

A Capital Idea!

The History of Georgia's Seats of Power

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A History of Georgia's Capitals

In its history, Georgia has had five different official capitals and a number of other unofficial seats of power. Savannah, Augusta, Louisville, Milledgeville, and our present capital Atlanta, served as official capitals at different times in our state's history. Other locales have served as temporary seats of power or de facto capitals. Places like Frederica in the Colonial era, Ebenezer and Heard's Fort during the Revolutionary War, and Macon during the Civil War, have also served as temporary or emergency capitals. There have also been unsuccessful attempts to move the capital.

Throughout the state's history each new capital has been situated a little farther west than the last. Bounded to the east by the Atlantic Ocean and to the south by Spanish Florida (later to become the state of Florida), Georgia's expansion and growth was always westward. Each new Georgia capital followed the westward-progressing frontier.

Transportation was another factor that played an important role in influencing the process of calling for and selecting a new capital. There has always been a need for a capital that was centrally located relative to population centers and

transportation routes. Many of our interactions with the government in everyday life, such as getting a marriage license or a business license, can be done over the internet, telephone, mail, or by a visit to a local office. Early in Georgia's history none of that was possible and people had to travel to the state capital to conduct business and elected officials had to travel from their districts to attend legislative sessions. In the early history of the United States, travel was always a very difficult and uncomfortable proposition and that was very true for much of Georgia's history.

In Georgia's Colonial era there was no official capital as legal authority over Georgia was in England and Georgia's leaders during that time were royal appointees and not elected officials. During that time the seat of power in Georgia resided with the appointed leaders and wherever those leaders chose to live was the de facto seat of power. Only when Georgia declared independence was there an official seat of state power.

Almost from the beginning there was dissatisfaction with the location of Georgia's capital in the more remote parts of the state and the frequent movement of Georgia's capital was a reflection of that dissatisfaction. The center of population



Georgia's capitals through its history.

moved westward following the frontier and a centrally-located capital with good transportation connections was an ongoing need and concern for the people of Georgia and that shaped the history of its capitals.

The Colonial Era

Georgia's beginning dates back well over two centuries to February of 1733 when James Oglethorpe negotiated an agreement with Tomochichi, Chief of the Yamacraw Indians. In that agreement, the

Yamacraw granted permission for the establishment of Savannah.

Three months after this agreement, Oglethorpe and Tomochichi signed a treaty that gave all land, from the Savannah River to the Altamaha River, and as far inland as the tides reached, to the Royal Trustees who governed the Georgia colony. This was the first treaty of many in Georgia's history which would result in the cession of all Indian land within the modern borders of Georgia, and ultimately in the forced removal of

Indians from Georgia in the nineteenth century.

While James Oglethorpe was a trustee and the leader of the colony's founding, the charter enacted in 1732 giving authority for the establishment of Georgia explicitly forbade Oglethorpe from holding a position of leadership and only accorded him limited official authority, he quickly established himself as the leader of Georgia and power effectively resided with him.

Based in St. Augustine, Spain was an ever-present threat to the new Georgia settlement and that threat occupied much of Oglethorpe's attention. Soon after Savannah's establishment, Oglethorpe was given command of a regiment of British soldiers and in 1736 he proceeded to establish the settlement of Frederica, and a fort named Fort Frederica, on St. Simons Island. From 1736 until his ultimate return to England in 1743, Oglethorpe resided at Frederica making it the effective seat of power in Georgia during that time.

Oglethorpe returned to England in 1743 and the trustees of the colony appointed William Stephens to administer Georgia. As Stephens resided in Savannah, that city became the effective seat of power for Georgia until 1754 when Georgia became a royal colony that was no longer administered by the trustees and was instead governed by the Royal Board of Trade, who answered to the British king.

Savannah was designated as the official seat of government where the Royal Governor, the legislative assembly, and courts were headquartered. John Reynolds

was appointed Governor. One of Reynold's first acts was to take a tour of the colony. While on this tour he found a location approximately 14 miles upriver from the mouth of the Ogeechee River that he thought would be ideal for settlement. Thinking to profit from the venture, he sought to found a settlement there that he named Hardwick. He planned the settlement and attempted to have it designated as the official seat of government, but the effort was not funded by the Board of Trade and it failed. The colony was governed from England and administered by a Royal Governor in Savannah for the next twenty years, until the Revolutionary War.

Savannah: The First State Capital

As the Revolutionary War approached, Savannah became the center of the independence movement in the state and Georgia delegates joined their colleagues from the other twelve colonies in signing the Declaration of Independence in 1776. By that time the Royal Governor no longer controlled the state and a Revolutionary Government was established. While Savannah was not officially designated as capital by any decree or piece of legislation, the first state constitution, ratified in 1777, directed that the legislature meet in Savannah, but did not designate the city as the official capital and it gave authority to move the meeting location if needed.

