

Gone But Not Forgotten Rediscovering the Civil War Through Archaeology



*Georgia Archaeology Month
May 2011*

Principal Sponsor:

The Society for Georgia Archaeology

Co-Sponsors:

Edwards-Pitman Environmental

Georgia Council of Professional Archaeologists

Historic Preservation Division, Georgia DNR

LAMAR Institute

New South Associates

Savannah River Archaeological Research Program-SCIAA

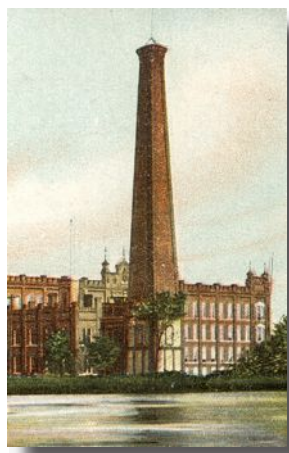
TRC



Gone But Not Forgotten

Rediscovering the Civil War through Archaeology

From 1861 to 1865 the United States of America was torn apart by war. This time the adversary was not England, France, or Spain, rather the fight was internal—oftentimes pitting brother against brother. Georgia was the scene of numerous military engagements during the Civil War, including the second bloodiest battle—Chickamauga. According to one estimate, Georgia's population was approximately 480,000 in the 1860s. Over 125,000 Georgians served in the Confederate States of America accounting for approximately 26% of the State's population. Of these, over 30,000 Confederate soldiers from Georgia lost their lives in defense of their beloved Southland. In comparison, a small number of white southerners sympathized with the North and donned the Union uniform. More substantial numbers of Unionist civilians either fled the Confederate states or focused their efforts in support of the Union and sought ways to undermine the Confederate cause. A number of freed African Americans from Georgia joined the Union ranks as well.



Georgia contains an array of archaeological sites relating to this tumultuous time in our nation's history, including arsenals, prisoner of war camps, shipwrecks, temporary campsites, battlefields, forts, and other defensive works. Battlefields and skirmish sites range from small events lasting only a few minutes to protracted sieges lasting several months, such as the siege of Fort Pulaski. Defensive strategies used by both sides included the excavation of trenches, artillery batteries, and forts. In some cases, defensive earthworks stretched for miles, such as the defenses at the Chattahoochee River and those on the west side of Savannah. Cavalry engagements, such as Brigadier General Kilpatrick's cavalry charge in Lovejoy, were often brief events with no time for the excavation of earthworks.

Coastal Georgia in the Early Years of the War

Fort Pulaski

In 1860, the state of Georgia seized control of Fort Pulaski following the secession of South Carolina from the United States. The fort was a primary target of Union forces because it guarded the coastal entrance to the port city of Savannah. Although the siege of the fort by Union forces required months of preparation, the Confederate surrender was short in coming. The assault against the massive brick fortification was launched on April 10, 1862. After 30 hours of bombardment, C.S.A. Colonel Charles H. Olmstead surrendered, and Union forces took control of the fort. Archaeological excavations were instrumental in delineating the boundaries of a cemetery at Fort Pulaski. Members of The Immortal Six Hundred are included among the burials of this hallowed ground.



In order to accomplish this victory, the U.S. troops constructed a series of artillery batteries in the salt marsh. One of these, Battery Halleck, was explored by archaeologists. Most of the remaining batteries remain undiscovered. The U.S. Army headquarters for this campaign were based at the Tybee Lighthouse. Limited excavations beneath the Assistant Lightkeeper's house revealed a deep refuse deposit from Major General Thomas W. Sherman's occupation in late 1861 and early 1862.

Despite the recapture of Fort Pulaski by the U.S. Army, Savannah remained a defensive stronghold for the Confederacy. The river forts on the Savannah River were further strengthened by an "interior line" of forts and heavy artillery positions on Savannah's east side. Fort James Jackson was a U.S. Army fort built in 1808 that was seized by the Confederates. Troops were garrisoned there for several years, and this fort was one of a series of forts that kept the U.S. Army at bay and unable to take the city of Savannah until late in the War.

Many Georgians who supported the Confederate cause fought in battles in the eastern theatre in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Although coastal Georgia saw action throughout the War, much of interior Georgia was spared any direct conflict until 1864. In this year, she was unable to escape the wrath of Major General William Tecumseh Sherman and Union troops as they cut a swath from the mountains to the sea.

