

In Camp on The Rappahannock

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 2

WINTER 2008

Special points of interest:

- BGES and Pamplin Historical Park Joint Venture Coming
- BGES Revolutionary War Series to End in Late August
- BGES Finds Favorable Reception for HQ in Historic Town of Chatham
- BGES White Paper Included--Addresses First of Four BGES Goals in Strategic Plan

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A Distinct Honor: Yellow Ribbon Tour Program Expands for the Spring

In civilian clothes they look like your brother, sister or neighbor. Their families are young—some have small children, others are old vets. Some are in their first tour of duty others have been in the military for years. A number were teenagers motivated by the visual imagery of 9-11. Some talk freely and others are withdrawn—all were grateful for the chance to do something on a Thanksgiving Saturday. They are American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines and they have bled for their country—they are in long term rehabilitative care. Many are missing a limb or have a prosthesis—it is an honor to be with them.

November 24th was a chilly day in Washington--too cold for some to endure. Ed was in fine form and Civil War Washington was an engaging topic. Their



eyes sparkled at the story of Dan and Theresa Sickles and when the director came in to specially open the Lincoln Cottage one soldier sat in a rocking chair similar to the one Lincoln used when he visited there. Each soldier relished his personalized leather bound edition of **Fields of Honor**.

BGES and the Yellow Ribbon Fund will open this year with Mike Miller at the Battle of Fredericksburg on March 29th. Greg Mertz will do the Battle

of Chancellorsville in late April, Parker Hills-Gettysburg in May and Becky Cumins 1st Manassas in June. BGES established a fund with all the donations being used for must pay expenses of the program. A financial statement is maintained for the fund and donors will receive summary updates. Currently 13% of our members have donated and we are at 70% of our 2008 budget funding goal of \$10,000. Thank you.

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 that Lee's move north was in response.

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** for sale on secondary markets.

Its Time to Travel! Great Reasons Abound

Words can scarcely do justice to the winter of 2008--it was and continues to be a cold winter and cabin fever got us all. I know because the Italy trip was just what the doctor ordered! The cost of gasoline is going up and is likely to continue rising—that is just a fact. Think we are high here? I paid \$10.30 a gallon for diesel in Italy. Vendor costs are up and that is a fact as well. We just got a call back from a bus company that needed to change their quote. We tried to anticipate all those in pricing our 2008 programs and are comfortable that the rates reflect the balance needed to offer first rate programs that pay for themselves. Van tours which form the core of our real exploratory programming are most sensitive to these market adjustments.

After a false start with Bearss' Americana (huge cancellation fees in Miami and Key West if we didn't have a minimum room pickup) and part 2 of

Sherman's march through the Carolinas—(just didn't attract enough interest) we are ready to start with Bill Shea's full van tour of Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove and Fort Smith. The two lost tours will be remarketed and hopefully conducted at a later time.

Despite those early disappointments, this year is our most diverse and substantial set of offerings ever with something for everyone. We are so pleased that the 2009 schedule draft is built the same way. At hand are tours for Civil War folks who want to take general tours of multiple sites, or staff rides and detailed campaign studies with the authors. We are also pleased to offer long term multi year studies of a solitary theme. You can travel with the legendary Ed Bearss and look at some of the great Revolutionary War campaigns and Civil War sites he hasn't visited in decades. You can study World War I or the great Geronimo and Cochise while visiting Tombstone and

the OK Corral. How about Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, Ethan Allan Hitchcock, Benjamin C. Butler, David Twiggs and George A. McCall in the Seminole (Florida) Indian Wars?

What makes each program special is that it is unique. These are indeed study tours—many will never be repeated and others are investigatory in nature. Ask participants about the State Line Road at Davis' Bridge or the antecedent military operations around Shiloh!

BGES is an educational organization and each tour is an educational experience. You can't do them all but I can assure you that wherever you pitch in you will have a great experience and will learn more than you thought you knew. You will also break bread with a great cohort of like minded people. Take another look at the schedule and your calendar and then get on the phone—we can only do these programs if you support them.

How do you feel? Would An Electronic Newsletter Be Worth Our Effort?

One of the great suggestions we have received from our members in the past year is to save funds for our projects by using an electronic newsletter in lieu of the paper copy. Now I must admit I am a traditionalist and the paper newsletter seems to be a hardy perk that I think puts the business of the organization in front of the membership to read at leisure. On the other hand, an electronic version is faster and

practically cost free. You can get the info if you want, erase the email as you wish, go to the website and reread it or download it.

