

Buddy Sullivan

Which historic sites exhibit features of early English settlement in Georgia?

The first English activity on this area of the Georgia coast really came to Ft King George in 1721, and it was chiefly a product of the English desire to have protection from Spain because England and Spain in the early 1700s were at odds commercially, largely trade wars and that type of thing. So the English wanted an outpost further south from Charlestown, as it was then called, to serve as an early warning outpost. And so Ft King George was built in 1721 and is the first permanent English outpost in what became the state of Georgia. Interestingly, actually 12 years prior to the founding of the colony by James Edward Oglethorpe in 1733. And Ft King George was a very elaborate fortification and served a very good role and purpose, although no actual military action took place as a consequence of the fort. But it did establish a foothold for the English for the first time in what became Georgia. Later, with the founding of the colony in 1733, by Oglethorpe and the English settlers, a similar concept was established south of the immediate town of Savannah on the Isle of Hope called Wormsloe, and this was a very ambitious project by which land was granted to the settler, Noble Jones, who was the colonial surveyor for Oglethorpe. Noble Jones was instructed to develop an outpost there at Isle of Hope, which Jones named Wormsloe. And so a sort of residence fortification was built at Wormsloe, the tabby ruins of which are still in evidence there. And so between Ft King George and Wormsloe, you had an immediate military presence in colonial Georgia by the English to defend against Spain. Of course the most ambitious project of all was Ft Frederica on St Simons Island, south of Ft King George, on which the largest English fortification on North America at that time was built in 1736. So Georgia, from the very beginning, was a military colony, largely in defense of incursions by the Spanish enemies to the south based at St Augustine.