General William Tecumseh Sherman's Campaigns

Atlanta Campaign, Spring – Summer 1864

The Civil War ushered in an era of industrial expansion for Atlanta. In 1862, fearing capture by Federal forces approaching Nashville, Atlanta became the site of a Confederate arsenal and the home of factories producing artillery, small firearms, swords, gunpowder, ammunition, and pikes. Confederate uniforms, train track rails, and armor plating were also manufactured in the city. Numerous hospitals were established in the Atlanta vicinity to accommodate the streams of wounded arriving from the battlefields of Tennessee and North Georgia. In addition, Atlanta's position as a rail hub defined its role during the Civil War as the "Gate City."



While in Chattanooga in the spring of 1864, Sherman received orders to advance his army of 100,000 troops as far as possible into Georgia. The primary objectives were to sever the lifeline of the Confederacy, the Western & Atlantic Railroad, and to destroy one of the major suppliers of the Confederate army, the armament industries in Atlanta. Atlanta's role as a key manufacturing and distribution center for war materials made its destruction critical to Federal plans for President Lincoln's re-election and a swift end to the devastating conflict in 1864.

From his headquarters at Tunnel Hill, Sherman launched the campaign to capture Atlanta in early May 1864. With the Confederates well established in Dalton, Georgia,

Sherman designed a feint to divert the attention of Confederate forces from his movements towards Resaca located south of Dalton. This feint resulted in an engagement by the 20th Army Corps and a small contingent of Arkansas Cavalry on Rocky Face Ridge.

Dug Gap and Rocky Face Ridge, May 7-9, 1864

On May 8th, General Geary made four unsuccessful attempts to conquer the Confederates at Dug Gap. The Confederates held a superior position and were able to hold off the overwhelming Union force. This action resulted in approximately 300 U.S. Army casualties, a number of whom were injured by tumbling boulders that were launched by the Confederates from the rocky summit. In early 2011, archaeologists defined the southern portion of the Dug Gap Battlefield. The area of the right flanking attempts by the 33rd New Jersey infantry was defined by this study. A lone minie ball fired from a Yankee gun was lodged 20 feet up in a downed cedar tree. This artifact marked the extreme southern extent of the battle.

Resaca, May 7-16, 1864

The ensuing Battle at Resaca was a major engagement that resulted in great loss of life on both sides. Once Resaca was taken by Union troops, Sherman's army continued in motion to the south. The 2008 archaeological study of the Resaca battlefield demonstrated that we still have a lot to learn from these well known Civil War sites. The general public had the opinion that there was nothing left to find because relic hunters had metal-detected the area for decades. However, investigations of a proposed access road and visitor center provided a detailed examination of a portion of the battlefield. The study included the intensive metal-detector survey of 37 acres of the floodplain and terraces of Camp Hill Creek. This survey was successful in recovering 126 battle-related artifacts. Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of the recovered items provided new insights into the nature of the battle on this section of the battlefield. Plotting of dropped versus fired artifacts that could be linked to specific regiments verified the suspected position of Confederate artillery on May 9, 1864, documented the reach of the federal probe on the 9th, and clarified the occupations of Bald Hill and Camp Creek Hill on May 13-14, 1864. Significant archaeological information remained despite the intensity of earlier relic hunter activity.



Advance on Atlanta, Spring – Summer 1864

Confederate forces mustered the strength to stall Union troop movements with actions at Allatoona Pass, Kennesaw Mountain, and the Chattahoochee River. Recent archaeological investigations at the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park have yielded data that provide a key link in understanding this portion of the 1864 Atlanta Campaign from an archaeological perspective. Charged with examining a project area that extended from Federal to Confederate lines, researchers identified numerous previously undocumented loci associated with the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. Using extensive documentary research, systematic metal detection, GIS technology, as well as comparative material from other national battlefields, investigators have been able to archaeologically reconstruct a segment of the June 27, 1864 battle in an attempt to capture the experience of the common soldier.



Following the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Confederate General Joseph Johnston's Army of Tennessee withdrew from the heights north and west of Marietta to present-day Smyrna. Although the battle was a Confederate victory, it left Johnston in an untenable position, forcing his army to withdraw further south for fear of losing Marietta to the larger Federal army. Brief but contentious actions occurred July 2-4, 1864, as the elements of the Army of Tennessee fell back to a prepared system of defensive earthworks known as the Chattahoochee River Line or Johnston's River Line.

