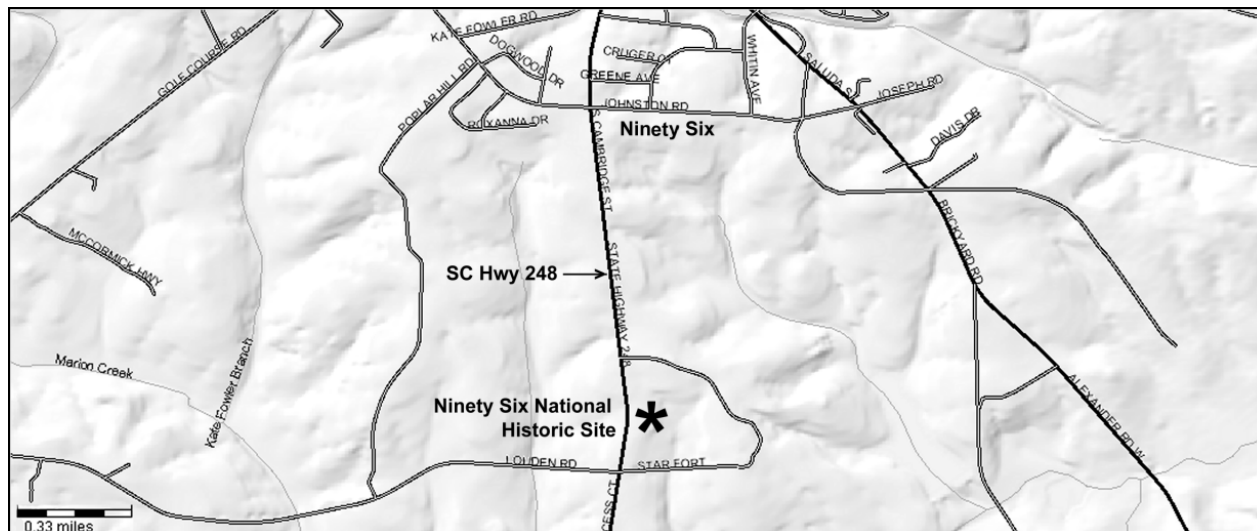


## Ninety Six



<b>Ninety Six 1<sup>st</sup></b>	7/17/1775	GPS: 34.14714°N 82.02341°W	Confidence: 5
<b>Ninety Six 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	11/19-21/1775	GPS: 34.14714°N 82.02341°W	Confidence: 5
<b>Ninety Six 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	5/21-6/18/1781	GPS: 34.14714°N 82.02341°W	Confidence: 5
<b>Ensign Camp Executed</b>	ca.12/23/1780	GPS: 34.14714°N 82.02341°W	Confidence: 1

**Directions:** From SC Hwy 34 in modern Ninety Six, go south on SC Hwy 248 for about 1.9 miles to the National Historic Site. This site is well marked with signage.

A unit of the National Park Service since 1976, Ninety Six was a significant crossroads community in South Carolina's western backcountry. It was the site of actions in the French & Indian War located on the active trading path from Charleston to the Cherokee Indian nation. On the eve of the Revolution, Ninety Six was a thriving commercial village on a crossroads with 12 houses, a sizable courthouse, and a sturdy jail. At least a hundred persons lived in the vicinity, and the land was cleared for a mile around.

**Ninety Six 1<sup>st</sup>:** On the question of independence, sentiment was probably even more divided than along the South Carolina coast. Patriot Capt. Moses Kirkland of the South Carolina 3d Regiment, Col. William Thomson's Rangers, in command of his militia company posted at Ninety Six, changed sides and persuaded his men to abandon the Patriot cause. Kirkland then invited a 200 man Loyalist militia, under Col. Thomas Fletchall, into Ninety Six, giving the Loyalists possession of the town without a fight. Patriot Maj. James Mayson, who had earlier captured the garrison, guns and military supplies at Fort Charlotte on the Savannah River, was arrested, jailed at Ninety Six and charged with robbing the King's gun powder from Fort Charlotte. The Loyalists later released Mayson on bail. He participated in the 2nd action at Ninety Six below.

**Ninety Six 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Patriot Maj. Andrew Williamson and about 600 men built defensive works consisting of wood, hay bales and beef hides at Savage's Old Field incorporating the barns and outbuildings of Loyalist James Holmes. It was called Williamson's Fort. Loyalist Maj. Joseph Robinson and Capt. Patrick Cunningham with about 1,900 men took over the town, fortified the jail and besieged the Patriots for two days. The siege ended with a truce. Loyalists: 1 killed, 52 wounded. Patriots: 1 killed, 12 wounded. This was the Revolution's first land battle south of New England. James Birmingham was the first South Carolina Patriot killed in the Revolution.

The British, after the fall of Charleston in May 1780, quickly moved into the South Carolina backcountry and established regional strategic based at Camden and Ninety Six. Loyalist militias were organized and the towns were fortified to provide a secure base to administer and control the area. The village of Ninety Six was surrounded by a palisade wall, with fortified block houses; the brick two-story jail was fortified; and two strong detached redoubts were constructed, one on the site of the 1775 Williamson's Fort and another just north of the village, the earthen Star Fort.

(Continued on the next page.)

## 200A

**Ninety Six 3<sup>rd</sup>:** American Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene with about 1,600 men conducted a classic trench and artillery siege of the fortified garrison of Ninety Six. Loyalist Lt. Col. John Cruger and about 550 Loyalists manned the village and its redoubts. A heavy cannonade caused the British to abandon the Stockade Fort and withdraw into the village leaving them vulnerable for want of water. Dashing Lt. Col. Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee returning from his capture of Augusta with the prisoners reinforced Greene. Lee’s troops successfully stormed the Stockade Fort and tried against the redoubt built around the jail while Greene attacked the Star Fort. The Loyalists repulsed these assaults on the Star Fort and the approach of British Col. Francis Rawdon with a 2,000-man relief column forced Greene to abandon this longest field siege of the war. Americans: 58 killed, 76 wounded, 1 captured, 20 missing. British: 27 killed, 58 wounded. On July 8, Cruger abandoned the fort and destroyed it. Note: Taking the guided tour of the battlefield is well worth the time spent as much more information will be presented than is possible here.

Epilogue: The British command knew they were too far from Charleston to hold Ninety Six. With their westernmost garrison weakened by the siege the British ordered their troops to abandon the fort and withdraw towards the South Carolina coast. After chasing Greene’s army for a few days, the British commander of South Carolina, Lord Francis Rawdon withdrew his force of British regulars to Granby (modern Cayce, SC) and Cruger withdrew his Loyalists to Orangeburg a few days later. While Greene had won neither the Battle of Hobkirk Hill nor his siege of Ninety Six, his overall goal was accomplished as the British and their loyal allies were driven from the South Carolina backcountry.

**Ensign John Camp Executed Action:** About 12/23/1780, British Ensign John Massey Camp was captured by Patriots in a raid on Ninety Six. His captors executed him on Christmas Day, 1780, but the location of his execution is unknown.



Battlefield with the earthen Star Fort in the background



Palisaded Fort Holmes or Stockade Fort reconstructed