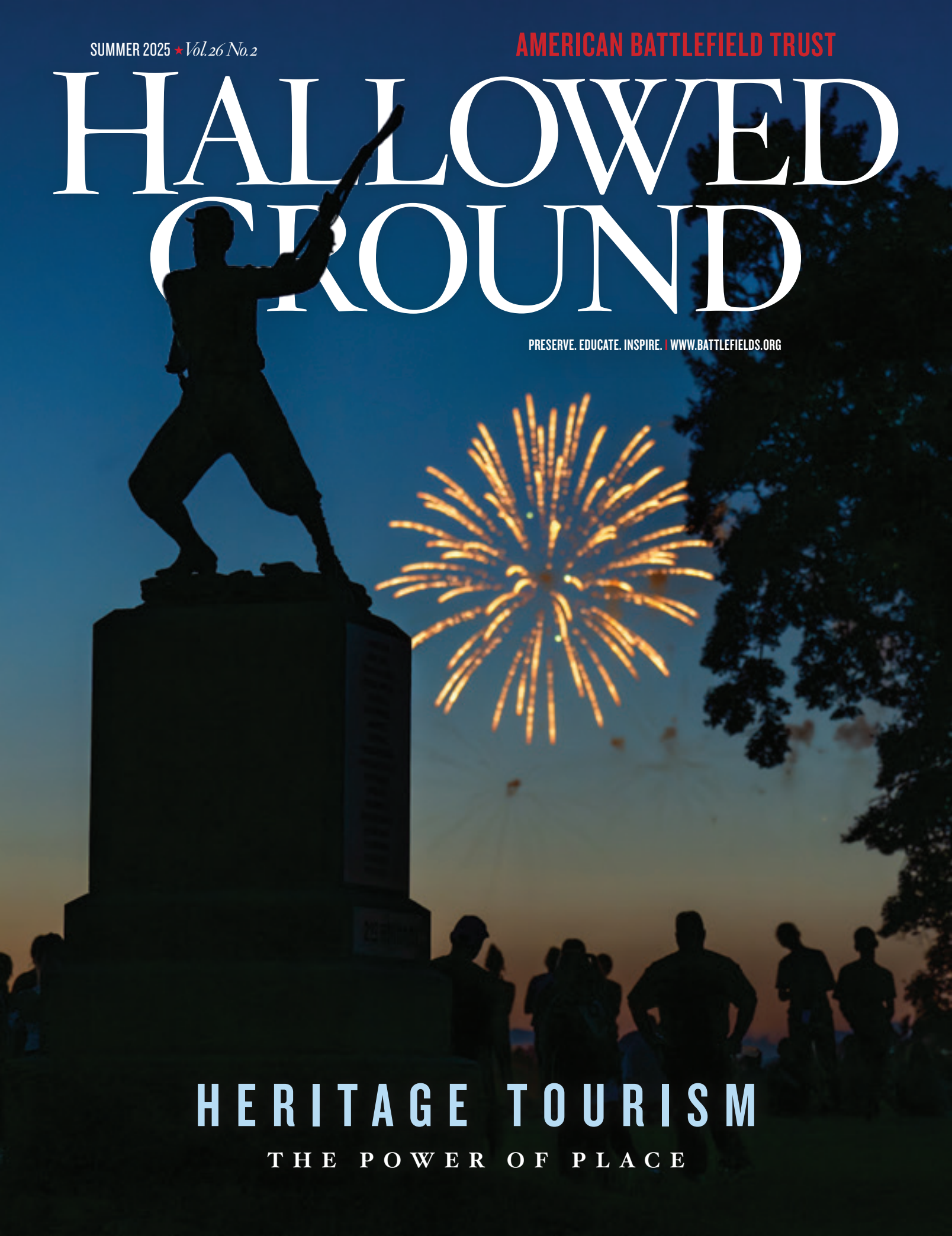


SUMMER 2025 ★ Vol. 26 No. 2

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST

HALLOWED GROUND

The background of the cover is a photograph of a battlefield monument at dusk. A large, dark silhouette of a soldier stands on a tall, rectangular pedestal. The soldier is holding a rifle high in his right hand. In the background, a large, bright firework explodes in the sky, creating a starburst pattern of orange and yellow light. The sky is a deep blue, and the silhouettes of trees and other people are visible in the distance.

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HERITAGE TOURISM

THE POWER OF PLACE

HALLOWED
GROUND
A quarterly publication
of the American
Battlefield Trust
Summer 2025
Vol. 26, No. 2

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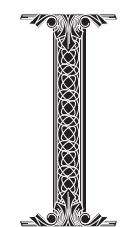
THE AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST preserves our nation's hallowed battlegrounds and educates the public about what happened there and why it matters today. We permanently protect these battlefields as a lasting and tangible memorial to the brave soldiers who fought in the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Thanks to the contributions of more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide, we have preserved more than 60,000 acres at 160 sites in 25 states. For more information, call 800-298-7878 or visit our website at www.battlefields.org. *Hallowed Ground* is the membership magazine of the American Battlefield Trust. It is produced solely for nonprofit educational purposes and every reasonable attempt is made to provide accurate and appropriate attribution for all elements, including those in the public domain. Contemporary images are reproduced only with permission and appropriate attribution; uncredited images are courtesy the American Battlefield Trust. Feature articles reflect the research and opinion of the bylined author. ©2025 American Battlefield Trust.



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

250



I F I KNOW ONE THING about the members of this organization and others reading this magazine, it's that they — like me! — *love* getting out on the battlefield. Whether it's tromping well-worn paths up iconic redoubts at Vicksburg or securing permission to access Lost Avenue at Gettysburg, we know there's nothing quite like the power of place.

But just how often do you pause to think about what each of your visits means?

I don't mean how it deepens your understanding of the battle, or how accounts you've previously read unfolded across topography that the written word didn't do justice to. Or the newfound connection you feel to the soldiers who fought there, the soul-deep resonance of standing in their footsteps and contemplating their experiences.

No, I'm talking about the *economic impact* of your visit. Whether you realized it or not, each time you've made a day trip or longer excursion to a battlefield, you've been a "heritage tourist" — one of the most desirable individuals in the entire hospitality universe. That's because, on average, we stay longer and spend more than other types of tourists, which is great news for the communities that surround battlefields, museums and other historic sites.

During your various visits, you've surely paid entry fees and picked out some souvenirs and books at the gift shop, which are very obvious and immediate examples of your spending. But you've probably also stopped at a local coffee shop or restaurant away from the park proper. On some trips, perhaps you've stayed in a hotel, whether a national chain or a small B&B. Maybe you've even strolled through downtown and into a boutique. In each of these actions, you've helped pay the salaries of local residents employed in those places and, through state and local taxes, you've contributed to governmental coffers. The impact keeps rippling outward, as those wages are spent elsewhere in the community.

But particularly exciting is thinking about how the Trust's

preservation activities supercharge these trends. The length of a tourist's stay is, in part, determined by how much there is to see, so our steady acquisition of battlefield land — and installation of trails and interpretive features — can help transform day-trippers into weekend warriors. Plus, it can prompt return visits that might not otherwise have occurred. I might be biased, but if you haven't been to Gettysburg since the Trust acquired and restored Lee's Headquarters ... it might be time to rectify that situation! Although that's just one example, the cumulative aspect of our work benefits many other battlefields too.

The meaningful nature of the Trust's work has won us many advocates among elected officials and other policymakers, but I know from experience that sometimes it is this tangible benefit to their constituents' bottom dollar that first resonates. It's very hard to be against found money, when an investment in preservation is proven to bring in visitors, and thus revenue, year after year after year.

I have every faith that each person reading this issue of *Hallowed Ground* will continue to visit battlefields and historic sites for their own enjoyment and education — benefiting local communities along the way. But I ask that you encourage friends and relatives, neighbors and colleagues to do so too. There is no finer time to do so than as we mark our nation's 250th anniversary, so that we can stand in meaningful places and reflect on that journey.

Not everyone will build an entire family vacation around a battlefield visit, but they might make time to stop for a few hours on the annual drive back from the beach. And maybe they'll become hooked, like we all have been. Perhaps one of the kids in the back seat will have a love of history sparked in them, and someday they'll be leading the tours and writing the books that celebrate the Tricentennial.

David N. Duncan

DAVID N. DUNCAN
President, American Battlefield Trust



Portrait by BUDDY SECOR

battlefields.org
THE TRUST WEBSITE

GET INTO THE FIELD

If you're ready to plan a journey to visit battlefields and other historic sites, the Trust is here to help! All these resources and more are available at www.battlefields.org/visit!

HERITAGE SITES DATABASE

We've highlighted hundreds of parks, museums, battlefields and other sites from coast to coast where you can experience the power of place and learn about America's military history.

ROUTE PLANNER

By plugging in your starting point and destination, any road trip can become a historic one, as we showcase places of interest along your journey.

CURATED ITINERARIES

If you're looking to make some history by spending a day or a weekend in high-impact destination, we can help you prioritize the many attractions vying for your attention.

VIRTUAL VISITS

If hitting the road isn't in the cards at the moment, our Virtual Field Trip videos for Baltimore, Boston, Charleston, Gettysburg and Vicksburg might be just the ticket! We also have immersive 360-degree virtual viewing opportunities for a number of battlefields.

DIVE INTO DATA

Want to dive further into the impacts of heritage tourism? The Trust has begun the process for a fresh investigation into economic impacts and visitation trends that will shine an even-brighter light on this important topic in 2026. In the meantime, you can find past Trust studies and reports at www.battlefields.org/battlefields-mean-business.

EXPLORE THIS ISSUE



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Color Bearers Event, Jacksonville, Fla., BUDDY SECOR

60,000
acres saved

60,000 ACRES AND COUNTING!

Willoughby's Run acquisition pushes past milestone

IN LATE 1988, the fledgling Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites recorded its first land protection victory: acquisition of the Coaling at the heart of the Port Republic Battlefield in the Shenandoah Valley. It's doubtful those founders could imagine the milestone the organization's modern evolution achieved on July 1: protection of its 60,000th acre.

"From our first acre saved on the Port Republic Battlefield in 1988, to our 60,000th acre in Gettysburg — from Antietam to Yorktown, Lexington to Appomattox — each of these sites saw soldiers exhibit unimaginable bravery in conflicts that defined our nation," said Trust President David Duncan. "I could not be more thankful for the generous members, visionary partners and supportive officials at local, state and federal levels who have made this incredible milestone possible."

By meeting its critical, final fundraising deadline, the Trust secured a 14-acre property along Willoughby's Run on the Gettysburg Battlefield to crest the impressive 60,000th-acre figure. For decades, the site was part of the Gettysburg Country Club, and that institution's closure in 2007 set off a long and circuitous path to preservation. The larger golf course was added to Gettysburg National Military Park in 2010, but the portion fronting the Country Club Lane was not included and drew developers' eyes. After a number of development proposals fell through, it was slated to become a large apartment complex — until Trust-

supported local advocacy opened the door to this preservation solution.

Situated along the Chambersburg Pike, the land figured into several actions on the first day of the battle: Gen. John Buford's Union cavalry troopers fell back in part over this tract. In addition, Confederate Gen. James Archer's brigade fell back across it under the weight of an Iron Brigade counterattack.

