

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

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

GBA's 2010 activities in review

The economy and its effect on national, state, and local preservation efforts was an underlying theme for the year. The government budget woes make the effort of non-government organizations, such as GBA, all the more important.

The annual GBA trustees meeting was held in January and the current officers were reelected: president Charlie Crawford, vice president Cindy Wentworth, corporate secretary Gene Murphy, and treasurer Frank Chew. Trustee John Cissell resigned because he was moving to North Carolina, and Joe Trahan was added as a trustee. Valerie Lyons continues as a GBA trustee.

Also in January, GBA assisted the U.S. Forest Service in a field survey of sites (Dug Gap, Snake Creek Gap, and Ship's Gap) on Forest Service land in northwest Georgia.

In February, GBA assisted the Grant Park Conservancy in its application for an American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) grant.

A DVD of GBA's walking tour of civil War Atlanta, recorded in March 2008, was finally produced and went on sale. The initial allocation to the Atlanta History Center sold out, and another production run was ordered late in the year. One particularly gratifying comment came from an Atlanta area 8th grade history teacher, who said Atlanta's Civil War history came alive for his students when he showed the DVD. GBA conducted the walking tour of Civil War Atlanta again in March 2010 as part of the Atlanta Preservation Center's Phoenix Flies program.

GBA's annual tour led by Ed Bearss covered the Fall 1864 campaign in which the Confederates tried to sever the railroad supplying the Federals in Atlanta, and Sherman chased Hood around northwest Georgia and into Alabama before breaking off the pursuit and receiving permission to march to the sea. March was also the 15th anniversary of GBA's founding.

The Tanyard Creek bike path, the course of which GBA influenced because it passes through the heart of the Peachtree Creek battlefield, opened formally on 10 April.

The update to the 1993 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission (CWSAC) report was submitted to GBA for comment in May. This revision, known as Civil War Sites II (CWS II), was subsequently published online and will not be printed because of cost constraints. The ABPP staff continued to correspond with GBA throughout the year and has incorporated several of our suggestions into the CWS II report.

GBA assisted Atlanta History Center in the "War in Our Backyards" exhibit that opened in August and will run through October 2011. The exhibit demonstrates how much of Atlanta's history has been overrun by growth of the city in the last 150 years and allows people to see if their own backyards were part of the action.

In conjunction with the National Park Service and the Georgia Civil War Commission, GBA continued to provide comments opposing a proposed cell phone tower near Davis's Crossroads.

In June, GBA commented formally on a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) plan to modify the I-285 interchange at Atlanta Road. The work will affect a trench related to the River Line. GBA's participation in this effort grew into consultation on a larger GDOT project known as the Metro Atlanta Civil War Context Study. GBA attended a 24 August meeting and followed-up with a written response to the study proposal. A discussion with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) representative participating in the meeting led to expanded GBA participation in ARC's Regionally Important Resources initiative which began in 2009. GDOT subsequently solicited GBA's comments on a plan to build a high speed rail line from Chattanooga to the Atlanta airport. GBA expressed concern about the numerous sites in this corridor, listing several of the more significant sites and recounting the detrimental impact already made by construction of I-75 and residential development. GBA advocated for a convergence of national (ABPP), state (GDOT), and regional (ARC) listings of Georgia's Civil War sites so that a common database may prevent the possibility of sites being overlooked in any

plan. Working from the national listing (CWS II, see above) as a core and augmenting it with the results of prior site surveys and studies should lessen the potential danger.

GBA was also asked to help Civil War Preservation Trust identify preservation opportunities in Georgia. We started with the CWS II report and worked from it to lesser known sites and those where the potential for loss or damage was greater.

GBA assisted the Georgia Historical Society in its efforts to install new historical markers, specifically in preparation for the Sesquicentennial. GBA agreed to help pay for the production of three markers and also helped prepare the texts. Two of the markers were installed during the year, and a third will be installed in January 2011. GBA also continues its representation on the state's Sesquicentennial steering committee.

Throughout the year, the GBA newsletter featured "150 years ago this month" articles chronicling the events leading up to secession and the outbreak of conflict.

Throughout 2010, GBA continued its presentations on Civil War topics and site preservation. We also respond to inquiries, most of which come to us through our web site, about sites. These range from "Is this mound on my property a Civil War fort?" to requests (often from out of state) for information about sites where an ancestor fought. We helped other organizations plan tours of Georgia sites, and also provided a tour for an author writing about the Atlanta Campaign.

While we hope all our activities will raise awareness and thereby increase support for site preservation, we are always looking for opportunities to buy historic land. We hope to make an announcement soon about our contribution to a conservation easement on hundreds of acres of a Georgia battlefield. Thanks for your membership and support.

150 years ago this month

On 3 December, President Buchanan delivers his final annual message to Congress. In it, he writes that the states have no legal basis for secession, but neither does the Federal government have a legal basis for preventing it.

On 20 December, the South Carolina secession convention votes to leave the Union. In the following days, special Congressional committees will attempt to introduce legislation or amendments that will defuse the crisis, but none of the proposals garner enough votes to pass. Cabinet members resign to protest President Buchanan's actions or inactions in response to the secession crisis.

Late in December, the focus is on Charleston. On 26 December, Major Robert Anderson, senior army officer in the area, consolidates his forces in Fort Sumter on an island in Charleston harbor. The next day, South Carolina state troops seize the abandoned Federal facilities at Fort Moultrie and Castle Pinckney. On 28 December, a South Carolina delegation meets with President Buchanan and demands removal of all Federal troops from Charleston. Buchanan refuses and says Federal property will be defended.

GBA tour led by Ed Bearss set for 10-13 March in Augusta

Hotel: Homewood Suites, 1049 Stevens Creek Rd, Augusta GA 30907. Call 706 738 3131.

Ask for the Georgia Battlefields Association rate of \$105 per night that includes breakfast.

Tour price: Still \$395 per person, but you must be a GBA member to register. Your reservation is confirmed when your check to GBA arrives at 7 Camden Rd NE, Atlanta GA 30309.

Subject: The end of the Confederacy and the importance of Augusta to the war effort. Stops include Crawfordville, Kettle Creek, Washington, Chennault, and Augusta.

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