

WALK TO MANY OF BEAUFORT'S HISTORIC SITES

Beaufort is steeped in history, perhaps more so than most communities in South Carolina. And because of its small size, it's easy to take a tour of the town and see some of the area's historic sites. Listed below are some important buildings and sites. Many are near the business district downtown; others are within easy walking distance.

1. **Thomas Fuller House, "Tabby Manse," 1211 Bay Street.** It was built in 1786 by Thomas Fuller and is noted for its tabby walls, which are 18 to 20 inches thick and covered with score plaster to resemble stone. Fuller's son, Richard, built the Baptist Church of Beaufort in 1844.
2. **Edgar Fripp House, "Tidalholm," 1 Laurens Street.** Built about 1856 by Edgar Fripp as his summer home to escape the heat and mosquitoes at his St. Helena Island plantation, it was the site of the filming of *The Great Santini* in 1978 and *The Big Chill* in 1983.
3. **Milton Maxcy House, "Secession House," 113 Craven Street.** The first meeting on South Carolina's move to secede from the Union was held here, according to writings on the basement walls: "In this house the first meeting in favor of secession was held in 1851." It was used as a headquarters by Union Army Gen. Rufus Saxton during the Civil War. The Ordinance of Secession breaking South Carolina's ties with the United States was signed here.
4. **St. Helena's Episcopal Church, 507 Newcastle Street.** Built in 1724 and in active use ever since, it is one of the oldest active churches in the United States. Its parish was established in 1712. The church was used as a hospital during the Civil War, and marble tombstone slabs were used as operating tables.
5. **The Arsenal, 713 Craven Street.** Built in 1795, then rebuilt in 1852 after fire destroyed the upper floor, on the site of Beaufort's first courthouse and powder magazine. The Arsenal was the headquarters of the militia during wartime, and also was the military arsenal for the Beaufort Volunteer Artillery. It is now the Beaufort Museum and contains artifacts and other memorabilia from Beaufort's history.
6. **First African Baptist Church, 601 New Street.** Built before 1840 and known as the Prayer House by 1861, it was sold to the freed slaves in 1868 by the Baptist Church of Beaufort.
7. **Leverette House, 1301 Bay Street.** A Pre-Revolutionary War house, it was moved from St. Helena Island to its present location by Benjamin Rhett about 1850. In 1854, Edward Leverette bought the house for \$1,800. It has its original lock, with a wooden bar to protect it from wind and intruders.

- 8. John Joyner Smith House, 400 Wilmington Street.** Built in 1811 and occupied by the federal military commander, Gen. Stevens, and his staff during the Civil War, it was also used as a hospital. Smith also owned the Old Fort Plantation, now the site of Beaufort's Naval Hospital.
- 9. The Baptist Church of Beaufort, 600 Charles Street.** The church was incorporated in 1804, but the building wasn't built until 1844 by Richard Fuller. It was used as a hospital during the Civil War. Before the war, the congregation consisted of 166 white worshippers and 3,577 slaves.
- 10. Paul Hamilton House, "The Oaks," 100 Laurens Street.** Built in 1856 by Col. Paul Hamilton and deserted when Beaufort was occupied by federal troops in 1861, it was used as a hospital for a time. Following the war, it was offered for sale by the government commissioner along with other Beaufort houses to pay "taxes due." Indignant citizens, led by George Holmes, a Northern merchant, gathered together enough money to pay for the house in Hamilton's name.
- 11. Edward Barnwell House, 1405 Bay Street.** Built in 1785 by Edward Barnwell, it housed federal offices during the Civil War and also served as a signal station and U.S. Telegraph Office. The house was sold after the war to pay taxes. Two Barnwell brothers inherited it, but they were so jealous of each other they built a partition through the middle, removing part of the stairway, and their families lived separately from each other.
- 12. George Elliott House, 1001 Bay Street.** Built about 1840 and used as a hospital during the Civil War, the house was sold in 1866 to pay taxes and was bought by George Homes. Formerly a museum and open to the public, it was renovated by the new owners and houses downtown office space.
- 13. John Mark Verdier House, 801 Bay Street.** Built around 1790 by John Mark Verdier and used as headquarters by Union forces during the Civil War, the Verdier house once housed the presses of the Beaufort Gazette. It is now a museum open to the public (closed on Mondays).
- 14. Elizabeth Barnwell Gough House, 705 Washington Street.** Edward Barnwell built the tabby structure around 1789 for his ward, Elizabeth Barnwell Gough, and her daughter after Elizabeth's marriage to Richard Gough failed.
- 15. William Elliot House, "The Anchorage," 1103 Bay Street.** It was built before the Revolutionary War by William Elliot I and occupied before the Civil War by William Elliott III, who was very much opposed to secession. He resigned his seat in the Senate rather than vote for nullification. But when the war broke out he, like Robert E. Lee, went with his state. The house was saved from demolition by the Historic Beaufort Foundation.

