

In Camp on The Rappahannock

Special points of interest:

- The handouts are especially important--Please read them and act now.
- BGES preparing to turn over Zaworski, Paul and Naul tapes to Bearss' Archives
- BGES transcribing Revolutionary War tapes for third book
- BGES resources section of web site dramatically expanded--visit now

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Recession Buffets BGES Operational Changes Announced

I'm a believer—we are in a recession! You have previously fielded appeals from me as we work through the very corrosive effects of the recession. Our rudest shock was the impact on our educational programming. Seminar and tour registration has dropped dramatically and the concurrent loss of revenue has become tangible.

The Board of Directors met in March and approved a budget with severe cuts that nearly balances our 2009 operations fund. Special donations and projected revenues may allow us to show a slight operating surplus for the year but will still leave us in the hole as a result of a difficult year in 2008. While we expect the release of **Receding Tide**, to reduce some of that burden that event is at least 10 months away thus we were

forced to make some hard operating cuts for the next 12 months.

Angela has left our paid employment effective May 1st however, she has volunteered to give us six hours a week from her Danville home to do our book keeping. We wanted her to do 8 hours a week with pay; but, the 50 mile roundtrip she makes weekly was difficult for her and she was able to replace our offer with paid work in Danville. We appreciate her sacrifice, and generosity. I believe you will still see her and Eddie from time to time driving the support vehicle during tours.

Beth is also leaving Danville in mid June to move 200 miles up the road to Banner Elk, North Carolina where her husband is a college professor. She stayed with us for her son's senior year and is now



BGES has accepted the challenge to restore this flag. Read about it on p3

going back home. Beth voluntarily cut her hours to 20 per week in February to reduce our burden and she took another job. She will continue to work for BGES at least quarter time and perhaps more from NC with occasional trips back to BGES to meet recurring requirements.

Over objections from the board and staff, I have taken a substantial pay cut effective April 1st. While see page 3

BGES & South Carolina Historical Society to Partner

We are pleased to announce a partnership with the South Carolina Historical Society (www.southcarolinahistoricalociety.org) based in Charleston. Founded in 1855, the SCHS is the state's oldest historical society and its largest private manuscript repository. The SCHS's mission is to expand, preserve, and make

accessible its collection, and encourage interest and pride in the state's rich history.

The SCHS is housed in the Robert Mills Fireproof Building on historic Meeting Street. We have agreed to make BGES events a perk of membership in the SCHS and for BGES members to enjoy the opportunity to attend SCHS events at

member rates, enjoy member research privileges, and enjoy member discounts on purchases of Society publications and gifts.

Affiliation with the BGES enhances the SCHS's own tour program. Future plans include jointly sponsored programs. Watch our web site for more information and direct links

Ford's Theater Flags Hung: Dedication Planned for July 11th

Stunning is the only way to describe the renovated Ford's Theater and the centerpiece is the presidential box where Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14th, 1865. The display looks just as it did the night of the historic event. Integral to the rehabilitation are the three flags which the BGES members donated and which are now displayed. The two Union flags flank the box in the vertical position and the Treasury Guards' Flag is front and center where John Wilkes Booth caught his spur exiting the box after shooting Lincoln.

Over 100 BGES members and friends fulfilled the subscription to complete the project on time and budget. Indeed it was the strongest and largest response we have ever had to one of our projects. The project attracted appreciation and recognition from outside the organization and many contributions were received from people who were not members of the BGES but believed in the project.

The flags were delivered and



installed in February, just prior to the reopening of the theater. Executive Director, Len Riedel and member Jim Grant got a private tour of the theater in early March and had the chance to hold the flags while standing in the presidential box.

The National Park Service wants to thank the members of the

BGES with a formal dedication program on Saturday evening July 11th at Ford's Theater. Curator Gloria Swift and the park superintendent are working out the details which will arrive as a formal invitation to BGES members in early June. Gloria promises it will be worth your effort to attend and proportional to the level of your generosity in completing this program. We will try to arrange an additional program so that out of town members might feel the weekend trip will be worth making.

