

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

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GBA agrees to support more Georgia Historical Society markers

Beginning in October 2010, GBA supported Georgia Historical Society's Civil War 150 Historical Marker Project by providing funds and reviewing proposed content for eight markers. GHS recently asked GBA to support two new March to the Sea markers, one in Atlanta and one in Savannah, and the board of trustees agreed. The Atlanta marker should be in place by November to commemorate the beginning of the march, and the Savannah marker in December to commemorate the end of the march. We'll announce specific dates when they're known.

GBA provides funds to add to Potato Hill park

As reported most recently in the May 2014 newsletter, GBA provided the funds to purchase 7 acres in Crow Valley, north of Dalton; and the site is now a Whitfield County park. GBA recently provided \$15,000 to add four adjoining acres to the site. This should complete preservation of the remaining earthworks atop Potato Hill.

Housing recovery may again threaten preservation

Through the mid 2000s, GBA often appeared at county rezoning meetings to speak in favor of preserving earthworks, but this has been infrequent since 2008. As the housing market recovers, new developments are again threatening historic sites. GBA was contacted in mid-August about a proposed development that might threaten earthworks related to the June 1864 Battle of Gilgal Church. The county historic preservation planner has ordered an archaeological survey of the site to see if earthworks remain, and GBA will monitor the status.

GBA advises on potential Cobb County earthworks

GBA was contacted by the new owner of a Cobb County property. He was advised by the former owner that the land contained Civil War earthworks, so representatives from GBA and the River Line Historic Area visited the site. Though the property is in the area of Federal earthworks from early July 1864, the orientation and position of the feature indicate it is not an earthwork remnant. Still, the property owner uncovered an 1860s coin, which suggests troops were on the site. Similar sites remain in private hands throughout the county.

150 years ago this month

After Hardee's force fails to drive the Federals away from Jonesborough on 31 August, a Federal attack on the afternoon of 1 September breaks the Confederate line, capturing a brigadier general and most of his brigade. Hardee sends a message to Hood that the railroad has been cut, and the evacuation of Atlanta begins that night, with much damage resulting from the detonation of a stranded ammunition train and looting of warehouses by people using torches for illumination. Hood reassembles his army at Lovejoy's Station, where Sherman confronts him for three days before declaring the campaign to be over and pulling his armies back towards Atlanta. "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won" reads Sherman's message to Halleck, Grant, and Lincoln. Sherman soon orders civilians to leave Atlanta, saying he won't use his supply line to haul food for them. This triggers a heated correspondence between Hood and Sherman, but by 20 September, almost 1600 people and their baggage have been shipped southward. Incredibly, almost 80 slaves choose to accompany their masters.

A committee from the Democratic National Convention reaches New Jersey on 5 September to inform George McClellan that he is the party's nominee for president. That same day, northern newspapers carry large headlines indicating Atlanta's fall. McClellan rejects the party's peace plank, but it is clear that Lincoln's re-election prospects are greatly enhanced. Fremont also recognizes the facts, and on 17 September ends his pursuit of the presidency. Lincoln declares 5 September a day of celebration for the victories at Atlanta and Mobile Bay. Around Mobile Bay on 8 September, Federal troops destroy 55 furnaces. On 19 September, Lincoln asks Sherman to furlough Indiana soldiers so they can go home to vote, as absentee ballots are not allowed by some states.

On 19 September, Hood moves his army to Palmetto to be on the railroad connecting him to his source of food in Alabama. President Davis visits the army on 25 September but is not well-received by the troops. Arriving at West Point, Georgia, on 28 September, Davis telegraphs an order reassigning Hardee to the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. By 29 September, Hood feels confident enough in his supply situation to begin a movement against Sherman's supply line through northwest Georgia. Since 6 September, Richard Taylor has commanded the Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and Eastern Louisiana.

In the Shenandoah Valley, Sheridan advances at a pace too slow to satisfy Lincoln and Grant, who visits Sheridan; and on 19 September, Sheridan leads 40,000 troops to a crushing victory over Early at Winchester. Each side loses a well-regarded division commander: Rodes for the Confederates and Russell for the Federals. Sheridan follows up on 22 September by thrashing the Confederates at Fisher's Hill, capturing 12 guns and many wagons. As Early retreats up the Valley, Sheridan destroys crops and barns for a few days before pulling back to Winchester.

On the Petersburg front, in mid-month, Wade Hampton leads the "Beefsteak Raid" that captures 2400 U.S. cattle. Grant continues to probe the Confederate defenses, in part to deter Lee from sending reinforcements to the Shenandoah Valley. The largest efforts are on 29 September against Fort Harrison north of the James and at Peeble's Farm southwest of Petersburg.

5 September is a day of respite for Charleston. 14,666 rounds have been directed at the city over the previous 60 days, and shelling resumes on 6 September. Though prisoner exchanges have been halted in general, surgeons and chaplains are exchanged near Charleston on 3 September.

On 16 September, Forrest and 4,500 troopers leave Verona, Mississippi, on a raid into central Tennessee that will last into mid October.

John Hunt Morgan's effectiveness as a raider had decreased greatly since his mid 1863 raid into Ohio, and he is killed by Federal cavalry on 4 September in Greeneville, Tennessee. Later in the month, Federal cavalry operates from Kentucky and Tennessee into southwestern Virginia and West Virginia, showing the Confederates' decreasing ability to defend the area.

On 19 September, Sterling Price leads 12,000 Confederates from Arkansas into Missouri. Price encourages guerrilla warfare, and Bloody Bill Anderson's force (including the James brothers) complies, his most notorious effort being the 27 September burning of Centralia, Missouri, the killing of 24 unarmed Federals heading home on leave after the Atlanta Campaign, and the ambush of another Federal force, killing 116, some after they had surrendered and been tortured.

Also in the west on 19 September, Confederates, including Indians, capture a Federal wagon train at Cabin Creek in northeastern Indian Territory. The U.S. Army operates against the Indians in Dakota Territory, New Mexico Territory, and northern California.

On 23 September, Lincoln asks Postmaster General Montgomery Blair to resign and the next day nominates former Ohio governor William Dennison to the office.

Civil War events calendar

September

19-21 Battle of Atlanta reenactment at Nash Farm. www.atlantacampaign.com/schedule.html

19-21 Civil War Trust Grand Review featuring tours of Atlanta area battlefields.
www.civilwar.org/aboutus/events/grand-review/

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