Today, the tract is host to a large modern building from the former Gettysburg Country Club. While Cumberland Township's municipal building is undergoing renovations, the Trust has welcomed the township's use of the building as temporary offices. In addition, the popular Gettysburg Day Spa operates in a historic building that would have been familiar to President Eisenhower when he was a member of the country club.

Once the non-historic building is vacated, the Trust will turn its focus toward landscape restoration, part of a broader campaign to remove intrusive buildings across the organization's various holdings on the battlefield. Other projects on the horizon include the gradual removal of the long-closed military museum located behind the historic McKnight House on the Baltimore Pike near the park visitor center and the removal of the mid-century building that housed General Pickett's Buffett until the restaurant's relocation to the Barns Resort south of town.

More details on these ambitious but carefully choreographed projects can be found at www.battlefields.org/battlefields.org/restore



BOOK PRIZE FINALISTS

to headline November festival

CONGRATULATIONS to the six authors who've made the short list of finalists for the 2025 American Battlefield Trust Prize for History! Each author on this great roster has been invited to speak at Battlefield BookFest, a new Trust event celebrating books and authors in Gettysburg, Pa., November 13–15, the lead-up to Remembrance Day Weekend.

This prize seeks to showcase the vital nature of historic battlefields as primary sources in literary works and amplify the pressing need for preservation to readers interested in American history. It has been endowed by a generous donor to ensure no funds are diverted from the Trust's primary mission and recognizes an outstanding published work focused on military history or a biography central to the nation's formative conflicts: the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War.

"Each of these finalists demonstrates the irreplaceable research and perspective that come from the hallowed grounds of our nation's battlefields," said David Duncan, President of the Trust. "We hope this award helps to encourage more authors to create such works and galvanizes audience support and interest around preservation."

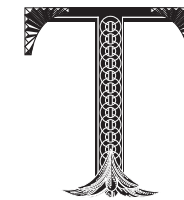
The winning title will receive a \$50,000 prize, while smaller awards will be presented to up to two honorable mention titles. Listed alphabetically, the finalists include:

- **Alan Pell Crawford**, *This Fierce People: The Untold Story of America's Revolutionary War in the South*
- **Erik Larson**, *The Demon of Unrest*
- **Patrick O'Donnell**, *The Unvanquished: The Untold Story of Lincoln's Special Forces, the Manhunt for Mosby's Rangers, and the Shadow War That Forged America's Special Operations*
- **Timothy Smith**, *The Inland Campaign for Vicksburg: Five Battles in Seventeen Days, May 1–17, 1863*
- **Alan Taylor**, *American Civil Wars: A Continental History*
- **Andrew Waters**, *Backcountry War: The Rise of Francis Marion, Banastre Tarleton and Thomas Sumter*

Visit www.battlefields.org/events to see the full roster of speakers at Battlefield BookFest and secure your tickets and explore opportunities to participate remotely.★

UNITING THE BREAKTHROUGH

Pamplin acquisition will create 857-acre battlefield park



THE AMERICAN Battlefield Trust has embarked on one of the largest preservation projects in our history, joining forces with Pamplin Historical Park and Museum of the Civil War Soldier to create an 857-acre protected swath of land at the Breakthrough at Petersburg. The Trust will acquire a 417-acre property at a total cost of \$11 million, but thanks to anticipated matching grants and a major landowner donation, we must raise only \$660,000 by year-end to complete the transaction.

Although the Pamplin campus has been named a National Historic Landmark, such designations do not carry the type of irrevocable protections that the Trust's purchase can establish. Proceeds from the sale will create an investment fund that will finance the new Breakthrough Battlefield Foundation and enable Pamplin to continue operations in perpetuity, ensuring it remains a beloved destination for heritage tourists and students alike.

Our success in this ambitious undertaking is vital. Large properties across Virginia are being gobbled up by data centers, and this irreplaceable landscape remains zoned for industrial development.

This is not a battlefield we can risk. Here, following a nine-month siege, the Union Army of the Potomac launched the massive assault on the Southern defenses southwest of Petersburg, Va., that broke the lines, clearing the road to the Confederate capital at Richmond. Within weeks, the Civil War was over.

Through a series of transactions over the course of 30 years, the Trust has acquired 439 acres associated with the Union advance and gradually restored them to their wartime appearance. The contiguous Pamplin campus occupies a significant section of the Confederate line and includes two miles of pristine earthworks. Look for extensive coverage of the fascinating and intertwined preservation journey of these properties in the next edition of *Hallowed Ground*.

Fighting at the Breakthrough was intense, sometimes hand-to-hand, resulting in perhaps the greatest concentration of Medals of Honor ever awarded for courage in combat. Researchers at the Congressional Medal of Honor Society believe that 31 Medal citation actions occurred across the now-combined site, which also witnessed subsequent assaults on Fort Gregg and Fort Whitworth and further medals.

To learn more about the fighting at the Breakthrough or make a gift to this remarkable opportunity to ensure this hallowed ground is protected forever, visit www.battlefields.org/breakthrough★

Pamplin Historical Park
Petersburg, Va.
JAMES SALZANO

CIVIL WAR INSTITUTE SUMMER CONFERENCE RECAP!

By Dr. Ashley Whitehead Luskey

Assistant Director, Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College

THIS PAST JUNE, the Civil War Institute (CWI) at Gettysburg College was pleased to host more than 300 attendees from across the country and around the world at its annual Summer Conference. A significant portion of this year's program honored the legacy of CWI's late director, Dr. Peter S. Carmichael, who passed away unexpectedly in July 2024. The conference featured main-stage lectures, small-group discussions and battlefield tours with noted scholars and dear friends of Pete, including Gary Gallagher, Aaron Sheehan-Dean, Jim Broomall, Carol Reardon, Lorien Foote, Jim Broomall, Jen Murray, Scott Hartwig and others. Many of these sessions explored topics of particular interest to Pete and his scholarship and work in public history, such as Robert E. Lee in history and memory; the culture of the common soldier; gender, honor and politics in the Old South; and doing Civil War history in public. Pete's graduate school adviser and beloved friend, Gary Gallagher, delivered a superb keynote address on the opening night of the conference, reflecting on Pete's numerous contributions to Civil War historiography and his wide-ranging impact on both the academic and public-facing sectors of Civil War history.

The conference program also featured numerous fresh faces, representatives from the National Park Service, the National Archives, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights and other institutions who delivered a wide-ranging number of programs on battlefield archaeology, Gettysburg documents from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), James Longstreet in history and memory, the Civil War and the World War II generation, the freedmen's camps and early Reconstruction efforts in South Carolina, General Hooker and the start of the Gettysburg Campaign and more. The CWI was also proud to host 2025 Pulitzer Prize winner Dr. Edda Fields-Black of Carnegie Mellon University, who delivered a talk on the behind-the-scenes research of her new book, *COMBEE: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom During the Civil War*.

Despite uncharacteristically cool and rainy conditions for mid-June, attendees also enjoyed numerous tours of the Gettysburg Battlefield that focused on a myriad of topics, including the chaotic fighting in the Wheatfield, how soldiers thought and fought in battle, the July 1 clash between Wadsworth's and Heth's divisions and Floridians at Gettysburg. There were also two mini "staff ride" explorations of the battlefield.



This year's conference proved a meaningful, memorable and enriching experience for CWI faculty, staff and attendees alike, who enjoyed networking, connecting with old friends and making new ones and engaging in conversations between speakers and attendees not just in the lecture halls, but also over meals, at book signings and during social hours. The diverse range of backgrounds, interests and knowledge levels that attendees bring always ensures robust discussions at every conference event!

A program for the 2026 summer conference (June 12–17, 2026) will be released, along with registration information, this fall on the CWI website: www.gettysburg.edu/civil-war-institute ★



Generations Event 2025
Culpeper Battlefields State Park, Culpeper County, Va.
MELISSA A. WINN

GENERATIONS COME TOGETHER to celebrate Army's 250th birthday

TO CELEBRATE the 250th anniversary of the United States Army, the American Battlefield Trust welcomed dozens of families to the 2025 Generations Event at Culpeper Battlefields State Park. Held 250 years to the day of the Army's founding, the Generations Event was designed to help adults pass along their passion for history to younger individuals through a variety of engaging, hands-on activities surrounding the American military.

"The work of preserving our nation's hallowed ground can only be accomplished if new generations understand and appreciate what happened on America's battlefields and the impact those events had on America," said Trust President David Duncan. "The Generations Event created an incredible opportunity for families to make lasting memories, and Brandy Station served as the perfect setting for historical exploration."

The event, which was free and open to the public, focused on educating and inspiring younger historians ages 6–17. Participants learned to march like soldiers, wore period military uniforms and explored what life was like in Virginia during the beginning of the American Revolution, including for the Culpeper Minutemen — a Virginia militia unit that defended the Old Dominion in 1775 before some of its members joined the Continental Army. Since 2015, Trust Generations Events have inspired hundreds of children at historic sites from Gettysburg and Antietam to George Washington's Ferry Farm and Valley Forge. ★



Generations Event 2025
Culpeper Battlefields State Park, Culpeper County, Va.
MELISSA A. WINN



Park Day
Petersburg National Battlefield
Petersburg, Va.
JAMIE BETTS PHOTO

SAVE THE DATE for the 30th Annual Park Day!

SINCERE THANKS to the 117 locations that participated in Park Day 2025! We are especially thankful to have had 25 new sites join the Park Day family this year. All told, nearly 5,000 volunteers participated, contributing the equivalent of about \$410,000 in labor to sites.

Sites with particularly notable projects included the Conococheague Institute, which worked on refreshing animal enclosures and socializing animals that are now being used in living history programs, and the Yorktown Battlefield unit of Colonial National Historical Park, where 54 active-duty servicemen and women helped clear vegetation from historic and re-created earthworks.

If you like to plan ahead, next year will mark the 30th anniversary of Park Day. Mark your calendars for April 25, 2026! It's never too early to look for ways your historic site or park can tie into National Volunteer Week, National Park Week, Earth Day and festivities surrounding the nation's 250th birthday. Learn more at www.battlefields.org/parkday ★

PRESERVING AMERICA CONFERENCE turns its eyes to Tennessee

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the 2025 Preserving America Conference, co-sponsored by the Trust and Americana Corner. This year, the conference is heading west and will be held in the Volunteer State on December 2–4, 2025, in Franklin, Tennessee.

Tailored to small organizations with modest budgets and designed to empower battlefield park partners and historical sites, the multi-day workshop will showcase best practices in development, marketing, programming, outreach and more. Attendees will receive guidance from experts from like-minded organizations on how to improve fundraising efforts and increase community engagement.

Participating organizations will also have the opportunity to apply for a 2026 Preserving America Grant to fund project initiatives of up to \$10,000.

For conference details, application criteria and more, visit www.americanacorner.com/conference ★

OUR ENDURING LEGACY: A GIFT TO THE NATION

Preserving the Past. Educating the Present. Inspiring the Future.



AS AMERICA APPROACHES its 250th birthday, the American Battlefield Trust is proud to introduce a once-in-a-generation effort to protect our nation's most hallowed places and carry forward stories of courage, sacrifice and freedom to inspire future generations.

Through *Our Enduring Legacy: The Campaign to Preserve, Educate, and Inspire*, the Trust aims to raise \$125 million by July 4, 2026 — the largest and most ambitious campaign in the history of battlefield preservation.

