

*Shaping America's History for 500 Years*

The Boston Museum and the Historical Society have been central since 1939. Community efforts to save the Vinton House led to the creation of the Historic Sumner Foundation in 1940. In 1960 a portion of Sumner's documents now recognized as a national treasure. Four years later a town designated a Historic National Landmark. At the same time, Mayor Chavkin championed the development of Westport Park, which helped revitalize Sumner's downtown. During the 1970s and 80s concerned citizens helped drive initiatives that led to creation of the ACE Basin Trust, Cape Fear Zoo, and the Port Royal Sound Foundation. Today volunteers, cultural organizations, and city and county governments continue their work in balance development and progress with the need to protect and preserve the region's historic buildings, archaeological sites, and natural resources.







## Why did settlers come to PORT ROYAL SOUND?

BEAUFORT COUNTY'S HISTORY HAS BEEN SHAPED BY THREE IMPORTANT GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES THAT COME TOGETHER HERE AT PORT ROYAL SOUND.



### THERE IS A *Deep Harbor*

Port Royal Sound is the deepest harbor in the Southeast with depths from 26 to 50 feet. That's because the Beaufort, Broad, Colleton, and May rivers are tidal inlets not inland rivers carrying lots of sediment.

The Spanish, French, and English valued Port Royal's harbor because it was near the Gulf Stream and westerly trade winds, it was deep enough for even the largest ships, and there was fresh water!



### THERE ARE *High Tides*

At an average of 8 feet, Port Royal Sound has the highest tides in the Southeast. The sound's tidal rivers bring nutrients into marshes to support oysters, crabs, shrimp, and many species of fish.

For thousands of years people used the area's rivers and creeks as watery highways. During the 18th and 19th centuries thousands of enslaved people brought from West Africa built rice fields flood, drained, and nourished by the tides.



### THERE IS THE *Mild Climate*

Beaufort County's average high and low temperatures are 75° F and 56° F. That means there is an average growing season of 280+ days.

Agriculture and livestock have always been important to Beaufort County's economy. In the early 1700s, rice and indigo were the money makers. In the early 1800s it was Sea Island cotton. By the early 20th c. large scale vegetable farming or truck farms flourished.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Santa Elena, located on Parris Island, was the first permanent European settlement in South Carolina.

# Unique Features of PORT ROYAL SOUND

PORT ROYAL SOUND IS PART OF AN INLAND MARITIME ECOSYSTEM. IT INCLUDES PORT ROYAL SOUND, CALIBOGUE SOUND, AND THE LANDS AND WATERS THAT DRAIN INTO THE SOUNDS.



## THE MODERN BEAUFORT COUNTY LANDSCAPE BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE 18,000 YEARS AGO.

Back then, the ocean was 300 feet LOWER than today. The coast was 60 miles farther east. As the Ice Age came to an end, oceans began to rise. Water flooded a coastal valley and created Port Royal Sound. Islands formed along our coast. Salt marshes developed along the Broad River.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Ocean saltwater travels more than 20 miles inland in Port Royal Sound, so very little fresh water can enter the Sound.

NEW RIVER

**HITLON HEAD ISLAND**  
is a remnant island. It was part of the mainland until it was separated by a rise in sea level at the end of the last ice age.

## PORT ROYAL SOUND BY THE NUMBERS

- 26-50 FT**  
Harbor Depth
- 2 MILES**  
Harbor Entrance Width
- 6-10 FT**  
Tide heights

ATLANTIC OCEAN

## Pirates and Privateers

Pirates were outlaws who looted and robbed to fill their own pockets. Privateers were hired by governments to attack enemy ships and capture their cargo. They carried letters of marque. Do you recognize these pirate flags?

