

# GEORGIA

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# BATTLEFIELDS

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Published by Georgia Battlefields Association, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of Georgia's Civil War history and sites. Contact newsletter editor by e-mail: [info@georgiabattlefields.org](mailto:info@georgiabattlefields.org)

## Georgia's Fiscal Year 2010 budget

Following the pattern of the last several years, state legislators waited until their final day in session (3 April 2009) to pass a budget for the coming fiscal year (State Fiscal Year 2010, which begins 1 July 2009). As of this writing, Governor Perdue has not signed the budget; so further decreases are likely, especially as each month's data indicate that sales and income tax revenue are declining more than was estimated when the legislators were preparing the budget.

Even given this uncertainty, GBA can confidently state that preservation will remain a low priority, based on these indicators:

- The Georgia Civil War Commission again received no funding, meaning it cannot even hold meetings unless the commissioners bear their travel expenses out of pocket.
- Marketing funds designated for the Sesquicentennial commemoration were eliminated.
- Due to budget cuts, the State Parks & Historic Sites Division eliminated the Historic Sites Region and redistributed its assets to the geographic regions.
- The State Archaeologist's Office was nearly eliminated but instead was cut by \$179,000. While the state senate was considering funding for the archaeologist's office, GBA sent a supporting e-mail to selected legislators. Ironically, Governor Perdue signed a proclamation declaring May as Archaeology Month.

While GBA would prefer to have more funds for preservation and related activities, we agree that fiscal responsibility is the highest priority—i.e., the state must restrain its spending. Still, some opportunities (such as the Sesquicentennial) are transient, and we won't get a chance to make up for the current lack of spending. Ironically, the Federal government declared May as National Historic Preservation Month.

In this situation, GBA will continue to do what it can to compensate for the state's unwillingness or inability to preserve historic sites, though we are unlikely to be able to match the amount of money that state government occasionally provides.

## Sesquicentennial prospects

Since March 2007, several editions of this newsletter have addressed the upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial commemoration and Georgia's participation. As the preceding article on the state budget suggests, funds for Sesquicentennial planning and commemoration are likely to be minimal or non-existent. From contact with our colleagues in other states, we understand this situation will be true throughout the country. Still, the occasion should be used to draw increased attention to the most important event in our nation's history.

While the funding constraint is likely to remain as long as the economy is suffering, we've found both within Georgia and in other states that another issue looms over every planning effort. Politicians at local, state, and national level are reluctant to be associated with a commemoration of the Civil War because they fear they will be perceived as celebrating the Confederacy and consequently labeled as racist. This is somewhat understandable, especially in light of what happened with the Civil War Centennial, which was tarnished by discrimination and assertion of the correctness of the Confederate cause. Robert Cook's 2007 book, [Troubled Commemoration](#), explores this sad history.

On the other hand, refusing to commemorate the seminal event in the nation's existence misses an opportunity to discuss race openly and honestly, acknowledging its central role in causing and shaping the Civil War and how subsequent eras—Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the struggle for Civil Rights for all—continue to influence the nation today. Consequently, Georgia Battlefields Association will continue to advocate for recognition of the Sesquicentennial, if necessary using only existing resources, which are numerous and varied. Further, we will continue to pursue our fundamental objective of preserving Civil War sites, so that—whatever his or her knowledge or perception—each person can better understand what happened by seeing and exploring the places where our country's essential history occurred.

## **Fort for sale on eBay**

Since late February, GBA has responded to several inquiries concerning an earthen fortification for sale on eBay. Upon investigation, we found that this was a fort already known to GBA. It was part of the Confederate defenses of Allatoona Pass built and occupied in May 1864; and it did not figure in the October 1864 battle. Preservation organizations have been negotiating with the owner of the fort for several years, and the eBay bidding period passed without anyone making the minimum offer required by the owner. GBA will continue to monitor the site.

## **Video from 2008 Bearss tour in production**

Those of you who attended GBA's 2008 tour with Ed Bearss may remember that professional videographers were along on Friday (Battle of Atlanta, Oakland Cemetery) and Sunday (downtown Atlanta). A GBA member graciously funded the filming, and a resulting DVD (or two) is now in production. After reviewing the raw footage and suggesting edit points, two GBA trustees met with the producer on 20 April to refine the content. Our hope is that the finished production will be suitable for broadcasting, either on public television, the History Channel, or another network. We'll keep you informed.

## **GBA continues awareness campaign**

One of Georgia Battlefields Association's continuing efforts is to raise awareness of the status of Civil War sites throughout the state. In April, GBA representatives again spoke on preservation efforts in Georgia and provided a tour of the Peachtree Creek battlefield to a group sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Since 2001, GBA has made 84 presentations and led 27 tours. If you know of an opportunity for us to inform a group about the importance of preservation, please e-mail us at [info@georgiabattlefields.org](mailto:info@georgiabattlefields.org).

## **Battle of Resaca reenactment 15-17 May**

The annual reenactment of the Battle of Resaca will occur on 15-17 May at the Chitwood Farm, part of the original battlefield. This is one of the largest and best reenactments. For information on participating or attending, see the web site [www.georgiadivision.org/bor\\_reenactment.html](http://www.georgiadivision.org/bor_reenactment.html) or e-mail [csgrizly@comcast.net](mailto:csgrizly@comcast.net) or write Battle of Resaca, P.O. Box 919, Resaca GA 30735-0919. As usual, some of the proceeds from the reenactment will go to preserve the battlefield. The Friends of Resaca Battlefield ([www.resacabattlefield.org](http://www.resacabattlefield.org)) have been great guardians of the site.

**Georgia Battlefields Association  
7 Camden Rd NE  
Atlanta GA 30309**

**[www.georgiabattlefields.org](http://www.georgiabattlefields.org)**

**May 2009**

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