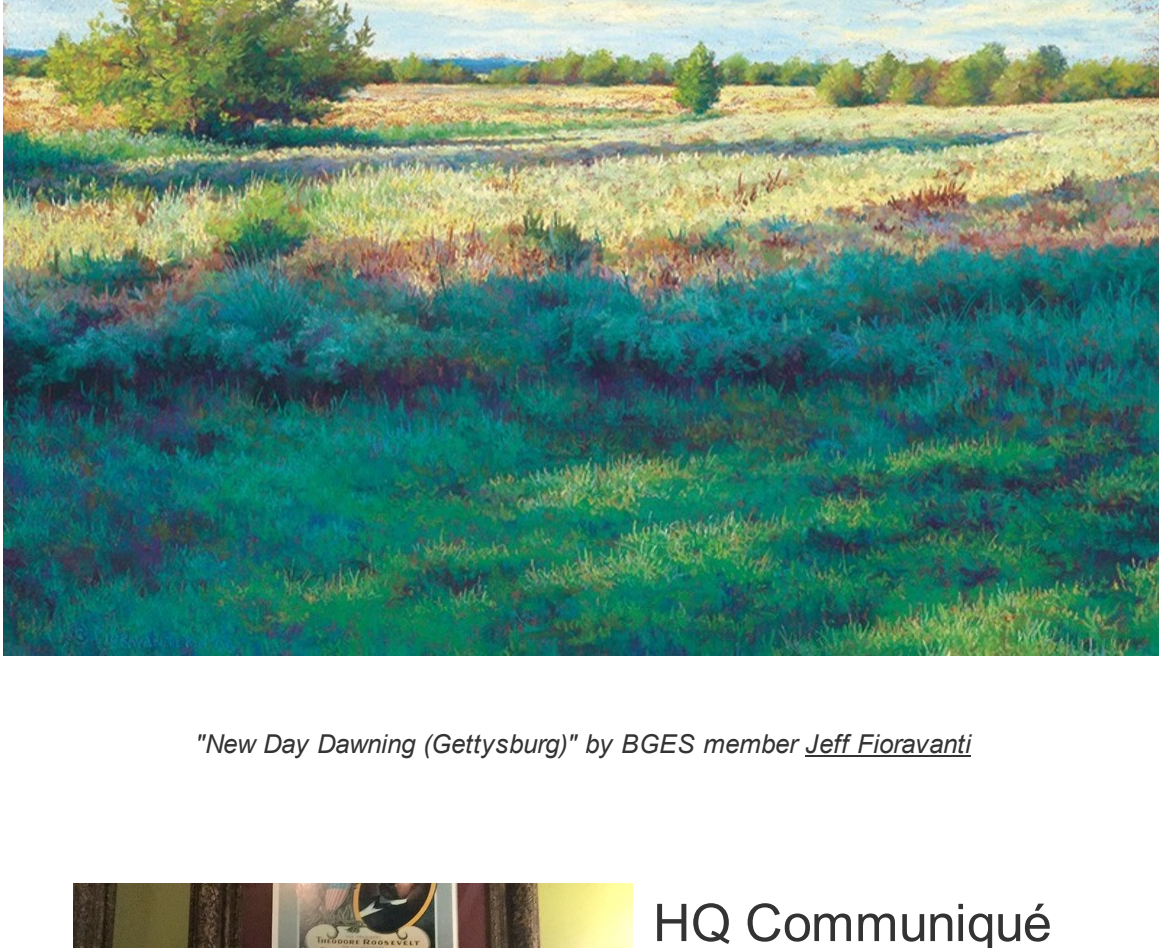
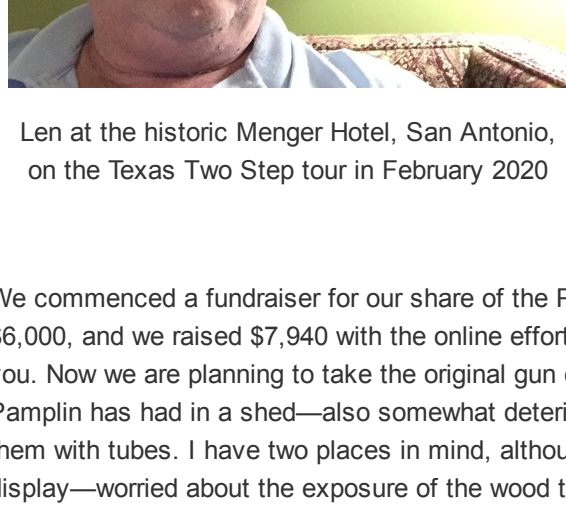




