

Visiting the Sites Along the Trail

At each site you will find narrative signs with more details about what happened there.

Follow the Patriot signs to each site.

All of the sites can be reached by motorized vehicles. Pedestrians and cyclists can get to Coosawhatchie from the Trailhead with reasonable care via the frontage road.

Battle of Coosawhatchie

On May 3, 1799 Lt. Col. John Laurens and 250 men were in position on a slight rise near the bridge at Coosawhatchie. They were guarding the road against the expected assault by about 2400 British soldiers from Savannah. Against orders, Laurens and his men crossed the river and formed in line for battle. With many of the soldiers and Laurens himself wounded, they fell back to the Tullifinny River, about two miles east.

McPherson's Plantation

Home of Isaac McPherson, described by Dr. Johnson as “a great Rebel, a man of property.” The British occupied the plantation March 14-17, 1780, after unsuccessfully trying to chase down 50 American troops on horseback. During their stay the British engaged in what they thought was a skirmish with the enemy but mistakenly attacked their own troops.

Descendants of Isaac McPherson and his brother continue to live in the McPhersonville area.

Drive, cycle (mountain bikes) or hike the McPhersonville Road back to the Trailhead. Much of the road looks as it did 225 years ago.

Saltketcher Bridge

The British left McPherson's Plantation on March 18, 1780 and marched to the crossing of the Saltketcher (now the Salkehatchie) River, where a bridge had stood before the beginning of the war. They were met by 80 American militiamen who tried to prevent their crossing. The British Light Infantry crossed the river below this spot and came up behind the Americans. A captain and 16 privates were bayoneted to death by the British, who then spent the night at nearby Ogilvy's Plantation.

Fort Balfour (at Pocataligo)

By the fall of 1780, to maintain control of the Beaufort District and protect the King's Highway between Savannah and Charleston, the British built an earth and palisade fort at this key crossroads and named it after the British commander of occupied Charleston. In April of 1781 Col. William Harden was detached from Gen. Francis Marion's Brigade with 100 men. On April 14 Harden convinced old friends from Beaufort, who were in command of Fort Balfour, that he had more troops than he did and

that they should surrender. They believed him and did. Learning that British soldiers were on the way from Charleston, Harden and his men burned the garrison.

E. The Trailhead

Located behind the Lowcountry Visitors Center in a gazebo designed to reflect 18th century architecture and landscaping, narrative signs explain the role South Carolina's Lowcountry played in the War of Independence.