

A 2019 BGES Civil War Field University Program: The Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga

The western Confederacy Armies had a long legacy of lost battles that were usually blamed on their dysfunctional leadership. The politics of the army and the Confederacy certainly made this an active area of discussion throughout the war, with President Jefferson Davis making a number of trips to the army in an effort to quell the active mutiny among the southern senior leadership. Yet in September 1863, the Confederate Army of Tennessee, augmented by the timely arrival of two divisions from the Army of Northern Virginia under Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, smashed into the army of Gen. William Starke Rosecrans and beat it at the battle of Chickamauga.

The route of the Federal force drove it back into the city of Chattanooga, where high ground surrounding the city permitted the guns of the Confederacy army to dominate all the lines of communications to the beleaguered Federal army. With supplies following a tortured path to the city, the very real possibility of the capitulation of a Union army loomed. And then came Grant.

This is a great transitional study showing the Confederates with one of their great opportunities and how they mismanaged it. Conversely, we get to witness the final command audition for the man who will win the war ... U.S. Grant at Chattanooga is Grant at his best, it is Grant truly taking Command!

Wednesday, November 13, 2019

6:00 PM. Arrive at the headquarters hotel near Dalton, Georgia, for registration and to meet your fellow students. Norm will talk informally about how the two armies got to Northwest Georgia. Expect a spirited discussion about Rosecrans' and Bragg's strategies, so be prepared to engage. Dinner is on your own.

Thursday, November 14, 2019

8:15 AM. We have spoken about how the armies got to Chickamauga, and we will start at Mont Eagle at the University of the South, where both armies passed en route to their clash. This great site includes the graves of Edmund Kirby Smith and other southern notables. Leonidas Polk dedicated the cornerstone of the college—a beautiful campus and a great time to visit. We then move to Battle Creek to consider the challenges in crossing the Tennessee River. Rosecrans mastered the challenge. We then will jump ahead to the spot where Rosecrans does his command handoff to Grant in Stevenson about six weeks later. Having crossed the river, we will see

where General Thomas begins to ascend Lookout Mountain—a long and broad mountain run whose nose is at Chattanooga but whose tail ends in Alabama. The Confederates are in defense, and we then will skip to Alpine, Georgia, where Confederate cavalymen Joe Wheeler and Nathan B. Forrest meet to agree on a strategy for interdicting Rosecrans force, which is splitting apart to cross the mountains. Our day ends with the missed opportunities at Davis Crossroads and McLemores Cove. Our last stops at Lee and Gordon's Mill and Crawfish Springs positions the armies for the clash to come. Lunch is provided, and dinner is on your own.

Friday, November 15, 2019

8:15 AM. The battle starts early and so will we, heading to Reed's Bridge, where cavalry under Forrest augmented by infantry under Bushrod Johnson and John B. Hood hit Rosecrans on the 18th. We then will slide over to Jay's Mill, where the battle begins in earnest on the 19th. We will move ahead through Winfrey Field as the fury of the Confederate assault is fully unfolded picking up, with Cleburnes turning movement north of the Brotherton Road and then A.P. Stewart's breakthrough at the Brotherton Cabin. Like the battle, this fast-paced morning finishes at Viniard Field, with Wilder's Lightning Brigade and Eli Lilly's stand against Hood's hammer blows.

After lunch, we will pick up the decisive fighting on September 20. Polk had added the leadership of James Longstreet to his command and with two wings was ready to strike at dawn. It didn't happen the way it was planned. We will start with Breckinridge's turning movement against George Thomas, which drives him away from his initial position. We then slide back to the Brotherton House, where the fates of history turned the battle and where Longstreet launched a charge, unknowing that Rosecrans had created a hole in the Federal line precisely where the attack took place. As the Confederates poured into Dyer Field and the Federals skedaddled from Lytle Hill, we will move toward and to Snodgrass Hill, where George Thomas forms a solid line that causes the Confederate tide to recede. We will retreat with the Federals before returning to the hotel. Lunch will be provided, and dinner is on your own.

Saturday, November 16, 2019

8:15 AM. Defeated by Confederates and undermined by observers from Washington, Rosecrans refitted in Chattanooga. In withdrawing, he failed to secure the high ground surrounding Chattanooga and quickly found that his food line from Bridgeport to the city was fully interdicted by the Confederates on Lookout Mountain. Departing the hotel, we will move to the spot where the most famous painting of Lookout Mountain is pictured. In discussing the commanding terrain, we will then solve the problem of the Cracker Line but heading to Browns Ferry.