Siege of Atlanta, July – August 1864

Three principal engagements—Peachtree Creek, Leggett's Hill (Atlanta), and Ezra Church—were fought in present-day Atlanta during July and August 1864. Period records and maps indicate that numerous earthworks, Federal and Confederate, once covered the landscape along the low-lying hills between Peachtree Creek and the Georgia Railroad corridor. Even the great New South metropolis of Atlanta was at one time "one vast fort." Today, the scattered remains of these fierce conflicts can be found only in the archaeological record.

Although numerous battles and skirmishes took place in the Atlanta area, one action in particular has become known as the Battle of Atlanta. Originally referred to as the Battle of Leggett's Hill or Bald Hill, this was the single-largest action of the Atlanta Campaign. Fighting erupted on July 22, 1864 as both sides struggled to gain control of the high ground between their respective battle lines.

Lovejoy/Nash Farm, July – November 1864

Lovejoy was the scene of four battles in 1864—the most remembered of which took place on August 20, 1864. Known as Kilpatrick's Charge, more than 4,000 Union horsemen commanded by Brigadier General Judson H. Kilpatrick rode over fewer than 1,000 dismounted Texas Cavalrymen under the command of General Sul Ross. Archaeological evidence of this event, which lasted less than an hour, was discovered in 2007 and is fully documented in a research report. More than 1,000 battle-related artifacts were recovered by a sample survey of the Nash Farm Battlefield. Archaeologists were able to track the movement of the U.S. Cavalry across the field where they were shelled by canister shot and stalled by log barricades before charging over the Confederate line and engaging the Texans in a fierce saber fight. The recovery of several finger rings, other jewelry, and sword fragments attests to this gruesome scene.

Sherman's March to the Sea

Emerging as the victors of the Atlanta Campaign, General Sherman and Union troops rested in the occupied city of Atlanta as he devised plans to "make Georgia howl." Although General Hood and Confederate forces moved toward northern Alabama and Tennessee in an attempt to have Sherman follow, Sherman refused to give chase. Instead, he ordered the forced evacuation of the

city's inhabitants and continued to plan his attack on central Georgia. After destroying much of Atlanta's infrastructure, Union forces left the city on November 15, 1864 headed south with Savannah in their sights.



Griswoldville, November 21-22, 1864

Engagements in central Georgia were widespread but mostly brief. Sherman had no intention of being bogged down in the central part of the state without his supply line, so he kept his army on the move. One exception—the Battle at Griswoldville—epitomizes the futile Confederate cause. Confederate soldiers at Griswoldville faced an overwhelming army of hardened fighters. Overpowered by Union forces, many of the old men and young boys struggling to defend Georgia were killed. Griswoldville was also the location of a famous pistol factory that was burned and destroyed by Major General Stoneman's cavalry in mid-1864. Griswoldville Battlefield is maintained as a Georgia State Park, but it has not been studied archaeologically.

Siege of Savannah, December 1864

On December 9, 1864, Sherman's troops reached the outskirts of Savannah, thus marking the end of his epic "March to the Sea" campaign. A last ditch effort by the greatly outnumbered Confederates to slow the Union advance resulted in brief battles at Monteith Swamp and Cuyler's plantation. At Monteith Swamp, about 350 Confederates blocked the road through the swamp. While they were no match for the 12,000 men of Sherman's 20th Corps, they held out for about five hours before withdrawing with only minor casualties. Archaeologists studied the Monteith Swamp battle site in late 2010 and early 2011. Although the area is broken up by residential neighborhoods and several convenience stores, the team was successful in defining key areas of the battlefield. The recovery of a nearly complete Springfield rifle, dropped in the swamp by a soldier in the 20th Corps, helped to locate the Union left flank on the battlefield. This find highlights the misery of soldiers who braved the icy waters and Confederate musketry to take the Confederate position.

Fort McAllister, December 13, 1864

Fort McAllister has been called Georgia's "Alamo." Unlike Fort Pulaski on the Savannah River, which was a seemingly impregnable brick fortress, Fort McAllister was simply built of sand and logs. For several years, the Union blockading fleet fired volley after volley into Fort McAllister. The soft sand merely absorbed these strong blows, and the fort was quickly restored after each bombardment. It was not until December 13, 1864, when U.S. Army infantry charged the fort from the interior side, that the fort was taken. This fierce and deadly battle lasted only 45 minutes. In the 20th century, Fort McAllister was "restored" by Henry Ford without the benefit of detailed archaeological study.