In 1778 British troops launched a campaign to occupy the southern states and Savannah was captured in December of that year. The government fled to Augusta, located roughly 125 miles

upstream from Savannah and an attempt was made to hold a meeting of the Assembly in Augusta in January of 1779. When no quorum was reached, an executive council was formed, but it had to abandon the city when British troops occupied Augusta for about a month.

British troops soon departed Augusta and further attempts to convene an assembly were made but political divisions prevented an assembly from meeting until January of 1780. At this meeting, Heard's Fort, in northeastern Wilkes County, was designated as a fallback meeting place should Augusta be seized by British troops again. This proved a fortuitous decision as British soldiers returned once again in May of 1780 and occupied Augusta, forcing the assembly to depart the city and relocate to Heard's Fort.

Keeping on the move to avoid being captured by British forces, the assembly met at Heard's Fort and other locations scattered throughout Wilkes County. Heard's Fort was abandoned after the war and its location forgotten. There are no traces left of this one time seat of power in Georgia.

In 1781 revolutionary forces retook control of Augusta from the British and the town served as Georgia's capital from August of 1781 until May of 1782. In early July, 1782, the Georgia Assembly met in Ebenezer for two days, but adjourned in order to move to the larger city of Savannah, which British troops had just abandoned.

Ebenezer was approximately 25 miles northwest of Savannah, on the banks of Ebenezer Creek, and served as the

Effingham County Seat. It was founded, in part, to serve in the defense of Savannah and a magazine was established there. During the war Ebenezer played a role in the defenses of Savannah and was occupied and heavily fortified by both sides. By the end of the Revolutionary War, the community was in ruins and the County Seat of Effingham was moved to Springfield in 1799.

From 1782 until 1785, Savannah and Augusta would alternate as the seat of government as a sort of compromise between coastal and inland sections of the state. While Savannah was the largest city, the center of population was moving into the interior where residents had great difficulty traveling to Savannah. There was no official meeting place in Savannah or Augusta during this time and government meetings most likely moved about, gathering in homes, taverns, or other public halls. By the middle nineteenth century the community of Ebenezer had virtually disappeared.

Augusta: Georgia's Second Capital

From 1782 through 1785 the capital of Georgia rotated between Savannah and Augusta. In February of 1785 the state legislature resolved to move the seat of government to Augusta and the assembly began meeting there in January of 1786.

During the Revolutionary War, vast expanses of land lying adjacent to Georgia's coast were obtained from the Indians and Georgia's population soon followed the westward moving frontier. Almost immediately there were calls for a new capital that was more central to the

population base, which had been moving steadily westward. This made Augusta too far east for residents living in more westerly locales to travel conveniently to the capital.

Travel to the capital at that time was very important because much of the legal business that is now conducted by local courts, such as divorces, land grants, licenses to practice law, medicine, or to operate a ferry or bridge, were all handled in the 1700s by the legislature. This fact required residents to travel to the capital for such business. That fact was the prime driving force behind a desire for a more westerly, centrally-located capital.

A commission was formed in 1786 that was charged with selecting a new location for a capital. The commission was instructed to find a suitable location that was within 20 miles of Galphin's Old Town, or Galphinton, on the Ogeechee River, in what is today Jefferson County. The commission was authorized to purchase 1,000 acres for the new capital, which was to be a planned community.

While the selection committee was searching for a new, more central location for a new capital, the legislative assembly, courts, and executive continued to operate in Augusta. There was no set meeting place and various locations in Augusta were used. For a time, a house owned by Abraham Jones, located on the southwestern corner of what is now Broad and Third Streets. Finding this house too small, the assembly rented meeting space from Richmond Academy, located at what is now the eastern corner of Lincoln and Fourth Streets. While Augusta served as

Georgia's capital, both the United States constitution and Georgia state constitutions were approved. Augusta served as Georgia's capital until 1795, when a new location was selected and suitable government buildings were erected.

Louisville: Georgia's Third State Capital

In 1786, the selection commission ultimately chose a location at a three-way crossroads where a market, built in 1758 and standing today, was situated. The capital was named Louisville in honor of the French king Louis XVI in recognition of the help he gave to the American colonies during the Revolutionary War. The town was to be a planned community whereby five streets would be laid out on each side of the market, with the Governor's Mansion and Statehouse situated at equal distances from each other on either side of the market.

