

GEORGIA

BATTLEFIELDS

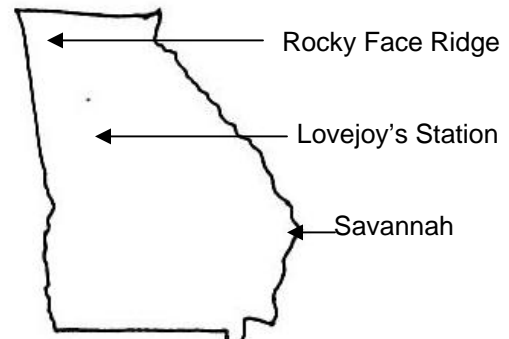
Published by Georgia Battlefields Association, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preservation of Georgia's Civil War history and sites. Contact newsletter editor by e-mail: info@georgiabattlefields.org

GBA submits most endangered site nominations

Through 31 October, the Civil War Preservation Trust (www.civilwar.org) is accepting nominations for its 2008 most endangered site list. GBA has nominated three sites

Lovejoy's Station

Lovejoy's Station was the site of two battles, both in the final month of the Atlanta Campaign. On 20 August 1864 Kilpatrick's Federal cavalry, raiding against the railroads south of Atlanta, was nearly trapped at Lovejoy's Station but escaped after a desperate charge. Two weeks later, the Confederate army assembled at Lovejoy's Station after evacuating Atlanta. On 3 September, S.D. Lee's Corps attempted to drive back the Federal XXIII Corps. Shortly thereafter, Sherman declared an end to the Atlanta Campaign and pulled his armies back to the vicinity of the city, while the Confederate army camped around Lovejoy's Station until mid September.



Several newsletters (most recently the August issue) have recounted the story of Henry County's acquisition of much of the battlefields of both 20 August and 3 September, but the county line splits the site, with 75 acres in Clayton County remaining in the hands of a developer, who has proposed putting 287 houses on the parcel.

Rocky Face Ridge at Mill Creek Gap

In February 1864, the Federal Army of the Cumberland probed Mill Creek Gap and Rocky Face Ridge, determining that the Confederate lines were still too strong to overwhelm but causing the recall of two divisions that had started for Mississippi. The site was a battlefield again less than three months later as Sherman began the Atlanta Campaign. The Army of the Cumberland again assaulted Rocky Face Ridge with particularly tough fighting in and around Mill Creek Gap on 8 and 9 May. While the Federals couldn't drive the Confederates from the ridge, the threat to the railroad near Resaca caused the Confederates to withdraw on the evening of 12 May.

Government and private organizations in this area have cooperated to save historic sites, including Whitfield County's 2001 purchase of 625 acres of Rocky Face Ridge north of Mill Creek Gap. Now, a private land owner is trying to sell two parcels totaling 188 acres. The 98 acre southern parcel extends from the northwest into Mill Creek Gap, and it contains earthworks used by both the Confederates and Federals. Development of this land could result in the loss of the earthworks and certainly would compromise both the February and May core battlefields.

Defenses of Savannah

The surrender of Fort Pulaski on 11 April 1862 rendered the main port of Savannah useless to the Confederacy, but the smaller rivers still provided haven for shallow draft blockade runners, so the Confederates constructed a series of earthen forts to protect the city's seaward approaches. Two and a half years later, Lieutenant General William J. Hardee moved many of the guns from these forts to a new defense line west of the city as 60,000 men under Sherman approached. Hardee directed a delaying action at Monteith Swamp (9 December 1864) while he hurried construction on the defenses. Hardee needed the artillery from the seaward-facing forts to bolster the eight-mile long line that required more than the 10,000 troops he had.

The Federals rolled up to the Confederate line on 10 December 1864. Sherman decided to forego a large attack and instead lay a siege; but he needed to establish contact with the Federal Navy to receive supplies and heavier guns. Sherman achieved that connection by taking Fort McAllister on the Ogeechee River on 13 December. The Confederate leaders decided that preserving 10,000 men was more important than holding Savannah, and the army abandoned the city on the night of 20 December, marching over a temporary bridge into South Carolina.

As new houses, commercial establishments, and roads are built, the western defense line remnants are in danger. An isolated Confederate earthwork remains from the fighting at

Monteith Swamp. From the action along the main defense line, Federal earthworks remain on the grounds of the Savannah Christian Preparatory School, and fragments of the southern portion of the Confederate Line are identifiable; but most of these are overgrown and unprotected.

For the seaward approaches, pre-war masonry forts Jackson and Pulaski are protected by the Coastal Heritage Society and the National Park Service, respectively. The earthen forts built during the war are in more precarious condition. Fort McAllister is protected as a state park, but several of the earthen forts and batteries have been lost and others are eroding. If the remaining earthworks are to be preserved, the time is now to identify and protect them.

Atlanta History Center gets new executive director

On 6 August, the Atlanta Historical Society announced Sal Cilella as its new executive director. Sal had been acting director since March, when Jim Bruns announced his departure for the new Theodore Roosevelt presidential library in New York. Sal had also been the Atlanta History Center's operations chief since arriving in 2006 from the Indiana Historical Society. Those of you who attended the GBA dinner at the Atlanta History Center on 16 March had the chance to meet Sal, and we look forward to working with him.

Help Atlanta History Center pay for Wray Collection

Many of our readers are aware that the Atlanta History Center agreed to pay \$2.5 million for the George Wray collection of Civil War materials. This collection is one of the finest still in private hands with many unique artifacts, particularly uniforms. While parts of the collection have been available for inspection, the Center still needs to raise funds to meet the payment schedule; and the next installment is due on 31 December. If you'd like to contribute, please make your checks payable to the Atlanta History Center, 130 W. Paces Ferry Rd NW, Atlanta GA 30305 and indicate the money is for the Wray Collection. If you have any questions, contact Gordon Jones at 404 814 4057 or gjones@atlantahistorycenter.com.

GBA opposes Atlanta Beltline bike path route through park

The Beltline project is an effort to turn unused tracks into a commuter rail system and to increase greenspace and planned development around Atlanta. The proposed Beltline would traverse both the Battle of Atlanta site and the Battle of Peachtree Creek site. (See maps of the Beltline route at www.beltline.org.) Also part of the project is a bike path planned by the PATH Foundation (www.pathfoundation.org).

In March 2007, GBA was contacted by neighborhood associations bordering Tanyard Creek Park (on Collier Rd), which is the last remaining greenspace on the Peachtree Creek battlefield. GBA was asked whether a 12 foot wide concrete path through Tanyard Creek Park would detract from understanding the historic site. After studying the proposed bike path route, GBA decided to oppose the installation of the path through the land that two Confederate brigades traversed on 20 July 1864. The park path was the subject of a 21 August *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article: www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2007/08/20/path_0821.html.

150 years ago this month

On 5 October, yet another election is held in the strife-torn Kansas territory, and fraudulent votes again mar confidence in the outcome. Though free-state supporters win a majority, a subsequent constitutional convention results in a document that indicates slaves already in the territory will continue to be characterized as property.

Georgia Battlefields Association
7 Camden Rd NE
Atlanta GA 30309

www.georgiabattlefields.org

October 2007

Address correction requested
Return postage guaranteed