

In Camp on The Rappahannock

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 3

SUMMER 2008

Special points of interest:

- Need a Gift? Bearss' Leather Book available for immediate shipment
- BGES' Needs to Raise Another \$4000 to Support Yellow Ribbon Tours
- BGES Now Owns HQ (see related story page 3)
- One time Chance to Study Revolutionary War in 4 programs

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At Pamplin Park You Can Hear the Guns: Thanks to BGES You Will Hear One More

One of the Civil War community's gilded jewels is the Pamplin Historical Park near Petersburg. Here in this bucolic setting an ancestral property that was part of the Confederate defensive works was breached in the general assault on the lines on April 2nd, 1865. That attack and other simultaneous ruptures forced Lee's army to evacuate Petersburg and by that action the Confederate capital in Richmond was also abandoned. Today that historic site is home to the Museum of the Civil War Soldier and is an outdoor classroom for thousands of students—young and old.

One of the features of the Park is a participatory history course entitled the "Adventure Camp." You may glean the details of its programming from their web site. Part of that curriculum is hands on

firing of various Civil War weapons including a mortar. Unfortunately, the "Queen of the Battlefield," a full scale operational artillery piece is not available. The price tag was above the budget of the park and would likely be so for some time.

In May 2007, Executive Director Len Riedel met with Pamplin Historical Park President and CEO, A. Wilson Greene to discuss ways in which the BGES could support this public education program. We agreed to tackle the hardest nut first—the expansion of the weaponry program by sharing the cost of a full scale operational artillery piece. The cost estimate was \$35,000 with a delivery date of September 2008.

As rarely happens when actually priced, Greene was able to find the carriage and limber already constructed



and at a discounted price that lowered the overall cost to approximately \$20,000. Our share dropped to just \$10,000. WE have promised our share when the tube is delivered in September. Beth is responsible for the fund raising for this project and our initial appeal will be in the mail during the second week of July. This is a worthy project that will influence future historians in positive ways—I hope you will be generous.

Receding Tide Coming

BGES has exchanged contracts with the National Geographic Society and Ed Bearss to do another book under the NGS logo. **Receding Tide** is the working title for a comparative presentation of the Vicksburg and Gettysburg Campaigns. The premise is that General Grant's activities influenced

Confederate strategy in Richmond and for Lee's army.

The book is anchored in Ed Bearss' narratives from numerous tours of the sites and is being edited by Parker Hills. The first third of the book has been drafted and reviewed—it is going to be good. The contract calls for publication in early 2009.

BGES plans to do a special leather bound edition of **Receding Tide** and it will be available for pre purchase to members of the BGES and a very limited outside market. These are exceptional collector's items and I have yet to see a single copy of the leather bound Fields of Honor available for sale on secondary markets.

Hood's Tennessee Campaign starts with Spring Hill

With the fall of Atlanta the fortunes of the Confederacy took an irreversible turn for the worst. With the dagger of Sherman deeply embedded in the vitals of Georgia, Southern hopes for independence received a serious, if not mortal, wound. Confederate John Hood had been temporarily promoted to the rank of full general concurrent with his selection to command the Army of Tennessee. He now lurked outside Atlanta looking for a way to draw Sherman back upon himself.

Sherman was dependent upon the Western and Atlantic Railroad which ran back to Chattanooga. When Hood threatened that line he responded; but, quickly realized Hood's ploy and decided to split his forces and draw his supplies from Savannah. Taking 60,000 handpicked troops he dispersed the remainder to the command of Major General George Thomas whose headquarters would be Nashville.

Hood was a protégé of

General Robert E. Lee and he quickly determined that the best strategy for the relief of the west was to invade Kentucky and cross the Ohio River. This promised redemption for Tennessee and a strategic move that would startle the Union and perhaps arouse Copperhead support that would undermine the Lincoln administration's ability to continue the war. In consultation with the theater commander, PGT Beauregard, Hood determined to invade Tennessee from a staging area in northwestern Alabama.

This move north caught the northern forces unaware and resulted in a rapid effort to consolidate at Nashville. Key among those dispersed troops was the XXIV Corps under Major General John Schofield. Although Schofield raced directly for Nashville, Hood had the angle to cut him off and after crossing the Duck River at Columbia Hood had the advantage in the race for the control of the Columbia Pike. The affair at Spring

Hill on November 29th was the product of that opportunity. As a prelude to the disaster at Franklin it is a controversial but essential piece of the puzzle.

