

# Where history happened

The most authentic tours in the history of America

August 2006



## Great American Tour Company Acquires HistoryAmerica

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HistoryAmerica TOURS ([www.historyamerica.com](http://www.historyamerica.com)), based in Plano, Texas, has been acquired by Great American Tour Company of Rapid City, South Dakota, ([www.greatamericantourcompany.com](http://www.greatamericantourcompany.com)). The new owner, Sharon McDermott, will take full control of HistoryAmerica on January 1, 2007. In the intervening period, HistoryAmerica will complete its published schedule of tour offerings and continue to be managed by Pete and Julia Brown, the founding owners.

HistoryAmerica has been the leading commercial purveyor of educational tours and cruises led by acclaimed historians since its inception in 1991. The pursuit of authentic history sites and themes has taken the company on the back roads of North America and Central America, Western Europe and the South Pacific. The brand has been heavily accented toward military history, as well as exploration and settlement of the American West. Expedition cruising on small ships with history themes has played an increasing role in recent years.

Great American Tour Company has been involved in managing sight-seeing and history related travel experiences since its inception in 1990. They plan to operate HistoryAmerica as a separate division and will maintain the HistoryAmerica brand, relying on Pete and Julia Brown during the transition period. Mr. Brown will remain on as a consultant in tour development, Ms. McDermott announced, and the tradition of unique high quality programs will continue to be the hallmark of HistoryAmerica TOURS.

Ms. McDermott plans to reveal 2007 HistoryAmerica offerings on August 15, 2006. They will include two WWII themed small-ship cruises in North Africa and the South Pacific led by Edwin C. Bearss, chief historian emeritus of the National Park Service. A number of motor coach tours will be offered as well with a variety of themes relating to American history and led by acclaimed historians.

October 17-25, 2006

## March through Georgia with Ed Bearss

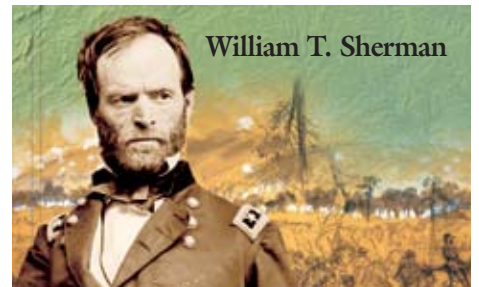


Ed Bearss

October 17-25, 2006, will mark the sixth time HistoryAmerica and Ed Bearss have presented the famous tour *Marching Through Georgia*. This event has proven to be one of the most enduring and popular history adventures ever offered by this intrepid company of fun-loving history buffs.

The reasons for the long run of *Marching Through Georgia* are threefold:

The leader, Ed Bearss, is simply a genius of the battlefields of the Civil War. Ed has the ability to recall the campaigns like no other, showing a knowledge of terrain and troop movements that is unparalleled. And, most importantly, Ed knows how to personalize the action and the participants in a way that will thrill you. You will know Sherman and Johnston and their legions far beyond what you could imagine. The energy level is always high and the action fast-paced when Ed is on stage. In the preface to Ed's most recent book, *Fields of Honor*, he says, "I served in the United States Marine Corps during WWII and know how a battlefield feels, sounds and smells.



William T. Sherman

Continued on page 2, column 3

# HISTORYAMERICA TOURS®

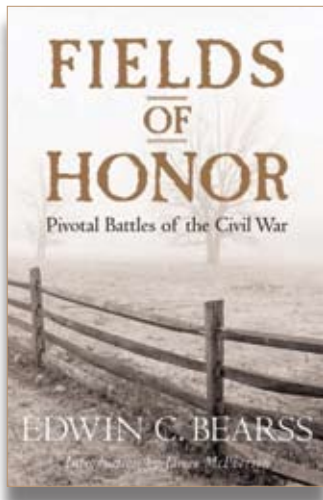
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# Ed Bearss

## BOOK NOTES



It has probably been a common experience to be on a battlefield somewhere in America listening to Ed Bearss explain the intricacies of a certain charge or maneuver in a battle, and you realize you understand the event for the first time. And you think to yourself: Ed should write it down. Well, he has!

Here is the perfect opportunity to go on a Bearss tour without having to leave your chair. America's number one historian guide tells the story of 14 battles that occurred during the four-year-long Civil War.

If you listen carefully, you can actually hear Ed reading it to you, from John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry to the surrender at Appomattox Court House, from Devil's Den to Atlanta.

He tells the story of the characters too, be they heroes or scoundrels, generals or privates, and he does it in his usual inimitable style.

There's probably no one in America who knows more about the Civil War. This is your chance to learn from the master.

There are 80 black and white photos and 18 maps to accompany the text.

