

G E O R G I A

BATTLEFIELDS

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State's mid-year budget provides for Savannah battlefield park

In mid March, Governor Perdue signed a FY2004 mid-year budget adjustment that provides \$6 million for development of a battlefield park containing the site of the redoubt that was central to the Revolutionary War Battle of Savannah (9 Oct 1779). (See February 2004 and January 2003 GBA newsletters for background on the Battlefield Park Heritage Center.) Congratulations to our sister preservation organization, the Coastal Heritage Society (www.chsgeorgia.org), for planning the center and coordinating the efforts to obtain funding.

General Assembly budget proves unacceptable to Governor

The regularly scheduled session of the 2004 Georgia General Assembly ended on 7 April. We hoped to report on the preservation-related impact of several pieces of legislation, but Governor Perdue will call the legislature back into session in May to resolve budget issues. What we can report is that preservation funding continues to suffer. Historic marker maintenance is likely to remain unfunded, and greenspace money—often used to save historic sites—is certain to be limited. We'll publish a more complete report once the budget is finalized.

Federal Transportation Bill may get Presidential veto

In early April, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a six-year, \$275 billion transportation reauthorization bill. Earlier, the Senate approved a \$318 billion version. Whatever the outcome of negotiations between the two houses, the final version is likely to exceed the \$256 billion that was proposed by President Bush; and he has threatened to veto any bill that authorizes more.

Most preservationists are familiar with previous transportation bills—ISTEA and TEA-21—that were also used to preserve historic sites proximate to federally funded highways. The latest bill is called the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA).

Transportation bills at both the federal and state level are primary vehicles for legislators to specify funding for projects in their districts—i.e., pork. While debate over the virtue of this tactic is a subject for some other organization's newsletters, it is certainly true that preservation has benefited from the largesse of previous transportation bills. The national level non-profit Civil War Preservation Trust, with which GBA works closely, is particularly adept at applying for transportation funds that are subsequently used to preserve historic sites. While we all hope for efficiency in government, we also hope preservation is not slighted in the final bill.

Help National Park Service add to Kennesaw Mountain unit

The proposed FY2005 Interior Appropriations bill contains \$2.2 million from the Land & Water Conservation Fund to buy 34 acres adjacent to Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. The Hensley Property contains remnants of Federal earthworks and already shares a 700-foot boundary with the park west of Old Mountain Road. Its historic value is similar to that of other properties adjacent to the park (March 2004 newsletter).

Additions to existing park units are rare, so please ask your senators or representative to support this funding. Because regular mail is often delayed for screening, it's better to contact your legislators by phone, fax, or e-mail. Contact information is available through www.senate.gov and www.house.gov. Contact info for the Georgia senators and relevant representative is:

Senator Zell Miller: 202 224 3643; fax 202 228 2090; e-mail via web site www.miller.senate.gov
 Senator Saxby Chambliss: 202 224 3521; fax 202 224 0103; e-mail via www.chambliss.senate.gov
 Representative Johnny Isakson: 202 225 4501; fax 202 225 4656; ga06@mail.house.gov

GBA board adds new trustee

On 8 April, GBA trustees elected Gene Murphy to the board. Gene is an attorney and is familiar to those who have been on the Ed Bearss tours or who attend the Atlanta Civil War Round Table.

Atlanta Campaign: 140 years ago – May 1864

May would witness the opening of the spring campaign and several battles. Federal commander William T. Sherman gathers his three subordinate armies in north Georgia. Facing this force of over 100,000, Confederate commander Joseph E. Johnston asks his government and General Leonidas Polk, commanding in Mississippi, to reinforce his army of 55,000. On 7 May, the Federals advance. Schofield's Army of the Ohio approaches via Crow Valley, while Thomas's Army of the Cumberland seizes Tunnel Hill. Originally, Sherman planned to send McPherson's Army of the Tennessee towards Rome, but missing the divisions provided to the Red River Campaign, Sherman instead sends McPherson towards Snake Creek Gap with the objective of cutting the railroad at Resaca. On 8 and 9 May, Army of the Cumberland units attack Rocky Face Ridge, and cavalry fights are numerous north of Dalton.

By midday on 9 May, McPherson is within 2 miles of Resaca, but his advance finds Confederate infantry guarding the town. Unaware that he is faced by less than a division of Polk's troops arriving from Mississippi, McPherson pulls back. Disappointed, Sherman nonetheless orders most of his forces to follow McPherson through Snake Creek Gap. Discovering this, Johnston pulls out of Dalton. Now facing each other west and north of Resaca, the Confederates and Federals engage for over two days, the only battle in the whole campaign where almost every unit of both armies is involved in the fighting. During the 13-15 May fighting, opportunities are missed by both sides, a scenario that will recur over the next four months. The arrival of Polk's troops brings the Confederate army to almost 70,000, its peak strength during the campaign.

Late on 15 May, the Federals succeed in crossing the Oostenaula River at Lay's Ferry, thus threatening the Confederate left and main line of retreat. Johnston pulls out of Resaca by dawn of 16 May. Sherman's superior numbers allow him to flank Johnston's positions while still presenting a strong front. This maneuvering results in small battles west of Calhoun on 16 May, at Rome on 17 May, and at Adairsville on 18 May. At Cassville on 19 May, Johnston splits his army to set a trap for that portion of the Federal force approaching along one road, but a Federal cavalry unit upsets the plan by appearing behind the Confederate forces intended to spring the trap. Johnston calls off the attack and entrenches south and east of Cassville. That evening, the Confederate army's high command discusses whether to make a stand or retreat. On 20 May, Johnston retreats across the Etowah River to a strong position astride Allatoona Pass.

Observing the Confederate lines, Sherman decides to abandon his railroad supply line and move around the position. After a three-day pause to rest and refit, the Federals cross the Etowah on 23 May, entering what was then the scrub brush of Paulding County. Countering the move, Johnston deploys to the southwest, and the Federals crash into the Confederates on 25 May at the road intersection around New Hope Church. An unsuccessful attack followed by a heavy rain compounds the Federal misery, and a 27 May attempt to get around the Confederate right (northern) flank at Pickett's Mill is even more costly and even less successful. On 28 May, Johnston probes the Federal right (southern) flank near Dallas, but the attack is botched. Since Federal cavalry have now regained access to the rail line south of Allatoona, Sherman begins to move his forces northeastward towards the reliable supply line that his troops and animals have sorely missed for the last week. The Confederates repeatedly probe to determine the Federal movements, resulting in almost continuous digging and skirmishing for the last days of May.

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