

# HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF FORT STEWART AND HUNTER ARMY AIRFIELD COMMUNITIES AND ASSOCIATED CEMETERIES



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## **Mission**

The mission of the Fort Stewart Environmental Branch is to support military training by achieving and exceeding environmental, natural, and cultural resources stewardship and legal standards

## **Publication Information**

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## Foreword

To be better stewards of the public lands that we manage, Fort Stewart has put together this booklet to provide some background into the many former communities and cemeteries found across the installation. A thorough listing of known burials on post may be found in Mr. Wyman May's *Fort Stewart Cemeteries* and is available in local libraries. An electronic database of burials found on Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield are available online at <http://www.stewart.army.mil/ima/sites/directorates/DPW/fscr/default.asp>.

The United States Army is only the latest of a chain of many users of this land. For thousands of years before us, people hunted, fished, and farmed these soils. When you drive across the Installation and Hunter Army Airfield (HAAF) and see one of our cemeteries, you might pause and reflect upon those who preceded you and their legacy, the very ground upon which you stand.

# **FORT STEWART**

## **Native American and Spanish Settlers (1492-1715)**

Although little documentary evidence suggests that there were settlements in the Fort Stewart area during this period, there may have been visitors to the area. In addition to the Native American population in the area, Spanish soldiers, missionaries, and English traders may have visited the area during this time period. The first European claim to the area was by the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Lands south of the Savannah River to present day north Florida was known as the Guale Mission Province. A series of missions were established in this area, especially along the coast and barrier islands, during the 1500s. One such mission close to the study area was that of Mission Santa Catalina, located near the mouth of the Ogeechee River (Worth 1995: 10). At first, the Native American population assimilated to this missionary system but by 1597, resentment of this system led to a successful uprising by the Native Americans.

During the 1600s, the English settlement of the Carolinas pushed its boundaries farther south towards the Spanish missions' lands. At first, the Carolinians established trade with the Guale Native Americans to the south but eventually hostilities occurred between the two. This prompted the southward retreat of both the Spanish missionaries and the resident Native Americans further to the south. These Native Americans were known as the Yamasee.

By 1684, as the Spanish and Yamasee were retreating southward from English encroachment, the Yamasee revolted. Between this time and 1680, the Spanish had abandoned many of the missions in the northern portions of the Province of Guale. Shortly thereafter, the Yamasee migrated to the inland portions of present day Georgia and northern Florida.

Up until 1702, the Guale Province area remained relatively quiet. By this time, the Queen Anne's War had spread to the American colonies. In the same year, the governor of Carolina, James Moore, marched through the Province of Guale into present day Florida where he proceeded to destroy the Spanish mission settlements. In 1713, the war had ended; but one year later, there was an unsuccessful revolt by the Yamasee. After the failed revolt, the Yamasee migrated to coastal sections of the Guale Province in present day Georgia but were quickly expelled by the English. This expulsion was the last of the original inhabitants of the Province of Guale and their Lower Creek allies.

## **Early British Influence (1715-1732)**

Due to the expulsion of the Yamasee and Lower Creek allies, the area between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers was virtually uninhabited. The British colonists quickly moved into this area to protect its borders. The Carolinians established Fort King George at the mouth of the Altamaha River in 1721 to create a buffer between the Spanish and the Carolinas. By 1729, this fort had been abandoned by the Carolinas as a result of relinquishment to the British crown for the creation of the buffer colony of Georgia. The only other known settlement during this time period in the Fort Stewart area was that of the Yamasee Camp. Although this camp may have been established prior to the Yamasee war in 1715, it is believed to have been established after the war. The exact location is unknown but is believed to have been in the vicinity of present day Taro Stage Field DZ (Drop Zone) in present day Fort Stewart.

## **Colonial Georgia (1732 - 1775)**

The first settlement near Fort Stewart was the colony of Savannah in 1733. Through an agreement with the Creek Indians a few years later, land was ceded to the colonists as far west as portions of present day Bryan and Liberty Counties in the Fort Stewart area. Fort Argyle (named after James Campbell, the Duke of Argyle) was established as a military post in 1733 to protect this buffer zone between the western edge of the ceded lands and the colony of Savannah. Other fortifications that were constructed to protect the new colony included: Hempstead; Highgate; Thunderbolt; Abercorn; Tybee Island; and Skidaway Island (Helms & McKivergan 1997: 20). Beard's Bluff (southwest of present day Fort Stewart in Long County), Fort Barrington, and Darien also garrisoned men to protect the new colony (Coxan 1979: 162). Between 1758 and 1763, additional lands were ceded to the colony of Georgia to include present day Bryan and Liberty Counties. By 1773, the colony of Georgia expanded westward to include all of present day Fort Stewart. Colonists during this time period settled along the coast of Georgia between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers. The colonists established an agricultural economy based upon rice, indigo, corn, potatoes, and eventually cotton. Due to the initial size restrictions of individual land grants granted by the trustees, labor intensive economies were not able to produce marketable quantities. By 1740, the size of land grants was increased and in 1751 slave labor was permitted.

After 21 years as a trustee charter, Georgia became a crown colony in 1752. In 1758, Georgia was subdivided into Parishes in which Fort Stewart comprised portions of St. Johns, St. Phillips, and St. Andrews. During this time period, inland areas of the crown colony were beginning to be utilized for crops such as rice and cotton in addition to timber harvesting and the raising of livestock. Within the boundaries of present day Fort Stewart, the two most important settlements during this time were Fort Argyle and Taylors Creek.

According to Campbell, et. al., Fort Argyle's original site that was selected "...lay on the east bank of the Ogeechee River at a point about 8.75 miles above the mouth of the Canoochee River and just above present-day Morgan Bridge" (1996: 82). Due to problems of flooding, the site was changed to the west bank of the Ogeechee River approximately "... 3.2 miles upstream from the mouth of the Canoochee River (Campbell, et. al. 1996: 82). The first settlers of Fort Argyle were Captain James PcPherson and a small group of

Southern Rangers. By 1734, a total of twenty people occupied Fort Argyle. Between 1734 and 1738, Fort Argyle fell into a state of disrepair and was restored in 1739. At this time, McPherson's Rangers were discharged leaving two men to oversee the fort. In 1740, the War of Jenkin's Ear initiated the re-establishment of a garrison at Fort Argyle. By 1741, Fort Argyle established a wooden stockade to replace the earlier earthenwork defenses. In 1742, John Milledge and 20 English Rangers were stationed at Fort Argyle. The community of Williamsburg was also established for the soldiers south of Fort Argyle outside of present day Fort Stewart.

Between 1743 and 1747, the English Rangers still garrisoned Fort Argyle during King George's War. In 1747, the English Rangers were disbanded and the fort fell into disrepair leaving the land in and around Fort Argyle to be used for public use. In 1756, the Rangers were once again stationed at Fort Argyle as a scouting garrison. Between 1757 and 1766, it is not known if Fort Argyle was occupied. In 1766, thirty-five men were assigned to Fort Argyle and in 1767, 300 acres were added to the Fort's holdings. From this point till the Revolutionary War started in 1776, Fort Argyle was not garrisoned. Lands around Fort Argyle became private property but the fort still remained a landmark.

