

## About the Speaker

Robert D. (“Bob”) Jenkins, Sr. is an attorney practicing in Dalton, Georgia where he has maintained a general and civil trial practice since 1990. Bob was graduated from Georgia Southern University in 1987 with a B.B.A degree in Business Management with Minors in History and Geography where he met his wife, Kathy, a native of Tucker, who obtained a B. S. degree in Education and taught school for about 10 years before starting a family. Together with his wife, Kathy, the two also own two toy stores in Dalton called Toys in the Attic which Kathy oversees. Bob received his Juris Doctor degree from Mercer University in 1990 and regularly practices in the courts throughout Northwest Georgia.

A native of Chamblee, Bob began pursuing his biggest hobby, the study of the Civil War, while he was in fourth grade when he chose War in Georgia as his Social Studies project. He was hooked, so much so that by high school his teachers would ban the Civil War as a topic for any further research projects or book reports. During the past twenty years, Bob has meticulously researched the Western Theater of the War, and he has uncovered many letters, diaries, articles and accounts which have remained out of the public’s eye for over 100 years. Sparking Bob’s interest was his own ancestor’s service in the 31<sup>st</sup> Mississippi, one of the many Confederate regiments which served without fanfare where little or nothing has been written concerning their role in the War.

At the Battle of Peach Tree Creek, the 31<sup>st</sup> Mississippi Infantry Regiment lost 181 men out of 215 who charged the Union works on a hot July day in Georgia, sustaining over 84.18% casualties and making it the highest recorded loss by percentage for a unit during any battle in the entire War. This unknown fact and many others have been uncovered by Bob’s work. Thus, what began as a work on the 31<sup>st</sup> Mississippi, the “Bloody Magnolias,” as Bob has chosen to call that illustrious unit in his regimental history, became a work on the important but oft overlooked and misunderstood Battle of Peach Tree Creek.

The Gate City, as Atlanta was called, was so vital. It was in many ways the capstone to the Confederacy’s growing military-industrial complex. Union General Sherman and his three armies had for months seen the ominous words “Made in Atlanta” on virtually every captured piece of equipment, food, clothing, weapon, munition box, and wagon. For the South it had to be held. For the North, it had to be taken. Confederate President Jefferson Davis expected an aggressive defense of that important place. But, by July 1864, Sherman’s Legions were knocking at the door of the Gate City. Was Davis’ commander assigned to defend Atlanta going to fight to hold the place? The Southern President feared not, and replaced the popular, but aloof, General Joseph E. Johnston, with one who he hoped would bring on the battle that would turn the tide for the Confederacy. That person was none other than General John Bell Hood, the aggressive young Kentuckian turned Texan who had fought well for Robert E. Lee in Virginia during the first three years of the war. But John Bell Hood had been wounded severely in the arm at Gettysburg, then lost a leg at Chickamauga just three months later, and now just nine months later and at the age of 33 years, the fate of Atlanta and the Confederacy wrested on his shoulders.

Bob Jenkins has recently completed a book on the Battle of Peach Tree Creek, the first of its kind which incorporates biographical information about the participants and previously unpublished photographs, maps, and diagrams, and he has included a detailed casualty list for all known Union and Confederate losses including charts depicting unit losses by regiment, brigade, division and corps which help to provide a more clear picture of what happened on that bloody Wednesday afternoon near a mill named Collier, a hill called Cardiac, and a village known as Buckhead. Replete with numerous maps which help the reader to follow along today’s bustling city streets and neighborhoods of north Atlanta’s subdivisions, the book will provide references to both the Civil War Era and the present-day locations of events. His manuscript is now with the editors and he expects to have it published by next year.