A Christmas Gift for President Lincoln

With the lack of organized armies in the interior of the state, Sherman's troops were able to wage all out war on the citizens of Georgia. As the Union soldiers were "living off the land and destroying any stores or provisions that might serve Confederate forces...(soldiers in gray) destroyed Rebel stores to keep them out of enemy hands." When Sherman reached Savannah on December 21, 1864, his army had cut a path of destruction through Georgia approximately 250 miles long and 20 to 60 miles wide. In a message to President Lincoln, Sherman presented the city of Savannah to him as a Christmas gift.

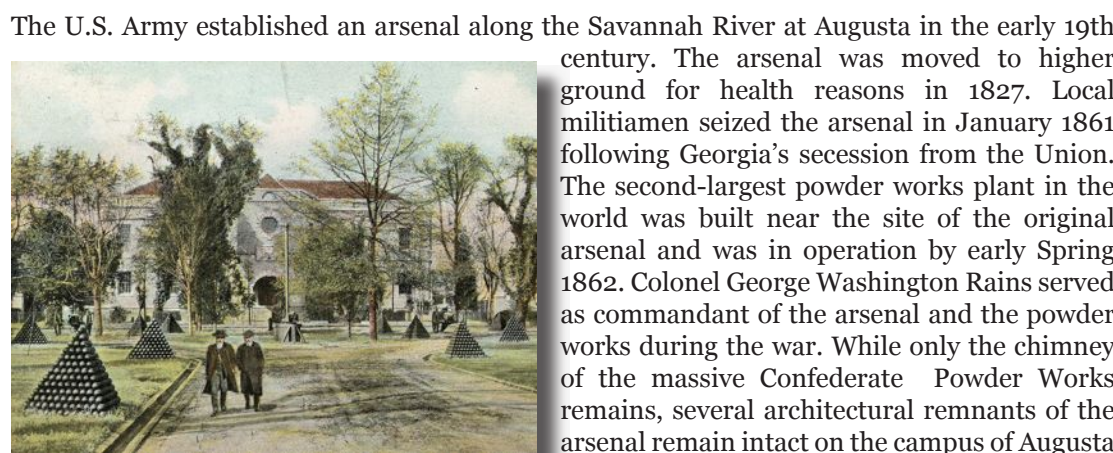
Wilson's Raid – Last Campaign of the Civil War

Fort Tyler, April 1865

In March and April 1865, U.S. Cavalry led by Brigadier General James H. Wilson wreaked havoc on industrial complexes in Alabama and west central Georgia. Industrial areas of Columbus were put to the torch, and Wilson was victorious in battle there on Easter Sunday, April 16. On this same day, a battle between LaGrange's Union forces and Confederates ensued at Fort Tyler, near West Point, Georgia. Archaeologists mapped Fort Tyler in the 1990s. More recent underwater archaeological survey in the Chattahoochee River near the fort discovered a sword, still in its scabbard, lying on the river bottom.

Confederate Military Industrial Complexes

The Confederacy operated numerous boatyards on its inland rivers to supply the war effort. The most substantial operation was on the Chattahoochee River. The story of the Confederate Navy is interpreted at the Port Columbus National Civil War Museum in Columbus, Georgia. On exhibit are the hulls of two Confederate gunboats, the C.S.S. *Chattahoochee* and the C.S.S. *Jackson*. Both hulls were recovered archaeologically from the Chattahoochee River.



The U.S. Army established an arsenal along the Savannah River at Augusta in the early 19th century. The arsenal was moved to higher ground for health reasons in 1827. Local militiamen seized the arsenal in January 1861 following Georgia's secession from the Union. The second-largest powder works plant in the world was built near the site of the original arsenal and was in operation by early Spring 1862. Colonel George Washington Rains served as commandant of the arsenal and the powder works during the war. While only the chimney of the massive Confederate Powder Works remains, several architectural remnants of the arsenal remain intact on the campus of Augusta State University. Archaeological exploration revealed aspects of life in this military industrial complex where guns, ammunition, and military accoutrements were manufactured.

One target of Sherman's horsemen in July 1864 was a large leather tannery operation in Clinton (Jones County). Archaeological excavations at the site uncovered a brief U.S. Army occupation and evidence of the fire that destroyed the complex. Many aspects of the early tanning industry were revealed as a result of this study which included historical documents research, detailed topographic mapping, and a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey.