Other settlements in the Fort Argyle area also include the Harn Family holdings. Portions of land granted to the Harn family in 1745 may have been located on present day Fort Stewart. John Harn and his descendents lived in the area until the acquisition of the land by Fort Stewart. The Butler land holdings were located in the Sterling Creek vicinity (south of Fort Argyle). The Butlers settled that area during the 1750's and more land was acquired to the north (within present day Fort Stewart).

Around 1752, the area then known as Barbecue Creek ("Barbicue" or "Barbicu") was settled by landholders from the Richmond Hill area. The Barbecue Creek area lies north of the Canoochee River and southwest of the Ogeechee River close to the junction of the two rivers. These lands were initially used for raising livestock and timber harvesting. During the 1760's, several more tracts of land were granted in the Barbecue Creek vicinity. In 1763, an area called Halfmoon Bluff was settled in the Barbecue Creek area. In 1764, one thousand acres were granted to Thomas Eatton on both sides of the Canoochee River, which was then called Mill Land. In 1765, maps indicate an area within the Barbecue Creek vicinity as the Conoochee Settlement. Some of the other known land holders in the Barbecue Creek area included: David Black; Jonathon Bryan; John Milledge (Fort Argyle Commander); Robert Houstoun; Sarah Sinclair; Robert Kirkwood; John Jagger; Elizabeth Wright (later Skillins); Thomas Camber; William LeConte; William Malden; Abraham Williams; Francis Graham; John Matthews (Fort Argyle Ranger); and Joseph Wood

During the 1750's, the area between the Canoochee and Ogeechee Rivers was referred to as Cross Swamp. The original land grant for this area was to Joseph Butler (from the Sterling Creek area) in 1754. Shem Butler acquired land north of the Canoochee in 1757. This land was then sold to John Harn (the younger) in 1767. By this time, houses and other structures had been established on the land grants. During John Harn's request for land grants, references to topographical markers were given. Bear Town was referenced as being located 2 miles upstream of a branch of the Canoochee River (possibly being Clyde Creek); this area was also near Rattlesnake Hill (Candler 1906b: VII: 515, 739). Little other information has been gathered concerning these two place names (Bear Town and Rattlesnake Hill).

Also during the 1750's lands in and around Fort Argyle were sought after by settlers to the area. Although the land in which Fort Argyle was located was reserved for public use, areas around the fort were granted. Some of the other known landholders in the Cross Swamp/Fort Argyle area included: Daniel Nunez (Nunes or Nunis); J. Bulloch; Elisha Butler; Lewis Smith; W. West; William Butler; James Savage; Governor James Wright (1767); John Fox; Thomas Burrington; William Leconte; Thomas Camber; William Elliot; James Mossman; David Huguenin; and James Read.

Around 1760, the Taylors Creek area started to be settled by the colonists. Various names and locations of Taylors Creek, Canoochee Creek, and their tributaries have caused confusion to the exact location of the original land grant. According to Campbell, et. al., the location of Taylors Creek land grant "...formed a sort of corridor anchored at one end by the junction of the Canoochee River and present-day Canoochee Creek and Taylors Creek. This corridor may have been as much as two or three miles wide" (1996: 94). This area was originally used by the first settlers to the area for raising livestock and timber harvesting. David Dicks and David Dicks, Jr. requested land in the Taylors Creek area in 1760. Also during the 1760's, Sylvanus Robinson, Archibold Bulloch, and James Taylor acquired land in the Taylors Creek area. James and William Ducker acquired land in the Taylors Creek area near what was known as Tom's Creek on the Little Canoochee. William Deveaux, Charles Mearn (Maran or Moran), Roger Kelsall, Luke Mann and William Simpson acquired land in the Taylors Creek area during the late 1760's and early 1770's.

Only one cemetery may be associated with this time period. The Fort Argyle cemetery is a single burial that was discovered during archaeological testing of the site. No headstone was present and therefore no interment date was available. From archaeological evidence, it has been suggested that the burial may be as old as 1775 but most likely dates to much later (Elliot, et. al. 1997: 103). Since the Fort Argyle site was not fully excavated, there is in all likelihood additional burials. The Georgia Society Colonial Dames of America also mention a cemetery at the Fort Argyle Site during a visit in 1929 (Georgia Society Colonial Dames of America 1929). The one known burial, although probably dating to later than the Fort itself, is located north of the Fort. The initial cemetery is probably located in the same area. As residents settled in the area after the Fort's use, they probably recognized the original cemetery and continued to use it (Elliot, et. al. 1997: 201). There are references to other cemeteries as well in the Fort Argyle area. There are references to a family burial plot associated with the Fort Argyle area during this time. According to Elliot, et. al., there was a 20 x 40 foot family burial plot on Joseph Butler's land (1997: 84). Another such reference was from a local newspaper published in 1973. According to the article, "Legend states that a pit about 125 feet from the bluff was a cellar within the fort, and between the pit and the bank is said to have been an old cemetery" (*The Patriot*, 30 August 1973).

## **Revolutionary War Period (1776-1781)**

During the Revolutionary War, the colony of Georgia supported independence from England. But by 1778, the British regained control of Savannah and its surrounding areas until 1782. Many of the settlers in the Fort Stewart area remained pro-Whig during this period. Shortly after the Revolutionary War ended, lands were ceded from the Cherokee and Creek Indians, which included additional portions of land between The Ogeechee and

## **Early American Period (1782-1820)**

During the 1780's, lands opened up to settlement to the west of Fort Stewart near the Ochoopee River. Because of this westward expansion, transportation routes were constructed through the Fort Stewart area connecting the coastal towns to the inland settlements. These new transportation routes created small crossroad communities within the Fort Stewart area. As the new American government was developing and an increase in settlement westward across Georgia, smaller additional counties were established in the Fort Stewart area. In addition to Liberty, Effingham, and Washington counties, Bryan and Tattnall counties were formed in 1793 and 1801 respectively. By 1820, the county seat of Bryan County (known as Bryan Courthouse) was moved to the community of Eden, which eventually became known as Clyde. By 1818, Sturges map of Georgia depicts the various small communities within the Fort Stewart area. The communities depicted on the map included Fort Argyle, Bryan Courthouse, and Canoochee Bluff. Other communities existed but were rather dispersed.