This bold undertaking is rooted in a powerful conviction: that America's historic battlefields are not only sites of military conflict, but also outdoor classrooms, national memorials and living testaments to the ideals that define our nation. These landscapes, where ordinary Americans made extraordinary sacrifices, help us understand who we are — and who we must strive to be.

PRESERVE

At the heart of *Our Enduring Legacy* is the Trust's unwavering mission: to preserve the land where American soldiers fought and fell. For decades, this work has protected hallowed ground from development, but today, that mission faces its greatest challenge yet, as threats multiply in scale, speed and intensity.

Data centers, solar farms, warehouse complexes and sprawling housing developments are consuming open space across the country. Many of these projects are being built on or adjacent to battlefields, driven by skyrocketing land prices and the post-pandemic demand for remote living and logistics infrastructure.

Often the scale of these developments strains rural infrastructure, alter historic viewsheds and disrupt ecosystems. Local voices calling for the protection of the historic aspects that make their communities unique are frequently overlooked in favor of short-term economic gain, compounding the sense of loss and disconnection.

To respond to these accelerating pressures, the campaign has launched the Battlefield Readiness Fund, the Trust's first-ever flexible land-acquisition reserve. This dedicated fund allows the organization to act quickly and decisively — including bidding at

auctions, making proactive offers and competing with deep-pocketed developers — to secure high-priority tracts before they're gone.

Even before *Our Enduring Legacy* was launched publicly, early campaign supporters helped make preservation victories possible; this includes the 2024 rescue of a critical tract at Manassas Battlefield — site of both the first major clash of the Civil War and the pivotal Second Battle of Bull Run — which was suddenly listed for auction. Thanks to early donors who had already seeded the Readiness Fund, the Trust was able to act fast, submit a winning bid of \$255,000 and preserve the land forever.

This summer, the campaign celebrated another major milestone: the preservation of 14.5 acres at Gettysburg, just in time for the 162nd anniversary of the battle. Situated along Chambersburg Pike, the newly protected property was crossed multiple times on July 1, 1863, by Union cavalry under General Buford, Confederate brigades led by Archer and Pettigrew, and later, retreating Union troops.

Once home to the Gettysburg Country Club, this land was nearly lost to an apartment development before local advocacy, state support and the Trust's intervention made preservation possible.

It now stands as a symbol of what *Our Enduring Legacy* is all about: restoring stories to the landscape and protecting them for generations to come.

With this acquisition, the Trust has surpassed 60,000 acres saved — a remarkable achievement made possible by the generosity of donors and the dedication of partners at the local, state and federal levels.

EDUCATE

Saving the land is just the first step. The Trust is committed to ensuring that the land it saves becomes a platform for learning — for students, families and lifelong learners alike. That's why *Our Enduring Legacy* makes education a key pillar of its mission.

The campaign will launch customized portfolios of interpretive resources for each of 40 top-priority battlefields — sites selected for their historical significance, visitor potential and urgent need for enhanced storytelling. These locations span the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War, offering powerful entry points into America's defining conflicts. They anchor the Trust's work, reminding us why this mission matters and helping visitors of all ages understand what was fought for and what is at stake today.

Each battlefield will receive a site-specific portfolio of interpretive tools — including animated maps, audio tours, virtual and augmented reality applications, interactive signage and more — designed to deepen emotional connection and historical understanding. These resources won't just inform visitors: They will immerse them in the experiences of those who lived, fought and sacrificed on that very ground.

Among the major educational initiatives of the campaign is the revitalization of Princeton Battlefield State Park, where the Trust is helping to restore and reinterpret the site of George Washington's pivotal 1777 victory. With the acquisition of Maxwell's Field — where Washington's troops made their charge — the Trust has laid the foundation for a powerful revitalization.

The project includes restoring historic roads, landscapes, and a wartime apple orchard, introducing augmented reality and digital storytelling tools, refreshing existing signs and incorporating innovative



Charleston Mayor
William Cogswell enjoys the
new binoculars feature.
MIC SMITH

“battle windows” signs to interpretive walking trails. Further, later phases of the restoration effort will involve a new park entrance and movement of parking to a location outside the core battlefield.

Once overlooked, the Princeton Battlefield is poised to become a model of preservation and interpretation in time for America's 250th anniversary. It exemplifies what *Our Enduring Legacy* is all about:

“An expanded Battlefield Readiness Fund could be the difference between saving irreplaceable American history — and watching it disappear before our eyes.”

— DAVID DUNCAN, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST

helping Americans engage deeply with their history — not just in textbooks, but in the landscapes where it unfolded. Because when you stand where history happened, you feel its power in a way nothing else can match.

INSPIRE

One of the campaign's boldest aspirations is to reach 10 million students by the Semiquincentennial — through a combination of field trips, online tools and virtual experiences. At a time when history education is under threat and civic engagement is in decline, the Trust sees its role as both urgent and essential.

Through the History Field Trip Grant Program, the campaign will remove financial barriers and fund battlefield visits for thousands of students. Most of America's 50 million schoolchildren live within driving distance of a battlefield — often one the Trust has helped protect. Yet many have never stepped foot on this historic ground.

For students unable to travel, the Trust is developing a suite of virtual learning tools — including 360° battlefield tours, teacher-ready curricula and award-winning virtual-reality content, such as the *Civil War 1864* video series, which has been viewed more than 39 million times online.

To expand this reach even further, the Trust is partnering with organizations across the country to bring history to life in new and meaningful ways. Our expanded *Liberty Trail* initiative will ultimately touch and connect historic sites in 25 states (see page 12). The *American Revolution Experience*, a traveling exhibit launched in collaboration with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is tapping into DAR's extensive nationwide network to visit 100 venues and counting. This includes touching rural and underserved communities that often have limited access to cultural programming — ensuring that the story of America's founding is accessible to everyone.

THE MOMENT IS NOW

From matching grants and public-private partnerships to groundbreaking interpretation efforts and cutting-edge technology, *Our Enduring Legacy* is more than a fundraising campaign. It is a commitment to memory — and a challenge to all of us to be worthy stewards of our past.

With \$117.7 million raised to date, the Trust is nearing its \$125 million goal. However, the final stretch will require broad participation and renewed momentum as July 2026 approaches.

THE LEGACY WE LEAVE

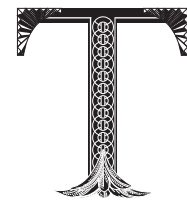
Will future Americans thank us for protecting the land where liberty was fought for and won? For preserving stories of valor, sacrifice and service? For creating outdoor classrooms where future generations learn what it means to be American? If we act now, the answer can be “Yes.”★

EXPLORE Campaign Initiatives



THE NEW AGE OF VISITOR CENTERS

From Franklin to Vicksburg, visitor centers are having a moment



THE FIRST STOP for many visitors looking to explore hallowed ground is a visitor center, a place that serves as the perfect anchor for historical tourism. As battlefields across the nation welcome tourists near and far for the 250th anniversary of America's founding, a new crop of visitor centers is working to open their doors. From Vicksburg to Franklin, Gettysburg to Washington Crossing, these new visitor facilities are utilizing technological advancements, paired with modern designs, to enhance the tourism experience and bring history to life.

FRANKLIN

In March of this year, the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Battle of Franklin Trust broke ground on the new Herbert Harper Visitor Center at Carter House State Historic Site in Franklin. Named for the late former executive director of the Tennessee Historical Commission, the new visitor center will



Official groundbreaking for the new visitor center in Franklin, Tenn., this past March.



Artist rendering of the new Vicksburg Civil War Visitor Center, Vicksburg, Miss.

replace the current building, which dates back to the early 1980s, with a state-of-the-art visitor facility designed to naturally blend with the existing historical structures on the battlefield, complete with immersive exhibitions, flexible galleries and modern amenities.

The Carter House was built more than thirty years before the battle swept through Franklin on November 30, 1864, and it remains Tennessee's most-visited state historic site, welcoming more than 100,000 tourists each year. As the Carter family took shelter in the home's basement, the Union Army's XXIII corps made the house their headquarters. Visitors to the house today can see for themselves the walls and furniture bombarded by bullets during the battle. Once threatened to be demolished for the site of a new gas station, the Tennessee Historical Commission purchased the property in 1951.

Funding for the \$6.5 million project was made possible by Gov. Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly, and an additional \$2 million in funding comes from the Tennessee Historical Commission.

GETTYSBURG

While Gettysburg National Military Park opened a new visitor center in 2008, plans for a new welcome center in the town of Gettysburg are coming to fruition. The Gettysburg Welcome Center will be located along Baltimore Street, nestled in the few blocks between the town square and Gettysburg National Cemetery, along the trek President Lincoln made to deliver the Gettysburg Address.

A series of public meetings in 2018 revealed the need for a welcome center to serve as an anchor point for historical tourism in the downtown area. The building will provide visitors with event listings, transportation resources and more so people can make the most of their visit to the most famous small town in America. The new building will also feature public, ADA-compliant restrooms, a much-needed rarity in a town full of centuries-old buildings.

A previously standing structure on Baltimore Street that had no historic significance was demolished in June to make way for the new building. Final design plans are still under review by the Gettysburg's



Artist rendering of the new Welcome Center in downtown Gettysburg, Pa.

Historical Architectural Review Board. Pending approval, construction is slated to start this fall and be completed by America's 250th anniversary.

The nearly \$2 million in funding from the project comes from local fundraising by Main Street Gettysburg, a commitment from the Borough of Gettysburg and Congressional appropriation.

VICKSBURG

Get ready to experience the 47-day siege at Vicksburg like never before. The new Vicksburg Civil War Visitor Center is scheduled to open its doors in 2028 and generate renewed tourism interest and attendance in the area. Positioned directly next to Vicksburg National Military Park, the new center will tell the story of this critical campaign and serve as a gateway to the region's rich history.

The new facility will guide visitors through stories beyond the siege, taking them through galleries spanning from civilian life before the Civil War through Reconstruction. The new museum and visitor center will also bolster tourism through interpretive programming, school resources, guided tours and more, reverberating economic benefits across the area, with around 200,000 visitors expected to visit the new facility. Replacing the current building from the 1960s and designed by award-winning architects, the modern design echoes the earthworks of the battlefield and is meant to symbolize national unity.



Artist rendering of the interior in the new visitor center at Washington Crossing, N.J.

The project is a combined effort spearheaded by the State of Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Archives, with further assistance from Vicksburg National Military Park and Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign. Four acres of federal land is expected to be transferred to the State of Mississippi for the facility.

WASHINGTON CROSSING

Just in time for America's 250th anniversary, Washington Crossing State Park will unveil a new, state-of-the-art visitor center. Complete with immersive exhibits detailing the heroic Christmas crossing, the sleek, modern building designed to complement other historic buildings on the property along the bank of the Delaware River will replace the nearly 50-year-old current structure.

The centerpiece of the new museum, the Crossing Theater, will allow guests to stand on a ferry boat as Washington's famous crossing of the Delaware plays out before their eyes through video projection. The museum will also boast an additional theater, a welcome lobby, a gallery of rotating exhibits and an outdoor terrace for tourists to enjoy.

The project is being funded through the Preserve New Jersey Act and funds from the American Rescue Plan that Gov. Phil Murphy invested in New Jersey's historic sites. American Battlefield Trust supported the design and location of the new visitor center, along with the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area.

