

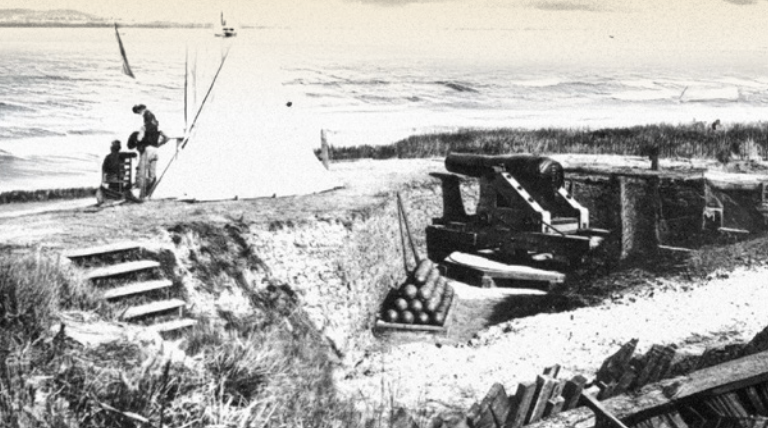
Fort McAllister

End of Sherman's March to the Sea

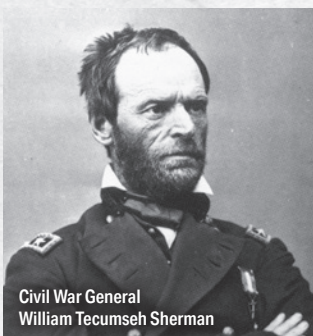


 **GEORGIA**
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES



Sentinel of the South



Civil War General
William Tecumseh Sherman

Fort McAllister, a Confederate stronghold in Richmond Hill, Georgia, near Savannah, played a pivotal role during the American Civil War. Constructed in 1861, its sturdy earthen walls and heavy artillery made it a formidable coastal defense against Union gunboats and ironclads.

The fort successfully repelled multiple Union naval attacks, earning a reputation as nearly impregnable.

The fort fell in December 1864 when Union troops overwhelmed the Confederate defenders in a short but intense land battle. The fall of Fort McAllister cleared the way for General William T. Sherman's capture of Savannah during his famous advance through Georgia, Sherman's March to the Sea.

In the 1920s, automobile magnate Henry Ford purchased the site and began extensive renovations of the fort in 1935. The land was later acquired by International Paper, which donated it to the state of Georgia in 1958. Today, Fort McAllister State Park offers visitors a glimpse into its military past and significance during the Civil War, as well as providing opportunities for outdoor recreation in a beautiful coastal setting.

3894 Fort McAllister Rd., Richmond Hill, GA | 912-727-2339
GaStateParks.org/FortMcAllister

Fort McAllister is open daily.

Scan for hours, admission, and more info.



Timeline

June 1861

The Dekalb Rifles construct defenses on Joseph McAllister's Strathy Hall plantation, using enslaved labor to build fortifications protecting the Ogeechee River's entrance.



April 1862

Confederates allow only friendly vessels to navigate past Fort McAllister in the wake of Fort Pulaski's fall to the Union.

July 1862

Fort McAllister's guns block the U.S. Navy's attempt to destroy the Confederate steamer *Nashville*.

January 27, 1863

Ironclad U.S.S. *Montauk* launches a five-hour assault on Fort McAllister, causing no significant damage to either side.



February 28, 1863

The *Montauk* shells and sinks the *Nashville*.

February 1, 1863

The *Montauk* strikes again, killing garrison commander Major John B. Gallie, but failing otherwise to inflict much damage.

March 3, 1863

Several U.S. war ships bombard Fort McAllister but fail to inflict much damage outside of the death of garrison mascot "Tom Cat."

December 1864

Fort McAllister blocks U.S. General William T. Sherman's army from reaching Savannah on Sherman's March to the Sea. Sherman's army takes the fort by a land assault, overpowering the Confederates in about 15 minutes. Confederate General William J. Hardee withdraws his 10,000 troops from Savannah. A week later, Sherman's forces abandon Fort McAllister and burn its bunkers.



1920s

Henry Ford purchases Fort McAllister site.

1947

International Paper buys the Fort McAllister property from the Ford estate.

1935

Ford begins restorations of the Fort and opens it to the public as a historic site.

