

A 2024 BGES Civil War Field University Program:

The Campaign for Mobile 1864-1865

Presented by Mike Bunn and Paul Brueske

From Mobile, Alabama; May 14-18, 2024

As U.S. Grant took command of all the Union armies, he looked at critical points that sustained Confederate armies and incorporated operations against them into his overall plan. Of the grand design only one—Mobile—failed to go as he designed. Instead, a useless and nearly disastrous operation up the Red River in Louisiana delayed operations against this last port on the gulf.

As Sherman moved and embraced Atlanta in serpent-like coils until she surrendered, there was a real belief that his next target might be Mobile. Instead, with Hood becoming active on his supply line, Sherman instead headed for Savannah as a successful operation in early August 1864 closed Mobile Bay. With the Confederacy just about “Up the Spout,” final actions against Mobile were delayed until the spring of 1865.

This special tour, through the stunning beautiful Mobile Bay region, is about the campaign against Mobile in 1864-1865. We will explore via land and water this last major campaign of America’s Civil War.

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

6:00 PM. Welcome to our headquarters hotel to meet our historians Mike Bunn and Paul Brueske as we prepare for this unique and interesting program. They will present a program titled “Introduction to the Mobile Campaign.”

Dinner is on your own.

As with so many locations, there are some very neat museums and sites that are not part of our tour. Arrive early or stay late and see the Battleship USS *Alabama*, a World War 2 submarine, a US Air Force B-52 at the USS *Alabama* Battleship Memorial Park; and the Mobile Carnival Museum. There also are some excellent seafood restaurants along US 90 between Mobile and Spanish Fort and close to the hotel.

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

8:00 AM. Mobile is at the head of Mobile Bay, and for some 30 miles the watercourse leads to the gulf. The mouth of the bay was defended by three fortifications: Fort Powell, which covered the entrance to Mississippi Sound; and the twin forts of Gaines and Morgan (near the old site of the War of 1812’s Fort Bowyer). It will take us 90 minutes to get to Fort Gaines, where we will walk this very well-preserved and maintained

fortification. Here we will walk the casemates and discuss the land operations against the fort.

Leaving there, we will spend 30 minutes looking at some related historic sites on Dauphin Island before taking the ferry across the bay to Fort Morgan. While sailing, we will talk about the Spanish Fleet during America's Revolutionary War. Following a fine lunch, we will tour Fort Morgan, discussing the operations in front of and after the fort is passed by Farragut's fleet.

With the bay entrance closed for the next seven months, we will head back to our hotel, stopping at Marlow's Ferry and the Confederate defenses of Mobile that were placed there. Making our way back to the hotel, we will travel along the route of General E.R.S. Canby through historic Point Clear, Montrose, Fairhope, and Daphne.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Thursday, May 16, 2024

8:00 AM. For many years, Spanish Fort was considered completely lost to development, until local historians recovered a very significant earthwork and spent some time retracing some of the operations against this significant fortification. Today we can devote an entire and meaningful day discussing the battle of Spanish Fort and visiting numerous spots in the siege and ultimate reduction of the fort on April 8, 1865. Our morning will be fully filled as we develop the Federal Approaches, the defensive works, and the state of the opposing forces before the culminating assault. We will visit Deer Park, the Daphne Museum, Montrose Cemetery, Starke's Wharf, and Bayside Academy before lunch—of note will be the battle at the village and the skirmish at D'Olive Creek.

Following lunch, a comprehensive seven-stand itinerary will take you to Redoubt #2 at Fort McDermott; Redoubts 3 (Battery Blair) and 4 (Red Fort); then Redoubt 1 (Fort Signal Hill) and Redoubt 5 (Sand Bag Battery). We will then close the day assaulting Spanish Fort from Union Battery #13 with the 6th Michigan and from the Hoosier Battery, which was Union Battery #22. A real reclamation day of sites thought lost forever.

Lunch is included, but dinner on your own.

Friday, May 17, 2024

8:00 AM. With the fall of Spanish Fort, April 9 would see the culmination of the campaign with the collapse of the last Confederate fortifications east of Mobile. It is ironic that a war in which slaves and slavery were never far from the surface would end the active military actions with an overwhelming assault by United States Colored Troops. The fort has become an excellent battlefield study and interpretative stop thanks to Mike and his staff. The USCT earned and have a starring role today, and we will tour the fort following the new USCT Heritage Trail. Following that, we have a special treat

on the fort's newly acquired tour boat—from the river, we will take a 90-minute cruise examining the eastern defenses from the water and seeing sites not otherwise accessible to folks who were land bound.

