



Medal of Honor for Two of Andrews' Raiders

By Stephen Davis, ABT, Sep 16, 24 Updated Dec 21, 2024



Medal of Honor.

On July 3, President Biden at the White House bestowed Medals of Honor to descendants of two Union soldiers who had participated in the daring Andrews' Railroad Raid.

The raid is a staple of Civil War folklore. In April 1862, James J. Andrews and another civilian, William Campbell, were joined by a dozen-and-a-half soldiers of the 2nd and 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiments on a dangerous mission into Rebellom.¹ Near Chattanooga, they were to slip behind enemy lines, make their way toward Atlanta and at a station north of the city, seize a train and speed north, burning bridges, tearing up track and cutting the telegraph along the way. Union Brig. Gen. Ormsby Mitchel approved the plan, hoping it might help in his proposed move against Chattanooga.²

On April 12, at Big Shanty (today's Kennesaw) Andrews and his men seized a locomotive, tender and three empty boxcars, then steamed north. They were immediately pursued. After an eighty-seven-mile chase, the raiders were captured. Eight of the twenty were tried and hanged as spies

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(Andrews among them). The rest escaped or were exchanged.³

During 1863-64 the U.S. War Department awarded Medals of Honor to nineteen Andrews Raiders. (Andrews and Campbell, civilians, were ineligible.) For some reason two raiders, Pvts. George Wilson and Philip Shadrach, were overlooked.⁴



Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III hosts the Hall of Heroes Induction Ceremony of Private Philip G. Shadrach and Private George D. Wilson, U.S. Army, at The Hall of Heroes in the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., July 4, 2024. The privates were awarded the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for their extraordinary heroism while participating in a covert military operation 200 miles behind Confederate lines on April 12, 1862. (DoD photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jack Sanders)

This rankled Private Shadrach's great-great-great nephew, Ron Shadrach, who a few years ago enlisted the help of Bradley Quinlin, a Civil War authority in Suwanee, Ga. Shadrach had been trying since 2008 to secure a Medal for his ancestor, but apathy and bureaucratic hoops got in the way. Quinlin, 70, is co-author of *Duty Well Performed: The Twenty-first Ohio Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War* (2011); nine of the Andrews Raiders served in the regiment. Quinlin enlisted the aid of his congressman,



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and after twelve years of bureaucratic delays, with Shadrach he pushed the project through the Pentagon. (Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin had to approve the Medal.)⁵



Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III hosts the Hall of Heroes Induction Ceremony of Private Philip G. Shadrach and Private George D. Wilson, U.S. Army, at The Hall of Heroes in the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., July 4, 2024. The privates were awarded the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for their extraordinary heroism while participating in a covert military operation 200 miles behind Confederate lines on April 12, 1862. (DoD photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jack Sanders)

Finally, the Medal ceremony was planned for the White House. President Biden has in recent years bestowed the Medal of Honor to servicemen who fought at Mogadishu; on Monday, July 3, he presented Medals to descendants of two Union veterans of the Civil War.

“It’s a long time in coming,” he began. Mr. Biden described the Medal: star-shaped, made of copper, coated in bronze. “At first, it was called the Army of Medal of Honor,” he continued. “In time, to capture the full capacity of our Armed Forces it became

known simply as the Medal of Honor. Today, it is our nation’s highest honor.”

The President explained that all of the Andrews Raiders had received the award, except for two, George Wilson and Philip Shadrach. “Today, we right that wrong,” he continued; “Today, they finally receive the recognition they deserve.”

Assuming the role of history professor, President Biden spoke about the service of Privates Wilson and Shadrach with the 2nd Ohio.

Folks, it was April 7th, 1862. James Andrews, the Union spy, who regularly sneaked behind Confederate lines, was preparing to lead a daring scheme. A group of two dozen soldiers, including George and Philip, would travel 200 miles deep into Confederate territory and steal a Confederate chain—a train near Atlanta and drive it north to Chattanooga, just over the Georgia border, which Union troops were preparing to capture—that is, Chattanooga. Along the train journey, they would destroy enemy bridges, railroad tracks, telegraph lines, disrupting communications and vital supply lines, sabotaging the railroad that the Confederate Army used to move troops.

President Biden went on to relate how the raiders attached three boxcars to the locomotive and tender they had seized. He mentioned the rain that hampered the raiders’ efforts at bridge-burning, as well as the pesky southbound trains that slowed them down. “They almost made it to [out of] Georgia, but about 15 miles from Chattanooga, they ran out of fuel, and the Confederates closed in.”



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Some of the captured raiders were lucky, and either escaped or were exchanged. “The rest, including Philip and George, were tried as spies and both sentenced to death.”

“Their heroic deeds went unacknowledged for over a century, but time did not erase their valor,” President Biden declared. “And what they fought for was just as precious as it is today: unity over disunity, freedom over subjugation, progress over retreat, truth over lies.” Accepting the awards on July 3 were Gerald Taylor, great-great-nephew of Private Shadrach; and Theresa Chandler, great-great-granddaughter of Private Wilson.⁶

More than 3,500 Medals of Honor have been awarded since President Lincoln signed the bill creating the Army Medal of Honor in July 1862.⁷ Almost half went to Union veterans of the Civil War. Soldiers of the Indian Wars, World War I (126 recipients), World War II (471, 273 of them posthumously), and America’s other conflicts have received the Medal of Honor.

“It’s so important to know our history,” President Biden affirmed in his closing remarks. Tracing the history of the Medal of Honor—and for us Civil Warriors, the 1,522 Union veterans who received it—help us remember what courage is all about.

Endnotes

1. James G. Bogle, “The Great Locomotive Chaseor, The Andrews Raid,” *Blue & Gray*, vol. 4, no. 6 (July 1987), 12.
2. Russell S. Bonds, *Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase and the First Medal of Honor* (Yardley PA, 2007), 34-35.

