



Below is a suggested route through the history gallery and permanent collection of the Museum.
Please feel free to stop and explore any part of the Museum.

*SSUSH1, SSUSH2, SSUSH6, SSUSH7, SSUSH8, SSUSH9, SSUSH10, SSUSH12, SSUSH17, SSUSH19, SSUSH20, SSUSH21, SSUSH22,
L9-10RH1, L9-10RH2, L9-10RH3, L9-10RH4, L91-10RH7*

1 FLOOR MAP ENTRANCE TO HISTORY GALLERY

Prior to the Civil War Columbus was the largest city in Georgia. Mainly this was because of the mighty Chattahoochee River. Northern cities used rivers to move cargo from the north to the south. Columbus was also a large producer of textiles, cotton and ironworks that were transported along the river to be distributed throughout the southeast.

It is actually a geographic feature that led to Columbus' success on the river. The fall line which is just north of Columbus prohibited boats and steamships from passing. All cargo would have to be taken off the boat and put back on another boat south of the fall line. All goods and passengers had to stop in Columbus before making their way south to Apalachicola, Florida. Before the start of the Civil War, Columbus was actually a very popular honeymoon destination for newlyweds.

2 URBAN SLAVE CABIN

A common misconception is that all slaves lived on plantations or farms in rural areas. However, in 1850 it is estimated that approximately 400,000 slaves lived in urban areas throughout the South. This cabin looks like a home that slaves would have lived in inside Columbus proper. Often male slaves were skilled artisans like blacksmiths, woodworkers and masons. Many of the slaves that resided within city limits were actually from rural areas but were sent to the city during the off season to work by their white owners. By the end of the Civil War most skilled workers in the South were freedmen who had learned their trades in slavery. Women in urban areas often served as domestic servants, seamstresses and cooks.

While slaves living within city limits may have had better living conditions and jobs they still had to adhere to strict rules and curfews. After the Civil War many of the skilled freed slaves were able to find work because they had already established themselves within the community.

3 CIVIL WAR AREA

Many do not realize that the Columbus/Phenix City area served as the sight for the last battle of the Civil War. You can see a clip from the movie, *The Last Battle* on the TV monitor and test your knowledge on the many changing flags during the time as well. Columbus boasted some of the largest textile mills and prosperous iron foundries in the South. Before being decimated by battle Columbus produced uniforms, weapons and other goods for the rebel soldiers.

Look through this area and learn more about the sinking of the ironclad ship in Chattahoochee River, the bread riots, Nancy Harts and Andersonville.

4 TEXTILE MILLS

Prior to the Civil War Columbus was a booming mill town with some of the largest textile mills operating in the country.

During the Civil War mills produced everything from blankets to confederate uniforms. Even after the decimation of Columbus and Phenix City (then called Girard) during the last part of the Civil War the major mills in Columbus reopened and continued to produce into the 20th century. One of the major developments that came from the mill culture of the late 1800s early 1900s was the creation of child labor laws. Photographer Lewis Wickes Hine was hired to travel down the eastern seaboard and into the South to photograph that conditions that many children worked in. Hines photographed many mill workers in the Valley region and those photographs led to the passing of the Child Labor Laws.

Some of the jobs that children were hired to do were dinner toters (bring lunch to family members and take over for them while they ate), doffers (young boys who had to switch out the bobbin in the looms by sticking their hand inside before the shuttle returned- many boys lost fingers or toes), seamstresses and coal miners.

5 FORT BENNING

Moving from Oklahoma in 1918 Fort Benning has become one of the largest military facilities in the world. Now home to the ranger battalion, army armor school and many more specialty training schools Fort Benning is a vital part of Columbus history. For many in our area the military is part of our heritage and our history. The soldiers at Fort Benning have been involved in every military action in some form.

Fort Benning grew drastically during the Second World War. In order to train troops effectively to serve in battle Fort Benning expanded its training schools and brought in more and more soldiers during that time period. Please take a moment and let your students write a post card to a soldier. We send all the postcards to deployed soldiers serving overseas through a partnership with *A Million Thanks*.