

Civil War Forts & Museums

(Click On The Fort Name to Visit Their Webpage)

ALABAMA. . .

[Fort Gaines](#)

"Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead". This famous quote was given by Admiral Farragut during the Civil War Battle of Mobile Bay. This week long naval and land battle resulted in the siege of Fort Gaines and its eventual capture by Union forces.

[Fort Blakely - Scene of Last Major Battle of The Civil War](#)

Just hours after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee miles away in Virginia, the Battle of Blakeley was fought at Fort Blakeley on April 9, 1865 at 5:30 p.m. It was a major news event in the ongoing coverage of the Civil War and was depicted in a front page drawing in "Harper's Weekly" of May 17, 1865.

"Probably the last charge of this war, it was as gallant as any on record," Harper's reported. Historic Blakeley State Park was created in 1981 to preserve the National Register Site and its 5 1/2 miles of pristine breastworks.

[Fort Morgan](#)

In the early daylight of August 5, 1864, the Federal fleet began its attack on Fort Morgan. Farragut's plan was for the fleet to dash up the narrow ship channel directly under the guns of the fort. The wooden ships were lashed together in pairs with the Tecumseh and three other ironclad monitors leading the way. As the tiny Confederate fleet waits, only the monitor Techumseh is destroyed by the "torpedos" (mines).

DELAWARE. . .

Fort Delaware

Now known as Fort Delaware State Park, the fort not only still exists, it is very much as it was when it held over 40,000 Confederate, Federal and political prisoners. Though now they go home at night, during the day, its dark, damp corridors still echo to the sounds of prisoners and guards as military and civilian living historians re-live the life and pathos of this infamous island. We cordially invite you to come and experience first-hand what the men of the North and South alike endured.

FLORIDA. . .

Fort Pickens

Fort Pickens was the largest of a group of forts designed to fortify Pensacola Harbor. Constructed between 1829-1834, Pickens supplemented Fort Barrancas, Fort McRee, and the Navy Yard. Located at the western tip of Santa Rosa Island, just offshore the mainland, Pickens guarded the island and the entrance to the harbor. Its construction was supervised by Colonel William H. Chase of the Corps of Army Engineer. Using slave labor, the fort used over twenty-two million bricks and was intended to be impregnable to attack. It has the distinction of never being captured by the Confederacy during the Civil War. Fort Pickens Rd, Santa Rosa Island; (850) 934-2635; Call for hours / admission.

Fort Barrancas - at N.A.S. Pensacola

Visitors Center - located at Naval Live Oaks Reservation

Civil War Soldiers Museum

108 S. Palafox St, Pensacola, FL; (850) 469-1900;

Open: Tues-Sat 10AM-4:30PM; Admission: Adult \$5 / Child (6-12) \$2.50;

Life-size dioramas of Civil War encampments and other exhibits portraying daily life for soldiers in both the Northern and Southern armies.

Pensacola Historical Museum

115 E. Zaragoza St, Pensacola, FL; (850) 433-1559;

Open: Mon-Sat 9AM-4:30PM; Admission: \$1;

Located in the Arbona Building, the museum exhibits a wide range of artifacts from Prehistoric Indians, Colonial Era, and the Civil War.

[FORT JEFFERSON THE DRY TORTUGAS](#)

BY BARBARA BOWERS



The 70-mile floatplane ride from Key West to Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas doesn't at first feel like a skip into the *Twilight Zone*. This is, after all, the tail end of the Florida Keys chain, and one of the newest U.S. national parks. But a flyby of the six-sided behemoth—the largest Civil War coastal masonry fort—is akin to sighting an intergalactic Mother Ship floating in deep blue space.

A tour of the fort's architecture reveals multiple arches and high moat walls. By day, the moat wall is a jogger's dream. By night, it becomes a stargazing platform. No pesky streetlamps, no car lights—no lights whatsoever to distract from shooting stars that fall into the Gulf of Mexico. Only a sky this black offers the naked eye such infinite depths of the Milky Way.

Modern history has crashed onto the fort's shores as surely as the wild blue waves of the gulf. Dr. Samuel Mudd was imprisoned here in 1865 after being convicted of complicity in President Lincoln's assassination. The U.S.S. *Maine* refueled here in 1898 before sailing to Havana where it was sunk, kicking off the Spanish-American War. And a recent ten-year battle here over fishing, diving, and other operating rights, waged between the government and commercial interests, ended when the waters around Fort Jefferson were annexed to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Anyone lucky enough to visit knows instantly that this place is remarkable. Rescued from oblivion by President Franklin D. Roosevelt following the demise of its military services, Fort Jeff was designated a national monument in 1935, a national park in 1992. Since then, the number of visitors has increased, reaching 100,000 in 2001 and forcing impact studies and protective limits.

Still, Fort Jefferson remains the most inaccessible national park in the lower 48 states. It shows. Pristine coral reefs are the sites of decades-old nurse shark studies. Goliath grouper and swordfish and marlin roam the nearby deep outer banks. The sugar-coarse beaches in the seven-island Dry Tortugas group shelter numerous loggerhead and green sea turtle nesting sites. One island, Bush Key, is a significant nesting site for sooty terns. Even the fort's moat wall is fortified with sea fans and sea urchins, with barnacles and

reef-building corals. A morning's snorkel around the fortress is like floating in outer space: At the very least, I spy aliens here.

Its contribution to American heritage looms large, but Fort Jefferson's environmental legacy may be its most lasting. No other testament to mankind merges salt and sea and sand and sun and stars—and humility—so succinctly into the timelessness of the universe.

barbara bowers writes from Key West, Florida, where her diverse occupations include being an art teacher, a marketing consultant, and a hotel bartender.