Despite having been commissioned in 1786, construction on public buildings in Louisville was not completed until 1796. Surprisingly, no drawings or sketches of the capitol building are known to have survived. The many construction delays were caused by a lack of needed funds, by the death of a contractor, and by the legislature's preoccupation with the acquisition and distribution of land obtained or taken from the Indians of Georgia.

In spite of these many delays, the state legislature met for the first time in Louisville in May, 1795, before construction on the capitol building was complete. At that session, Louisville was

declared the official capital of Georgia and a number of amendments to the Georgia constitution were considered. In response to the discovery of widespread corruption in the Georgia government, a constitutional convention was also called at the first legislative session in Louisville, which was to be held in 1798.

During the constitutional convention of 1798, what started as a consideration of amendments to the constitution ended up becoming a convention where an entirely new constitution was drafted. Among the provisions of the new constitution were restrictions on legislative control over public lands, an amendment establishing a legislative procedure for amending the constitution, and a provision making Louisville the capital of Georgia. The last provision designating Louisville as the capital, importantly, did not use the word permanent, thus leaving the door open for yet another move in coming years.

In the very late 1700s and early 1800s, treaties with the Creek Indians of Georgia resulted in the acquisition by Georgia of vast expanses of land that make up what is now the western part of the state. This land was divided into counties in 1802 and almost immediately Georgia's citizens began to express a desire for a new, more centrally-located capital. Another factor that may have driven the desire to find a new capital was the fact that Louisville was situated in an area that was relatively swampy and harbored mosquitos that carried malaria, yellow fever, and other disease.

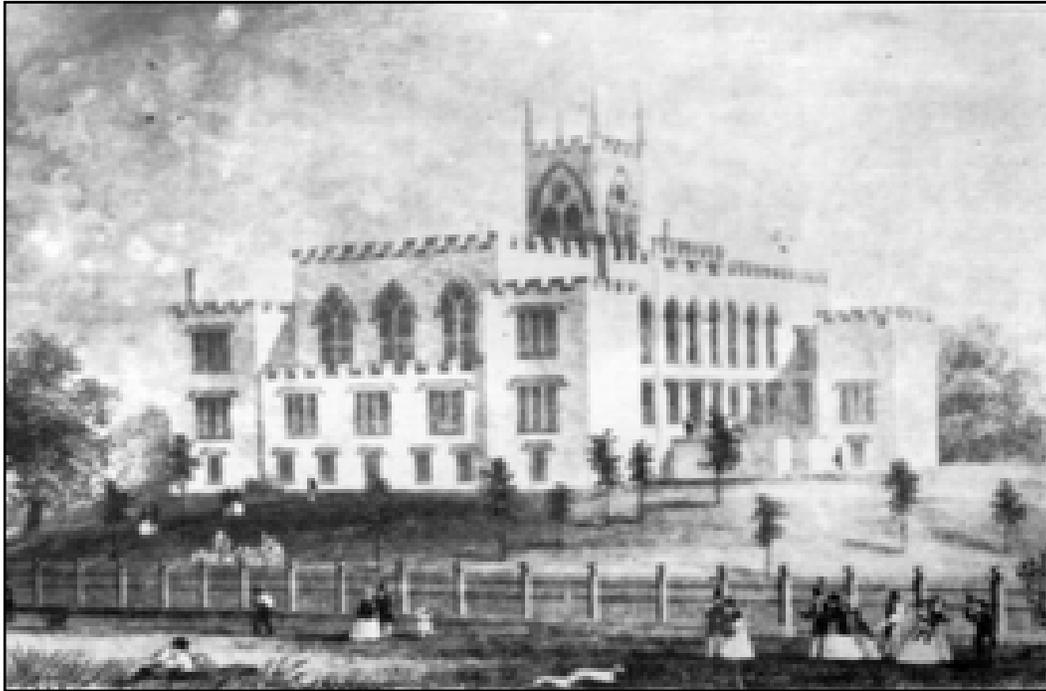
On May 11, 1803, the state Assembly appointed a commission charged with

finding a location suitable for a new capital at or near the head of navigation of the Oconee River. In December of the following year, the Assembly passed an act authorizing the construction of a new capital in Baldwin County and appropriated 3,240 acres for the establishment of the new town, which was named Milledgeville, after then governor, John Milledge. It is not known with confidence when the Georgia government officially ceased operating in Louisville, but in October of 1807 the treasury and public records of the state government were transported to the new capital at Milledgeville.

After the transfer of the government to Milledgeville, the Assembly designated the old capitol building in Louisville as a public arsenal in 1807. In 1813, the building was sold to private concerns and then, in 1824, Jefferson County purchased the building for use as a courthouse. Cracks began to form in the building causing concern over the stability of the old statehouse. These cracks grew worse and could not be repaired and the building was ultimately condemned as unsafe. The old statehouse was demolished and the materials were salvaged to build a new courthouse. This building was demolished at the turn of the century and the building now occupying the lot serves as the courthouse.

