

GEORGIA BATTLEFIELDS

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Old Clinton War Days returns 6-7 May

The Old Clinton Historic District will again host reenactments of the July 1864 Battle of Sunshine Church and the November 1864 Battle of Griswoldville. On both Saturday and Sunday, gates open at 9 a.m. and reenactments begin at 2:05 p.m. Saturday's activities conclude with a memorial service at the Methodist Church Cemetery. Before the reenactments, tour the historic buildings, including the McCarthy-Pope House, the oldest house in town, which will have displays relating to the Griswold Pistol Factory and other relics. Food, including items from Civil War recipes, and crafts of the era will be demonstrated. Proceeds (\$5 for adults, \$3 for ages 6-18, and free for ages 5 and under) are used to help preserve the historic district. Old Clinton is 12 miles northeast of Macon, just a block northwest of US 129. For more information and directions see <http://www.oldclinton.org/war-days-3/>

Those of you who attended Georgia Battlefields Association's 2022 visit to Old Clinton will remember how our guide Earlene Hamilton provided an evocative narrative that helped us imagine the site's appearance when Stoneman's cavalry passed through the town twice during his July 1864 raid and when part of Sherman's forces passed through during the March to the Sea in November. War Days provides an opportunity for visitors to have a similar experience.

Four days in Savannah: The 2023 GBA annual tour

We had mostly good weather for our 13-16 April visit to sites in the Savannah area. The tour was led by National Park Service historian Jim Ogden, who always provides a narrative filled with insights as well as a wealth of facts. Thursday began with a visit to the reconstructed British redoubt from October 1779 and the adjacent Savannah History Museum operated by [Coastal Heritage Society](#) (CHS). Lunch at the museum was followed by a visit to [Bonaventure Cemetery](#) with a local guide. The photo of John Miller singing "Moon River" at Johnny Mercer's grave attests to the one rainy portion of the tour. Too bad that lyricist Mercer didn't pen "Singin' in the Rain." A reception and dinner at the hotel featured a presentation by GBA Secretary Mary-Elizabeth Ellard, D.V.M., on veterinary medicine during the Civil War.

Friday was devoted to the seaward defenses of Savannah and began with a visit to Battery Halleck, the sole remnant of the multiple [U.S. artillery positions](#) that bombarded [Fort Pulaski](#), followed by a tour of the fort itself, a National Park Service site. Next, Old Fort Jackson (also a CHS site), a War of 1812-era fort that was manned by the Confederates during the Civil War, provided an opportunity for some hands-on experience with Civil War weaponry, thankfully using only powder but no shot or shell. Fort Wimberly, on the grounds of [Wormsloe State Historic Site](#), illustrated how the many Confederate sand and earth forts were both substantial and—compared to masonry forts—quickly reparable. The remnants of Fort Boggs provided a glimpse of the never-tested inner defense line of the city. Dinner was at [The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum](#). Next month's newsletter will feature a story about an aircraft in the museum.

Saturday covered the U.S. forces' December 1864 approach to the city and the Confederates' landward defenses and began with a visit to Monteith's Swamp and the infamous crossing of Ebenezer Creek. A stop was also made at Ebenezer Church, established in 1734 and site of a well-preserved Revolutionary War redoubt. The sites of Shaw's Dam and Battery Jones illustrated the Confederate 1864 defense line. Lunch was at the site of [King's Bridge](#), for a few days one of the busiest ports in North America as the U.S. Navy resupplied Sherman's two armies after their March to the Sea. The afternoon visit to [Fort McAllister State Park](#) showed a reconstructed Confederate fort that was attacked unsuccessfully by the U.S. Navy in 1863 and successfully by the U.S. Army in December 1864. Dinner was at The Pirates' House but unfortunately did not coincide with International Talk Like a Pirate Day (19 September).

Sunday morning was a historic Savannah walking tour, featuring information on the city's founding as well as Revolutionary and Civil War sites, led by 17-year-old Dalton Shuman, whom we first met at the Columbus Naval Museum during our 2020 tour. Dalton designed the tour, and the local expertise of Dalton and his mother Michele was helpful in our tour planning. We are hopeful that Dalton represents a preservation mind-set among more of his generation.

Come join us in April 2024 when we'll be based in Chattanooga and will cover events of October and November 1863. Watch our web site for details as the event draws closer.

Below Left (Thursday): At Savannah History Museum to cover the Revolutionary War.



Right (Thursday): John Miller sings "Moon River" at Johnny Mercer's grave.
Below (Thursday): Local guide leads tour of Bonaventure Cemetery.



Friday photos. Below left: NPS ranger tells the group about Fort Pulaski.



Below center: Dale Ann Joslin lights off a 6-pounder gun at Old Fort Jackson.



Right: Exploring the earthworks at Fort Wimberly.



Left: Friday evening dinner was followed by docent-led tours at The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

Right: Saturday morning on the south bank of Ebenezer Creek.



Left (Saturday): Jim Ogden explains significance of King's Bridge Landing.
Right (Saturday): Park Ranger tells the story of Fort McAllister.

Below (Sunday): Dalton Shuman at monument to French troops from Haiti who helped Colonials assault the British lines at Savannah in 1779.



Thanks to all the photographers:
John Miller, Mary-Elizabeth Ellard,
Bill Gurry, David Hull, Skip Johnson,
James Nobles, and Melody Henson.



Sunday morning group photo.

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