3. Stephen Davis, “Andrews Raid” in John C. Inscoe, ed., *The Civil War in Georgia* (Athens GA, 2011), 66-67.
4. Bonds, *Stealing*, 322, 325.
5. Phone conversation with Mr. Quinlin, July 5, 2024.
6. The White House, “Remarks by President Biden at Presentation of the Medal of Honor to Army Private Philp G. Shadrach and Private George D. Wilson,” delivered in the East Room, July 3, 2004.
7. Bonds, *Stealing*, 308.

Stephen Davis has been writing about the Civil War for a long time—“since Jesus was in third grade,” he contends. He served as General Editor for The Reminiscences of General M. Jeff Thompson (Morningside, 1983), and from 1985 to 2005 worked as Book Review Editor for Blue & Gray Magazine. He is author of Texas Brigadier to the Fall of Atlanta: John Bell Hood (2019) and Into Tennessee & Failure: John Bell Hood (2020). With Bill Hendrick he wrote The Atlanta Intelligencer Covers the Civil War (2022).

His next book, Confederate Triumph Volume One: 1861, begins his counterfactual narrative of how the South won the war. It will be out this summer.

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Senate Passes Crucial Federal Battlefield Preservation Initiatives

Jim Campi, Claire Barrett, ABT December 20, 2024



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(Washington, D.C.) — On Thursday, the U.S. Senate passed the American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act (H.R. 3448), a bipartisan reform bill sponsored by 67 Senators and Members of Congress. The bill strengthens the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), a public-private initiative administered by the National Park Service that encourages preservation of historic battlefields. The legislation, passed as part of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act (EXPLORE Act - H.R. 6492), refines an already successful grant program, going even further to ensure the preservation, restoration and interpretation of our nation's most hallowed battlegrounds.

“The ABPP Enhancement Act includes important reforms that will make battlefield preservation efforts throughout the nation faster and more efficient,” remarked Trust President David N. Duncan. “With the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution beginning in 2025, there is no better time to enact this important legislation to safeguard these historic treasures for future generations.”

Duncan was also quick to thank the lawmakers and committee chairs who championed the bill: “We applaud bill sponsors U.S. Representatives Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) and Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), U.S. Senators Tim Kaine (D-Va.) and Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.), along with House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) and Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Joe Manchin (D-W.V.) and Ranking Member John Barrasso (R-

Wyo.), for their hard work on behalf of this successful program.”

Since the ABPP land acquisition grant program was first funded in 1999, its matching grant awards have been used to protect more than 35,000 acres of hallowed ground in 20 states — including sites as diverse as the Revolutionary War battlefields of Bennington, N.Y., and Kettle Creek, Ga., and the Civil War battlefields of Gettysburg, Pa. and Glorieta Pass, N.M. Grants from the program compensate willing sellers for acquisition of the land.

“From Yorktown to Appomattox to the Pentagon, you can’t map America’s military history without Virginia,” said Sen. Kaine. “I’m glad to have worked with Senator Hyde-Smith to secure the Senate passage of our legislation to bolster the American Battlefield Protection Program because preserving these sites is crucial to ensuring that Americans can visit them and learn about our country’s history. I urge President Biden to sign it.”

This legislation strengthens the ABPP through several practical modifications: (1) allows non-profits and tribes to directly apply for ABPP grants, in addition to state and local governments; (2) expands eligibility of Battlefield Restoration Grants so they may be used to restore battlefield lands protected by state, local and tribal governments; (3) clarifies eligibility of identified Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefield lands for acquisition matching grants; and (4) creates a process for utilizing recent archaeological findings, technological advancements and authoritative research to determine the historic scope of battlefields, and help



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preserve battlefield lands currently considered ineligible for funding.

“Mississippi is home to some of our nation’s most significant and historic battlefields, and this legislation will make it easier to protect these hallowed grounds for future generations,” Sen. Hyde-Smith said. “Senator Kaine and I recognized that the American Battlefield Protection Program could be more applied to protect the sites where so many pivotal moments of American history took place. I look forward to this legislation becoming law.”

The House version of the bill was first introduced in May 2023 by Reps. Stefanik and Connolly, co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional Battlefield Caucus. It was unanimously passed in the House of Representatives in November 2023, before it was incorporated into the EXPLORE Act, which was also unanimously passed by the House in April 2024. The House Committee on Natural Resources, chaired by Rep. Westerman, and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, chaired by Sen. Manchin, were instrumental in the passage of the ABPP Enhancement Act.

“I am proud to have my legislation pass the Senate with bipartisan support, now one step closer to becoming law. My American Battlefield Protection Program Enhancement Act will ensure our many battlefields in Upstate New York, the North Country, and across our nation are preserved for generations to come,” said Rep. Stefanik.

“I was proud to join Congresswoman Stefanik to introduce this important legislation and I am thrilled to see it pass the Senate,” said Rep. Connolly. “This bill builds on the hugely successful American

Battlefield Protection Program and will allow us to better protect the history and legacy of battlefields in Virginia and across the country.”

“There is still much work to be done, but the ABPP Enhancement Act ensures that our nation's hallowed grounds, and their power of place, will be preserved for generations to come,” added Trust President David Duncan.

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American Battlefield Trust Launches \$100,000 Fredericksburg Fundraising Effort

Fight to save twice-hallowed ground coincides with battle’s 162nd anniversary

Jared Herr, ABT, December 12, 2024

(Fredericksburg, Va) — As Fredericksburg marks 162 years since the Civil War swept through the city’s streets, the American Battlefield Trust seeks contributors to fulfill its \$100,000 year-end payment requirement toward a 7.5-acre property once zoned for 34 townhouses.

