

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

Preservationist and historian Phil Secrist dies

Phil Secrist—historian, preservationist, and a veteran of both the Marine Corps and the Army—died in his sleep at age 80 on 4 September.

Phil had an Ed.D. in history and taught for many years at Atlanta area high schools, Southern Polytechnic State University, and Kennesaw State University; but he was much more than an academic historian. He was instrumental—putting up some of his own money—in the establishment of Pickett's Mill as a state historic site. He was a long time member of the Atlanta Civil War Round Table and served as its president (1975-76). He supervised an inventory and preparation of a map of Cobb County's historic sites; and because of his interest in preservation and his commitment to public service, he ran for the Cobb County Board of Commissioners and served as its chairman (1988-92). He was a charter member of the Georgia Civil War Commission and served a year as its chairman (1997-98). Phil also wrote a book on the Battle of Resaca and a guide to the Atlanta Campaign, as well as many scholarly articles on the Civil War. In recent years, despite physical ailments, Phil was supervising the preparation and installation of additional historical markers throughout Cobb County.

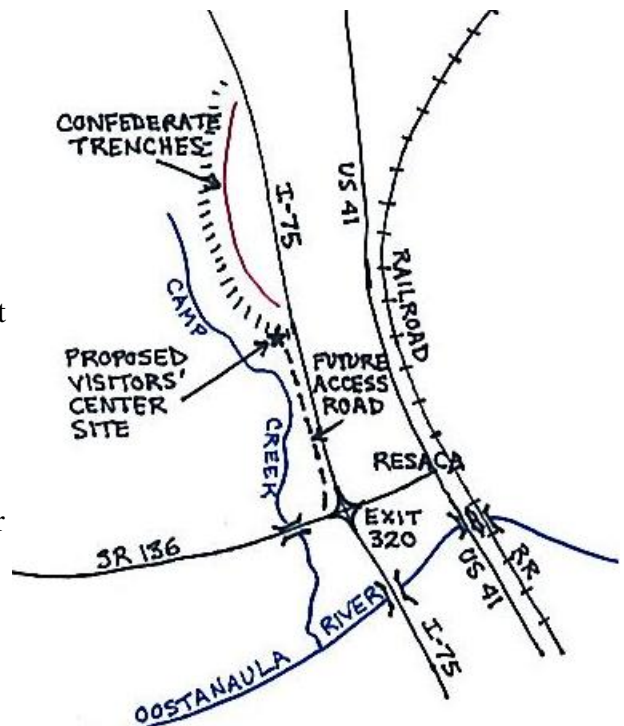
The sites that Phil preserved will be enjoyed by generations to come. We hope that anyone who visits the sites will remember his efforts. The family requests that donations be made to Friends of Resaca, PO Box 1098, Resaca GA 30375. www.resacabattlefield.org.

Resaca groundbreaking scheduled for 27 October

On 27 October, Commissioner of Natural Resources Noel Holcomb is scheduled to officiate at the groundbreaking for facilities at Resaca State Historic Site. Over 500 acres of the battlefield were bought by the state in 2000, but plans to build a visitors' center, access roads, walking trails, historical markers, etc., were put on hold when the state's revenue declined in 2001. The current economic difficulties will certainly affect the pace at which facilities are built, but the 2008 General Assembly authorized a \$3 million bond issue for Resaca; so the state feels that construction can begin.

A GBA representative participated in an 18 September session to plan the content of the new Resaca visitors' center. The proposed location is at the southern end of the ridge line that is still marked by Confederate trenches, immediately west of I-75. An access road will proceed north from SR 136, just west of the exit 320 interchange. Buildings will be partially buried in the slope to reduce both the impact on the viewshed and the cost of heating and cooling.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) hopes to start construction in January 2009 with at least some facilities open by early 2010. Attendees at the 18 September meeting agreed that the visitors' center will primarily interpret the Battle of Resaca and the days immediately before and after, but it will also address the Atlanta Campaign in greater context and serve as the gateway for visitors wishing to know more about any Civil War site in Georgia.



The groundbreaking may also be an occasion to announce Georgia's intent to participate in Sesquicentennial events. While \$500,000 for Sesquicentennial planning was included in the Department of Economic Development's (DECD) State Fiscal Year 2009 budget, that amount is likely to be reduced by the Governor's directive for all state agencies to spend 6% less and to prepare to spend 10% less than authorized. Still, DECD will do what it can to optimize the marketing of Georgia's numerous Civil War sites and museums and to publicize Sesquicentennial-related events.

GBA participates in update to 1993 CWSAC report

In 1993, the Congressionally-mandated Civil War Sites Advisory Commission (CWSAC) issued a report that identified and evaluated Civil War sites. The report identified 384 sites and has been widely cited, serving as the basis for the federal government and many state governments to evaluate preservation funding. www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/cwsac/cws0-1.html

In response to a Congressional request, the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) has been resurveying the 384 sites to update information on the condition of and threats to the sites: www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/CWSII.htm. In mid-September, ABPP representatives (including one of the original CWSAC staff members) visited sites of the Atlanta Campaign and the March to the Sea. When the team assessed Lovejoy's Station, GBA reps were included in the discussion. Based on the presentations organized by Henry County historian Mark Pollard, the ABPP report is likely to recommend expanding both the impact area of the site and the description beyond the 20 August 1864 cavalry engagement. This would include actions in July, September, and November 1864.

GBA reps also proposed including other sites that were overlooked in the 1993 report. While the ABPP team's marching orders preclude adding new sites, GBA argued for including the Chattahoochee River Line under the Marietta Operations entry and including Savannah's seaward defenses under Fort McAllister I and Savannah's landward defenses under Fort McAllister II. www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/battles/bystate.htm#ga

The ABPP reps promised to consider our proposals and also asked if GBA would be available to review the draft report before it was submitted to Congress.

Annual Profiles in Leadership program features Lincoln

Each year, the Georgia Historical Society sponsors a round table discussion titled Profiles in Leadership. The 2008 event returns to the Georgia Public Broadcasting studios at 260 14th St NW, Atlanta at 8 p.m. on 10 October. Scholars Harold Holzer and David Blight will lead a roundtable discussion on "Abraham Lincoln: Leadership and Legacy for a New Generation."

Holzer will be familiar to C-SPAN viewers as an authority on Lincoln, and he is co-chair of the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (www.haroldholzer.com/hh_2_bio.html). Blight wrote *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, which won the Lincoln Prize in 2002; and he has been a consultant on several PBS documentaries (www.davidwblight.com).

More information is available at www.georgiahistory.com/events/55. Admission to the event is free, but please make reservations by calling 877 424 4789.

150 years ago this month

On 9 October, an Overland Mail stagecoach arrives in St. Louis, 23 days after leaving San Francisco. The next day, the westbound stage arrives in San Francisco from St. Louis. While transportation improvements are uniting the East and West, political differences are aggravating tensions between the North and South.

The last three (of seven total) debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas occur in October. While Douglas will win the Senate seat, Lincoln will garner significantly increased public awareness of this heretofore little-known former Congressman from Illinois.

Georgia Battlefields Association
7 Camden Rd NE
Atlanta GA 30309

www.georgiabattlefields.org

October 2008

Address correction requested
Return postage guaranteed