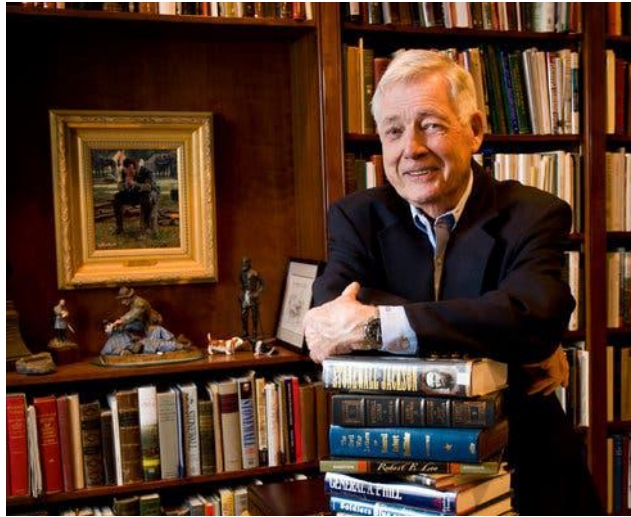


James I. Robertson Jr., Exacting Civil War Historian, Dies at 89

Dr. Robertson, who wrote or edited dozens of books, was best known for his monumental biography of Stonewall Jackson.



The historian James I. Robertson Jr. in 2011. He wrote or edited dozens of books about the Civil War. Credit...John McCormick/Virginia Tech



By Daniel E. Slotnik. NY Times. Nov. 14, 2019

James I. Robertson Jr., an authority on the Civil War who published several dozen deeply researched books that humanized historical figures like Stonewall Jackson, died on Nov. 2 at a hospital in Richmond, Va. He was 89.

His wife, Elizabeth Lee Robertson, said the cause was complications of metastatic

cancer. He had taught at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg for 44 years.

Dr. Robertson, who went by Bud, wrote books that appealed to general audiences as well as academics.

“History is human emotion,” he said in an interview for “Dr. Bud, The People’s Historian,” a documentary film scheduled to be released next year, and it “should be the most fascinating subject in the world.”

“You take away the humanization of history,” he added, “and you’ve got nothing but a bunch of boring facts, and history poorly taught is the worst, most boring subject in the world.”

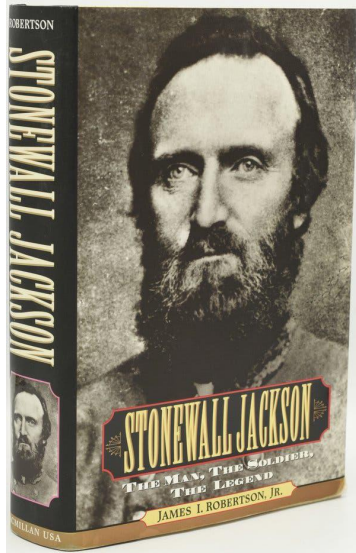
Dr. Robertson wrote or edited many books about the Civil War, including “For Us the Living: The Civil War in Paintings and Eyewitness Accounts” (2010), which featured lavish illustrations by the artist Mort Kunstler; “Robert E. Lee: Virginian Soldier, American Citizen” (2005); and “General A.P. Hill: The Story of a Confederate Warrior” (1987).

His most lauded book was “Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend” (1997). More than 900 pages long, it was the product of seven years of research.

Thomas Jonathan Jackson, better known as Stonewall, was a critical military leader for the Confederacy — so much so that many historians point to his death in 1863, days after he was mistakenly shot by Confederate soldiers during the Battle of Chancellorsville, as the beginning of the end for the South.

Jackson, who had a reputation as a taciturn, eccentric battlefield genius and a religious zealot, was often glorified by earlier

generations as a figure of near legend, but Dr. Robertson sought to present an unvarnished portrait of him.



Dr. Robertson's most lauded book was "Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend," published in 1997.

"Mr. Robertson has tracked down all this source material — finding a good deal that is new along the way — and, equally important, has subjected all of it to rigorous testing," the Civil War historian Stephen W. Sears wrote in *The New York Times Book Review* in 1997. "Myths are exploded, anecdotes crumbled. What remains as fact is highly distilled."

