

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

ADVOCACY



POLITICAL CONSULTING

GRANT WRITING

7/30/2023

On behalf of the Wyse Fork Battlefield Commission and the History Preservation Group, we thank you for joining us to learn more about the Wyse Fork Battlefield. For over a year, the Save Wyse Fork Battlefield Commission has been working to preserve the site of the Second Largest Battle in North Carolina during the Civil War.

Preservation of these spaces from commercial development is at a critical point in many areas. Once these spaces are destroyed, they are lost forever and future generations will never know the impact that they had on their local and national communities. Once such location is the Wyse Fork Battlefield and its surrounding areas in Kinston, North Carolina. Although we talk primarily about the multiple battles at and around Wyse Fork, there is a bigger American story to tell. This particular battlefield is home to pre-Colonial and Revolutionary War activity, Civil War and Reconstruction activity. A significant portion of Wyse Fork is in grave danger of being permanently altered and destroyed by a highway interchange in the near future. It should be noted that multiple sites have been identified with considerably less loss of historic resources and cost and yet, to the confusion of those who work to preserve Wyse Fork, this site was selected- even when the core battlefield is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We would appreciate the help and the voice of public officials and other community leaders in our efforts.

We respectfully ask that you:

- Urge your Member of Congress to become a co-sponsor of HR 3448;
- Support the efforts of the American Battlefield Trust and other organizations that are seeking to purchase properties connected to the Battle of Wyse Fork, or land conservation easements.
- Consider sending letters of support for grants or other possible preservation efforts for the Battlefield.
- Join us in thanking North Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary J. Eric Boyette and North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer Ramona Bartos for meeting with representatives of our organization.

Sincerely,

Andrew C.M. Mizzak

Andrew Mizzak
Main Street Consultants

A historian's best gift: An Explorer's Guidebook to America's Revolutionary War

BUY NOW!

≡ MENU



≡ Menu

The Fight to Preserve the Wyse Fork (Wise's Forks) Civil War Battlefield

August 29, 2022 by BGES



Billboard along US 70

By early March 1865, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman was operating with nearly complete freedom in North Carolina on his way north to form a junction with Union forces in Virginia. The responsibility for ensuring a functioning railroad from New Bern to Goldsboro in support of Sherman's movement rested with Maj. Gen. Jacob D. Cox. On March 2, 1865, Cox ordered his hastily assembled Provisional Corps to march toward Goldsboro. In

Privacy - Terms

A historian's best gift: An Explorer's Guidebook to America's Revolutionary War **BUY NOW!**

command of the aggressive but controversial Gen. Braxton Bragg, the Confederates stood for four days (March 7-10) and successfully halted Cox at Wise's Forks. This delay provided Johnston with the precious time he needed to concentrate his forces and fight the large and important Battle of Bentonville.

