

The Civil War in Henry County

Henry County, Georgia experienced a great deal of Civil War activity that most citizens know nothing about. Since 2005 county government has invested much effort and publicity toward depicting the Nash Farm as

“...a fierce struggle between opposing armies ... which ended the Atlanta Campaign.

If you connect all the dots on a map of the 33 battles that were fought in the Atlanta Campaign, the last dot would end at the Nash Farm Battlefield in Western Henry County, located near Lovejoy.”

On Thursday, February 21, 2002 Mr. Mark Pollard was featured by the Atlanta Journal article, “Civil War Battle Beats in his Heart.” Pollard had prepared a five-page paper titled, “*Henry County’s Forgotten Civil War Battle,*” about the engagement at Fosterville on August 20th, 1864. Union forces had fled from Lovejoy’s Station enroute to McDonough. As Union forces under Gen. Judson Kilpatrick crossed Walnut Creek, Confederates of the 1st Mississippi “came roaring out of a cornfield and straight for the creek banks.”

The Chicago Board of Trade battery was positioned inside the gates of the Foster house, which was on a small ridge east of the creek and north of the McDonough Road. The Yankees were greeted by a Confederate cannon ball crashing through the roof and destroying the house’s front porch. The engagement involved about an hour and one-half of ruthless contention.

The AJC article told about Pollard’s decades of relic hunting and collection of artifacts in Dutchtown, once known as Fosterville. He claimed finding hundreds of cavalry and infantry bullets, belt buckles, spurs, horseshoes, spent shell casings, toe taps, harmonica reeds, a Louisiana coat button, cannonballs, and a sword hanger.

The one striking omission from the article is any mention of Nash Farm, the location of campsites at Nash Farm, an epic cavalry charge at Nash Farm or a massive battle at Nash Farm. What may be familiar is the listing of artifacts, which is very similar to the artifacts more recently discovered at Henry County’s Nash Farm Battlefield.

On Wednesday, December 1, 2004 – at the time Henry County was in negotiation to acquire Nash Farm – Mr. Pollard wrote a guest column in The Daily (Clayton). The title was, “Are our battlefields ‘Gone With the Wind’?”

The 2004 article stated, “Clayton and Henry counties were both prominent in Sherman’s theater of 33 battles that would be fought before Atlanta would fall.” Pollard asked what it was like for folks living near the Battle of Walnut Creek in

Henry County, or for citizens in McDonough during Sherman's March to the Sea, and he imagined a bird's eye view of the Battle of Jonesboro.

Mr. Pollard stated,

“Four separate battles were fought in Lovejoy, some of which extended into Henry County. Three cavalry battles and one infantry battle took place at Lovejoy. Two cavalry battles and Sherman's March to the Sea took place in Henry County.”

It would seem the 90-minute *Battle of Walnut Creek* would rank more significantly than the 30-minute Union charge across a Lovejoy field, recently named *The Battle of Nash Farm*. Perhaps so since Nash Farm was not named in the article; and, that “Lovejoy field” and the later skirmishes of September 1864 were actually in Clayton County.

The only local *battlefield* recognized by the National Park Service and the 1993 Civil War Sites Commission was Lovejoy's Station, for the action in Clayton County in August 1864.

In 2004 the largest recent preservation effort was at Utoy Creek and involved \$2.65 million in private and public funds to secure and preserve 103 acres of hallowed ground.

In 2004 Henry County was preparing to spend over \$8 million in public funds to purchase 204 acres, the location of dubious Civil War activity. In 2005 Henry County needed to document a battle or two on the Nash property so the expense and use of eminent domain could appear more acceptable to the county's taxpayers.

From the listing below, it is clear that Nash Farm was not the *last dot on a map* of the Atlanta Campaign. In fact Henry County has a significant list of Civil War actions and historic places from the period, each one researched, documented and recognized by official historical markers or national registry.

It is helpful to remember the following term definitions:

Strategic Raid: A strategic effect is sought via a single operation that is limited in scope and time.

Skirmish: A fight between small bodies of troops, esp. advanced or outlying detachments of opposing armies.

Battle: An intense battle fought in close contact by troops arranged in a predetermined formation.

Civil War Engagements in Henry County

- Flat Rock – July 28-29, 1864
Gen. Joseph Wheeler CSA vs. Gen. Kenner Garrard. Heavy skirmishing along South River part of the Stoneman-McCook Raid. Gen. Wheeler forced Gen. Garrard back to Latimer's (today's Belmont).
- McDonough – August 20, 1864
Gen. Hugh J. Kilpatrick US had a raid on the area which began at Sandtown and moved to Jonesboro and then to Lovejoy's Station. They moved to McDonough and then turned north and exited the county on the 21st at Flat Rock, where once again Gen. Garrard was present to protect Kilpatrick's flank.

