

H.R. 3371- Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park
Boundary Adjustment Act of 2015

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3371, a bill that will add valuable historical property to the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. This park, which is located within Georgia's 11th Congressional District, is the site of significant battles that took place during America's bloodiest conflict, the Civil War.

Our nation has long recognized the importance of preserving historic sites, especially those battlefields where Americans fought and died for freedom. Sites, such as Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield Park, allow us to look back in time to get a glimpse of the events that shaped our nation.

It is extremely important that we understand our history, otherwise we will be destined to repeat the mistakes of our past.

A recent study of American History education revealed that only 23 percent of college seniors could identify James Maddison as the father of the Constitution. However, 98 percent of college graduates knew that Snoop Doggy Dog was a rapper. Mr. Speaker, it is now more important than ever, that the generations following us have access to these historic sites and the educational opportunities they provide, or we risk losing touch with our history.

It is extremely important to restore the comprehensive study of American history in our schools; however, it is equally important to preserve the places where significant events in our history took place.

This bill, that I've sponsored, will simply allow Kennesaw National Battlefield Park to acquire two pieces of property that will add to the historic and educational value of this historic battlefield.

One of the properties this bill will preserve is a home that was built in 1853 by Mr. Josiah Wallis. Mr. Wallis built this home for

his family, but it was eventually used as a hospital by the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

In 1864, the Wallace house fell into hands of General William Sherman of the Union Army, during his campaign to take Atlanta. The house served as Sherman's headquarters during the Battle of Kolb's Farm, which was a resounding victory for the Union Army. But the victory was not without cost - when the smoke cleared, over 350 Union soldiers and over 1,000 Confederate soldiers lay dead.

Five days later, Union General Oliver Howard used the Wallis House as his headquarters and communications center during the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, one of the bloodiest one-day battles of the entire war. This was also the last major battle before Atlanta fell to Union Forces. While the assault by General Sherman was a tactical failure, costing the lives of over 3,000 of his men, the battle also inflicted heavy losses on the Confederates. Losing another 1,000 men, the Confederate Army could not stop General Sherman on his march to Atlanta.

Adjacent to the Wallis House is 8 acres of land known as Harriston Hill. This property offers a sweeping view of the valley leading to the Confederate line on top of Kennesaw Mountain, and was used by the Union as signaling position during the battle. This location is essential for park visitors to understand the strategic positions taken by the Union and Confederate Armies during the battle.

In addition to being critical sites in Civil War history, the Wallis House and Harriston Hill are two of the few original locations remaining from the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, associated with the Union Army. Most of the park's current attractions correspond with Confederate history, and these additions will prove to be major historical acquisitions that will enhance the value of the park and provide insight into the Union's side of the story.

In 2002, the Cobb County Government purchased the Wallis House and Harriston Hill, to prevent the house from being demolished. Since then, the county has been seeking to

transfer the property to the park. My bill simply modifies the boundary of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to include the house and the hill, and authorizes the park to acquire the property by donation. Along with the Cobb County government, this bill is supported by the National Park Service, Kennesaw Mountain Park, and several park volunteer organizations and historical societies in my district.

This legislation is an essential step toward preserving our nation's heritage and a valuable part of Civil War history. The Wallis House and Harriston Hill will provide tremendous educational and historical value to Kennesaw Mountain Park; and it is my hope that the park will quickly acquire this property, and restore it to its original condition for visitors to enjoy for generations to come. I urge my colleagues to support this bill; and I yield back the balance of my time.