“My team and I used to point to this very tract and promise each other that if it ever became available, we would be the ones to buy it. When I saw that it could be developed for townhouses, I was crushed,” said Trust president David Duncan. “Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we secured it. And now, by raising the needed funds, we can put it on the path to be saved forever.”

Trust officials negotiated a contract with the longtime owners that allowed for included regular installment payments to meet the



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\$1.5 million asking price — including the \$100,000 now due by year's end.

Located on the eastern side of Lee's Hill (or Telegraph Hill), these 7.5 acres were the site of artillery positions, observation areas, and command posts during two battles — December 1862 and the less-famous Second Battle of Fredericksburg in May 1863. Building 34 houses on this twice-hallowed land would destroy the sanctity of the land — paving and plumbing and digging basements and roads would be completely irreparable and rob generations to come of the irreplaceable history that unfolded on this land.

Urged by President Lincoln to move quickly against his opponents, newly appointed commander of the Army of the Potomac Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside arrived in Fredericksburg, Va., in December 1862. The ensuing battle was one of the largest and deadliest of the Civil War with more than 200,000 combatants and 18,500 casualties. It witnessed the first opposed river crossing in American military history, as well as some of the deadliest urban combat of the Civil War.

Gen. Robert E. Lee selected Telegraph Hill as his headquarters and an important artillery and observation point for the Army of Northern Virginia and much of the Confederate high command is documented to have been present. It was here that, despite the decisive Confederate victory, Lee uttered the famous phrase: "It is well that war is so terrible, otherwise, we should grow too fond of it."

Although overshadowed by simultaneous combat to the west at Chancellorsville, on May 3, 1863, Union forces overwhelmed the

Confederate rearguard at the Second Battle of Fredericksburg. Once the Union regiments seized Telegraph Hill, they placed their own batteries on Telegraph Road and shelled the Confederate position on Marye's Heights to the north. While the battery position is not known with certainty, these Union batteries may have overlapped with the 7.5 acres the Trust is working to save.

From a grassroots organization started by historians 30 years ago, the American Battlefield Trust has grown into one of the most successful private heritage land preservation organizations in the nation. The 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 58,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War, representing more than 160 sites in 25 states. Its 350,000 members and supporters believe in the power of place and the continued relevance of history as a means to fully understand our rights and responsibilities as Americans. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

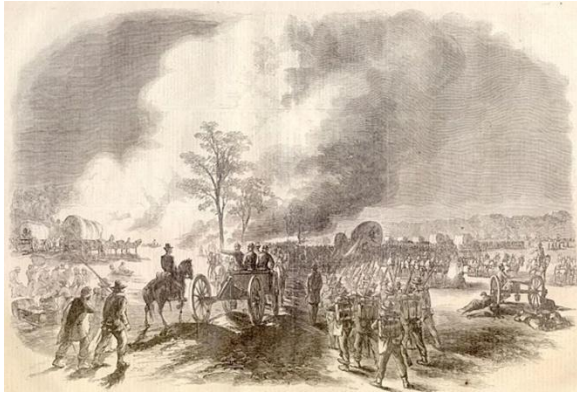
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Remembering the 23rd Georgia Infantry, CSA

Robert S. Davis, January 13, 2025,
blueandgrayeducation.org



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The 23rd Georgia Infantry first saw action in Virginia, participating in the defense of Yorktown. At the Battle at Seven Pines, which took place between May 31 and June 30, 1862, the regiment lost 80 men killed or wounded out of its 400 soldiers. | public domain

Most Civil War regiments have histories that go “forgotten.” Hundreds of such military organizations are chronicled in the encyclopedic works of Frederick H. Dyer, Stewart Sifakis, Joseph H. Crute, Jr., and others. Regardless of race—Black or White—an in-depth study of a regiment, battalion, or company reveals that each was as unique as the individuals who served, including, occasionally, women.

For example, Colquitt’s Brigade of the Army of Northern Virginia, Confederate States Army, is strikingly underrepresented in public history. Despite its heroic service, none of its six regiments has a comprehensive published history.

The 23rd Georgia Infantry, part of Colquitt’s Brigade, primarily drew its members from the Georgia mountains, a region known for its strong anti-war sentiments. Remarkably, this regiment had one of the lowest desertion rates in the Confederate Army.

Pickens County, Georgia, gave two companies to the 23rd Georgia Infantry,

even though many of its residents there raised a United States flag in protest of Georgia’s Secession in 1860. One resident wrote disparagingly of any Confederate companies being raised there.

The Hammontree family exemplifies the region’s divided politics. Like most of their neighbors, they owned no enslaved people. Sam Hammontree, a farmer in Pickens County, raised seven children on his mountain homestead. Later, he became a Georgia celebrity as one of the last surviving Civil War veterans, passing away on March 26, 1934—his 94th birthday.

Sam and his brother Stephen enlisted in the 23rd Georgia Infantry, while another brother, Sylvester, escaped to the North to avoid the war. The youngest Hammontree brother, William Nelson, joined the United States Army but later deserted to protect their elderly parents from the local Confederate home guard.

The 23rd Georgia first saw action in Virginia, participating in the defense of Yorktown. At the Battle at Seven Pines, which took place between May 31 and June 30, 1862, the regiment lost 80 men killed or wounded out of its 400 soldiers. Later, at the Battle of Malvern Hill on July 1, 1862, Sam Hammontree risked his life to retrieve Gen. Robert E. Lee’s telescope.



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Portrait of Brig. Gen. Alfred Holt Colquitt, from a Richmond newspaper in 1863. He became commander of Colquitt's Brigade with the Army of Northern Virginia. | public domain

The regiment endured brutal fighting at the Battle of South Mountain and held the infamous Miller's Cornfield at Antietam. Steve Hammontree, Sam's brother, died in that fight, where almost half of the brigade was killed or wounded.