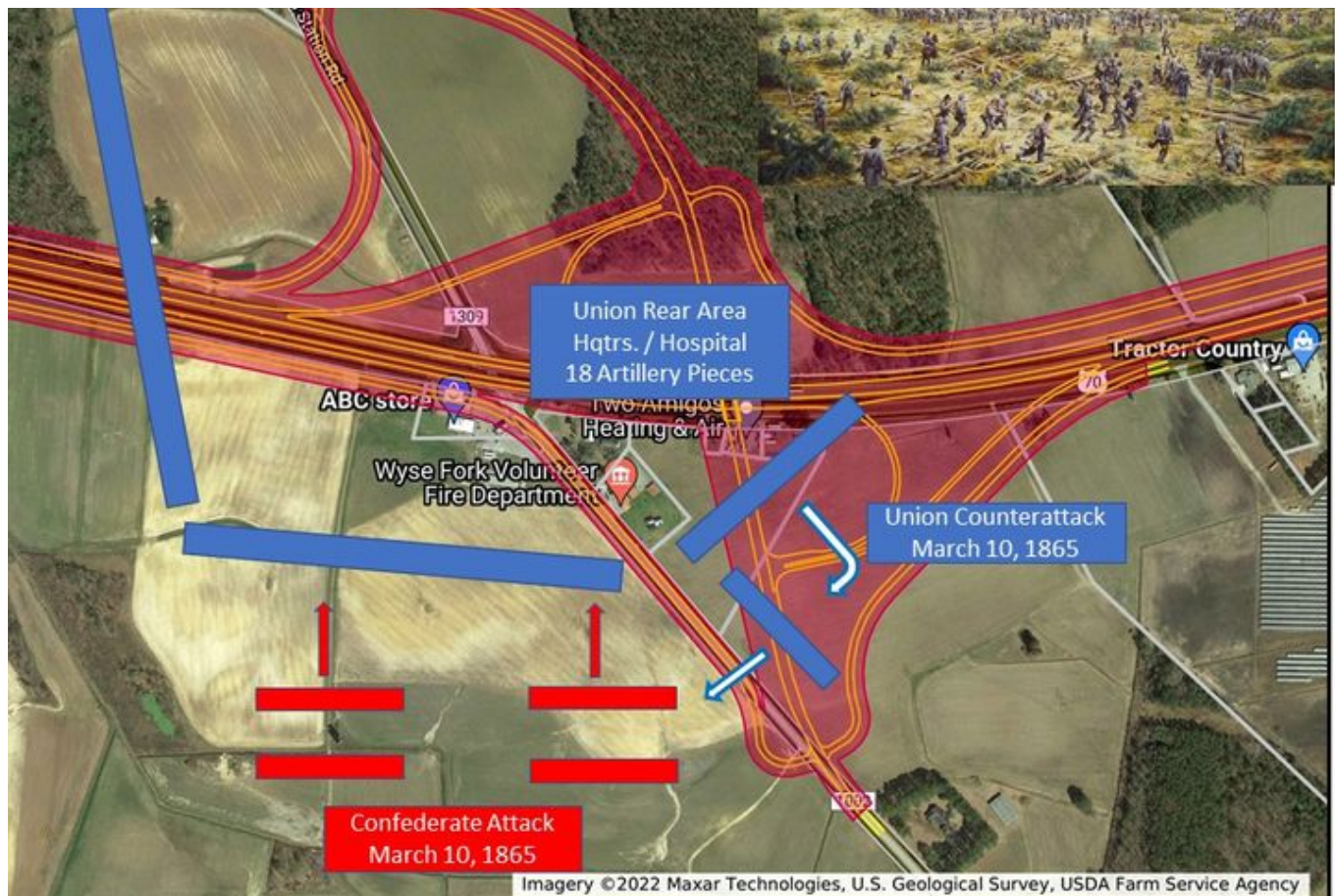
Located just east of Kinston, the Battle of Wyse Fork, as it is known in contemporary terms, was the first major attempt to defeat General Sherman's forces in the Old North State. Today, the N.C. Department of Transportation's proposed Interstate 42 bypass around Kinston threatens to all but destroy the entire left flank of Cox's defensive position, where on March 10, his Federal divisions successfully turned back two separate attacks: The first, carried out by Maj. Gen. Robert F. Hoke's division and a subsequent attack by remnants of the Army of Tennessee commanded by Gens. D. H. Hill and Edward C. Walthall.

It is important to note that in 2017, the U.S. Department of the Interior entered the approximately 4,000-acre Wyse Fork Battlefield into the National Register of Historic Places. You are probably wondering how can the proposed bypass occur considering the battlefield's National Register status. Simple, for the specific portion of the interstate project that impacts the battlefield, the state accepts no Federal dollars, thus circumventing mandated mitigation actions required due to its historical significance.



A historian's best gift: An Explorer's Guidebook to America's Revolutionary War

BUY NOW!



The Union Left Flank on March 10, 1865

The Save Wyse Fork Battlefield Commission, which falls under the 501c3 organization Lenoir County Historical Preservation Group, a non-profit since June 2002, is spearheading the preservation effort to save the battlefield. In close consultation with state and local elected officials, American Battlefield Trust, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the group seeks to alter the proposed route, thus preserving significant areas of the battlefield.

How can you or your organization help? First, go to the online petition sponsored by the American Battlefield Trust and let them know you support the preservation of this battlefield. https://www.battlefields.org/preserve/speak-out/protect-site-second-largest-battle-fought-north-carolina?blm_aid=17276932

Next, join the Facebook groups, **Save Wyse Fork Battlefield**, and **Kinston Civil War Round Table** to obtain updates and information regarding ongoing preservation efforts. Finally, please consider donating to support the ongoing effort to save the battlefield. The photograph of the billboard along U.S. Hwy. 70 as you travel through the battlefield is just

A historian's best gift: An Explorer's Guidebook to America's Revolutionary War [BUY NOW!](#)

groups' Facebook pages, or you can mail a check to the address below.