The Taylors Creek community was primarily settled by residents of Bryan County and other Georgia counties in the 1790's and early 1800's. Settlers from other states such as Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina also settled in this area during this time. In 1807, a Methodist congregation was established by Rev. Angus McDonald, which was later known as the Little Canoochee Meeting House by 1809. The Taylors Creek Campground may have also been established during this same year as well (see Antebellum Period) (Yarbrough and Yarbrough 1963: 75). Residents of the Taylors Creek community were primarily farmers and remained so throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the known names of families which resided and/or settled in the Taylors Creek community during this time included: Dicks; Delk; Mann; Hills; Gaulden (ca. Late 1700s); Robinson; Daniel, Abram of Bulloch County (1801-1802); Bradley, Eli and Newman (ca. 1800); Dorsey (Darsey), James (1799); Gaulden, Rev. Jonathon of South Carolina (ca. 1801); Caswell, Martin James from North Carolina (ca. 1790? Or 1801?); Martin (Before 1800); McFerrell (McFail) from South Carolina; Hendry, Robert from North Carolina then to Burke County (1801); Hog; Harville; Oswald (Oswald); Warren; Swilly; Terrell; Davis; Slade; Dyess; Herrington; MacNair; Togner; Underwood; Chessler; Tatom; Buchanan; Hendry (1801-1802); Laing (Before 1820 or 1828?); and Surley.

Other areas in Fort Stewart grew slowly during this time period. It has been suggested that there were settlements along the upper Canoochee River as well as the roads which crossed the Fort Stewart Area. Although documentation for this time period regarding settlements outside of the major communities is limited, it is assumed that settlement patterns were associated with access to transportation routes (i.e. roads and rivers) in areas of present day Long County and portions of southwest Liberty County. The northeastern portion of Fort Stewart appears to have been less settled than other areas.

The land around Fort Argyle during the Revolutionary War traded hands several times by opposing sides of the war. When the war was over, the confiscated lands were sold by Georgia as well as lands in the Cross Swamp area. Confiscated lands from the Revolutionary War in the Fort Argyle area owned by former Governor James Wright were sold to John



Ward in 1782 (Elliot, et. al. 1997: 84). Land that was owned by James Butler and Roger Kelsall in the Cross Swamp area was sold to George Walton during this time period. It has been suggested that the Savage family as well as John Waldron and Jacob Green resided in the area of Fort Argyle during the Early American Period. By 1800, the community name of Fort Argyle had become well established.

By 1806, the “Well’s Ferry-Lane’s Ford Road” was established in the western portion of Fort Stewart across the Canoochee River (near present day Landing sites L-15 and L-22 in the northwestern portion of Fort Stewart). Nathan Smart and John Futch owned and operated this ferry crossing. The Durrence Family cemetery is located a few miles west of the “Well’s Ferry-Lane’s Ford Road”. Although there are currently no headstones present within the cemetery, it has been suggested that the earliest interment date was 1808 (Lopis, Briuer, and Butler 1993). The Salem Church might have also been established in this area in 1811 (Georgia Southern University Library Special Collections [GSULSC] Lucile Hodges Papers n.d.: Box [B]1, Folder [F] 2, Item [I] ?).

In 1809, two roads were petitioned to be built through Taylors Creek community. These roads helped to further establish Taylors Creek as an important crossroads community by 1820. The “Hencart Road” (or “Handcart Road”) was also another important road that was constructed in 1809 linking the western portions to the eastern portions of present day Fort Stewart (Yarbrough and Yarbrough 1963: 15). The “Hencart Road” was located approximately where present day GA 144 and Fort Stewart Road 144 are now located.

## **Antebellum Period (1820-1860)**

During the antebellum period of the Fort Stewart area, there was a steady growth of settlements. The local agricultural economies still continued to rely on subsistence farming and rice cultivation. Meanwhile, raising livestock and the timber harvesting still played an important role. Cotton was also produced during this time period on the small number of plantations that utilized slave labor. Also during this time period, gristmills were being constructed in most of the Fort Stewart area.

By 1827, areas in Bryan County were producing rice as their primary agricultural economy. By the 1850s, livestock raising and timber harvesting were the primary economic endeavors. According to Census Bureaus of 1850, lumber cutters resided in the Fort Argyle and Eden areas of Fort Stewart. By 1860, cattle raising and rice cultivation declined for this same area. By 1847, the county seat of Bryan County was known as Eden. The Fort Argyle community continues to show up on maps for this time period as well. Canal construction near Fort Argyle began in the 1820s and by 1830 was an important development for the residents in and around the Fort Argyle area. The Harn settlement, which was first settled by the Harn family during the Colonial Period, was located in the area between the Canoochee River and Fort Argyle. The lands around Fort Argyle, and possibly Fort Argyle itself, were sold to Lewis Hines in 1839. North of the area around Fort Argyle, 2229 acres were sold in the same year to William Savage. This area was called Silk Hope Plantation (Braley, Doyon, & Williams 1985: 27). Although little is known about the usage of the land during this time, it has been assumed that the land was used for livestock raising, timber harvesting, and possibly tenant farming.

Associated cemeteries in present day Bryan County from the Antebellum Period include:

Bandy; Gordon Strickland; Liberty Chapel; and Waters. W. H. Strickland cemetery is located between Liberty Chapel and Waters cemetery. No inscriptions on the remaining headstones are present and the cemetery is probably a small family cemetery. This cemetery is assumed to be associated with the surrounding communities and would probably date from this same time period.

At Taylors Creek, Agricultural Censuses for the 1850s and 1860s in Liberty County indicate a reliance on subsistence farming and some sugarcane. Cotton was also produced by some of the larger plantations but not on the same scale as those plantations on the coast. Livestock raising, such as hogs, cattle and sheep, continued to play a role in local economies. According to Campbell, et. al., the Taylors Creek area "...unmistakably remained one of multiple small, family-owned farms where no shortage of food sources existed, but on which almost no market crops were produced" (1996: 107). Some of the families that settled in the Taylors Creek area during this time included: Bird (ca. 1825-1830); McGillis (Before 1849); May (Before 1861); and the Shuptrines (1850-1860).

Also during the Antebellum Period, the Taylors Creek Methodist Church had been re-established in 1841 and was used until 1941. Prior to this time, the original location of the church and cemetery was in an area prone to flooding. According to Yarbrough and Yarbrough, the church was located along the Canoochee Creek near the bridge crossing of the Sunbury to Greensboro road (1986: 130-131). The cemetery was also moved during this time to its current location. The earliest interment date at the cemetery is 1832. Taylors Creek Campground was also established during the Antebellum period. Although the earliest date for the Taylors Creek Campground is unknown, the land was permanently donated to the Methodist Conference in 1859. There has been some confusion as to when the Campground was established. According to Yarbrough and Yarbrough, the Campground was established by 1812 and possibly as early as 1807 (1963: 75). The Campground was both a social and religious tradition for nearby residents. During the yearly event in October, a religious revival was held. This camp meeting was open to all denominations (Martin 1979: 45).