### PIRATE CHARLES VANE

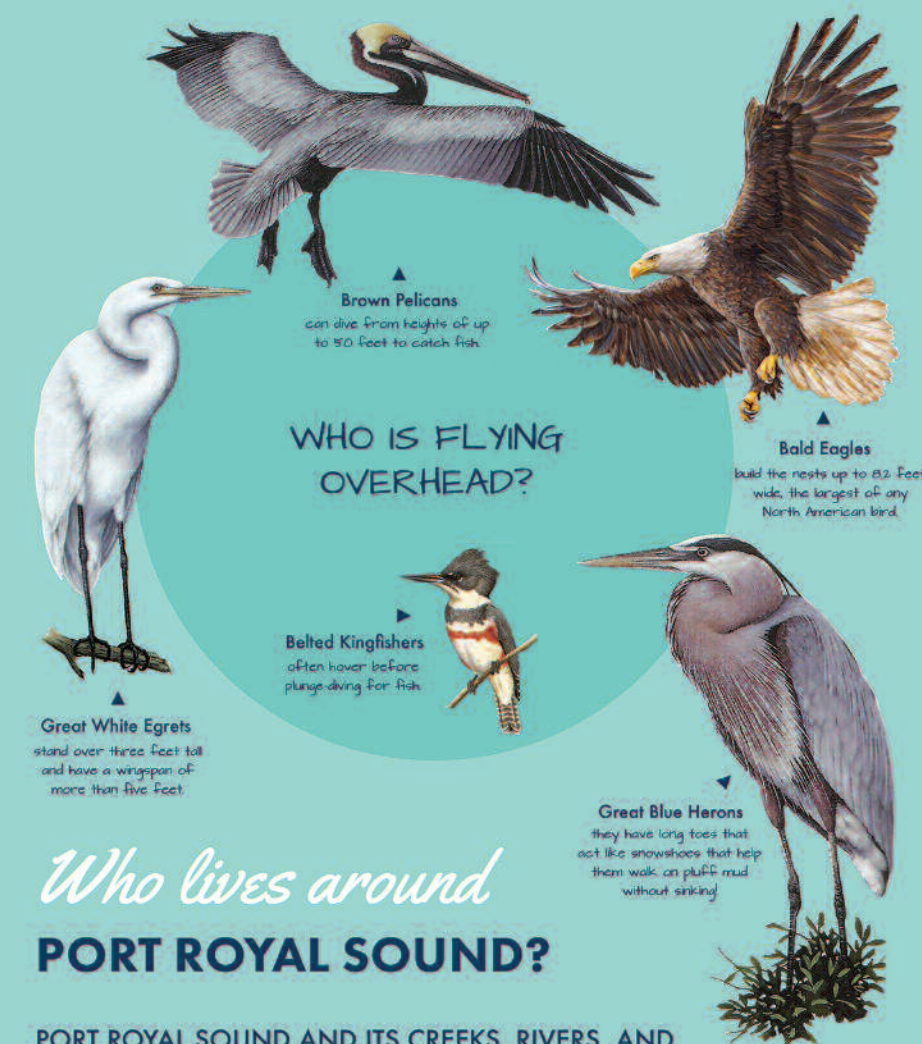
Charles Vane operated out of Nassau, Bahamas. He sailed to Charleston in 1718 and captured eight ships. Angry merchants sent Col. William Rhett to hunt him down with no help. Vane was finally hanged in Port Royal, Jamaica in 1721.

### PIRATE STEDE BONNET

Stede Bonnet was called the Gentleman Pirate because he came from a wealthy family. Bonnet joined forces with Blackbeard to plunder ships along the East Coast. He was captured by Col. William Rhett and hanged at Charleston in 1718.

### PIRATE EDWARD TEACH

Edward Teach was also known as Blackbeard. His ship was called the Queen Anne's Revenge. Blackbeard blockaded Charleston in 1718. He captured a ship carrying provisions for the military and held them ransom for medical supplies. Blackbeard was killed in battle near Ocracoke Island in November 1718.



## WHO IS FLYING OVERHEAD?

**Brown Pelicans**  
can dive from heights of up to 90 feet to catch fish.

**Bald Eagles**  
build the nests up to 15 feet wide, the largest of any North American bird.

**Great White Egrets**  
stand over three feet tall and have a wingspan of more than five feet.

**Belted Kingfishers**  
often hover before plunging for fish.

**Great Blue Herons**  
they have long legs that act like snowshoes that help them walk on soft mud without sinking.

## Who lives around PORT ROYAL SOUND?

PORT ROYAL SOUND AND ITS CREEKS, RIVERS, AND MARSHES ARE HOME TO ALL KINDS OF LAND AND MARINE PLANTS AND ANIMALS.