In 2003 HistoryAmerica published *Edwin Cole Bearss: History's Pied Piper* by John C. Waugh. You can read this *Concise Illustrated Biography of the Life and Times of America's Impresario of Public History* on our website at [www.historyamerica.com](http://www.historyamerica.com). The Ed Bearss Tribute Fund, spearheaded by colleagues Bill and Dru Vodra, raised the money for its publication, and all proceeds went to Civil War battlefield preservation efforts. We call attention to it here simply to drive home the point that Ed's life is far too full of achievements to even begin to summarize in a paragraph or two. Reading the biography makes it readily apparent that Ed's devotion to the Civil War has been lifelong. His father read Civil War books to him as a child. He did a massive amount of reading while recovering from wounds received in combat in WWII. He has read, researched, written about, walked and talked Civil War battlefields ever since. His upcoming *Marching Through Georgia* tour in October 2006 will be a perfect demonstration of his passion for doing what he loves most – being in the field with a group of devoted Civil War buffs.

Georgia, continued from page 1

Frankly there is nothing like it. Anyone who has ever been there will never forget it." On this tour through Georgia, you will not forget the soldiers, the terrain and battle-action Ed brings to life every inch of the way.

The tour is rich in themes. The Atlanta Campaign, the Battle of Atlanta, and Sherman's March to the Sea are all included in one seamless package. Since it first ran in 1998, Ed has tweaked and improved *Marching Through Georgia* until every turn is down pat and nothing is left to chance. We start up near Chattanooga at Ringgold and end in Savannah, by way of Atlanta and Milledgeville. We walk and drive through the terrain of virtually every important battlefield in Georgia and many skirmishes as well. At Dug Gap, Rocky Face Ridge, Pickett's Mill, and Kennesaw Mountain we will see how Sherman and Johnston avoided one another and yet clashed violently in the Atlanta Campaign. We will cross the Chattahoochee, fight the battles that led to the fall of Atlanta, recapping it all at the Cyclorama. We will learn what really happened and didn't happen on the March to the Sea. We even have a side trip to Beaufort and Parris Island, SC, before we finally call a halt in Savannah.

The logistics are worked out to a tee. You go in and out of Atlanta Hartsfield Airport, or you can drive and leave your car at the opening hotel for the duration. We spend the first four nights in the Marriott Northwest in Atlanta, one night at a Hampton Inn in Milledgeville, and the final three nights at the Hyatt in Savannah, before circling back to Atlanta for departure. The bus will be a first-class 55-passenger coach, driven by a consummate pro in our friend and colleague, Henry Mattox. The on-board tour director will be Bruce Airheart, our most senior person in this position and a veteran of the Georgia tour. Pete Brown will be out in front in a car, making sure all goes well, as he has on all the Georgia tours over the years. You can count on the meals being excellent and the rest stops on time. Singles are welcomed and will be in the majority. The events will unfold according to a time schedule included in your welcome packet. Rest assured of receiving superb organization in the hands of a most professional staff.

Here is the catch. There are only 10 spaces left, so if you don't want to be left behind, pick up the phone today and call Julia Brown at (800) 628-8542. Check out the details at <http://www.historyamerica.com/tours/Sherman.html>.

**Pete and Julia, continued from page 4**  
work. Yet she knows she has a lot to learn about taking on this great new adventure, and she will soon begin to steep herself in the systems that patrons of hand-crafted events from HistoryAmerica have come to know and trust. She and members of her staff will be at our office in Plano, Texas, the first week of August, learning the systems first-hand from Pete and Julia.

Pete Brown will remain on as a consultant, developing events and pursuing his passion of the most thorough scouting in the business. Sharon already is putting together great plans for 2007. In order to convince all loyal HistoryAmerica Regulars, without a shadow of doubt that the brand will continue, a group of the finest historians anywhere has committed to participate in Sharon's initial season at the helm.

Ed Bearss, Jim McPherson, Gary Moulton, Craig Symonds, and Neil Mangum are among those who will lead tours and cruises in 2007. On-board tour directors that you know including Bruce Airheart and Phil Waldron have joined in. Bus drivers like Henry Mattox and Eric Forseth plan to be in on the action as well. The hotels, meals, and logistics will be better than ever.

Sharon plans to keep all earned discounts in force. Travel Journals will be stamped, and going the extra mile with service will be the rule. The HistoryAmerica website will continue as will the first-class maps and reading lists. Julia and Pete feel they could not have found a person who will be more responsible, enthused, and dedicated to taking you to where history happened. Consider yourself on the mailing list and part of the continuing family of HistoryAmerica.

