

*A BGES Civil War Field University Program:
Glory for All, The 54th Massachusetts & the
Impact of Black Troops Along the Southeastern
Coast*

With Stephen Wise and guest speakers

April 2-7, 2024; from Beaufort, SC

During the Civil War, three events are considered to be major turning points. Vicksburg and Gettysburg lead the list, but the third, the July 18, 1863, attack on Battery Wagner, also changed the face of the war. The fine showing of the 54th Massachusetts proved to the nation that Black soldiers would fight, and the United States greatly expanded its enlistment of “colored” troops. By the war’s end, nearly 200,000 Black men wore the Union blue. This infusion of manpower increased the stress on Confederate resources and helped ensure Confederate defeat. Led by Stephen Wise, author of the acclaimed *Gate of Hell: Campaign for Charleston Harbor 1863*, and with a number of special guest guides, this tour will highlight the service of Black regiments in the Department of the South.

Based in beautiful Beaufort-By-the-Sea, this will be an extensive and very worthwhile tour. Beaufort also is home to the recently established Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, which emphasizes the start of the Reconstruction Era and that numerous Black regiments were raised in the area and used in the culmination of the war in that region.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOME REAL BRAIN SALAD AND SOMETHING NEW, THIS PROGRAM IS A “MUST-DO!”

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

5:30 PM: Meet at the Holiday Inn headquarters hotel. Steve will deliver a talk at 6 PM on “Beaufort in the Civil War.” You are then free to have dinner on your own.

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

The capture of Port Royal Sound in November 1861 gave the Federals a toehold in the Deep South. In response, with the need to protect both Savannah and Charleston and the railroad linking them, Gen. Robert E. Lee was sent to supervise the construction of appropriate fortifications. As will be obvious, the various waterways and meandering marshes required extensive fortifications. Today, we will do a special tour of earthworks and fortifications in the Beaufort area. We will visit sites on private property that

protected the railroad. We will also visit fortifications between the Combahee and Ashepoo Rivers. The tour also includes a visit to and discussion of the October 1862 battle of Pocotaligo.

This evening we will do an evening walking tour of Beaufort sites that were associated with the USCT.

Lunch is included, and dinner is on your own.

Thursday, April 4, 2024

As the historiography of the war expands, we have found increasing interest in the role that the Black man played in the ultimate success of the Union war effort. Movies like *Glory* have pinpointed significant social adaptations that both the North and South had to transcend to move us into a Civil Rights era that in many ways still confounds us today.

This area was particularly fruitful as a study of the impact of the Black soldiers on the war and the impact of the war on Black slaves and free people of color. Today in conjunction with the Friends of Honey Hill (FOHH), you will enjoy an extensive look at the Low Country, including the battle of Honey Hill, Tulifinny, where in 1864 Confederates faced Union assaults heavily manned with young Black Union regiments.

We also will visit sites associated with the final operations of the 54th Massachusetts and tour Camp Saxton, where the 1st SC trained and was encamped. It was there that the Emancipation Proclamation was first read publicly in South Carolina. Finally, we will finish the day at the Beaufort National Cemetery, where many USCTs were buried.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Friday, April 5, 2024

8 AM: After Sherman marched north from Savannah, dispersed Confederate units returned to towns that had been passed. Today we head north to Manning, South Carolina, to follow Potter's Raid—a punitive expedition to flush out those remaining Confederates. The cutting edge of the expedition was the 54th Massachusetts and other USCT units. While there, they destroyed rolling stock missed by Sherman in Camden and Sumter. The remainder of the tour today includes the relatively unknown engagements at Dingle's, Boykin, and Dinkins Mills.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Saturday, April 6, 2024