James Irvin Robertson Jr. was born on July 18, 1930, in Danville, Va., to James and Mae (Kympton) Robertson. His father was a banker. Dr. Robertson said his fascination with the Civil War was kindled when his grandmother told him tales about his great-grandfather, who had fought for the Confederacy.

After graduating from George Washington High School in Danville, Dr. Robertson began studying history at Randolph-Macon

College in Ashland, Va., interrupting his education to serve in the Air Force during the Korean War. After completing his bachelor's degree at Randolph-Macon, he earned a master's and a doctorate in history from Emory University in Atlanta in the late 1950s.



Dr. Robertson, second from right, was executive director of the United States Civil War Centennial when he met with President John F. Kennedy and others at a White House ceremony in 1962. Credit...John F. Kennedy Library

In 1961, Dr. Robertson was appointed executive director of the United States Civil War Centennial Commission, which oversaw commemorations of the war.

He taught at the University of Iowa, George Washington University and the University of Montana before moving to Virginia Tech, where he founded a center for civil war studies. He also worked as a football referee for the Atlantic Coast Conference for 16 years (before Virginia Tech joined the conference in 2004).

In addition to his wife, whom he married in 2010 and with whom he lived in Westmoreland County, Va., he is survived by two sons, Howard and James III; a

daughter, Beth Brown; a stepson, William Lee Jr.; a stepdaughter, Elizabeth Anderson Lee; seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. His first wife, Elizabeth Green, died in 2008.

Dr. Robertson lectured about the Civil War and acted as a historical adviser for the 2003 Civil War film “Gods and Generals.” He retired from Virginia Tech in 2011 and afterward wrote and edited several more books, most recently “Robert E. Lee: A Reference Guide to His Life and Works” (2018).

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What Were the Best History Movies of the Decade?

These ten films (plus one documentary) each took the past and translated it in a way worth remembering

By Jason Herbert smithsonianmag.com
December 30, 2019

This holiday season, moviegoers can learn about World War I with *1917*, the Atlanta Olympics bombing with *Richard Jewell*, automotive history with *Ford v. Ferrari*, World War II maritime battles with *Midway*, the Underground Railroad with *Harriet* and that’s not even touching the streaming services where the likes of Jimmy Hoffa and *The Irishman* reign. Each year, Hollywood mines our past to tell us stories about our present through biopics, epic sagas and much more.

The past decade has been no exception, either, but with the explosion of social media and the web, viewers have at their fingertips the opportunity to learn the real history behind their favorite films. Yet is that even the responsibility of the filmmaker

to hew to the facts? How much dramatic license is acceptable? What can we learn from the memory of history as portrayed onscreen?

As a historian, I grapple with those matters regularly, including every Sunday night when I lead my fellow historians on Twitter in the Historians At The Movies discussion. Each Sunday, historians engage with moviegoing audiences at home via Twitter to dissect films. We laugh, we cry, we historicize. But we do it as a community, using the hashtag #HATM; it’s tremendous fun and a great way to enjoy history, film and friends at the same time.

But here’s where I come down. Historical films don’t even need to be all that historical. Outside of documentaries, almost every film will take liberties with real-life events (ahem, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*). That’s all right, too. What makes the films below successful is they take what’s found in the archive and history books and interpret it in a fascinating and digestible format. This list is far from comprehensive or complete, I encourage you to add your own in the comments, but as I looked back on the 2010s here are ten of the best films and one documentary about America’s past sure to inspire the historian in all of us.

The Witch (2015)

Was colonial New England this frightening? Director Robert Eggers dares anyone to leave for North America with this horrifying tale of a Puritan family exiled from Plymouth Colony. *The Witch* is a slow-burn contemplation on the centrality of religion and the fear of damnation in 17th-century lives and a jarring one at that. It looks and sounds beautiful—some of the dialogue is actually taken from the historical record—

and allows viewers to not only see the colony, but to fear it.

12 Years a Slave (2013)

This compelling adaptation of Solomon Northup's 1853 memoir of the same name portrays the kidnapping of a free black man from New York who is then sold into slavery on a Louisiana plantation. Solomon, heartfully portrayed by Chiwetel Ejiofor, becomes witness for the audience to see first-hand the horrors of chattel slavery. The film unflinchingly captures the daily struggles of enslaved people, along with their resistance against a system designed to exploit their bodies and their labor. *12 Years a Slave* is by no means easy to watch, but the very reasons that make it difficult are the same that make it necessary.