GEORGIA. . .

[Fort McAllister](#)

Built between 1861 - 1862, this fort withstood two years of battle before falling on December 13, 1864 during General Sherman's March to the Sea.

[Fort Pulaski](#)



Fort Pulaski, built near the mouth of the Savannah River by the U.S. Army before the Revolutionary War, blocked the river access to Savannah. Fort Pulaski was called a third system fort and was considered invincible at the time. It was completed in 1847 with 25 million bricks and walls 7.5 feet thick. The strength of this fortification was tested in the Civil War. Seized by Georgia state troops early in the war, the fort was besieged by Federal forces on April 10 after Colonel Charles H. Olmstead refused to surrender the fort. Within hours, the Union troops had breached the southeast part of the fort and continued to attack. A cannon was fired and caused part of the brick wall to crumble. After only 30 hours of bombardment, the walls were breached and Olmstead surrendered the fort to the Union army.

Today the Fort Pulaski Park includes 5,623 acres of scenic marsh and uplands. You can find white-tailed deer, alligators, raccoons, and a variety of resident and migratory birds. Spanish moss drapes from holly bushes and trees. There

are both self-guided and ranger-led tours of the fort. Visitors can also enjoy browsing through the museum and exploring the nature trails.

Want more info?

Fort Pulaski- http://www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/us_nm/ga_pulas.htm

Fort Pulaski National Monument- <http://www.nps.gov/fopu/local/>

KENTUCKY. . .

Fort Duffield

On September 4, 1861 Confederate troops under the command of General Leonidas Polk occupied Columbus, Kentucky this action effectively ended Kentucky's neutrality; two days later U.S. Grant's Federal troops took Paducah, Kentucky. The actions of Grant and Polk brought the Civil War into the Commonwealth.

LOUISIANA. . .

Fort deRussy

Fort deRussy is located on the south bank of the old Red River Channel north of Marksville, LA, in the river's closest bend towards Marksville. It has recently been purchased by La Commission des Avoyelles, the local historical organization, and plans are underway to restore parts of the fort. It is ranked in the top 1/3 of the best preserved civil war sites by members of the National Park Service and the Civil War Trust.

Fort Pike State Commemorative Area

In 1861 the silence of Fort Pike was broken. Before the actual start of the Civil War, the Louisiana militia captured the fort. Confederates held it until the Union forces took New Orleans in 1862, whereupon the Southerners evacuated Fort Pike. Federal forces then reoccupied the fort and used it as a base for raids along the Gulf coast and Lake Pontchartrain areas and as a protective outpost for New Orleans. In spite of all this activity, not a single cannon ball was ever fired in battle from Fort Pike.

MARYLAND. . .

[Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine](#)

During the American Civil War union troops were stationed at Fort McHenry to help keep Baltimore out of the hands of those who would have Maryland join the southern rebellion. The fort's guns were turned toward the city. The fort was used as a temporary prison where political prisoners suspected of being confederate sympathizers were held, often without trial. Following the Battle of Gettysburg in early July, 1863 nearly 7,000 confederate soldiers were detained in the fort.

MASSACHUSETTS. . .

[Fort Warren](#)

Fort Warren, located on Georges Island in Boston Harbor, is a former Civil War prison and was a harbor defense fort for many generations. Today the Fort is maintained by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and is the cornerstone of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. The fort is situated on a 45-acre island at the entrance to Boston Harbor where it is in a prominent position to guard what used to be the main shipping channel.

MINNESOTA. . .

[Fort Snelling](#)

In 1858, the year Minnesota became a state, the fort was sold to a land developer and platted as a town site. Plans for the city of Fort Snelling were abandoned, however, with the outbreak of the Civil War. Between 1861 and 1865 Minnesota expanded the fort as a training center for thousands of volunteers who joined the Union Army. After the war, the regular Army returned.

MISSOURI. . .

[Fort Davidson State Historic Site](#)

Earthwork remnants of Fort Davidson, occupied by Union Forces during the bloody Battle of Pilot Knob, are still visible at this 37-acre

historic site. The Civil War battle on Sept. 27, 1864, lasted less than one hour, but an estimated 1,200 men, most of them Confederates, were wounded or killed. Exhibits in the visitor center feature the historic battle.

NORTH CAROLINA. . .

Fort Branch

At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, the Confederate Army chose the site of Fort Branch to provide the upper Roanoke Valley with badly needed protection against the Union gunboats that were beginning to enter eastern North Carolina's rivers and sounds. The fort was named in honor of General Lawrence Branch, a local hero who had been killed on a Maryland battlefield.

Fort Macon

The War Between the States began on April 12, 1861, and only two days elapsed before local North Carolina militia forces from Beaufort arrived to seize the fort for the state of North Carolina and the Confederacy.

RHODE ISLAND. . .

Fort Adams

The United States Naval Academy relocated to Fort Adams during the early months of the Civil War. The fort housed the cadets and served as a training facility until more suitable quarters could be secured in the town of Newport. The fort also served as the home to USS Constitution ("Old Ironsides") and was used to house midshipmen and as a training vessel.

SOUTH CAROLINA. . .

Fort Sumter National Monument

The first engagement of the Civil War took place at Fort Sumter on April 12 and 13, 1861. After 34 hours of fighting, the Union surrendered the fort to the Confederates. From 1863 to 1865, the Confederates at Fort Sumter withstood a 22 month

siege by Union forces. During this time, most of the fort was reduced to brick rubble. Fort Sumter became a national monument in 1948.