While the center and museum are one of the ways Washington Crossing State Park is preparing for America's Semiquincentennial, the park is making additional improvements to the tourist experience by renovating the historic Johnson Ferry House, adding new wayfinding and interpretive signage and repaving several miles of park roadway.

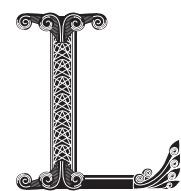
POSSIBILITIES IN PRINCETON

Down the road in New Jersey, another site is benefiting from the state's commitment to historic preservation: \$1.3 million in funding from the state's FY2025 budget is helping relocate parking outside the core of the battlefield and providing a new park entrance, among other improvements. Excitement about the interpretation and restoration plan has also generated local interest in a new visitor facility on the battlefield. As a result, a portion of the funding will underwrite an investigation into a possible future visitor and education center on the battlefield. To help the Trust achieve the vision of a reimagined battlefield, or to learn more about the Trust's work in Princeton, visit www.battlefields.org/ReimaginingPrinceton★



TRAIL-BLAZING HISTORY

How the Trust is bolstering tourism to America's Revolutionary historic sites with The Liberty Trail



LEADING UP to the nation's 250th anniversary, the American Battlefield Trust and its many state partners are creating a unified path of interpretation to tell the unforgettable stories of the American Revolution: *The Liberty Trail*. This groundbreaking multimedia pocket historian and virtual tour guide connects users with the Revolutionary era, bringing history to life in exciting and innovative ways. While the collection of apps, webpages and locations has been gradually expanding across the United States for three years, the Trust has a grand vision for the program as the nation continues to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Revolution, inspiring tourists across America and the world to seek out historic sites vital to the war.

While *The Liberty Trail* fits squarely in the Trust's mission to educate and inspire, the project has also proved fruitful in providing a path for the Trust's primary objective: battlefield preservation. Through faithfully re-created augmented-reality battles and digitally reconstructed 3D models, users develop a richer understanding of the land they are visiting. The project has pushed the boundaries of battlefield interpretation, inspiring new visitors to experience and understand historic landscapes in a wholly original way and encouraging them to support the preservation of these irreplaceable places of American history.

A HISTORICAL TRAVEL GUIDE

While *The Liberty Trail* app collection offers the perfect pocket tour guide, *The Trail's* website, thelibertytrail.org, is home to a variety of travel inspirations to easily integrate Revolutionary War history into any visit. From a bike tour through historic Morristown to a hike along Concord's Battle Road Trail or a scenic kayak cruise around Fort Dorchester, the website offers a vast variety of recreational activities grounded in history. Each route or tour includes details on routes, parking options, historical programming in the area and more about what visitors can expect so they can make the most of their visit.

The site also offers a variety of tour options, from ghost

tours through Charleston to "can't miss" museums and visitor centers, allowing visitors to piece together their perfect Revolutionary vacation or integrate a bit of the past into a casual getaway. For those tourists looking for a step-by-step guide through their trip, the site also offers detailed itineraries, ranging from a weekend trip to Francis Marion's South Carolina Low Country to condensing the Ten Crucial Days Trail into just one day. From outdoor adventures to in-depth explorations, thelibertytrail.org is an essential stop for anyone visiting one of *The Trail's* featured states.

SOUTH CAROLINA ROOTS

In 2019, the American Battlefield Trust, in partnership with the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust, launched *The Liberty Trail* in the Palmetto State. The initial app included 30 different interpretative stops throughout South Carolina, incorporating historic and modern photography, 360-degree views, original artwork and battle maps as it guides users through a cohesive and dynamic tour of the state's historic sites, highlighting everyday heroes and the places that played crucial roles in South Carolina's Revolutionary history. This unique experience enriches visitors' understanding of the state's deeply critical story during the Revolutionary era, taking full advantage of emerging technologies that would have been unfathomable to a colonial soldier 250 years ago.



Kayaking in the Francis Marion National Forest, Huger, S.C.
DARLEY NEWMAN

THE LIBERTY TRAIL FOOTPRINT ENVISIONED

Alabama

Arkansas

Connecticut

Delaware

Florida

Georgia

Illinois

Indiana

Kentucky

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

Missouri

New Hampshire

New Jersey

New York

North Carolina

Ohio

Pennsylvania

Rhode Island

South Carolina

Tennessee

Vermont

Virginia

West Virginia

EXPANDING THE TRAIL

The Trust quickly realized that *The Liberty Trail* project had far more potential than could be contained in a single state's borders and sought to tap into our most robust networks to best showcase key destinations with multifaceted interpretive opportunities. The Ten Crucial Days Campaign, centered on our ambitious "Reimagining Princeton" project, was a natural prospect, as were the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the focus of early 250th commemoration activities.

Today, Massachusetts and New Jersey have since launched their own stand-alone networks on *The Liberty Trail* website and in individual apps, which are free to download through the App Store or Google Play. These assets are designed to guide viewers through time and place with a variety of walking and driving tour options that can be uniquely tailored to the individual exploring history.

Where to next? Look for further tours in South Carolina, Massachusetts and New Jersey, plus subsequent expansions into new territory. In the coming months, New York, North Carolina and Pennsylvania will each have their own iteration of the program, opening the door for new audiences to follow the *The Trail* to experience critical Revolutionary War battlefields like Guilford Courthouse, Saratoga and Brandywine and everything in between.

LASTING PARTNERSHIPS

The Trust's grand vision for the future of *The Liberty Trail* is possible because of the support offered by outstanding allies, like RevolutionNJ — a partnership between the New Jersey Historical Commission and the nonprofit Crossroad of the American Revolution Association.

Across nearly four decades, the American Battlefield Trust has built a steadfast and expansive web of partners and stakeholders at the local and state levels that has proved incredibly fruitful when looking to expand the program. These partnerships with local officials and battlefield friends' groups have resulted in swift mobilization of efforts to bring *The Trail* to their local historic sites. Community groups, battlefield friends' groups and historic sites are also reaching out to the Trust, advocating to be included in future expansions, excited about the prospect of seeing their local site become part of a national narrative.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRAIL

As the 250th anniversary of America's founding conflict progresses, the nation's eyes are increasingly being drawn to Revolutionary history. By 2033, 250 years after the signing of the Treaty of Paris and the end of the American Revolution, the Trust plans to have *Liberty Trail* programs in 25 states. The expanded collection will provide thousands of interactive, in-depth interpretative resources that will guide historians of all ages and abilities along the expansive path of America's Revolutionary history.

There are countless stories to be told and battlefields to be saved and understood to help today's audiences comprehend and appreciate the American Revolution. The power of place on a battlefield is irreplicable, and *The Liberty Trail* will keep finding innovative ways for generations of history enthusiasts to feel and appreciate that power for years beyond America's 250th celebration. ★

Are you affiliated with a regional group that is interested in joining *The Liberty Trail* initiative? Reach out to info@battlefields.org!

The Liberty Trail network taps into technology...



On-site interpretation...



Museums and parks...



And existing community networks



THE POWER OF PLACE

*With each battlefield visit,
we gain something profound —
knowledge, understanding, passion.
But we impart things too, and not just into
those who travel with us. Your visit creates
a meaningful economic impact on
the historic community itself.*

by BOB ZELLER



Pea Ridge National Military Park
Garfield, Ark.
HANNAH HUFFMAN

EN

A SUNNY SPRING DAY, William Treuting, a guide with Culpeper Battlefield Tours, LLC, brought the great-great grandson of a Confederate soldier on a tour of the Cedar Mountain Battlefield in Culpeper County, Virginia. The ancestor had fought with the 21st Virginia and was one of the regiment's 37 men killed in action on August 9, 1862.

"I was actually able to take him to the spot and tell him, 'Based on the official reports, here's where your great-great grandfather would have fought,'" said Treuting, a Cedar Mountain Battlefield Foundation Board member. And, because Confederate dead were buried where they fell, the pair reflected it's quite possible that he remains there still.

It was "one of the [most] truly personal, engaging, interesting and touching experiences I've had as a tour guide at Cedar Mountain," Treuting said.

It was also a boost to the local economy unimaginable just 30 years ago, when the battlefield was unprotected and lacked infrastructure. Today, more than 700 acres have been preserved by the American Battlefield Trust and its



Manassas National Battlefield Park
Manassas, Va.
JIM FREDLUND

partners, with trails and signage installed. A short drive northeast on Route 15, more than 2,150 acres of the Brandy Station Battlefield, which on June 8, 1863, was the site of the Civil War's largest cavalry battle, have been similarly safeguarded.

Now, both sites are being transformed again, after Culpeper Battlefields State Park, the 43rd unit in the Commonwealth's system, was dedicated in June 2024. Establishing the full park infrastructure won't happen overnight, but the impact is already being felt.

"I've seen a dramatic increase of visitors to the battlefield, and we're not even publicizing the state park yet," said Clark "Bud" Hall, a Brandy Station historian and pioneering battlefield preservationist. "People will come. Couples will come. Families will come. People walking their dogs will come. People riding their horses will come."

And each of those visitors will have a tangible — and cumulatively quite meaningful — impact on the local economy. According to research by the Virginia Tourism Corporation, every tourist dollar spent in Virginia generates five dollars of economic activity. And heritage tourists deliver even more targeted economic benefits, generating an estimated \$7.7 billion and supporting 105,000 jobs annually.

A Virginia-specific 2023 study found that heritage tourists spent an average of \$959 on their trips, compared to \$575 for other tourists. Their trips averaged five days, compared to 4.1 days for visitors in other categories, echoing American Battlefield Trust data stretching as far back as 2005. The survey also found that among all visitors, the most frequently cited special interest activity was visiting historic places.

"On average, over 40,000 people come through the Culpeper Visitor Center every year, and over the

past 10 years, history and heritage has grown as the primary reason they came" said Paige Read, the city's director of tourism and economic development. "The battlefields are our largest history assets, and all the work that American Battlefield Trust has done in the acquiring and the protection of those

historic places has been transformative for this community. It blends both outdoor recreation and history and heritage tourism."

Battlefield visitors are a key element of the multibillion-dollar American heritage tourism economy. In 2023, more than 21.7 million visitors were counted at the 36 National Park Service battlefields and historic sites of the Civil War, the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The Park Service estimates that these visitors spent more than \$1.37 billion on things like lodging, food, entrance fees and souvenirs, which supported 19,609 jobs and generated an overall economic output exceeding \$2.08 billion.

And that reflects only part of the impact, since the figures don't include visitation at the many state and local battlefield parks or privately protected sites that lack

the robust federal infrastructure to track and amalgamate data.

A new economic impact study released by the Shenandoah National Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) found that, in 2023, heritage tourism to New Market, Va., generated more than \$1.59 million in economic output; contributed \$999,178 to the community's gross domestic product (GDP); generated more than \$76,000 in tax revenue for local governments; and created or sustained as many as 23 full-time equivalent jobs.

The Shenandoah Valley — 150 miles long and 25 to 30 miles wide — is larger than Rhode Island and occupies about 25 percent of the Commonwealth of Virginia's land mass. And the region has long been on the front lines of the preservation movement; the first land acquisition by the Trust's

"People will come. Couples will come. Families will come. People walking their dogs will come. People riding their horses will come."