This project has importance beyond the obvious--this is a contribution to the world and the hundreds of thousands of visitors both international and American who will come to the site. Soon your contribution will be on display for the President of the United States and other dignitaries. Gloria has told me that the White House is planning a June presidential event. Unfortunately we aren't invited still not to worry—we all know that we did it. Way to go!

Promises Made and Promises Will Be Kept at Pamplin Park

The BGES has delivered its first installment of \$6,000 to Will Greene the CEO and President of Pamplin Historical Park for the 12 pounder, Confederate Napoleon artillery piece. We still owe \$4,000 to complete our pledge and a supplemental appeal will soon go out to the members.

The artillery piece, which is on display at Pamplin Park, is a full scale operating model that will be used as part of the Adventure Camps which Pamplin Park offers throughout the year. We think this was the missing piece in a solid and important public education program which PHP delivers to hundreds of students and adults each year.

In our last newsletter, I reported that BGES had reached 60% of its goal in fundraising. Many of you may remember the bottom fell out of the economy in early October just after

we had finished the publication and printed it. I unexpectedly went out on a sick leave that lasted three months. At the same time the same economic forces that affected us also hit Pamplin Historical Park which made catastrophic and draconian changes to their operations. This included laying off the majority of their staff and closing to visitation except by prior arrangement and with a minimum admission fee that would justify the opening of the park. These shock waves rocked the system as we all wondered if Pamplin Park might not return to operation.

However, I know Will Greene and what he has done for preservation over the past two decades and he didn't fold up his tents or go away. Instead he restructured the operations, solicited volunteers to man key parts of the park and announced plans to reopen and serve his primary constituency of

students and other group visitors. That plan was implemented and announced recently and the park has reopened on a modified basis.

Will has assured me that Pamplin Park will continue to fulfill its mission and it has reopened with a revised operation which reflects its current resources. Greene has caveated that should PHP decide to eliminate its Adventure Camp program or otherwise downscale its operations, BGES will have to opportunity to acquire the artillery piece and its carriage for \$10,000 which is the amount of the Pamplin contribution to the purchase. That would allow BGES to place the cannon at another location. I assured Will that this will aid us in raising the remaining \$4,000. BGES has also restructured and is revisiting its outstanding obligations. We will solicit the remaining money in June and July

BGES to Restore One of the Cary Flags

BGES and Memorial Hall Museum of New Orleans (also known as Confederate Memorial Hall) are teaming to restore one of the rarest of rare artifacts—one of the original prototypes of what would become the Confederate battle flag. It may be one of the most powerful artifacts in existence. BGES will raise and donate half of the estimated \$20,000 needed to restore it for permanent display in New Orleans. We expect the project to be done by the end of 2009 or early 2010.

There were no greater belles in the South than the Cary sisters and their social presence permeates the diaries of most influential writers of the Confederacy. They were lovely and popular. The flags, sewn by Hetty,

Jennie and Constance Cary, were developed early in the war in response to complaints about the confusion created on the battlefield at first Manassas. The Union Stars and Stripes and the Confederate Stars and Bars at a glance were easily confused. Following the battle, the commanding general PGT Beauregard made a request and the women set to work. Constance Cary wrote:

“During the Autumn of '61, to my cousins, Hetty and Jennie and to me was entrusted the making of the first three battle flags of the Confederacy. They were jaunty squares of scarlet crossed with dark blue edged in white, the cross bearing stars to indicate the number of seceded states. We set our

best stitches upon them, edged with gold fringe, and, when they were finished dispatched one to General Joseph E. Johnston, another to General Pierre Beauregard, and the last to General Earl Van Dorn. The banners were made from red silk for the fields and blue silk for the crosses.”

The resulting flags have mistakenly been called the stars and bars; however, the true identification is the Southern Cross or the Beauregard Battle Flag. Having just finished the flags at Ford's Theater this is a worthy and nonpartisan project. Some BGES members had the rare pleasure of seeing the flag during a private showing in December 2007. You will get more information during the summer.

