



Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY'S

JOHN WESLEY

AND THE EARLY METHODIST REVIVAL



A Kingswood Course

Spener's Proposals

- More extensive study and use of Scripture
- Need to recognize and encourage the priesthood of all believers
- Need to put faith into practice as a way of life (i.e., Christian love)
- Understand our responsibility to correct those who are in error, but to do so through love
- Reform theological education as a practical discipline (“...since theology is a practical discipline, everything must be directed to the practice of faith and life.”)
- Improve ministerial formation, especially in the area of teaching good preaching that is practical and aimed at helping to form the “inner man.”

The Wesley Family

- Parents were Samuel and Susanna.
- John and Charles Wesley were two of 17 (or 19?) children.
- Parents were the children of dissenters, but in their young adulthood they became High Church Anglicans.
- Father was the minister over Epworth and Wroot.
- Characteristics of JW's childhood: tight-knit family, life revolving around the parish, daily religious devotion, Susanna's education and discipline, and Samuel's scholarly bent.



The Three Rises of Methodism:

Oxford, Savannah, and London



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“On Monday, May 1, [1738,] our little society began in **London**. But it may be observed, the first rise of Methodism (so-called) was in November 1729, when four of us met together at **Oxford**: the second was at **Savannah**, in April 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house: the last, was at London, on this day, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to a free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer. In all our steps we were greatly assisted by the advice and exhortations of Peter Böhler, an excellent young man, belonging to the society commonly called Moravians.

— John Wesley, “A Short History of the People Called Methodists,” ¶9, (1781)



John Wesley's Career at Oxford University

- Arrives from Charterhouse School in June of 1720 at the age of 17.
- Graduates with a Bachelor of Arts from Christ Church in 1724.
- By 1725, Wesley was captivated by the call to live a holy life. He was influenced by reading writers in the holy living tradition, such as Thomas à Kempis (*The Imitation of Christ*) and Jeremy Taylor (*Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying*). He set out on a quest to gain an inward purity of intention in everything he did and a sense of assurance of salvation through personal holiness.
- Ordained as a deacon on September 25, 1725.
- Elected as a fellow of Lincoln College on March 17, 1726.
- Receives the Master of Arts degree on February 14, 1727.
- Ordained as a presbyter (priest) on September 22, 1738.
- Served as his father Samuel's curate at Epwort and Wroot from 1727 to 1729.

John Wesley's Career at Oxford University

- During John's time in Epworth younger brother Charles (a student at Oxford) writes to John indicating that he wants to take his religious life more seriously. John visits in the summer of 1729 and meets with a small group of men including Charles, William Morgan, and Bob Kirkham.
- Wesley returns to Oxford permanently in November 1729. A small group of men begin meeting regularly together. By 1731, their manner of organization and regular activities have attracted the attention of the larger university community. They start receiving epithets such as, "Methodists," "Holy Club," "Sacramentarians," "Godly Club," and "Bible-Moths."



“The Holy
Club in
Session”

