

HISTORYAMERICA PRESENTS

MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA: SHERMAN WAGES TOTAL WAR

October 22-30, 2008

On November 15, 1864, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman provisioned his army with 20 days' hard rations and abandoned the devastated city of Atlanta. Behind him he left wrecked railroads, leveled fortifications, and a city in flames. His new target was Savannah, Georgia, about 225 miles to the southeast, on the Atlantic coast. Marching in two wings, Sherman's army of 62,000 men advanced against light opposition from Confederate Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler's cavalry and the Georgia Militia, cutting a 60-mile-wide swath of destruction through the heart of Georgia. After a savage fight at Griswoldville (November 22), lesser engagements at Ball's Ferry and Sandersville, and running cavalry fights in and around Waynesboro, Sherman arrived at the gates of Savannah on December 11, 1864. To facilitate a linkup with the Federal fleet, Sherman sent Brig. Gen. William B. Hazen's division to capture Fort McAllister on the Ogeechee River. The fort fell on December 12. Unable to hold the city, Lt. Gen. William J. Hardee evacuated Savannah on the night of December 20, marching his troops across a series of pontoon bridges built on rice barges appropriated from nearby plantations. On Christmas Eve, President Lincoln received a telegram from Sherman. "I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about 25,000 bales of cotton."

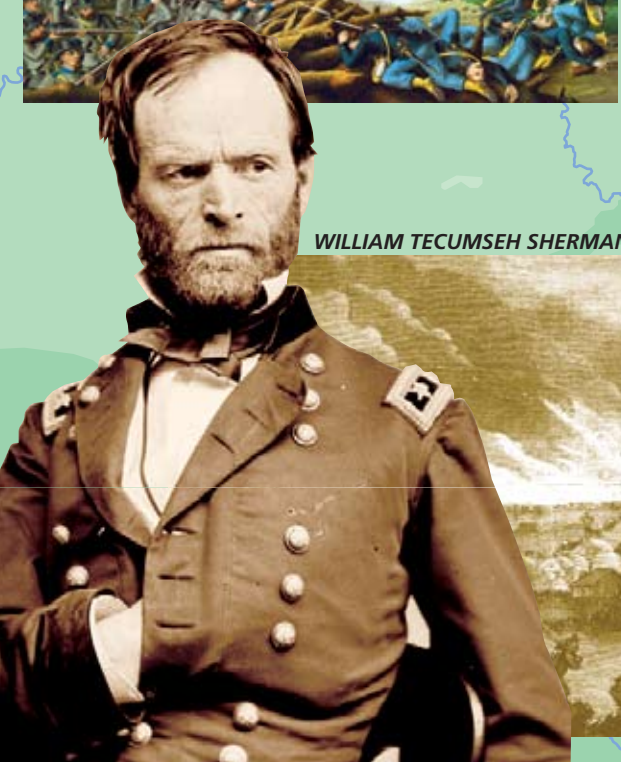
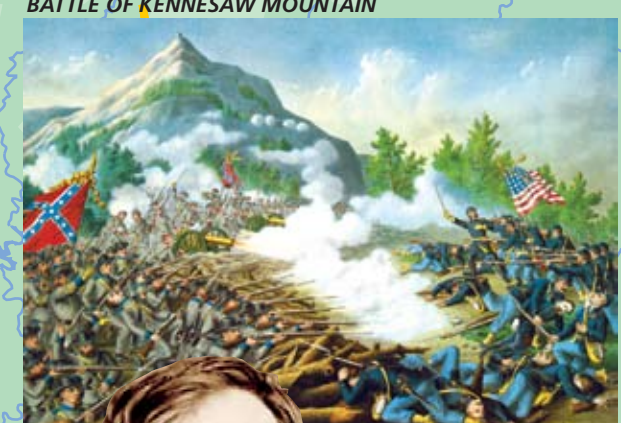
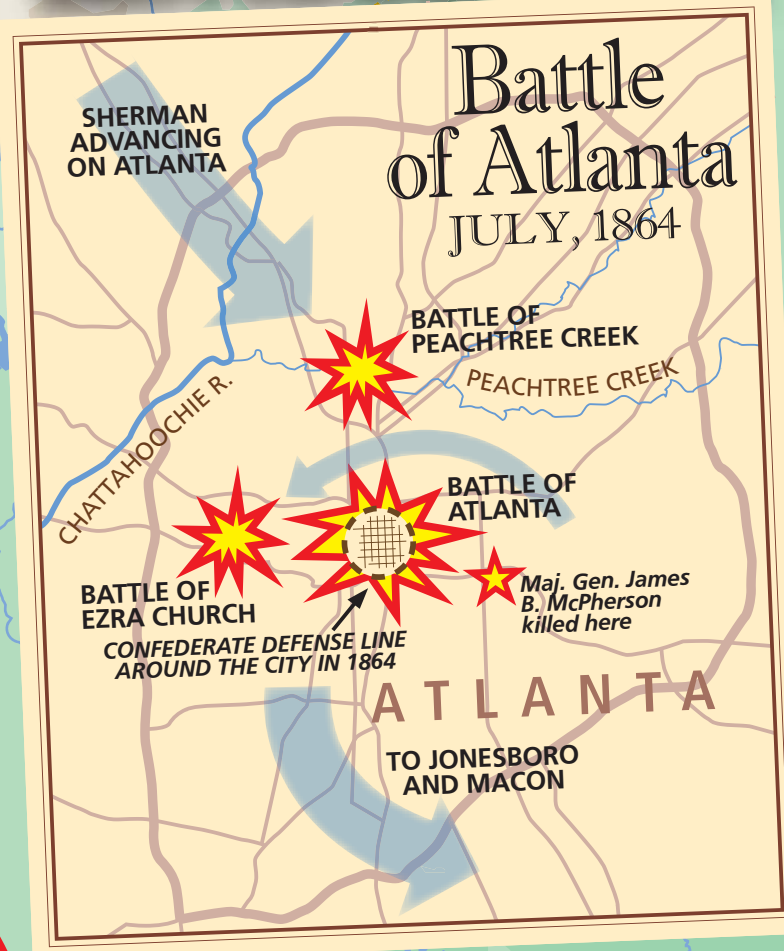
*Edwin C. Bearss
Fields of Honor: Pivotal Battles of the Civil War*