BGES' Chatham Headquarters Opens to Visitors

The BGES move to Chatham took place in July 2008 and the property has fulfilled our greatest expectations. An attractive Victorian property it has held its character inside and out and has charmed BGES visitors, members and guests alike. It hosted its first board of directors meeting in March and is saving the organization money monthly.

BGES already owns a substantial interest in the HQ thanks to the generosity of a number of our members who donated or pledged in excess of \$70,000 towards an overall goal of

\$150,000. The recession has slowed the pace of fundraising for the HQ and has limited the ability of some of the donors to fully honor their pledges. We hope the recession will ease to the extent that we can execute our plans to retire the mortgage in three years time.

BGES currently holds an interest only 15 year note with a 3.25% rate. This is \$195 a month--\$200 less than we were paying for rent in Danville. Our principle note is \$73,500. None the less the \$2300 a year interest payment is still money away from our other

programs and we would like to liquidate the mortgage rapidly to retain those payments for BGES programs.

This is your headquarters and you are welcome to visit. We recommend you make arrangements before coming. We have a bedroom for you, a 3000 volume library and thousands of hours of taped tours and lectures for you to watch. We also have plenty of opportunities for you to donate some volunteer time to help us get some things done. Do we have a carpenter out there? How about a roofing and gutters person?

I will manage the Chatham office and continue to work approximately 48 hours per week plus programs. The other aspects of the BGES budget which must be modified include plans to automate and make more use of electronic communications. We may also go to a mobile phone system as a primary means of communications. This will allow us to reduce our phone bill which is currently near \$5000 per year. We hope to reduce it by as much as 40%. You will also receive a telecommunications survey in which we will ask you to seriously consider accepting email and other electronic means of communications to and from the BGES. This will reduce a nearly \$6000 annual postage bill by more than 50%. These changes can only work with your cooperation and I hope you will be open to the need..



Your BGES Headquarters Building at 9 Ridge Street in Chatham, Virginia

Great Leaders at Gettysburg Series

Looking for something different? Gettysburg is Gettysburg and then there are the “Great Leaders and Scapegoats of Gettysburg” series offered by the BGES. These carefully planned micro studies of key commanders are allowing participants to view the great battle through the eyes of people who played the key roles in the conflict. Past programs have studied Dan Sickles and James Longstreet. Future programs will include Robert E. Lee, Richard S. Ewell and JEB Stuart.

In June, we will examine the new Federal commander, George Gordon Meade and his handling of the crisis he was handed on June 28th, 1863. We will look at the battle through his eyes from his headquarters, through his rules of engagement and his mission

from the president. What resources did he have, how did he use them, how did he prioritize his tasks and how did he respond to changing circumstances. We will answer all these questions and more in a fast paced three day study led by Parker Hills and Len Riedel. This program will accept just two vans and the first is nearly full.

This is a great chance to visit the new Gettysburg park which has been restored to look as it did at the time of the battle. People, who haven’t seen it, are awe struck by the improvement and are much more able to understand the events that took place there on July 1-3, 1863.

Anyone who has been with Hills before knows his Powerpoint briefings are not to be missed and that

his site selections will uncover the overlooked by critically important stops that you can’t get on a normal tour of Gettysburg. Given that Hills has just finished his editorial work on Bearss’ **Receding Tide** book, participants will benefit from that currency and insight—having read the draft I can assure you that this narrative and program is going to be different from any at Gettysburg that you have ever experienced before.

An additional benefit of a trip there is a chance, for those who are interested, to participate in our Yellow Ribbon Tour for the Wounded Warriors from Walter Reed Army Medical Center which takes place on June 28th. So mark your calendars and plan to join us in Gettysburg—June 24-27. It will be special.