Lincoln (2012)

Contemporary audiences may consider that the 13th Amendment's passage was inevitable in the twilight of the American Civil War. *Lincoln* shows us this was not so. Adapted largely from Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, the movie chronicles the maneuvers of the president and his administration to end slavery, even if it meant prolonging the war. Scenes such as when Lincoln (a never-better Daniel Day-Lewis) espouses the legality of the Emancipation Proclamation, or during his exchanges with Gloria Reuben's Elizabeth Keckley, Jared Harris' Ulysses S. Grant, and Sally Field's Mary Todd Lincoln helps us to better understand the Illinois Rail Splitter. Director Steven Spielberg goes beyond the politician to show not only Lincoln the President, but also Lincoln the husband and father to demonstrate how an imperfect man navigated the country through its most terrible crisis.

Free State of Jones (2016)

Interested moviegoers are not bereft of films focused on the Civil War—this year's superb *Harriet*, for instance, finally gave the Underground Railroad operator her cinematic due—but films that tie the war, Reconstruction, and the mid-20th century together number about one.

Free State of Jones flailed at the box office, but don't let that deter you from viewing what is arguably the best Civil War film since 1989's *Glory*. Drawn in part from the work of historian Victoria Bynum, the film centers on the actions of Newton Knight (Matthew McConaughey), a Confederate defector in southeast Mississippi who coupled with Rachel (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), an enslaved Creole woman who bore him a child.

Unlike many Civil War films, *Free State of Jones* continues well past 1865 to show the failures of Reconstruction. Mahershala Ali, playing freedman Moses, emerges as the heart of the film's final 40 minutes, which illuminate the victories won and hardships endured by black folk after the Union victory at Appomattox. Interlaced with the stories of Newt, Rachel and Moses is the court case of the Knights' descendant Davis, who was arrested and tried on charges of miscegenation in 1948. *Free State of Jones* is not a traditional "feel good" film where the good side triumphs; it leaves the audience with a sense of uncertainty about the future.

Midnight in Paris (2011)

At what point do history and nostalgia cross the line? How does one complicate the other? The 2011 romantic comedy, featuring a spellbinding cast, seeks to answer these queries. Owen Wilson's screenwriter Gil

crosses into 1920s Paris one night where he meets his muse, Adriana (Marion Cotillard). Along the way they encounter Adriana's American ex-pat friends, such as Gertrude Stein, F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, and a cartoonish Ernest Hemingway, whose laughable machismo steals every scene he is in—"Who wants to fight?" *Midnight in Paris* plays fast and loose with its characterizations (and besides, *Avengers: Endgame* has already shown that most assumptions about time travel are false, anyway). But that's not the point. Ultimately Gil realizes that nostalgia is longing for an imagined past to which he can never really belong, and learns to embrace the present. Even as Woody Allen's real-life history makes his films understandably unpalatable for some, *Midnight in Paris* reminds viewers that perhaps some other future will long for our time today.

***Selma* (2014)**

Ava DuVernay's first entry on this list follows civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. in the months leading up to the iconic 1965 Selma to Montgomery March. DuVernay asks us not to know not only King but to know the Civil Rights Movement *through* King. *Selma* is at the same time the story of a man and his community and that of a movement striving for voting rights long denied. Come for David Oyelowo as King, but stay for performances by Carmen Ejogo as Coretta Scott King and Tom Wilkinson as Lyndon B. Johnson. Stay for the entire cast, actually. The movie is filled with incredible performances throughout its 128-minute run time. *Selma* ends on a triumphant note, though viewers may find its calls for social justice elusive some 54 years later.

***Hidden Figures* (2016)**

Hidden Figures proved a hit upon its release late in 2016, racking up more than \$230 million at the box office. The film chronicles three African-American women, who beginning in 1961 challenged racism and sexism at NASA to assert their positions within the agency. Based on a book of the same name by Margot Lee Shetterly, *Hidden Figures* spotlights the lives of Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson to illustrate the lived experiences of African-American women employed by NASA at the time. This movie lets us think about other stories waiting to be broadcast to broad audiences. *Hidden Figures* offers no easy answers to the problems of the era, but few on this list can rival its potential to inspire.