Departure TBD: No study of the 54th Massachusetts or the USCT would be complete without a trip to Morris Island and an examination of the attack on Battery Wagner. En

route, we will follow the Federals' march line to Charleston during Sherman's move through the Carolinas. After our boat trip to Morris Island, we will head back to Beaufort, stopping at the wonderfully preserved McCloud Plantation, where the 54th encamped after Charleston fell. Visits to Morris Island are driven by the tides; if all goes well, we will make a stop at the site of the Combahee Raid where, in June 1863, James Montgomery's 2nd South Carolina, another regiment of formerly enslaved people, destroyed a series of rice plantations and freed some 800 enslaved people. This operation was particularly noteworthy because it was accompanied by Harriet Tubman—the famous black underground conductor.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Sunday, April 7, 2024

7:30 AM: Our last day will be a long one as we head south to Florida and the Olustee Battlefield. Along the way, overviews of Federal raids and operations along the Georgia and Florida coasts will be revisited. Of special interest will be stops at Darien, the site of the June 11, 1863, raid led by James Montgomery and manned by the 2nd South Carolina and the 54th Massachusetts. The sacking of Darien was controversial, a fact depicted in the movie *Glory*. Another excursion will be the 1st South Carolina under Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson movement along the St Mary's River to destroy a lumber mill. A stop at Baldwin, Florida, allows us to set up the fight at Olustee.

Following lunch, we will stop on the way back to Beaufort at Camp Milton and Camp Finegan, later renamed Camp Shaw after the 54th's commander and where additional USCT regiments camped and were trained. Expect to return by 8 PM.

Lunch and dinner are included.

About the Faculty:

Stephen Wise is a professor of History at the University of South Carolina Beaufort and Director of the Marine Corps Museum at Marine Corps Depot Parris Island. Wise has been recognized for excellence in history by the State of South Carolina; is a leading student of South Carolina history, a protégé of the legendary Civil War historian Thomas Connelly, and the author of two splendid books: *Lifeline of the Confederacy*, about blockade running, and *Gate of Hell*, highlighting the efforts to take Charleston in 1863. Steve's tours are noteworthy for his strong insight, especially when touring South Carolina sites, and his guest support historians. Every day and site are a real treat.

Hotel Information:

The program will be based at the Holiday Inn, 2225 Boundary St., Beaufort, SC. The rate of \$129 plus tax is good until March 3, 2024. [Click here for a hot link to the](#)

property or call 843-379-3100, ext. 194, and ask for Jennifer. Keep in mind you may want and need to get a room for Sunday night, the 7th of April.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Savannah (SAV), which is served by every major airline, JetBlue, and Southwest. The distance from SAV to Beaufort is 48 miles, and it takes an hour by car. There are nine rental car companies at the airport. Uber and Lyft offer taxi-type services. Go to <https://savannahairport.com/airport/ground-transportation> to check out commercial transportation options.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. These books are available online.

Luis F. Emilio: [*A Brave Black Regiment: The History of the 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry 1863-1865*](#)

Thomas W. Higginson: [*Army Life in a Black Regiment: and Other Writings*](#)

Christopher Looby: [*The Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters of Thomas Wentworth Higginson*](#)

Todd Mildfelt and Gavid Schafer: [*Abolitionist of the Most Dangerous Kind: James Montgomery and His War on Slavery*](#)

Gordon Rhea: [*Stephen A. Swails: Black Freedom Fighter in the Civil War and Reconstruction*](#)

Noah Trudeau: [*Voices of the 55th: Letters from the 55th Massachusetts Volunteers, 1861-1865*](#)

Stephen Wise: [*Gate of Hell: Campaign for Charleston Harbor, 1863*](#)

Stephen Wise and Lawrence Rowland: [*Rebellion, Reconstruction, and Redemption, 1861-1893: The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina*](#)

Registration Form

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the Impact of Black Troops along the
Southeastern Coast*

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Presented by Stephen Wise and guest speakers

April 2-7, 2024; from Beaufort, SC

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes four lunches and one dinner, maps, the academic program, the support of a professional historian, a tour director, and transportation. We will also provide snacks and cold bottled water.

_____ Registration \$1300

_____ Current BGES member \$1195

_____ 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 \$300 per person 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, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit cards to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.