Formatting and fielding an electronic version of this newsletter is a practical thing to do—the question is would you accept this form of communication in lieu of the paper version? You can email us at membership@blueandgrayeducation.org. I'd want to

see at least 100 or more interested in it before proceeding.

We would also like to update our email directory in hopes of making better use of email as a means of mass communications for our membership. If you are willing to allow us to communicate with you that way please send your email address to staff@blueandgrayeducation.org. Be sure to include your name and email address.

North Anna Good News: Add 90 Acres

The Friends of the North Anna Battlefield has pulled off a remarkable feat in expanding the preserved acreage. It looks like another 90 acres will be incorporated into the park—this time along the Federal lines. The downside is that 664 acres have been approved for mining. Studies are still to be undertaken and the impact of this expansion on the ambiance of the park has yet to be calculated.

The Friends are not a finely tuned lobbying group. They are a few dedicated individuals determined to make a difference. The driving force is Art Taylor (tee1776@hotmail.com). He is aggressive and sharp. You can aid his efforts by letting him know of your interest and BGES membership. Supportive letters and people willing to attend public hearings

make a big difference as the county officials negotiate with Martin Marietta Aggregate people and the Corps of Engineers. BGES hasn't been asked for financial support and am not sure they are organized to accept the same. They do want us to expand the interpretation later. We will keep our ear close to the ground and keep you posted. This is our battlefield—the BGES' first project.

BGES' WW2 Tour: The Italian Campaign

I have had the good fortune of site surveying World War II sites in Sicily and Italy supporting the Ed Bearss' Archives series and will soon be collating the information into a registration form with registration opening on July 1st.

This program was originally organized as a boat tour with six land excursions, by necessity the program was limited in scope. Ed has a great deal to say about the "Forgotten War" in Sicily and Italy and he asked us to develop a land based tour. *Even if you participated in the History America tour this is sufficiently comprehensive enough to entice you to consider doing it again.*

We will start at Sicily with a comprehensive treatment of the allied

landings and particular attention to the maneuvers of George Patton's 7th Army to Palermo and beyond. We will do the landings and German counter attack. Then we will examine the Italian surrender followed by the Germans' fighting withdrawal through Messina.

We will then go to Salerno to follow the landing of the Americans and British on the Italian mainland. This includes some of the fiercest fighting of the war at Altavilla and will include both British Commandos and American Rangers. We break out with the Americans and British en route to the Gustav Line and the legendary fighting at San Pietro, Sant Angelo, Minturno, Monte Cassino, Anzio, Aprilla, Cisterna, and Velletri en route to Rome.

We will look at Fascist Italy and Mussolini while in Rome and

will go to the site of his rescue in the Grand Sasso Mountains near L'Aquila. Our trip goes north to Florence and then on to the Gothic Line, the Po Valley, Verona, Lake Garda, Como and Dongo. This program will be filled with solid Bearss analysis and riveting narrative. It is not just a part of his Legacy Series—it is a unique opportunity to study an entire World War II campaign where it happened.

We can't yet estimate the cost as the exchange rates are very high and unstable right now. You will get the best value we can provide and there will be numerous important lessons and similarities to Civil War campaigns that you will realize as we travel. Call us if you want to be added to the list for a no obligation brochure.

I'll take that Challenge! Medford Historical Society Project Needs Just \$2700 to Complete

The BGES and Medford Historical Society have completed their letter of agreement and are ready to charge ahead with the project of cataloguing, scanning and eventually making their entire collection of 5400 Civil War era images available to the public. You have seen some of the photographs in our 2008 Calendar. It is a shame that you weren't able to see them up close

and handle them like we did. They are so evocative and truly a work of photographic art.

This project had a \$7100 price tag for archival type software and computer hardware. You'll be pleased to know we already have \$4400 from Boston seminar attendees and the excess donations to Ford's Theater. I challenged attendees to match my

\$150 donation and Ed Bearss doubled me—others followed his lead. I'll put in another \$150—who will match our \$300 donations? Ed and I both think it is very important to get this done—our cash is in the bank. There is a worksheet in this package. It isn't important how much you give; but, that if you are interested you give something by April 30th. You make the difference!

