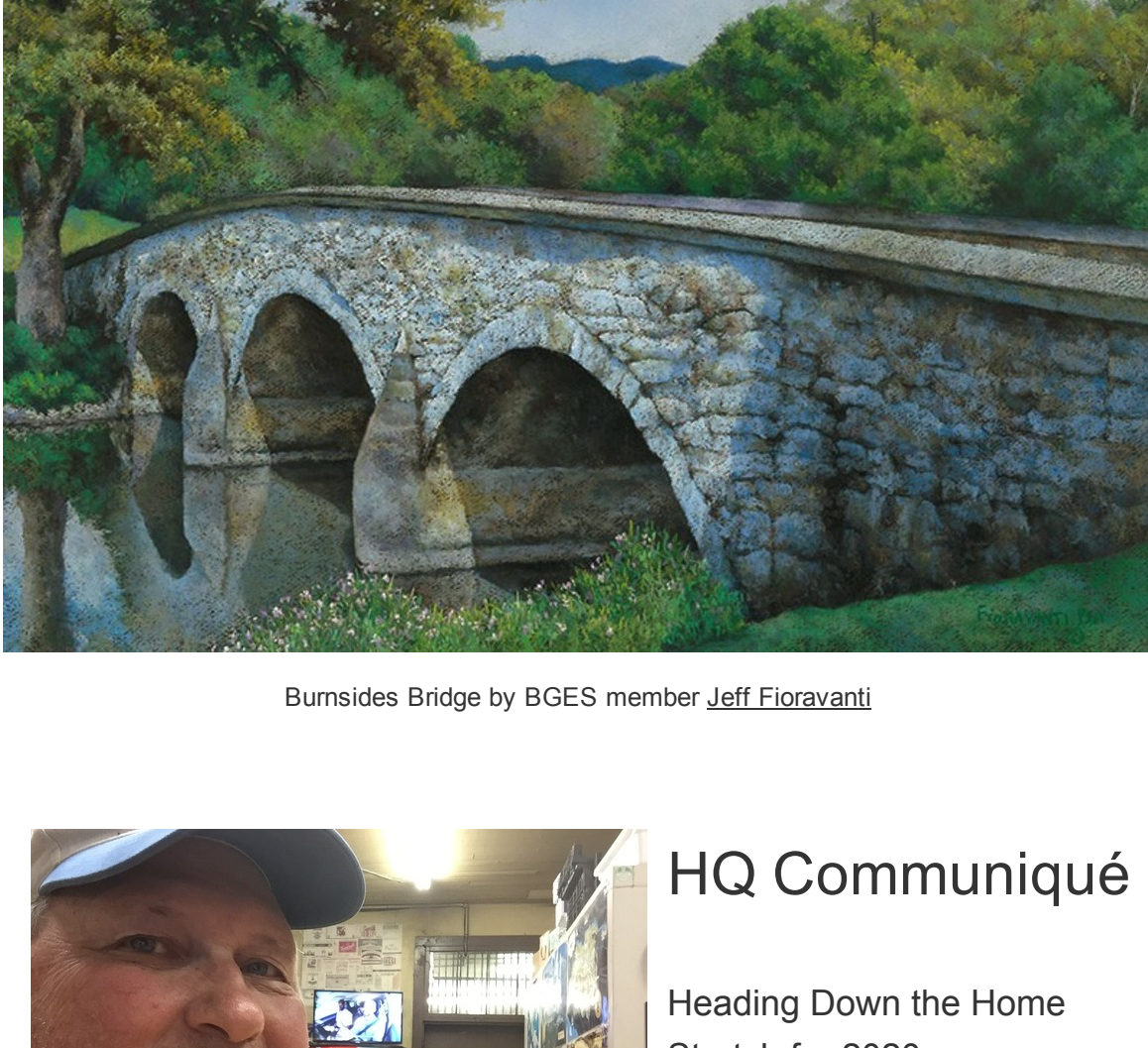
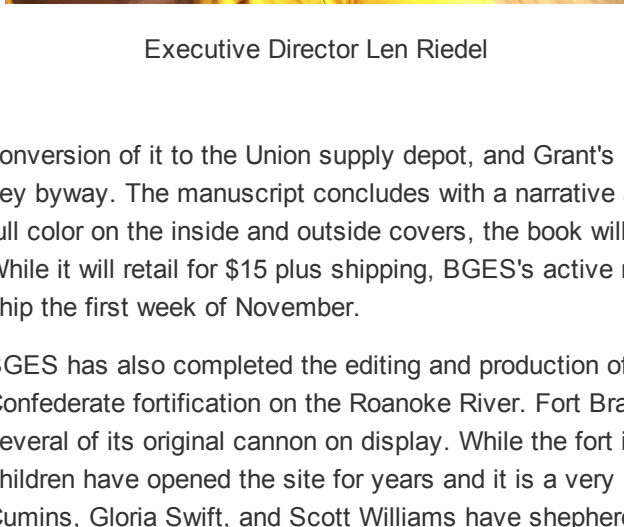




