

A BGES Sesquicentennial Program: Sherman's March Through North Carolina

Sherman and his army were already legendary. Burned into the psyche of the South— Director Victor Fleming ensured the central message of author Margaret Mitchell in *Gone With the Wind* in his flame laden *Sherman* opening after the intermission. Indeed in less than three months, Grant's trusted subordinate has brought the western war to the east and was now ready smash into Virginia to join his colleague in destroying the thinning Confederate main army. The war would end before the flowers could fully bloom.

South Carolina had been vengeance with the very ground sown with salt to ensure the seeds of rebellion would never return. After Columbia burned the Federals regained their composure and moved on towards Cheraw and the North Carolina border crossing into the Tarheel state in the first week of March. Gathering to oppose him were the remains of the Army of Tennessee and those who defended Wilmington under Joseph E. Johnston and Braxton Bragg. Unlike South Carolina, there would be serious fighting and high drama ahead. Complete the circuit, Walk in their footsteps as BGES brings you *Sherman in North Carolina*.

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

6 PM: Meet at the Holiday Inn RDU Airport. After picking up your reading books, Executive Director Len Riedel will offer opening remarks followed by Mark's introductory lecture bringing the armies into North Carolina and the central role North Carolina had played in the war.

Thursday, May 28, 2015

8:15 AM: Depart the hotel en route to Fayetteville and Fort Bragg. As Sherman moved into North Carolina the need for deception ended. Throughout South Carolina, Sherman had left the defending Confederates to believe he would move directly on Charleston or towards the last Confederate railroad spine near Charlotte. Now Sherman's access and focus was to align his forces with those from the coast under General John McAllister Schofield, secure his supplies and position himself to support Grant's final moves against Lee in Virginia. He would soon meet with Grant and the President in Hampton Roads, Virginia to finalize those plans.

The Confederates would indeed needed to oppose Sherman and the remains of the Army of Tennessee were brought to North Carolina under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston. Johnston would marry up with the forces under Braxton Bragg who had evacuated Wilmington in January. Schofield would meet Confederates at

Wyse Forks. However, Sherman would get a wakeup call when Confederate cavalry under the very capable Lieutenant General Wade Hampton spanked a surprised Federal Cavalry force under the amorous and careless Judson Kilpatrick at Monroe's Crossroads on March 10th. We are planning to go to the Monroe's Crossroads battlefield which is on the Fort Bragg Military Reservation. NOTE: *I must advise you that Fort Bragg is an active military installation housing the 82 Airborne Division and US Army Special Forces. The battlefield is in the midst of primary training grounds. Access is dependent upon real world military requirements and we may either change the order of the tour to gain access around training or access could be denied at the last minute. **We expect to have access but cannot guarantee it.*** I can access the base as a retired military officer and can vouch you in but real world requirements trump all general access issues.

After Monroe's Crossroads, we will occupy Fayetteville just as Sherman did for 4 days. The massive site of the old Arsenal is still accessible and other sites of importance in Fayetteville such as the Market House will fill our time. There was even a secondary skirmish on March 11th in the town between the two cavalry forces. Rest assured the time will be well spent.

Following lunch, we will follow the advance of General Henry Slocum as Sherman moves towards a junction with Schofield. Johnston needs time to draw together his forces and orders General William Hardee's Army of Georgia to engage Sherman and if possible drive them back. The resulting battle at Smith Plantation just outside the village of Averasboro will occupy the remainder of our day. The site has undergone much conservation and interpretation in the past 18 years and you will receive a polished and important interpretation from Mark and other local experts. Battle scarred buildings serve as mute testimony to the 1500 casualties suffered in mid March 1865. Lunch is provided but dinner is on your own.

Friday May 29, 2015

8:15 AM: On board for an early start, today is devoted to the battle of Bentonville. History tells us that the battle was fruitless and yet if the Confederates knew they had lost this last hurrah provided a very rude slap to Sherman's face as he arrived in the Eastern theater. Bradley's book is an excellent one and is worth reading for the level of detail and context; however, Nathaniel Hughes book on Bentonville will also provide necessary background. If you get the map book you will see the level of detail and appreciate how complex this three day fight was.

