

# 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](mailto:info@georgiabattlefields.org)

## Gilgal Church battlefield preservation and interpretation prospects

[American Battlefield Trust](#) is working with [Atlanta History Center](#) to ensure continued preservation of part of the Gilgal Church battlefield and enhance prospects for its interpretation. In 1975, four properties on the battlefield were added to the National Register of Historic Places through the efforts of then-owner Syd Kerksis (1916-1980), a retired Army officer, historian, relic collector, and preservationist, who gifted his papers to Atlanta History Center (AHC). In 1981, Beverly M. Dubose, Jr., Kerksis estate executor, added another property to the estate.

The five properties totaling 17.38 acres are in two sections separated by a narrow property that contains a modern residence. The four parcels acquired by Mr. Kerksis comprise the western section totaling 7.48 acres and containing readily discernible trenches occupied by U.S. Army forces 15-17 June 1864. These trenches were later marked with wooden signs identifying the units that occupied each trench. The properties also contain wooden crosses at eight former U.S. soldier gravesites, from which remains were reinterred at Marietta National Cemetery.

The 9.9 acre eastern section acquired by Mr. Dubose contains a [Georgia Historical Marker](#), a Confederate trench, a monument indicating Cleburne's Division held this line, a replica infantry fortification (built 1989), and the former Due West School building (circa 1880) that was relocated to the site in 1988 to prevent its destruction by a road widening project.

On 15 June 1989, the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle, the Kerksis Trust administrators dedicated the school house as a visitors center and museum, but vandalism and continuing security concerns led to the museum's closure in 1991, though the building was available for events.

Under estate provisions, Atlanta History Center (AHC) received the properties in 2007. AHC has rebuffed attempts to purchase and develop the site, but its location 20 miles from the Atlanta city limits has led AHC to seek another preservation organization to preserve the site. Attempts to get the Georgia State Parks Division or National Park Service to accept the properties have failed. Even so, AHC has kept the school building under repair (e.g., a new roof) and hired a landscaping company to cut the grass, cut back brush, and remove debris.

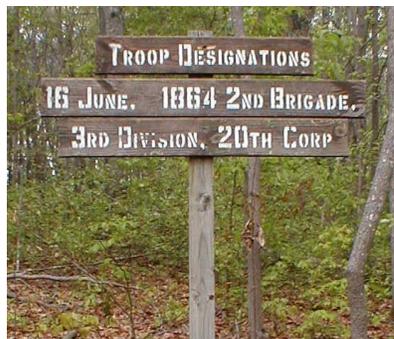
[American Battlefield Trust](#) now has a [campaign to raise funds](#) to put a conservation easement on the properties and allow Atlanta History Center to transfer them to another preservation organization that intends to maintain and interpret the site, allowing for its use as a teaching tool and hopefully raising awareness of the value of preserving such sites.



Eastern section: Historical marker, replica infantry works in middle distance, and school building beyond.



Former grave site.



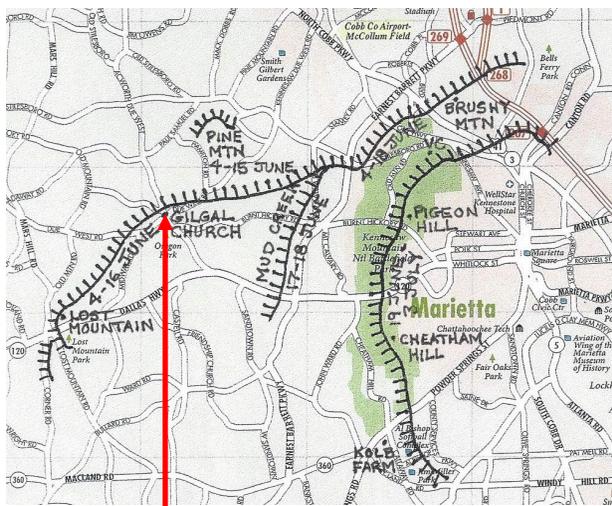
Western section trench marker after 2007 repair by Georgia Battlefields Association.



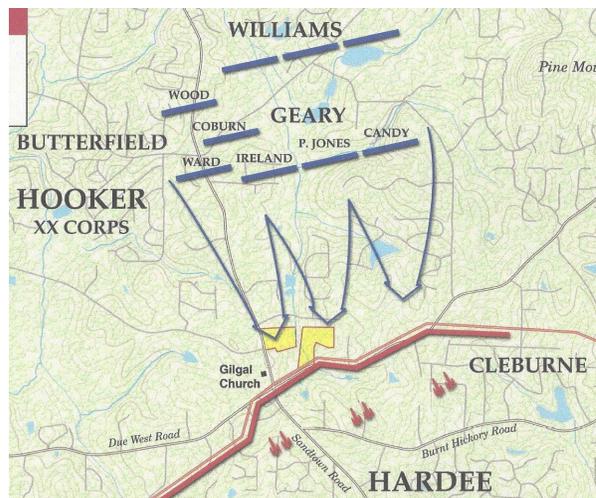
Eastern section: Monument at right and Confederate trench on left.



February 2022 photo of replica infantry works on eastern section.



Gilgal Church site and Confederate lines on a modern Cobb County map.



American Battlefield Trust map showing 15 June assault with subject properties in yellow.

## Annual tour: Something different in Savannah, 13-16 April 2023

The GBA trustees have been working on our next tour. We've selected a hotel, the [Hampton Inn & Suites Historic District](#) at 603 W. Oglethorpe Ave. The price (before taxes) is \$179 per night for Wednesday and Thursday nights and \$259 per night for Friday and Saturday nights. If you reserve for all four nights, it's \$219 per night. The almost 16% tax adds \$34.47 per night, for a total of \$253.47. Parking is \$30 per night, but that appears to be the case with any hotel that is near the historic district. We know this more expensive than usual for our tours, but hotel prices have increased dramatically in Savannah. Also, we chose a hotel with easy access to downtown rather than one several miles away (near the airport, for example). The hotel has established a GBA reservation web site, accessible at [this link](#).

The cost for the tour has increased to \$460 from our longstanding price of \$430. Savannah is more expensive than Macon and almost any other location. The meal and bus costs are notable examples, and bus contracts include a fuel surcharge that reflects the higher price of diesel fuel.

When reading the first paragraph, you may have wondered why we would cite the price for Wednesday night. It's because we've added an optional extra day on the front end of the tour. If you participate on Thursday, 13 April, you'll pay an additional \$120. In the morning, we'll provide a Revolutionary War sites of Savannah walking tour. This will include the reconstructed British redoubt and the Pulaski Monument, among other sites. After lunch, we'll bus to Bonaventure Cemetery (cited as one of the most beautiful as well as historic cemeteries in the country) for another walking tour, then return to the hotel before the usual Thursday evening reception. If you're interested in attending on Thursday, please sign up early.

As with the 2022 tour, the Thursday evening reception will feature a serve-yourself array that should suffice for dinner. After a brief program, walk the historic district to help the meal settle.

For those of you able to attend only part of the tour, we will again have a la carte pricing so you can skip a day or a dinner and be charged less. When registration opens, provide your schedule to our treasurer, Bill Gurry. You can always reach him through [info@georgiabattlefields.org](mailto:info@georgiabattlefields.org).

This will be our third tour based in Savannah (2002, 2012), so we're feeling more comfortable with our itinerary. Even so, Savannah has so many sites that we have to be selective. We'll surely include Forts Pulaski, Jackson, and McAllister, and earthworks east and west of the city.

Coming newsletters and our web site will have more details, but please plan on joining us.

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