The Taylors Creek Campground cemetery was located somewhere in the vicinity, but the exact location is unknown. At the Taylors Creek cemetery, a headstone mentions the burial of three individuals with interment dates ranging from 1849 to 1853 near the Taylors Creek Campground. Another important feature near the Taylors Creek community was the Taylors Creek Baptist Church. This church was built sometime after 1847. The Taylors Creek Union Academy, a high school that later became Liberty Institute (ca. 1887-89), was constructed sometime after 1833. In 1849, a Freemason Lodge was established in Taylors Creek. This was the Liberty Union Lodge No. 96, F. & A. M. The Lodge prospered for several years thereafter but then declined in importance in the latter half of the Civil War. The charter was then forfeited in 1866 (Yarbrough and Yarbrough 1963: 71).

The Thomas Hill community, and the Thomas Hill cemetery, developed during the Antebellum Period. West of Thomas Hill was another community which later was associated with Bethany Baptist Church (near the present location of Todd Ray cemetery) sometime before 1860. The Bethany Baptist Church would later be established in the 1890s (Mobley 1979: 155). Another community in this area was near Antioch Baptist Church which was established around 1845. The Soules Chapel Methodist Church was established in the mid 1800s (possibly as early as 1836) also located in the vicinity (Mobley 1979: 154). Other

cemeteries for the Antebellum period in present day Liberty County include: Gaulden; Parker Sapp; Pinholster; Salem (the church itself may have been established early as 1811 [GSULSP Lucile Hodges Papers n.d.: B1, F2] ); and Zoucks.

Although Tattnall County saw an increase in settlement during the Antebellum Period, the portions of Tattnall county that comprise the Fort Stewart area still remained rural. Economic life was similar to that of other areas in Fort Stewart. By the 1860s, the turpentine industry makes its appearance in the Fort Stewart area. Families who settled this area of Fort Stewart included: Durrance; Rogers; Smith; Deloatch; Todd; Sands; Waters; Boggs; Dasher; Smart; Martin; Bacon; Prevatt; Easterling; Glisson, Gainer; and Baker.

The Long Branch community, near Wells Ferry, is located near the present site of Z. R. Moody cemetery in present day Evans County. James Moody settled in this area around 1844. James Moody's family continued to live in this area throughout the Antebellum Period.

A family community existed during this time period in present day Long County. The J. E. Moody cemetery is located west of Strickland Pond. The earliest interment date for this cemetery is 1840. The closest known settlement in relation to this possible community was Taylors Creek which is located several miles to the east of the J. E. Moody cemetery.

Poplar Head (or Popular Head) cemetery is located in present day Long County west-northwest of Pinholster cemetery. This cemetery is a small family cemetery with the earliest interment date of 1848. A small family community was evidently established near the Kirkland Creek area during the Antebellum period. The Poplar Head Church was associated with this cemetery.

## **Civil War Period (1861-1865)**

Although very little military action occurred in the Fort Stewart Area, the communities were economically affected by the war. Farmers who relied on slave labor to cultivate rice and cotton were greatly affected. In 1864-1865, General Sherman's army did march through the area near the lower Canoochee and the Ogeechee River towards Savannah through Fort Argyle and Bryan Courthouse. Sherman's objective was to destroy the Ogeechee Canal and the Central Georgia Railroad located nearby. Sherman met with little resistance while marching through the Fort Stewart area and set up a temporary Union camp at Bryan Courthouse (Eden). According to Yarbrough and Yarbrough, Liberty County (presumably in and around the Taylors Creek community) suffered greatly during the Civil War. Raiding parties of Union troops stole food and destroyed property. In addition to the Union raiding parties, there were also raiding parties by the Confederate troops. Those that were cut off by Sherman's troops as well as stragglers and deserters of General Wheeler's Southern Cavalry raided plantations and farmsteads in areas of Liberty County (1963: 37-47).

Cemeteries associated with the Civil War Period include Fleming, Strickland Pond, and Wells. Strickland Pond cemetery, also known as Toms (or Thoms) Creek, is located at the former site of Toms Creek Methodist Church (an Anglo-American church). This cemetery was also used by Toms Creek Church (an African-American church) which was located south of the Strickland Pond cemetery. According to Lucile Hodges, the Thoms Creek

Church (unknown as to which one) was in use in 1855 but had disbanded in 1866 (GSULSC Lucile Hodges Papers n.d.: B1, F2, I86).

## **Reconstruction Period (1865-1880)**

Although many areas of the South experienced economic recovery after the Civil War, communities in the Fort Stewart area essentially were unchanged. Unlike other areas of the South which experienced significant devastation, communities in the Fort Stewart area were directly affected only on a small scale. Many of the communities in the Fort Stewart area were small farms rather than large scale plantations. However, economic improvements such as an increased naval stores and timber harvesting industry occurred in the Fort Stewart area. Ownership of small farms by African Americans and rural areas of the Fort Stewart area increased in population as well.

In the Taylors Creek community, livestock herds had declined due to foraging by occupying Union soldiers. According to Campbell, et. al., "By 1880, [Taylors Creek], with a population of 80, featured four sawmills and four general stores; the surrounding countryside produce[d] cotton, rice and lumber" (1996: 119). The community was also described by contemporaries as "only a country post office" (Norwood 1879).

In areas of present day Bryan County, the agricultural economy, much as it was during the Civil War remained essentially the same. One important industry that did grow in importance during this time was that of the naval stores industry. The naval stores industry (i.e. production of turpentine and rosin from local pine) primarily employed African Americans as laborers. Laborers in the naval stores industry would either live in communities or camps provided by their employers or would work part-time for the naval stores employers to supplement their incomes during the agricultural off-seasons.

The Fort Argyle community still remained on maps during this time but its population was only fifteen. The Bryan County Seat (Eden) consisted of only 25 people by this time and by about 1880, a post office was established. In the western portion of Fort Stewart, approximately 25 people lived in the community of Long Branch. During this time, new communities were also established. The community of Darlot was located near the Taylors Creek Campground. The population of Darlot was about fifty people and included a Methodist church and two saw mills. The main agricultural products that were produced by Darlot were cotton and rice (GSULSC Lucile Hodges Papers n.d.: B1, F2, I5). Pinholster was another community established during this period and was located northwest of Taylors Creek in present day Liberty County. The community of Leonard was located north of Eden in present day Bryan County. These three communities were established in the 1880s. Two African American communities were also established during this time period. An African American Episcopal Church was formed in the Taylors Creek area as well as the Pleasant Grove Church in the Cypress Slash area.

In present day Evans (then Tattnall) County, the community of Brewton's Mills was established by at least 1874. Brewton's Mills was located on the upper portion of Little Canoochee Creek. It is not known with certainty if this community was within present-day Fort Stewart's boundaries.

Cemeteries associated with the Reconstruction Period include Corinth, located southwest of Little Creek cemetery; Cox, located north of Liberty Chapel cemetery; Gill, located near the Cross Swamp area; Little Creek, located near the Taylors Creek community; Sand Hill (associated with Mt. Pleasant M. E. Church), located near Beards Creek; Todds, located south of the Cross Swamp area; Warnell, between Taylors Creek and Longbranch communities; Wise (or New Hope), in the Cross Swamp area; and Z. R. Moody, near the Long Branch community.