***Spotlight* (2015)**

"It's time, Robbie! It's time! They knew and they let it happen! To KIDS!" implores Mark Ruffalo as journalist Mike Rezendes to Michael Keaton's Robby Robinson, his editor, in *Spotlight*. What begins as a *Boston Globe* investigation into a single priest's sexual assaults against children soon balloons into an exposé about widespread abuse within the Boston Archdiocese.

Journalists are in some ways the historians of the present. This movie is at its best when director Tom McCarthy meticulously details the Spotlight team's archival research, leading to its groundbreaking story. Powered by a cast including Liev Schreiber, Rachel McAdams, John Slattery and Brian d'Arcy James, *Spotlight* has been called the best newspaper movie since *All the President's Men* (1976). *Spotlight* is better.

***The Big Short* (2015)**

Unless you are 5 years old or so, reading this at home or at work, you have lived through

the worst financial depression since 1929. Director Adam McKay, working from a book by journalist Michael Lewis, manages to chronicle the downfall of the American mortgage market via a combination of humor and bewilderment. Several films emerged about the economic crisis during this period, namely *Margin Call* (2011) and *Too Big to Fail* (2011), but none are as imaginative as *The Big Short*. (A genius move of McKay's is to intersperse the film with fourth-wall-breaking actors to explain complicated financial jargon. Anthony Bourdain hawking halibut stew to define Collateralized Debt Obligation? Yes, please.) Harkening to the straight comedy *Trading Places* (1983) years before, the film manages to be both a critique of capitalism and greed, while the central characters all attempt to get rich in the meantime. McKay's light touch over such a heavy topic makes *The Big Short* the cinematic equivalent of a velvet jackhammer.

***13th* (2016)**

The heart of superb, historical film may always be the documentary. DuVernay's *13th* is a powerful dissection of race, class, law, and power in the years following slavery's abolition. Drawing upon commentary from activists and scholars such as Angela Davis, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Van Jones, Kevin Gannon, Michelle Alexander, Khalil Muhammad, and others, the film shows how local and federal laws continue to exploit a loophole in the 13th Amendment to keep African-Americans in a system of mass incarceration and disenfranchisement. *13th* is a gut punch to the assumptions of American freedoms and opportunities, and a needed one. There is no more powerful film made in the past decade.

***Black Panther* (2018)**

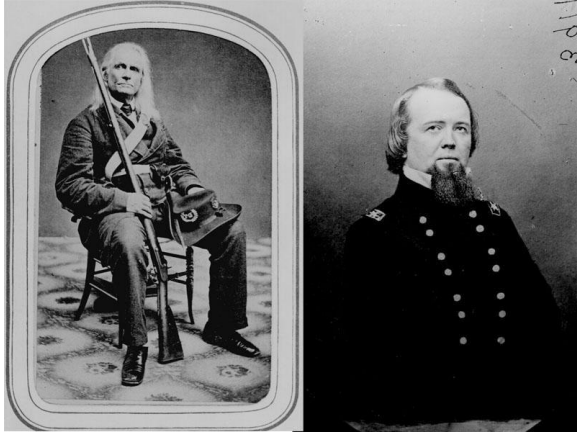
Good histories connect our past to our present. The best histories not only link us to the generations who came before, but imagine a better future based upon learning from these experiences. The Marvel movie is rife with African history—its visual and musical stylings call upon African arts and traditions to assert the centrality of the African past in the global present. *Black Panther* wrestles with real questions—how do we as a global society come to terms with centuries of African slavery and racial inequality? What steps do we make from here? Writers Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole pull no punches in addressing the effects of European colonialism on the African continent and its diaspora. The hero, T'Challa, and the villain, N'Jadaka (Eric "Killmonger" Stevens) represent opposing responses to the crisis of colonialism. His victory complete, T'Challa closes the film with an assertion of black power—and black permanence—on the world stage. *Black Panther* dreams of an African utopia, but for American audiences, the promise of black equality emerging from its own complicated history remains.