The key to the Cracker Line is breaking the Confederates' hold on the line to Browns Ferry. With the night battle of Wauhatchie, where Geary is not trapped, we will appreciate that the Confederate vice grip has been broken. As we move to Lookout Mountain and its outstanding vistas, we will evaluate the famous Battle Above the Clouds, in which Confederates hold Lookout Mountain around Craven House for nearly 24 hours before being forced away—the Confederate siege is now doomed. We will return to the hotel, where we will head out for a group dinner. Lunch and dinner included.

Sunday, November 17, 2019

8:30 AM. It is Sunday morning, and so our morning work takes us to a quiet experience to discuss the challenges Grant is facing at Missionary Ridge at the National Cemetery. This awe-inspiring vista where so many American heroes are buried reminds us of the ultimate sacrifice all soldiers are pledged to make. We then will move to Missionary Ridge and the Bragg Reservation to consider the pending assault from the Confederates' perspective. The development on the ridge has obliterated the interpretative potential, and the obtuse paradox of a Confederate artillery piece sitting in a property owner's front yard aimed at his picture window, are a shame but it is reality. We will walk the neighborhood and try to take you back to that November day some 156 years ago.

Grant carries the ridge by accident, but he had intended to turn the Confederates out of the position by unleashing William T. Sherman on the northern flank of Missionary Ridge. Unfortunately for Sherman, Pat Cleburne was on that flank, and there was an unperceived saddle between Sherman and his objective—it would be a very bloody mistake. We will come full circle as we return to Orchard Knob to Grant's observation point for the day's fighting. Here we will review the terrain we have visited from afar and review the siege. As we return to the hotel in Dalton, we will travel via Ringgold Gap, along the route to the Confederates' winter encampment at Dalton. While traveling the route, we will point out some points of historical interest associated with Grant, Longstreet, and Andrews' Great Locomotive Chase.

This is a busy four days and clearly our highest value program of the year. In years past we have brought you only the best historians for this campaign: Bearss, Ogden, Hills, Wise, and Powell. Now we bring you a new and dynamic historian—you will love his preparation, his knowledge, and his casual but comprehensive presentation. This is well worth the money and your time.

About the Faculty:

Norm Dasinger is a Land Title executive in Alabama whose lifetime passion for the Civil War has made him an expert on the war in Georgia and Alabama. Leading tours

on his free time, Norm has an insightful understanding of the nuances of seemingly simple events, and he helps clients develop a comprehensive understanding of the subject. This is a man whom you will instantly like and will find yourself probing during the breaks—he is a real teacher of history!

Hotel Information:

This program will be headquartered at a hotel in or near Dalton, Georgia. It will be announced on this site. You can expect a rate around \$110 per night, plus tax. You will need ground transportation to reach the headquarters.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Chattanooga (CHA). Other airports with much better fares and schedules are Nashville (BNA) and Atlanta (ATL). If you fly in, you will need a rental car. Amtrak goes into Atlanta, and we aren't aware of any limo or shuttle services to Dalton. Perhaps you can find a dirt cheap rental car on www.priceline.com. The program is easily accessed by car on I-75.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with a reading book and maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. Amazon.com has a program to support non-profits IF YOU SIGN UP to support Blue and Gray Education Society (EIN 54-1720582) at [AmazonSmile](https://www.amazon.com/AmazonSmile). When you sign up there rather than the normal Amazon site, one-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon. This will apply not only on this purchase but others you may make at other times.

Thomas L. Connelly: [*The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy*](#)

Peter Cozzens: [*The Shipwreck of their Hopes: The Battles for Chattanooga*](#)

Judith Hallock: [*Braxton Bragg and the Confederate Defeat Volume 2*](#)

Lawrence Petersen: [*Decisions at Chattanooga: The Nineteen Critical Decisions that Defined the Battle*](#)

David Powell: [*The Chickamauga Campaign—Glory or the Grave: The Breakthrough, the Union Collapse, and the Defense of Horseshoe Ridge, September 20, 1863*](#)

David Powell: [*The Chickamauga Campaign: Barren Victory: The Retreat into Chattanooga, the Confederate Pursuit, and the Aftermath of the Battle, September 21, to October 20, 1863*](#)

Registration Form

The Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga
A BGES Civil War Field University Program
Presented by Norm Dasinger Jr.
November 13-16, 2019 from Dalton, Georgia

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes three lunches, one dinner, one breakfast, one night of lodging in Knoxville area, a reading book with maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian & tour director, and transportation appropriate to the registration, which will be limited to two vans: 19 people. We also will provide snacks, bottled water, and a limited selection of sodas.

_____ Registration \$760

_____ Current BGES member \$695

_____ Teacher/full time student with identification \$625

_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of

\$_____ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax deductible)

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$250 plus full payment for any memberships.
Total enclosed is \$

I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$_____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531 or fax credit cards to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.