

# G E O R G I A

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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)

## **Governor signs Fiscal Year 2009 budget**

On 14 May, Governor Perdue signed the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2009 budget into law. As mentioned in the April newsletter, the budget authorizes a \$3 million bond issue for building park facilities at Resaca. The Governor's proposed budget included a \$5 million appropriation. Still, area legislators believe the \$3 million will allow the construction of access roads, parking, visitors' center, walking trails, historical markers, and directional signs to begin.

## **Sesquicentennial steering committee meets again**

The Georgia Civil War Sesquicentennial Steering Committee met again on 22 May. The focus of this meeting was to develop a marketing plan for the Sesquicentennial. The Golin Harris PR agency sent representatives to hear about the committee's progress and to gather ideas. Golin Harris hopes to have a marketing plan within a month or so.

As reported in the above item about the SFY2009 budget, area lawmakers believe the \$3 million bond issue will allow the start of development of Resaca as a state park. This is also the position of Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Noel Holcomb, who hopes for a groundbreaking ceremony at Resaca in late Summer. Because of Resaca's proximity to I-75, the visitors' center is intended to be a focus for tourists visiting for the Sesquicentennial. Thus, the groundbreaking ceremony may become the opportunity for an announcement of Georgia's Sesquicentennial efforts.

Earlier in the Summer, the Department of Economic Development hopes to feature the Sesquicentennial on its tourism home page. At a minimum, internet users seeking information about Georgia's Sesquicentennial efforts should be linked from [www.georgia.org](http://www.georgia.org) to information about the many Civil War sites in the state. This would include National Park Service sites (such as Kennesaw Mountain and Andersonville), state parks and historic sites (such as Pickett's Mill and the Jeff Davis capture site), county sites (such as Nash Farm Battlefield), driving trails (such as Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails and the Blue & Gray Trail), museums, etc.

Even with the uncertainty of funding for a multi-year effort, the state plans to proceed, doing whatever it can with the available funds. The volunteer participation of GBA and other groups will be critical to the effort.

## **Guide to Georgia's Civil War sites will be ready this year**

*Crossroads of Conflict* is a state-prepared guide to Georgia's Civil War sites. The last edition was published almost ten years ago. Through the fits and starts of uncertain funding, the Georgia Civil War Commission (GCWC) has continued to sponsor another revision of the document. Unstinting efforts by GCWC staff member Barry Brown, with help from Rich Elwell and Bob Price, have almost reached fruition. A much-improved version (many more entries, full color graphics, more logical sequence, etc.) of *Crossroads of Conflict* should be submitted to the printers by 1 July, so the printed version should be available in late Summer or early Fall. The price has not been established, but if previous rulings by the State Attorney General's office are a guide, the state must sell the document at cost, currently estimated at around \$15.

Since the last print edition was distributed, the internet has become much more widely used as a source of information; and some portions of the guide are already available through the GCWC web site <http://georgiacivilwar.org/guide.htm>. The full online version of *Crossroads* will likely be posted in early July. It will have at least the same material as the print version and will have the capability of being updated quickly. In fact, the Commission encourages users of the guide to submit corrections or suggestions.

## **Notes from national battlefield preservation meetings**

As reported in the May newsletter, GBA representatives attended the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) annual conference in Springfield, Missouri in mid April. GBA reps also attended the CWPT board meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico in February. Some of the information gleaned at those meetings is summarized below.

Civil War Preservation Trust was formed in late 1999 as a merger of two groups (Civil War Trust and Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites) who had separately pursued similar goals for over a decade. CWPT is the principal battlefield acquisition organization in the country, having saved over 25,000 acres. CWPT has raised and spent over \$120 million, \$60 million of which was provided by governments (federal, state, or local), often as matching grants. \$100 million of the total has gone for land transactions.

CWPT estimates that \$250 million will be needed to buy a similar amount of land (25,000 acres) over the next decade, as the price of land is increasing (perhaps not as quickly as in the past decade, but it is unlikely to decrease much if any) and the threatened parcels will be those that are most desirable for development.

CWPT has about 62,500 members. About 625 (1%) of those people donate over \$1,000 per year and cumulatively provide over 40% of the donated funds.

As the currently unprotected battlefield land is either developed or saved, CWPT will transition from an acquisition and preservation organization to a preservation and education organization. CWPT already sponsors teachers' workshops every summer at a battlefield site.

The U.S. has a long history of assimilating immigrants, even though immigration policies have varied considerably. New citizens will have difficulty assimilating if they don't know American history, and the Civil War is arguably the most important event in U.S. history. Visiting the battlefields considerably enhances one's understanding of events that occurred there. Also, preservation of the battlefields dissuades some forms of revisionism since the geography helps to anchor the narrative. Further, battlefields can't be exported or manufactured overseas, so their economic impact always yields local benefits.

In the absence of the Congress acting to recognize the Civil War Sesquicentennial, CWPT and the History Channel will organize a national effort to publicize the event and use any resulting public interest to increase preservation.

CWPT is revising its web site [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org). The ongoing modifications now permit members to submit preservation-related photos, including some taken by GBA. The web will also be used increasingly to solicit new members, as the cost is much less than mass mailings or media advertising.

GBA is glad to be associated with CWPT and will continue to pursue a good relationship.

### **150 years ago this month**

On 16 June 1858, the Illinois Republican Party nominates Abraham Lincoln as its candidate for the U.S. Senate. In his acceptance speech, Lincoln states "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free."

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