

# *HISTORY OF THE GEORGIA MILITIA, 1783–1861*

By Gordon Burns Smith

This four volume set is a comprehensive history of the Georgia Militia from the end of the Revolution in 1783 to Secession in 1861, along with transitional information on the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Confederate eras. This is a reference guide for genealogists and historians in locating new records for the ante-bellum period of Georgia. Second, this work places special emphasis on biographies of ante-bellum Georgians not readily available elsewhere. Third, again for the first time, this account tells of the participation by the Indians, English, Scots, French, Germans, Irish, Jews, Greeks, and Negroes in the Georgia Militia; and Georgia's participation in campaigns in Florida and Alabama. Finally, this set introduces serious students of history to a completely new and amazing range of important research topics. Each of these four volumes is hard-cover and contains a full name index:

**VOLUME 1, CAMPAIGNS AND GENERALS** (423 pages), an introduction to the components of the General Militia and Volunteers, tracing the militia system from its organization by Oglethorpe in 1733, through the Revolutionary War, and then detailing each of the eight major conflicts in which the Georgia Militia served thereafter: OCONEE WARS, EMBARGO WARS, WAR OF 1812, FIRST SEMINOLE WAR, SECOND SEMINOLE WAR, CREEK WAR OF 1836, CHEROKEE TROUBLES AND REMOVAL, and MEXICAN WAR. Eyewitness reports punctuate these heavily documented accounts. Lists of units in active service during the campaigns are appended—identified by county of origin where possible. Next are the biographies of 205 Georgia Militia generals. The more important Militia Acts of the Legislature are outlined, followed by a selection of General and Special Orders from the state chains of command. For genealogists, a list of battalion and regimental designations by county is included, along with a table of organization for the 27 brigades and 13 divisions of the Georgia Militia.

**VOLUME 2, COUNTIES AND COMMANDERS, PART ONE** (385 pages), the militia histories of fifteen representative counties, CHATHAM, BURKE, JEFFERSON, TATTNALL, BALDWIN, MORGAN, JASPER, MONROE, BIBB, WARE, PIERCE, CAMPBELL, SUMTER, COBB, AND FLOYD, placing them in their political and economic contexts. Each chapter is richly documented with biographical and genealogical information on men and women residing in the county. Company rosters and payrolls are attached in numerous cases. These pages contain a veritable genealogical treasure trove, since some counties have lost most if not all of their early public records. There is appended the history of the State Arsenal at Savannah and an account of the Coffin Brigade, the secret Secessionist society.

**VOLUME 3, COUNTIES AND COMMANDERS, PART TWO** (404 pages), the militia histories of twelve more representative counties, GLYNN, CAMDEN, EFFINGHAM, WASHINGTON, COLUMBIA, LINCOLN, CLARKE, HABERSHAM, MUSCOGEE, THOMAS, COLQUITT, and LOWNDES, placing them in the same contexts as those in Volume 2. Company rosters and payrolls are also attached in numerous cases. Of these counties, several have lost most if not all of their early public records. An eyewitness account of the first of the *Wanderer* trials and its conclusion is appended.

**VOLUME 4, THE COMPANIES** (394 pages), the histories of twenty-five representative volunteer companies, with rosters where pertinent. Among them are the GEORGIA HUSSARS, LIBERTY INDEPENDENT TROOP, RICHMOND HUSSARS, REPUBLICAN BLUES, McINTOSH LIGHT DRAGOONS, MACON VOLUNTEERS, CRAWFORD VOLUNTEERS, FORT GAINES GUARDS, ALBANY GUARDS, and GATE CITY GUARD of Atlanta. Included for genealogists are units in counties that have lost their early records. The work describes many of the medals, flags, and uniforms of the units. Historians also will appreciate the account of Georgia involvement in the FILIBUSTERS from the close of the Mexican War to Georgia's Secession: López, Gonzáles, the Order of the Lone Star, "the Grey-Eyed Man of Destiny," Henningsen, and the Knights of the Golden Circle. In addition, there is included a chapter on the military history of BEAUFORT DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA, which district has lost most of its early public records.

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Most historians, however, have simply ignored the militia. In fact, says Smith, the militia system was perhaps the most inclusive and influential element in antebellum society. Nor was the period between the British evacuation of Savannah and the coming of the Civil War a time of peace, for in terms of the threat of armed violence against its people, Georgia "was in an almost constant swirl of "war or rumors of war"™. And he makes a very creditable effort to fill the void in the historical record. The oversized volumes in this set total more than 1,600 pages with several times that many footno