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THE SOUTHERN STRATEGY

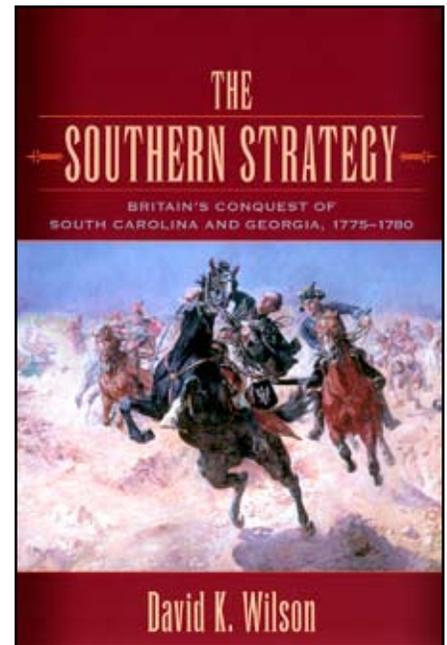
Britain's Conquest of South Carolina and Georgia, 1775-1780

David K. Wilson

"The Southern Strategy is an important contribution to the military literature on the American Revolution. In addition to highlighting the basic flaws in British strategy, David K. Wilson describes all the major military operations that occurred in the region between Great Bridge and the Siege of Charleston. He is particularly adept at reconstructing battles that usually get glossed over in general histories."—*On Point, The Journal of Army History*

A finalist for the 2005 Distinguished Writing Award of the Army Historical Foundation and the 2005 Thomas Fleming Book Award of the American Revolution Round Table of Philadelphia, *The Southern Strategy* shifts the traditional vantage point of the American Revolution from the Northern colonies to the South in this study of the critical period from 1775 to the spring of 1780. David K. Wilson suggests that the paradox of the British defeat in 1781—after Crown armies had crushed all organized resistance in South Carolina and Georgia—makes sense only if one understands the fundamental flaws in what modern historians label Britain's "Southern Strategy". In his assessment he closely examines battles and skirmishes to construct a comprehensive military history of the Revolution in the South through May 1780. A cartographer and student of battlefield geography, Wilson includes detailed, original battle maps and orders of battle for each engagement. Appraising the strategy and tactics of the most significant conflicts, he tests the thesis that the British could raise the manpower they needed to win in the South by tapping a vast reservoir of Southern Loyalists and finds their policy flawed in both conception and execution.

July 2008, 360 pages, 38 illus.



David K. Wilson is an independent scholar who lives in Plano, Texas, and works in the advertising industry. He holds an M.A. degree in history from the University of Texas at Arlington.

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As one historian put it bluntly: "The 'Southern strategy' explanation of the political transformation of the modern South is wrong" (Lassiter 2006, 5). Moreover, as co-editors and contributing authors to the 2009 anthology *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Matthew Lassiter and Joseph Crespino argue that the "notion of the exceptional South has served as a myth, one that has persistently distorted our Southern Strategy. The Confederate States of America recognized from the outset of the Civil War that they had disadvantages in terms of population and industrial output. Their strategy was to take advantage of their compact geography, with internal lines of communication, their military heritage (Southerners had been disproportionately the officers of the United States Army), and their greater enthusiasm for their cause to wear down the Union will to wage war. The Southern strategy is a Democrat conspiracy theory that alleges Richard Nixon carried Southern states in the 1968 presidential election in the wake of the bi-partisan 1964 Civil Rights Act. In fact, the South was carried by Democrat renegade George C. Wallace. In 1972, the Democrats for the first time in 40 years did not have a Southern on the ticket, and Southerners overwhelmingly rejected two Northern liberals at the top of their ticket. In 1976, 1992, 1996, 2008, and 2012 the South returned to the

The Southern Strategy is the policy of the Republican Party in the United States to gain political support in the Southern section of the country. Politically, the concept generally uses themes traditionally supported by residents of the Southern states to win election in those locations. Since segregation continued well into the late 20th century in the region, the Republican Party officially attempted to utilize this wedge issue as a way of garnering support for their political faction in these states. Southern Strategy BEFORE 1960: THE UNSTABLE DEMOCRATIC PARTY COALITION 1960 TO 1964: RACIAL ISSUES REEMERGE, AND REPUBLICANS MOVE TO THE RIGHT 1965 TO 1972: YEARS OF TURMOIL AND NIXON'S SOUTHERN STRATEGY 1969 AND LATER: THE SOUTHERN STRATEGY EVOLVES, BUT CONTINUES BIBLIOGRAPHY Source for information on Southern Strategy: International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences dictionary. In American politics, the Southern strategy was a Republican Party electoral strategy to increase political support among white voters in the South by appealing to racism against African Americans. As the civil rights movement and dismantling of Jim Crow laws in the 1950s and 1960s visibly deepened existing racial tensions in much of the Southern United States, Republican politicians such as presidential candidate Richard Nixon and Senator Barry Goldwater developed strategies that successfully