Savannah's Famous Firsts



First English Hymnal (1736) - John Wesley, the third rector of Christ Church, published the first English hymnal in America. Sunday School classes organized at Christ Church by John Wesley are thought to represent the first Sunday School.

First Lighthouse on South Atlantic Coast - The first aid to navigation in the South was erected near the present Tybee Island lighthouse. The first tower never was lighted and served as a day mark. A second tower, built in 1742 and lighted in 1742, was the third lighthouse in America.

First Black Baptist Congregation (1788) - The first Black Baptist congregation was organized at Brampton Plantation outside Savannah. Their descendants established Savannah's First African Baptist Church and First Bryan Baptist Church.

Cotton Gin (1793) - Eli Whitney, a Yale graduate, invented the cotton gin while serving as a tutor on General Nathaniel Greene's Mulberry Grove Plantation outside Savannah. This invention revolutionized the South, making it possible to process cotton on a large scale.

***S.S. Savannah* (1819)** - This sailing vessel with auxiliary steam power crossed from Savannah to Liverpool, England. Two week's prior to the historic voyage, President James Monroe, the second president to visit Savannah, made an excursion on the vessel to Tybee Island.

Massie School (1856) - Georgia's oldest school in continuous operation was build in 1856. It was named for Peter Massie, who left $5,000 for the education of poor children. Regular classes were discontinued in 1974, but it continues as a resource center.

Telfair Museum of Art (1886) - Built in 1819 as a mansion for Alexander Telfair, the academy was left to the Georgia Historical Society in 1875. Period rooms with many Telfair family pieces are maintained. The museum's collection contains works by American and European artists, as well as special exhibits and is the oldest art museum in the South.

Girl Scouts (1912) - On March 12, 1912, at her residence on Lafayette Square, Juliette Gordon Low formed the first Girl Scout troop in America. Low's birthplace, at the corner of Oglethorpe Avenue and Bull Street, is maintained by the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and is a museum and a national program center.

Other Savannah Firsts

- 1733 Capital of Georgia, Americas 13th Colony
- 1733 First Jewish Congregation in the South
- 1734 First City planned on a system of squares in North America
- 1734 First agricultural experimental garden in North America
- 1735 First silk exportation from America
- 1736 First lighthouse on the South Atlantic coast
- 1740 First horse race in Georgia
- 1755 First cattle exportation in Georgia
- 1763 First newspaper in the Colony, *The Georgia Gazette*
- 1788 First Negro Baptist Congregation in America
- 1788 First public school in Georgia - Massie School
- 1793 First cotton gin - Eli Whitney
- 1794 First golf course in America
- 1819 First steamship to cross an ocean -- *S.S. Savannah*
- 1833 First hospital for Negroes in America - Georgia Infirmary
- 1862 First use of rifled cannon in modern warfare at Fort Pulaski
- 1886 First art museum in Southeast
- 1911 First motorized fire department in America
- 1963 First Garden for the Blind in Southeast