BLUE, GRAY & GREEN

ECONOMIC & TOURISM BENEFITS OF BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION
“What it boils down to is blue and gray makes green.”

KEVIN LANGSTON
Deputy Commissioner for Tourism,
Georgia Department of Economic Development
Civil War battlefields are significant local assets, which are going to attract more attention in the coming years.

The Civil War sesquicentennial is upon us. From 2011 to 2015, tens of millions of Americans will commemorate the monumental struggle that ended slavery and unified our nation. Much of this reflection and remembrance will be focused on the battlefields where hundreds of thousands gave their lives and the nation’s future was decided.

For communities near battlefields, this 150th anniversary is likely to boost the already-substantial economic advantages that come with this proximity. This brief report outlines some of the economic benefits that battlefield preservation can confer. Its main findings:

★ BATTLEFIELDS BOOST TOURISM
★ BATTLEFIELDS GENERATE JOBS
★ BATTLEFIELDS MEAN TAX REVENUE
★ BATTLEFIELDS ARE COMMUNITY ASSETS
★ BATTLEFIELD EVENTS DRAW CROWDS

IN FIVE STATES—Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia—15.8 million visitors to 15 National Park Service Civil War battlefields and historic sites spend nearly $442 million in local communities, supporting 5,150 local jobs.¹

At 20 Civil War sites from Gettysburg to Chickamauga, visitors add $11.7 million per year to local government tax revenues, and $21 million to state coffers.²

A typical family of four spends $1000 during its battlefield visit.³

In Virginia, Civil War visitors stay twice as long as—and spend double the money of—the average tourist.⁴

³Ibid.
Civil War tourists: the ideal repeat visitor

In Virginia, Civil War visitors stay twice as long as—and spend double the money of—the average tourist.

“People come to Virginia to see our battlefields and our history. It is a great way to showcase the Commonwealth and is a tremendous boost to our tourism efforts.”

—William J. Howell
Speaker, Virginia House of Delegates

Civil War travelers are terrific guests. They are energetic, involved, and eager to stay in the area longer than other travelers.

As a group, Civil War tourists are better-educated and more affluent than both the general population and other heritage travelers. On average, they:

• Earn a household income of $66,000 per year (compared to the national median of $52,000 in 2008)
• Are well educated, with a high proportion of college graduates (51 percent, compared to 24 percent nationwide).
Civil War sites are tourism magnets.

History enthusiasts flock to historic sites, but they are not alone. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources reports that historic sites are the second most popular tourist destination for families, surpassed only by cities. Twelve percent of leisure travelers to Virginia visited historic sites and churches. Seven percent visited Civil War sites. In a 2010 survey, 31 percent of adults said they are “extremely interested” in visiting a Civil War site or trail while traveling for leisure. That’s a market of 72.2 million eager Civil War travelers.

In just five states—Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia—Civil War battlefield parks, historic sites, and museums attract more than 20.5 million visitors each year.

“Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield is one of the most popular attractions in the Springfield area for visitors and local residents alike. In addition to the economic impact generated by visitors to the battlefield, it provides a historic, cultural experience that fits perfectly within the family-friendly attractions offered in our area.”

—Tracy Kimberlin
President of the Springfield, Mo., Convention & Visitors Bureau

Of out-of-town visitors interviewed at 20 battlefields:

★ Two-thirds were visiting the area specifically to see the battlefield
★ Three-quarters would visit other Civil War sites while in the area
★ Nearly all (91 percent) said they would recommend the battlefield to others.

In 2010, more than 130,000 visitors to Richmond National Battlefield Park spent over $9 million in the local area. That year at Antietam National Battlefield, 394,000 visitors spent $19.3 million locally.

3Civil War tourist characteristics from Davidson-Peterson Associates. 2006. U.S. figures from U.S. Census Bureau.
7The Harbinger Consulting Group, 2012.
A typical family of four spends about $1,000 during its battlefield visit. This is how their money is spent:  

- **Food and Beverages:** $290  
- **Lodging:** $240  
- **Shopping:** $230  
- **Transportation:** $100  
- **Admissions:** $80  
- **Other:** $60

“Tourists come to see the battlefield, but they also come to enjoy the local atmosphere. They stay in a B&B, enjoy a cup of coffee, and go shopping in town.”

—**Hap Connors**  
Former Chairman,  
Spotsylvania County, Va.,  
Board of Supervisors
Seventy percent of Civil War tourists stay at least one night in the battlefield communities they visit. 15

On average, visits by 956 tourists support one full-time job in a battlefield community. This happens through what is called the “multiplier effect.” Local businesses spend the visitor dollars they take in to pay employees, purchase goods, and pay for rent, fuel, taxes, and other expenses. Some of this money is spent locally, where it can then be spent again by the businesses and individuals who receive it, and so on down the line.16

In five states—Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia—this multiplier effect means that 15.8 million visitors to 15 National Park Service Civil War battlefield parks and historic sites spin off an annual economic contribution of more than $248 million to local communities. The money they spend supports 5,150 local jobs, paying $151 million to local workers.17

State and regional Civil War sites and parks also contribute to local economic vitality. In Virginia, a typical state park brings in $4.6 million in visitor spending, and supports 85 local jobs and $1.6 million in wages.18

The Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (Georgia and Tennessee) attracts nearly 992,000 visitors each year, supporting 724 jobs in the surrounding communities.20

14Ibid.
15Ibid.
16Ibid.
17Ibid.
20Stynes, 2011.
Battlefields generate millions for government coffers.

