

# GEORGIA

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# BATTLEFIELDS

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## GBA trustee Charlie Geiger dies

We regret to report that GBA trustee Charlie Geiger died on 22 June at age 82.

Charlie was born in 1925 and raised in northern Illinois. When he graduated from high school in 1943, he enlisted in the Navy. After training, he served as an engineer on a yard minesweeper in the Pacific, participating in the landings on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. During heavy weather, his ship anchored close to the Okinawa shore; and when he had deck watch that night, he repelled a Japanese attempt to board the ship. His ship also helped clear Tokyo Bay before *USS Missouri* arrived for the surrender ceremony. When he was discharged from the Navy in 1946, he entered Northwestern University, earning his B.S. in Engineering in 1950 and subsequently working as an electrical engineer and manager for an electric motor manufacturer in the Midwest and Northeast before being transferred to the Atlanta area. He brought his interest in history to Georgia and was deeply involved in preservation work, increasing his efforts upon retiring from work in 1991. He served as a GBA trustee since 1999 (president 1999-2002) and as chairman of the history committee for Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails. He won a Georgia Humanities Council Hero Award in 2006. He is survived by his wife Linda, daughter Barbara, and son Jeff.

### A personal appreciation of Charlie Geiger, by Charlie Crawford

Charlie Geiger was president of GBA when I joined, and he recommended that I succeed him. He was my answer man for questions about Civil War history, especially if they related to historical markers. He was also the one who pushed for the installation of seven historical plaques at Ezra Church (May 2005 newsletter). These plaques had been manufactured 40 years ago but languished in a warehouse until Charlie persuaded the city of Atlanta to install them.



The Ezra Church markers in what is now Mozley Park in southwest Atlanta. Photo by Linda Geiger.

Charlie was particularly disdainful of any impediment to preservation, especially government officials; and he could be blunt, even intemperate, when expressing his opinion. But no one could deny his passion for preservation or for Civil War history. This passion was manifest in his hard and sustained work for the causes in which he believed. Every organization needs someone like him, and GBA is certainly going to miss him as a leader, colleague, and friend.

## **Sesquicentennial planning**

The Georgia Civil War Sesquicentennial Steering Committee met on 9 July.

The committee still plans a ground breaking ceremony for Resaca (state historic site) visitor's center later in the summer. This will also serve as occasion to publicly announce the state's initial proposals for Sesquicentennial commemoration (see June newsletter).

A proposed Sesquicentennial logo was discussed and will be revised, with committee approval expected shortly. The approved logo will be featured on a Sesquicentennial "landing page" on [www.georgia.org](http://www.georgia.org) and will appear on stationery, press releases, etc.

Barry Brown, Department of Economic Development contact person for Sesquicentennial issues, participated in a 25 June conference call with representatives from 12 other states regarding Sesquicentennial activities. American Association for State and Local History ([www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org)) will serve as the coordinating body for quarterly conference calls and periodic meetings.

The GolinHarris public relations firm presented a well-received marketing plan for the Sesquicentennial commemoration.

GBA's participation in Sesquicentennial planning is designed to increase awareness of Civil War sites throughout the state. Increased awareness should lead to increased support for preservation.

## **Battle of Chickamauga reenactment**

A reenactment marking the 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Chickamauga will be held 19-21 September 2008 in Walker County, Georgia, about a ten minute drive south of Chickamauga National Military Park. This will be the largest reenactment of a western theater battle in years. Information is available at [www.battleofchickamauga.net](http://www.battleofchickamauga.net) or by calling 800 624 0281 x 326.

## **150 years ago this month**

On 2 August 1858, Kansas voters reject a proposed constitution for the third time, meaning Kansas will remain a territory rather than becoming a state.

On 16 August, President Buchanan and Queen Victoria exchange greetings across the new transatlantic telegraph line. The line will fail within a month due to excessive voltage being applied in an effort to boost the signal. A lasting connection will not be established until 1866.

On 21 August, the opposing candidates for one of the U.S. Senate seats from Illinois debate at Ottawa, Illinois. Republican Abraham Lincoln and Democrat Stephen Douglas will debate again on 27 August at Freeport, twice more in September, and three times in October. Their seven meetings become arguably the most famous series of political debates in American history.

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