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Alaska man visits Wyse Fork site of ancestor

1/28/2007

Kinston Free Press (NC)

<http://www.kinston.com/SiteProcessor.cfm?Template=/GlobalTemplates/Details.cfm&StoryID=41900&Section=Society>

When her telephone rang, Jane Phillips, president of the Historic Preservation Group, recognized the voice on the other end. Wilbur King of King's Restaurant had a customer who had come from Alaska to see the area where his great-grandfather had been in the battle of Wyse Fork. He was interested in purchasing a set of maps of the Wyse Fork Battlefield.

Phillips entered the restaurant with map set in hand. Introductions were made and she began to learn that Raymond Reed was a retired Navy man now working for the State of Alaska with the Wildlife and Fisheries Department. He had business that was taking him to Florida, so he worked in the side trip to Kinston to visit the site where his great-grandfather had fought, been wounded and captured during the Civil War.

Reed recalled how his grandfather had told him stories of his father, Pvt. James Reed, and his times in the Civil War. James Reed had lived in Shutesbury, Mass., and had served in two different regiments, the western theater at Vicksburg and later transferred east.

At the battle of Wyse Fork, Reed was wounded in the thigh and captured on the first day of the battle. After his capture the prisoners were put on a train and sent to Libby Prison in Richmond, Va. He was among more than 600 men who were part of the last mass capture of the Civil War.

The war ended weeks later and Reed was released. He later received land in North Dakota for his service and settled there with his family. In 1888, a terrible blizzard came upon the land. Reed was 14 miles from home and had started his trek back when the blizzard hit. His frozen body was found later, having survived the horrors of war but not the fury of nature.

Raymond Reed spent several days in Kinston, visiting and photographing the Wil King Memorial Site on the Kinston battlefield, several sites on the Wyse Fork Battlefield, the CSS Neuse II and the CSS State Historic Site.

He is among a growing number coming to Kinston to trace their ancestors' Civil War footsteps.

"Tourism of this type will continue to grow as the battlefields are being developed and with the completion of other projects," said Phillips. "Many people are working to see that the battlefields, CSS Neuse Museum, the CSS Neuse II and the Cultural Heritage Museum become integral parts of the story of the Civil War in Lenoir County.

"The community needs to support these projects and help develop heritage tourism for the good of the community. One day this vision will become a reality and we all will be better for it."

Prints of the "Surrender of the 15th Connecticut" by Stephen McCall, which was the last mass capture of Union soldiers in the Civil War, are on sale by the Historical Preservation Group. For information, call Phillips at (252) 522-0540.

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EDITORIAL

2/4/2007

In our view: Preservation battle isn't over

01/27/2006

Joplin Globe (MO)

http://www.joplinglobe.com/editorial/local_story_026235121.html

Incorporating the historic Newtonia battlefields and the Richey Mansion into the National Park Service's efforts to preserve important Civil War sites had appeared on a fast track after the proposal won approval in the U.S. House in December.

But things have changed in Congress and the plan has been reintroduced by its champion, Minority Whip Roy Blunt, R-7th District.

Still, there is reason for confidence and optimism to believe that the Newtonia battlefields will wind up one day being nationally recognized, perhaps folded into the management of the Wilson's Creek battlefield in Springfield.

On the plus side is the fact last month's proposal passed with bipartisan support.

Furthermore, a good case can be made on behalf of the historical significance of the battlefields.

The first battle of Newtonia, on Sept. 30, 1862, was the first — or, at least, believed to be — in which American Indian troops, led by Indian officers, met in bloody combat against each other. That alone makes the site historically valuable or, as Kay Hively, who represented the Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association, noted: "... the site best suited to tell the story of Native American participation in the Civil War."

On Oct. 28, 1864, Gen. Stirling Price's retreating Confederate troops were attacked by Union cavalry in what was the final engagement between Northern and Southern soldiers in Missouri. It also is recognized as among the last Civil War battles west of the Mississippi.

Part of the battlefields and the Richey Mansion are being protected by the Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association. But federal oversight and assistance are needed for long-term preservation of these unquestionably historic fields of conflict from the encroachment of modern-day expansion. They should be protected by the National Parks Service.

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Civil War Museum May Leave Capital
Richmond's Museum of the Confederacy Studies a Move to Lexington
By Janet Caggiano

01/24/2006

Richmond Times-Dispatch (VA)

http://www.timesdispatch.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=RTD/MGArticle/RTD_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1149192815336

Museum of the Confederacy officials are considering moving the world's largest collection of Civil War artifacts to Lexington.

"I don't know if the conversations will go anywhere," said Waite Rawls, the museum's president and CEO, who visited Lexington this month. "But they have started."

Lexington, about 140 miles west of downtown Richmond in Rockbridge County, could be a good fit for the museum's collection of Confederate artifacts, manuscripts and photographs. Confederate Gens. Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson are buried there, it is home to Washington and Lee University, and the town takes pride in its Civil War history.

