

# 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)

## GBA provides another historical marker

On 7 April, GBA supervised installation of another historical marker in Atlanta. The marker is at Mill Town Lofts, 781 Wylie Street. Both sides of the marker relate to the Civil War: One explains the Confederate assault through this area during the 22 July 1864 Battle of Atlanta, and the other explains the destruction of the trains and rolling mill along the nearby railroad during the 1 September 1864 Confederate evacuation of the city.



After the war, the site contained housing for workers at the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill, which was built on the site of the former rolling mill. Ultima Holdings, the developer of Mill Town Lofts, agreed to placement of the marker and subsidized its cost. GBA wrote the text, drew the maps, and selected the photo (the famous Barnard photo of the destroyed railroad cars and rolling mill) for the marker, and Atlanta Creative Graphics fabricated and installed the marker.

While we're hopeful that state markers will now be maintained (see article below), we'll continue to propose new markers with permission of the property owners.

## Governor signs bill providing tax credit for preservation

On 21 April, Governor Perdue signed a land conservation bill that passed the state house and senate without any opposing votes. The Land Conservation Tax Credit Act provides a tax break to property owners who agree to protect their land from development. The landowner can:

- donate the property to a state or local government or land trust, or
- donate a conservation easement and keep the land.

The easement would restrict use of the property: For example, a farmer could donate an easement and continue to grow crops on the land but would be unable to sell it to someone who wanted to build a warehouse or condominiums. The tax credit could be up to 25% of the land's value but not more than \$250,000 for individuals or \$500,000 for corporations. The donated land must qualify as conservation land and be certified by the Department of Natural Resources.

This act will supplement the 2005 Land Conservation Act that enabled greenspace loans and grants (March 2005 newsletter). Together, both acts could be used to save Civil War sites.

## Civil War Commission moves to Economic Development

On 14 April, Governor Perdue signed an act amending the 1993 act that created the Georgia Civil War Commission. The amending act administratively reassigns the Commission from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Economic Development. The hope of the act's sponsors is that the Commission will get more support from the executive and legislative branches if it is perceived to be generating heritage tourism dollars as well as preserving historic sites. This may prove to be true, but it will require other actions, such as replacing and maintaining the historical markers that allow visitors to find the sites.

## Some hope for marker maintenance

This newsletter has frequently reported (most recently in February) on the lack of maintenance for state historical markers. An *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article, published near the end of the General Assembly session, apparently prompted inclusion of funds for marker maintenance in the state fiscal year 2007 budget. Senator George Hooks, a longtime supporter of the program, proposed \$100,000 for marker maintenance. In the final budget, the amount was reduced to \$50,000. Governor Perdue has until 9 May to approve or veto the amount.

## **Census report confirms growth of Atlanta's suburbs**

A 16 March Census Bureau report shows Georgia led the U.S. in the number of fastest-growing counties by percentage of population from 1 April 2000 to 1 July 2005. Georgia had 18 of the top 100 fastest growing counties, with 15 of those in metro Atlanta. This follows similar findings from the Census Bureau's report for the period from mid 2000 through mid 2003 (February 2005 newsletter). Many of these counties contain sites from the Atlanta Campaign or the March to the Sea, amply illustrating the need for immediate preservation efforts.

## **Historians rank Civil War as greatest national crisis**

Young people understandably lack perspective, but they sometimes serve a purpose. After hearing students comment that this was one of the most trying times in U.S. history, researchers at Siena College's Research Institute decided to survey history departments at 2,500 colleges nationwide. Asked to compare eight difficult periods in the nation's history, the responding professors chose the Civil War as the most dangerous, followed by the Revolutionary War, the Great Depression, Vietnam and the Cultural Revolution, World War II, the Cold War, World War I, and today's War on Terror. [www.siena.edu/sri/tryingtimes.asp](http://www.siena.edu/sri/tryingtimes.asp).

While such validation is not surprising to those of us working to preserve Civil War sites, it does provide us additional ammunition when arguing for the protection of battlefields.

## **Membership renewal dates**

Your membership in GBA renews annually. For those of you still receiving the newsletter by regular mail, you'll see the renewal date on the address label. Whether you receive the newsletter by mail or electronically, you'll receive a reminder letter when it's time to renew.

We list your renewal date as the first of the month. This means your membership expires on that date, not that your membership is good through that month. For example, if the label indicates 4/01/2006, you should mail a check before that date to ensure that you'll continue to enjoy the benefits of membership, such as eligibility to participate in our annual tour led by Ed Bearss.

## **150 years ago this month – May 1856**

Two of the most notorious incidents leading up to the Civil War occur this month.

On 19 May 1856, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, a fervent abolitionist, gives a speech on the senate floor. He titles the speech "The Crime against Kansas" and, among other things, derides the actions and character of South Carolina Senator Andrew Butler. Three days later, South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks, a relative of Butler's, enters the senate chamber and beats Sumner unconscious with a cane. Sumner slowly recovers and spends 18 more years in the Senate. Brooks resigns from the House but is quickly re-elected, though he dies of the croup the next year. Both men become icons for their regions, further dividing the country.

Even more bloody is the action in Kansas itself. On 21 May, pro-slavery men attack the town of Lawrence, Kansas, a center of anti-slavery sentiment, killing two men and destroying printing presses and buildings. In retaliation, John Brown leads a group of anti-slavery men who use swords to kill five pro-slavery men near Pottawotamie Creek on 24 May. This and subsequent actions bring more publicity to the situation in Kansas and make Brown an icon to those who believe only force will bring the end of slavery.

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