May 2020



"New Day Dawning (Gettysburg)" by BGES member [Jeff Fioravanti](#)



Len at the historic Menger Hotel, San Antonio, on the Texas Two Step tour in February 2020

HQ Communiqué

Seems like I have spent a lot of time communicating with people this past month. I have sent two general snail mailings to the membership and just finished a third which goes out over the weekend updating our 440 members—yes, membership is rising slowly, but it is rising. The flurry of activity is what you might expect. The functions of the BGES do go on despite the impact of the virus on our battlefield escapades.

We commenced a fundraiser for our share of the Pamplin Park Gun Carriage. Our goal was \$6,000, and we raised \$7,940 with the online effort, passing the goal line in 25 hours! Thank you. Now we are planning to take the original gun carriage and perhaps a second one that Pamplin has had in a shed—also somewhat deteriorated—and refurbish them and redeploy them with tubes. I have two places in mind, although one is not really suitable for static display—worried about the exposure of the wood to the elements in a park setting. I have reached out to one site and am awaiting their reply.

I have received detailed information on the artifacts list for the Lincoln Conspirator's Courtroom Museum at Fort McNair, and we will soon be raising approximately \$35,000 to fund the four phases of that project. I will explain the mission in more detail when we start the ask. It is a very meaty project that I know you will be proud to be a part of.

Our other interpretative project at Fort Branch has completed the draft signs, and they are being corrected before finalizing and proceeding to production. That project is already fully funded.

I have evaluated approximately 11 tours over the past three weeks and moved ten of them—two to 2021—and cancelled one. Rather than list them all, click [here](#) to look at the new line up for the rest of the year, or click [here](#) for a list of the tours that have changed. Our first planned tour will be in the Shenandoah Valley right after the 4th of July. At the same time, I have coordinated with all our historians and we have agreed on programs and dates; the tour schedule for 2021 has been submitted to the Board of Directors for consideration and approval. The list will be released the first week of June, and programs in the first few months of 2021 will be open for registration at that time.

It bears repeating that the BGES has a wide range of meaningful projects and educational programs, and just because we are not in the field at our Civil War and related Field Universities does not mean we are on idle. I think you can see that. The virus has been a formidable obstacle to our full program, and its final impact is yet to be known. I think our major challenge is Social Distancing and the nature of our tour. It is both a confidence issue and a public health issue—the group of people most at risk look like a group picture of our cohorts. No doubt many will want to see the course of the virus and that remedial options are available and functional across society. Support issues are also unknown at this time. I think it is reasonable to assume that the answers to all these questions will reveal themselves in due course. Issues of liability have yet to be defined. All this could reap further destruction on our plans. I will remain flexible.

I am certain we will return to the fields—will it be in 2020 and in July? That is what we are shooting for, but as each day brings new data points to consider and respond to, what I say tonight on April 30 could very well be overcome by events on May 7. Time will tell.

Let me close with a few positive words and an invitation. As I said, membership is slowly rising and attrition is practically nonexistent—thank you. Our email blasts are reaching over 5,000 people now, with the range of people reading them ranging from 900 to as many as 1,300 people. Given we have but 440 members, that is very encouraging. Many may soon become members—we will be inviting them soon.

I also want to invite you to help us reach the next generation. We announced a Civil War 101 tour of Gettysburg. I will be leading it after Dave Collins needed to back out due to family reasons, with Norm Dasinger helping me. A board member has made it possible for you to come and bring up to two students or children for just \$25 each—the cost of their lunches with their own full-priced registration. They have underwritten the cost of a full-size bus and we are excited about the generational synergy with helping younger folks get the chance to walk a battlefield with a parent or older mentor—they are our future preservationists, and we need to get them excited and engaged with Civil War education. I can assure you that the experience will not be a babysitting outing. The interest and enthusiasm of the younger folks up through college undergraduates will make for a unique and dynamic interface that will be rewarding to all—I guarantee it. So look it over, get registered, and if you know a couple of younger folks who would benefit from this, bring them to this great battlefield. It would be a great return after this period in Siberia.