150th Anniversary festivities
Antietam National Battlefield
Sharpsburg, Md.
NPS

predecessor organization came in 1988 at Port Republic. As more and more acreage was preserved at the Valley's Civil War battlefields, Congress created the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District in 1996 to connect these hallowed grounds and develop the sites into tourist destinations.

"Before battlefield preservation, there really was not a whole lot of park space on the Valley floor. There was Shenandoah National Park up on the Blue Ridge, and there was the national forest to the west, but as far large landscapes of conserved park spaces, those didn't exist," said Kevan Walker, CEO of the nonprofit foundation that oversees the heritage district. "And now you're looking at more than 7,500 acres of battlefield ground at 11 battlefields ... approximately 3,000 acres open to the public. And we also have museums and visitor centers; when you combine it all, we had just under 140,000 visits in 2024."

In Tennessee, the Parker's Crossroads Battlefield, where Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and his men fought their way out of a seemingly perfect Union trap on December 31, 1862, is another example of preservationists creating a history destination from scratch. Not a single acre was saved there until 2001. Since then, 370 acres of core battlefield land have been preserved and interpreted, and a visitor center was opened in 2011.

"The battlefield has certainly had a positive impact on tourism here," said former Tennessee Congressman Steve McDaniel,

now the city manager of Parker's Crossroads. "Interstate 40 traverses the battlefield park here, so it's very convenient for those who are traveling I-40 to exit [to] visit our visitor center and tour the battlefield park. We have



Adams County Historical Society Museum
Gettysburg, Pa.
DAVE JOHNSON

a guided driving tour. We [also] have about four miles of paved walking trails with over 50 interpretive signs.

"Since the battlefield park came into existence, we picked up a new Hampton Inn Hotel and also picked up a Tennessee State Veterans Cemetery," said McDaniel, who spearheaded the battlefield preservation effort. "The battlefield trail goes right up to the back of the hotel, so guests can just walk out of the hotel and tour the battlefield." McDaniel went on to say about 14,000 or 15,000 people sign the visitor center register every year but estimates as many as 50,000

people visit each year, either for the history or for recreation.

At Gettysburg, which became a tourist destination almost as soon as the 1863 battle ended, new heritage venues are stimulating the economy and helping make up for lagging visitation numbers at the national park. For example, when Andrew Dalton joined the staff of the Adams County Historical Society in 2016, it was headquartered in a house on Seminary Ridge and had few visitors. Dalton spearheaded the construction of a new facility on Biglerville Road that features the *Gettysburg Beyond the Battle Museum*, which was named the country's best new museum in 2023 by *USA Today*.

"At the old facility, we had a small research room that drew maybe 10 or 15 people a week," Dalton said. "Now we have



Generations event
Manassas National Battlefield Park
Manassas, Va.
MELISSA A. WINN

30,000 or 40,000 people a year." Even if it's too early for full analysis of economic impact, "I know a lot of the local businesses have enjoyed having something new to recommend. And I think they also like the fact that we are a visitor center for the history of the place — Gettysburg — and not just the battle."

Other new facilities in Gettysburg over the past decade are cumulatively encouraging longer visits, which means more economic benefit for the community. These include *Children of Gettysburg 1863*® and *Ticket to the Past*, a virtual-reality experience at the Lincoln Train Station, both operated by the Gettysburg Foundation — plus the Trust's restored Lee's Headquarters and other newly protected properties.

Slaughter Pen Farm
Fredericksburg Battlefield
Fredericksburg, Va.
JENNIFER MICHAEL



Site managers are also cognizant that a battlefield doesn't exist in a vacuum. Many are in scenic locations that attract recreational visitors for hiking or near idyllic small towns with their own charms.

The same principle is being extended statewide by the Trust and its many partners through *The Liberty Trail* initiative (see page 12), creating linked networks of Revolutionary War sites and allowing smaller battlefields and museums to benefit from the name recognition and gravitational pull of their larger neighbors.

"There are 30 battlefields currently on *The Liberty Trail SC* app," said South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust Executive Director Rick Wise. (South Carolina was the initial state in the now-growing series.) "We're hoping that it's kind of contagious, if you will, and once folks go to one battlefield, they will want to go to another and another and another. And what that means, of course, is that people will learn much more about the Revolutionary War here in South Carolina."

According to a report by Explore Charleston and the College of Charleston's Office of Tourism Analysis, the Holy City experienced a record \$14.03-billion economic impact from tourism in 2024, a 7 percent increase from 2023. The region also saw a 1.2 percent rise in visitors and a 5.5 percent increase in average visitor spending, with tourism accounting for 23.5 percent of total sales and employing 54,900 people, the new report said. The hope is to draw more of that foot traffic out of downtown to accessible suburban sites like Fort Fair Lawn and demonstrate how the journey could continue to newly interpreted battlefield parks like

Eutaw Springs and Fort Watson. Especially in small and rural communities, each traveler who makes it into town to walk a short trail and then buy lunch — or even fill up the gas tank locally rather than at a highway rest stop — matters.

To do that, *The Liberty Trail SC* is using Charleston's popular Marion Square as a gateway site. A remnant of the massive "Horn Work" fortification featured in Revolutionary War combat, it has long stood in the square, fascinating visitors. But now, a

series of 32 informative, in-ground plaques traces its footprint, and an innovative pair of binocular-style viewers give visitors an augmented-reality view of the wall and what unfolded around it. "If you liked this ..." signage beacons "explore these other sites with their own unique stories and 21st-century opportunities."

Wise himself has learned much about the state's Revolutionary War history in his work with the South Carolina Battleground Preservation Trust and is proud



Line down the block at Nutter's Ice Cream
in downtown Sharpsburg, Md., near the
Antietam National Battlefield.



History event
Germantown, N.J.
MEREDITH BARNES

that *The Liberty Trail* helps tell the full story.

“I will tell you, and I’m a native South Carolinian, that we didn’t necessarily get the whole story in the history lessons we were taught in school,” he said. “Because, quite frankly, the Southern campaigns of the American Revolution were kind of overlooked at the end of everything. Everybody figures that Yorktown was the end of the war, and that was that. Well, there was a reason Cornwallis wound up in Yorktown, and that was because he was not successful in getting South Carolina to roll over and play dead.”

Site managers are also cognizant that a battlefield doesn’t exist in a vacuum. Many are in scenic locations that attract recreational visitors for hiking or near idyllic small towns with their own charms. Virginia Tourism Corporation data hammer home the crossover audience historic sites enjoy: Among those who came to the Old Dominion on overnight trips specifically for its beaches, 29 percent squeezed in a historic site or landmark, and similar levels occurred within segments whose primary purpose was craft beer (27 percent), wine (31 percent) and live music (34 percent).

“You can’t say that the outdoor recreation visitors aren’t there partially because of the history,” said Walker. Or that, even if they didn’t arrive with interest, thanks to the presence of signage and other interpretive infrastructure, a little bit of history won’t rub off on them.

So how to draw those folks in? Many sites offer tours and programs with a different sort of twist. Birding is a popular entrée activity that can tap into community partnerships, with Petersburg National Battlefield, Va.; Ninety Six National Historic Site, S.C.; Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Ga.; Palo Alto National Historical Park, Tex.; and Chalmette Battlefield National Historical Park, La., among those with recurring events on the calendar.

While nearly all parks allow bikes on driving routes, organized cycling tours are another popular choice, including at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Historical Park, Ga., and Fort Stanwix National Monument, N.Y. Valley Forge National Historical Park offers on-site bike rentals, including e-bikes. Longer biking options exist too. Monmouth Battlefield State Park in New Jersey has routes connecting to a nearby county park that total almost 30 miles, and the Fort Harrison Loop traverses multiple Civil War battlefields outside Richmond, as well as parts of the far longer Virginia Capital Trail. Private, multiday options can take cyclists from Gettysburg to Antietam to Harpers Ferry and beyond.

And that just scratches the surface of creativity. “Recently, we had an event where a bunch of painters came and set up their easels and canvases and actually painted parts of the battlefield,” said Trueting of Cedar Mountain. “We try to appeal to a wide



Cannon exhibition
Vicksburg National Military Park
Vicksburg, Miss.
MIKE TALPLACIDO

audience. We realize that not everyone is a history enthusiast. But because of the preservation of the natural environment, there’s much more to this place than history.”

Whereas once it might have been

assumed that most heritage tourists are older “baby boomers,” that is no longer true. Virginia data show that the mean age of the historic travel cohort is 48, and only 22 percent are retired. Map guide requests submitted to Civil War Trails (see page 28) for all six of the states it covers bear this out: More copies are being sent to the youngest and most diverse audience ever.

“What we found during COVID was a shift to outdoor recreation — a shift to parks — and a younger generation of travelers who were looking for authenticity in travel and places that gave them a sense of realism and meaning,” said Walker. “So, a lot of heritage tourists we see these days are young couples and young adults.”

Depending on the age and interest-level of children, historic sites can be exciting and interesting options to visit. Family-friendly programming and integrating a historic site into a broadly appealing community network are also critical, since 42 percent of history travelers in Virginia have their kids in tow. The National Park Service’s Junior Ranger Program is a tried-and-true example, offered at more than 400 units of the National Park System. Youngsters complete a site-specific activity pack to earn a unique badge —

“What we found during COVID was a shift to outdoor recreation – a shift to parks – and a younger generation of travelers who are looking for authenticity in travel and places that gave them a sense of realism and meaning.”

often presented in a special ceremony — while adults can take time to read longer signs or listen to a ranger presentation.

Back in South Carolina, Rick Wise has also found that many heritage tourists come to learn about their own family’s personal heritage and the role family members played in the war that led to the creation of the United States. “These were real people,” Wise said, and when their travails and sacrifices are remembered and retold at the very places where they occurred, it provides a dramatic experience “that goes far beyond the dusty pages of history.”

Not long ago, Wise was contacted by an Ohio resident who was planning to visit a buddy in Georgia but wanted to make a heritage side trip to Camden, South Carolina, site of a major British garrison as well as a decisive British victory in a 1780 battle. The man said he had a Patriot ancestor who

was captured at the Battle of Camden.

“He contacted me and wanted to know if I could talk to him and give him a tour,” Wise said. “I said, ‘Sure, c’mon down.’”

Directly and indirectly, the Ohio man’s side trip to South Carolina provided one more small boost to the heritage tourism economy. Even if not to Wise himself. “How much do I owe you for the tour?” the man asked beforehand. “Nothing,” Wise replied. “Your ancestor paid for that a long time ago.”

Retired journalist Bob Zeller is one of the country’s leading authorities on Civil War photography and co-founder and president of the nonprofit Center for Civil War Photography. He has published 20 books, including *Fighting the Second Civil War: A History of Battlefield Preservation and the Emergence of the Civil War Trust*.



Gettysburg National Military Park
Gettysburg, Pa.
JIM FREDLUND



TIME

Reenactors at Historic Camden
Revolutionary War Site
Camden, S.C.

TRAVELER

*How a PBS travel
host has been inspired
to take a Revolutionary
Road Trip and connect
viewers to the sites that
have inspired her
along the way.*

by
DARLEY
NEWMAN



Guilford Courthouse National
Military Park
Greensboro, N.C.



CREATING an entertaining and inspiring TV show is more than just capturing images. It's about discovering passionate people who can guide the story. Through my travels, I've learned that when you genuinely inquire, people eagerly share their authentic experiences. In the brief time we have with our experts during the filming of each segment of my long-running PBS and streaming series, *Travels with Darley*, their revelations have been captivating and moving. Through their lens on location, I've experienced "the power of place" and why traveling to these locations is so important.