There was a small skirmish at Walnut Creek; general looting of farms; Timberridge Church was burned one board at a time for Union campfires; McDonough Baptist was used as a slaughtering pen for livestock and the courthouse (Clerk's office) was looted.

- McDonough – September 1, 1864
Gen. Hood and Gen. Wheeler CSA evacuated Atlanta and camped in and around town before moving on to Lovejoy's Station on September 2nd.
- Flat Rock – Foraging party of October 11-13, 1864
Major A. B. Smith of the 115th NY Volunteers crossed the South River at Flat Rock and turned right toward where Fairview is located today. The Union soldiers loaded 500 wagons with corn and oats, and then returned by way of Flat Rock back to Atlanta.
- Flat Rock – Foraging party support. Gen. Slocum sent Col. Dustin to protect a wagon train of 800 wagons guarded by three brigades and two batteries that was threatened by a large CSA cavalry force. US forces encamped for the night, and then moved to Lithonia to Latimer's on October 23rd.
- Stockbridge – The Orphan Brigade CSA setup their headquarters on present Hwy 23 & 42 just southwest of Old Stockbridge. They encountered the 15th and 17th Corps US on the March to the Sea on November 15, 1864. They met Union forces to the west and northwest of Stockbridge. A running battle began at Anvil Block Road and Stagecoach Road as the Orphan Brigade under Gen. Lewis fell back. The 15th Corps 2nd Division camped at Reeves Creek west of Stockbridge near present Hwy 138. The 15th Corps 1st Division camped on Panther Creek northwest of town on present Hwy 23 & 42 at present Valley Hill Road. The 17th Corps camped on Brush Creek just east of town. The command of the 15th Corps was Gen. Osterhaus, and Gen. Blair of the 17th Corps, both serving under Gen. Howard.

- McDonough – November 16, 1864
 The 15th Corps US marched via the Atlanta Road and met some elements of Iverson's Cavalry CSA at Little Cotton Indian Creek southeast of Stockbridge, then marched on to McDonough. The advance guard drove a CSA cavalry brigade out of town. The 15th Corps camped in and around town. The 17th Corps US approached on the Old Flat Rock Road and camped on Walnut Creek north of town.

- Bear Creek (Hampton) – November 16, 1864
 After Gen. Kilpatrick drove the CSA from Lovejoy (note markers along present Hwy 19/41 and historical references about Lovejoy Plantation) he pursued them to Bear Creek, where skirmishes occurred. Kilpatrick then turned northeast and camped on the McDonough-Griffin Road – present Hwy 155.

- Locust Grove – November 17, 1864
 From here the 15th Corps US and Kilpatrick moved south toward Jackson (Butts County).

- Peachstone Shoals-Keys Ferry Area – November 17, 1864
 There were three brigades of the 17th Corps US that moved up the Peachstone Shoals Road (present Hwy 20). They burned the Timberridge and Old Sharon Churches, and then advanced and met with the rest of the Corps south of Ola on present Keys Ferry Road before exiting the county.

National Register of Historic Places

Henry County, Georgia

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/GA/Henry/state.html>

Crawford-Talmadge House ** (added 1980 - **Building** - #80001091)

Also known as **Lovejoy Plantation**

NW of Hampton at U.S. 19/41 and Talmadge Rd., Hampton

Historic Significance: Person, Architecture/Engineering

Architect, builder, or engineer: Unknown

Architectural Style: Greek Revival

Historic Person: Crawford, Thomas S.

Significant Year: 1850, 1835

Area of Significance: Agriculture, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1825-1849, 1850-1874

Owner: **Private**

Historic Function: Domestic

Historic Sub-function: Secondary Structure, Single Dwelling

Current Function: Domestic

Current Sub-function: Single Dwelling

Globe Hotel ** (added 1985 - **Building** - #85001980)

Also known as **Dunn House**

20 Jonesboro St., McDonough

Historic Significance: Architecture/Engineering, Event

Architect, builder, or engineer: Unknown

Architectural Style: Stick/Eastlake

Area of Significance: Architecture, Transportation, Commerce

Period of Significance: 1825-1849

Owner: **Private**

Historic Function: Domestic

Historic Sub-function: Hotel

Current Function: Domestic

Current Sub-function: Multiple Dwelling

Griffin, Smith, House ** (added 1985 - **Building** - #85003225)

Also known as **Oaklea Manor**

Off Wynn Dr. NE of GA 20, Hampton

Historic Significance: Person, Architecture/Engineering

Architect, builder, or engineer: Chinn, Henry

Architectural Style: Greek Revival, Late Victorian, Classical Revival

Historic Person: Griffin, Smith, et al.

Significant Year: 1860

Area of Significance: Architecture, Politics/Government

Period of Significance: 1850-1874, 1875-1899, 1900-1924, 1925-1949

Owner: **Private**

Historic Function: Domestic

Historic Sub-function: Single Dwelling

Current Function: Domestic

Current Sub-function: Single Dwelling