Please mail checks to:

Save Wyse Fork Battlefield Commission
901 Phillip's Rd.
Kinston, NC 28504

See you on the high ground!

Wade Sokolosky
COL, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Co-author with Mark Smith, 'To Prepare for Sherman's Coming,' The Battle of Wise's Forks March 1865 (Savas Beatie, 2015)

 BGES News, Blog

 #featured #blueandgray #civilwartours #blueandgraytours

< [Having Fun While Doing Good at Fort Shaw](#)

> [BGES Member Making a Difference: Mike Green](#)

Search

Recent Posts

[Len's Book Review: A Refugee at Hanover Tavern](#)

By Len Riedel



WYSE FORK

SECOND KINSTON

Lenoir County, NC | Mar 7 - 10, 1865

In an effort to link up with Sherman's troops advancing into North Carolina, Union Gen. John M. Schofield advanced inland from Wilmington in late February 1865. Schofield ordered Maj. Gen. Jacob D. Cox to move his XXIII Corps from New Berne toward Goldsboro. Cox's advance was blocked, however, by Confederate divisions under Gen. Braxton Bragg at Southwest Creek just east of Kinston. Bragg tried to wrest the initiative from the Federals by attacking their flanks on the 8th. After initial success, the Southern attacks stalled. Union reinforcements arrived on March 9, just in time to repulse Bragg's renewed attacks the next day. After heavy fighting and unable to dislodge Cox, Bragg withdrew across the Neuse River.

WYSE FORK: FEATURED RESOURCES

Battle Facts

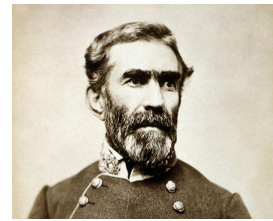
Lenoir County, NC | March 7, 1865

Result: Union Victory

COMMANDERS



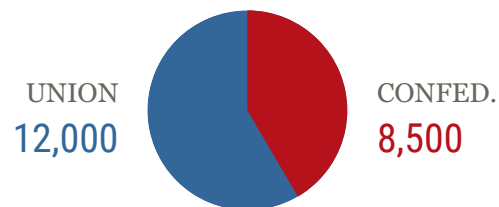
UNION
John M. Schofield



CONFEDERATE
Braxton Bragg

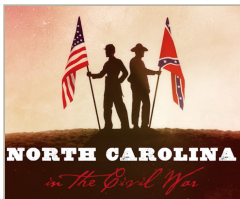
FORCES ENGAGED

20,500



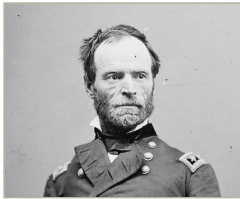
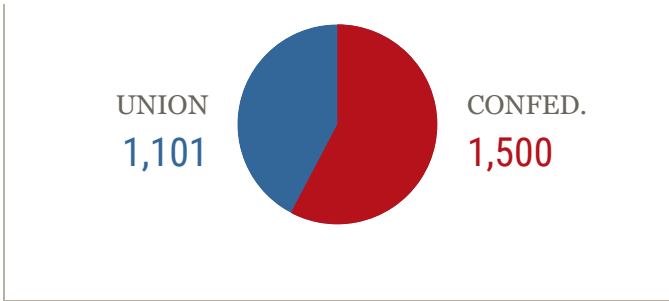
ESTIMATED CASUALTIES