After the Battle of Chancellorsville on May 2, 1863, over 800 Confederates soldiers, including members of the 23rd Georgia, were captured and paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.

Transferred south, the 23rd served on Sullivan's Island in Charleston Harbor. These men played a crucial role in the Confederate victory at the Battle of Olustee, Florida, on February 24, 1864.

Back in Virginia, Colquitt's Brigade fought in the horrific Wilderness Campaign and defended Petersburg in battles such as Cold Harbor, Drewery's Bluff, Fort Harrison, and the Crater.

When Wilmington, the Confederacy's last major port, faced imminent capture, Colquitt's Brigade sent to defend it. However, they were denied the opportunity to try to save Fort Fisher, which sealed the fate of Wilmington and hastened the Confederacy's demise.

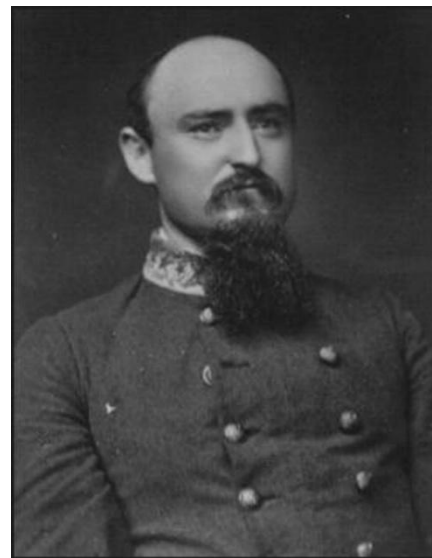
The brigade achieved a final victory at the Battle of Bentonville, repelling General Sherman's forces, but surrendered with the Army of Tennessee at Greensboro, North Carolina, on April 26, 1865.

What a remarkable record of service for the men of the 23rd Georgia Infantry!

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Was Confederate Brig. Gen. Hylan Lyon's Courthouse-Burning Campaign in Kentucky a Bold Strategy or a Burning Failure?

Hal Litchford, January 6, 2025,
blueandgrayeducation.org



Brig. Gen. Hylan Benton Lyon (1836-1907), CSA | public domain

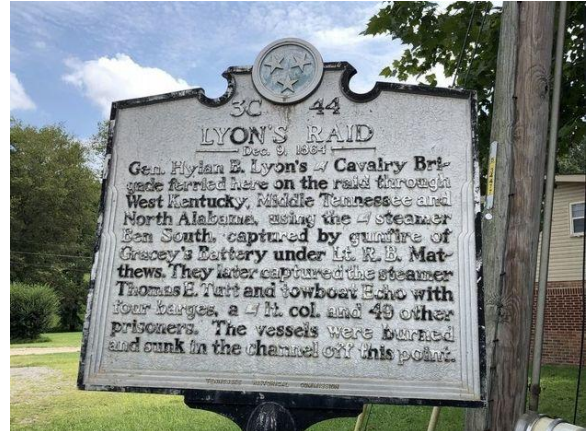


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One little-known aspect of Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood's Tennessee Campaign was his logistical planning in anticipation of defeating Union Gen. George Thomas at Nashville. As part of this broad geographical strategy, on November 20, 1864, Hood ordered Brig. Gen. Hylan B. Lyon, a Kentuckian, to lead a raid through Kentucky. The primary goal of the raid was to seize control of all gristmills north of Nashville, put them "in running order, and put them to grinding at once." Secondly, Lyon was directed to destroy the railroad between Nashville and Bowling Green, Kentucky, and to disrupt telegraph infrastructure. Hood's intent was for Lyon to operate in the Union rear, thereby enabling more aggressive Confederate maneuvers in Tennessee.

Lyon and his two brigades, totaling some 800 men and two howitzers (cannons), set out from Paris, Tennessee, on December 6. They reached Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on December 11, prompting the Union garrison to abandon the town. Lyon burned the county courthouse but allowed the citizens to remove the official county records beforehand. He justified the action by citing the building's use as a billet for Union troops. This pattern of burning courthouses—while sparing official records—continued throughout Lyon's raid, as he burned seven more courthouses that had been used to house U.S. soldiers. Lyon inexplicably made no effort at any point of the raid to seize much less operate any gristmills.



Lyon's Raid Historical Marker in Cumberland City, Tennessee | The Historical Marker Database

At Hopkinsville, Lyon divided his force, leaving one brigade behind while he led the other west to Eddyville, Kentucky, his hometown, where he visited his wife and son. Along the way, he burned the courthouses at Cadiz on December 13 and Princeton on December 15,

Union forces were not inactive. On December 11, General Thomas dispatched two of the three Federal brigades under Edward McCook's cavalry division to intercept Lyon and protect the Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad. McCook attacked at Hopkinsville on December 16, before Lyon's detachment could reunite with the other half of his command. In a sharp engagement, the Confederates were routed, but ineffective follow-up allowed them to escape largely unscathed. McCook remained at Hopkinsville with one brigade and ordered Col. Oscar La Grange to pursue with the other.

Lyon continued his raid, burning the courthouse at Madisonville on December 17. La Grange caught up with Lyon at Ashbysburg while his men were crossing the Green River. However, La Grange delayed



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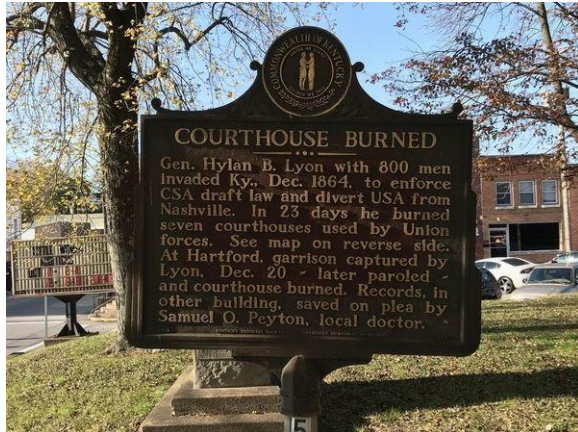
engagement, allowing Lyon's entire force to cross to the opposite bank. By systematically destroying all nearby bridges and boats, Lyon delayed La Grange's pursuit by two days.