With A Little Help For Our Friends Ford's Theater Flag Project Reaches Goal

You deserve a big HUZDAH! What a great response—nearly 100 (98) people sent in donations ranging from \$5 to \$500 to push us past our goal right on schedule. We have notified Gloria Swift the NPS historian at Ford's Theater that we have banked the money to pay the entire cost of three flag poles and three flags for President Lincoln's box

at Ford's Theater. The flags will be installed as part of the restoration which is currently underway and is expected to be completed for a grand reopening on or about President Lincoln's 200th birthday.

We have contracted with Steve Hill (www.dupagemilitaryflag.com) as the vendor for this project. He expects to

deliver the flags in November 2008. Steve comes highly recommended—BGES member Helen Hannon says he is simply the best! This is a valuable and meaningful restoration project that is right in line with the BGES' interpretative mission. More to follow concerning the dedication and reopening of Ford's Theater.

Angela's Boutique: Spring Logo Line

Every great idea often takes a little time and effort to bring to fruition but when it does the outcome is well worth the wait. This mailing includes the spring line of merchandise for the BGES. It is noteworthy for its durability, attractiveness and quality appearance--indeed several proposals hit the cutting room floor before this line was presented.

Some of our long time supporters remember our logo merchandise was distinctly masculine and heavily focused on golf type stuff. That is still offered and indeed is proving extremely popular; however, this new line will satisfy both you and the lady in your life. The ladies of

the BGES will appreciate that I didn't select these. The material used and the fashion styles were a collaborative effort between Angela and Beth.

Many of you may be aware that developing a line of logo merchandise is a difficult and often expensive proposition. If you have ever priced the same in college bookstores or golf pro shops you know that retail prices are very high. We are combating that with a preorder system. By determining who wants what when? we can negotiate the best wholesale price and avoid holding a reserve of unsold odd sized stock. We also look at the price and adjust margins to reflect what you should pay for an item regardless of the final mark up for BGES. We believe



Angela models one of the BGES' Lady's Line Shirts

that logo merchandise is a great way for you to look smart when out and about this spring, summer and fall and to give your BGES a plug for the great work that you are doing. Dress proudly!

Caution Construction Zone: Website to see Major Overhaul

Many of you have expressed concern with the appearance and utility of the BGES website. You will want to know that our site was hacked for a day around Christmas and an effort to defraud people using our ecommerce engine was thwarted without damage--all of the safeguards worked. We are now in the process of overhauling the BGES web site which for the past 12 years has been managed by volunteers. Al Nelson who designed the Medford Historical Society website has agreed

to design and maintain the site for us at a greatly reduced stipend as a means of thanking the BGES and its members for supporting the photographic project. His company usually gets anywhere from \$25K to \$100K for web design work.

Al is a professional in the information technology field and we have recently agreed on the statement of work as the lead in to the actual redesign. When it is completed it will be a site rich in content, extremely functional for visi-

tors, well connected and fully integrated with E-commerce. We expect it to be a useful portal to facilitate connections with related organizations and important sources of information that will assist visitors in finding important primary and secondary source materials.

We invite you to see what the future holds by visiting the Medford Historical Web site at www.medfordhistorical.org. We are hopeful; the work will be completed by the end of May and will let you know once it makes its debut.

Primary Sources--Report on the Conduct of the War

For those of you who think that General David Petraus was raked across the coals by members of Congress you will be sadly reminded that this has been a mode of operation since the inception of the republic and is the basis of the concept of civilian control of the military.

Most Civil War buffs are aware of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. Most think it was established to hold Lincoln's feet to the fire and to hold accountable military officials who appeared to show a want of zeal for the

hard war that needed to be fought to subdue the rebellion. Historian Bruce Tapp, **Over Lincoln's Shoulder**, has written the definitive study of that committee. I thought you would like to know first hand what they did.

The various topics and the wide variety of witnesses boggle the mind. There is a complete analysis of John Fremont's administration of the Western Department, the disaster at First Bull Run and Ball's Bluff, an analysis of alleged Rebel atrocities, issues of trade and commerce within military

districts, The Army of the Potomac, Battle of Petersburg, the Red River Expedition, Fort Fisher, the commission of light drafted Monitor ironclads, the performance of heavy ordinance, the Sherman-Johnson Surrender negotiations, the Cheyenne Indians, the generalship of William Rosecrans, the letting of Ice Contracts and a myriad of statements for the record by many of the major officers in the war. It is an enriching exploration.

Broadfoot Publishing reprinted the 8 volume proceedings & index for \$450.

