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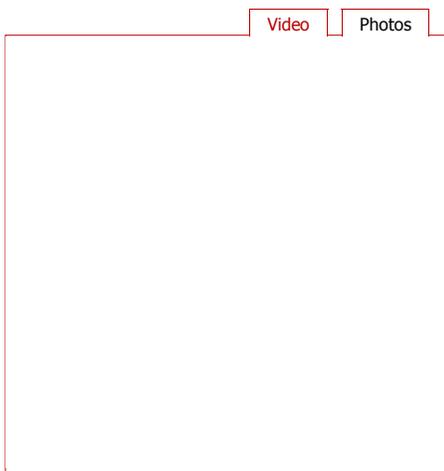
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School children celebrate Georgia's founding

Posted: February 12, 2011 - 12:19am | Updated: February 14, 2011 - 12:35pm



By Constance Cooper

Hundreds of elementary school students bounded down Bull Street dressed in lace-trimmed bonnets, flowing skirts, construction-paper-and-feather headdresses and tricorner hats.

Students from 26 area elementary schools donned Colonial attire and marched from Forsyth Park to City Hall in the cold sunshine on Friday morning to celebrate the founding of Georgia.

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The event is a highlight of the Georgia Historical Society's month-long Georgia Days state history celebration and was held on the eve of Georgia's 278th birthday. The parade has been going on since the 1890s, according to Scott Hodges, who marches every year dressed as Gen. James Oglethorpe, the colony's founder.

Hodges is a "professional Oglethorpe," who makes his living traveling around the state lecturing about Oglethorpe's life dressed in a handmade costume, complete with authentic British military trim and lapels dyed with vegetables to "popinjay green," a yellowish shade that was the signature color of Oglethorpe's 42nd regiment.

Hodges led the parade with a group of adults and Savannah Arts Academy

students dressed as important figures from Georgia's history.

His head shaved in a traditional Cherokee style and a bone piercing his septum, Vinson Miner, a Cherokee historical interpreter and bow maker, portrayed Sequoyah, the author of the Cherokee alphabet and this year's parade honoree.

"It's an honor to represent someone who is so outstanding in Native American History," Miner said as he held his toddler daughter, whose plastic, cartoon sippy cup was the only non-authentic item in her Colonial child getup.

Miner wasn't the only father to march with his daughter in this year's parade. Adam Iardino walked alongside his daughter, Lydia, a fourth-grader at Isle of Hope Elementary School whose Colonial child costume consisted of a flowered skirt, pastel shawl, lacy bonnet and

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fluorescent tennis shoes. It was Iardino's second march in the parade, the first being more than 20 years ago, when he donned a colonial minuteman costume as a fourth-grader at St. Paul's Lutheran School and shot friends with his toy musket.

"Everyone was jealous," Iardino said, smiling, as he remembered his gun.

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