In total, Lyon's men had covered over 400 miles in just 28 days.

Lyon failed the primary objective of securing and operating gristmills. While he achieved some disruption of railroad communications, it was minor and did not materially aid Hood's Nashville offensive.

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Derek Carter named superintendent of Monocacy National Battlefield



"Courthouse Burned" Historical Marker in Hartford, Kentucky | The Historical Marker Database

Taking full advantage of this head start, Lyon pressed on. Between December 20 and 23, his raiders burned courthouses in Hartford, Leitchfield, and Elizabethtown. They also destroyed trestles, blockhouses, bridges, and tracks along the L&N near Elizabethtown and Nolin. Additionally, they captured a train transporting convalescing Union soldiers from Nashville.



NPS Photo/Lauren Parry

On December 23, Lyon received word of Hood's defeat at the battle of Nashville. Realizing the raid had lost its purpose and facing rampant desertions among his Kentucky troops, Lyon began a southward retreat. As they withdrew, the raiders burned courthouses in Campbellsville and Burkesville. Lyon's force reached the Cumberland River and crossed it on January 3, 1865. What remained of his exhausted brigades eventually made their way through Middle Tennessee and returned to Alabama.

News Release Date: January 13, 2025
National Capital Region Office

WASHINGTON – The National Park Service (NPS) has named Derek Carter as the new superintendent of Monocacy National Battlefield in Maryland. Carter, a Maryland native, begins his role today, and brings decades of leadership experience and a deep connection to the area.



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Carter's career with the NPS includes serving as superintendent at Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument (Nevada), where he oversaw all aspects of park operations, including resource management, visitor protection, education, and facilities. He previously led Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (Colorado) and Curecanti National Recreation Area (Colorado) as superintendent and also served as deputy superintendent at Big Cypress National Preserve (Florida). Beyond the NPS, Carter's experience includes leadership roles in the U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets), the private sector oil and gas industry, and the nonprofit sector.

"Carter's professional experience with the National Park Service and with the U.S. Army strategically align with the history, purpose and priorities of the park," National Capital Regional Director Jennifer T. Nersesian said. "Derek's leadership qualities and analytical skills, experience with budget, strategic planning, park operations, and the military, prepare him well to serve as superintendent of Monocacy National Battlefield."

Growing up in Little Orleans, Maryland, Carter developed a lifelong love of history and the outdoors while hiking, camping, and visiting historic sites across the region.

"Returning to Western Maryland is truly special," Carter said. "I'm honored to lead Monocacy National Battlefield and excited to collaborate with partners, volunteers and the local community to enhance visitor experiences, increase recreational

opportunities and preserve the park's rich history."

Monocacy National Battlefield commemorates the pivotal Civil War Battle of Monocacy, known as "The Battle That Saved Washington." The park spans 1,649 acres of farmland, forests and riparian areas in the Monocacy Valley near Frederick, Maryland. Visitors can explore more than 10 miles of trails, enjoy birdwatching, learn Civil War history or simply connect with nature. In summer 2025, the park will host the 161st commemoration of the battle. Monocacy National Battlefield also preserves 51 historic structures, numerous archaeological sites and a museum with objects that bring history to life for visitors of all ages.

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Fort Pulaski National Monument release a Finding of No Significant Impact for Development Concept Plan



NPS Photo

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News Release Date: January 10, 2025

Contact: [Max Farley](#), 912-710-1283



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SAVANNAH, GA - Fort Pulaski National Monument finalized the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the park's recent Development Concept Plan and Environmental Assessment (DCP/EA) on January 7, 2025.

The Development Concept Plan and Environmental Assessment will provide Fort Pulaski with a consistent planning framework. Selected actions include:

- Establish new desired conditions for visitor use and experience, natural and cultural resources, and facilities and infrastructure.
- Relocate the entrance station and widen the entrance road.
- Improve visitor center parking and visitor safety.
- Improve picnic area Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) accessibility.
- Relocate Volunteer-In-Parks (VIP) campsites and construct a new building for maintenance, resource programs, and law enforcement staff and equipment.

The plan/EA also establishes visitor capacities for Cockspur Island. The signed FONSI and final DCP/EA is available under the Document List at:

ParkPlanning - Development Concept Plan and EA for Facilities and Infrastructure at FOPU

Fort Pulaski National Monument is located on U.S. Highway 80, 15 miles east of Savannah. For more information, please call the visitor center during business hours at



912-219-4233, email fopu_information@nps.gov, visit the park website at www.nps.gov/fopu, or follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FortPulaskiNPS

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Inside the Struggle to Preserve Georgia's Butler Island, Home to a Notorious Plantation

Descendants of people enslaved at the site are grappling with its complicated history while also honoring the region's rich culture



Major Pierce Butler, a U.S. senator representing South Carolina and an original signer of the United States Constitution, left the 1,500-acre rice plantation—and its enslaved laborers—to his grandsons when he died. For locals whose ancestors were forced to work there, it's considered a sacred place. Sheila Pree Bright

Photographs by Sheila Pree Bright, Text by Melissa L. Cooper, Smithsonian, January/February, 2025

The route that runs straight through Darien, Georgia, and cuts across the marshes, rivers and creeks along coastal McIntosh County



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leads to a historic site: Butler Island, a once vast antebellum plantation.