2,601



CIVIL WAR | VIDEO

North Carolina in the Civil War



CIVIL WAR | BIOGRAPHY

William T. Sherman



CIVIL WAR | AREA OF INTEREST

The End of the Civil War



CIVIL WAR | VIDEO

Military Engagements of the Civil War



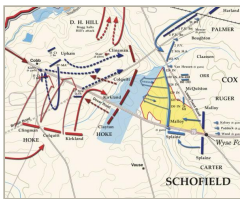
CIVIL WAR | BATTLE

Fort Fisher



CIVIL WAR | BIOGRAPHY

Joseph E. Johnston



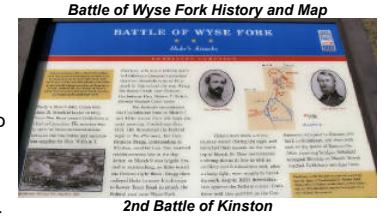
CIVIL WAR | BATTLE MAP

Wyse Fork | Mar 8, 1865

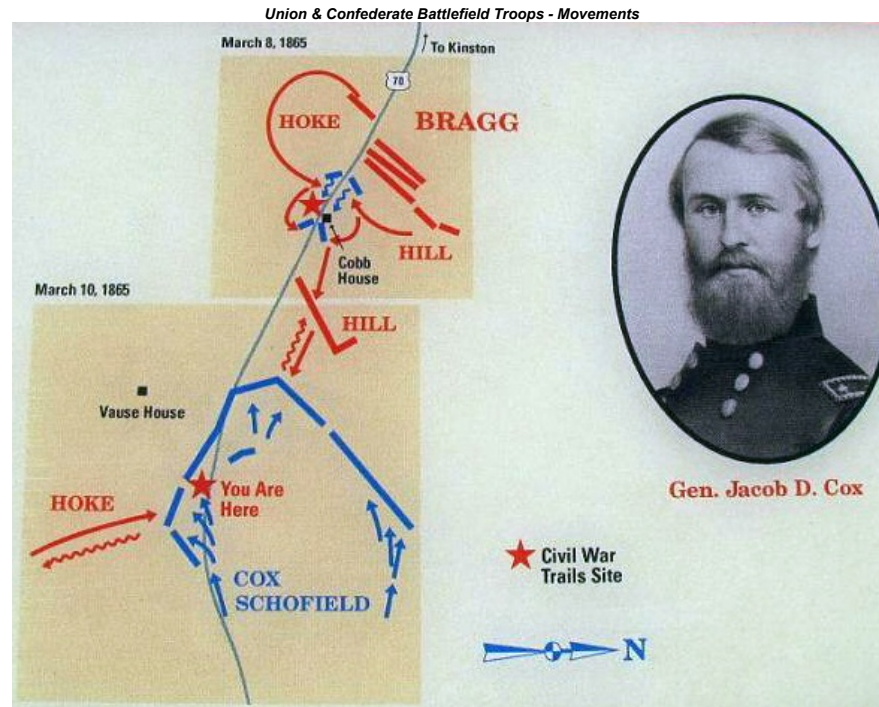
Battle of Wyse Fork

BATTLE OF WYSE FORK: A HISTORY (AKA 2ND BATTLE OF KINSTON) MARCH 8-10, 1865

In the late stages of the Civil War the Union forces were intent on moving up the rail line from New Bern through Kinston to Goldsboro. Their objective was to unite with Sherman and open a supply route through eastern North Carolina. Confederate troops entrenched on Southwest Creek sought to impede their progress. For three days the opposing armies clashed in the fields and woods south and east of the creek. Union Maj. Gen. Jacob D. Cox commanded over 13,000 soldiers, most belonging to the divisions of Brig. Gen. Innis N. Palmer and Brig. Gen. Samuel P. Carter. Gen. Braxton Bragg led a Confederate force of 12,500 men, organized in divisions led by fellow North Carolinians Gen. Robert F. Hoke and Gen. D. H. Hill. The Junior Reserves, mostly seventeen-year-olds mustered in only months before, came under Hill's command.



2nd Battle of Kinston



(Civil War Map and Photograph of General Cox)

By March 6, Union troops were gathered in Gum Swamp three miles east of Wyse Fork. Travel, along the bed of the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad and through swampy terrain, was difficult, made more so by heavy rains and a lack of wagons. Meanwhile Gen. Bragg had moved his army up from the lower Cape Fear region. On the evening of March 7, advance Union guards skirmished with Confederates at Wyse Fork as Palmer's division moved into position 800 yards east of the creek.

Friday, March 8, was the high point for the Confederates. In mid-morning Hoke's division moved down Upper Trent Road and around the head of the millpond. With whoops and yells, they "burst through like a torrent," striking the Federals' left flank. Concurrent with Hoke's move, Hill's division crossed the creek and struck the right flank. The 15th Connecticut, positioned south of Dover Road and 500 yards east of Jackson's Mill, was besieged. Col. Charles L. Upham's brigade shattered, with 890 men taken prisoner and horses and guns abandoned. By the end of the day Confederates, with the support of artillery fire, occupied a line along British Road. That evening a division led by Brig. Gen. Thomas H. Ruger arrived to offer additional Federal support.