Hood has been criticized for the campaign; however, each study has failed to consider what caused it. This 3 part series will continue in 2009. Our 12 days together will be one of the most detailed field studies ever done. Participants will have received a considerable amount of contemporary documentation and the chance to discuss the campaign in detail. This study may not change the prevailing verdict of history; but, we can promise that the campaign will no longer be a factoid in one's general knowledge of the war—it will be an intellectually agile exercise that will give you a comprehensive understanding of the campaign, the characters, the hopes, expectations and real outcomes of this decisive campaign. For more information or to register please call us or visit the web site.

Vicksburg Campaign Series Drawing to a Close

BGES Epic Series Spanned 32 Days over Four Years

The September Battle of Baton Rouge and Siege of Port Hudson will bring a successful conclusion to BGES' most comprehensive field study ever. Twenty years ago the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission marveled at the interpretative potential of the Vicksburg Campaign and all we can say is Amen!

The series started with a study of Forrest's 1862 West Tennessee Raid and the Van Dorn Holly Springs Raid. We followed that with a wide ranging program that covered the Battles of Chickasaw Bayou, Helena and Arkansas Pass; the Yazoo Pass Expedition, Steele's Bayou Expedition and the Greenville Expedition. We fought the battle of Fort Pemberton and then did each of Grant's Canals from Duckport, to Lake Providence and the Williams Canal. We saw first hand where levees had been cut at Ashton and Moon Lake. We then did

McClelland's March through Louisiana and saw the island where Jefferson Davis' plantation Hurricane was at. We visited Bruinsburg where Grant crossed, and followed the Grierson Raid through rural Mississippi towns and saw where the raid came within shouting distance of the Federals preparing to cross the river. We then visited in detail Grand Gulf, Port Gibson, and Grant's march from Utica. We examined the Battle of Raymond and Jackson. We followed every march and route that showed the establishment of the Confederate fortifications and the Federals efforts to circumvent them, we found derelict houses where great things happened and stood in the ruined room where Pemberton held his council of war prior to the battle at Champion Hill. We accessed McClelland's headquarters and went to sites along where Sherman crossed the Big Black River. We saw

the remains of the meandering scar where Federal troops under Michael Lawler were able to pass within a hundred yards of the Confederate line undetected prior to their rush to break the Confederate line. We followed Loring as he abandoned his comrades and lost his artillery crossing Baker Creek and showed how he made a conscious decision to desert with his command rather than rejoin Pemberton's army. His march of shame showed him clearly out of the campaign.

By the time we got to Vicksburg we were ready to walk routes inside and outside the park and follow precisely described roads where events long ago forgotten were vividly described. The Visitor's center was a distraction—we were in search of the real Vicksburg and we found it in cemeteries and traces of roads still extant within and outside the city. (continued on page 3)

BGES Inks Contract to Purchase Headquarters

1880 House on Oldest Road in Revolutionary Era Town

After 14 years of rented and borrowed office space the BGES will have someplace the organization can call home. The historic town of Chatham has welcomed us with open arms and high expectations that we will be a meaningful and functional part of their focus on history. Closing is scheduled for June 30th.

The house located at 9 Ridge Road is in remarkably good shape with original siding and flooring. Its well maintained and rests on a spacious 1.5 acre wooded property with the town's freshwater springs at the rear of the lot. The 2000 square foot house sold for \$92,000. The house has a modern kitchen with appliances, a new central

heating and air conditioning system and new thermally efficient replacement windows. The lot has fruit bearing trees and in the past week a turkey, red fox and deer were seen in the back yard. The downstairs provides three good sized offices. Upstairs one bedroom will become the organization's library and the other will be for BGES guests.

BGES' move was indorsed and actively supported by the town council, officials and key citizens. Meetings have indicated the town hopes BGES will help focus attention on this historic community. During the war various companies mustered in the town and encamped below the house before entraining for Richmond. A number of veterans moved to Chatham including a

colonel who commanded a regiment in Pickett's Charge.

BGES' plans call for a move in July. Financing at 5% on \$78,200 has been obtained with no prepayment penalty. We plan to own the home outright within 3 years with a challenge goal to have it completely paid for by December 2009. You will have the opportunity to participate in a "Burn the Mortgage" drive this fall.