Spotsylvania Kicks off 2009 Wounded Warrior Program

On a perfect, warm spring day BGES and the Yellow Ribbon Fund delivered a perfect and informative program for a half dozen troops from Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Led by historian Jim Ginther from the USMC Archives staff at Quantico we visited Todd’s Tavern, Laurel Hill, Upton’s Attack, The Bloody Angle, Lee’s Final Defensive line and Harris Farm during a fast paced 6 hour trip.

Lunch was provided by Marie Riedel and the troops enjoyed home baked peanut butter cookies made by Annalise

Riedel (my excellent niece). The troops were supported on board by BGES members Ben Buckley, Vinnie Dimattina and Len Riedel. Each participant was presented a copy of Gordon Rhea’s seminal book on the battles from Spotsylvania Courthouse. It was a great time.

Dr. Dan Beattie will lead the next tour on May 9th to the site of the battle of Brandy Station. Beattie recently authored the first book written about the battle. Each soldier attending the program will receive an autographed

copy from Beattie. BGES licensed battlefield guide Bob Baker will lead a June tour to Gettysburg and July’s trip goes to Monticello and Montpelier.

BGES members from far and near continue to generously fund this program ensuring its continuity. A recent call to approximately 50 past donors practically filled the coffers for the entire 2009 schedule; however, we can always use more support and welcome any donations you may care to make. You can donate on line under projects or call us at 1-888-741-2437.

New BGES Library Brings Resources Together

One of the key features of the new BGES headquarters is the marriage of Executive Director Len Riedel’s 3000 plus volume Civil War library, an internet access point and the thousands of hours of video and audio tape of BGES tours and commercially produced video tapes, DVDs and cassette recordings in one location.

The 400 plus book feet of materials was recently delivered and stacked on the shelves in Chatham. This move not only increases our ability to respond to

questions about specific aspects of the war but when combined with BGES’ expanding resource section on line provides a mind boggling collection that is unparalleled in the region. Indeed BGES’ library is the largest Civil War library in the area and it rivals some at major research centers in Chapel Hill and elsewhere.

The library is one great reason to visit BGES headquarters and we hope you’ll come see us and use it.



Eight Part Vicksburg Campaign Study Offered Again

In Civil War literature there are seminal works which define certain campaigns--Bigelow's Chancellorsville; Castel's Atlanta, Hennessey's Return to Bull Run, Coddington's The Gettysburg Campaign and Gordon Rhea's four volume series on the 1864 Overland Campaign--and then there is Bearss' titanic three volume set The Vicksburg Campaign. While each is distinctive in its content and reability none faced quite the challenge accepted and mastered by Bearss. Taking a campaign for the control of the Mississippi River that started in early 1862, he presented in an orderly and cogent fashion in nearly 2700 pages the entire campaign.

Reading such a work is intimidating, understanding it is nearly

impossible unless you walk it in sequence. Until 2005, the best anyone could get was a three day tour that visited Grant's Canal and then went from Grand Gulf through the surrender.

In February we completed Baton Rouge and Port Hudson the final part of our 8 tour set. Using Ed's work, we spent a combined 31 days examining all the sites of the campaign in detail—with two parts conducted each year.

We are now ready to do it again improved by all the lessons from the prototype effort. You will benefit from the experience of your pioneering cohort. This program is a van tour restricted to 16 people total. Priority is given to those who plan to do the entire series, of which about 6 people did

the entire first set, and others who are now picking up the tours they missed. Indeed our first van is already filling.

In Part 1, Parker Hills and I will lead you on two important raids that set the strategy for the ensuing seven months—Nathan Bedford Forrest's West Tennessee Raid and Earl Van Dorn's Holly Springs Raid. Both took place in December 1862 and they collectively destroyed the Union supply depots and forced US Grant to a water based supply system.

This is a series that is singularly informative and excellent. If you are interested in going let us put you in touch with some of the graduates from the first cohort—they can sell it better than I can.

Bearss' Gettysburg and Vicksburg Book Update Receding Tide Draft Now in Editing Process

The first draft of **Receding Tide** has been completed and it looks awesome. We are in the editing phase right now and expect to complete the book within the next four months. *National Geographic* has set a tentative publication date of late Spring 2010. That is subject to adjustment as they refine their schedule.