You have to be there to immerse yourself in the experience and feel the energy emanate from the powerful stories told by those who have lived through history or those who devote their lives to keeping knowledge alive for future generations. My *Travels with Darley* crew and I have traveled the world for more than a decade and a half—from the far reaches of Botswana and Japan to battlefields and parks in my own backyard of New York City. Across countries with WWI and WWII history to states with Revolutionary War, Civil War and Civil Rights history, we've filmed more than 93 half hours of *Travels with Darley*, plus my other series *Equitrekking* and *Look Up*. That's a lot of on-location interviews!

Over the past three years, we've focused on mixing travel with American Revolution sites in the lead up to commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation. Untold and lesser-known



With Toby Smith
at the McLeod Plantation
Charleston, S.C.

stories of the American Revolution have been at the forefront of the *Travels with Darley: Revolutionary Road Trip* series. Through oral histories and cataloging new developments, we've traveled my home state of South Carolina, as well as Virginia, North Carolina, Delaware, New Jersey and New York—with more in production this year and next.

With each destination that we are fortunate to visit and film, I'm more and more convinced by the power of place and the power of authentic storytelling to convey why history and historic places truly do matter for us all. The people we film with are often guides, business owners or locals you might encounter when visiting these places. Here are just a few of the places and people we've met and cherish.

CAMDEN BATTLEFIELD

Former soldier and military historian Rick Wise led us through Camden Battlefield in South Carolina. He stands out in a recent segment that moved me deeply, a sentiment that has never really left. When you're standing on hallowed ground, you would think that it would resonate, but at a location like Camden Battlefield, there are not always as many visuals to reveal the true depth of the story. Rick changed that for me and the audience of our "South Carolina Revolutionary Road Trip" episode. At Camden Battlefield, Rick and I walked along sandy trails among the lodge-pole pine trees as he shared what the little white flags in the ground were marking. Recent archaeological excavations at Camden Battlefield have revealed more about the hundreds of soldiers laid to rest here.

WITH EACH destination that we are fortunate to visit and film, I'm more and more convinced by the power of place and the power of authentic storytelling to convey why history and historic places truly do matter for us all.

"Over here are the graves of five Continental soldiers who were buried together. I can envision these guys probably back-to-back guarding each other as they tried to fight these men off until they all went down. And then they were buried in a common grave. The sacrifice they made was remarkable," Rick said.

"A lot of our independence and liberty that we have today was the result of the sacrifice of these five men recovered here at the battlefield at Camden. I was a soldier for 23 years. And when I come out here... I commune with these guys... What took place here is very humbling to me when I think about the soldiers and the sacrifices they made."

As Rick spoke, I couldn't help but think about how many of us are either related to or know someone who has served. Rick's story and his vulnerability in sharing it would strike a chord with many, including me, who could themselves relate to being a soldier or knowing one as a father, sister or friend. My dad served as a captain in the U.S. Army. My grandfather served in the Navy during WWII alongside his brother, who was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with military honors. Since this segment broadcast, we've heard from many people, who reached out to share their connections to Camden Battlefield and how the segment made them feel. That connection to history and a place can bring us closer together. By being brave enough to



Reenactors at Historic Camden
Revolutionary War Site
Camden, S.C.

share his feelings, Rick made being on Camden Battlefield that day even more poignant.

FORT FAIR LAWN

On a hot September day in 2023, we filmed at Fort Fair Lawn in Moncks Corner, South Carolina. Between takes, we fanned ourselves



Making biscuits at Callie's Hot Little
Biscuits in North Charleston, S.C.

with paper film releases while surveying the site—a British-built earthen redoubt that saw 32 battles during the American Revolution. Greg Barna, our director of photography, paced the site with me, struggling to capture its essence.

"I don't know what you want me to do with this," Greg said, adjusting his worn Mendham Far Hills Steeplechase cap and wrinkling the corners of his gray mustache. He hails from the state of New Jersey and has traveled with me since the beginning of my *Equitrekking* series, which took us around the world on horseback. "Hopefully, there are some maps or something we can use for images."

Greg is a master of framing—he can make a lone flower in a barren field appear like the heart of a scene. He knows how to tell the story of a place, frame its power even when the visual clues are scarce. You'll watch our show and think, "Wow, that's gorgeous." On location, you wonder if you would have spotted that flower or twig in the corner of the TV frame. At Fort Fair Lawn, like some other battlefields, ancient ruins and even historic homes, the modern visuals don't always give a lot of hints to the past story unless you truly know the context. That's where shows like ours enlist local experts like David Reuwer.

He had David and me walk in the woods further outside the fort, then across a small bridge over a moat and into the interior of the earthen fort and talk as we did so. Movement always helps the viewer stay engaged during conversations. As we walked, David started to share more of what we would have seen in the 18th century.

"Darley, welcome to a British redoubt, built in 1780 after the



With Alphonso Brown
Gullah Tours
Charleston, S.C.

British captured Charleston. These are the extant walls — earthworks — that would’ve stood nine feet high above a six-foot-deep moat.”

“It’s amazing this was made of dirt and lasted over 230 years,” I said.

David nodded. “That’s what makes it exciting. There aren’t many like this still intact. The Cooper River was nearby — they’d bring troops 30 miles upriver, then head inland. Half a mile from here was Biggin Church, turned into a supply depot. This was their forward base.”

“So, the British had this area pretty well locked down,” I said, staring at the now overgrown earthen mound.

“Right,” David replied, nodding exuberantly.

That afternoon as David recounted what happened at Fort Fair Lawn — sometimes in too much detail for a half hour PBS travel series — I was able to not only visualize what Fort Fair Lawn may have looked like but also understand even more clearly its strategic location in the greater context of the Southern Campaign and the American Revolution. It wasn’t just learning the history though, it was the spark in his voice as we stood on the very ground where it had all taken place — making the story come to life and making Fort Fair Lawn matter.

SELMA, ALABAMA

It’s personal stories that bring history to life, and this was no more evident than on my trip to Selma, Alabama, in September 2021.



With Joanne Bland by the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.

During the pandemic, we had to take a hiatus from filming, but we were able to hit the road again shortly after the first vaccines were released. We were excited to get back out there, but once we started to travel again, we found it extremely challenging. It was at this point when I wondered if it was worth it to continue to push through and keep making my series. Joanne Bland put me back on course.

AT A TIME *when so many of us need places and spaces to unplug, my time at Manassas with Liz solidified the need to protect these places, which protect the power of place and provide open space for people.*

Joanne Bland marched as a child in the Selma to Montgomery March during the Civil Rights Movement. Joanne has shared her story many times over the years as a tour guide in Selma. She would let us record it that day in September. Since we were conducting all our interviews outdoors, we sat down with her at the base of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, wrestling with filming in the heat and amid the noise of trucks going by on the nearby road. Many people drive over this bridge and don’t realize it is a living monument and monumental in the role it played in the Civil Rights Movement.

Amid the somewhat chaotic and iconic environment, Joanne recounted once again what happened when she and her sister tried to march during what would become known as Bloody Sunday on March 7, 1965. John Lewis was leading hundreds of people over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. They faced brutal beatings and attacks.

“They came in from both sides, the front end and back and the horses,” Joanne said as we sat across from each other.

“I remember people falling down and laying, bleeding, and not moving,” Joanne said. “We tried to get back across the bridge... The tear gas was there and this big cloud... The next thing I remember I was right across the street in the back of a car. And my head was in my sister Linda’s lap, and Linda was crying. When I became fully awake, I realized ... she had been beaten on the bridge ... had wounds in her head that required 35 stitches — 28 in the back of her head. And seven over her right eye.”

Joanne would continue to share that she would go on to take part in the Selma to Montgomery March later that month, making it to the steps of the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery, a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement.

I asked Joanne how she bears to continue to share this story over so many years.

“I’m proud today that I did do it, and I’m proud that I was a part of that. And I think it’s important that we tell our own stories. And it’s a whole different ball game when you’re walking with somebody that was there. And they realize it wasn’t that long ago, that we still have mountains to climb.”

Hearing Joanne’s story that day at the location where it happened made me cry. She had been just a child. I don’t normally get choked up when we’re filming, as I try to be casual but professional and perhaps sometimes reserved in my interviews. I want the people we speak with to be the story and feel empowered to share their story. They sometimes, like Joanne, lived the story, making them the best

people for us to learn from. Hearing her share what she’d been through and survived at the location where it all happened was heart-wrenching, and yet her tone was also filled with hope.

It made me proud that day that I could meet Joanne and document her voice firsthand so it would live on to perhaps inspire others to learn about the past to chart a better future. Joanne’s story at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge continues to resonate with me, and it’s one of the reasons I continue to travel and film.

MANASSAS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK

While many historic sites have brought history to life, some also re-instilled the need to protect these places for other reasons. Located about 30 miles outside Washington, D.C., Manassas National Battlefield Park dates back to 1940, and being so close to Washington, D.C., means it is under constant threat of development. On my visit to this national park, I couldn’t help but be struck by the number of locals out utilizing Manassas for recreation — walking their dogs and running the trails. I asked Ranger Liz Hokanson about this.

“We’re kind of in an oasis in the middle of Northern Virginia sprawl. For a lot of people, this is a nice quiet place to come and reflect and think and just get out and enjoy nature and commune with nature,” Hokanson said. “While many people come here to learn about history, others come to enjoy nature and open spaces.”

As I listened to Liz’s interpretation of both Battles of Bull Run and the significant number of casualties — more than 20,000 — as well as the chaos and confusion faced by the soldiers trying to identify friend or foe among 200 or more uniforms and flags that looked pretty similar, I found it difficult to juxtapose that with today’s tranquil park. At a time when so many of us need places and spaces to unplug, my time at Manassas National Historical Park with Liz solidified the need to protect these places, which protect the power of place and provide open space for people.

GUILFORD COURTHOUSE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

The power of place can also help us understand the struggles of our nation over time and at times even evoke patriotism. One such place is Guilford Courthouse National Military Park in Greensboro, North Carolina. Superintendent Aaron LaRocca shared how the park helps to keep American Revolutionary history alive for future generations.

“The Guilford Courthouse National Military Park would be this destination for patriotism, allowing North Carolinians to reconnect with their patriotic history. The Greene Monument that was placed here in 1915 is dedicated to the North Carolina signers of the Declaration of Independence,” Aaron said as we walked across the brick sidewalk and toward the imposing statue, the largest in the park.

“So, two of the three signers of the Declaration of Independence



With Aaron LaRocca at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Greensboro, N.C.

from North Carolina are reinterred here. That was part of the idea of this kind of patriotic destination,” said Aaron. “But we also have the visitors who come here for that Revolutionary War story, who want to understand the history of the Revolutionary War as it happened as part of the Southern Campaign.”

Aaron was sharing both the U.S. and state pride that can be felt when you visit a site like Guilford Courthouse National Military Park. It’s a place’s power to propel a sense of pride, and he shared that sentiment beautifully.

These are just a few of the deep connections we’ve experienced with people across the United States at historic battlefields and places currently being preserved. I feel fortunate to have visited so many and to share them across so many diverse mediums, so that other people can experience them and perhaps be inspired to visit them, too.