October 2020



Burnsides Bridge by BGES member [Jeff Fioravanti](#)



Executive Director Len Riedel

HQ Communiqué

Heading Down the Home Stretch for 2020

September was a really productive month with progress on many fronts. Our 20th monograph is at the printers and they have promised it will ship to us by

November 1. Parker Hills did a fine job on *The Grand Gulf to Raymond Historic Scenic Byway*. This 96-page keeper details the history of Grand Gulf, the battle for it, the

conversion of it to the Union supply depot, and Grant's move north against Vicksburg using this key byway. The manuscript concludes with a narrative and tour of the Raymond battlefield. With full color on the inside and outside covers, the book will be one you will not want to put down.

While it will retail for \$15 plus shipping, BGES's active members will receive a copy free and it will ship the first week of November.

BGES has also completed the editing and production of 18 signs to be installed at the small Confederate fortification on the Roanoke River. Fort Branch is a wonderful relic of the war with several of its original cannon on display. While the fort is on private property, the owner and his children have opened the site for years and it is a very nice half-day visit. BGES members Doug Cumins, Gloria Swift, and Scott Williams have shepherded it to completion. With the installation, BGES will have installed nearly 180 interpretative signs and 16 artillery pieces around the country.

We have now made plans to restore the wooden gun carriage from Pamplin Park. We will be moving it to the contractor in central Mississippi at the end of October with a completion in the spring of 2021. The rebuild is estimated at \$10,500. We have the seed money to start this project and will be raising \$7,000 in additional funds early next year. We have not placed the new carriage yet, nor have we determined if we will put the tube on it or if a partner group will. We will keep you posted.

We have stepped out promptly on two new projects, and you will read about them within the newsletter. The Video Archives Project is off and running. We are starting with over 350 lectures and may eventually move to some of our field tours. The lectures exceed 500 hours, which will be available to all active members of the BGES. It will be password protected to restrict it to members only. You can watch four lectures now as part of our fundraiser; find more info [here](#). We need your support to keep the contractor, who has converted more than 100 lectures from over 50 different speakers, working. Please donate [here](#).

We are also jumping on the bandwagon with online lectures, panels, and interfaces with book authors, seminar tour leaders, and other historians. We will be announcing the process for members and guests soon, and we expect to initiate these lectures and Internet events toward the end of October. We have a very full stable of supportive and capable historians that includes Gordon Rhea, Scott Patchan, Robert Jenkins, Gary Ecelbarger, and many more. You will get to meet some lesser known historians and some of the legends and superstars of the circuit and field. Many of the events will be free to the public and members; others will be tied to tours and other aspects of BGES's activities and will have minimal restrictions or expenses.

We have broadened our horizons on the Medford Photographic Collection project to build a superior provenance base for the photos. Our purpose is to give the Medford Collection the detail needed to make it the most consulted and visited photographic collection outside of the Library of Congress. To do this, we have engaged Jane Martin. Jane has decades of photographic editorial experience including the photo work on our Civil War guidebook for the National Geographic. Jane knows the medium and the repositories of period photography. Using the inputs to the weekly and monthly images we post on our website and on Wednesday mornings, Jane will accelerate this project to work through the 3,400 or so images within the next few years. We will need to fund this effort. As we get further into it, it looks that we will likely work with a \$750 monthly budget, which translates at this point to about \$9,000 a year. If you have not paid much attention to this project before, I invite you to watch for the Wednesday postings. We share what we know or find out about each photo within a week within the email, and the monthly images are also identified monthly. Everyone can help with this, and it is a great participatory opportunity.