## **New Growth (1880 - 1920)**

Similar to the Reconstruction period, local economies relied on raising livestock, the timber and naval stores industry, and subsistence farming remained important. Technological advances in the naval stores and agricultural industries produced an increase in populations for many areas within the Fort Stewart Area. The introduction of the copper still, the cup-and-gutter method, and an increased demand for naval stores products greatly affected the Fort Stewart area. The vast majority of pine in the area produced the raw product for the industry. Because of the importance of this industry, railroads were constructed through out the Fort Stewart area to transport this booming product. Due to the clearing of many lands from the naval stores activities coupled with cheaper fertilizers, many acres of land opened up for farming. Also during this time, railroad construction within the area increased to transport timber and naval stores products.

During the New Growth period, the area around Fort Argyle declined in population as lands were purchased for the naval stores and timber industry. In 1891, the Fort Argyle Brick and Lumber Factory was also established in the Fort Argyle area. This factory was in production until 1909-1910 when it was closed. In 1912, the land around Fort Argyle was leased to the Georgia-Carolina Lumber Company. But in 1919, the remaining years of this lease were purchased by R. C. Jacobs.

The community of Eden (Bryan Courthouse) became known as Clyde during the New Growth period. Clyde cemetery was established during this time period. The earliest interment at Clyde cemetery was 1888. The communities of Long Branch as well as Taylors Creek continued to prosper with the increase in naval stores production in both communities during this time. By 1901, there were a total of twelve turpentine distilleries in Liberty County.

Many new communities were established during the New Growth period with the increase in the lumber and naval stores industries. Communities established in relation to the lumber and naval stores industry tended to be short lived. As raw materials were exhausted in the area, many of the communities ceased to exist. Communities established along rail lines tended to be more permanent. Some of the new communities that were established during this time period included: Banner; Dukes; Kent; Letford; Lida; McCan; Onida (Oneida); Roding; Sigma; Smiley; Stewart Town, Strum Bay; Trinity; and Willie.

The community of Smiley, located in the southwestern portion of Fort Stewart, was established around 1887. By 1900, Smiley had a population of about 50 people and was described as a small agricultural trading district. Banner was established by 1888 and appears to be a short-lived community as it does not appear on maps published after 1889.

Congregational (or Oak Grove) and Smith cemeteries were established during this time period. Congregational and Smith cemeteries are located between the communities of Smiley and Banner. Onida (Oneida) was established around 1887 and continued through 1906. Haygrove (associated with Philadelphia Church) cemetery is located west-southwest of Onida. The earliest interment date at Haygrove was 1884 and was used until 1932. Haygrove was a small to medium size church cemetery.

Strum Bay was a turpentine community which was located in the area that would become Willie (located near Rimes cemetery). Stewart Town, an African American community located near Strum Bay, was probably also a turpentine community. The Strum Bay cemetery is probably associated with the Stewart Town community rather than the Strum Bay community. It has also been suggested that the Strum Bay cemetery was actually two separate cemeteries divided by a fence but is now fenced as one cemetery. In the Strum Bay area, the Harmony Methodist Church was established around 1888 serving residents in the area. Some of the members of Soules Chapel Methodist Church transferred to this church. Family members of Harmony included: Floyd, Jones, Lanier, Lowther, Richardson and Smith (Mobley 1979: 156).

To add further to the confusion of correct cemetery names and/or locations, the chain of title search conducted during the acquisition of lands of Fort Stewart during the 1940s lists Stewart Town cemetery being bounded to the west by Stewart Town Church or Pleasant Grove (Missionary) Baptist Church. This is the same name of a cemetery located in the Taylors Creek community. These two cemeteries were African-American cemeteries. According to the Land Acquisition records, H. A. Swindle deeded the land in the Stewart Town area that was to be used as a cemetery. The person recording the land acquisition described the area as "...a community thickly settled by colored people, who have continued to bury their dead to this day".

The community of Sigma was also probably a turpentine community. Although little information is known concerning Sigma, the community appears to have diminished sometime after 1896. The community of Roding was a turpentine community with several stills operating in the area.. Roding was the location of Bragg Baptist Church (and it's associated cemetery), Braggs Bridge, Bragg's Landing, Ellis Landing, Hines Landing, and Ellis' Turpentine Still. In addition to Bragg cemetery, Dreggars cemetery is located next to Bragg cemetery. The earliest interment date for Dreggars and Bragg cemeteries was 1897. By 1906, Roding had a population of sixty-one and maps dating from 1911-12 still indicate the community of Roding.

The neighborhood of Willie consisted of several smaller communities. The railroad station community of Letford, which was established sometime before 1911, was located in the Willie neighborhood. As can be seen on present maps of Fort Stewart, the dismantled railroad that runs across the base was the tram line built by William Tuten with Letford being the first base of operations for his sawmill. From Letford, the tram line ran to Strumbay. By 1910, this tram line ran to the Old Sunbury Road and then to the community of Willie (named after William Tuten's daughter). This railroad was known then as the Savannah and Southern Railroad.

Other railroad station communities established in the Willie neighborhood (towards the southwest to Glennville) included Dukes, Lida, and possibly Kent. Churches/cemeteries

associated with these railroad station communities include Bethany Church/Todd Ray cemetery (Dukes), Brannen (a family plot with one known burial near Dukes), Letford (in or near Letford community), Rimes (east of Strum Bay and Stewart Town); Shuman (between Rimes and Letford); and Bethel Church (Lida).

In the Long Branch neighborhood, Jerusalem Church and the Cherry Grove neighborhood were established during the New Growth period. Jerusalem cemetery was also established during this time period. Jerusalem cemetery is a large cemetery and the earliest interment was 1890. The Cherry Grove Baptist Church was established in 1892. According to Lucile Hodges, "The land [was] donated by Henry Joshua Shuman, for church and school purposes...[and was located] on or near the Old Hencart road in the Dyess-Shuman community, which is near the Camp Oliver area of Fort Stewart" (GSULSC Lucile Hodges Papers n.d.: B1, F2, I1). By the 1920s, the church had become inactive (the church later revived during the 1930s). Little is known regarding other communities such as Trinity and McCan (or McCann). Trinity cemetery was established during this time period with the first known interment in 1886. In the vicinity of Trinity the Cypress Slash cemetery was established during this time period. The earliest interment date for Cypress Slash was 1902. The community of McCan is believed to have been a lumber and turpentine community. The family name of Ryon has been associated with the McCan community. The Deloach cemetery, a small family cemetery, is located near McCan with the earliest interment date of 1911.

