

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

About this newsletter

Over the last month, the GBA trustees haven't been able to visit battlefields, attend preservation-related meetings, or interact face-to-face with other organizations. Thus, this newsletter is less focused on our primary missions, which are saving historic sites and educating people about them. We hope to return soon to more normal activities, and we're sure you feel the same.

History education resources

With schools closed, teaching is occurring at home by parents (or grandparents) or through distance learning. Below are some online history teaching resources.

Library of Congress <https://loc.gov/teachers/>

National Archives <https://www.archives.gov/education>

Stanford History Education Group <https://sheg.stanford.edu/history-lessons>

National History Education Clearing House <https://teachinghistory.org/>

Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History www.gilderlehrman.org/blog/new-free-family-website-subscription-provides-resources-and-guidance-remote-learning

C-SPAN www.c-span.org/. Search for topics (e.g., Civil War) or people (e.g., Gary Gallagher). Many presentations take about as long as a regular history class.

American Battlefield Trust (ABT) has a commitment to education, exemplified by Civil War and Revolutionary War content at www.battlefields.org/learn. Included are: lesson plans & curricula; battlefield apps and virtual tours; Civil War Crash Courses; and animated maps and hundreds of videos www.youtube.com/user/CWPTbattlefields/videos. Chief historian is Garry Adelman gadelman@battlefields.org. Education manager is Kris White kwhite@battlefields.org.

American Civil War Museum <https://acwm.org/learn/homefronted/>

National Civil War Museum www.nationalcivilwarmuseum.org/educational/information-for-teachers/

National Museum of Civil War Medicine www.civilwarmed.org/online-resources/

For national parks, go to www.nps.gov/teachers/index.htm and scroll down.

For Civil War-related national parks in Georgia:

Fort Pulaski www.nps.gov/fopu/learn/education/classrooms/curriculummaterials.htm

Andersonville www.nps.gov/ande/learn/education/classrooms/curriculummaterials.htm

Chattahoochee River www.nps.gov/chat/learn/education/classrooms/curriculummaterials.htm

Kennesaw Mountain www.nps.gov/kemo/learn/education/classrooms/curriculummaterials.htm

Kennesaw Mountain ranger Amanda Corman amanda_corman@nps.gov, a former teacher, has developed lesson plans that range beyond what happened at and near the park.

Georgia Historical Society (GHS) <https://georgiahistory.com/education-outreach/for-educators/> and <https://georgiahistory.com/education-outreach/ghs-resources-to-support-at-home-learning/>.

GHS's education coordinator is former teacher Lisa Landers llanders@georgiahistory.com.

Atlanta History Center www.atlantahistorycenter.com/for-schools/educator-resources

If you read the GBA newsletter regularly, you're familiar with Kennesaw State University's Center for the Study of the Civil War Era, which has published lesson plans as well as a timeline and links to other resources <https://chss.kennesaw.edu/cwc/resources/lesson-plans.php>.

The New Georgia Encyclopedia offers educators a way to search for content that correlates to the Georgia Standards of Excellence www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/educators.

Online historical periodicals from Georgia universities have articles that may be applicable: Southern Spaces is a project of Emory University <https://southernspaces.org/>.

Two University of Georgia Department of History professors founded <https://ehistory.org/>.

The above is not a comprehensive list of online learning resources, but we hope it helps you get started. Of course, you can always resort to having students read history books.

Disease: The Civil War's greatest killer

Most people alive today have not witnessed a pandemic on the scale we're currently enduring, the most analogous case being the 1918-1920 Spanish Flu. Swine Flu, the corona viruses Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and Ebola were all highly contagious and more deadly on a percentage basis than seasonal influenza, but seasonal flu still kills more people because it recurs annually and contributes to about 40,000 American deaths—many with underlying conditions—each time it reappears.

Medical science continually improves its understanding of contagious diseases, and most of us fortunate to live in advanced societies now know the importance of sanitation and vaccination. The soldiers of the 1860s were much less aware of how disease was spread, and their ignorance cost many of them their lives. More of them died from disease than combat injuries. Dysentery, a severe form of diarrhea, was the most common killer and usually resulted from contaminated water or food. Typhoid fever, a type of salmonella bacteria and also attributable to contaminated water and food, was another major killer, though cases decreased as the war progressed, in part due to the efforts of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Since most Americans in 1860 lived outside urban areas, most soldiers had not had regular interaction with masses of other people before joining the army; so few of them had been exposed to childhood diseases that, if one survived, would have provided immunity. Many men had not been vaccinated for smallpox prior to becoming soldiers www.civilwarmed.org/surgeons-call/small_pox/. Measles, a highly contagious virus spread by droplets, was especially common in the early encampments and was sometimes fatal. Other contagions, such as the bacterial disease tuberculosis, often took years to progress from latent to active, so we can't know how many men who died of consumption (as it was then called) in the post-war years were casualties of their wartime exposure. Further, the lack of access to fruits and vegetables led to instances of scurvy, caused by vitamin C deficiency.

Senior officers were not exempt from death and disease. Typhoid fever killed two highly regarded U.S. Army leaders: Brigadier General John Buford, commanding a cavalry division in the Army of the Potomac, in December 1863; and Brigadier General Thomas Ransom, commanding the 17th Corps of the Army of the Tennessee, in October 1864. General R.E. Lee suffered severe diarrhea that may have influenced his ability to command during two important battles: Gettysburg in July 1863 and North Anna River in May 1864.

Many soldiers from the north or upper south had less resistance to diseases more prevalent in warmer climates, such as mosquito-borne malaria. Nor was it always a microorganism that caused death. As one example, the cause of death for a Wisconsin soldier serving in Louisiana was listed as “addled by the sun,” which equates in modern terms to sunstroke or heat stroke.

Among other distinctions, the Civil War was among America's greatest public health disasters.

Those of you who are members of the Atlanta Civil War Round Table have already seen a more comprehensive article on the above information from longtime Round Table member Dr. Thorne Winter. We thank Dr. Winter and the Atlanta Round Table for inspiring this article.

Cancelled events

- Old Clinton War Days, 2-3 May. www.oldclinton.org/
- Battle of Resaca Reenactment, 15-17 May. www.georgiadivision.org/bor_reenactment.html
- American Battlefield Trust Annual Conference, 3-7 June in Chantilly, Virginia.
www.battlefields.org/news/2020-american-battlefield-trust-annual-conference-postponed-due-covid-19-regulations

Georgia Battlefields Association
PO Box 669953
Marietta GA 30066

www.georgiabattlefields.org

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