Milledgeville: Georgia's Fourth Capital

The site ultimately chosen for Milledgeville had something of a history itself. The chosen site was originally occupied in 1795, when General Elijah Clarke had Fort Defiance built in Creek



A sketch of the capitol building in Milledgeville as it looked in 1859. Image courtesy of the Georgia Military College.

Indian territory to serve as the seat of an independent state he called the Trans-Oconee Republic. He even participated in multiple attempts to invade Florida, then held as a territory of Spain. Clarke's plans were ultimately foiled and Fort Defiance was destroyed.

In December of 1804, the General Assembly consented to the partitioning of the new town into lots, which were sold and the proceeds used to pay for the construction of a new capitol building, which was to be erected on a 20 acre square reserved for public buildings and uses. The new capitol building was complete enough to be used for government business by the fall of 1807 and all government documents, furniture, and other public property was moved from Louisville to Milledgeville in October of that year.

The statehouse itself was regarded as an impressive building for its time. The building was in the Gothic Revival style and was built of brick, with massive walls bearing crenellations and towers that resembled a castle or fort. The initial construction cost the state a total of \$79,976.00, although only \$60,000.00 had been allocated originally. Subsequent additions to the capitol building in Milledgeville in 1828 and 1837 brought the total expenditure to approximately \$200,000.00.

Throughout the history of Georgia's changing capitals, westward expansion and a need for a centrally located seat of power were driving forces behind the progressive westward movement of Georgia's capital. By the time Georgia's capital was established in Milledgeville, railroads were a driving force for change

by increasing the rate at which people could move across the landscape, communicate, and conduct business.

With the opening of what is now northern Georgia to settlement, railroads were planned that would extend through the interior of the state to provide access to coastal markets and to cities in surrounding states. To help open these new lands obtained from the Cherokee, a railroad was planned that would extend from the Chattahoochee River to the Tennessee River, giving Georgian's access to interior markets made accessible by the Tennessee River. In December of 1836, the Georgia legislature chartered the Western & Atlantic Railroad and construction began in 1838.

At the southern end of this railroad, the small community of Terminus arose to provide services and homes to railroad workers. The community of Terminus grew rapidly, especially once the railroad was completed. In December, 1843, the Legislature voted to incorporate the town, but changed its name to Marthasville, in honor of former governor William Lumpkin's daughter, Martha. The residents did not approve of this name as the feeling was that it was too feminine for a frontier railroad town with a rugged character. The Chief Engineer of the Georgia Railroad suggested to the Legislature the name of Atlantica-Pacifica, in recognition of the railroad. The recommendation was favorably received and the name was shortened to Atlanta and the change was approved on December 29, 1847. Marthasville was renamed Atlanta.

By the late 1840s, Atlanta was connected by railroad to Augusta, Macon, Charleston, and Memphis and was growing rapidly, becoming a hub for transportation and industry. Its convenient location and railroad connections soon helped the city to emerge as a potential location for a new capital. By 1847, calls for a move to Atlanta reached a peak and the matter was addressed with a vote. The Legislature voted against relocating the capital to Atlanta by a vote of 68-55, but that did not settle the matter.

Seven years later, in 1854, the issue was put before the general electorate and a referendum was held where the voters decided to move the capital. By a vote of 49,781 to 29,337, the citizens voted to remain in Milledgeville. In later years, during the Civil War, there was an effort to have Atlanta made the capital of the Confederate States of America, but those efforts were not successful.

Throughout the Civil War Milledgeville served as Georgia's capital. Located well inland, the city was not directly impacted by military action until relatively late when, in November, 1864, after the fall of Atlanta, Union forces under the command of General William T. Sherman occupied the capital during his advance to Savannah. Milledgeville was not burned, but Union troops ransacked the city for food and supplies and soon departed to continue the advance to the coast.

Before Sherman's army arrived in Milledgeville, Georgia governmental officials fled the city, with Governor Joseph Brown seeking refuge in the area



A photograph of the Old Capitol as it appears today. Image courtesy of the Georgia Military College.

of Cordele and the legislature escaping to Macon, where it held special sessions. Following the surrender of Confederate forces in 1865, Georgia was occupied by Union forces a new legislature was elected, which met in Milledgeville in December of that year to draft a new constitution for Georgia.

