

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

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GBA designs new marker for May 1864 fighting near Dallas

On 16 May, a two-sided historical marker was installed at the Community Trust Bank branch on Merchants Drive east of Dallas, Georgia. The marker resulted from a query by Larry Peterson, a descendant of Confederate Brigadier General Alfred Vaughan, whose Tennessee brigade fought in this area. Although the fighting near Dallas has been the subject of research by several historians, the reports of the action on 27 and 28 May 1864 are incomplete and often contradictory. Still, with the help of Friends of Civil War Paulding County, the staff of Pickett's Mill State Historic Site, and some field research (see January 2007 newsletter), GBA designed a marker that should at least raise awareness of the historic events that occurred at the site.

The GBA web site has higher resolution photos:
www.georgiabattlefields.org/activities.htm.



The 27 May side of the marker (left photo) describes the action in which Vaughan's Brigade helped push Federal troops off the hill in the background.

The 28 May side (below) includes the attack of the Kentucky Orphan Brigade. One portion of the Federal line was in the woods behind the marker.



Community Trust Bank deserves credit for agreeing to have the marker on bank property and for paying for the marker's manufacture and installation.

State budget again makes preservation a low priority

In considering the Fiscal Year 2008 budget, the General Assembly cut some of the funding that the governor had proposed for preservation-related items. Assuming the Governor signs the FY2008 budget passed by the legislature, the Georgia Civil War Commission will again receive \$50,000, but historical marker maintenance will get nothing.

As indicated in the February newsletter, \$60,000 and responsibility for installing new historical markers were moved from the Georgia Historical Society to the Department of Economic Development; but the Governor's proposal to spend \$5 million on Civil War sesquicentennial planning, Resaca Battlefield enhancements, and historical marker maintenance was not included in the legislature's version of the FY2008 budget. Instead, \$500,000 was reportedly allocated for sesquicentennial planning only. While Governor Perdue may veto all or part of the budget by the 1 July deadline, he can't reinsert items once the legislature has voted.

In related news, Dan Rowe, chief of tourism for the Department of Economic Development, resigned his position on 1 May. Dan led the state's sesquicentennial planning and advocated implementing the Resaca Battlefield plan and repairing historical markers in preparation for the sesquicentennial. At a minimum, Dan's departure represents a loss of continuity.

Finally, on 21 May, State Parks Director Becky Kelley announced that five state parks and historic sites would have reduced operating hours at least through the end of the fiscal year (30 June). Historic sites affected were the Robert Toombs House Historic Site in Washington

(closed Sun & Mon), the Jefferson Davis Historic Site in Fitzgerald (closed Mon & Tues), and Fort Morris (Revolutionary War) Historic Site in Midway (closed Sun through Wed).

Kelley said the Department of Natural Resources has deferred filling job openings, neglected vehicle maintenance, raised user fees, and cut visitor services over the last few years of declining budgets; but she was left with no other places to economize and decided that reducing operating hours was the only alternative. She hopes to reverse some of these cutbacks if Governor Perdue signs the FY2008 budget, which provides for a small increase in state money for the parks.

Atlanta adds more people than any other metropolitan area

A 5 April U.S. Census Bureau report indicated that the 28-county metropolitan Atlanta area added 890,000 people from 2000 to 2006, more than any other metropolitan area in the country. The report estimates over 5 million people now live in the area. Much of this growth is in the suburban counties, which is also where Civil War sites remain. Since 2002, the Civil War Preservation Trust's annual endangered sites list has included these metro area sites: Southwest Atlanta siege lines (Fulton County), Kennesaw Mountain, River Line, Marietta (Cobb), Hell Hole (Paulding), Brown's Mill (Coweta), and Lovejoy's Station (Henry & Clayton).

National Park Service seeks outside funding, increases fees

Recognizing that the government will never provide enough money to fund all the necessary programs, the National Park Service (NPS) is looking for ways to generate revenue. In a January interview, Mary Bomar, NPS director since October 2006, indicated the agency would increasingly look to outside sources for money to maintain the parks.

By her statement, Bomar was reflecting the conclusions of a 2006 Government Accountability Office report that indicated the NPS is cutting back on visitor services, education programs, and protection of resources because funding has failed to keep pace with operating costs, leading to a maintenance backlog. Bomar acknowledged NPS problems of reduced staffing and aging facilities. To address these issues, she is counting on corporate and private donations to improve the parks for the NPS centennial in 2016. The NPS is currently getting over ten percent of its funds from non-government sources and hopes to increase that number, though it must tread carefully to avoid PR problems, such as the XYZ Corporation National Park (similar to stadium or bowl game naming agreements).

News from early May also relates to the issue of inadequate government funding. Through early 2009, the NPS will phase in higher prices for annual park passes at about one third of the 390 facilities it manages. Among the first sites to increase entrance fees will be Fort McHenry National Monument in Baltimore and Colonial National Historical Park (including Jamestown and Yorktown). The increase was not announced from NPS headquarters; rather, it was left to the individual site managers to inform visitors. If the public response is muted, the increases will likely occur. If a public outcry results, site managers can request that the NPS defer the increase.

Robert Lincoln was prescient when he deeded his parents' Springfield house to the public in 1887 (first to the State of Illinois, eventually to the NPS). Lincoln stipulated that access to the house should be free: If admission was ever charged, the house would revert to the family.

GBA to speak to Cartersville Round Table

GBA president Charlie Crawford will speak on Civil War site preservation to the Northwest Georgia Civil War Round Table at 6 p.m. on 14 June at the Booth Museum in Cartersville (www.boothmuseum.org/civilwarroundtable.htm).

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