Battle of Wyse Fork Historical Marker

Battle of Wyse Fork Map

- [Thomas' Legion](#)
- [American Civil War HOMEPAGE](#)
- [American Civil War](#)
- [Causes of the Civil War : What Caused the Civil War](#)
- [Organization of Union and Confederate Armies: Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery](#)
- [Civil War Navy: Union Navy and Confederate Navy](#)
- [American Civil War: The Soldier's Life](#)
- [Civil War Turning Points](#)
- [American Civil War: Casualties, Battles and Battlefields](#)
- [Civil War Casualties, Fatalities & Statistics](#)
- [Civil War Generals](#)
- [American Civil War Desertion and Deserters: Union and Confederate](#)
- [Civil War Prisoner of War: Union and Confederate Prison History](#)
- [Civil War Reconstruction Era and Aftermath](#)
- [American Civil War Genealogy and Research](#)
- [Civil War](#)
- [American Civil War Pictures - Photographs](#)
- [African Americans and American Civil War History](#)
- [American Civil War Store](#)
- [American Civil War Polls](#)
- [NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY](#)
- [North Carolina Civil War History](#)
- [North Carolina American Civil War Statistics, Battles, History](#)
- [North Carolina Civil War History and Battles](#)
- [North Carolina Civil War Regiments and Battles](#)
- [North Carolina Coast: American Civil War](#)

HISTORY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Western North Carolina and the American Civil War

