

The Great Locomotive Chase Tour
(on the 163rd Anniversary of the event)
with Jim Ogden, Chief Historian,
Chickamauga-Chattanooga NMP
A BGES Civil War Field University Program
April 11-13, 2025, from Ringgold, GA

Jim Ogden is one of the great historians of the National Park Service. Widely admired for his intimate knowledge of the 1863 Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns, he is a preservationist of the first degree, often called upon to lead our nation's leaders on private tours of historical sites. What many people do not realize is that the core of Jim's success is a relentless and compulsive desire to be prepared and to understand the peripheral issues related to his primary topics. Now, he is bringing that collateral knowledge to BGES in a series of programs he has long wanted to do. Andrews' Raiders is but one of his specialties.

On April 12, 1862, pro-Union civilian James Andrews and his raiders captured the imagination of the North with their daring raid, while in the South, Capt. William Fuller captured the hearts and resolve of the citizens of Dixie. Now, on the 163rd anniversary, Jim will lead us as we retrace the steps of each party on the same day, Saturday, and the same date, April 12, as it actually occurred.

This is a very special trip, and we hope you will join us for a one-of-a-kind program.

Itinerary

Friday evening, April 11, 2025, 6:00-7:00 p.m.: Orientation

Meet Jim at our headquarters hotel and hear his opening lecture on the nature and role of railroads in the infrastructure of antebellum South. We will discuss how Gen. Ormsby Mitchel planned to move against the key railroad juncture of Chattanooga and why he needed an operation against the Western and Atlantic Railroad. Recently completed operations in and around Savannah, Tennessee, and Corinth, Mississippi, helped focus the Federal plans.

Dinner is on your own.

Saturday, April 12, 2025, 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Starting at 8:00 a.m., on the 163rd anniversary of this famous event, we will head south to the staging area near Marietta. This study tour suggests that we hug the Western and Atlantic Railroad. Along the way, Jim will introduce us to James Andrews and the men from Ohio who made this spectacular operation possible. Starting at the Kennesaw House, we will figuratively board the train with Andrews' adventurers and head north to Big Shanty, where, on April 12, 1862, they detached the superfluous passenger cars and

headed northbound with the stolen train. While at Big Shanty (today Kennesaw), we will see the famous locomotive, *The General*. The logistics of 19th-century train travel are sophisticated, and the tasks associated with evading pursuit and/or destroying the railroad at key locations will be fully explored. Our goal today is to reach Dalton via a multitude of small villages and train stations—keep in mind this is an event in motion.

We will return to the hotel by 6 p.m. Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Sunday, April 13, 2025, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

This morning, we will head directly to Tunnel Hill. The act of thievery was bold in the extreme; however, the leadership and commitment of *The General's* engineer, Capt. William Allan Fuller, to pursue and reacquire his engine is remarkable. Imagine running an engine (*The Texas*) in reverse, with the support vehicle preceding you. After clearing Tunnel Hill, we will pursue to Ringgold and the spot where Andrews and his men abandoned *The General*. When you run out of fuel, you are out of fuel! Fuller's tenacious pursuit prevented Andrews from fully utilizing his advantages and properly servicing a 19th-century engine. The raiders were all captured, and a number were tried and convicted. The death penalty was carried out in Atlanta. We cannot go to that site (although it is marked), but we will go to the location where the trials were held and where the monument to the raiders is commemorated. Our day will finish with a visit to the final resting places of the executed men in the Chattanooga National Cemetery. While there, we will discuss the creation and award of the Medal of Honor. Amazingly enough, Andrews was and remains ineligible.

This program has been part of our consciousness for more than a century—indeed, the silent film with Buster Keaton is timeless. It is about time the story is told honestly and in its proper historical context. We hope you will join us.

We will finish and return to the hotel by 5:00 p.m. Lunch is included.

About the Faculty

Jim Ogden might well be called “the National Military Park’s encyclopedic historian.” To coin a phrase, if he doesn’t know it, it probably can’t be known—at least when it comes to Civil War and local history. “I wanted to work for the park service from the time I was a kid,” says Ogden. The path to his current position was not smooth, though. The son of two teachers, James Ogden III says he was “expected to learn things” growing up. He settled on the American Civil War and military history as areas of expertise. At Frostburg State College in Maryland, when he informed his academic advisors of his intent to major in these areas, he was told it was not a well-rounded curriculum. He forged ahead anyway and graduated with the degree of his choice.

When Ogden wanted to do an internship at Harper’s Ferry National Historical Park, he was told by his advisors it was not one of the available options. The young student

borrowed a family friend's car, drove to the train station, took a train to Harper's Ferry, and returned with the information necessary to make the internship work.

After graduation, Ogden says, "I learned that at that time, the park service didn't care if I had a degree in any kind of history. They were looking for law enforcement-trained officers to serve as rangers." So, the newly minted historian took a six-week law enforcement course and was hired as a ranger at the Chickamauga Battlefield. There, he worked for some years, patrolling the park, helping visitors, and amassing additional knowledge. He took a break from Chickamauga for six years and did short stints at Russell Cave and Fredericksburg, Virginia, then returned to his first national park home.

In 1988, Chickamauga Battlefield created an official historian position, and Ogden became the only historian the park has ever had. After 36 years, Jim remains the Chief Historian at Chickamauga-Chattanooga NMP.

Hotel Information:

This program will be headquartered at Hampton Inn Ringgold, 6875 Battlefield Parkway, Ringgold, Georgia, 30736; 706-935-4800. The BGES special hotel rate is \$139 plus tax, with a rate cut-off date of March 12, 2025. When you call the hotel, be sure to tell them you are booking your room with the group "Blue and Gray Education" to get the special rate. The hotel does not have an airport shuttle.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (CHA), 12 miles from the hotel. Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is also an option. It is 112 miles from the hotel.

Recommended Reading and Viewing

Bonds, Russell, [*Stealing the General: The Great Locomotive Chase and the First Medal of Honor*](#). An original copy may be accessed via the Library of Congress online at: <https://archive.org/details/stealinggeneral0000bond/page/n7/mode/2up>

Pittenger, Lt. William, *Daring and Suffering, A History of the Andrews Railroad Raid*. This is an incredible eyewitness account by a 22-year-old participant, who survived! An original copy may be accessed via the Library of Congress online at: <https://archive.org/details/daringsufferingh02pitt>

Silent Movie: [*The General*](#) (1926) with Buster Keaton

Disney Movie: [*The Great Locomotive Chase*](#) (1956) with Fess Parker

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Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Registration includes 2 lunches, all paid admissions, maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian and a tour director, and transportation by passenger bus or van. We will also provide snacks and bottled water.

_____ Current BGES member \$575

_____ Non-BGES member \$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 membership donation of \$_____ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax-deductible; see blueandgrayeducation.org for levels).

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$150 per person 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, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.