Drivers unfamiliar with this stretch of U.S. Highway 17 likely pay little attention to the remains of a 75-foot brick chimney that powered the old rice mill or the huge kiln nearby, both planted in the lush landscape of palmetto trees and marsh grass. The 1,500-acre tidewater plantation was originally purchased in 1793 by Major Pierce Butler, a signer of the United States Constitution whose grandsons—Pierce Mease Butler and John Mease Butler—inherited the property and the people enslaved there. Relying on agricultural knowledge passed down to them by their ancestors who honed their techniques in West Africa’s rice-growing region—stretching from present-day Senegal to Liberia—the captives on Butler Island waded through boggy and marshy fields, doing intensive, grueling work to produce the rice crop that made coastal planters rich. Today, all that remains to acknowledge the hundreds who maintained the residence and worked the land is a historical marker erected in 2019 that shares a brief story of the “Enslaved People of Butler Island.”

Dehumanization and suffering were inherent effects of slavery, and some of the agonies Butler Island’s enslaved population endured were [documented](#) by Frances Anne Kemble, Pierce Mease Butler’s wife, a well-known British actress who spent the winter of 1838-1839 on the plantation. (The couple typically resided in Philadelphia.) Absent any detailed testimonies from Butler Island’s enslaved residents, Kemble’s record singularly sheds light on the everyday conditions there. She recalls the pitiful sight of Black women in the property’s infirmary,

“most of them on the ground,” some “too ill to rise.” Kemble was stunned into the realization that “here, in their hour of sickness and suffering, lay those whose health and strength are spent in unrequited labor for us—those who, perhaps even yesterday, were being urged on to their unpaid task.” (Kemble became an outspoken abolitionist, which reportedly played a role in her 1849 divorce from Butler.) Through it all, the enslaved individuals on the Butlers’ plantation made families and a community, passing on what remained of their forebears’ traditions—such as hand-weaving baskets used to winnow rice—through the generations and adding more than captivity and suffering to the meaning of the place. That’s what made the events of March 2 and 3, 1859, especially catastrophic. To pay off gambling debts and financial losses, Pierce Mease Butler sold 436 Black people, a portion of those he enslaved on Butler Island along with some from his nearby Hampton Plantation, a major cotton-producing farm. The auction of enslaved people, held at Ten Broeck Race Course in Savannah, was among the largest in American history.





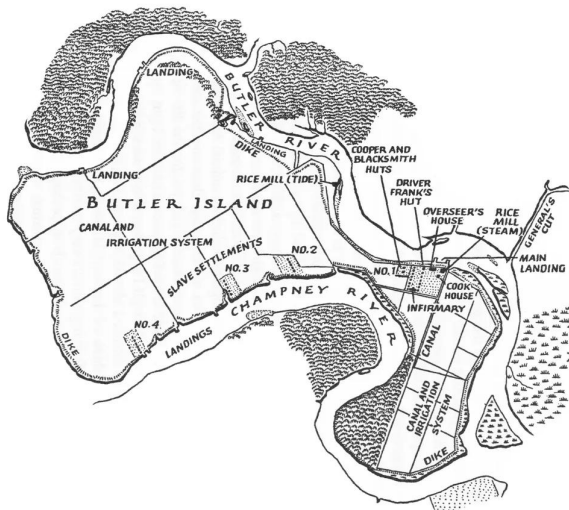
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The last remaining structures from the former plantation's rice-growing era, the 75-foot chimney of the steam-powered rice mill, built in 1833, and a nearby kiln. They stand as reminders of the free-labor economy on which America was built—and those who suffered under it. Sheila Pree Bright



*Located along two rivers, the land was a “muddy, slimy sponge,” in between earth and water; Frances Anne Kemble wrote in one entry of her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839*. Sheila Pree Bright*



*A map of Butler Island Plantation included in one 1984 edition of Frances Anne Kemble's *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian**

Plantation in 1838-1839. The University of Georgia Press / Public Domain

Anne C. Bailey, a historian and the author of a book about the auction, writes that the mass sale and its aftermath came to be known as the “Weeping Time,” ripping apart families and the community forged on the island, and scattering some of its members across the South. Moreover, not only did the Butler auction represent “a traumatic breach in family bonds” for those who were bought and sold, Bailey writes, but it also severed a link “between present and future generations.”

After the Civil War, the Butler Island Plantation would never again achieve the same scale of agricultural production. The Butler estate was passed down in the family until it was sold in 1923, becoming a vegetable and dairy farm before changing hands again. Today, the island is the property of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Descendants of those who remained on Butler Island after the auction consider it a sacred place for ancestral remembrance. “Down every road in McIntosh County there is some history,” says Eunice Moore, an 85-year-old lifelong Darien resident who believes her ancestors were once enslaved on the Butler Island Plantation. A former member of Darien’s City Council and a representative on a local historic preservation board, Moore has advocated to keep Butler Island’s history alive. She is a regular honored guest at local Black history events and commemorations, dressed in African-style attire that, she says, “pulls my culture to me.”



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Eunice Moore has helped conserve the history of Butler Island and the surrounding region, including as a former member of Darien's City Council. One idea she proposed was to include the plantation as a stop on a Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor trail. "We need to have some recognition," she said. Sheila Pree Bright



The enslaved population of Butler Island lived in cabins that Kemble described as "shockingly dilapidated and overcrowded." At one time, Major Butler counted as many as 900 men, women and children as his property. For generations, families lived together on this land. Sheila Pree Bright



Wide, coiled sweetgrass fanners were used to winnow rice, which involved pounding and tossing it from one basket to another to separate the grains from the husks and chaff. Today, these hand-woven items are popular in markets throughout the Lowcountry. Sheila Pree Bright

For residents descended from people enslaved on Butler Island and other Lowcountry plantations, the customs of their ancestors are instilled in their culture. They point to hand-woven sweetgrass and palmetto baskets, rice fanners, intricately crafted fishing nets, musical customs such as the ring shout (singing spirituals while keeping the rhythm by pounding a stick and marching in a circle), spiritual traditions such as baptismal "seeking" rituals, and patterns of speech and syntax that can all be traced back to African influences and a culture sometimes known today as Gullah Geechee.

