

Georgia Historical Society marches out its plan for 275th anniversary celebration

Events in February 2008 will recognize 1733 founding of colony by Gen. James E. Oglethorpe

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A small crowd of tourists and Savannah residents gathered in Chippewa Square on Tuesday afternoon to watch, listen and sip champagne as the Georgia Historical Society announced its plans for next year's 275th anniversary celebration of the founding of the colony of Georgia.

"This is a momentous occasion," said W. Todd Groce, president of the society.

The society will have its usual lineup of events, including the Colonial Faire and Muster and the Georgia Day Parade, but

will add a couple of special programs for this milestone, Groce said.

A birthday bash and awards gala will take place Feb. 16, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Savannah. The site is important, Groce said, because that's where Gen. James E. Oglethorpe landed on Feb. 12, 1733, to found the 13th colony.

This black-tie affair will include greetings from Queen Elizabeth II and a keynote address from Michael Beschloss, NBC's presidential historian and the author of several books, including "Presidential Courage: Brave Leaders and How They Changed America 1789-1989," "Power and the Presidency" and "The Crisis Years: Kennedy and

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Khrushchev, 1960-1963."

With 2008 being an election year, Beschloss seemed like a great fit, said Groce, standing in front of a statue of Oglethorpe, another focal point for the 275th celebration.

The Englishman will be this year's honored character and the centerpiece of the celebration's kickoff event, "An Evening With James Edward Oglethorpe:

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A Dramatic Historical Presentation.”

Scott Hodges, a professional historic interpreter, will dress as Oglethorpe and draw upon some 30 years of experience to bring realism to the role.

“I go into schools across the state,” Hodges said, “and conduct a one-hour program about the early colonists.”

Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson also spoke at the announcement, which was witnessed by a steady stream of pedestrians walking through the square and tourist trolleys circling around it.

Oglethorpe brought the city its first 114 residents, Johnson said, a seed that’s now grown to some 135,000 people.

Those attending the announcement happily raised

2008 CELEBRATIONS

The Georgia Historical Society has planned these events as part of its annual Georgia Days celebrations:

- **Feb. 2-3:** Georgia Days Colonial Faire and Muster at Wormsloe State Historic Site on Skidaway Road.
- **Feb. 5:** “An Evening with James Edward Oglethorpe: A Dramatic Historical Presentation” at GHS headquarters, 501 Whitaker St.
- **Feb. 10:** Super Museum Sunday. More than 40 house museums, art museums and other points of interest will be open for free during this popular annual event.
- **Feb. 11:** Black History Month Essay and Public Speaking Contest at GHS headquarters, 501 Whitaker St.
- **Feb. 12:** The annual Georgia Day Parade of elementary schoolchildren, costumed characters and local citizens through the squares of Bull Street to City Hall.
- **Feb. 16:** Black-tie gala at the Hyatt Regency Savannah. Keynote speaker will be Michael Beschloss, NBC’s presidential historian. The affair will begin with cocktails at the site of the 1733 landing, and dinner will follow in a seating plan designed to evoke Savannah’s squares. Tickets are \$175, and approximately 500 people are expected.

All events are free and open to the public except where otherwise noted. For information, call 912-651-2125 or go to www.georgiahistory.com.

their champagne glasses at the Georgia, the city of Savannah, event’s conclusion when Groce Oglethorpe and a successful offered a toast to the state of 2008 celebration.