

# 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)

## Annual meeting of GBA board of trustees

The board of trustees held its annual meeting on 13 January. John B. White, Jr., elected in December, attended his first meeting. Charlie Geiger, Art Carey, and Bob Rivers were re-elected for three-year terms that end at the annual meeting in 2005. Officers for the coming year are:

President – Charlie Crawford

Vice President, Membership – Bob Rivers

Vice President, Communications – Olly Keller

Secretary – Elaine Rivers

Treasurer – Art Carey

Past President – Charlie Geiger

The trustees voted to donate \$5,000 to Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails, Inc., to further its work on designing and buying signs for its developing trail system. See the article below. GBA has contributed to other preservation groups (such as the Georgia Civil War Commission and the Kolb Farm Coalition) when specific projects were judged worthy. GBA members can get a complete financial report by contacting the treasurer at 2331 Fireside Ct, Jonesboro GA 30236.

GBA is an organization of volunteers. Being a trustee requires a commitment of some time towards preservation work. If any member is interested in becoming a trustee, please contact the secretary by mail or e-mail to express your interest. Email: [rivers.2@juno.com](mailto:rivers.2@juno.com)  
Mail: Elaine Rivers, GBA Secretary, 1028 Boston Ridge, Woodstock GA 30189-3560.

## Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails group making progress

Georgia's Civil War Heritage Trails, Inc. (GCWHT), a non-profit group that won substantial federal funding through the state's Transportation Enhancement Program just over a year ago (see February 2001 newsletter), is making progress in its effort to designate trail routes and emplace interpretive markers for the Atlanta Campaign and the March to the Sea. GCWHT's effort now involves local preservation groups in 31 counties throughout the state.

According to correspondence from GCWHT president Kathryn Sellers, an overall coordinator contacts county historical or preservation organizations, which then choose a local committee to suggest routes, sites to be included, and marker locations for each trail. Once the locations are agreed upon, the committee drafts texts, provides references, and selects graphics for each of the 82 sites currently selected. These inputs are reviewed by a statewide committee of historians.

For the marker design, GCWHT chose the same one used by the National Park Service because the design is durable, intrudes minimally on the view of the site, and accommodates text, graphics, and maps. While the local site committees are selecting marker locations and texts, marketing committees are planning visitor brochures and a user-friendly web site. To date, all the work has been done by people volunteering their time, so that almost all the Transportation Enhancement Program funds can be used to buy markers, directional signs, and pull-off areas.

GCWHT receives Transportation Enhancement Program funds by reimbursement rather than grant, so GCWHT must spend money before applying for reimbursement. This process sometimes creates cash flow problems, which prompted GBA's donation (see article above). You can contact or contribute to GCWHT at P.O. Box 1982, Evans GA 30809-1982.

## National Park Service web sites shut down

The Department of the Interior shut down all its web sites in early December because of security concerns. This affects anyone trying to access National Park Service web sites, such as those for Chickamauga, Kennesaw Mountain, Fort Pulaski, etc. Links to these sites from GBA's web site ([www.georgiabattlefields.org](http://www.georgiabattlefields.org)) are also affected. Further, e-mail to park service employees ([anyone@nps.gov](mailto:anyone@nps.gov)) will not go through.

A spokesman for the Department of the Interior conceded that officials have no idea how long the outage will last. For a complete explanation of the reasons for the shutdown, see [www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002/01/04/interior-usat.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002/01/04/interior-usat.htm).

## **Atlanta home with Civil War connections saved**

Thanks to the Atlanta Preservation Center, one of the city's few antebellum structures will be saved and restored. The remains of the Lemuel Grant home were recently purchased with the objective of rebuilding the house as a headquarters for the preservation organization. Grant was a key Atlanta figure during the Civil War, and the house itself has an interesting history (featured most recently in a 26 December 2001 article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*).

Lemuel Grant was a native of Maine and worked on railroads in Pennsylvania before being hired by the Georgia Railroad in 1840. In an article in the summer 1980 *Atlanta Historical Journal*, John Robert Smith wrote, "more perhaps than any other person, Lemuel Grant sparked the development of the very rail system by which the City of Atlanta was launched into greatness."

During the Civil War, Grant was chief engineer for the Georgia Militia, achieving the rank of colonel. He planned and oversaw construction of Atlanta's fortifications by slave labor in 1863 and 1864. Impressed by the strength of the defenses, Sherman chose not to assault them but to subdue Atlanta's defenders by cutting the city's rail lines.

Grant amassed considerable land holdings on the south side of the city and built his Italianate mansion at 327 Saint Paul Avenue in 1858. After the Civil War, he sold some of his land below market value so Atlanta could have a public hospital (the site of the current Grady Hospital). He later donated the acreage southeast of his house for the public park that bears his name.

After Grant's wife died in 1879, he remarried and built a new house; and the mansion passed through several owners. In 1902, golfing great Bobby Jones was born there. In 1941, Margaret Mitchell joined with newspaperman Boyd Taylor to purchase what historian Franklin Garrett called "Atlanta's most significant and endangered house." Mitchell hoped to make the house a museum, but Taylor's management of the property caused her to unsuccessfully sue him. Until his death in 1981, Taylor lived like a hermit in the basement of the house, which gradually fell to pieces: The roof was destroyed by fire, upper floors collapsed, porches were torn down, and water and power were cut off for non-payment. Taylor surrounded the house with a high fence and guard dogs. Subsequent owners didn't do much to restore the property.

The Atlanta Preservation Center paid \$130,000 for the house and plans a capital campaign next year to cover a \$500,000 restoration and a \$125,000 endowment. Contact the Preservation Center at 404 876 2041, or see their web site at [www.preserveatlanta.com](http://www.preserveatlanta.com). For more on the house and Lemuel Grant, see the Grant Park web site at <http://grantpark.dreamtv.net/gpna/>.

Georgia Battlefields Association is happy to acknowledge any preservation efforts, especially those that save the few remaining Atlanta sites associated with the Civil War.

## **GBA tour of Coastal Georgia Civil War sites: 14-17 February**

Very few seats remain for the tour of Coastal Georgia sites with Ed Bearss. GBA will maintain a standby list in case anyone drops out. To sign up or get information, contact Elaine or Bob Rivers at 770 592 5611 or [rivers.2@juno.com](mailto:rivers.2@juno.com), or see GBA's web site [www.georgiabattlefields.org](http://www.georgiabattlefields.org).

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