This legislative assembly meeting would be one of the last in Milledgeville. In 1867, the United States Congress assumed control of Reconstruction efforts, which theretofore had been led by President Andrew Johnson. Georgia and other southern states were placed under military occupation and command of Georgia was given to Major General John Pope, whom established his headquarters in Atlanta on April 1, 1867. General Pope

ordered a new constitutional convention to convene in Atlanta. This gathering lasted from December, 1867, to March, 1868.

During the 1867-1868 constitutional convention, officials and promoters for Atlanta recognized the meeting as an opportunity to have the city designated as the official capital. The Atlanta City Council met and put together a plan, which was submitted to the convention whereby Atlanta proposed that in exchange for being designated the official capital in the new constitution, Atlanta would provide government buildings free of rent for ten years and would donate either the 25-acre fairgrounds or any undeveloped 10-acre lot in the city for use as a site for a new capitol building. This

proposal was accepted by the convention and a provision was inserted into the new constitution making Atlanta the capital of Georgia. The constitution was ratified by the citizenry in April, 1868.

After Atlanta was made the state's capital, the Old Capitol Building in Milledgeville was turned over to Baldwin County where it served as a courthouse until 1879. In that year the building was converted for use by the Georgia Military College, which maintains the structure and grounds today. The Old Capitol was severely damaged by a fire in 1941. Although the structure was rebuilt, many of the original objects used when the building was the capitol were destroyed. In the year 2000, the building was restored as the Old Capitol and is presently administered by the Georgia Military College.

Atlanta as Georgia's Capital

On June 30, 1868, the contents of the statehouse in Milledgeville were shipped by railroad to Atlanta. Several days later, on July 4, 1868, the first meeting of the state legislature met in the new capital. This meeting was held in a building that served as both the Atlanta City Hall and Fulton County Courthouse and which was located on the site of today's state capitol building.

It was quickly apparent that this building would not be large enough and in August, 1868, the Atlanta City Council met with members of the Georgia House of Representatives to discuss the problem. This meeting resulted in a proposal where Atlanta offered to either enlarge the

existing City Hall building, or to complete the unfinished Kimball Opera House, on the southwestern corner of the intersection of Marietta and Forsyth Streets. This building was started by the Atlanta Opera House and Building Association, but a shortage of funds resulted in the halting of construction and the listing of the property at a receiver's sale in June of 1868, where it was purchased and ultimately converted for use as the new statehouse.

The opera house-turned-statehouse was ready for use in January, 1869. In spite of some financial irregularities the building opened to the public on January 12 to great acclaim. Satisfied with the new government building, the State of Georgia purchased the Kimball Opera House for the sum of \$250,000.00 in government bonds. The Kimball Opera House served as the state capitol for 20 years, when the government grew too large and required a larger facility.

In 1876, Congressional Reconstruction ended, occupying Federal troops were withdrawn, and Georgia was readmitted to the Union. Almost immediately there were calls for a new constitution to replace the one many felt had been imposed on them by the United States government.

A constitutional convention was held in Atlanta in 1877 and during the assembly the issue of Georgia's capital was once again debated. Fearing that the government would return to Milledgeville, or to some other location, Atlanta leaders sought to make an agreement with the convention whereby



Photograph of Georgia's current capitol building. Photograph Source: United States Library of Congress.

Atlanta would be made the official capital. Members of the convention ruled that the issue should be decided separately from the constitution and that a referendum should be held.

This referendum initiated a fierce competition between those two cities as to which should be voted the capital of Georgia. Speeches were given across the state, newspapers took sides, and nearly 1 million flyers were printed and distributed. The vote was held on December 5, 1877 and by a count of 99,147 to 55,201 it was decided that the capital would remain in Atlanta. This was the last time that Atlanta's status as the state capital would be challenged.

By the time that Atlanta's status as capital was settled the old Kimball Opera House,

which had served as the capitol building for 20 years was, in 1879, no longer suited as a capitol building. During the constitutional convention of 1877, Atlanta offered the state 10 acres of undeveloped land, or the five acre lot where the City Hall was located (known as the City Hall Lot), as a site for a new capitol building and further offered to assume the expense of building a new capitol that was equal to the Old Capitol in Milledgeville. In 1879, needing a new capitol, the state accepted the offer and selected the City Hall Lot, but decided that the state, and not the City of Atlanta, would be responsible for the construction of the new capitol. The Kimball Opera House was sold in 1890 and was eventually demolished.

Financial troubles plagued early efforts to start construction on the new capitol, but

money was finally authorized in 1883. The old City Hall building was demolished on October 15, 1884 and the bricks were salvaged for use in the new capitol. Construction on the new capitol was started on November 13, 1884 and the cornerstone was laid on September 2, 1885 in a ceremony attended by a reported 10,000 people. The building, designed in the Classic Renaissance style, took 4 ½ years to complete. The foundation was made of Georgia granite, the exterior walls of Indiana marble, and interior walls of Georgia marble. Over 250 workmen labored on the site and construction was completed on March 20, 1889, three months behind schedule but \$118.40 under budget.

