Early Expansion: University of Georgia and Georgia's Capitals

SS8H4a

Westward Movement of Georgia's Capitals

SAVANNAH (1776-1778). Savannah was the capital of the Georgia colony, and it continued to serve as a state capital until it became too heavily targeted by the British during the American Revolution. This location was useful because of its proximity to bodies of water used for trade and transportation.

AUGUSTA (1778-1786). Once Savannah was deemed too dangerous to keep important government business, much of the state government's business was conducted in Augusta. During the American Revolution, governmental activity frequently moved back and forth between Savannah and Augusta. The first official legislature meeting took place in Augusta on January 3rd, 1786. However, much of Georgia's population was already moving westward into new territory occupied by American Indians. By January 26th of the same year, a commission was established to find Georgia a new capital.

LOUISVILLE (1786-1804). This location was chosen due to it being closely located to the center of the state's moving population as well as its proximity to an American Indian trading post. The location was named Louisville to honor French King Louis XVI due to the country's aid to the Patriots during the American Revolution. Officially, Augusta was still the capital for ten more years, until 1796, while Louisville was constructed. But yet again, with new Indian (Creek lands ceded in 1802) territory opening up for settlement, a search for a new state capital began.

MILLEDGEVILLE (1804-1868). In 1804, an act was passed to build Milledgeville, the new state capital named in honor of Governor John Milledge. The first official acts as the seat of government began in 1807. However, pressure began to build again once the Cherokee were removed from their land in 1838. With newly opened lands, yet another search for a new capital began. The search took quite some time, as the state had other more pressing concerns, like the Civil War, to tackle. Milledgeville remained the capital through the Civil War, and its last legislative session took place in 1868.

ATLANTA (1868-present). Legislators had their eyes on Atlanta (originally named Terminus) as the capital since the 1830s. Its attraction was due to the increasing number of rail lines being built through the area. Atlanta was quickly linked to major cities within the state as well as in neighboring states. Over the years, the city continued to attract business and economic activity, maintaining its capital status to this day.