Western North Carolina: Civil War Troops, Regiments, Units

North Carolina: American Civil War Photos

Cherokee Chief William Holland Thomas

HISTORY OF THE CHEROKEE INDIANS

Cherokee Indian Heritage, History, Culture, Customs, Ceremonies, and Religion

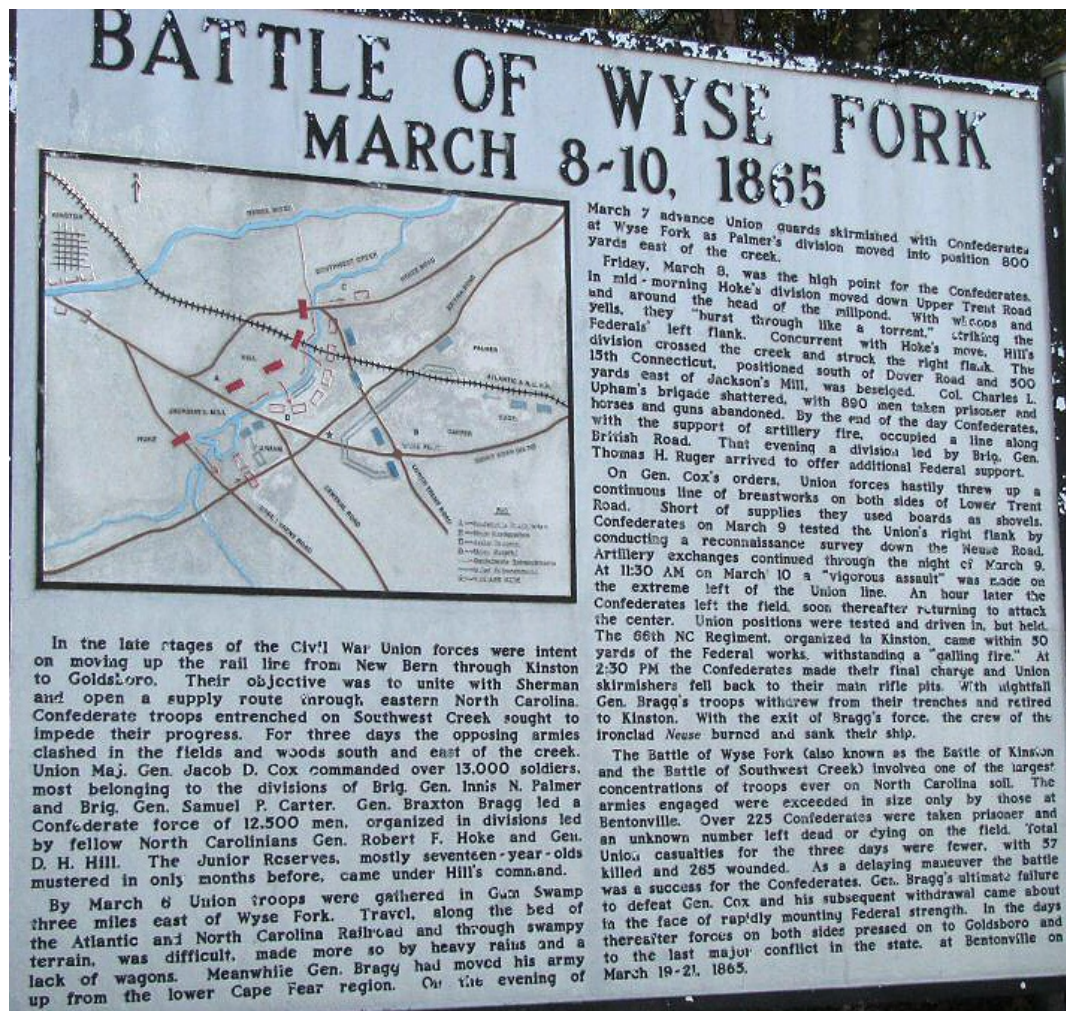
Cherokee Indians: American Civil War

History of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Nation

Cherokee War Rituals, Culture, Festivals, Government, and Beliefs

Researching your Cherokee Heritage

Civil War Diary, Memoirs, Letters, and Newspapers



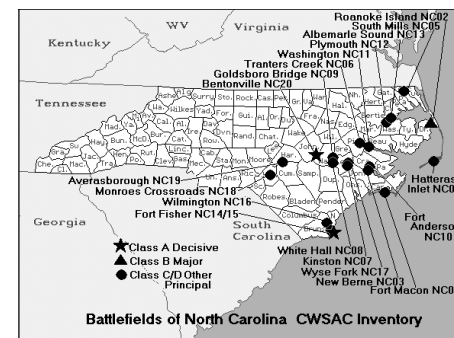
(2nd Battle of Kinston Civil War History)

On Gen. Cox's orders, Union forces hastily threw up a continuous line of breastworks on both sides of Lower Trent Road. Short of supplies they used boards as shovels. Confederates on March 9 tested the Union's right flank by conducting a reconnaissance survey down the Neuse Road. Artillery exchanges continued through the night of March 9. At 11:30 AM on March 10, a "vigorous assault" was made on the extreme left of the Union line. An hour later the Confederates left the field, soon thereafter returning to attack the center. Union positions were tested and driven in, but held. The 66th NC Regiment, organized in Kinston, came within 50 yards of the Federal works, withstanding a "galling fire." At 2:30 PM the Confederates made their final charge and Union skirmishers fell back to their main rifle pits. With nightfall Gen. Bragg's troops withdrew from their trenches and retired to Kinston. With the exit of Bragg's force, the crew of the ironclad Neuse burned and sank their ship.

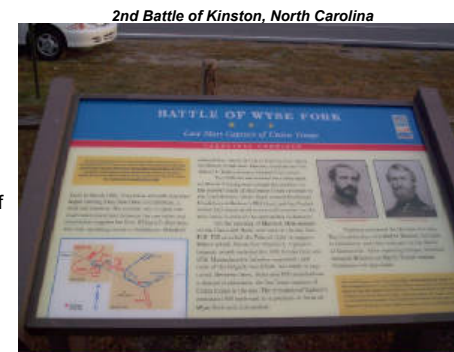
The Battle of Wyse Fork (also known as the 2nd Battle of Kinston and the Battle of Southwest Creek) involved one of the largest concentrations of troops ever on North Carolina soil. The armies engaged were exceeded in size only by those at Bentonville. Over 225 Confederates were taken prisoner and an unknown number left dead or dying on the field. Total Union casualties for the three days were fewer, with 57 killed and 265 wounded. As a delaying maneuver the battle was a success for the Confederates. Gen. Bragg's ultimate failure to defeat Gen. Cox and his subsequent withdrawal came about in the face of rapidly mounting Federal strength. In the days thereafter forces on both sides pressed on to Goldsboro and to the last major conflict in the state, at Bentonville on March 19-21, 1865.