Jason Herbert is a doctoral candidate in American History at the University of Minnesota and instructor at The Pine School in Hobe Sound, Florida. He is also the creator of Historians At The Movies (#HATM), a weekly film session that connects historians and the public across the world. You can find him on twitter at @herberthistory.

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Archaeologists Find Hair Dye Bottles Used by Self-Conscious Civil War Soldiers Posing for Portraits

Hair-do it for the gram



Some soldiers (although not necessarily the ones pictured here) dyed their lighter locks to avoid appearing washed out in photographs. (U.S. National Archives)

By Katherine J. Wu smithsonianmag.com
December 5, 2019

From 1861 to 1865, the Civil War tore the United States asunder. But while the country may have been consumed by conflict, new research suggests soldiers off the battlefield still made time for a wee bit of vanity.

Archaeological excavations at Camp Nelson—a former Union outpost in central Kentucky—have unearthed broken bottles that once held hair dye likely used to darken light-toned locks that might otherwise wash out as gray or white in photographs, reports Jeff McDanald for the *Lexington Herald-Leader*.

The bottles represent a small selection of the many artifacts found at the site in 2015, when researchers unearthed the remnants of a 150-year-old photography studio—the first ever found at a Civil War encampment.

“I think it’s a really exciting find,” Bob Zeller, director of the Center for Civil War Photography, tells McDanald. “Now, we have an archaeological discovery of a Civil

War photo studio. As far as I know, it has not happened before.”

Camp Nelson, first established during the war as a Union supply depot, morphed into one of the war’s largest recruitment and training centers for African-American soldiers—many of whom shed their slavery upon enlistment, as Lyndsey Gilpin reported for the *Guardian* last year. Spurred by brewing tensions and hopes of securing their freedom, slave families traveled in droves to the site, which also served as a refugee camp for women and children.



Confederate General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard's prematurely-graying hair was alternately attributed to the stress of war or a dwindling supply of hair dye. (Matthew Brady/U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

Sprawling over some 4,000 acres, the site hosted thousands of people from all backgrounds. New residents quickly found community in the tiny town—complete with taverns, a bakery, a prison and a post office—that sprang up on Camp Nelson’s flanks. The local industry grew enough to sustain a portraiture business run by a young photographer named Cassius Jones Young, the researchers found, as evidenced by the bits of picture frames, glass plates and chemical bottles strewn throughout the soil.

The team was surprised to discover shards from bottles that once held rich dyes likely used by portrait sitters to darken their hair, Stephen McBride, Camp Nelson's director of interpretation, tells McDanald.

"We found a lot of [the bottles]," McBride says. "It's something you just don't find on other sites."

During the Civil War, photography was undergoing something of a boom, as soldiers scrambled to immortalize themselves in images sent to loved ones as fond mementos or commemorations of their service.

"Being a soldier was and is a special status associated with manhood, bravery and honor," McBride explains to McDanald. "The portraits and the identifying stencils were important to the men to illustrate their status as both men and soldiers at that moment, but also for posterity, as they could soon be wounded or killed."

The looming threat of death certainly upped the ante on taking the perfect portrait. Soldiers wanted to look their best—even if it meant exaggerating certain aspects of their appearance.

That's where the dye comes in, though its popularity can't be blamed entirely on vanity. In the 1860s, the commercialization of color photographs was still decades away, and black and white images tended to exaggerate blonde-ish hair into gray or even white. To avoid accidentally aging themselves, soldiers in front of the camera may have used dyes to wage war—not against the Confederates, but against the ghastly pallor of their own luscious locks.

The catch? There were no Instagram filters to save soldiers when the pigments ran out. Photos of Confederate General Pierre

Gustave Toutant Beauregard show his hair grayed within a year of the Civil War's start. While some attribute the change to stress, others have speculated that the military man's dye supply ran dry when the Union navy began to throttle Confederate ports.

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Mark Your Calendars for a Year's Worth of Special Events from the American Battlefield Trust

Planned events include continuing education for teachers, living history demonstrations, family-friendly gatherings and member conferences

By Mary Koik, January 2, 2020

(Washington, D.C.) — Just in time to fill the new calendars received by history lovers this holiday season, the American Battlefield Trust has announced its 2020 slate of member and educational events. From its acclaimed National Teacher Institute to exclusive member gatherings to public access and living history demonstrations at important historic structures, the Trust offers something for everyone in the coming year.