Finishing with Blakeley before noon, we will head to Stockton for lunch and then on to a key and emotionally important site from the Creek Indian War some 50 years earlier—at Historic Fort Mims, we will see the site of and discuss the massacre of settlers that so inflamed the territory and brought Andrew Jackson and his Tennesseans to fame just prior to their destiny at New Orleans in 1814/1815. En route back to Spanish Fort, we will stop at Red Hill Spring and Cliff's Landing—site of the Ghost Fleet Docks.

Lunch is included, but dinner on your own.

Saturday, May 18, 2024

Today we will finish your study with a look at Historic Mobile. Escorted by Paul, who does Mobile tours on a recurring basis, you will get the insider's look at the most important sites, including the cannon salvaged from Fort Powell out near Dauphin Island, Admiral Semmes' majestic and noble statue, the History Museum of Mobile, Fort Conde, Christ Church, and LeVert Hospital—all before lunch.

After lunch, we will head to Battle House, the Hunley Museum Construction Site (yes, the *H.L. Hunley* submarine that is being conserved in North Charleston) and see the site where the town magazine exploded, and visit historic Bienville Square. We will then walk to several sites for brief interpretations and photo ops that will include Father Ryan's home (Poet of the Confederacy) and the Mardi Gras Museum. Mounting up, we will do a windscreen tour of Barton Academy, the Semmes home, the Kennedy Home, the Beehive, and other Civil War Era landmarks.

We will finish our most excellent foray by driving to Magnolia Cemetery, the quiet and peaceful resting place of a number of southern soldiers and the controversial Gen. Braxton Bragg. Lest we forget, the final stop is the adjacent National Cemetery, which contains a number of Union veterans and one of the few extant remnants of one of the lines of earthworks that ringed Mobile in 1865.

You will be back at the hotel by 5:30 PM, free to depart or have a peaceful night and leave at your leisure.

About the Faculty:

Mike Bunn is the Director of the Fort Blakeley State Park. A former interpreter at Fort Morgan Historic Site, he is the author of several books, including [*Fourteenth Colony: The Forgotten Story of the Gulf Coast During America's Revolutionary Era*](#) and [*Civil War Eufala*](#); as well as being coauthor of [*Battle for the Southern Frontier: The Creek War and the War of 1812*](#). Mike has been a public historian for his entire career.

He is a frequent speaker throughout Alabama and beyond and is an instructor on Civil War history for local continuing education programs.

Paul Brueske is a lifelong resident of the gulf area who became interested in the Civil War history of the Mobile Bay area, particularly the 1865 Campaign for Mobile. His first book, *The Last Siege*, is a result of his years of researching the subject. He founded and is the driving force of the Mobile Civil War Round Table, and from that has generated continuous buzz and interest in the historic sites in and around Mobile. He is the head track and field coach at the University of Southern Alabama and is a member of the Friends of Historic Blakeley State Park, the Mobile Historical Society, and the Friends of the History Museum of Mobile. He is working on his graduate degree at the University of South Alabama.

Hotel Information:

The headquarters hotel is Fairfield Inn & Suites, Mobile Daphne/Eastern Shore, 12000 Cypress Way, Spanish Fort, AL 36527; 251-370-1160. The rate per night is \$116 plus tax. You can call to make a reservation (be sure to ask for the Blue and Gray Group arriving on May 14, 2024); or make an online reservation by clicking [here](#).

Note that the cutoff date for reservations is May 1, 2024.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Mobile Regional Airport (MOB), 31 miles away. It is generally more expensive to fly into than, say, Pensacola Regional (PNS), which is serviced by Southwest Airlines; Pensacola International Airport is 52 miles away. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International (MSY) is a bit farther but is all interstate from the airport to Mobile, taking about two hours. The hotel is easily accessible just off I-10 east of Mobile.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with a map and/or handouts upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program.

Arthur Bergeron: [*Confederate Mobile*](#)

Paul Brueske: [*The Last Siege, The Mobile Campaign, Alabama 1865*](#)

Jack Friend: [*West Wind, Flood Tide: The Battle of Mobile Bay*](#)

Phil Gottchaux: [*In Deadly Earnest: The History of the First Missouri Brigade*](#)

Chester Hearn: [Mobile Bay and the Mobile Campaign](#) and [Admiral David Glasgow Farragut: The Civil War Years](#)

Stephen Wise: [Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War](#) (*Studies in Maritime History*)

Registration Form
The Campaign for Mobile 1864-1865
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Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes: breakfast at the hotel, four lunches, all paid admissions, boat and ferry passage, maps, the academic program, support of two professional historians, tour director, and transportation by mini-bus or van based upon registration. We will also provide snacks and bottled water.

_____ Registration \$1150

_____ Current BGES member \$1050

_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of \$_____ (must be \$75 or more which is tax deductible).

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$250 per person and/or memberships.

Total enclosed is \$_____. I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$_____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.