We are excited by this move and look forward to welcoming members to their national headquarters throughout the coming months. You may also look for cooperative programs with the town of Chatham as we help them present their Civil War story. It is a real win-win marriage.

Medford Historical Society: Mission Accomplished!

With the delivery of the specialized software, the Medford Historical Society now has the resources they need to begin digitizing the more than 5400 images they have in their collection. BGES members provided all of the funding to support this effort. Volunteer opportunities now exist for those who might like to work with Medford on the project. If you are interested call us and we will facilitate it.

The new BGES website will come on line in July. The support that Medford is providing will allow us to have the

most comprehensive site we have ever presented. The customized design work is being done professionally by the webmaster for Medford's site. Beth and Al met in Boston in April to work out some of the final kinks in the design work. The delay has been caused by the customization work that we asked for; however, we have seen the product and it is worth the wait.

Medford and BGES developed a strong personal affinity during the project. I know they were impressed by the decisiveness of our organization

and our "In for a penny, In for a pound" attitude. We gave them far more than they expected and their entire board has expressed its gratitude. They are not Civil War people and appreciate that we bring something to the table for them that they must have to make the most of the opportunity the photographic collection presents.

We are planning to meet with the Medford Board in Boston in September and look forward to updating our Memorandum of Understanding. Look for new programs to be announced.

Vicksburg Campaign Series Drawing to a Close

Continued from page 2

This program is only suitable for van travel and when it commences again in the fall of 2009 a maximum of 18 people will be allowed to register for each event. It is a commitment that promises a healthy reward for those who commit to complete it over the period 2009-2013. A few slots remain on the Port Hudson program; but, they will no doubt be gone soon. You can start with it or await the 2009 commencement. In any event this is a special event that I can say from having planned and experienced it far surpasses any study that has ever been or will be done on the Vicksburg Campaign.

Bearss Rev War Tour Produces Gems

Last year when doing Greene's Southern Revolutionary War Campaign, Ed wanted to go to Moore's Creek—site of a 1775 encounter that set the stage for the more momentous events that followed. We couldn't do it at the time because of the great distances involved; but, agreed to add a tour which would allow us to visit sites that had been excluded in the 2007 program.

Fuel prices held registration down and we made the decision to shift to a van. The move proved fortuitous. South Carolina has numerous dirt and county roads that are off the beaten path. Past Bearss' trips in the region were limited to main roads which didn't permit a flavor of the region.

This being an Ed "Legacy" tour we went where Ed wanted to go.

Released from a bus tour we willingly went exploring to find places Ed had never been to in his life.

This was Francis Marion country. Known as "The Swamp Fox," Marion interdicted supply routes and disrupted communications between British forces in the field and the main base of operations in Charleston. Marion hit convoys as they attempted to cross rivers or move through heavily wooded regions. Then his men melted back into the woods to meet at prearranged times and places.

Ed started each day with a challenge to us to find spots on unmarked dirt roads deep in the Low Country. We walked historic Georgetown and had a private tour and dinner at Hopsewee—the plantation of

Declaration of Independence signer, Thomas Lynch. We even found Snow Island—Marion's swamp hideout. A group of men thought we were doing a baptism and called their dogs out of the water so as not to disrupt us.

There are special moments. Ed went on a trip of discovery and no one was disappointed. He knew the stories; but, he had never had the chance to put them together with the places. We went places where you heard nothing but the wind and found graves and other places unappreciated for decades. In five days we hit some 62 sites—Ed had never visited over 30 of them. Was it my imagination or was that a spring in his step and a twinkle in his eyes when we dropped him off at the airport?

BGES Logo Pins Honor Membership Support

Recently we decided to add another small token of our appreciation for your support as a member of the BGES. Many of you in the First Edition Autographed Book Club have your special leather bookmarks. Most of you have received nice pens or something else of nominal value reminding you of your affiliation with the BGES and thanking you for your support. Now we have added pins and they are really nice!

You'll see from the insert the detail of each one. There are three different types each with a purpose: The BGES membership pin will be sent to new

members and veteran volunteers at the \$75 level. It is an attractive and colorful reminder that allows you to show your support and membership in the organization.