Other cemeteries associated with this time period include: Golden Family (a small family cemetery located northeast of Pinholster); Greenbay (west of Eden/Clyde); Irene Driggers (a small family cemetery located south of Green Bay cemetery and west of Eden/Clyde along the Canoochee River); Pleasant Grove (associated with Pleasant Grove A. M. E. Church, located southeast of Taylors Creek cemetery in the Taylors Creek community); Porter (a small family cemetery with one marked grave and several unmarked graves located near Willie); and possibly Bonnet Bay. The only known headstone associated with Bonnet Bay cemetery is broken into several pieces and no known date has been established for this cemetery. Bonnet Bay (which flows into Savage Creek) is located between Little Creek and Letford cemeteries. It is probable that Bonnet Bay cemetery was a family cemetery and dates from this time period. Another possible cemetery associated with this time period is the Branch Family cemetery. It is located approximately 1 mile northwest of Bethel cemetery. Since there are no headstones remaining in this cemetery, an interment date has not been determined. It is probable that this family cemetery was associated with the community near Bethel Church.

## **American Period (1920 - 1940)**

Throughout the American period, the communities in the Fort Stewart continued to prosper. The lumber, naval stores, and livestock raising (primarily sheep and hog) industries continued to increase during this time period. The cotton industry, however, experienced a significant decrease due to the boll weevil infestation. In addition to these industries, communities in Long and Tattnall Counties started to produce tobacco in the 1920s.

Unlike the rest of the nation, communities in the Fort Stewart area were affected to a lesser degree during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Since many of the communities in the Fort Stewart area relied on agriculture, residents were at least able to be somewhat

self-sufficient. The main impact that the Great Depression had on the Fort Stewart area was a lack of surplus cash available to the residents. One positive aspect that occurred during the 1930s was the new technologies that were developed to process the locally abundant yellow-pine for the use in pulp wood mills. This, along with the continued growth of the naval stores industry characterized the economic livelihood during the American period.

Because of the transitory nature of the naval stores and lumber industry, many communities in the Fort Stewart area ceased to exist. Trees that were utilized for the naval stores industry tended to produce gum for an average of seven years. After this time, the trees were often times sold for lumber. Due to the relatively short time that a forest could be utilized for naval stores, the industry would move on to the next stand of trees. Communities associated with the naval stores and lumber industries would often diminish and set up elsewhere. Examples of these types of communities were Letford, Lida, McCan, Sigma, and Strum Bay.

During the latter half of the 1930s, the communities of Clyde, Taylors Creek, and Willie were the most prosperous within the Fort Stewart area. The community of Willie by this time had started to decline due to the diminished lumber and naval store industries in the immediate vicinity. By 1940, Taylors Creek had grown to accommodate 84 structures. Although the community of Clyde was not as large as Willie and Taylors Creek, it did remain the county seat until the acquisition of land by the government. The area around Fort Argyle by this time was not considered a community but rather a place where residents of Clyde would picnic. Sometime during the 1920's the lands around Fort Argyle were sold to Russel C. Jacobs. A turpentine still, a lumber mill, and two houses were located on the properties.

One community that probably developed during this time period was that of Glisson's Mill Pond. This community was located in the extreme northwestern portions of present day Fort Stewart west of Camp Oliver. Glissons's Mill Pond community may have developed out of Brewton Mills community (ca. 1870-1885). Glisson's General Store still stands at its present location and is registered on the Nation Register of Historic Properties. This general store is the only pre-Fort Stewart structure still standing today. There are only two known cemeteries associated with this time period. Smith Chapel cemetery is located near Smith and Congregational cemeteries between the former communities of Smiley and Banner. Zion Traveler cemetery is located southwest of Smith Chapel and Congregational cemeteries near the former community of Banner.

Zion Traveler cemetery consists of only one known burial. This cemetery was associated with an African-American Baptist church which shared the same name as the cemetery. According to maps of 1920, a church symbol is located just outside of present day Fort Stewart which was probably the same church.



Maps depicting land ownership in 1946 during the acquisition of these lands indicate the church as still standing. (Helms & McKivergan 1997: 55)

## **World War II & the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century (1940 - Present)**

In June 1940, several military bases were created by Congress due to threat of war. Fort Stewart (or Camp Stewart as it was first known) was one of these military bases. The initial purchase of the government was a tract of land totaling 5,000 acres. Originally, Camp Stewart was established as an artillery training post as well as a basic training post. Fort Stewart today encompasses 280,000 acres and is home to the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Mechanized) Division.

Camp Stewart was established more than 18 months prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Camp Stewart was named after Brigadier General Daniel Stewart, an American Revolutionary from Liberty County (later to become a statesman of Georgia and the great grandfather of Theodore Roosevelt). The main reasons for choosing the area near Hinesville as a military base were strategic, economic, and political. The port of Savannah was considered a strategic port to maintain, the land that was acquired by the government held a relatively low property value, and at the time, only a small number of families would have to be displaced. As it turned out, the government may have underestimated the number of families affected.

Personnel started to arrive at Camp Stewart in September 1940. Anti-aircraft artillery training started in January 1941. By March 1942, the United States had entered the war therefore increasing the importance of training troops at Camp Stewart. Expansion of the base occurred throughout the rest of the war but peaked in the latter half of 1943. By the end of 1944, Camp Stewart became inactive as an anti-aircraft training base. In 1945, Camp Stewart was used as a postal unit training center as well as a cookery school.

After World War II had ended, Camp Stewart was deactivated in July 1946. Between World War II and the Korean Conflict, Camp Stewart was utilized as a Nation Guard Training camp during the summer months. By August 1950, Camp Stewart reopened as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Anti-Aircraft Artillery Training Center in response to the Korean Conflict and continued through 1953. Starting in 1953, firing and maneuvering areas for tanks were being developed. In March 1956, Camp Stewart was renamed Fort Stewart and became a permanent military installation.

Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, Fort Stewart increased their number of buildings but by 1963 the Fort once again experienced a time of little activity. By 1966, the Vietnam Conflict created changes for Fort Stewart. In 1967, Hunter Army Airfield (HAAF), together with Fort Stewart, became an Army Flight Training Center. By 1969, HAAF became a sub-installation of Fort Stewart. Between 1969 and 1973, Fort Stewart once again saw a period of slow activity and was feared to close. In 1973 Between 1969 and 1973, Fort Stewart once again saw a period of slow activity and was feared to close. In 1973 the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was then stationed at Fort Stewart.

1979 the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force was organized and by October 1980 the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was upgraded to a Mechanized division. For 10 years, the 24<sup>th</sup> Mecha-

anized division. For 10 years, the 24<sup>th</sup> Mechanized trained for rapid deployment and then were called upon in 1990. In August 1990, the 24<sup>th</sup> Mechanized was mobilized to Saudi Arabia for Desert Shield. The 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Mechanized) was then known as the Victory Division. Today the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Mechanized) Division remains ready for future rapid deployment.

## **Other Possible Cemeteries on Fort Stewart**

Names and locations of the cemeteries on Fort Stewart have changed over the years. An attempt has been made to refer to all cemeteries by their commonly known name. Where applicable, other names associated with each cemetery have also been given. An effort has also been made to correctly locate each cemetery as well. Maps over the years have depicted various cemeteries in locations where none exist. Names of cemeteries have also been erroneously labeled both on maps and on signs associated with each cemetery.

