

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

More tours led by Georgia Battlefields Association

On 19 July, GBA helped the Civil War Trust Teacher Institute. In the morning, GBA led a tour of Kennesaw Mountain to show 40 teachers how a preserved battlefield could be used as a teaching tool for middle and high school students. The afternoon was spent touring Battle of Atlanta sites and showing how an unpreserved battlefield could still be used as a teaching tool.

On 20 July, GBA led a tour of Civil War sites in downtown Atlanta for Scott Peacocke, *Atlanta Journal Constitution* editor for the online "War in Our Backyards" series, and Phil Gast, freelance journalist and editor of the Civil War Picket blog <http://civil-war-picket.blogspot.com/>.



Left photo: Scott Peacocke of the AJC and Charlie Crawford of GBA as the 20 July tour begins. Photo by Phil Gast. Right photo: Teachers and guide Charlie Crawford on 19 July at the Battle of Atlanta's McPherson monument.

Tracy Houpt's long run

The March and April newsletters covered Tracy Houpt's plan to run from Ringgold to Kennesaw Mountain, following as near as possible the 1864 march of his great-great uncle Robert Houpt of the 31st Indiana Infantry during the Atlanta Campaign. Severe blisters and cramps made Tracy unable to complete his run in three consecutive days, but he reached Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park a few Saturdays later than planned. Thanks to Tracy for persevering and for using his run to raise funds for preservation. Photo: Tracy Houpt ends his run at the Illinois Monument.



150 years ago this month

On 4 August, Grant and Sheridan travel to Washington and a conference with Lincoln. The result is Sheridan's 7 August appointment to command the new Middle Military Division, encompassing all U.S. forces in the Shenandoah Valley area. Sheridan pulls back to Winchester, then Harper's Ferry to consolidate his new command and its supply system. Early takes this opportunity to advance on 17 August, and Lee sends more infantry and cavalry on the 21st. Sheridan is ready to move by 29 August, and the decisive campaign for the Valley begins.

Near Petersburg, Grant continues to extend his lines to the west, trying to cut supply lines to Lee's army. The largest effort begins 18 August and is directed against the railroad to Weldon, NC. The Federal advance near Globe Tavern is driven back, and the 25 August fight at Ream's Station shows that Federal replacement troops don't have the quality of veterans, many of whose three-year enlistments are expiring. Still, the railroad is now unusable. On 9 August, a huge explosion at Grant's huge supply depot at City Point kills 43 and wounds 126. Only after the war is it revealed to be the work of Confederate saboteurs. Increasingly annoying all Federal operations in Virginia are Mosby's raids in the northern part of the state.

Sherman is justifiably unwilling to attack Atlanta's fortifications, so much like Grant attempting to cut the railroads to Petersburg and Richmond, Sherman extends his infantry lines to the southwest, aiming ultimately at the two remaining rail lines servicing Atlanta. He tries to get ahead of the Confederate trench diggers, but lack of cooperation among his subordinates

sabotages the effort and results in a repulse at Utoy Creek on 6 August. Sherman supplements his southwestward movement with increased shelling of the city and is persuaded by Kilpatrick to permit another cavalry raid to cut the railroads, despite the utter failure of the late July raids. For five days, Kilpatrick operates south of the city and nearly gets trapped on 20 August at Lovejoy's Station, but the break in the rail line is repaired. Sherman now decides to use six of his seven corps to cut the city's supply line for good. On 25 August, the 20th Corps is deployed to protect the Chattahoochee River Crossing, while the remainder of Sherman's force moves in a wide arc south, then east. Sherman's troops cut one railroad on 30 August and are closing on the other. Hood is informed by his remaining scouts of the Federal movement, even though he permitted Wheeler and the bulk of his cavalry to head north on a raid on 10 August. Hood tasks Hardee to take two of the three Confederate corps to Jonesborough, and Hardee unsuccessfully tries to drive off one Federal army on 31 August. Warned of another Federal force approaching the railroad closer to Atlanta, Hood recalls one corps, but he can't defend the entire rail line.

Wheeler's raid is intended to affect Sherman's operations by disrupting supplies, but Wheeler is repulsed by the Federal garrisons guarding the railroad, notably on 14 August at Dalton. Though Wheeler will go on to destroy wagon trains in Tennessee, he does not accomplish the mission.

On 3 August, Federal infantry invests Fort Gaines, and at 0530 on 5 August, the U.S. Navy storms into Mobile Bay. They sink 3 small Confederate gunboats and force surrender of the ironclad *CSS Tennessee*, but *USS Tecumseh* is sunk by a mine and over 300 sailors are killed or wounded. Fort Gaines surrenders on 8 August, and although Fort Morgan will not surrender until 23 August, the port of Mobile is no longer available, leaving Wilmington, NC, as the only open Confederate port. On 6 August, *CSS Tallahassee* leaves Wilmington and takes 30 prizes off New Jersey and New England before returning on 25 August. Confederate commerce raiders are few, and French authorities will not permit *CSS Rappahannock* to leave Calais. A continuing danger for the U.S. Navy is mine clearing at all the ports they have captured. On 29 August, a mine explosion in Mobile Bay kills five sailors and wounds nine.

Despite the good news from Mobile, the Northern press reports little progress by Grant and Sherman, and political information reaching Lincoln is gloomy. Senator Wade and Representative Davis of Lincoln's own party publish an article on 5 August excoriating Lincoln for vetoing their harsh reconstruction bill. On 23 August, the President has his cabinet members sign—without reading—a document pledging to support a successor administration in trying to end the war on favorable terms. On 29 August, the Democratic national convention opens in Chicago and adopts a "peace plank" on the 30th. On the 31st, it nominates McClellan, still a general, for president and Representative George Pendleton of Ohio for vice president.

On 21 August, Forrest raids Memphis, nearly capturing two generals, and on 29 August, Sterling Price takes command of Confederate forces gathering at Princeton, Arkansas. As of 15 August, Richard Taylor takes command of the Confederate Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and Eastern Louisiana. On 18 August, Grant again refuses to resume prisoner exchanges.

Expeditions against the Indians continue, with operations in Kansas, California, and the territories of Dakota, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico.

Civil War events calendar

August

- 14 7 p.m. University of Georgia professor and editor of the New Georgia Encyclopedia John Inscoe speaks on Georgia's Unknown Civil War History. www.heritagesandysprings.org.
- 22-24 Commemoration of Kilpatrick's Raid that culminated in a 20 August 1864 battle: Includes living history sites, monument dedication (10 a.m. on 21st), sabre charge (1 p.m. on 22nd). www.henrycountybattlefield.com/calendar-events/events/ Bill Dodd w.g.dodd@att.net.

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