At 20 Civil War sites from Gettysburg to Chickamauga, each visitor added an average of $2.92 to local government coffers, and $5.22 to state tax revenues. The totals add up: $11.7 million per year to help defray the cost of local services, and $21 million to the states. 21

An added benefit: Tourists do not need the services that government must provide to residents, so their tax contributions can help offset the cost of maintaining a livable community. Battlefields can literally help pay for community services.

Battlefields also preserve open space. In five counties in southeastern Pennsylvania, protected open space:

★ Adds $30 million each year to state and local tax revenues from money spent on recreation and other activities;
★ Boosts home values by a total of $16.3 billion; and
★ Generates $240 million in property tax revenues annually. 22

Shiloh National Military Park
Shiloh, Tenn.
MIKE TALPLACIDO

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Battlefields aren’t just for out-of-town tourists. They provide outdoor classrooms for educators and scenic open space, where residents can run, walk, or simply sit and enjoy the natural beauty.

At Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia, locals accounted for more than 684,000 visits to the park’s educational programs, historic landscapes, and scenic roads and trails in 2010.23

At Harper’s Ferry National Historical Park, school field trips and programs like “Tigers on the Trail,” engage more than 56,000 students each year in history and outdoor activity and learning.24

Open space such as battlefields boosts nearby property values.25 A study in Philadelphia found that historic preservation provides a similar boost in property values, which increase an average of 1.6 percent for each mile closer to a national historic district, and 0.5 percent for each mile closer to a local historic district.26

People enjoy living in historic places that have been preserved, that have “character.” We don’t need to choose between preservation and development, but we have to be smart and forward-thinking about how we develop so we keep the context for history alive.

—STEVE McDaniel
Member, Tennessee House of Representatives

According to a 1997 study, small business owners ranked nearby parks, open space, and recreation opportunities as the number one factor for choosing a new location. Kennesaw, Georgia, home to the Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield (SHOWN), was selected as one of the nation’s “10 Best Towns for Families” in 2007.

Harpers Ferry, W.V.
WILLIAM FOX

2Personal communication, park staff, January 2011
The 150th anniversary of the conflict that so indelibly shaped our nation is upon us. By 2012, 30 states had formal commissions or initiatives in place to coordinate the commemoration of the Civil War. Virginia’s Sesquicentennial Commission identified this four-year span as being rich with educational, economic, and tourism opportunities. The economic benefits could be significant.

Each year, the town of Gettysburg attracts three million visitors, about half of whom go to the Gettysburg National Military Park. Local authorities expect visitation to grow to as many as four million in 2013, the anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. The additional economic impact could top $100 million.²⁷

During the four years that Pennsylvania’s Civil War Road Show travels the state, its visitors are expected to spend $29 million in host communities. The upshot? A total economic shot-in-the-arm of $75 million, and, for each of four years:

★ 233 jobs
★ $5.3 million in income for local workers.²⁸

In South Carolina, reenactments, educational programs, conferences, tours and other events will likely generate an economic impact of $7.6 million.

Some of the benefits:
★ $2.8 million in wages for local workers
★ 118 jobs created
★ $576,000 in sales and excise tax revenues.²⁹

In Richmond, Virginia, 2011 attendance at the Museum of the Confederacy was up 25 percent over the previous year. A new branch of the museum in Appomattox opened in 2012 and is expected to draw an additional 200,000 visitors, who will also likely visit nearby Appomattox Court House National Historical Park — a 20 percent increase in annual tourism during 2011.³¹

In 2011, Fort Sumter National Monument in Charleston, South Carolina — which averages roughly 200,000 visitors a year — drew a record-high 328,000 total visitors. Nine days of special events in April boosted overall visitation by 26 percent over the previous year, while twice as many people ventured to the Fort Moultrie unit as in April 2011. The trend continued into 2012, with visitation climbing an additional 11 percent during the first quarter.³⁰

The July 2011 sesquicentennial commemoration of the First Battle of Manassas (or Bull Run), Virginia, boosted restaurant meal tax revenues in the city of Manassas by 14 percent for the month, compared to the previous July. The benefits were concentrated in the historic Old Town, where shops collected 55 percent more sales tax revenue than in July 2010.³¹

²Personal communication, Carl Whethill, Gettysburg Convention and Visitors Bureau, December 2010.
⁴Ventura, Bridg and Ring Pan, Ph.D. Tourism Impact of the Sesquicentennial Anniversary Celebration of the Civil War to the State of South Carolina, 2010-2012. Prepared by the Office of Tourism Analysis, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC. Fort Sumter/Fort Moultrie Trust.
⁵Low Country Sesquicentennial Coordinating Committee, 2009.
“One of the three reasons visitors come to Charleston is due to our rich history, a thread in the vast tapestry that makes up the story of our nation. We are obligated to use this as a ‘teaching moment’; the economic benefits only confirm that the message falls on eager ears.”

—Blake Hallman
Member, Charleston, S.C., City Council
ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO, brother fought brother as North and South clashed in bitter combat, leaving some 625,000 Americans dead.

Today, the Civil War Trust is the only national organization committed to educating the public about the war’s legacy and the fundamental conflicts that sparked it, and protecting the final tangible links to this defining moment in our history—the battlefields where the conflict was decided.

CIVIL WAR TRUST
Saving America’s Civil War Battlefields
Civilwar.org