Another problem that has occurred with inventorying all cemeteries of Fort Stewart is the fact that when Fort Stewart acquired its present land holdings, all of the cemeteries were not listed in the land transfer. Often times when a church property's deed was sold to the government, an associated cemetery was not always listed. Additionally, small family cemeteries were not always listed on the property's inventory. Over the years, additional cemeteries have been added to the inventory through discovery by Fort Stewart personnel (e.g. Porter and Bonnet Bay cemeteries recently).

There have also been cemeteries listed on paper (e.g. historical records and maps) and memory that have not been presently located. For example, the Taylor's Creek Campground reportedly was once used as a burial ground. The exact location of the campground and its associated burials are unknown today. There is a grave-marker at the Taylors Creek cemetery which mentions the burials of three individuals (all from one family) near the Taylors Creek Campground. It is not known if there were any additional burials at/near the Taylors Creek Campground.

The Hendry Family cemetery is mentioned at the Taylors Creek cemetery. There is a family plot marker that mentions the burials of eight individuals of the Hendry family and associates. Although the location of this cemetery is unknown, the current plot marker in Taylors Creek states that the headstones were moved to the Taylors Creek cemetery from the Hendry Family cemetery located three miles northwest of Taylors Creek cemetery.

According to Wyman May, there may also be a cemetery associated with the Glisson Pond area in the northwest corner of present day Fort Stewart. Little information is known concerning this cemetery (McKivergan 1997: V6). The J. O. Rahn cemetery was listed as a cemetery on the land transfer maps during the 1940s. The location of the cemetery was near present day Wright Army Airfield (then known as Liberty Field). Attempts have been made to locate the cemetery, but none have been successful (McKivergan 1997: V6). The Herrin Chapel Baptist

Church cemetery also has not been successfully located. The land acquisition maps also state an associated cemetery with the Herrin Baptist Church. The exact location is unknown at this time but is located in the Fort Stewart Training Area E18 (McKivergan 1997: V6). The Downs cemetery has been reported by Wyman May to have existed on Fort Stewart's property as well. The exact location is unknown but is reported to be located in Fort Stewart Training Area C2 (McKivergan 1997: V6). There are two other cemeteries which might be located on Fort Stewart's property according to Wyman May. The Elders Family cemetery is reported to be located somewhere in Bryan County, possibly in Fort Stewart Training Area F5 (McKivergan 1997: V6). Boggs cemetery, as reported by Wyman May, may be located in Fort Stewart Training Area C2 but is probably located outside of present day Fort Stewart (McKivergan 1997: V6).

In addition to these potential "lost" cemeteries, there may be additional cemeteries located on the property of Fort Stewart. As stated earlier, some cemeteries were not listed with various church's property transfer descriptions to the U.S. government. The various churches listed in the Fort Stewart Land Acquisition Records included: Mount Zion Baptist Church, located between the Cantonment area and Wright Army Airfield (U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia 1941a); Melwood Sunday or Sabbath School (Pigot Church), located just northwest of Taylors Creek Campground (USDCSDOG 1941a); Strumbay Church or Peter Chapel (although this may in all likelihood be associated with Strumbay cemetery) (USDCSDOG 1941b); Methodist Episcopal Church South, in the Town of Willie (USDCSDOG 1941c); Abraham Chapel, located approximately one mile west of Cypress Slash and Trinity cemeteries (USDCSDOG 1941a); and Christian Church of Willie, in the town of Willie (or Methodist Church of Willie) (USDCSDOG 1941d).

# HUNTER ARMY AIRFIELD

## Colonial Period

James Oglethorpe, along with approximately 100 people arrived on the Georgia Coast in February 1733. The city of Savannah was established on the Savannah River east of current day HAAF. Upon arriving to the area of Yamacraw Bluff on the Savannah River, Oglethorpe met with Tomichichi (a Creek chieftain) in order to secure a place for settlement. Lands were ceded by Tomochici between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers. Varying amounts of land were then parceled out to the various colonists (no larger than 500 acres per person at that time). The primary reason for the Georgia settlement was to create a buffer zone between the Spanish to the south and the Carolinas. Because of this, Georgia was envisioned as a colony of armed yeomanry and therefore no slaves were allowed. Georgia was also seen as a source of raw materials (e.g. indigo, silk, and lumber) to be exploited by England's industries.

In order to protect Savannah, smaller communities were also established inland of Savannah. One of the buffer zone settlements was that of Fort Argyle (which was located on present day Fort Stewart as discussed earlier). Two other buffer zone settlements that were established between 1733 and 1734 were Highgate and Hampstead which were located approximately five miles to the southwest of Savannah (northeastern portion of present day HAAF). South of Savannah, Darien was settled by Highland Scots in 1735. Fort Frederica was established in 1736 on the island of Saint Simons. Hampstead, with only twelve families, was only occupied until 1743. Highgate was similar in size to Hampstead but by 1740, the community was only occupied by two families. According to a map dating from 1780, there was no indication of the community of Highgate. During the early 1740's, the communities of Acton and Vernonburg were established. Acton continued no longer than 1817, as a map from that year does not list the community. Vernonburg (also known as Dutchtown) on the other hand survived through the American Revolutionary Period.

In 1750, slaves were permitted in the colony and land grant size restrictions were loosened thus creating a potential for larger agricultural economies. Rice cultivation gained in importance and was cultivated in the lower parts of Savannah. On higher ground, cotton and indigo was cultivated. In the area of present day HAAF, it appears that the earliest settlement to the area was during the 1750s in the area known as the Little Ogeechee District.

## American Period

During the Revolutionary war, many of the landowners in the Savannah area remained loyal to Britain. After the war, these lands were confiscated and were sold starting in 1782. During the Civil War, there were possibly Confederate earthworks in the northern edge of present day HAAF. Maps from this time period also indicate a few farms located in the HAAF area. It has been suggested that this area was sparsely populated during the Civil War period. A railroad that was constructed between 1837 and 1840 was located at the western edge of present day HAAF. This transportation route helped to increase the utilization of the area. Along the Savannah River to the north and west of the city saw an increase in settlement and land usage. The Colerain plantation (later called Springfield plantation) was one of the settlements in the present day HAAF area. After 1850 (or as late as 1874), the Springfield plantation was purchased by the city of Savannah to be drained. The draining of this plantation would have affected lands on present day HAAF (Smith, Council, & Honerkamp 1984: 29).

During the Civil War, Confederate earthworks may have been constructed in the northern portion of HAAF. Other maps from this time period do not indicate many structures in the area but the area was probably used as farmland to some degree. Problems with drainage due to the Springfield plantation being drained probably deterred large-scale settlement in the area during this time.