Related Reading:

[Battle of Wyse Fork](https://thomaslegioncherokee.tripod.com/battle_of_wyse_fork_2nd_battle_of_kinston.html)



Battle of Kinston Map



(Second Battle of Kinston)

Local historians hope to preserve Wyse Fork Battlefield — Neuse News

[neusenews.com/index/2022/3/18/historians-hope-to-preserve-wyse-field-battlefield](https://www.neusenews.com/index/2022/3/18/historians-hope-to-preserve-wyse-field-battlefield)
(<https://www.neusenews.com/index/2022/3/18/historians-hope-to-preserve-wyse-field-battlefield>)

March 21, 2022



Stephen McColl painting named the ‘Surrender of the 15th Connecticut’.

The proposed interstate from La Grange to Dover brings historians, the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the US Army Corp of Engineers together to balance preserving the history of Wyse Fork Battlefield with infrastructure progress.

A part of the proposed interstate approved in February 2020 would disrupt part of the battlefield. Historian Dennis Harper has expressed his appreciation for the ability to work towards preserving the battlefield.

“It’s exciting to have a seat at the table,” said Harper who will join Colonel (Ret) Wade Sokolosky in the discussion of the proposed interstate. Sokolosky wrote *“To Prepare for Sherman’s Coming”*: The Battle of Wise’s Forks March 1865.

Artifacts recovered from the Wyse Fork Battlefield have helped tell the story of the battle. The Battle of Wyse Fork was the second largest land battle in North Carolina.

“I just hope that the DOT takes into consideration all the historical aspects of the area they are proposing to install the new highway,” said Matthew Young, Military Historian and Director of the CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center. “If it stays in its presently proposed location, a part of our history that we can never get back, will be destroyed.”

The Wyse Fork Battlefield, under the National Register, is 4069 acres and 56 acres are protected by the Historical Preservation Group. It contains the area of the last mass capture of Union troops during the Civil War.

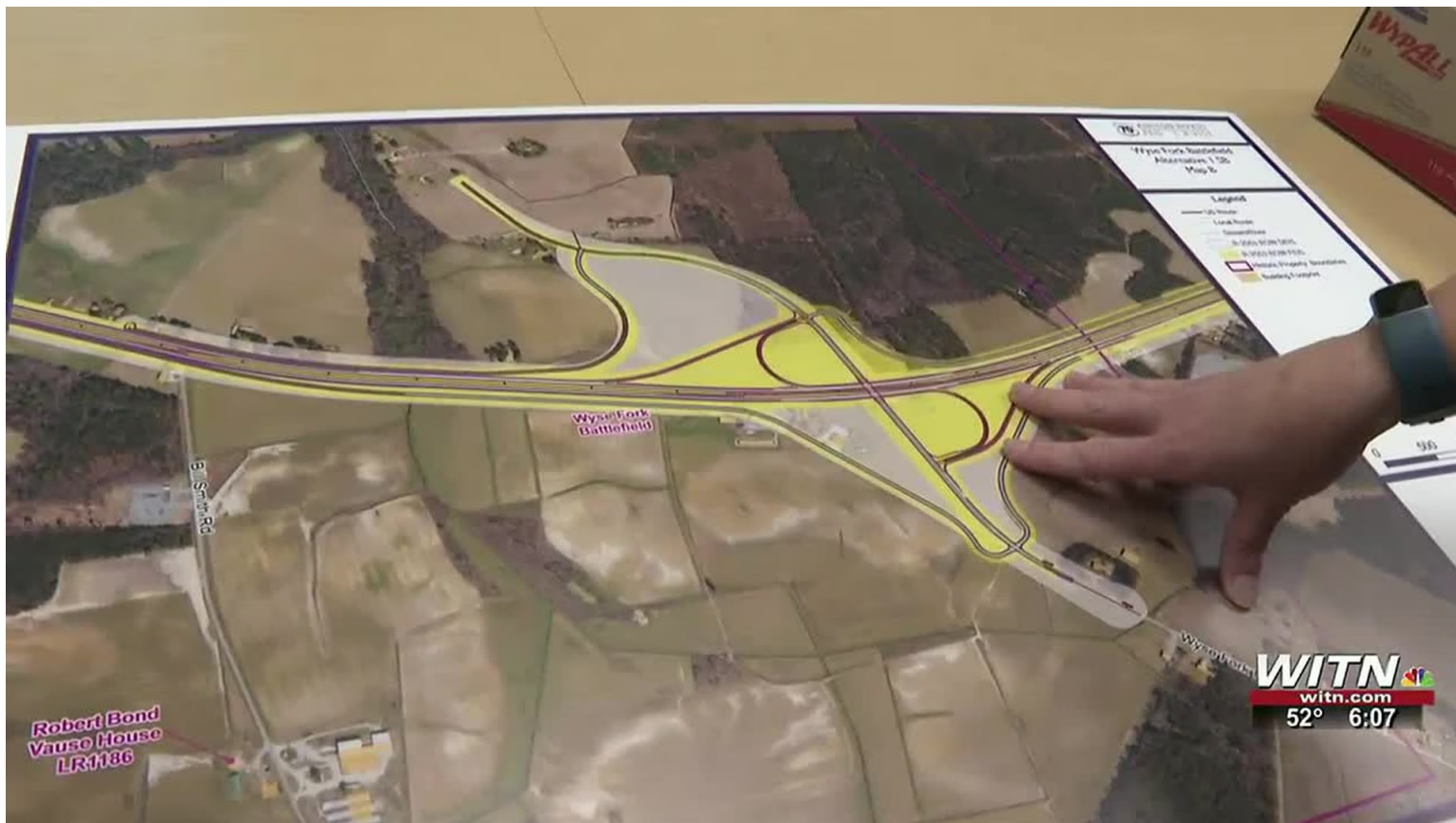
The proposed Kinston Bypass would be a four-lane, median divided freeway that extends 22 miles from U.S. 70 near La Grange to U.S. 70 near Dover. The historians in the Kinston-Lenoir County, Jones county area, the state of North Carolina, and people from all over the country have come to weigh in on the Wyse Fork Battlefield.