Early in the summer we assessed the projected impact of COVID on our operations and plotted a way forward to raise the \$65,000 shortfall we anticipated. We are staying that course, encouraged that a vaccine will soon be circulating and that sometime in the first quarter of 2021 we should be doing tours again. I will do an update for BGES members early in October, but for now we are hopeful that we will be able to do our first tour of 2021 in late January. Of course we may need to push those back based on guidelines from the government and our insurance company, but I feel comfortable that we will be back in the field sooner rather than later.

At issue, though, is the financial bridge getting us to that point. Membership is holding up its financial promise in terms of dollars—the vast majority of members have renewed on time and more generously than before. We do have a larger than expected cohort of people AWOL; about 13% of the membership has gone past due, many in the past three months. I will be approaching them directly seeking their renewal. If you are on that list, your renewal will be very important at this time. The dollars and numbers add up unemotionally; they are what they are. If you return to the ranks you will be doing your part. New memberships have surged, and we are having our best year in more than a decade. If you are not a member of BGES, consider this your invitation. Just click [here](#) and join. We are approaching 500 current members, a milestone we haven't reached in 15 years.

The BGES Leather Book Sale is not quite where we hoped it would be, but it is moving the needle. If you follow up with the offers that are forthcoming and consider giving books for Christmas, we will achieve the sales level we need as part of the overall \$65,000 goal. The introduction of Sam Hood's new book *Patriots Twice* was an unexpected perk that sold more than 100 books last month—after expenses BGES netted over \$2,500. I am hopeful we can sell another 250 leather books, which would net us \$9,000. Sentimentally, please know that the Ed Bearss's books *Receding Tide* and *Fields of Honor* are now memorial books, as is Winston Groom's *Shiloh 1862*. We lost both of those BGES members on back-to-back days two weeks ago. These are now truly collectors items. In 2019 we had less than \$2,000 in book sales. This year we are approaching \$20,000—that is a game changer. If we can hit \$30,000, we will have done something important in our efforts to survive.

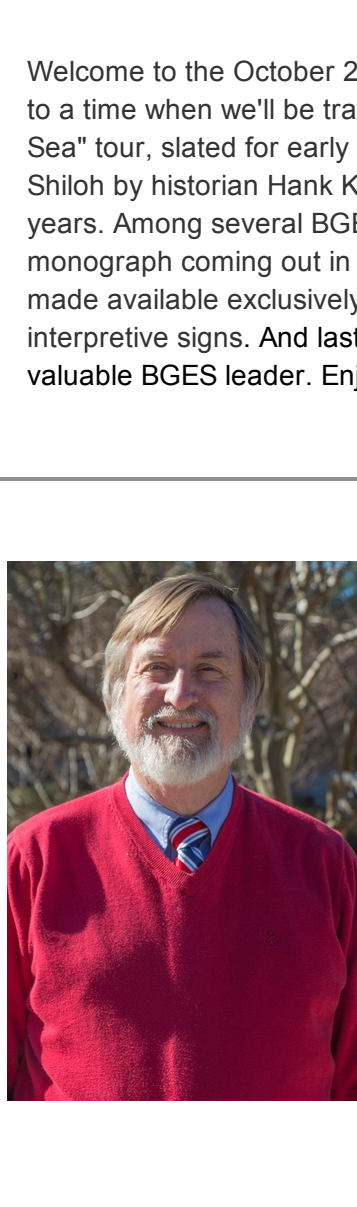
As I project through the remainder of the year it looks promising. If you continue to respond as you have, we will get through this. The vulnerability zone now looks like the first quarter of 2021. If we get to start our tours again in the first quarter, I believe we will have crossed the bridge and will be fine financially. If we do not get to do tours before April, then we will likely have to go through another round of transition funding for the first quarter 2021. We need to be aware it could happen and be thinking about it.

In closing for this month, I want to say Thank You! The response to the pandemic within our organization has been robust and positive. It is clear you want the BGES to survive, and your actions have spoken louder than anything else. We are unique and what we do is meaningful. You can see those tangible achievements in these very paragraphs. We are moving ahead, and we intend to still be standing after all this turbulence has subsided.