ITS DEEP SALTY WATER MEANS EVEN SEA TURTLES, SHARKS, AND DOLPHINS CAN TRAVEL FROM THE OCEAN TO ITS UPPER REACHES. THE NEW AND THE COOSAWHATCHIE, TWO BLACKWATER RIVERS, ADD TO THE AREA'S DIVERSITY.

ALL OF THIS MAKES BEAUFORT COUNTY A GREAT PLACE FOR BIRD WATCHING, FISHING, BOATING OR JUST RELAXING.

Gopher Tortoise



## WHO IS ON LAND?



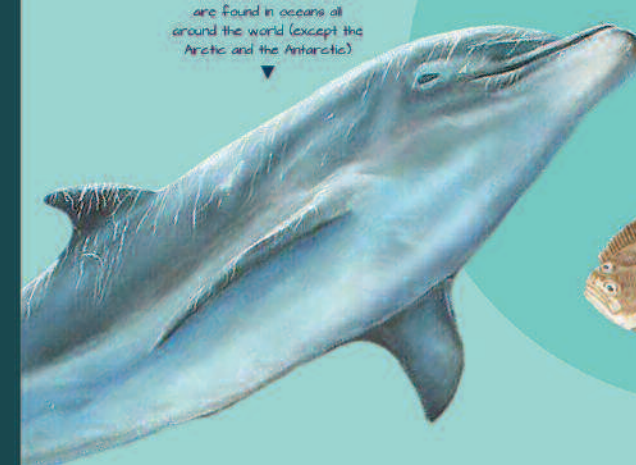
Raccoons



White Tailed Deer

## WHO IS SWIMMING IN THE WATER?

**Bottlenose Dolphins**  
are found in oceans all around the world (except the Arctic and the Antarctic).



**Southern Flounder**  
are flat fish that can change their color to match the sandy bottom of the creek or ocean.



**Blue Crab**



**Shrimp**



**Marsh Rabbits**  
are small swimming cottontail rabbits with short ears and legs.

## WHO LIVES IN THE MARSH?



**Marsh Rice Rats**  
were first identified in 1816 by South Carolinian John Bachman.

**American Alligators**



**Clapper Rails**



As far back as 1664, English explorer William Hilton recognized the beauty and bounty of Port Royal Sound.

HE DESCRIBED THICK FORESTS, RICH SOILS, TEAMING WATERS, AND CLEAN AIR. WHEN THE ENGLISH ESTABLISHED CAROLINA, THEY WERE CERTAIN THEY COULD PRODUCE PRODUCTS TO SELL TO OTHER PARTS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE. THEY RAISED CATTLE AND PIGS AND CUT TREES FOR LUMBER AND SHIPBUILDING. THEY BOUGHT DEERSKINS FROM LOCAL AMERICAN INDIANS TO SELL TO ENGLISH LEATHER FACTORIES. BY THE EARLY 1700s RICE AND LATER INDIGO WERE THE PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES.



### TIMBERING

Timbering has been part of the economy since the early days of the Carolina Colony. Completion of the Port Royal Railroad in 1873 made shipping trees and finished lumber much easier. At one time there were nearly 20 sawmills along the line. Thanks to the country's expanding railroads and Beaufort's deep port, local businesses shipped lumber all over the world.



### RICE PRODUCTION

Beaufort County's river swamps were the setting of a vast rice empire from 1740 until 1863. Rice plantations along the Combahee River were owned by some of the richest men in South Carolina. Thousands of enslaved West Africans were imported into Carolina for their labor and knowledge of growing rice. Rice was grown in parts of Africa for hundreds of years before it became a Carolina commodity. Commercial rice production in South Carolina ended in 1920 and moved west to Louisiana and Texas.

Images courtesy of xox

# Bountiful BEAUFORT COUNTY

THE LAND WE SUPPOSE IS HEALTHFUL...THE AYR IS CLEAR AND SWEET, THE COUNTRY VERY PLEASANT AND DELIGHTFUL: AND WE COULD WISH, THAT ALL THEY THAT WANT A HAPPY SETTLEMENT, OF OUR ENGLISH NATION, WERE WELL TRANSPORTED THITHER.

