

Buddy Sullivan

What role did Ft McAllister play in the history of Georgia and the United States?

The goal of Sherman was of course the capture Savannah, which would of course cut off one of the south's major seaports and transportation centers from the rest of Georgia and the confederacy. But in order to take Savannah, he first had to capture and subdue Ft McAllister, which was just to the south of Savannah near the mouth of the Ogeechee River. Ft McAllister had withstood seven union naval attacks during 1863. Union gunboats and monitors had unsuccessfully attacked the fort from water approaches to the fort. But the fort was built and designed by confederate forces to defend against sea borne attack, but not land borne attack. And so Sherman knew this, and see he sent his forces, his cavalry forces under general Kilpatrick into Briarneck and Ft McAllister was eventually captured on the 13th of December, 1864. And with the fall of Ft McAllister, that opened up the door to Savannah and Sherman was able to go in and occupy Savannah and send his famous telegram to President Lincoln, one of the most famous telegrams of any American war, in which he wired President Lincoln on the 21st of December, 1864, "I present to you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah, 25,000 bails of cotton, and plenty of arms and ammunition."