

# 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)

## 2016 tour with Ed Bearss

Dates: 10-13 March 2016.

Subject: Atlanta Campaign from Gilgal Church to the Smyrna Line, 15 June – 4 July 1864.

October newsletter has more info on itinerary. [www.georgiabattlefields.org/newsletters.htm](http://www.georgiabattlefields.org/newsletters.htm)

Hotel: Hampton Inn, 871 Cobb Place Blvd, Kennesaw. (Just west of I-75 exit 269)

\$110 per night (\$130 including tax). Phone 770 426 0017

Web site: <http://hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/georgia/hampton-inn-atlanta-town-center-kennesaw-ATLTCHX/index.html>. If making room reservations online, use code GBA.

Register: Send \$395 check to GBA at P.O. Box 589, Tate GA 30177-0589.

## Time to apply for annual battlefield preservation grants

The American Battlefield Protection Program annual preservation grant process is underway. See [www.nps.gov/abpp/grants/planninggrants.htm](http://www.nps.gov/abpp/grants/planninggrants.htm) for guidelines and an application form. If you don't have access to the internet, call grants manager Kristen McMasters at 202 354 2037. Mailed applications must be postmarked by 2 January 2016.

These ABPP grants cannot be used to acquire land, unlike those through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Georgia projects received grants in 2009, 2010, and 2012.

## The nature of battlefield preservation efforts in Georgia

In 1998, a survey of Civil War sites in Georgia contained over 350 entries. These ranged from major battles, such as Chickamauga, to small pieces of land where a cavalry picket was posted near an important road. The great majority of the sites related to these campaigns or events:

- Federal actions on the coast in early 1862 (e.g., Fort Pulaski)
- Andrews Raid – April 1862
- Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns – September-November 1863
- Atlanta Campaign – May-September 1864
- Sherman's Pursuit of Hood – October 1864
- March to the Sea – November-December 1864
- Wilson's Raid – April-May 1865
- Jefferson Davis's flight and capture – May 1865

Other sites that do not relate to a campaign are still significant. Examples are training camps (Camp McDonald), prison camps (Andersonville), or war industries (Augusta Powder Works). Georgia Battlefields Association (GBA) was established in 1995 to help preserve these sites.

As you might expect, many of the opportunities that GBA pursues for purchase or easement are where the larger campaigns occurred. Almost all the sites we own or have helped to preserve relate to the Chickamauga Campaign, Atlanta Campaign, or the March to the Sea.

Georgia Battlefields Association works to preserve historic land. While we endorse efforts to preserve historic buildings, we don't provide funds to do so. We leave this to other organizations, such as the well-regarded Trust for Historic Preservation.

As is true for many land preservation groups, GBA has criteria for evaluating any land purchase. We arrange the criteria to form the acronym SCAT because it's easy to remember.

**Significance** – How important were the events that occurred on the property? As you might imagine, we consider land near Chickamauga that was the scene of fierce fighting to be more significant than land where a volunteer company was trained for a month.

**Condition** – Does the site at all resemble what it looked like during the war? Most of the land relating to the significant battles around Atlanta was lost to housing or commercial development decades ago, in some cases as much as 100 years ago.

**Availability** – Is the owner willing to sell, and if so, at what price?

**Threat** – Are the bulldozers about to roll on the site?

These are sometimes contradictory influences. If land grading equipment is about to level an earthwork, we have to act fast, regardless of the property's significance.

If GBA had a bottomless checkbook, the recent (2009-2013) housing recession would have been an ideal time to buy land; but even then, earthworks in the Atlanta area are often on land that the owner will not sell for less than \$100,000 per acre. Such owners are now being rewarded for their persistence, as land values in the Atlanta suburbs have rebounded. In one case, the price was \$900,000 per acre. In contrast, land that GBA helped save in 2010 at Resaca sold for about \$3,000 per acre. This certainly influences our decisions, as "bang for the buck" is important.

As might be expected, when landowners know that an organization wants to purchase a property, the price goes up, so our interest in buying a site must appear to be less than what it often is. This also affects our ability to inform our members about projects on which we're working. GBA might get increased support if we appeared to be working on preserving more land, but we might be reducing the amount of land we can save if property owners know of specific sites we are pursuing. Still, we can report that we are working with other preservation organizations on a site relating to the Atlanta Campaign and another that relates to the March to the Sea.

In addition to outright purchase or establishment of conservation easements, we have worked to mitigate the impact of development on sites by asking that county governments require the developers to set aside part of their properties. Typically, this involves preserving a trench or artillery position in the midst of many houses and often occurs on properties around Atlanta. The viewshed (i.e., the appearance of the adjacent land) may be adversely affected, with the intrusion of modern buildings limiting a visitor's ability to envision what the site looked like 150 years ago; but we often persuade the developers to put fencing around the earthworks and pay for interpretive markers.

Almost always, GBA does not act alone when trying to preserve a specific site. Indeed, since the GBA trustees cannot physically cover the whole state, we rely on people who live near historic sites to inform us of changes, such as when a development sign appears or when a rezoning application is filed. Often, local groups are organized to protect specific sites, such as Friends of Resaca Battlefield, River Line Historic Area, or Brown's Mill Battlefield Association. Also, we work with national preservation organizations, such as Civil War Trust or Trust for Public Land.

We feel an important component of preservation is raising awareness of historic sites. Thus, we give lectures and tours, participate in conferences and seminars, and provide content and funds for historical markers and monuments that relate to historic sites. We also provide this newsletter not only to members but to state legislators, like-minded organizations (local, state, and national), and the media.

## **150 years ago this month – November 1865**

On 6 November, *CSS Shenandoah* surrenders to a British warship near Liverpool, the last lowering of the Confederate flag.

On 10 November, Major Henry Wirz is hanged at Old Capitol Prison (now site of the U.S. Supreme Court) for his actions as commander of the POW camp at Andersonville.

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

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