—Len Riedel, Executive Director, Blue and Gray Educational Society

October Happenings: The Fall Campaign

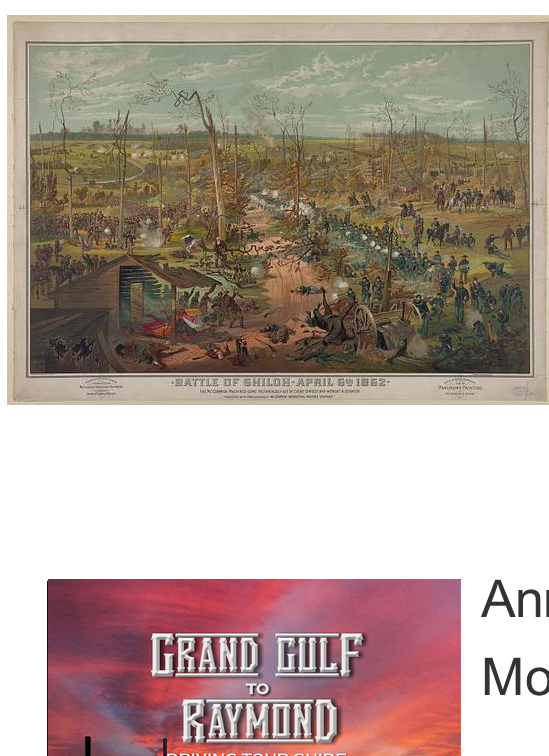
Welcome to the October 2020 issue of *Holding the Line*! This month we look ahead to a time when we'll be traveling again with John Derden's "Sherman's March to the Sea" tour, slated for early 2021. In addition, we present an interesting take on Shiloh by historian Hank Koopman, who has studied the subject for more than 20 years. Among several BGES announcements that you won't want to miss are a new monograph coming out in October 2020; our video archives being converted and made available exclusively to BGES members; and an update on the Fort Branch interpretive signs. And last but not least, we profile a member who has been a valuable BGES leader. Enjoy!



Tour Talk: John Derden and Sherman's March to the Sea

John Derden will be leading a tour of Sherman's famous March in 2021. Here are some thoughts on his childhood as an Army brat, his interest in the Civil War as a European history scholar, and the echoing of current events to the days leading up to the Civil War. You'll also gain some insight into his tour—it's never too early to sign up!

[Read More](#)



What if Historians Don't Have the Right Shiloh Story?

Hank Koopman has spent 20 years studying Shiloh, and he's convinced that history has it wrong.

[Read More](#)



Announcing BGES's New Monograph

After a long hiatus, BGES is publishing its 20th monograph, showcasing the Grand Gulf to Raymond Scenic Byway. The 96-page guide contains gorgeous images and maps, and site-by-site guidance to make the most of your visit. Authored by historian Parker Hills, this is one monograph you'll want to add to your collection.

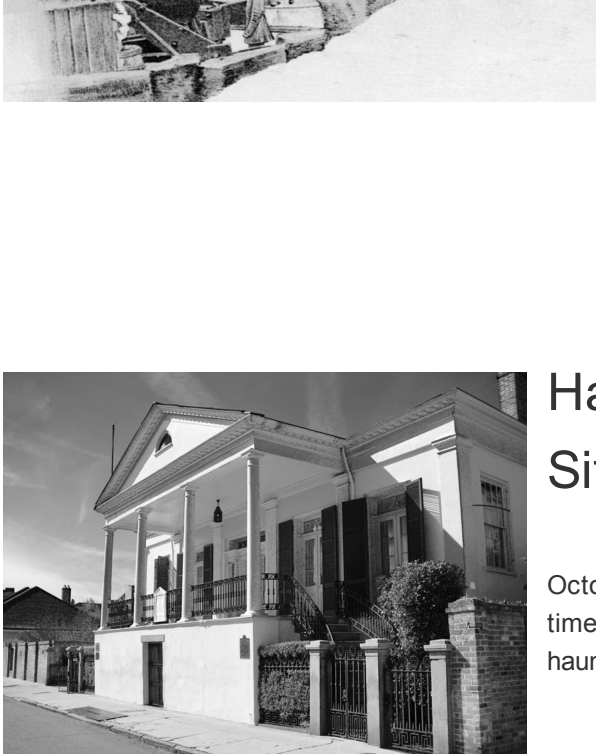
[Read More](#)



New BGES Membership Perk

One bright side of COVID: We have finally found the time to organize video footage from thousands of hours of lectures by our premier historians and scholars. And they will be made available exclusively to BGES members.