Amy Lotson Mitchell, another coastal Georgia native, has been a key figure in preserving local Black history. She calls herself a "memory keeper." Born and raised in St. Simons, a nearby island settled by members of the emancipated Black community from local plantations, Mitchell is now the historian for the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition. She was instrumental in saving the historic Harrington School, a one-room structure



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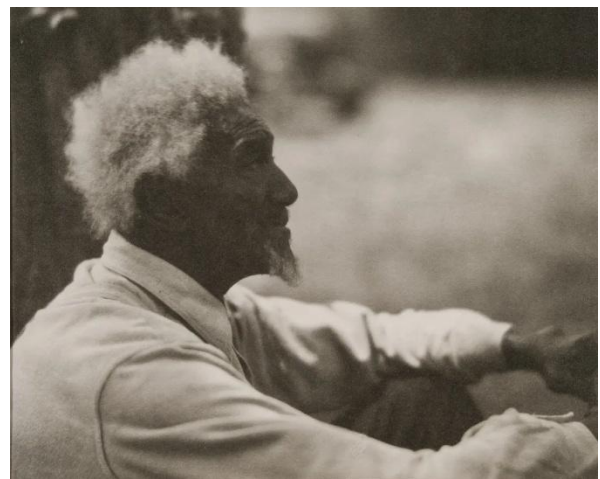
built on St. Simons in the 1920s to serve three Black communities. A few years ago, she published a book, co-written with historian Patrick J. Holladay: *Gullah Geechee Heritage in the Golden Isles*. The old rice plantation on Butler Island also has personal significance for Mitchell—her paternal ancestors are from McIntosh County and may have been enslaved there. She says all Black Americans, not just those with family ties to the plantation, should learn about it: “Our people need to know what struggle we had.”



According to locals, servants who were seemingly loyal to the people who enslaved them were sometimes honored in death with headstones for their graves. Many other burial plots were left unmarked. The inscription of this stone, a replacement for the worn original, for Sambo Swift (1811-1884) reads, “Sorrow vanquished. Labor ended. Jordan passed.” Sheila Pree Bright



Amy Lotson Mitchell displays a hand-woven basket made from sweetgrass. Africans who survived the Middle Passage brought this skill with them to the Lowcountry and passed it down to their descendants for generations. The tradition is considered part of the Gullah Geechee culture of the region. Sheila Pree Bright



Recognized as the “last of the Butler slaves,” Liverpool Hazzard was born on the plantation in 1851, according to most records, and was never sold. An oarsman, he rowed in races that sometimes proved lucrative for Pierce Mease Butler. Clara E. Sipprell, Liverpool Hazzard—108 Years Old, ca. 1930, gelatin silver print, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, Purchase through gift of The



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Dorothea Leonhardt Fund of the Communities Foundation of Texas, Inc., P1984.1.88

For the communities around Georgia's coast, the struggle continues, as efforts to preserve local history have grown urgent. Residents face increasing challenges, not the least of which is their displacement. The encroachment of developers and the "heirs' property" crisis, which is marked by the forced sales of family homesteads passed down without a will, make the future of these culturally rich areas uncertain. Tax hikes and new proposed zoning regulations may also drive out residents hoping to preserve the area's history.

Other dangers also threaten these historically significant sites. In 2020, a bill put forward in the Georgia state legislature would have opened Butler Island and other heritage sites statewide to private sale. One proposal, which would have turned the plantation into a distillery, was protested by Butler Island descendants and preservation groups, including the recently formed Coalition to Save Butler Island Plantation & House. Moore was among those who fought against the sale. The bill died in the State Senate.



Joe Hazzard, the great-great-grandson of Liverpool Hazzard, is among the many descendants of Butler Island's enslaved. Many of

those who weren't sold and stayed on the plantation after the auction remained in the region after the Civil War and created tightknit Black communities along Georgia's coast. Sheila Pree Bright



Former co-owner of the New York Yankees T.L. Huston bought Butler Island in 1926 and built this mansion on the land a year later. Its entryway, marble fireplace and woodwork were signature features until the home was destroyed by fire in 2024, dashing preservationists' hopes of turning it into a museum. Sheila Pree Bright



The waterlogged remnants of dikes, once used to control and manage water necessary for rice cultivation, are still visible on Butler Island. The land is now the property of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and is available to the public for fowl hunting and other recreational activities. Sheila Pree Bright



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Then last summer, the 1920s-era mansion on the site was set on fire, allegedly by a burglar, and destroyed. Meanwhile, intensifying and damaging storms are battering coastal neighborhoods, and rising seas threaten to submerge Butler Island and other heritage sites.

But Moore, Mitchell and other leaders refuse to lose faith, vowing to continue to keep the memory of their ancestors alive. “Some of these things we can’t erase,” says Moore. “You might want to cover them up, but you can’t erase it. It’s still there.”

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The Remarkable Life of One of Boston’s Most Fervent and Daring Abolitionists

Harriet Bell Hayden is believed to have helped hundreds of people fleeing slavery from her Beacon Hill residence

Olatunji Osho-Williams, Staff Contributor, Smithsonian Magazine, January/February 2025



Harriet Bell Hayden National Museum of American History

Behind the heavy oak door of her two-story brick house, Harriet Bell Hayden kept rifles, kegs of gunpowder and even a secret tunnel. Her willingness to defend freedom-seekers made her and her home a linchpin of Boston’s Underground Railroad.

Born in Kentucky in 1816, Harriet Bell escaped enslavement in 1844 with her husband, Lewis Hayden, making their way to safety in Canada with the help of a white Northerner. But the antislavery cause brought the couple back to the United States two years later, and they settled in Boston’s Black and abolitionist neighborhood of Beacon Hill determined to make a mark.