On July 3, 1889 the state legislature marched from the old Kimball Opera House to the new capitol where the building was formally dedicated by Governor John B. Gordon and serves to this day as Georgia's official capital and seat of power.

Georgia's Capitals in Review

While it is not unusual in a state's history to move the capital city, Georgia's five official capitals is an unusually high number. There were certainly many different reasons behind each change in capital, we have seen that the need for a central location and a capital that is well connected to transportation routes were almost always factors in the desire to move and in the selection of a new location.

In the Colonial era there was no official capital as the Georgia colony was

governed from England and administered by appointed officials, such as James Oglethorpe. Because there was no official capital, one could say that the seat of power was wherever the appointed leader happened to be. In Georgia's early history, Savannah was the chief city of Georgia, but Oglethorpe spent much of his time on the southern border of Georgia protecting British settlements against threats from Spanish Florida. Later Georgia leaders resided in Savannah, making that town the *de facto*, but not official, capital of Georgia.

In the decades that followed the Revolutionary War, external threats from foreign powers no longer dictated where the leader of Georgia resided. For nearly a decade following the Revolution competing interests in Augusta and Savannah sought to have their cities declared the official capital. As the largest city and the chief port and economic center of the state, the leaders and citizenry of Savannah felt that city was the most appropriate capital. Settlers inland and on the frontier argued that a coastal capital was not fair as it required very long and difficult travel to reach the coast. Augusta, they argued, was far more convenient for those living inland and on the frontier. Moreover, they argued, it was not a difficult journey for those living in the Savannah area to reach Augusta.

The competing interests of inland and coastal settlers that was reflected in the contest between Savannah and Augusta to become the official capital would continue to drive future calls for the capital to be relocated. As Indian Removal acts forced Native groups out of Georgia and other

southeastern states, their lands were taken and opened for settlement. Georgia's frontier was pushed farther west by settlers moving into Indian lands and the debate between Augusta and Savannah was made moot as neither town was conveniently situated to settlements in newly-opened land and that fact was behind the selection of Louisville as the new capital.

Louisville was in many ways a purpose-built capital. The selection committee was specifically charged with finding a centrally-located place that was well connected to the rest of the state so that it could be reached easily by all citizens. Once Louisville was established as the capital, it served in that role for only 10 years. While malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases were a problem in Louisville, the need for a more conveniently-located capital. Milledgeville was eventually selected and that city served as Georgia's capital for six decades.

As we saw, the reasons behind Atlanta becoming the final and current capital. It is important to understand that the move to Atlanta was made during Reconstruction and the change was made with the encouragement of occupying Union forces. Furthermore, the Atlanta business community recognized the potential economic benefits that would fall to the city if it was the capital. Helping the argument for Atlanta was the fact that it was by that time the largest city in the state and one of the most important manufacturing and transportation hubs in the southern United States. Unlike in the past where calls for a new capital were driven primarily by the desire for a capital

that was centrally located with respect to all parts of the state.

There have been five official capitals and a number of unofficial, temporary, or emergency seats of power. As we have seen, the circumstances behind each move were different, but the forces that prompted the call for each move seemed to focus on the competing interests of inland and coastal Georgians. These competing interests were evident as soon as Georgia became a state and were behind the decision to rotate capitals between Augusta and Savannah. As Indian land was taken by treaty or by forced removal, Georgia's frontier was always moving westward and settlers followed it, making travel to the eastern capitals of Augusta and Savannah inconvenient. Convenient travel to the capital was essential in Georgia's early history because many legal functions now handled at local courthouses or agencies, such as obtaining licenses, were carried out at the state capital. This was one of the major factors leading to the establishment of both Louisville and Milledgeville as successive capitals. Were it not for the large population, strong political influence, and extensive transportation connections of Atlanta, Milledgeville may still be the capital of Georgia today.