By Marshall
Claxton

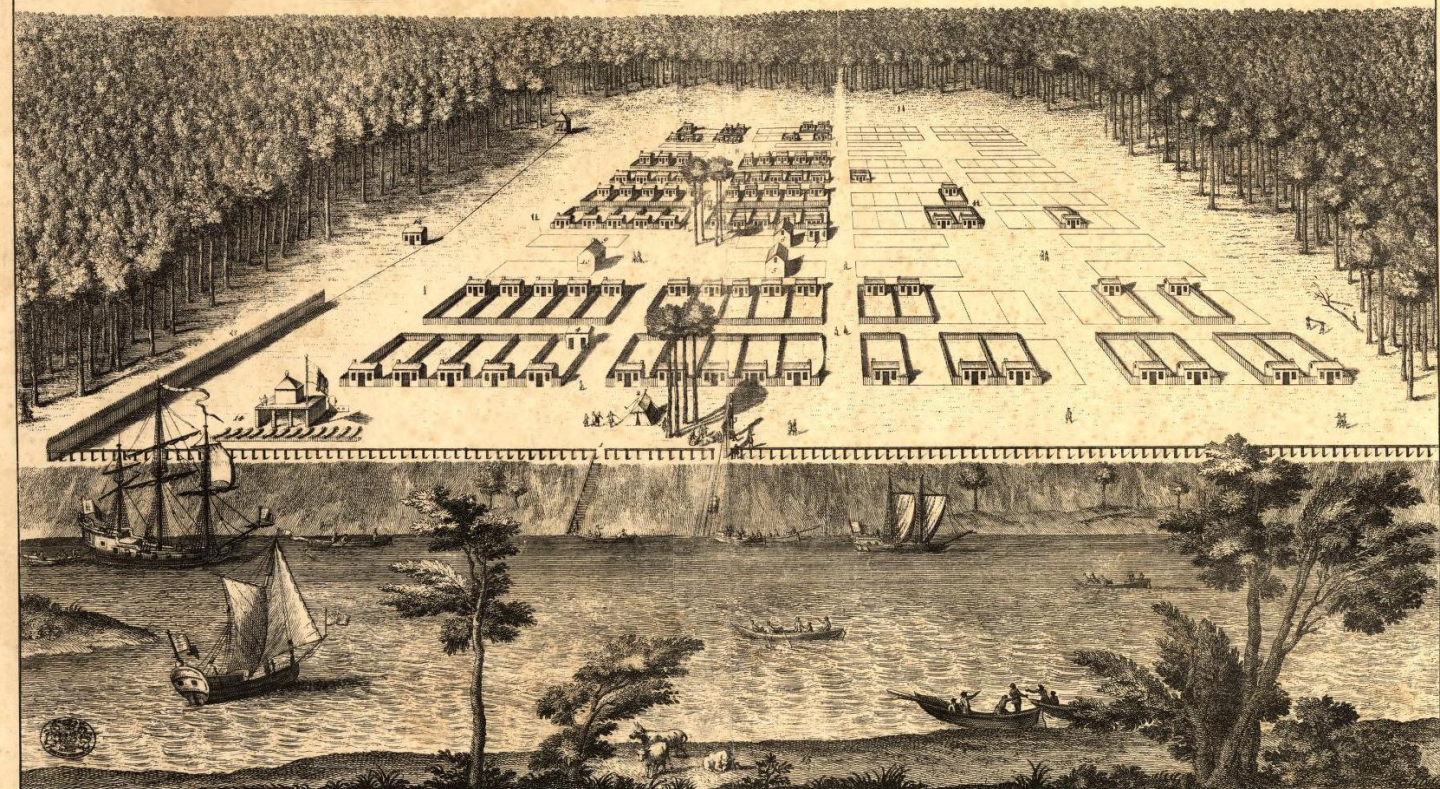
Characteristic Activities of Oxford Methodism (1729-1735)

- Patterning daily life as influenced by the holy living tradition (Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law)
- “Meditative piety” involving meeting together for religious conversation, the study of the Bible, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, receiving the Lord’s Supper weekly, and keeping diaries to track spiritual progress.
- Visiting prisoners at the Castle Prison and the Bocardo City Jail.
- Teaching orphans and caring for the poor and elderly.
- John Wesley was the primary influence, but others played a shaping role as well (Charles Wesley, William Morgan, John Clayton, Bob Kirkham, Benjamin Ingham, and George Whitefield)
- Groups were only 5 or 6 people in size, but under John Clayton’s influence the idea of subsidiary groups formed. There were perhaps 40 Oxford Methodists between 1730 and 1735.

The Georgia Mission: 1735 to 1738

- Sailed from England in the winter of 1735 on the *HMS Simmonds* and arrived in Georgia on February 6, 1736.
- Wesley's desire was to preach the gospel to the Indians in the Georgia colony, but went to serve as the parish priest to Savannah.
- A religious society had already been started before Wesley arrived and he sought to build on it.
- Wesley's insistence on rule following and general rigidity caused problems.
- The "Sophy Hopkey affair" ended Wesley's time in Georgia and he left in December 1737.