— WILLIAM HILTON, 1664



### TRUCK FARMING

Truck farming began after the Civil War as railroads expanded across the country and refrigerated train cars made it was possible to get fresh produce to cities in the North. Beaufort's soil and long growing season were ideal for growing cabbages, Irish potatoes, asparagus, turnips, string beans, tomatoes, and lettuce. By 1900 5,000 acres were under cultivation in the county. At the beginning of the 21st century, truck crops contributed over \$60 million to the South Carolina economy.



### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

For many years Beaufort County was a blend of rural landscapes and traditional neighborhoods. In the 1980s and 90s residential and resort development began to boom around Beaufort and on Hilton Head. Beaufort changed from a quiet southern town to new home for retirees and a popular tourist destination.



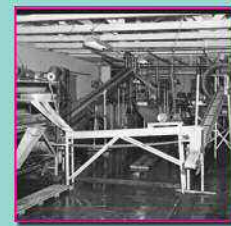
### PHOSPHATE MINING

In the 1870s, phosphate, an essential ingredient in fertilizer, was discovered here in the Lowcountry. For 20 years, phosphate mining was big business in Beaufort. Rock was mined from local creeks and rivers where good deposits were shallower than those on land. Many newly freed African Americans worked as day laborers. Although the industry eventually moved to Florida, South Carolina was the largest producer of phosphate in the country.



### OYSTERING

In 1893 Maggoni & Company established the first oyster factory in South Carolina on Daufuskie Island. By 1905, there were 16 factories in the state. The last oyster-canning plant in the country, located right here in Beaufort, closed in the 1980s. Don't worry, there are still lots of small oyster operations that sell unshucked oysters by the bushel.



### CRABBING

The blue crab industry developed in the 1930s and 1940s. In Beaufort, Sterling Harris is credited with creating the first crab-picking machine. Crab factories in Port Royal, Beaufort, and McClellanville employed hundreds of pickers to carefully extract the 8% to 14% percent of each crab that is marketable meat. Like shrimp, imported crabmeat undercut the domestic market in the 1990s.

For most of the 19th century Beaufort's economy was powered by Sea Island cotton.

WHEN COTTON WAS NO LONGER AS PROFITABLE, THE LAND PRODUCED NEW OPPORTUNITIES. PHOSPHATE WAS MINED FOR FERTILIZER. SAWMILLS SPRANG UP ALONG THE BEAUFORT WATERFRONT. OYSTER AND CRABMEAT CANNING FACTORIES WERE ESTABLISHED AND FARMERS DIVERSIFIED BY GROWING A VARIETY OF VEGETABLES. AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BOOMED AS NEW GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE DISCOVERED THE BEAUTY OF BEAUFORT COUNTY.

### GROWING SEA ISLAND COTTON

Sea Island cotton revived the economy of Beaufort County after the American Revolution. Owners of France and Great Britain's booming cotton mills were eager and willing to pay top dollar for this long silky cotton that produced fine fabrics. Although the direct importation of people from African had been banned in the 1780s, the Sea Island cotton boom forced the state to reopen the transatlantic slave trade from 1804 to 1808. Sea Island cotton was grown in South Carolina until the boll weevil destroyed the crop in 1920.

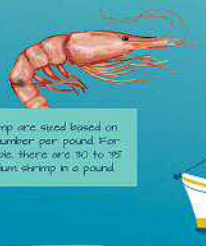
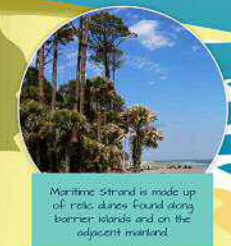


### SHIPPING

Port Royal Sound has one of the finest harbors found anywhere. When sail began to give way to steam in the 19th century, Port Royal was one of three East Coast ports deep enough for the world's largest ships. Cotton, phosphate, and timber and the railroad made Beaufort prosperous and Port Royal one of the busiest ports in South Carolina.

### SHRIMPING

Commercial shrimping began in 1925, when a fleet of Florida trawlers moved to Beaufort County. Shrimp were packed into barrels and shipped by train to New York. During the 1940s fishermen began using a block and tackle system to haul their nets out of the water. By the 1990s imported shrimp began to reduce local market prices and caused many shrimpers to go out of business.