Discussion Questions

Ask the students to think about and use the information presented above to consider and discuss the following questions:

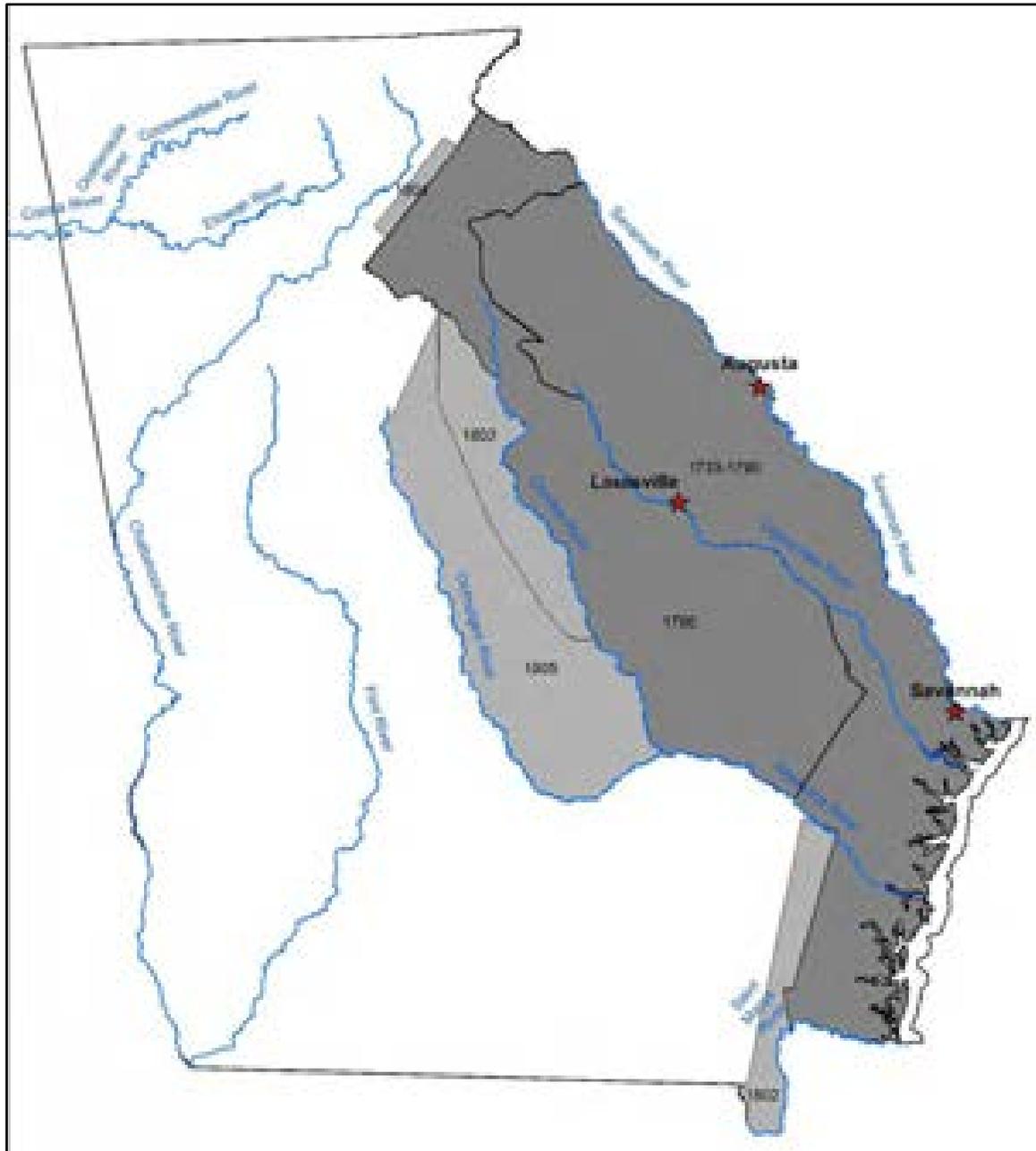
1. Locate each of Georgia's five official capitals on the three maps below. These maps show each of the five capitals and how Georgia expanded its borders through time. You can use them to see how large Georgia was when each of the five cities was Georgia's official capital. Think about where each city is located relative to natural features, such as the fall line and rivers or other bodies of water, and other features that would prevent or impede travel, such as a large lake, a swamp, or mountains. Also think about how the state grew in size while each was the capital. For each capital, think about how hard or easy you think it would have been for people to get to each city and make a list of advantages and disadvantages for each one. Using that list, decide which of Georgia's capitals you think the best located and discuss.
2. James Oglethorpe was able to establish peaceful relations with the Yamacraw Indians and their chief, Tomochichi. Only with the permission and good will of Tomochichi and his people was the settlement of Savannah possible. Think of life in Savannah very soon after its establishment. What ways do you think Oglethorpe's success in establishing good relations helped the new community of Savannah? Consider areas of defense, economy, and the ability to find and produce food.
3. You have read how national and international events have impacted Georgia's history. Before Georgia was even a state, Spanish forces invaded Georgia in 1742, but were defeated by James Oglethorpe at St. Simons Island in what became known as the War of Jenkins' Ear. The Revolutionary War was a part of the larger Seven Years War that involved much of Europe. How have these, and other national and international events such as Indian Removal, the Civil War, and the World Wars, influenced Georgia's history and the location of its capital.