FORT McALLISTER



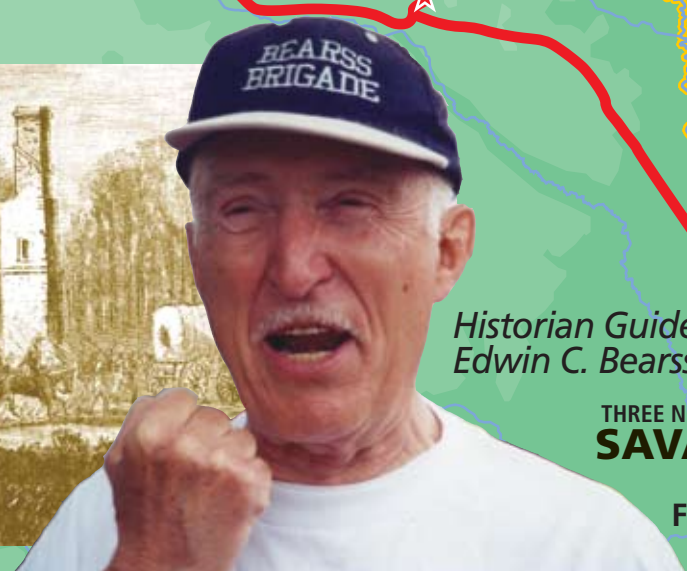
FORT PULASKI



WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN



DESTRUCTION OF ATLANTA



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