Blood on the Horizon: The 1854 Kansas/Nebraska Act

With the organization of territories the question of the expansion of slavery which had been initially settled by the 1820 Missouri Compromise was called into question. The territories acquired after the Mexican War and the territories of the Louisiana Purchase were ripe for expansion. The discovery of gold and silver in California and the western mountains promised new sources of wealth. In 1850 a compromise had allowed the territories of New Mexico and Utah to organize and determine the question of slavery by popular sovereignty, but, when Senator Stephen Douglas introduced a similar proposal for Kansas and Nebraska the South

howled and the nation was thrown into turbulence.

The Missouri Compromise had restricted slavery to a line south of 36 degrees 30 minutes north. Slave owners protested that both Kansas and Nebraska would be settled by “free staters” who would tip the balance against the South’s interests.

Douglas realized the political realities of the act and realized it could not be passed without giving the Southerners something. That something was a repeal of the 36/30 line. The practical impact of it was to upset the Northerners who felt bullied by the Southern power—this seriously eroded Douglas’ support in the North.

A new political party, the Republicans organized on a platform that included opposition to the expansion of slavery into the territories—in 1856 they made a strong showing in the presidential contest. Illinois lawyer, Abraham Lincoln used Douglas’ sponsorship of the bill to contest his senate seat in the 1858 congressional election. Douglas also lost his supporters in the South who felt they could not trust him in the 1860 Presidential election.

The passage of the act ignited the Kansas territory which led to the era of Bleeding Kansas. You can find out all about that contentious period by joining us on our study tour in August 2008. In our next newsletter we will discuss the Dred Scott decision.

Saratoga: The Campaign that Won American Independence

If there was an event that turned the tide of opportunity for the Americans in their war of independence from the British, it was the surrender of General John Burgoyne’s British Army at Saratoga in October 1777. That event convinced the French to expand its war against Britain to a cooperative alliance with the Americans. The end game was revealed at Yorktown. It is fitting that our Revolutionary War series with Ed Bearss comes to its conclusion studying this 1777 Northern Campaign.

We’ve done many Revolutionary War battlefields—indeed if you look at an

inventory of them we will have done every major battle and campaign plus the partisan warfare of the Southern Campaigns. We have also looked at it by land and sea over a period of 7 tours for the Ed Bearss archives program. The end result is likely to be yet another Bearss book in 2010 or early 2011.

This is a great time to go to upstate New York. The air is crisp and the late summer climate will be a welcome relief from other hotter regions we have been to. This program will take you to sites that were made famous by Benedict Arnold, Henry Knox and

Ethan Allen. Horatio Gates brings all to a glorious conclusion. You’ll get to visit Valcour Island, Fort Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Mount Independence, Hubbardton, Bennington, Fort Oriskany, Fort Stanwix and of course all the sites at and around the Saratoga battlefield such as Bemis Heights. This is a compact 5 day program based out of Albany, New York. This is a major program with several major battlefields—you won’t get this chance with us again. Oh—we might even go to St. Albans to see that Civil War site you are soon getting a monograph about

First Edition Autographed Book Club Trends Intellectual: Publishers Sending Titles that Examine Themes not Battles

The process of book publishing is a careful marriage between scholarship and readability with the trump card being sales. Many a fancy cover wraps a lousy book. As 2008 unfolds we are seeing a flurry of books anticipating the Lincoln Bicentennial Commemoration and others that examine underlying themes that contributed to the war. This is offering BGES members a unique chance to enlarge their intellectual side by providing some great context

for considering the entire era of the war. Early offerings this year have introduced readers to Harriett Beecher Stowe beyond Uncle Tom’s Cabin, the Republican/Northern decision for war, tomes on why the South fought and the ugly side of reconstruction. Others are equally as stimulating—many are sure to inflame or provoke serious discussion and your further critical study. Several are first books by new authors who may be on the cusp of great careers. If

you aren’t on the mailing list for this BGES program, you are missing a very useful benefit of your membership. Even if you don’t collect books, Len’s review tells you if a book is worthy of your time. He has read and carefully considered each one for its potential contribution to the field of scholarship and your education. To be added to the list call Angela at 888-741-2437. Mailings are sent monthly to active donors approximately 9 times a year.



Director Len Riedel, Lee McDowell and Ed Bearss in Fort Macomb's enlisted quarters a real coup!

December was certainly not a quiet month With the BGES following Sherman's March Across South Carolina with Steve Wise and Across Louisiana with Ed Bearss and Dale Phillips--a great way to end a great year!