Between the Civil War and 1912, the lands of present day HAAF were slowly increasing in population. There were increases in land drainage allowing an increase in land usage. By 1912, maps indicate several structures in the area, which included a dairy and a church. Other structures that appear at this time are three farmsteads. The Poulain, Kollack, and possibly the R. Woodhouse properties were located in the White Bluff Road area. Along the west side of the Middleground Road corridor several structures also appear on maps from 1912. Up until the 1940's the area of HAAF continued to increase in land usage. The invention of the automobile has been attributed to this increase. Since the area in and around present day HAAF was about 6 miles from Savannah at that time, automobiles allowed the transportation of commodities between the two areas to occur in a one day trip. Previously, horse-drawn carts and foot travel made the trip a multi-day trip. Maps from this time period indicate the increased construction of paved roads. (Smith, Council, Honerkamp, & Babits 1984: 31-32)

Since this area was still sparsely populated by the late 1920's, the city of Savannah sought to establish a municipal airport. Land was selected in 1928 which comprised 730 acres of the Belmont Tract. On September the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1929, the municipal airport was opened. In 1930, the airport was designated the Savannah Airport, but by 1932, it was designated the Hunter Airfield/Savannah Airport. It was named after a United States Army World War I pilot, Captain Frank O'Driscoll Hunter. A Works Progress Administration started in 1935 at the airport. A hangar, three runways and an administration building were constructed. (\*\*\*\*\*)

By September 1940, the military buildup by the United States acquired the Hunter Airfield and 150 acres outside of the area for the defense of the nation. This land acquisition was by the U.S. Army Air Corps and was to be returned to the city of Savannah after the war.

On September 27, 1940, the first personnel began to arrive at the newly named "Savannah Army Airbase". The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Groups arrived during this time. Fifty-five barracks and sixty-seven other buildings were also built. By February 1943, the Savannah Army Airbase was designated as a staging area. By December of the same year, the airbase became the staging area for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Airforce Staging Wing. (\*\*\*\*)

After the war had ended, the Airbase went to inactive status. Between 1946 and 1950, the airbase was used as an industry park, apartments, an orphanage, and a University of Georgia extension campus. In 1950, the airbase was purchased by the U.S. government for \$1.00 and exchanged for Chatham County Airport. At this time, HAAF was designated a permanent base for the Strategic Air Command until 1963. After this time, HAAF became a base for Military Air Transport Services. The military was then scheduled to close the base by 1967. By December of 1966, the government decided not to close the base but to establish an Army Helicopter Pilot Training Base at HAAF. (\*\*\*\*\*)

In April of 1968, the U.S. Army took over HAAF from the U.S. Air Force and was then officially renamed Hunter Army Airfield. Between March of 1970 and May of 1972, Vietnamese were instructed in aviation for the Allied Military Training Program at HAAF during the Vietnam Conflict. In 1973, the base was closed and only a skeleton crew remained. In July of 1974, the base reopened as part of the Army's Fort Stewart – Hunter Complex. (\*\*\*\*\*)

## **Associated Cemeteries**

**There are two cemeteries associated with the current land holdings of HAAF, McNish and Belmont cemeteries. McNish cemetery is a small family cemetery with four burials. Belmont cemetery (also known as Pet Cemetery) is a relocation cemetery. There are 185 burials, all of which are marked as unknown. It has been suggested that the burials are associated with an influenza outbreak around 1911.**

McNish cemetery was named after John McNish who died in 1826. Although documentary evidence regarding the ownership of the land that the cemetery is located is limited, research was conducted in 1986 in order to ascertain the history of the area (Council, Smith, & Honerkamp). An 1875 map depicting the area of the McNish site indicates that this area was known as the Hermitage Plantation. It was first thought by the researchers that the Hermitage Plantation might have been a part of the Rose Dew (or Rose Due/Rose Dhu) Plantation owned by Joseph and Benjamin Butler. Further investigation indicated otherwise. Since the documentary evidence of the McNish site is limited, information concerning the Rose Dew plantation was gathered to depict possibly similar land development in areas nearby.

Rose Dew Plantation was created by a 500-acre land grant in November 1755 to Patrick Houstoun. According to Council, et. al., the plantation "...was located between the Vernon and Little Ogeechee Rivers and bounded on the north by a 500 acre grant made of the same day to James Houstoun (1986: 11-12). In 1758, a 300-acre island to the south of these lands was granted to Thomas Parker. Patrick Houstoun's and Thomas Parker's lands were later combined into one area owned by Benjamin Butler in 1766. The McNish site was located north of the land holdings of James Houston. Butler then sold a portion of this land in 1788 to James Houstoun. North of the Hermitage, 500 acres were granted to Charles Watson in March of 1743. In 1755, this land (then known as Rockingham) was sold to Henry Bourguin. As can be seen, settlement in the area around the McNish site was settled by at least the 1750s.

Thomas Johnston, owner of the Hermitage Plantation died in 1815. His estate was divided among the family and was sold ultimately to Ann Mary Johnston (daughter of Thomas Johnston) between 1815 and 1817. In 1819, Ann Mary married John McNish who arrived as a Scottish immigrant in 1805. John McNish was an attorney, merchant, and factor. In 1820 John McNish sold half of the Hermitage Plantation to his wife's sister, Jane Johnston. John McNish died in 1826 and his estate was divided in 1829. Jane Johnston sold her half of the Hermitage Plantation back to Ann Mary (Johnston) McNish and her niece, Mary Jane McNish. In 1843, Mary Jane McNish sold her portion to Theodosius Bachor and Jane E. Johnston the Hermitage Plantation. In 1870, Jane Johnston sold her portion of the Hermitage Plantation to Mary Jane Hazelhurst, her niece. Mary Jane Hazelhurst died in 1878 leaving the Hermitage to her husband and children. In 1879, the land was then deeded to their children: John McNish Hazelhurst; Elizabeth P. W. Burroughs; Anna J. Hazelhurst; Mary R. Hazelhurst; and Sarah E. Hazelhurst. The Hermitage remained in the Hazelhurst family through the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Hazelhursts then sold the property in 1906 to Gustave A. Miller and William L. Webster. By 1908, Webster was the sole proprietor of the Hermitage but then sold the land to his wife (Annie Meta Webster). At this point in time, the Websters owned approximately half of the western portion of present day HAAF. In 1912, the land was then sold to Charles J. Allen. After Allen's death, the land was sold to Mrs. Roalie K. Walker in 1913. The same day the title was recorded, she sold the property to Michael J. O'Leary. Between 1913 and 1918, the land was subdivided into several portions and sold off individually. Documentary research by Council, et. al. (1986) did not continue after 1918. The area comprising former Hermitage Plantation was not utilized to a great extent after 1918 (until HAAF acquired the land).

The Belmont cemetery, also erroneously known as the "Pet Cemetery" is located north of Perimeter Road on present day HAAF. This cemetery has been used as a reinterment cemetery through the course of construction projects at HAAF. Whenever unidentified human remains were discovered, they were interred at the Belmont cemetery and marked with a small metal gravemarker. According to Smith, et. al., the majority of the burials originated north and west of the former community of Hampstead (1984: 110). This area also included portions of the former community of Highgate. It has been suggested that the origin of these burials were from epidemics in the city of Savannah during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Smith, et. al. 1984: 110)

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