Many thanks,

*Pete & Julia*

## OUR 2006 SCHEDULE

### TOURS

#### **Barons, Bars & Brothels:**

How the West was Fun

*August 5-10*

Historian Guide: Mike Koury

#### **Westward Ho!:**

From the Oregon Trail  
to the Black Hills

*August 8-17*

Historian Guide: Ed Bearss

#### **Nova Scotia:**

Fulcrum of the Seven Years War

*August 31-September 9*

Historian Guide: Brian Cuthbertson

#### **Lincoln and Black Hawk:**

A Rising and a Falling Star

*September 13-21*

Historian Guide: Ed Bearss

#### **The Revolutionary War in the West:**

The Campaign of George Rogers Clark

*October 2-8*

Historian Guide: Jim Holmberg

#### **Marching Through Georgia:**

Sherman Wages Total War

*October 17-25*

Historian Guide: Ed Bearss

#### **Civil War on the Carolina Coast:**

First Shot to Final Battles –

*November 5-12*

Historian Guide: Jim McPherson

### CRUISES

#### **Love and War:**

Great Love Stories of the Civil War

*September 3-10*

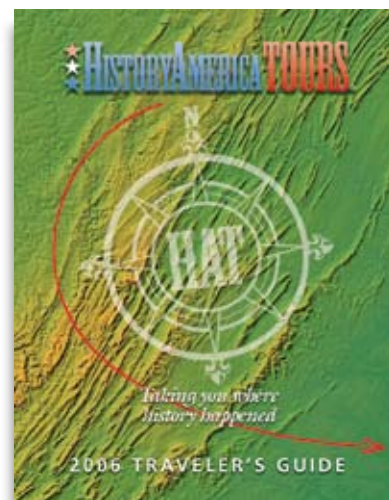
Historian Guides: Virginia Morton  
and Sara Bartlett

## BOOK NOTES



Richard McMurry's superb book, *Atlanta 1864*, details Sherman's invasion of Georgia and the march to the sea from Atlanta.

At the same time McMurry tells of the crucial election of 1864. Lincoln needed re-election and McMurry argues that Sherman's March gave him that victory, and resulted in the eventual failure of the Confederacy's bid for independence. This is a concise study of the campaign with excellent notes and bibliography – a great introduction to the Atlanta campaign without overwhelming the reader. McMurry's style is concise and focused.



Misplaced your 2006 History America brochure? Want to send one to a like-minded friend? Simply e-mail us at [tours@historyamerica.com](mailto:tours@historyamerica.com) or call (800) 628-8542 and speak to a real person!

# Pickett's Mill Georgia



## FEATURED SITE

Pickett's Mill is one of the best preserved Civil War battlefields in the nation. Visitors can travel roads used by Federal and Confederate troops, see earthworks constructed by these men, and walk through the same ravine where hundreds died.

On May 27, 1864, the Federal Army, having been stopped in its advance on Atlanta two days earlier by the Battle of New Hope Church, attempted to outflank the Confederate position. Some 14,000 Federal troops were selected for the task, and General Howard was given command. After a five-hour march, Howard's force reached the vicinity of Pickett's Mill and prepared to attack. Waiting were 10,000 Confederate troops under the command of General Cleburne. The Federal assault began at 5 p.m. and continued into the night. Daybreak found the Confederates still in possession of the field. The Federals had lost 1,600 men compared to the Confederate loss of 500. The Confederate victory resulted in a one-week delay of the Federal advance on Atlanta.

At one time only a few local historians knew the exact location of Pickett's Mill Battlefield. The site was studied and informally mapped by Wilbur Kurtz and Beverly Debose in the 1930s. Interest remained minimal until the 1960s and the Centennial of the American Civil War.

At that time the site was becoming increasingly popular among relic hunters. Finally in 1972 several amateur historians purchased a core piece of the battlefield consisting of 400 acres. The state purchased it in 1974. Fortunately the site had changed little since the Civil War battle 110 years earlier, and was in almost pristine condition. The state negotiated with several other smaller landowners and purchased the last piece of the park in



1982. After installation and completion of exhibits the site was officially opened to the public in May 1992. There are several miles of trenches dug by these men still in existence on the park.

The site of the mill is still readily seen and period dirt roads crisscross the battlefield. Besides the site's historical importance, the 765 acres of green space are a valuable asset in an area that has quickly become urbanized.

## Pete and Julia on the sale of their company



We want our great friends in history to meet Sharon McDermott who owns and operates Great American Tour Company of Rapid City, South Dakota. This soft-spoken lady of firm convictions has just purchased HistoryAmerica TOURS and she does not take the new commitment lightly. She knows the brand has developed around authentic history themes, acclaimed historians who can bring the action to life, and great attention to detail in the form of personal service and well organized itineraries. Her ambitions are to not only keep HistoryAmerica a separate and ongoing entity, but to offer ever new and more imaginative themes as she eventually makes the brand her own.

Julia and Pete have known Sharon since the mid-1990s. She was introduced to us by her husband, John D. "Jack" McDermott, a well published author of the Indian Wars who has made a career of heritage tourism. Jack has served as Historian Guide many times for HistoryAmerica and knows this business inside and out. Sharon brings along a thorough knowledge of the travel industry to the table. It is her life's

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**CALL PETE, JULIA, CHARLENE OR SHIELA TODAY TO MAKE YOUR BOOKING... (800) 628-8542**

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