at Cowpens in January 1781. In an effort to loosen British control over the backcountry, Greene set siege to Ninety Six in May 1781 but never took the fort. In July, the British abandoned the fort, moved to the coast and surrendered at Yorktown four months later, effectively ending the war.

Over two centuries later, reenactors from around the Southeast converge at **Ninety Six National Historic Site** to recreate the clashes between American Patriots and British Loyalists in 1775 and 1781.



The reenactment is held in April on alternate years, with the next program set for 2003. The program includes living history demonstrations, cannons and encampments.

Exhibits and artifacts in the visitor's center and a 10-minute video titled "Ninety Six, A Frontier Crossroad" provide a fascinating introduction to the star fort's history. The park includes a restored early 19th-century log cabin, the stockade fort, the well dug by Loyalists defending the star fort, a bookstore and souvenir shop.

## *If you go:*

### **NINETY SIX NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

1103 Hwy. 248  
Ninety Six, S.C. 29666  
864-543-4068  
[www.nps.gov/nisi](http://www.nps.gov/nisi)

## *Additional Revolutionary War sites:*

### **KINGS MOUNTAIN NATIONAL MILITARY PARK**

2625 Park Rd.  
Blacksburg, S.C. 29702  
864-936-7921  
[www.nps.gov/kimo](http://www.nps.gov/kimo)

### **COWPENS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD**

4001 Chesnee Hwy.  
Gaffney, S.C. 29341  
864-461-2828  
[www.nps.gov/cowp](http://www.nps.gov/cowp)

### **FORT MOULTRIE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

1214 Middle St.  
Sullivan's Island, S.C. 29482  
843-883-3123  
[www.nps.gov/fomo](http://www.nps.gov/fomo)