View of Savannah as it stood the 20th of March 1734.



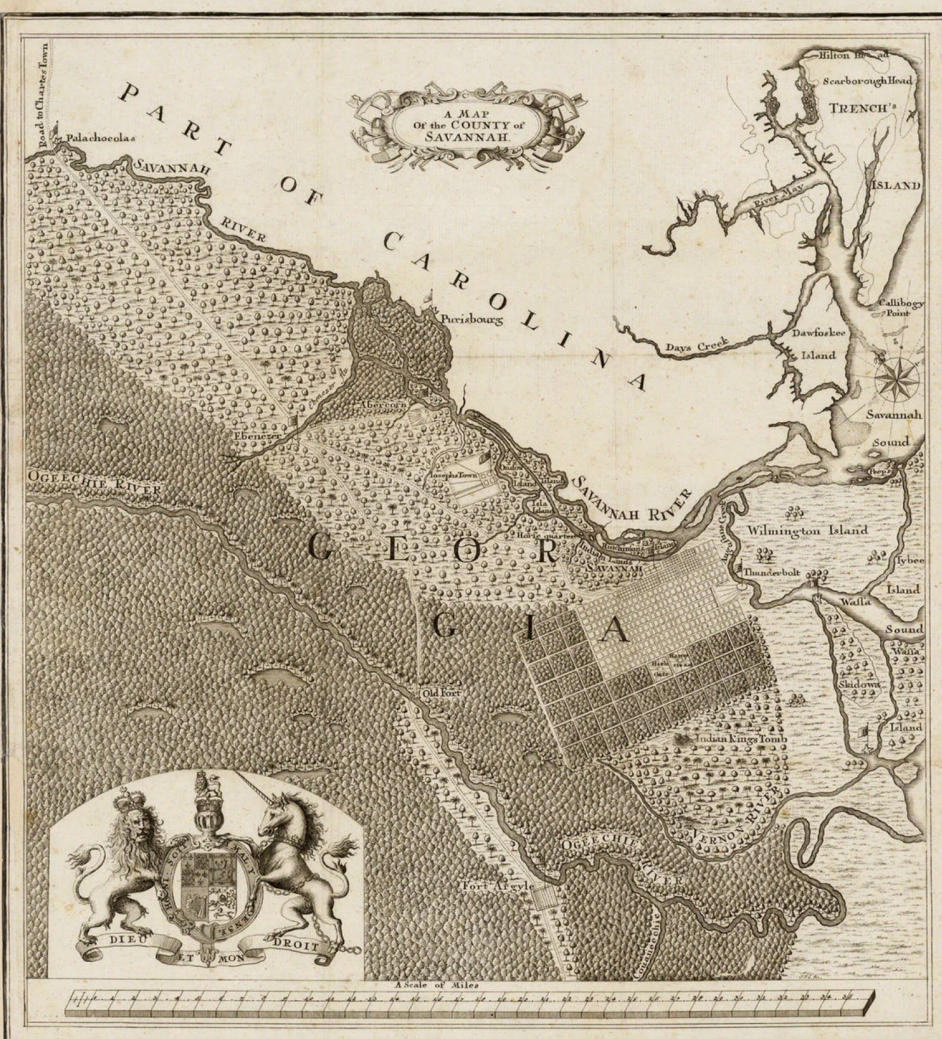
1. The Steers going up.
2. Mr. Oglethorpe's Tent.
3. The Crane & Bell.
4. The Tobacco and Storehouse.
5. The publick Mills.
6. The House for Strangers.
7. The publick Oven.
8. The Iron Well.