"We hope that longtime friends and newcomers to the world of battlefield preservation will join us at exciting events in the coming year," said Trust president James Lighthizer. "If you love American history, you will love the gatherings hosted by the American Battlefield Trust."

Scheduled 2020 events include the following. Note that event details are subject to change; please visit www.battlefields.org/events for the latest information.

Public Events

Please note that advance registration or applicable fees may be necessary for these events.



Matt Brant

Park Day at sites nationwide, April 4, 2020: Join fellow volunteers at a battlefield, museum or historic site near you to help perform critical maintenance projects.

Annual Conference in Chantilly, Va., June 3–7, 2020: Hundreds of history lovers come together for a weekend of exciting tours and exclusive speakers. Registration is now open; tour selection begins soon!

National Teacher Institute in Mobile, Ala., July 9-12, 2020: Some 160 educators gather for an acclaimed continuing education and training conference, provided free of charge and with travel scholarships available.

Pop-Up Battlefield Tours

These informal pop-up tours featuring Trust historians are designed for members who donate at least \$100 annually.

Wilson's Creek, Mo., on March 7, 2020: Explore one of the first great battles of the War and the largest engagement ever fought in Missouri. Note: for our first-ever Western Theater Pop-Up, we are waiving membership restrictions: This event is open to all!

Yorktown, Va., on April 18, 2020: Explore the battle that turned the world upside down and secured American victory in the Revolutionary War.

Gettysburg's Seminary Ridge, April 25, 2020: The Trust has preserved key aspects of this landscape, including the building used as Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's headquarters.

First Day at Chancellorsville, Va., May 2, 2020: A tour of an iconic Trust-protected property to mark the 157th anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville.

Slaughter Pen Farm, Va., on October 10, 2020: Join Trust historians for a visit to the site of the Battle of Fredericksburg's decisive engagement.

Generations Events

The Trust's family-friendly Generations programs are designed to help history lovers pass on their passion for the past to children, grandchildren and other younger people. Advance registration may be required.

Yorktown, Va., on April 18, 2020: Explore the battle that turned the world upside down and secured American victory in the Revolutionary War.

Slaughter Pen Farm, Va., on October 10, 2020: Join the Trust for a visit to the site of the Battle of Fredericksburg's decisive engagement.



A dramatic sky highlights the recently restored Lee's Headquarters building in Gettysburg, where the lawn and fruit orchard are now well-established.

Lynn Light Heller

Lee's Headquarters Openings and Demonstrations

The Trust purchased and restored the building used as Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's headquarters at Gettysburg. It is open to the public on select days in cooperation with the Seminary Ridge Museum, as well as hosting weekend living history demonstrations.

June 5, 12, 19 and 26 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.: Open through the Seminary Ridge Museum.

June 26–27, 2020: Union Artillery living history demonstration weekend.

July 4–5, 2020: Confederate Artillery living history demonstration weekend.

July 3,4,5, 10, 17, 25 and 31 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.: Open through the Seminary Ridge Museum.

August 7, 14, 21 and 28 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.: Open through the Seminary Ridge Museum.

December 12, 2020: Lee's Headquarters holiday Open House.

Exclusive Member Events

The Trust hosts a pair of invitation-only gatherings for members of the Color Bearers, our major donor society.

Thank You Weekend in Savannah, Ga., February 7–9, 2020: Guests will explore the one of the nation's most historic and beautiful cities. This popular event is currently waitlisted.

Grand Review in Richmond, Va., October 23-25, 2020: A weekend of tours and fellowship exclusively for Brigade Color Bearers and higher.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 52,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

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Congress Gives America's Endangered Battlefields a Major Boost in Federal Funding Bill

Bipartisan bill includes \$18 million for protection of historic battlefields, along with new program to enhance visitor experience at these shrines to American valor and sacrifice

Jim Campi, Mary Koik,

December 19, 2019

(Washington, D.C.) — The American Battlefield Trust today applauded passage of FY2020 Appropriations legislation by the House and Senate this week, as the measure awaits the signature by the President. This annual federal funding bill includes \$18 million in federal funds for battlefield preservation, along with a new grants program to restore, rehabilitate and interpret these hallowed battlegrounds.