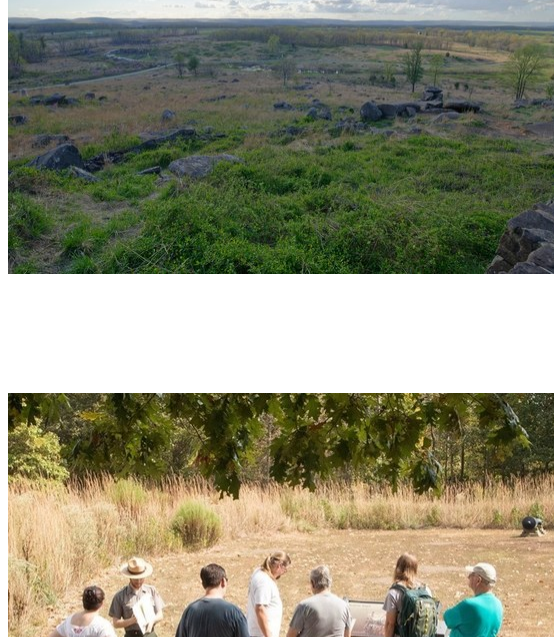
Thank you for your interest, constant support, and understanding. This organization is tempered by 26 full years of experience, and we can and will survive this. I want you to survive it as well. Please be careful, and when in doubt opt for safety. We will get out again—they will get a vaccine, and we will be back at it! If there are more cancellations, know that in war you do have casualties, but we are winning and we are going to win.

See you again soon,

—Len Riedel, Executive Director

May Happenings: The Spring Campaign

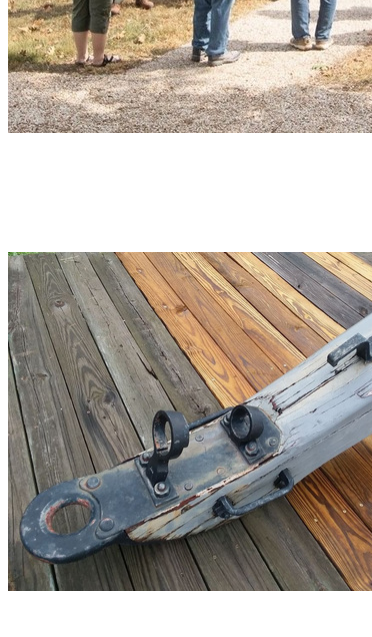
Welcome to the May issue of *Holding the Line*! This month you'll read about Neil Mangum's upcoming tour, which delves into the lesser known story of the War on the Northern Plains (and which has been rescheduled for August 2020 thanks to the coronavirus), as well as an exciting new BGES venture that will bring students into the fold. We announce our longterm plans for #GivingTuesday and discuss BGES's commitment to projects up and beyond educational tours. We've created a blog page that keeps track of April-May-June tours that have had to be rescheduled (see it [here](#)), and share some really cool virtual tours of Civil War sites at a time when they've been closed in real life. And last but not least, we commemorate another BGES member who has done amazing work in restoring a historic cemetery. Enjoy!



On Sacred Grounds, with Neil Mangum

One of the nation's foremost experts tells BGES Blog about his upcoming tour that delves into the lesser known side of American West history.

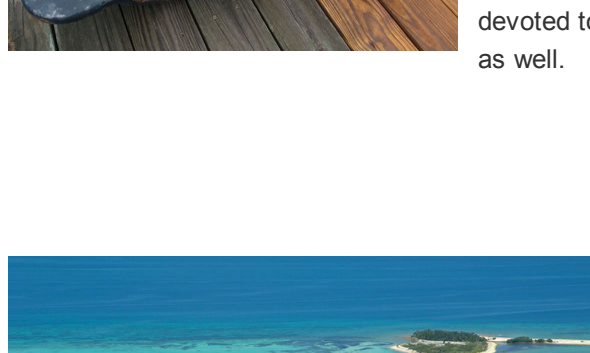
[Read More](#)



The Medford Files

The results are in! After five weeks of posting one new mystery image a week, we share what we know about each one.