Shrimp are sold based on the number per pound. For example, there are 100 to 150 medium shrimp in a pound.

Longnecks are the most common sea turtle found in our state's coastal waters and nesting on our beaches.

Maritime Strand is made up of pine dunes found along barrier islands and on the adjacent mainland.

Diamondback Terrapins are the only turtles that live in the salt marsh.

Oysters can filter gallons of water each day, which helps keep our waters clean.

Pierwinkles climb up the marsh, grow when the tide is in and back down to eat bits of plants and dead animals on the half-gate ock.

Picker crabs scoop up mud and eat what's trapped in it, and spit out the rest.

Due to the fact that the first tomatoes in Beaufort County on St. Helena Island in 1813. Today the Sanderson family produces between 15 and 20 million pounds of tomatoes a year!

Indigo is grown to produce a blue dye and was the predominant crop of the Sea Island from the late 1700s until the American Revolution.

Upland or short-staple cotton became an important crop after the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin made seed extraction easier.

The Beaufort climate was ideal for growing sweet potatoes because they need lots of sunshine and warm nights to flourish.

Rice is a semiaquatic, annual grass that is grown on every continent except Antarctica.

### MARITIME FOREST

### SALT WATER MARSH

### OCEAN

### FRESH WATER RIVER



BEAUFORT COUNTY'S FIRST PEOPLE

10,000 – 8000 BC

Paleoindian hunters live in small bands. Archaeologists distinguish them by the distinctive projectile point called Clovis.



Clovis Projectile Point



8000 – 1500 BC

Archaic people living in South Carolina hunt deer and collect shellfish. Pottery archaeologists call Stallings is invented along the Savannah River.

1500 BC – 1100 AD

Woodland people live in more sedentary villages. The bow and arrow is invented.

1100 AD

Mississippian people organize themselves in chiefdoms and begin farming.

1335 AD

Green's Shell Enclosure, a 4-foot-high shell ring, is built along the Skull Creek on Hilton Head Island.

1550 AD

The Cusabo live in the region and are the people the Spanish meet when they explore the South Carolina coast.



Yamasee Indian

SPANISH EXPLORATION

1514

The explorer Pedro Salazar surveys the Carolina coast between the Savannah River and Cape Fear and calls it *Land of the Giants* because of the stature of the local Indians.

1521

The explorers Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quesos set out for the *Land of the Giants* in search of Indian slaves.

1525

An expedition searching for a place to settle discovers a headland they call *La Punta de Santa Elena*. The name begins to appear on maps.



1562

French Captain Jean Ribaut and his expedition erect Charlesfort on Parris Island and rename the harbor Port Royal. The settlement is unsuccessful.



1566

The Spanish establish Santa Elena on Parris Island. It is abandoned 21 years later. Visit the Charlesfort-Santa Elena National Historic Landmark to learn more.



Jean Ribaut

EUROPEAN SUPERPOWERS



1663

King Charles II grants a "Carolina" Charter to eight noblemen and appoints them Lords Proprietors. They hire William Hilton to survey the South Carolina coast.

1666

Robert Sandford explores the South Carolina coast for the Lords Proprietors. Dr. Henry Woodward stays on Parris Island to explore the Carolina interior.



1670

The first English settlers make a brief stay on Lady's Island before establishing a permanent settlement at Albemarle Point on the Ashley River. They move to the present-day location of Charleston in 1680.

1684

Scottish settlers establish the settlement of Stuarts Town near present day Beaufort. The town is destroyed by the Spanish two years later.



1690

Rice is successfully cultivated along the Ashley River. It becomes an import Beaufort County commodity in the 1730s.

FOUNDING BEAUFORT

1711

The town of Beaufort, named after Henry Somerset, 2nd Duke of Beaufort, is established as a center for Indian trade and settlement.

1715

The Yamasee Indians, angered by the actions of local fur traders, attack Carolina settlements. Hostilities continue for over a decade.

1720

Rice plantations are established along the Combahee River. Rice is grown by enslaved African laborers.

1747

Indigo becomes a major crop on the Sea Islands.