Prisoner of War Camps

Camp Sumter/Andersonville

Camp Sumter, better known as Andersonville, was one of the largest Confederate military prison camps established during the Civil War. This prison had a brief but infamous history. Constructed in early 1864 to house Union prisoners of war, the stockade quickly filled with

soldiers from the many battles in north and central Georgia, as well as adjacent states. Living conditions at Andersonville were abominable, and thousands died as a result. As Sherman's army pushed further into Georgia, the Confederates feared that Andersonville was one of his intended destinations. Archaeological exploration at the site has been limited to identifying the gate entrances and sections of the prison walls. Portions of the 26 1/2-acre stockade wall have been reconstructed, and associated exhibits provide information based on the results of archaeological investigations conducted at the site. This historic site is maintained by the National Park Service and includes the National Prisoner of War Museum and Andersonville National Cemetery.

Camp Lawton

At Camp Lawton just north of Millen, the Confederates built what was intended to be the largest prison in the world. Prisoners from Camp Sumter were transferred by train to Camp Lawton. Although the prison was in use for only six weeks, researchers estimate that more than a thousand prisoners died while held there. In December 2009, archaeologists discovered the relatively undisturbed occupation sites (or shebangs, as they were called) of the Union prisoners. This discovery sparked a new era of archaeological interest in the site that promises to reveal many aspects of life in a Confederate prison. As this historic site is located on the grounds of Magnolia Springs State Park and the Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery, the site is maintained by both the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



The Future of Civil War Research in Georgia

Advances in historical archaeology and battlefield archaeology have improved our understanding of events in Georgia during the Civil War. This subject is of great interest to the public, and many relic hunters and self-appointed archaeologists are busy scouring the landscape for tangible evidence. Several collaborative projects have involved professional archaeologists and relic collectors, but there remains room for considerable improvement in this relationship. *For the archaeologist, context is key.* The geographic locations of the battle objects are a vital part of the story. Once these clues have been removed from their battlefield context, their scholarly value is greatly reduced.

Battlefield archaeology is a "who-dun-it" on a massive scale. Bullets and accoutrements tell a story of who is firing at whom, and where were they standing at the time. In many cases, the telltale evidence left by the battle artifacts tells a more accurate version of the battle story. Archaeologists and relic collectors should pursue additional avenues to share information about battlefield finds. Basic information could be gathered, including a geographic location (recorded by GPS device or cell phone) and an artifact photograph with a scale.

To learn more about Federal and State laws relating to archaeology and how you can contribute to Georgia Archaeology, we encourage you to visit <http://www.thesga.org> and http://shapiro.anthro.uga.edu/GASF/site_pamphlet.html.

To view references used in compiling the text for this poster, visit <http://thesga.org/category/archaeology-month/2011-archaeology-month>.

Places to Visit, Experience, and Learn

Andersonville National Historic Site
496 Cemetery Road
Andersonville, GA 31711
229-924-0343
www.nps.gov/ande

Camp Lawton at Magnolia Springs State Park
1053 Magnolia Springs Drive
Millen, GA 30442
478-982-1660
www.gastateparks.org/info/magspr

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park-Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center
3370 Lafayette Road
Fort Oglethorpe, GA 30742
706-866-9241
www.nps.gov/chch

Fort McAllister Historic Park
3894 Fort McAllister Road,
Richmond Hill, GA 31324
912-727-2339
www.gastateparks.org/FortMcAllister

Fort Pulaski National Monument
US Hwy. 80 East b/t Savannah & Tybee Island
P.O. Box 30757
Savannah, GA 31410
912-786-5787
www.nps.gov/fopu

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield
900 Kennesaw Mountain Drive
Kennesaw, GA 30152
770-427-4686 ext. 0
www.nps.gov/kemo/index.htm

Nash Farm Battlefield Park
100 Babbs Mill Road
Hampton, GA 30228
770-954-2031
www.henrycountybattlefield.com

Pickett's Mill Battlefield Historic Site
4432 Mt. Tabor Church Road
Dallas, GA 30157
770-443-7850
www.gastateparks.org/PickettsMillBattlefield

Port Columbus National Civil War Naval Museum
1002 Victory Drive
Columbus, GA 31901
706-327-9798
www.portcolumbus.org

CONTRIBUTORS:

Daniel T. Elliott
LAMAR Institute
Christopher T. Espenshade
New South Associates
Tammy F. Herron
SRARP-SCIAA
Robert Moon
SRARP-SCIAA
Garrett Silliman
Edwards-Pitman Environmental



thesga.org