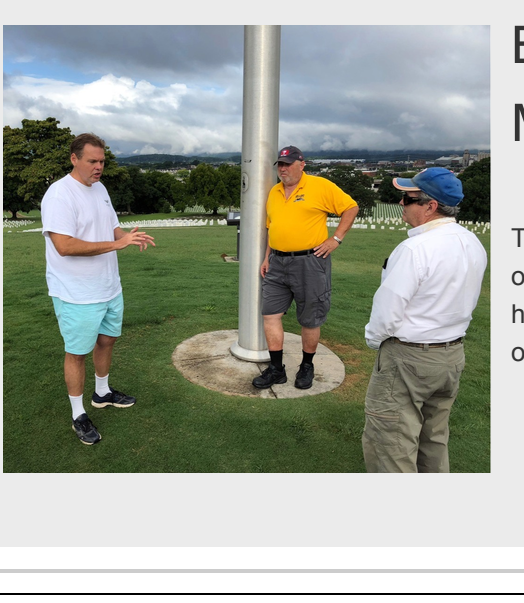
[Read More](#)



Update: A Fascinating BGES Project

BGES has been instrumental in providing interpretation for the South's only earthenwork fortification with its original artillery in place. Here's what's happening.

[Read More](#)



Haunted Civil War Sites

October is Halloween month, the perfect time to explore some of the nation's most haunted sites—if you dare.

[Read More](#)



BGES Members Making a Difference

This amazing man emerged from the shadow of his famous father to become a noted historian, author, and Civil War expert in his own right.

[Read More](#)

Publications, Upcoming Tours, & News

Publications

BGES Authors: If you're looking to read up on the Battle for Mobile Bay, there's no better book than Jack Friend's *West Wind, Flood Tide: The Battle of Mobile Bay*, published in 2004. Friend, who passed away in 2010, extensively reexamined evidence and incorporated new sources to write what many consider to be a definitive overview of the battle and its importance to the Civil War. As *History* journal stated in a review: "Friend describes in almost excruciating detail the ship movements and preparations for the climactic assault, making extensive use of primary sources." And the *New York Military Affairs Symposium* reported that the book provides "a very valuable look at two of the 'fightingest' admirals of the Civil War, David G. Farragut and Franklin Buchanan ... [and] 'rattlin' good' tactical detail while giving the reader a solid education in the conduct of naval operations during the Civil War." Friend was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, a Korean War veteran, a Mobile businessman, and he served on the board of the CSS *Alabama* Association.

In Camp Along the Monocacy: Look for the next members' newsletter, edited by Len Riedel, in mid-October. BGES is honored to have five general/flag officers in its ranks from one star generals to two star generals and a three star Vice Admiral who will be reflecting on Civil War leadership and who and what most affected them in their upper levels of military leadership. If you are a BGES member and you are not getting this bi-monthly electronic newsletter, email BGES communications at communications@blueandgrayeducation.org and ask to be added to the list. You can review archived copies about six months after they are released to the membership.

Upcoming Tours

Suspended through the end of the year. See latest schedule [here](#).

Investors' Reports

Detailed reports for donors and prospective donors are available for download from our website on [Our Mission](#) page.

BGES Recruiting Station

Membership

As a member of BGES, you will be part of a community devoted to saving our Civil War. You will receive our e-newsletter, updated info on upcoming tours, and access to some of our greatest historians. [Join here](#).

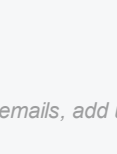
Already a member? Don't let your membership slip. [Renew here](#).

Quarter Guard Program

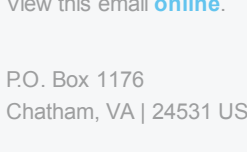
We would also like you to consider joining the [Quarter Guard Program](#), which supports BGES on a monthly or quarterly basis.

BGES Major Gift and Legacy Program

What Will You Be Remembered For? Be part of BGES's future by making an endowment or legacy gift. [Contact us](#) if you would like to make an endowment or legacy gift.



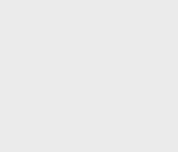
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