The second pin is attractively finished in a silver/pewter design for members of our Leadership Corps. The design is intended to give a sense of importance as we recognize and laud your higher level of commitment to the organization. Without the strong and growing support of the Leadership Corps we could not function competitively in the nonprofit world. It isn't any more ex-

pensive—it just looks expensive. Wear it with pride.

The final is our Veteran Campaigner pin for those who have gone on 3 or more battlefield tours with the BGES. We admire each of our members and appreciate their support. We find that this pin is a worthy addition to the field uniform many of you wear when touring with us. Soon we are going to add a permanent nametag for those who have done 5 or more tours. It is a practical means of helping people know who you are while replacing the consumable nametags we are currently using.

BGES' 19th Monograph Going Press

1864 Confederate Secret Service Raid on St. Albans, Vermont Featured

After a long dry spell, the next BGES monograph is ready to roll with historians Dan Rush and Gale Pewitt very informative and detailed study of the St. Alban's Raid in Vermont on October 19th, 1864. The raid involved the robbery of several banks in the town which provided by some estimates as much as \$200,000 in currency for the

Confederate Government. The raiders were pursued, arrested and tried in Canada in a story that is not known.

The majority of the men involved in the raid were from Kentucky and had been part of John Hunt Morgan's command. Many had been captured during Morgan's Ohio raid that ended at Buffington Island

and many were escapees from Camp Douglas.

The authors have presented a definitive micro history of each raider and the circumstances surrounding their involvement. You are going to enjoy this one. We expect it to come off the presses in late January.

Wounded Warrior Programs Take Root

Although the economy has been soft the BGES' partnership with the nonprofit Yellow Ribbon Fund has produced four great tours and an expanding schedule that will add 6 tours between July 5th and the end of the year. An auxiliary call for financial donations from current donors went out the week of June 9th.

Soldiers and their families have responded enthusiastically to programs that were offered at Washington, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Historians Ed Bearss, Mike Miller, Greg Mertz, Parker Hills and Len Riedel delivered crisp and substantial programs. Handouts and general readings for each tour were presented to each soldier or marine.

I have to tell you these are America's best and they do themselves proud. Most are amputees, cancer patients or are suffering from embedded metal that cannot currently be removed. They are usually young and optimistic despite what they have experienced. It is inspiring to be with them.

We have a good group of volunteers who are helping with the program they include: The Cumins family, Twyla and Dave Jackino, Lee and Rob McDowell, Jim Grant, Vinnie DiMattina and John Hoy. Future tour leaders include Tom Clemens, Dan Beattie, Bob Baker, Joe Whitehorne, Bryan Hagan and Becky Cumins

Our average participation is approximately 25 soldiers and family

members per event. BGES members in the area are serving as volunteers providing baked goods, sodas and other support for the soldiers. Donations to the BGES cover the unavoidable costs of the programs such as transportation, lunch, staff travel and lodging plus a general book about the battle being studied such as Stephen Sears' book Gettysburg.

If you are not presently a financial supporter of the program and would like to be or if you live within a reasonable commute from Walter Reed Army Medical Center and would like to be a program volunteer call us at 1-888-741-2437.

Fields of Honor Generates More Revenue

Paperback Sales Signal End of Hardback Era

BGES received another generous royalties check for **Fields of Honor** as sales passed the 26,000 mark—a remarkable achievement. With that also came the end of joy as paperback sales are now taking center stage. With lowered wholesale costs and other features future checks are likely to be much smaller. We also noted with sadness that National Geographic has

remaindered the trade hardback edition which can now be purchased for as little as \$3 plus shipping. Those will have remainder marks, we still have some first editions trades for \$25.

In surveying the market, the special leather bound edition does not appear on any secondary market sites meaning that the 1000 people who have the book are holding on to it as the keepsake

that it is. In as much as BGES has all the unsold inventory of 500 books this investment can only increase in collectable value. We will use the book to fulfill special requests for purchases and for other promotional activities.

We appreciate the wide support this book received and are looking forward to a successful sequel in the upcoming publication "**Receding Tide.**"

BGES Visits Lutheran Theological Seminary Cupola: *New Perspective on Day 1 at Gettysburg*

On June 27th, 16 members of the BGES' Staff Ride of Longstreet at Gettysburg on Day two took a break to visit the Adams County Historical Society. In the course of the visit, Executive Director Len Riedel made arrangements with old friend Wayne Motts, Executive Director of the Society to permit the members to visit the cupola. Each person enjoyed a 15 or 20 minute visit where Motts answered questions about the battle

and various aspects of the use of the seminary during the battle. The site made famous in the movie Gettysburg was the observation point where Union cavalry general John Buford observed the fighting on McPherson Ridge and greeted First Corps Commander with the legendary reply "The Devil's to Pay, John." While the fragile site is infrequently open and then only for a lofty donation, this is the sort of access BGES members have come to expect!



