



# BRASSFIELD STATION



## *A Path Both Traveled*



### CAROLINAS CAMPAIGN

The Carolinas Campaign began on February 1, 1865, when Union Gen. William T. Sherman led his army north from Savannah, Georgia, after the "March to the Sea." Sherman's objective was to join Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in Virginia to crush Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Scattered Confederate forces consolidated in North Carolina, the Confederacy's logistical lifeline, where Sherman defeated Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's last-ditch attack at Bentonville. After Sherman was reinforced at Goldsboro late in March, Johnston saw the futility of further resistance and surrendered on April 26, essentially ending the Civil War.

Union forces occupied Raleigh on April 13 as Gen. H. Judson Kilpatrick pursued retreating Confederates. The next day, moving through Durham, he split his cavalry forces, sending Gen. Smith D. Atkins, leading the second brigade, west through present-day southern Durham. At New Hope Creek, Atkins engaged in the last picket skirmish of the war. Kilpatrick accompanied Gen. Thomas J. Jordan's and Col. Michael Ker-



Gen. H. Judson Kilpatrick  
- Library of Congress

win's brigades as they trailed a band of Confederates north along the North Carolina Railroad past Brassfield Station here, meeting little resistance. The Federals rode on to Durham's Station, where Kilpatrick made his headquarters at the nearby home of Dr. Richard Blacknall.

Brassfield Station stood in a rural area of hills and dales dotted by pine trees and wildlife in 1865. According to the 1860 census, the area was home not only to white farmers but also to 528 free African Americans, making for an unusually

diverse community. Many free blacks lived, worked, and worshiped alongside whites in Durham during the antebellum years.



Civil War-era train from North Carolina Railroad Company stock certificate.  
- Courtesy North Carolina Railroad Company



Post-Civil War Durham became known for the popularity of its "brightleaf" smoking tobacco. The city soon became a commercial center with the South's first denim mill and the world's largest hosiery manufacturer. Agriculture and manufacturing, although still important, have given way to a creative-class economy based on education, health care, pharmaceutical research, and bioinformatics. Less than a century after Union cavalrymen pursued retreating Confederates past Brassfield Station, thousands of acres here were incorporated into Research Triangle Park in 1959.

Durham, ca. 1880 - Courtesy of Durham County Library, Durham, N.C.