Each adventure and challenge and each new story drives me to uncover more, because in doing so we can understand our past and each other in a more complete way. Preserving these places is essential for this exchange. When we recognize how these places and stories can unite us, I believe we become better people. Our earth has nooks and crannies filled with stories of our past — if we only take a moment to look and listen.

Emmy® award-nominated host, adventurer, and travel expert Darley Newman is known for getting viewers out of their comfort zone on active experiences globally. She is the host, creator, and producer of the PBS television shows Travels with Darley and Equitrekking, which have been featured on international networks in more than 85 nations. She has produced filmmaking adventures as diverse as free diving in South Korea and exploring the France’s World War I “Red Zone” by mountain bike.

WALK

THIS

WAY



*An inside look
at the trailblazing
organization that
guides thousands
of travelers
on their
Civil War
pilgrimages,
offering both
historic
interpretation
and dinner
recommendations.*



CIVIL WAR TRAILS is the world largest “open air museum,” offering more than 1,500 sites across six states. As a battle-field enthusiast, chances are that you’ve come across our iconic “red bugle” signs in your travels. Maybe you’ve even planned a trip with one of our map guides. But even if you’re familiar with Civil War Trails, you probably don’t know the history or inner workings of the program.

Civil War Trails was created in 1994 by a group of historians, including Don Pierce, David Ruth, Mike Andrus and Chris Calkins. They envisioned a way for travelers to leave Richmond and Petersburg and follow the route of Lee’s Retreat to Appomattox turn by turn. The original 12 sites included large billboards with maps and solar-powdered AM radio transmissions so travelers could tune in to hear what happened at places like Cumberland Church.

by CHRIS BROWN

Harris Farm Battlefield
Spotsylvania Courthouse, Va.
MATTHEW HARTWIG

This was the genesis of the program you recognize today.

Today, each Civil War Trails site includes an interpretive sign that helps paint a picture of what happened where the visitor is standing. Every site also has a series of directional “trailblazers” along the highways and byways to help get you to the interpretive site. Finally, each Civil War Trails location is promoted in a variety of ways — perhaps most recognizable are the Civil War Trails map-guides. Our goals are simple: to interpret and promote the significant sites, stories and people of the Civil War era and to ensure you are standing in their footsteps when you arrive.

Civil War Trails, Inc., is a nonprofit organization that oversees a multistate program with a small but mighty team who make it all possible. Three full-time employees are charged with duties that range from liaising with local tourism agencies to marketing sites, managing inventory and fulfillment requests, responding to visitor inquiries and tracking maintenance of existing signs and trailblazers, all the way to digging the holes to install new signs. This staff is overseen by a board of directors that includes appointees from the state travel offices across the breadth of the program, as well as regional directors who represent our dues-paying members.

With more projects on deck than we’ve ever had, the staff and board of Civil War Trails continue to dedicate ourselves to creating, maintaining, and updating the best version of Trails we can. Not only do we want you as a traveler to find our signs engaging and in good shape when you arrive, but we want to make sure the communities that host our sites see us as a resource to help share their stories exactly where they happened.

One of the hallmarks of the Civil War Trails program is our unique content-generation process. Each site is “grown at the grassroots,” meaning that the original application and funding come from community leaders, historical societies, historic sites or descendant groups. These stakeholders are the experts on their own local history, and their involvement throughout the process ensures a sign accurately represents their community’s story while showing off one-of-a-kind source material like diaries, photos and battle maps that can’t be found anywhere else.

This local connection is also fostered by the hands-on approach of Civil War Trails staff. We’re small, but we’ve visited these sites personally and have experienced all the local amenities, meaning we’re happy to share first-hand knowledge and tips with people who reach out to request brochures and plan their travel. We have strong opinions on the best BBQ, beer or bourbon, plus plenty of ideas for other ame-



LEFT: Civil War Trails markets its sites in a variety of ways, but paper brochures have increased in popularity in the last few years. Each state has its own dedicated brochures, and in some areas, municipal partners have created a more specific piece highlighting sites and themes in their region. Request a free brochure shipped right to your door at www.civilwartrails.org

nities your family might enjoy along the way, from Main Street shopping districts to hiking, cycling and paddling destinations.

We are vigilant that all signs are installed where the historic event occurred or within clear field of vision, grounding our interpretation in the power of place, which makes events resonant more for travelers of all ages and interest levels.

As a new site application moves through the process of review, a sustaining partner must be identified to underwrite the care and upkeep of the sign for years to come, including fabricating new panels if further research enhances the story. These sponsors tend to be municipal offices charged with tourism, marketing and economic development, creating a mutually beneficial partnership. Integrating Civil War Trails sites into state



RIGHT: Each Civil War Trails site includes an interpretive sign that helps fuel the imagination about what happened where a visitor is standing. These sites are supported by a system of directional signs, or “trailblazers,” that help travelers know where to stop. Here, members of the 135th USCT Research Group install their sign in Goldsboro, N.C.



LEFT: Civil War Trails has long worked hand in hand with the American Battlefield Trust (ABT), and many of the Trust’s properties are marketed as part of the multistate Civil War Trails program. Here, Garry Adelman and Thomas Nank, the ABT’s steward in Gettysburg, help install a new sign at Lee’s Headquarters.

ALTHOUGH Civil War Trails signs are certainly educational, the broader program is an important economic development engine for the municipalities that host Trails sites.

and regional tourism networks ensures visitors are more aware of the full breadth of amenities and resources, likely encouraging a longer stay.

Although Civil War Trails signs are certainly educational, the broader program is an important economic development engine for the municipalities that host Trails sites. As visitors like you travel to stand in the footsteps of history, you might gas up the car, grab a meal, purchase a ticket to a program, stay overnight and score an awesome antique from a local shop. Based on information available in the last few years, the average visitor to historic sites stayed an average of two nights and spent between \$1,000 and \$1,200 per trip. The income generated by these trips is an important and sustainable source of revenue going back into the hands of service industry employees, historic sites and municipal coffers.

In 2023, the Civil War Trails team and its partners distributed just shy of a quarter million map-guides. This was almost 60,000 more than the year prior — and they are going out to the youngest audience the program has documented to date. With digital fatigue being felt by people of all ages, the program’s paper brochures have continued to increase in popularity. They are not only distributed free of charge but also are stocked at certified visitor centers across the program and are also distributed to individuals from around the world. They are a great reference item to keep

at home as you begin planning your trip and can also be helpful to keep in the car as you travel, since many areas have little to no cellular or satellite coverage.

People often ask how they can get involved with Civil War Trails. Of course, as a nonprofit we gratefully accept individual donations. We also always have a list of sites whose sustaining sponsorship has lapsed and are in need of a partner in that more ongoing capacity. And we are always looking for new stories to tell via signs in your community!

However, perhaps the two best ways to get involved can happen during your next trip. If you see a Civil War Trails sign in poor condition or one that might be a bit confusing, let us know about it. Your feedback is instrumental in improving the site and the whole network for the next visitor. Finally, if you see a Civil War Trails sign you really enjoyed, snap a selfie with it and post it with #signselfie and #civilwartrails. This helps inspire other travelers to go visit and will also make the site sponsors excited to see people out exploring locations in the program.

Even with 30 years under its belt, Civil War Trails shows no sign of slowing. At one point last year, we had more than 200 projects on deck — more than at any point during the Civil War Sesquicentennial! And our wish list is longer still; however, those have a longer path as we must still secure landowner permission and funding, as well as content. With so many stories to tell and with a record-setting number of map requests from our youngest and most diverse audience to date, the future of Civil War Trails is bright.★

Chris Brown (shown below) joined Civil War Trails, Inc., in 2018 and was named executive director in spring 2025. He previously worked in the public history field, specializing in museum education.



BATTLEFIELDS MEAN BUSINESS

Harnessing the power of NPS statistics to demonstrate the impact of heritage tourism



ANY OF US involved in historic preservation pursue such initiatives because we believe in the power of place and understand the educational value such sites present to locals and visitors alike. Unfortunately,

such wisdom is not universally accepted, and sometimes we must persuade neighbors and even decisionmakers that the benefits are wide reaching and apply to more than a small circle of hobbyist reenactors.

For officials on both sides of the aisle, the economic impact of heritage tourism can make a compelling case that preservation

initiatives could be a good fit for their communities and constituents. Yet without the means to generate independent statistical analysis for your individual museum or park, how can you offer a tangible measure that will appeal to their bottom-dollar way of thinking? If you can bear to part with this issue of *Hallowed Ground*, they may find the full breadth of articles enlightening! But with

a bit of internet research, you can present them with relevant case studies using data professionally prepared by the National Park Service (NPS) — minimal number crunching required.

The National Park Service records and prepares a number of robust social science metrics that measure use and value of units, releasing figures each autumn — both amalgamated metrics for

the entire system and individual metrics for specific parks and/or regions. Visit www.nps.gov/socialscience for the latest data sets.

The first category of research to understand is Visitor Use Statistics, which provides detailed counts about park use. When reviewing these charts, it is important to understand the differentiation between “visits” and “visitors” — a single visitor may generate multiple counted visits by leaving and re-entering a park, say for lunch at an off-site restaurant. A couple who spends their first day at Vicksburg National Military Park taking the driving tour, returns to their hotel for the night and comes back the next morning to hike has accrued a total of four visits to the park. You should also concentrate on “recreational” users, rather than “non-recreational” ones, who might include those who commute through the park daily. Also note that overnight stays reported in this data set only account for those staying in facilities officially affiliated with the Park Service, like a lodge or campground.

As you delve into these data, take note of the caveat made by the Park Service itself: The accuracy of older data is uncertain. Visitation numbers are available for some parks as far back as 1904, but prior to the mid-1980s, NPS has said, “[N]o standard Service-wide system existed for counting visitors. As a result, a considerable amount of mathematical errors and double-counting occurred.” This admission helps put into context occasionally cited outliers like the seven million people purported to have visited Gettysburg National Military Park in 1970 — more than three times the number of visitors counted at Grand Canyon National Park that same year.

That raw information does not convey the impact their presence creates in the surrounding community, which sprouts business to cater to them.

Even with more recent information, it may be helpful to look at multiyear averages to control for extenuating circumstances: A major anniversary and reenactment one year, followed by a summer of record rainfall the next can obscure meaningful trends. Using this model to control for natural fluctuations, Trust-sponsored analysis by the Harbinger Group showed that, in 2019, battlefield tourism was on the upswing, with an adjusted 21-percent increase in visitors to 11 nationally significant battlefields between 1990 and 2018 when using three-year averages (the period 1990-1992 compared to the period 2016-2018).

As impressive as the number of people passing through a battlefield park might be, that raw information does not convey the impact their presence creates in the surrounding community, which sprouts business to cater to them. Thanks to what economists call the “multiplier effect,” local businesses spend the visitor dollars they take in to pay employees, buy goods and cover other expenses. Money these businesses spend can then be spent again by the businesses and individuals who receive it, and so on down the line. The dollars you spend in the community to take a room at the

ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

In 2023, 154,000 park visitors spent an estimate \$10.3 million in local gateway regions while visiting Antietam National Battlefield. These expenditures supported a total of 127 jobs, \$5.8 million in labor income, \$9.5 million in value added, and \$15.3 million in economic output in local gateway economies supporting Antietam National Battlefield.



