

Teacher's Guide for:

The Mystery of Thunderbolt Fort

A Word From Carole Marsh

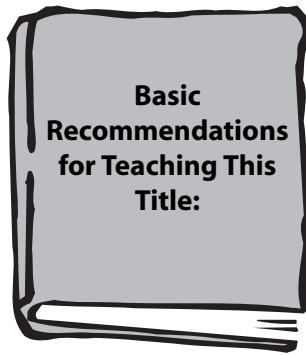


The Mystery of Thunderbolt Fort is the third installment in my new Pretty Darn Scary mystery series. The setting is coastal Georgia, where the charming city of Savannah shares the limelight with a stoic Civil War fort.

I've been to a lot of historic places in my travels, but I think that Fort Pulaski is one of the most amazing historic sites that I have ever visited. It is very well preserved and maintained and has a fascinating history! The site does a great job of interpreting what it might have been like to have been stationed or imprisoned there.

Thunderbolt is an actual nearby fishing village, still quite active in the fishing industry. Slaves were once quarantined at this watery crossroads. Today, it is both a romantic and mysterious coastal enclave as well as a dramatic globally-connected port.

I hope you and your class enjoy this story as it winds its way through the present and the past to bring a separated family together again!



- Because of the short chapters with intriguing endings, this book is a good choice to read aloud in class.
- Consider using some of the topics below to discuss after the chapter where the subject matter is mentioned.
- Ask students to select a subject for a short written essay, oral report, or a project. They can work in teams if you prefer. Subjects might include:

What really goes on at the CDC? Who is not interested in what goes on behind those walls in the massive Centers for Disease Control and Prevention building in Atlanta? Visit the CDC website and see all the things the CDC is doing. Is bird flu really a threat? What's up with these *e coli* outbreaks? Do I really need a flu shot? There are lots of “meaty” subjects there!

What is the role of America's coastal ports? Savannah is a major port, of course, but so are New Orleans, Norfolk, Boston, and New York—to name a few! What comes into these ports? What goes out of these ports? How big are those massive freighters and container ships? No matter how high-tech our society becomes, we still need to physically move lots of stuff from one place to another!

What happened at Fort Pulaski? The builders had great hopes for it, but its Confederate commander surrendered the fort only 30 hours after it began to be bombarded by Union artillery. What happened? How did military strategy change after the fall of Fort Pulaski?

Who is Casimir Pulaski? Why did this brave Polish soldier fight for America? In what battles did he serve? What famous American persuaded him to come to America? Why was this fort named after him? What is his nickname?

What's the story of Savannah? This city has led a rich and exciting life! Who founded Savannah? Why was the site chosen? What is unique about the city's layout? Who settled in this city on a hill? How did the settlers make a living? What were the “rules” for living in Savannah? What is Savannah like today?



Thinking About the Story...

- **Thunderbolt is an actual fishing village!** The town is still quite active today in the shrimp industry. It began as a colonial settlement, turned into a military outpost during the American Revolution and Civil War, and finally settled into a summertime resort before becoming a sleepy fishing village in this century. The name comes from an Indian legend about a thunderbolt opening up a spring of fresh water with a strong smell! The burnt smell described in the legend is now known to be a mixture of sulphur and iron found in springs in the area.
- **It took slaves four to six months to travel from Africa to Savannah!** Slaves living in such close quarters on board ship often led to the spread of disease. Savannah leaders built a nine-story quarantine house on Tybee Island called a lazaretto, which means “pest-house” in Italian. Slaves were brought to the lazaretto to be checked by doctors before they were sold or passed on to their owners.
- **Ebola is a germ you never want to meet!** This virus is named after the Ebola River in Central Africa. This was the location of the first known outbreaks of the disease in 1976. There have been numerous other outbreaks, including one contained in the monkey population of a lab in Reston, Virginia in 1989. There have not been any human cases of Ebola in the United States.
- **Ahoy, mate!** Yes, it’s true that pirates once roamed the barrier islands of coastal Georgia! The most notorious pirate in this group was Blackbeard. Legend says that he ate gunpowder for breakfast, stuck flaming sulphur matches in his beard, and married 14 wives! Experts believe that Blackbeard liked to hide in the tidal rivers, inlets, and barrier islands along Georgia’s coast. He was killed off the coast of North Carolina in 1718 in a fight with Lt. Robert Maynard, a British naval officer. Maynard cut off Blackbeard’s head and displayed it as a warning to other pirates! Yikes!
- **Supporting the troops!** Since it is so close to Georgia’s Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, the Port of Savannah has taken on a highly important role in helping to move the equipment needed by American forces in the Middle East. Helicopters, Bradley tanks, armored personnel carriers, and construction and engineering equipment are just a few types of cargo handled by the port. Big equipment needs big ships to move it! And without blinking an eye, the Port of Savannah made the necessary changes in its security procedures to meet the needs of America’s military.

Bibliography, Other Resources and Ideas!

- *Savannah: People, Places & Events* by Ron Freeman packs its pages with lively lore and fascinating facts about the city of Savannah. You'll find everything you'd ever want to know about Savannah here, from monuments and markers to cemeteries and churches!
- *Savannah: A History of Her People Since 1733* by Preston Russell and Barbara Hines leaves no stone unturned! This fascinating history of Georgia's first city takes you back to Savannah's earliest days, introduces you to the fascinating people who have called Savannah home, and reviews the city's recent history.

State Parks, Wildlife Areas, Recreation Areas

- Fort Pulaski National Monument

Visitors to this monument will also enjoy the coastal marshes on Cockspur Island and the Cockspur Light that has stood watch over the mouth of the Savannah River for more than 150 years.

- Tybee Island

The location of Tybee Island made it an important link in the defense of the United States in its early years. The island is home to Fort Screven (Spanish-American War fortification) and a neighbor to Fort Pulaski. Tybee also has beautiful beaches and recreation areas.

- Fort Jackson

This oldest standing fort in Georgia was built in Thunderbolt to protect the city of Savannah from naval attack.

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THE GHOST OF PICKPOCKET PLANTATION

THE SECRET OF SKULLCRACKER SWAMP

THE SECRET OF EYESOCKET ISLAND