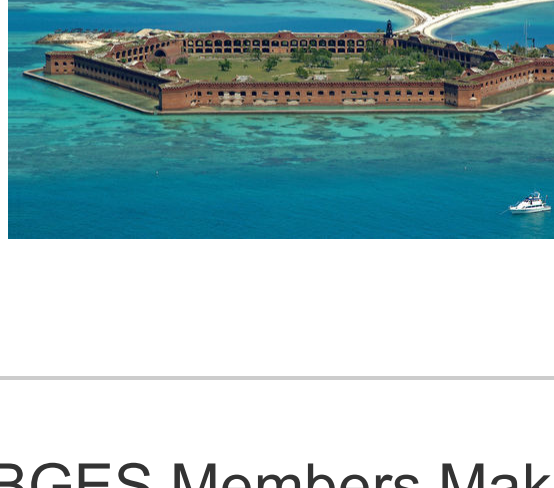
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Gettysburg 101

BGES is embarking on an exciting new program—for students.

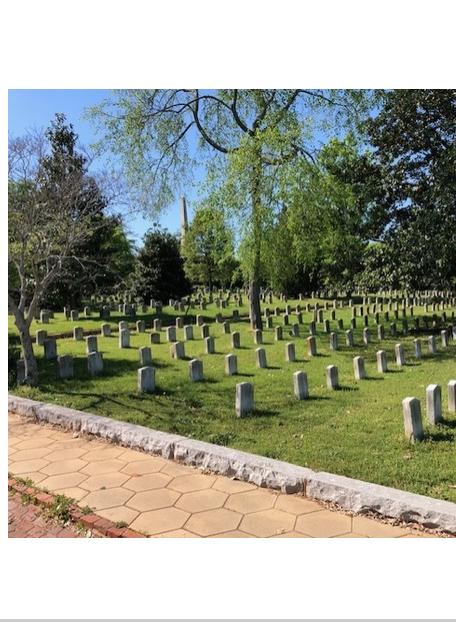
[Read More](#)



#GivingTuesday

It's never too early to start thinking about #GivingTuesday, the worldwide phenomenon just after Thanksgiving that benefits all kinds of nonprofits. See how it can help BGES.

[Read More](#)



The Latest BGES Projects

BGES is devoted to exceptional education, of course. But over the past 26 years, it's been devoted to some pretty amazing special projects as well.

[Read More](#)



Civil War Sites to Experience from Home

Maybe we can't go out and visit our favorite Civil War sites right now, but there's an excellent Plan B.

[Read More](#)

BGES Members Making a Difference



One of our members has been instrumental in restoring a historic Atlanta cemetery.

[Read More](#)

Publications, Upcoming Tours, & News

Publications

BGES Authors: Richard Hatcher is one of BGES's popular tour leaders, and those who have accompanied him understand his gift of storytelling—they will tell you, you will not want to miss his forthcoming book, *Thunder in the Harbor: Fort Sumter, Charleston, and the American Civil War*. Slated to be published in July 2020, this fascinating tale delves into the storied history of Fort Sumter and its greater role in the Civil War. Retired from his position as historian at Fort Sumter National Monument, Rick now serves on the board of the Fort Sumter-Fort Moultrie Historical Trust and as chairman of its History Committee. Be sure to preorder today and be one of the first to read this fascinating narrative rooted in the earliest days of the Civil War.

In Camp Along the Monocacy: Look for the next members' newsletter, edited by Len Riedel, in mid-June. The topic probably will be "Reflections on Vicksburg: Pivotal Campaign of the Civil War." 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. You can review archived copies about six months after they are released to the membership.

Upcoming Tours

July 2020

July 7-11, 2020: [Sheridan Recovers the Valley, Fall 1864](#)

July 17-19, 2020: [Civil War 101: The Gettysburg Campaign](#)

July-August 2020

July 27-August 1, 2020: [Grant Moves South: A Star Ascends to the West](#)

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](#).

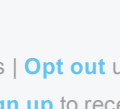
Already a member? Don't let your membership slip. [Renew here](#).

Quarter Guard Program

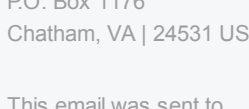
We would also like you to consider joining the [Quarter Guard Program](#), which supports BGES on a monthly or quarterly basis.

BGES Major Gift and Legacy Program

What Will You Be Remembered For? Be part of BGES' 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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