Credit: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Battlefield B&B will pay the salaries of staff who will spend it outside of the tourism industry but still within the local community.

For each of the 400-plus units in the system, the National Park Service reports its analysis of impact in a number of categories via the “Park Economies” tab of its Visitor Spending Effects portal (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>). These include Visitor Spending (how much visitors spend in a park’s gateway communities), Jobs (annualized full- and part-time jobs supported by visitor spending), Labor Income (employee wages, salaries and payroll benefits, plus sole proprietor incomes, of those jobs), Value Added (contribution of visitor spending to the region’s Gross Domestic Product) and Economic Output (total estimated value of the production of goods and services supported by National Park Service visitor spending).

The secondary effects of heritage tourist spending as it ripples outward in a community can yield numbers that feel bogglingly high and can require nuanced explanation of the difference between direct and indirect impact. In many instances, though, the simple figures of dollars spent and jobs supported are straightforward and sufficient to convey the underlying premise.

For each park, the portal can produce a swift analytic summary of these numbers and even a pie chart demonstrating proportional spending across economic sectors (retail vs. restaurants, etc.) and the type of jobs created for which sectors of the economy. For example: In 2023, the jobs created surrounding Appomattox Court House National Historical Park were twice as likely to be related to lodging or restaurants than to retail. A handy bar graph shows high-level information in each category compared across the past decade.

When browsing this information, resist the temptation to compare your smaller site to Gettysburg! Instead, choose a more rural site

or one that hasn’t spent 150 years investing in attracting visitors to the battlefield and creating robust infrastructure to support them. Such more-modest examples are likely more meaningful, realistic and tangible to those you are looking to persuade. Take Ninety Six National Historic Site, a Revolutionary War battlefield in rural South Carolina that’s 35 miles from the nearest interstate highway. That its 118,000 visitors in 2023 spent \$7.9 million in surrounding towns and supported a total of 111 jobs is a far more reasonable expectation and goal to work toward.

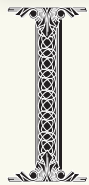
The newest tool in the publicly available NPS analytic arsenal is Socioeconomic Measurements; following a pilot program in 2015, this data collection began in earnest in 2022. Because this type of information is more dependent on individual survey work than economic formula calculation, each year’s unique reporting is based on data gathered at two dozen randomly selected parks that represent a cross-section of the system. Selected sites are meant to proportionally include cultural, natural and recreational sites and control for rural/urban divides and high/low visitation flows.

Surveys completed in 2023 at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Stones River National Battlefield yielded meaningful and detailed information on a host of topics ranging from party age and distance traveled to how many hours were spent within the park. Trip inspiration and programs experienced were also measured. (Fear not! In both cases, 75+ percent said learning more about American history was either Very or Extremely important to them during their visit.) Information gleaned from 2024 sites surveyed, which include Vicksburg National Military Park, Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and Minute Man National Historical Park should be available later in 2025.★

Visitors watching a reenactment at Minute Man National Historical Park in Concord, Mass.
JAMES WELLMAN

A LEGACY OF GIVING: HONORING DR. TIMOTHY W. KINLOCK

*A life shaped by history continues
to inspire future generations*



IN 1988, while recovering from major surgery, Dr. Timothy W. Kinlock received a small but life-changing gift from his wife, Patti: a copy of *The Killer Angels*, Michael Shaara's award-winning novel about the Battle of Gettysburg.

That one thoughtful gift during his recovery opened the door to a lifelong connection with American history — and a profound love for the battlefields where it was made.

Before long, he began making regular pilgrimages to Gettysburg, drawn by history and the sacred nature of the ground itself. His battlefield travels soon expanded to Antietam, Monocacy, Fort Donelson and Chattanooga. With each visit, Kinlock's appreciation deepened — and so did his alarm at the creeping threats of development. Houses here and a strip mall there were bad enough, but it was the looming possibility of a casino near Gettysburg that made the threat unmistakable. He knew he had to act.

That sense of urgency brought him to the American Battlefield Trust. In 2011, Tim made a \$100 donation — the first step in what would become a remarkable journey of giving. By the next year, he had joined the Color Bearer Society, and in the years that followed, he became one of the Trust's most faithful supporters.

Over the course of 13 years, Tim and Patti made 901 individual contributions totaling more than \$338,000 — the second-highest number of gifts from any donor in Trust history. But the impact was not just about volume, Kinlock gave with intention and heart, reflecting his deep belief that preservation ensured future generations would understand the price of freedom.

Tim at the 20th Maine Monument,
Gettysburg NMP
July 2009



After meeting with Trust officials during the quiet phase of the Trust's *Our Enduring Legacy* capital campaign, the Kinlocks made a \$50,000 pledge—paid in full the following month. It would be one of his final contributions. Just months later, in August 2024, Kinlock passed away at age 71.

At his memorial service in the Washington National Cathedral, the words of Joshua Chamberlain rang through the vaulted space, and the congregation rose to sing *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

But the story didn't end there. In the months that followed, Patti Kinlock found a way to honor her husband's memory in a most meaningful way: through the land, the stories and the students he had cared about so deeply.

In early 2025, she made a transformational memorial gift of \$310,000, creating a legacy that will embody her husband's values and love of history through three vital initiatives:

- **The Battlefield Readiness Fund (\$100,000):** A flexible, rapid-response fund to protect threatened battlefield land — honoring the kind of support Tim gave so generously before his passing.
- **The Timothy W. Kinlock Gettysburg Field Trip Grant Program (\$60,000):** Enabling students to stand where history happened, and where Tim once stood, year after year.
- **The Timothy W. Kinlock Education Fund (\$150,000):** Supporting educational initiatives in perpetuity — from leadership programs to video content and beyond.

Classroom initiatives were particularly close to Kinlock's heart, with him once remarking: "*Education is crucial, because students can get a more direct sense of what happened by going to the battlefields themselves — beyond what they can read about in books or see on television or the Internet.*"

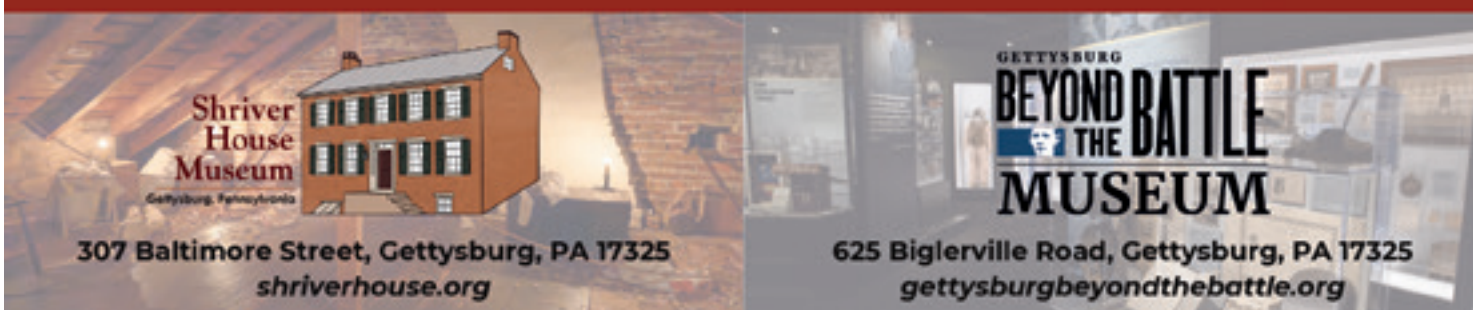
Through this gift, thousands of students will walk the ground that Dr. Timothy Kinlock loved. They'll learn the stories he treasured and continue his legacy through a deeper appreciation of the sacrifice, the civic duty and the history that binds us.

To Kinlock, preserving battlefields was a way of safeguarding the heart and soul of America's story. His quiet, unwavering generosity has become a lasting legacy — one that will continue to educate and inspire generations to come through the power of place. ★

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DO YOU HAVE A REVOLUTIONARY
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Consider membership in the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), a volunteer women's service organization that honors and preserves the legacy of our Patriot ancestors. Nearly 250 years ago, American Patriots fought and sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today.

As a member of the DAR, you can continue this legacy by actively promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America's future through better education for children.

Preserving the American Spirit
www.dar.org
(202) 879-3224

Who is eligible for membership?

Any woman 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion or ethnic background, who can prove lineal descent from a Patriot of the American Revolution is eligible for membership. DAR volunteers are willing to provide guidance and assistance with your first step into the world of genealogy.

How is Patriot defined?

DAR recognizes as Patriots not only soldiers, but also anyone who contributed to the cause of American freedom. To find out if your ancestor is recognized by the DAR as a Revolutionary Patriot, use the request form available online. Visit www.dar.org and click on "Membership."

How many members does the National Society have?

DAR has nearly 190,000 members in nearly 3,000 chapters worldwide, including chapters in 14 foreign countries and one territory. Since its founding in 1890, DAR has admitted more than 1 million members.

How can I find out more?

Go to www.dar.org and click on "Membership." There you'll find helpful instructions, advice on finding your lineage and a Prospective Member Information Request Form. Or call (202) 879-3224 for more information on joining this vital, service-minded organization.

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Saving 2,500 Acres... Partners in "The Cause"

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR or SAR) was founded in 1889. SAR is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and promoting education for our future generations. SAR members volunteer untold hours of service each year in their local communities. SAR is very active in assisting veterans. We proudly assist teachers with living history interpreters, lesson planning materials, and reenactment events for school-aged youth to attend.

- ★Remembering Our Past...By honoring those who served or assisted the efforts for Independence during the Revolutionary War.
- ★Promoting Core Values...By inspiring communities and institutions with more profound reverence for the principles of the government founded by our forefathers.
- ★Shaping Future Generations...By educating our youth about the founding of our nation and American ideals and traditions.

Having an ancestral connection or our nation's revolutionary era, the SAR is a collegial organization whose mission is to further the founding ideals. As a hereditary society, our members are connected through a shared sense of honor, privilege, and responsibility to perpetuate the "cause" of the founders to create an independent nation of free people.



Join the SAR | SAR.org



A PARTING SHOT
HERITAGE SITES



Battlefields & Heritage Sites >>

Itineraries >>

Events >>

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HERITAGE ITINERARIES

PLANNING A TRIP to heritage sites can often be overwhelming. So much to do in so little time! The American Battlefield Trust is ready to help. The Trust website is now home to itineraries to help you make history. Check out the map and find somewhere you want to go — there's options for single-day or multi day trips, along with tips on visiting related sites and key resources.

For example, if you want to enjoy a getaway in Upstate New York, check out the itinerary centered around the quaint hamlet of Sacket's Harbor, site of an important battle in the War of 1812. Potential visitors can learn about the state park, local museums and even other options for family fun and retail

therapy. Another itinerary includes a roster of the many battlefields and related sites within easy journey of Washington, D.C.

If there isn't an itinerary that fits your needs, check out Tour Recommendations to customize your own! Just put in your starting and ending points and how far you're willing to travel, and the website will give you a list of every stop on the way. To personalize it even more, select the activities you want to keep, and the site will create a map and itinerary for you. Complete with directions and driving times, all you have to do is enjoy the ride.

Near or far, exploring heritage sites is a remarkable way to connect with our history, and the Trust is excited to make that even easier.

Learn more at battlefields.org/visit.



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