March 14, 1963

Fort McAllister opens as a state historical site.

1958

International Paper deeds the site to the Georgia Historical Commission.

1970

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1980

Fort McAllister and neighboring Richmond Hill State Park join to become Fort McAllister State Park.

Explorer's Key

① Genesis Point

Bluff on the Ogeechee River deemed an ideal vantage point for defense of the area.

② Signal Tower

Replica of the signal tower constructed by the Confederates in early 1864. It was part of a network of signal stations that connected Fort McAllister to the railroad bridge on the Ogeechee, which then linked to the telegraph relay at Ways Station.

③ Greenway

The Greenway once held rows of tents, sleeping quarters for lower-ranked enlisted men. Soldiers only slept within the walls of the fort in the rare situation of an imminent naval assault.

④ NCO Huts

These structures represent the winter quarters used by troops after their tents became too worn, damaged, or inadequate to provide proper shelter during the harsh winter conditions.

⑤ Barracks

This structure is modeled after a drawing of an overseer's house from the McAllister plantation, which was later repurposed as barracks for officers and the fort's commander.

⑥ Artificer's Shop

This structure represents the shop of a Civil War artificer, responsible for blacksmithing and woodworking. Tools like anvils, hammers, saws, and chisels were used to forge metal and craft wooden items, essential for repairing weapons and maintaining equipment during the war.

⑦ Bridge

The moat surrounding the fort wasn't designed to hold water but was reinforced with palisades (spikes) to slow down land attacks, as replicated here.

⑧ Parade Ground

The parade ground was a center of activity for troop inspections and other duties when the fort was idle, but it became dangerous during attacks.

⑨ Hot Shot Gun

This gun is a smooth bore and fired 32-pound heated cannonballs at wooden ships to set them ablaze.

⑩ Hot Shot Furnace

Red-hot solid iron cannonballs were heated in a furnace and fired from hot shot guns to ignite wooden ships. Gunners accessed the furnace from the rear, retrieving the heated projectiles and loading them into the cannon for firing. The tunnel visible today was added by Henry Ford in the 1930s.

⑪ Central Bombproof

The large bomb-proof was used as a hospital and supply area as well as a refuge during naval bombardments.

⑫ Parapet

A Union shell struck the trunnion of a cannon positioned on the outer edge of the fort's earthen wall, causing the trunnion to break off. The detached trunnion fatally struck the fort's first commander, Major John B. Gallie, killing him instantly.

⑬ Sharpshooters

During the naval assaults, Federal ironclads positioned across the river to shell the fort. Confederate sharpshooters in the marsh fired at their gun ports, wounding one officer. Despite the ironclads' return fire, the sharpshooters suffered no casualties.

⑭ Columbiad

This gun emplacement was one of four of the original battery. Struck during multiple naval assaults, the gun was always fixed quickly for subsequent service.

⑮ Service Magazine

Reconstruction of the service magazine which held shells, powder, fuses, and implements for the 32-pound rifled gun. The rifled gun would have been positioned to the rear of the magazine.

⑯ Eastern Bastion

This position was added and fortified with light field guns in January 1864 to protect against land assaults.

⑰ Sally Port

The sally port allowed easy access to the fort's interior by supply wagons and heavy guns. While it was filled with dirt to slow Sherman's assault in December 1864, it was one of the first locations that Federal forces breached.

⑱ Battlefield

Originally a large field, this area was the site of General Hazen's frontal assault on the fort. Mines in the field placed by Confederates inflicted heavy casualties on Federal troops.

⑲ 10-inch Mortar Battery

This mortar battery was used heavily during the February 1, 1863 bombardment, causing the platform to collapse. Confederates continued to fire it for the duration of the bombardment.

⑳ Shoreline

During the December 1864 attack on the fort, several Federal infantry regiments advanced along the shore of the river during ebb tide and attempted to scale the mounds while under heavy fire. Troops in the 47th Ohio regiment were the first to enter the fort and place their flag.



Welcome to Richmond Hill, GEORGIA

HENRY FORD'S SOUTHERN TOWN

**Fort McAllister is STOP 19
on Richmond Hill's Coastal Bryan Heritage Trail.**

Explore more sites with our free app. Fuel your fun at local
restaurants, shops, and attractions along the way!



FREE APP

(912) 756-2676
VisitRichmondHill.com