4. During the Revolutionary War, Savannah was made the first official capital of Georgia. Augusta, the second official capital, was also an important fall line community. Both Savannah and Augusta were occupied by British forces. Ebenezer, another important community at the time, was so devastated that it never recovered. Later, in the Civil War, Milledgeville was occupied by Union soldiers. What effects did events like these have on the lives of those living in the communities, the governmental leaders, and the ability to have a government? Why do you think that it was important for governmental officials to keep the government together by meeting at places like Heard's Fort in the Revolutionary War, and Macon in the Civil War?

5. Milledgeville served as Georgia's capital for 60 years and its establishment as capital ended a period in Georgia's history where the location of the state's capital had been in near constant flux. What do you think made Milledgeville a good location for Georgia's capital? Why do you think the capital was ultimately moved to Atlanta? Think about geography, population, transportation (especially railroads), economics, and the politics involved in the ultimate decision to move the capital to Atlanta.



Map 1. A Map showing the extent of Georgia when Savannah and Augusta rotated as capital cities, 1777-1796.



Map 2. A Map showing the extent of Georgia when Louisville was the capital, 1796-1806. Dark gray shows Georgia when Louisville was made capital and light gray shows Georgia when the capital was moved to Milledgeville.



Map 2. A Map showing the extent of Georgia when Milledgeville and Atlanta were the capital cities, 1807-Present. Dark gray shows the state when Milledgeville became the capital and light gray shows how Georgia expanded. When Atlanta was made capital, Georgia had reached its present size.



Thinking and Writing Activities

Activity 1: History

As we read, in 1877 there was an especially fierce debate over the location of the Georgia capital. Atlanta had recently been made the capital but there was a strong movement to return it to Milledgeville. The issue was put to the vote. Leading up to the debate thousands of flyers were printed and distributed, newspapers ran editorial opinion essays, there were public debates, and people wrote letters to newspapers and public officials in support of their respective choice for capital.

Imagine that you are the editor of a prominent Georgia newspaper in 1877. Your newspaper must decide upon which side of the debate it stands and you have been asked to write the editorial supporting either Atlanta or Milledgeville as the official capital of Georgia. Consider conditions in Georgia in 1877 and remember that, while there were railroads, travel was still primarily by horse or foot, and communication was still relatively slow. Think about the advantages and disadvantages of each city in the role as capital and make a list so you can make a comparison. Based on your comparison, compose an editorial essay in support of your choice. In your essay, describe and discuss at least two key advantages your choice has. To strengthen your argument, write about at least one area that may be a weakness for your choice and discuss how that can be overlooked or overcome.

Activity 2: Archaeology

Imagine that you are an archaeologist living in the future. All of Georgia's old capitol buildings have been torn down and turned into parks. Even the current capitol building was torn down and turned into a park because a larger capitol building was needed. To help preserve Georgia's heritage and celebrate its history, Georgia's future leaders have planned a large archaeological project to investigate the ruins of the capitol buildings in Louisville, Milledgeville, and Atlanta. The Senior Archaeologist has asked you to join the excavation team and help plan for the project.

Before any excavation can start, an archaeologist must think about many things in order to have a successful. Every archaeological site is different. For example, log cabins are very different from modern houses. Each are buildings, but the archaeologist will find very different things at each site. Likewise, even though your team will be digging at different capitol buildings, each one was used at a different period of time in Georgia's history so each building was different and, consequently, used differently.

Task: Think of three ways each of the sites will be similar and three ways they will be different. Write a short essay describing the similarities and differences you expect.

For Similarities:

Think about how the capitol buildings would have been used. Throughout history, the capitol buildings have always served the purpose of providing a large place for the assembled elected officials to meet and govern. The Governor may have had offices in each capitol building and the members of the State Legislature may have had offices as well. They would have had assistants who worked in the building. There would have been meeting rooms and legislative chambers in every capitol building.

For Differences:

Think about when each of the different capitol buildings served as the official capital of Georgia as this will determine, in some ways, how the building was used and what kinds of artifacts you will recover. For example, how was the interior lit – with windows, candles, gas lights, or with electricity? Was there indoor plumbing? If not, would that mean that you might find outdoor privies? How did people communicate and keep records – did they write letters, make phone calls, or send e-mails? Very simple questions like these have answers that point to many things about Louisville, Milledgeville, and Atlanta that are very different even though they all three served as capitol buildings.

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