“This is a banner day for all those who care about American history,” said Trust president James Lighthizer. “Not only does this legislation provide for critical battlefield land acquisition grants, it creates matching funds for their restoration and interpretation of these historic landscapes. Perhaps most important, its passage and enactment demonstrate continued bipartisan support in Congress for protection of these national treasures. I am deeply thankful for the many legislators whose strong support made its passage possible this holiday season.”



Included in the law is the largest-ever appropriation — \$13 million in FY2020 — to the American Battlefield Preservation Program’s Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program, a matching grants program administered through the National Park Service that encourages private sector investment in historic battlefield protection.

Since the program was first funded by Congress in FY1999, it has been used to preserve more than 32,000 acres of battlefield land in 20 states, including land associated with some of the most famous engagements in American history. The legislation further includes nearly \$5 million for use by the National Park Service to acquire inholding parcels for incorporation into battlefield parks, notably at Virginia’s Petersburg National Battlefield and North Carolina’s Guilford Courthouse National Military Park.

In addition to the funding packages for next fiscal year for Interior and other federal departments, the so-called “minibus” bill passed by Congress also included the Preserving America’s Battlefields Act (HR 307; S. 225), which reauthorizes the Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants Program through FY 2028 at \$18 million annually — a recognition of the tremendous successes achieved through this public-private partnership. A truly bipartisan bill, it acquired 101 co-sponsors — 51 Democrats and 50 Republicans — in the House of Representatives and seventeen cosponsors in the Senate. Moreover, for the first time, similar matching grant streams will be made available to assist in the restoration and interpretation of protected battlefield landscapes; up to \$1 million will be available in each category annually.

“That this measure received such tremendous support speaks volumes about the significance that a preserved and interpreted battlefield can hold,” said Lighthizer. “They are outdoor classrooms for those who seek to learn about our past. They are memorials to the service and sacrifice of America’s military. They are pristine open space and economic engines via heritage tourism.”

The Trust thanks Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and Representative Jody Hice (R-Ga.) for their leadership on the Preserving America's Battlefields Act, as well as Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chair and Ranking Member Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Natural Resources Committee Chairman and Ranking Member Representatives Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Rob Bishop (R-Utah); Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Ca.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.); Senate Appropriations Chair and Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Ranking Member Tom Udall (D-N.M); Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.); House Appropriations Committee Chair and Ranking Member Representatives Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) and Kay Granger (R-Texas); Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Chair and Ranking Member Representatives Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) and Dave Joyce (R-Ohio); and Reps. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), Bobby Scott (D. Va.) and Donald McEachin (D-Va.). These historic legislative achievements would not have been possible without the continued support of these members in particular.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 52,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

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Could modern medicine have saved Abraham Lincoln?

Abraham Lincoln was shot at point-blank range on 14 April 1865 by John Wilkes Booth. Would modern medical practices and resources have been able to save Abraham Lincoln after his fateful trip to the theatre in 1865?



April 15, 2019 at 10:28 am

Abraham Lincoln was shot at point-blank range on 14 April 1865 by John Wilkes Booth, wielding a Philadelphia Derringer pistol. The bullet entered his head just under his left ear, went through his brain and lodged just behind his right eye. He immediately lost consciousness and lived for about eight hours. His doctors correctly said he could not be saved, given the state of medicine and surgery in 1865. There were then no possibilities of intensive care, with IV drips, assisted ventilation and steroids to reduce the cerebral swelling.

The bullet's trajectory probably spared Lincoln's frontal lobes and his vital brain stem areas. He would have sustained damage to his cerebellum, the area of the brain that controls movement, and we can never know what other brain structures might have also been damaged.

However, modern medical interventions could have kept Lincoln alive for a while, and brain scans might have allowed his doctors to assess the precise extent of damage. Had he survived the immediate aftermath, modern neurosurgeons could have assessed whether removal of damaged tissue, and possibly the bullet itself, would have helped him.

Whether his quality of life could have been partially restored is another, separate question, and one we simply can't answer.

This Q&A was answered by William Bynum, emeritus professor of the history of medicine at UCL, and first appeared in the May 2013 issue of *BBC History Magazine*