Between 1850 and 1860, it’s estimated that Harriet sheltered hundreds of people fleeing slavery. In the evening, you might have found a table of men studying in her home, in one hand a book and “the other resting upon [a] pistol or knife,” as the Black journalist Pauline Hopkins wrote in a 1901 essay.

“Lewis and Harriet turned their home into one of the most active Underground Railroad sites in the city,” says John Buchtel, curator of rare books and head of special collections at the Boston Athenaeum.

Harriet made her home a hub for Boston’s prominent antislavery advocates: Harriet Beecher Stowe visited in 1853, as did John Brown in 1859, only months before his raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. She was also an early devotee of women’s suffrage.

Harriet died in 1893. In her will, she bequeathed her estate of nearly \$5,000 to establish a scholarship for Black students at Harvard Medical School—believed to be the only university bequest from someone who



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was once enslaved. The Lewis and Harriet Hayden Scholarship continues today.

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Was Cassville the Turning Point Sherman Never Planned?

Robert D. (Bob) Jenkins, Sr., December 30, 2024, blueandgrayeducation.org

*Editor's Note: Bob Jenkins is widely regarded as the leading authority on the Cassville Affair. His latest book, *The Cassville Affairs*, promises to reshape our understanding of the events surrounding the controversies at Cassville and fill significant gaps in its historical narrative. In this article for BGES, Bob sheds light on the previously misunderstood events that have surrounded the bizarre decisions that unfolded in Cassville, Georgia, on May 19, 1864.*



Bartow County Courthouse (1902) and Confederate Monument in Cartersville, Georgia. General Sherman's troops burned the first Bartow County Courthouse, built in Cassville, in 1864. | public domain

For more than 150 years, Civil War historians have remained baffled over the Cassville controversies. There are two conflicting versions of events: one from Confederate commanding Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and the other from Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood. But Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman pursued his own plans, leaving the Confederates "surprised" in the woods and fields of Bartow County, near Cartersville, Georgia.

At the heart of the Cassville affair were two Confederate dilemmas: first, whether to attack a portion of the Federal army in the morning; and second, once the morning attack was deemed unfeasible, whether to stay and fight the following day. Both decisions were the responsibility of Johnston, and both decisions involved advice and assistance by Hood.

On the morning of May 19, 1864, Johnston issued a General Order declaring the army's retreat had ended, and the time had come to turn and face the enemy. Yet, after a series of unforeseen developments, the Southern commander chose to withdraw from Cassville without engaging in a major fight.

Several factors played a hand in the decision to retreat from Cassville. Chief among them was the "fog of war," a term coined by military theorist Carl von Clausewitz to describe the uncertainty and chaos of battle that can disrupt even the best laid plans. As fate would have it, both accidental mishaps and enemy actions compounded to derail Confederate strategies at Cassville.

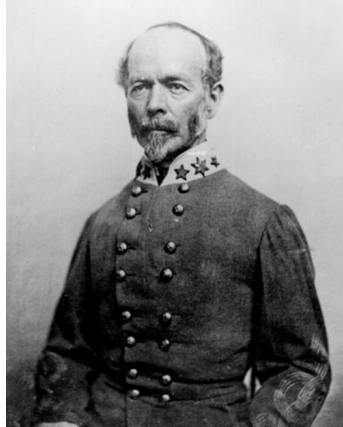
Due to an oversight in Confederate map-making, a key road was not properly identified, leaving the Confederate cavalry screen unable to protect Hood's column of



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infantry, which was marching to execute a flanking surprise attack on a vulnerable portion of the Federal army. This lapse allowed Brig. Gen. Edward McCook and his Federal cavalymen to penetrate the rear and flank of Hood's forces, unraveling the Confederate plan.



Gen. Joseph E. Johnston in uniform, ca 1862 | public domain

Additionally, Sherman had his eyes set on Kingston as the target of his army, not Cassville. Like spokes of a wagon wheel pointing toward the center, Sherman ordered his six infantry corps to converge on Kingston, with each column supporting the others as the widely scattered corps converged. As a result, Hood's intended target, Maj. Gen. John Schofield's XXIII Corps, did not march into the intended trap. Even if McCook's cavalry had not frustrated Hood's plan, the Confederate attackers would have been striking at air, for Schofield was not where they expected and when they had anticipated. In fact, Schofield and his corps would not arrive in the vicinity of Cassville until after 4 p.m., long after Hood's attacking force had abandoned the plan.

Cassville was supposed to be the site of a bold Southern counterattack, where Johnston and Hood would turn the tide on Sherman and reverse Confederate fortunes in Georgia, and with it the wider war. Instead, Sherman's decisions in the "fog of war" served to both successfully (and accidentally) prevent Schofield's force from being struck in a surprise ambush, and to successfully (and intentionally) thrust McCook's cavalry into the unsuspecting underbelly of Hood's marching column.

For 160 years, Johnston successfully deflected blame for the failure at Cassville, shifting the narrative to suit his legacy. But, as this new study has revealed, there was plenty of blame to go around.



*Bob Jenkins is a seasoned historian and tour leader for the Blue and Gray Education Society, as well as the Director of the BGES Field University. Specializing in sites associated with the Atlanta Campaign, he is the author of *The Battle of Peach Tree Creek: Hood's First Sortie, 20 July 1864*; and *To the Gates of Atlanta: From Kennessee Mountain to Peach Tree Creek*. Bob also serves as President of Save the Dalton [Georgia] Battlefields, LLC, and as Vice Chair of Whitfield County's Historic Preservation Commission. Through the efforts of these organizations, the county has acquired and opened Mill Creek Gap Park, Potato Hill Park, and Rocky Face Ridge Park.*