

Key Dates Around the End of the Civil War:

- **April 9, 1865** – General **Robert E. Lee surrendered** to General Ulysses S. Grant at **Appomattox Court House, Virginia**. This is considered the effective end of the Civil War, though fighting continued in some areas afterward.
 - **April 14, 1865** – President **Abraham Lincoln was shot** by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.
 - **April 15, 1865** – Lincoln **died** early in the morning, and Vice President **Andrew Johnson became President**.
 - **April 16, 1865** – The day **after Lincoln's death, Easter Sunday** that year. This was a particularly emotional and significant day across the nation, especially for those in mourning or recently impacted by war.
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In the Letter:

When Mary Joanna Morton writes about **April 16, 1865**, and says:

"Easter Sunday April 16th 1865 was a day I never shall forget; we had a taste & feeling recollection of the horrors of war..."

She's likely referring to the compounded grief of **the war's end, Lincoln's assassination**, and the **chaotic state of the South** — a powerful moment of emotional reckoning.

The Fall of Savannah – December 1864

What happened:

- The **Fall of Savannah** occurred at the end of **General William Tecumseh Sherman's "March to the Sea,"** a devastating Union campaign that cut a 285-mile path from Atlanta to the Atlantic Coast.
- After leaving **Atlanta in November 1864**, Sherman's troops destroyed infrastructure and supplies in their path, aiming to break the Confederacy's will to fight.

Key dates:

- **December 10–21, 1864** – Sherman's forces reached **Savannah, Georgia**, and laid siege to the city.
- **December 21, 1864** – Confederate General **William Hardee** evacuated Savannah during the night to avoid encirclement. Union troops entered unopposed the next morning.

Outcome:

- Sherman **captured Savannah** and presented it to President Lincoln as a Christmas gift:

"I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah..." — Sherman's telegram to Lincoln, Dec. 22, 1864

Significance:

- The fall of Savannah was a major psychological and strategic blow to the Confederacy.
- It marked the near-completion of Sherman's total war campaign in Georgia and helped ensure Lincoln's support for continuing the war through to unconditional Confederate surrender.

Since Mary Joanna wrote that **George "was in Savannah when she fell,"** he would have experienced this campaign firsthand — and she notes he lost 30 pounds and nearly died from the exposure, which matches reports of the harsh conditions troops faced during Sherman's march.