“At the end of the day, we will have a beautiful interstate passing through Lenoir County and we’ll have a beautiful battlefield with as much preserved as possible for future generations,” said Harper.

Information about NC DOT’s Kinston Bypass plans can be found here (<https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/kinston-bypass/Pages/default.aspx>).

The N.C. Department of Transportation selected Alternative 1SB (<https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/kinston-bypass/Pages/selected-alternative.aspx>) as the Preferred Alternative, for the future bypass. Photo from NCDOT.

Proposed I-42 interchange could impact historic battlefield in Jones & Lenoir Counties



By WITN Web Team and [Courtney Bunting](#)

Published: Mar. 10, 2023 at 7:46 PM EST | Updated: Mar. 27, 2023 at 8:50 AM EDT



KINSTON, N.C. (WITN) - Friday is the 158th anniversary of the end of the [Battle of Wyse Fork](#) - also known as the battle of Kinston. That Civil War battlefield in Jones and Lenoir County is on the [National Register of Historic Places](#), but an NCDOT interchange plan threatens to impact it.

You'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who knows the history of the Wyse Fork battlefield quite like Dennis Harper.

He's poured his passion for history into studying it, but now, part of the land that holds a special place in his heart could be impacted by an NCDOT project.

There are some homes, businesses, and roads within the 4,069-acre battlefield, but members of a group called Save Wyse Fork battlefield fear a [future I-42 interchange](#) would wipe out a core location of the conflict.

"There were 2,601 American casualties on this battlefield," said Harper. "That is 200 more than were at Omaha Beach on D-Day at Normandy."

The future I-42 will run from Raleigh to Morehead City and could include an interchange at the corner of Wyse Fork Road and U.S. 70.

NCDOT officials say they have extensively researched the impact it could have on the area - even sharing their ideas with the public.

"Back in 2019, we had a meeting in August when we presented 12 alternatives," said NCDOT Assistant Division Construction Engineer Heather Lane. "This shallow bypass, as it's come to be called, was one of those alternatives."

7/30/23, 2:26 PM

Proposed I-42 interchange could impact historic battlefield in Jones & Lenoir Counties

No final decision has been made to date for where exactly the interchange will go. NCDOT officials said the decision will likely be made in 2024.

They are open to public comment and welcome those concerned with the project to reach out to them.

Copyright 2023 WITN. All rights reserved.