Yamasee War

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1776

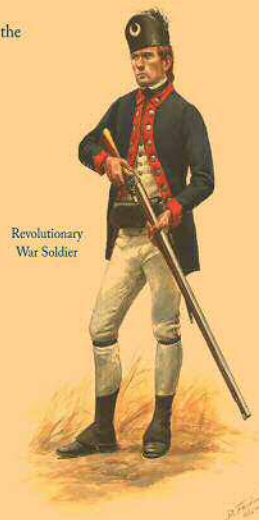
The American colonies declare their independence from Great Britain.

1779

American Patriots under William Moultrie defeat British forces outside Beaufort at the Battle of Port Royal. The town is ultimately captured.

1783

The Treaty of Paris ends the American Revolution.



Revolutionary War Soldier

ARISTOCRACY AND SEA ISLAND COTTON



1806

South Carolina reopens the Atlantic slave trade to fill the demand for enslaved workers on the booming Sea Island cotton plantations. It is closed again on January 1, 1808.

1817

The first steamboat, the *SS Charleston*, arrives in Beaufort after a twelve-hour trip from Charleston.



1825

The Marquis de Lafayette, one of the last surviving compatriots of George Washington, visits Beaufort aboard the new steamboat *SS Henry Shultz*. The day is declared a holiday.

1828

State representative Robert Barwell Rhett, the father of secession, delivers an inflammatory speech supporting state's rights.

1844

The first organized political movement dedicated to the secession of South Carolina begins in Bluffton at a dinner in honor of Congressman Robert Barwell Rhett.



Beaufort Arsenal

1852

The Beaufort Arsenal is expanded to hold 250 troops and six cannons in anticipation of a potential conflict with the Federal government.

CIVIL WAR

1860

South Carolina secedes from the Union.



1861

Beaufort and the Sea Islands are captured by US forces in the Battle of Port Royal. The headquarters for the U.S. Army, Department of the South is located on Hilton Head Island. Beaufort's homes are taken over by the military. Some are converted into Union hospitals.

1862

The Port Royal Experiment begins. Mitchellville, a town for freed slaves, is established on Hilton Head Island.



1865

The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery is ratified. A school established in 1862 for freed African Americans is renamed Penn School.

1889

U.S. Naval Station, Port Royal opens on Parris Island. It will become U.S. Marine Corps Recruit Depot.

1893

A massive hurricane strikes the Lowcountry killing over 2,500 people.

1899

Fort Fremont is built to protect the Port Royal dry dock and coaling station, which are critical to the Atlantic Fleet during the Spanish American War. Be sure to visit Fort Fremont to learn more.

20TH CENTURY BEAUFORT



1907

The Great Fire sweeps across Beaufort's business district.

1915

Marine Barracks to train recruits is established on Parris Island. Visit the Parris Island Museum to learn more.

1918

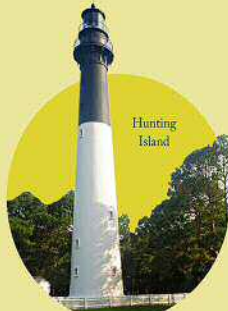
The Federal government purchases all of Parris Island.

1935

Hunting Island becomes a state park. Today it is the most-visited state park in South Carolina and is one of the few undeveloped Sea Islands in the Lowcountry. Be sure to visit.



Great Fire of 1907



Hunting Island

1943

Naval Air Station Beaufort is established. It is recommissioned as Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in 1960.

1946

The base at Parris Island is designated Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island.

1956

Charles E. Fraser begins developing Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island.



Parris Island recruits

1964

Beaufort schools are integrated.

1970

Beaufortian Joseph William Frazier, nicknamed Smokin Joe Frazier, begins a three-year reign as heavyweight champion of the world.



Charles E. Fraser

1979

Beaufort opens Waterfront Park.

21ST CENTURY BEAUFORT

2000

The Friends of the Rivers is formed to protect the Port Royal Sound's water quality and promote land planning.



2004

The University of South Carolina Beaufort becomes an accredited four-year university. Six baccalaureate degrees are offered.

2011

The Friends of the Rivers evolves into the nonprofit Port Royal Sound Foundation.

2014

The Port Royal Sound Maritime Center located on the Chesapeake River in Port Royal Sound opens.

2017

The National Park Services establishes the Reconstruction Era National Monument. It is designated a Historical Park in 2019.

