

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

Battlefield Preservation Act authorizes funds for five years

On 17 December, President Bush signed the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Act of 2002. As stated in the Act itself, its purposes are: "...to preserve and protect nationally significant Civil War battlefields through conservation easements and fee-simple purchases of those battlefields from willing sellers; and to create partnerships among state and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, and enhance nationally significant Civil War battlefields." The complete text of the 3-page bill is available at the Library of Congress web site <http://thomas.loc.gov>. Type "battlefield preservation act" in the search box.

The Act authorizes \$10 million a year for FY2004 through FY2008 to fund a matching grant program to preserve endangered battlefields. Eligible sites must not be within the exterior boundaries of a National Park and must be identified in the 1993 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Battlefield Report. (Of the 384 sites listed in the Report, 27 are in Georgia. See the web site www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/battles/bystate.htm#ga.) The Act also provides that the 1993 Battlefield Report shall be updated not later than two years after enactment of the legislation.

Grants will be competitively awarded by the American Battlefield Protection Program, though the "non-federal" share must not be less than 50%. By requiring matching funds, the program insures that local government and non-governmental organizations are involved. Georgia Battlefields Association intends to be an involved organization.

The legislation was introduced by Representatives Miller (R-CA) and Radanovich (R-CA), and it passed the House of Representatives on 1 October. An identically worded bill was introduced by Senators Sarbanes (D-MD), Sessions (R-AL), and Jeffords (I-VT), and it passed the Senate by unanimous consent on 20 November. Since the House and Senate bills were identical, the final legislation bypassed conference and went to the President for signature.

The Act enhances an earlier program (established by the American Battlefield Protection Act of 1996) that has already been used to protect nearly 8,000 acres in 12 states. In the past year alone, that program has helped save property at Prairie Grove (Arkansas), Antietam, Chancellorsville, and Harper's Ferry.

Ed Bearss will lead third annual GBA tour in February 2003

The bus is filling up for our annual GBA tour with Ed Bearss, Chief Historian Emeritus, National Park Service. Here's the relevant information.

Headquarters: LaQuinta Inn, 3944 River Place Dr, Macon GA 31210. Rate is \$70 per night.

Call 800 531 5900 or 478 475 0206. Mention GBA confirmation number 94146049.

Cost: \$295 to GBA members.

Feb 20 – Evening reception for Ed Bearss at LaQuinta Inn.

Feb 21 – Bus to Andersonville and Columbus. Sit down dinner at Sidney Lanier House.

Feb 22 – Bus trip along Davis's escape route, including Irwinville.

Reception at Cannonball House. Buffet dinner at Hay House.

Feb 23 – Bus to Milledgeville, Griswoldville, Old Clinton. Finish by noon.

Sign up or more information: Contact Elaine Rivers at 770 592 5611 or rivers.2@juno.com.

GBA presentation at Historic Sandy Springs on 9 January

As part of Heritage Sandy Springs' Civil War Lecture series, GBA president Charlie Crawford will speak at 6 p.m. on 9 January about events that occurred in the Atlanta area after the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain and before the Battle of Peachtree Creek (28 June to 20 July 1864). Slides of the related sites will show the preservation status. Contact Heritage Sandy Springs at 404 851 9111 or e-mail programdirector@mindspring.com for more information on this presentation and other lectures in the series. All lectures occur in the lower level of the Williams-Payne House, 6075 Sandy Springs Circle, just west of Roswell Road and north of I-285 in Sandy Springs.

Peachtree Creek battlefield parcel saved from development

A coalition of groups and a historic parcel's status as a wetland have combined to save a sliver of the Peachtree Creek battlefield. In May 2001, people in Atlanta's Ardmore Park neighborhood approached representatives of the Georgia Civil War Commission and the Georgia Battlefields Association about the historic value of land along Tanyard Branch. The 7-acre parcel south of Ardmore Park had recently been bought by a developer who intended to build houses. When approached by residents of the area, the developer indicated a willingness to negotiate; but he also cautioned that any premature publicity would be cause for breaking off discussions. Consulting historic maps, GCWC and GBA representatives advised that the land was unlikely to have been the scene of much fighting but was certainly traversed by Confederate forces (at least Carter's brigade of Maney's—formerly Cheatham's—division of Tennesseans) as they swept northward to attack Federal forces on 20 July 1864. Further, GCWC and GBA representatives advised that the parcel's status as a wetland might be more helpful in preventing its development.

Subsequently, Ardmore Park neighbors convinced the State Parks and Historic Sites Division to relocate historic markers from Collier Road to Ardmore Park. The neighbors reasoned that this would emphasize the historic nature of the area around the park, thus making development less likely. The Historic Sites Division reasoned that no driver or pedestrian could safely stop to read the markers on heavily traveled Collier Road. While the arguments have merit, one unfortunate result was to render inaccurate several marker text references, especially those to direction and distance. Despite protests from GCWC, the markers remain in Ardmore Park.

Regardless of the markers' fate, the parcel of land has been saved by a coalition of organizations. As with the property along Utoy Creek in Southwest Atlanta, the City contributed Greenway Acquisition Project funds that must be spent on watershed protection, and the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation supplied substantial funds. The Ardmore Park Neighborhood Association raised \$100,000, and the Trust for Public Land and Park Pride arranged the \$1 million purchase. While the Peachtree Creek battlefield was largely lost to development over 80 years ago, the preservation of small parts of this urban area still represents a victory.

Savannah Heritage Center to include battlefield

Last month's newsletter reported on the current survey of *CSS Georgia* and on Coastal Heritage Society's (www.chsgeorgia.org) role in advocating preservation of the sunken ironclad.

Since 1979, another project of Coastal Heritage Society has been development of a Battlefield Park Heritage Center that encompasses the Savannah History Museum and Visitor's Center, the Roundhouse Museum, the currently unused Car Barns, and the site of Spring Hill Redoubt, the focus of the Revolutionary War Battle of Savannah (9 October 1779). Under CHS's plan, the Car Barns would house the History Museum and any artifacts recovered from *CSS Georgia* or, ideally, the ship itself. The Heritage Center will be the gateway to the historic heart of the city.

Most recently, Norfolk Southern Corporation signed a contract to sell the 9.5-acre Spring Hill Redoubt site to the City of Savannah, pending an environmental review. The \$4.3 million price also includes two other pieces of land.

Backed by Coastal Heritage Society, the Chamber of Commerce, the Convention & Visitors Bureau, and other groups, the City has applied for federal funds to develop the Heritage Center. Coastal Heritage Society asks that you write to your Congressman and Senators supporting this effort. Because of restrictions on mail to the U.S. Capitol in the wake of last year's anthrax letters, send your messages to the Society, and it will hand deliver the letters to the addressed senator or representative. Coastal Heritage Society, 303 MLK Jr. Blvd, Savannah GA 31401.

**Georgia Battlefields Association
2331 Fireside Court
Jonesboro GA 30236-2671**

www.georgiabattlefields.org

January 2003

**Address correction requested
Return postage guaranteed**