OTHER HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN BEAUFORT

- **Petit Point, 503 Washington Street.** This Pre-Civil War house was built for the spinster sister of the Chaplin family. The wing to the right is a recent addition.
- **Berners Barnwell Sams House, 310 New Street.** Built in 1818 by Dr. Berners Barnwell Sams with the help of slave labor, it served as a hospital during the Civil War. Sams also built a house on Laurens Street.
- **Robert Means House, 1207 Bay Street.** Built around 1790 by Robert Means. The front door still has its original lock; the main structural timbers are 10 inches thick and the main support beams are 15 inches thick.
- **Wallace House, 611 Bay Street.** Built in 1907 after a fire that destroyed many fine homes in Beaufort, it now houses the law firm of Tupper, Grimsley and Dean, P.A.
- **William Joseph Thomas House, 607 Bay Street.** Built in 1909. A tabby house originally stood on this site, but it was torn down and replaced by a clapboard house that burned to the ground during the fire of 1907.
- **Lewis Reeve Sams House, 601 Bay Street.** Built in 1852 and used as a hospital during the Civil War, it survived a fire in 1907 when Waterhouse Cotton Gin workers formed a bucket brigade from the hand pump in the kitchen to the upstairs windows and used wet blankets to beat out the flames.
- **Former Location of the Gold Eagle Tavern, East End of Bay Street.** Built in 1930 and razed in 1967.
- **Thomas Rhett House, 1000 Craven Street.** Built in 1820, the structure is now the site of the Rhett House Inn.
- **Tabernacle Baptist Church, 907 Craven Street.** Built in the early 1800s, the present church was organized in 1863 by the Rev. Solomon Peck of Boston. Black members of the Baptist Church of Beaufort started meeting there during the Civil War, and purchased it for \$350 in 1867.
- **John Barnwell Grant House, 409 Carteret Street.** Built in 1764, the two-story home was sold at an 1863 tax sale for \$600. It is now a private home and art gallery.

- **Joseph Johnson House, “The Castle,” 411 Craven Street.** Built around 1850 and used as a hospital during the Civil War; the laundry house at the rear served as a morgue. Before the house was abandoned prior to the arrival of Union forces, the Johnson family buried its valuables beneath the floor of the laundry house.
- **Moorelands, 310 Federal Street.** Built after the Civil War. On this site, a house built in the 1700s was replaced by another building that was all but destroyed by fire and was, in turn, replaced by Moorelands.
- **John A. Cuthbert House, 1203 Bay Street.** Built around 1810, the house originally was built elsewhere but later was split in half and relocated to Bay Street. It houses a bed and breakfast.
- **James Robert Verdier House, “Marshlands,” 501 Pinckney Street.** Built around 1814 by James Robert Verdier, son of John Mark Verdier, and used during the Civil War as headquarters of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. It is the imaginary home of Emily Fenwick, the heroine of Francis Griswold’s Civil War novel, *Sea Island Lady*.
- **James Rhett House, 303 Federal Street.** Begun in 1884 and completed in 1886, it became known as “Rhett’s Folly” during its construction when James Rhett changed the plans of the house.
- **Edward Means House, 604 Pinckney Street.** Built around 1853 and saved during the Civil War by federal forces in need of quarters.
- **The Green, bordered by Pinckney, Laurens, Short and King Streets.** An empty block in the middle of The Point neighborhood, the privately owned acreage is used for football games and picnics.
- **Berners Barnwell Sams House, 201 Laurens Street.** Built in 1852, the second of two houses built by Dr. Berners Barnwell Sams. It was used as a Civil War hospital.
- **Miles Brewton Sams House, 801 Prince Street.** Built before the Civil War, the house is a typical Beaufort-style house that recently was restored.
- **St. Peter the Apostle’s Catholic Church, 802 Carteret Street.** Built around 1846 and dedicated in November 1846 by Bishop Ignatius Reynolds. Father Jeremiah J. O’Connell was named the first parish priest.

- **Old Beaufort College, 800 Carteret Street.** Built in 1852 as a boys' school and taken over during the Civil War by Gen. Stevens. It later became a private school, then a public school. A part of the University of South Carolina Beaufort campus today, it just completed an extensive restoration.
- **Elizabeth Hext House, 207 Hancock Street.** Built around 1720. Elizabeth Hext married William Sams of Wadmalaw Island at the age of 15. The house, "River-view," remained in the Sams family until 1864 when it was sold by the U.S. Tax Commission for \$640.
- **Ledbetter House, 411 Bayard Street.** Built in the early 1800s. Thomas Ledbetter served as a minister to the Beaufort Methodist Mission, which was an attempt to evangelize slaves on the cotton and rice plantations.
- **John Cross Tavern, 807 and 813 Bay Street.** It once occupied two buildings in the 1700s. The tavern is now in the upstairs of one building, with a gift shop on the ground floor; a bookstore occupies the other.

NOTE: These are but a few of Beaufort's historic offering. For a more comprehensive list, stop by the Greater Beaufort Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Center at Bellamy Curve or go to there website: www.beaufortsc.org

Guided tours of the historic district are available by horse-drawn carriage, bus or on foot.

Information about the above attractions is available at the Visitor's Center.