"The mission of the museum is consistent with the historic attractions and educational institutions already in our community," said Lexington Mayor John Knapp in a joint statement with Harvey Hottinger, chairman of the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors.

The museum at 12th and East Clay streets has been struggling for survival beside Virginia Commonwealth University's sprawling medical campus for years. Annual visitation has dropped from 92,000 to about 51,500 since the early 1990s. Rawls announced in October that the museum will relocate its collection but that the adjacent White House of the Confederacy will remain where it has stood since 1818. A committee had looked at the feasibility of relocating the Civil War home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

"We have said all along that our preference is to be in Richmond," Rawls said. "But given Lexington's historical character . . . we said, 'Let's go up and take a look.' We are no further along than that."

During their visit, Rawls and three members of the museum's board toured a possible site, the historic Rockbridge County

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courthouse complex on Main Street. Lexington is set to break ground on a new courthouse in February. When the two-year project is completed, the 1897 building will be vacant.

The courthouse complex also includes the town's old jail, which dates to 1841, the First American Bank building and the "lawyer's row" building. All are vacant and would require renovation work.

"We want to keep the historical integrity of the buildings," Rawls said. "The question is, can you do that and meet the needs and demands of both sides?"

It would be a big blow to Richmond if the museum should leave town, said Jack Berry, president and chief executive officer of the Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"It would be a very big loss," he said. "We'd be losing a huge asset. We hope it doesn't happen."

While talks with Lexington will continue, Rawls said, that doesn't mean the search is over.

"This is all very preliminary," he said.

Whether the collection stays in Richmond or moves outside the city, Rawls said he hopes the museum will be in its new home by 2011, the beginning of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

Contact staff writer Janet Caggiano at jcaggiano@timesdispatch.com or (804) 649-6157.

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Cell Tower Talks Set for Missionary Ridge
By Betsy Bramlett

01/23/2007

Chattanooga Chattanooga (TN)

http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_100293.asp

Proponents, opponents and decision makers will converge Wednesday on the site of a controversial proposed cell tower at Missionary Ridge.

At issue is whether the tower would compromise the "viewshed" from Bragg Reservation, a national Civil War park on Missionary Ridge.

"All indications right now are that it would," said Kay Parish, executive director of Friends of the Park. "Looking out from Bragg, you can understand why it was such a crucial place in the resolution of the Civil War. For all of the teachers and students, tourists and residents who visit there, seeing a cell tower would have a major negative impact on the experience."

A few years ago, the city of Chattanooga in partnership with Friends spent approximately \$30,000 in clearing park property to open the western view to provide a better idea of what the union and confederate armies encountered in the battle for Chattanooga, she said.

The Tennessee Historical Commission initially had no objection to Wireless Properties' plan to build the tower at 2897 E. Main Street, a kudzu-covered lot near South Seminole Drive. The decision was based on a report from Paul Archambault of the Southeast Tennessee Development District. However, Mr. Archambault later reversed his opinion, saying he did not have full information at the time.

The city Variance Board approved a special exemptions permit for construction of the 150-foot tower with the knowledge that its vote would have no standing over the state historical commission, which is considering an appeal by opponents of the project.

The meeting is scheduled for 1 p.m. and will consist of representatives from the Historical Commission, Wireless Properties, the Missionary Ridge Neighborhood Association, the National Park Service, Friends of the Park, Cornerstones and any other interested parties.

Participants will then go to Bragg Reservation to gain another perspective and conclude with a "fact gathering" session at the MRNA Community Center (formerly a fire hall).

Matt Bates of Wireless Properties said he hopes the differing sides "can find a middle ground."

According to Mr. Bates, his company has exhausted its options for an alternative site. "We don't have a lot of tall buildings like Atlanta that could be utilized," he said. "We feel that we've complied with all of the regulations, and we've found the best site we

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can to serve the needs of cell phone operators, particularly those traveling through the Ridge Cut."

Mr. Bates said his company had already agreed to lower the height of the tower from 180 feet to 150 feet and planned to paint it brown "so as not to be so obtrusive."

He also said that Wireless would be willing to put in writing that it would not later raise the tower.

But Dwayne Smith, communications director of the Missionary Ridge Neighborhood Association, said, "There is a loophole in the National Preservation Act that wireless carriers and tower companies frequently take advantage of and use to get their foot in the door and then raise the tower without further review or approval. Furthermore, any legally binding agreement is worthless unless individuals or organizations are willing to continually monitor the situation and pursue civil action in a court of law to enforce the terms of the agreement."

Because members of organizations change over the years, he said he fears that people will forget about the agreement and that "Wireless will get by with breaking the terms." For that reason he said the Association opposes any cell tower on the site "no matter what height."

Joe Garrison of the Historical Commission would not say when a decision will be made.

"It's an ongoing project, and we don't discuss it," he stated.