Receding Tide is the story of the

relationship of the Vicksburg and Gettysburg Campaigns as seen through the analysis and presentations of Ed Bearss. Structured in a general sense like the best selling book **Fields of Honor**, the book is heavy in Bearss' narratives of the two campaigns as told on tours he has conducted for the BGES. In addition Ed has added important text to cover areas where he

has not previously done tours. Parker Hills has served as the copy editor.

We are planning a leather bound special edition of **Receding Tide** and as before BGES members will have the opportunity to be listed in the book as sponsors of the printing. Details will follow in the fall. In the meantime, make your gift lists and plan to stock up on another BGES keepsake.

Rare Medford Photographs on Display

BGES continues to enjoy an excellent relationship that expands with each passing month. Recently, BGES provided support to the Medford Historical Society as they opened a public display of some of their rare photographs. The presentation entitled "*Of the People: Faces of the Civil War*" was scripted by BGES' Mike Chesson at the request of Executive Director, Len Riedel for MHS. Mike is a professor of history at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

The two month exhibit runs from February until June at the Society's headquarters and was featured in the Boston Globe on March 8th. BGES was prominently mentioned and credited in both the article and in the support documents of the exhibit.

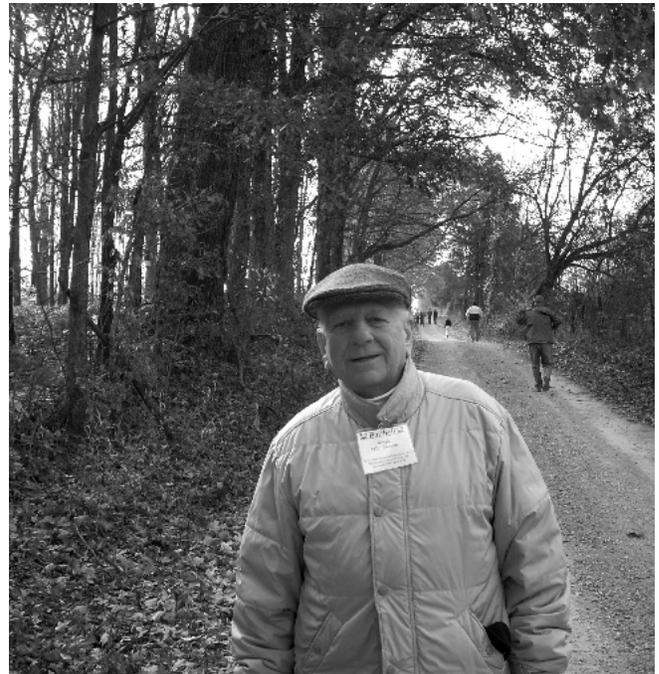
BGES is currently in discussions with MHS about several other supportive projects and we hope to have one or more announcements about additional joint projects in the later part of this year.



Rare photograph of Brevet Lt Gen Winfield Scott and staff. He was Commanding General of the Army



Our May Wounded Warriors Tour to Brandy Station brought us a wide ranging and appreciative group of participants. It was a beautiful day in the mid 80s. Dan Beattie was in fine form. We got great coverage in the local newspaper--we will try to put it on line at www.blueandgrayeducation.org



BGES member Barthell Joseph from Greenwood, Mississippi is one of the finest gentlemen you would ever want to meet. Here he is with us in Spring Hill, Tennessee last November. His contacts got us into Hood's Spring Hill headquarters--a site closed to the public.



Doris and Bob Teela joined us in Louisiana in February. Bob is frequently on BGES tours and Doris joins us for the meals. It is always nice to see them down from Illinois.



BGES members and guests will enjoy a warm welcome when they visit our headquarters in Chatham. The 1880 house has been authentically and caringly been finished in period furniture and paint to offer a refined and comfortable stay. Let us know when you plan to visit. The site is on the oldest road in Chatham and the town was known during the Civil War as Competation. Mock battles took place in the back yard and below the hill.