Frank Roberts from Georgia at the Battle of Congaree Creek outside Columbia, SC



The ladies were as pleased to be in Fort Pike as were the men--Char Lambert, Beth Cromwell and Merle Ireland were reacting to the story of the nearby death of Jayne Mansfield who died on the bridge in a traffic accident after singing in Biloxi. She was en route to New Orleans. Beth is wearing the BGES hooded rain jacket which works just fine! Give Angela a call if you want one



Jeff Cumins got to do what Angela, Beth and countless others would no doubt like to do--douse Len in an ice water bath. This impromptu opportunity raised a cool (cold) \$300 for the Confederate Museum when photographer Bart Allen offered \$100 to see him take the bath--Sam Hood and Char Lambert matched the donation. You can get a copy of the photo for a \$100 donation to the museum.



ED Riedel was the first American to visit the new town museum for the destroyed Italian town of San Pietro. This important position was the key to further allied advances towards the German Gustav Line which was anchored on the abby at Monte Cassino. The museum which is due to open later this year is devastatingly effective and it will move the people who register for our Italian Campaign program in March of 2009. Texans take note this is a site you must see.



We catch them all--this skirmish took place on the same day Lee surrendered at Appomattox. Eighty South Carolina Militia were flanked out of the position resisting the advance of Potter's Raid into the interior. The site is to the left of the sign and down to the Mill about 250 yards.

THE BLUE AND GRAY EDUCATION SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER

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Long ago we adopted a tag line of "having fun while doing good." BGES had a great time with the Confederate Memorial Hall people. We worked with them to make Ed available for a lecture which packed the hall to overflowing. We then returned for a private lunch and showing. With traditional New Orleans cuisine like gumbo, creole and home made bread pudding it was unforgettable. We left them with donations totaling over \$4000! From left: Ed, Director Pat Rickey, Len and Sam Hood. Sam is their board president--BGES' Becky Cumins is also on the board. Husband, Jeff Cumins is an active supporter--huzzah!

BGES' Explorations: If We Can't Get You In... Forts Pike and Macomb Opened for the BGES

Our *Cajuns, Crawfish and War* program in New Orleans in December was a fit end to another great year. Based in the famous French Quarter at the Bienville House on Decatur Street, we were perfectly situated to fulfill every aspect of the program. Great sites! Great Food! and Great Company! put everyone in the holiday spirit. Ed was of course his incomparable self; however, the last minute substitution of Dale Phillips for Art Bergeron (due to a family emergency) was flawless. Indeed Dale and his wife drove from Indiana, where he is superintendent of the George Rogers Clark National Park, to his old stomping grounds in New Orleans to help out Ed and Art.

The tour was highlighted by a number of special openings because of the reputation of BGES for being good stewards of historical resources. We saw up close and personal the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Fort Pike had been ravaged in a way no enemy force ever managed. Twenty seven months after the storm it was still closed to the public--one corner of a wall had been

blown out at the jointing and the storm surge clearly engulfed the entire facility.

We then went to Fort Macomb (Wood) at the Chef Menteur bridge. It hadn't been open to anyone since the early 1950s--over a half century ago!. It was a real treasure. The inner citadel was still roofed with step markers from over 170 years ago still visible. Surprisingly the storm had cleared away much of the overgrowth and it was a great stop. Because it was Ed, the state sent someone from Port Hudson over 120 miles away to open it for us. Ed was heard to comment "You can't ever criticize Len for the access he gets us--I've never had a group in here before!"

Fort Jackson was also available to us and we received front page coverage in the local newspaper. We are ready to help them get this important facility open again.

Wherever we went the doors opened and our folks got as comprehensive a tour as was possible. We saw the battle of Baton Rouge, Port Hudson and where Huey Long was assassinated. It was intensely sad and yet they have survived. We did what we could to help.

Helping Confederate Memorial Hall in New Orleans

Political correctness is a way of life in many cities--none more so than in New Orleans. The city long ago turned its back on its Civil War history and turned instead towards WW 2 and the architectural history of the area. The Confederate Memorial Hall survived an ownership challenge and being ignored by the city to maintain itself as a Southern shrine--it is here that Jefferson Davis laid in state.

With the hurricane, heritage tourism dropped dramatically and admission fees for the museum could not support the cost of operations. Recently they received a challenge grant of \$20K for operations. During our trip we donated over \$4000 or 20% of the core challenge. They still need more as soon as possible. BGES members Sam Hood, Becky and Jeff Cumins are active with their board. If you are inclined to help call Pat Rickey at 504-523-4522.