Petersburg: The town beneath Clarks Hill Lake

Once Georgia's third largest town, Petersburg, Georgia was an upriver market town at the fork of the Board and Savannah rivers in Wilkes County, Georgia (now Elbert County). It was founded by Dionysius Oliver in 1786 and named for Petersburg, Virginia, where Oliver was born. The town was built to serve the rapidly growing Broad River Valley region of Georgia.

The remnants of Petersburg are now submerged beneath the waters of Clarks Hill Lake after the Corps of Engineers built the reservoir during the early 1950s. Today, Petersburg is the major historical attraction here at Bobby Brown Park. Visitors may be able to see what remains of the town from the lakeshore when lake levels are down.

Interesting Facts about Petersburg:

- Third largest town in Georgia at one time, with only Savannah and Augusta being larger
- Two U.S. Senators lived in the town at the same time
- Tobacco inspection center for the Broad River Valley Region
- Flat-bottom boat to carry tobacco downstream, called The Petersburg Boat, was designed here
- Town consisted of 86 ½-acre lots
- *Georgia Carolina Gazette* newspaper opened in 1805
- Several schools were located in the town of Petersburg
- Many residents left to move out west, and railroads bypassed the town; by 1854, only three families remained
- Two ferries in operation crossing the Savannah River and Broad River to Lisbon, GA and Vienna, SC. All three towns now lie under Thurmond Lake (locally known as Clark's Hill Lake)

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