Dr. Markidian was fascinating



Ed and Rick Hatcher in a quiet moment



From left to right are BJ Prihoda, Tommy Cole, Gary Vodicka and Frank Kendrick. they may have been some of the first people to walk the length of the Old State Line Road bed at Davis Bridge Bridge, Tennessee since the Confederates were on it October 5th, 1862



Here is how the Federal ironclads had to come past ...



Someone has to do it--ED Riedel at Charleston



The Black Jack Battlefield where Captain John Brown fought in 1856--first battle of the war?

THE BLUE AND GRAY EDUCATION SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER

Blue and Gray Education Society
PO Box 129
1100 Franklin Turnpike
Danville, Virginia 24543-0129

Phone: 1-888-741-2437
Fax: 434-836-3292
Email: staff@blueandgrayeducation.org
www.blueandgrayeducation.org



The BGES Assaults Fort Moultrie from the same position as the British in 1776

Dred Scott Decision Polarizes the Nation

The March 1857 Supreme Court ruling in Scott versus Sandford created a social and political hysteria that compromised the legislative process and called into question the various political remedies that sustained an uneasy relationship between the Free and Slave states. It not only denied that blacks were citizens of the United States it also declared that as property congress had no standing to prohibit what a slave owner might do with that property or where they might take it. This undercut the political remedies that allowed slavery in some places and disallowed it in others and specifically nullified the belief that slavery could and should be excluded from Federal territories.

In 1833, Dred Scott was bought in St. Louis, Missouri by Dr. John Emerson. In the course of Emerson's military career he was posted to the free state of Illinois and the free territory of Wisconsin. Scott married in Wisconsin. When Emerson died in 1843 ownership of Scott and his wife passed to his wife. For three years, Scott and Emerson's other slaves were hired out, but, in 1846 Scott and his wife sued for their freedom based on an 1837 legal precedent in Missouri that once a slave had lived in a free state or territory they were forever free.

The case went to trial in 1847 with

precedent favoring Scott's petition. A legal question delayed the trial to 1850; however, Scott and his wife were freed by the Missouri court. From 1847-1850, Scott's wages were held in escrow. Emerson placed her brother in charge of her affairs. Sanford did not wish to pay the wages that Scott had earned and he appealed the decision.

The Missouri Supreme Court bowing to proslavery pressure in 1852 overturned multiple precedents to rule in Sanford's favor. Scott's lawyers believed that the action of the Missouri Supreme Court was national importance and filed federal suit. Sanford's attorneys questioned Scott's right to sue because he "claimed" to be a United States citizen. They also challenged the constitutionality of the 1820 Missouri Compromise. In short they question had become national in scope because Sanford contended that, as property, Scott had never been free regardless of where he was taken to. The US Supreme Court ordered the case argued twice first in February 1856 and later in December 1856.

The court initially appeared ready to merely affirm the Missouri Supreme Court's ruling without addressing the other issues; however, the political momentum of the time lured the court into a more sweeping

opinion to address issues that they believed would eventually come before the court.

The 7-2 ruling determined that Scott was not a citizen and thus his suit had no merit and was dismissed. Further it was determined that Scott had never been intended to be free and thus wasn't. The greatest ruling was that Congress had exceeded its constitutional authority in prohibiting slavery anywhere in the United States or its territories. Thus the Missouri Compromise and all its subsequent related legislation was invalidated.

The national mood now forced the issue and political battle lines were drawn along ideological positions. Angry northerners and abolitionists argued that a proslavery judicial conspiracy was taking control. Within the North, many felt that no further compromises would be possible. The fledgling Republican Party built its resume on a platform that pledged slavery could and would not expand to the territories. Southerners saw the response and the national mood and increasingly realized their isolation from the northern states. The conflict was becoming increasingly inevitable. In our next newsletter we will discuss the impact of Lincoln's 1858 "House Divided" speech.