*To the Hon.^{ble} the Trustees for establishing the Colony of Georgia in America
This View of the Town of Savannah is humbly dedicated by their Honours
Obliged and most Obedient Servant
vve. de Savannah dans la Georgie. Peter Gordon.*

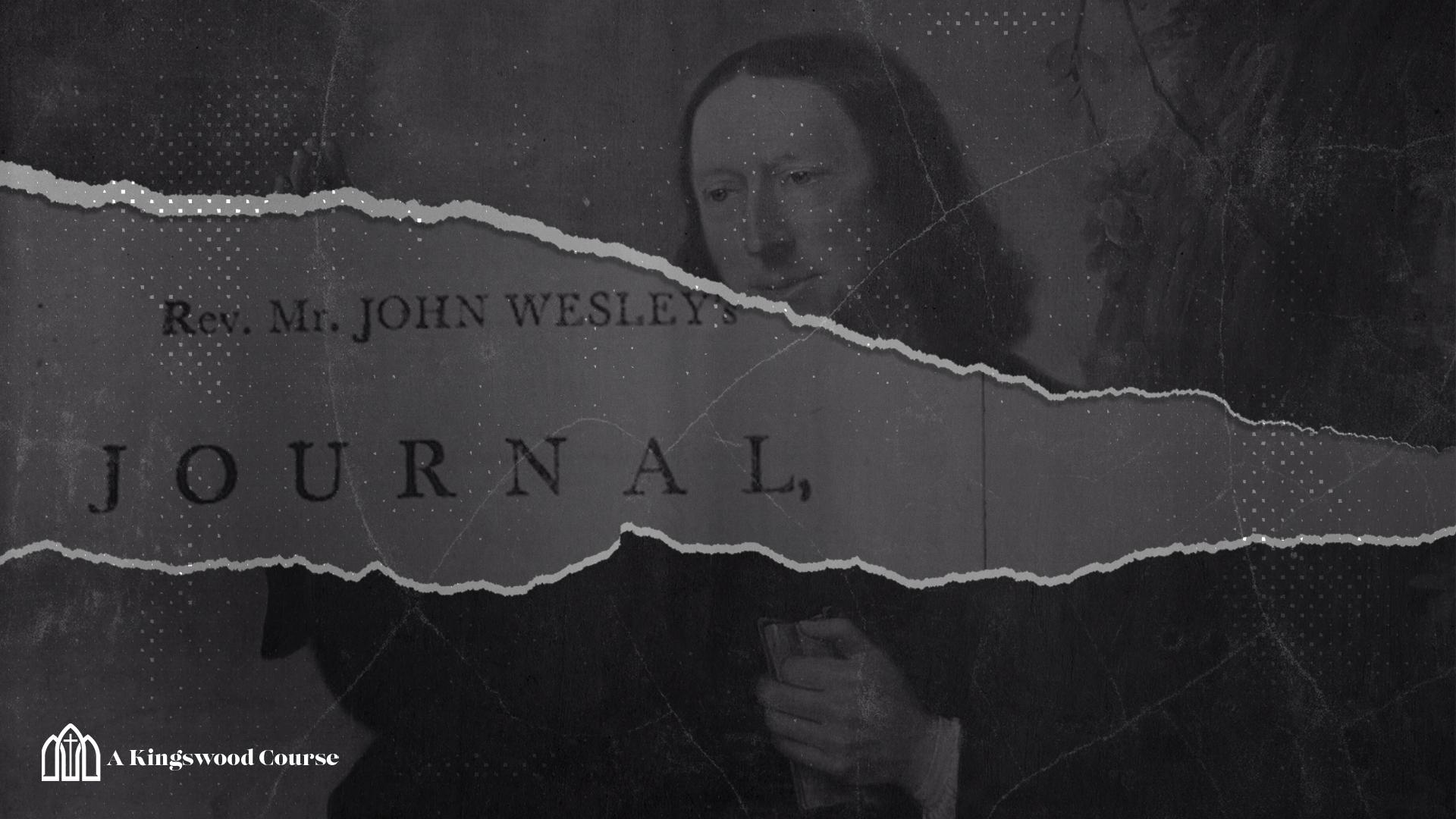
9. The Lott for the Church.
10. The publick Store.
11. The Fort.
12. The Prisoners House.
13. The Millstones.
14. The Guard House and Battery of Cannon.
15. Hutchinsons Island.

Map of Savannah in March 1734

The Georgia colony was founded in 1732 under Governor James Oglethorpe.



Map of the County of Savannah in 1735 or 1740



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