This is a small world and about two years ago some old friends from the original Civil War Society in 1987 found us. Velma and Frank Crawford from Illinois are the real deal--funny as can be, down home friendly and good historians as well. You would be lucky to know them.



Doug Waters from Texas is a generous supporter of both the BGES and the Friends of Raymond where he is a "General" level supporter! His company generously matches his generous gifts



The cohort at Baton Rouge for the final Vicksburg program enjoyed a special trip up to St. Francisville, Louisiana where Nathaniel Banks crossed the Mississippi River en route to the siege of Port Hudson. Benjamin Brand from Carlsbad, California is a frequent program participant and an active student.



Baton Rouge brought us many friends including from the left Mississipian Jim Hollandsworth (Banks biographer), Californian Frank Kendrick, Velma and Frank, and Brian Brown our lawyer from Arkansas. Here we are in the Cemetery where the Federal line broke at Baton Rouge.

THE BLUE AND GRAY EDUCATION SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER

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Ed Bearss and his cohort from Walter Reed Army Medical Center had a busy and exciting time following the path of John Wilkes Booth after being treated to a behind the scenes look at Ford's Theater which was still under remodeling at the time. This Thanksgiving Saturday program kept many a soldier and his family from being bored on the holiday.

A Trip to Walter Reed

In March I made a trip to Walter Reed to meet the key people in the Amputee Center as a means to improve our relations with this critical support unit. We came away with everything we needed including their unqualified support and advocacy. Already advertising of our programs has improved and soldiers are getting their reading books when they sign up. We will follow up with them a day or two before the tour to confirm their participation. We also got clearance and general blanket approval to schedule any program we wanted to put forth. It is a product of their excellent relationship with the Yellow Ribbon Fund and our single minded integrity. They even broke the code for us and said that our tours could be offered on a Friday which is occupational and recreational therapy day. An important distinction as BGES tours can now be credited for the outpatient therapy each soldier must do weekly.

What was most inspiring though was the private tour to the unit as the soldiers and their families worked through the multiple challenges of their new life with prosthetic limbs and the need to reenter the workplace. Words can hardly describe the honor it

was to see America's heroes preparing themselves for their next leadership role. I saw little bitterness just hope. I saw men and women pushing themselves to do that little something extra and the determination in their eyes as they struggled with their new "smart limbs." The clinics were everywhere and the soldiers were fully engaged. Working, sweating and in pain as they mastered another challenge—rock climbing, skiing, firing weapons and yes, preparing to voluntarily return to Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is an amazing world there filled with volunteers and highly trained and empathetic technicians helping these soldiers return to living. The Veterans Administration is there as are the various service caregivers. Prosthetic limbs plugged in and computerized, laboratories that examine the weight distribution and ambulatory traits of amputees to perfectly program the limbs to conform to their pre amputation posture. Hollywood specialists who could and do perfectly match the skin tone of the soldier's prosthesis with his or her normal skin tone. Each soldier getting hundreds of thousands of dollars in care to ensure they have a fair chance to compete

again wherever they go. But most of all it was the soldiers—I know what Jackson meant when he said of his foot soldiers "Who could not triumph with such men as these?"

The response of BGES members to our appeals for the soldiers has told us that you think this program is important. From my perspective as a retired Air Force officer let me say that it is practically impossible to understand combat unless you have been there--in 19 years I never experienced it and a good many of our current enlistees haven't either. Yet here near where Abraham Lincoln sought solace from the demands of the Civil War, American soldiers who have seen war are healing. We know the horror stories of mass amputations in the Civil War--limbs stacked outside surgeon's tents. We have seen how these casualties were treated and the crude pegs and stumps they were given for balance--it is heart warming to see the United States government and the scores of volunteers stepping up to the line to ensure that these who bear the burden of US foreign policy and who are on the front lines with their lives and bodies are being cared for and supported. BGES is honored to do our part—thank you.