Johnston believing he had a chance to hit a geographically separated Union force ordered William Hardee to strike Slocum's advance. The fighting of March 19th was the most severe of the three days with each side attacking and falling back to entrench. As fighting sputtered out on the first day, Johnston perhaps hoping to draw Sherman into an ill-considered attack on March 20th stood down with only light skirmishing. On the third and final day, General Mower got permission to do a reconnaissance on the Federal right. He instead attacked and while making

progress was ordered to withdraw by Sherman thus effectively ending the battle. Sadly for Sherman perhaps a continuation of the fight would have destroyed Johnston's resistance and army ending the war in North Carolina in March. That night, Johnston withdrew from the battlefield ending the last major battle in North Carolina. After a visit to the visitor's center and Harper House we will return to the hotel. Lunch is again provided.

Saturday May 30, 2015

8:15 AM: The Civil War in North Carolina has but two months to play out. With Johnston's withdrawal, Sherman is free to move on to Goldsboro where he will join Schofield and await Grant's pleasure. We will open the day in Raleigh—the state capitol where we will visit related sites and the North Carolina Historical Museum. From Raleigh, Sherman contemplated how he might finish the war; but, Johnston had no stomach for further fighting and he too awaited the pleasure of Sherman. We will move back via Morrisville where our hotel is as we follow Johnston back from Bentonville. We will then go on to Hillsborough, a historic colonial era town where we will visit the Alexander Dixon House and Hardee's son Willie's grave at St. Mary's Episcopal Church—he was but 16 and was killed in his first battle at Bentonville. Our day and program will finish with the proceedings and drama of the surrender negotiations at Bennett Place. Mark will summarize the war and the continued deterioration of the Confederate government as Davis and his cabinet became refugees. Lunch is again provided.

You may depart at your leisure tonight or tomorrow. **Thank you for joining us.**

About the Faculty:

Mark Bradley is the undisputed expert on military operations in North Carolina and the Civil War in that state. I have known Mark for twenty years and experienced his riveting lectures at our 1997 Duke University Symposium and working with him through graduate school and his doctorate. He is now a historian at the United States Army's Center of Military History in Washington, DC. Mark's broad experience makes him the perfect person to detail and explain this significant military and political operation.

Hotel Information:

This program will be based in Morrisville, North Carolina at the Holiday Inn Raleigh Durham Airport, 930 Airport Blvd., Morrisville, NC 27560. The cost of the hotel \$79 per night plus tax is not included in your registration fee. You should call 919-465-1910 or their toll free number and ask for the BGES Durham Program HOLRDU. We have a block of rooms until May 13, 2015. After that date rooms will be made available at the prevailing rate. The hotel provides transportation to and from the airport.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Raleigh Durham (RDU). Greensboro (GSO) is within range but has limited air service. This area is easily accessed by Interstate 40.

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. All prices are inclusive of shipping.

_____ John Barrett: **Sherman's March Through the Carolinas \$25**

_____ Jacqueline Campbell Glass: **When Sherman Marched North From the Sea, Resistance on the Confederate Home Front \$25**

_____ Mark Bradley, **The Battle of Bentonville, Last Stand in the Carolinas** (out of print, used copies in very good condition are available on AbeBooks.com for \$27 and up—this is the definitive work)

_____ Mark A. Moore, **Moore's Historical Guide to the Battle of Bentonville \$45** (This definitive map set supports Bradley's book and is also out of print, you can get excellent copies used from \$10 on AbeBooks.com)

_____ Mark Bradley, **This Astounding Close, The Road to Bennett Place \$30**

_____ Robert Dunkerly, **The Confederate Surrender at Greensboro, The Last Days of the Army of Tennessee \$40**

Registration Form

Sherman's March Through NC
A BGES Sesquicentennial Program
Presented by Dr. Mark Bradley
May 27-30, 2015 from Morrisville, NC

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes three lunches, all paid admissions, a reading book with maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director and transportation. We will also provide snacks, bottled water and a limited selection of sodas.

_____ Registration \$695

_____ Current BGES member \$625

_____ Teacher/full time student with identification \$575

_____ Register and prepay for Sherman in SC, BGES Weekend Warrior Wilmington Tour and Sherman in NC and enjoy Wilmington for just \$75; (\$40 for a BGES member—save \$300 on the multi registrations) (mail in only)

_____ 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)

_____ Send me the books indicated, I have enclosed \$_____

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$250 per person plus full payment for any books and or 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 on line at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.