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A Battle Over Civil War History
By Joel Elliott

01/23/2007
Portland Press Herald (ME)
<http://pressherald.maintoday.com/news/state/070123cannons.html>

A wrong turn on a back road in Richmond led Todd Violette to one of his biggest discoveries as an antiques collector.

He had been planning to make a house call for his Winslow-based business, Violette Antiques and Collectibles Inc., when a glimpse of Civil War history made him slam on the brakes.

Their green patina glowing, two bronze cannons stood in incongruous splendor in front of a plain brick building belonging to Emerson-Lane American Legion Post 132.

Violette knew the cannons were valuable. They were 12-pound Napoleon cannons, prized by armies on both sides in the Civil War for their accuracy and superior ability to fire without bursting.

"I couldn't believe what I was seeing," Violette said. "I had an employee with me, and I turned to him, and said, 'Do you realize what we are seeing?'"

Violette threw the car into reverse and pulled into the parking lot. Eventually, his research revealed that the cannons were two of only 370 made by Boston-based Henry N. Hooper & Co. for use by the Union Army. Cast in 1863 -- the middle of the Civil War -- the cannons probably were fired at Confederate troops. They could be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, and Violette's curiosity was aroused.

"It just struck me as odd that this little post out in the middle of nowhere had these really valuable cannons sitting out front," he said. "I was wondering how they acquired them."

The woman inside the Legion post wouldn't give him much information. But that inquiry two years ago sparked an ownership dispute that continues today between the Legion post and the Togus Veterans Affairs Medical Center, from which the cannons had been removed decades before.

A DODGY CLEANUP

Togus administrators apparently had not known that the cannons were missing from their storage facilities, Violette said.

In their time outside the 390-member Legion post, the cannons have become such a part of the community that veterans have threatened to chain themselves to the now-icy cannons if anyone tries to remove them.

Violette, appalled at the sight of the 144-year-old cannons deteriorating from exposure to the elements, began a one-man campaign to get them put in a safe place.

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His concerns increased when, on a return trip, he saw that someone had used a chemical solution to scrub off the green patina that had formed a protective coating on the cannons' surface.

The cannons now glow their original coppery color, but scrubbing off the patina probably reduced their value by at least \$10,000, and their continued exposure to the elements is destroying them, Violette said. "They obviously don't know how to take care of these," he said. "(The cannons) need to be in the Maine State Museum."

But after contacting various investigators, a state legislator and a member of Maine's congressional delegation, Violette said he found that no one wants to get involved.

"It's kind of a political hot potato," he said.

Violette began his quest to move the cannons to safety two weeks after he discovered them. First, he contacted the National Park Service, a federal agency that helps preserve items of importance to American history. Virginia-based Special Agent Tim Alley took the case, but several months later passed it on to the Togus Police Department, when he realized that the Park Service has no jurisdiction over Togus or the Legion property.

Togus Police Capt. Arnold Ridley, who has not returned phone calls placed to his office, took over the investigation.

According to both Violette and Legion members, he let the matter drop when Legion members refused to hand over the cannons.

The police then turned the matter over to Togus' regional attorney, Bruce Williams.

After discussing the matter with Rep. Ken Fletcher, R-Winslow, Violette sent a letter to U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, on Nov. 28, 2006, appealing for her help. He said he never received a response.

Members of the Legion post also have sent letters to Maine's congressmen and senators.

MOVED BY DUMP TRUCK

The story of the cannons' journey from Togus to Richmond is told best by the man who moved them.

Lawrence Bond Jr., 80, a Legion member and former Army corporal, said in a recent interview that a fellow Legion member who worked at the time in the Togus storage facilities gave him the cannons.

"They had them up there on the grounds," he said. "At the time, one of the post members worked at Togus, and he said they had a couple of cannons up there. Anyway, I picked them up, brought them down one at a time in my dump truck."

The Togus employee who gave him the cannons is dead, Bond said. "There's not anybody else alive that knows anything more about them than I do."

Bond said he removed the cannons about 35 years ago. But others at the Legion post, including the commander, have said it may have happened as long as 50 years ago.

FIGHT FOR PRESERVATION

Togus wants the cannons back, according to a statement released last week by hospital spokesman Jim Doherty.

"We are not aware of the actual circumstances of the transfer of the cannons at that time, and we do not have documentation that far back," it reads. "We will be contacting the Richmond American Legion Post requesting the return of the cannons for the benefit of all veterans visiting Togus."

Members of the post are digging in behind the cannons despite the murky history of their acquisition. Togus won't get them back without a fight, said post Cmdr. Lester Dearborn.

"It was very clear that Togus lost control of their cannon," Dearborn said.

Dearborn, who works for Togus, said the hospital wants the cannons only for their resale value, which is the same charge that Violette makes against the Legion post.

"Back then, I don't know if it was a good ol' boy agreement, or what it was," Dearborn said. "We don't have records back that far."

His wife, Brenda Dearborn, a former commander of the post, vows that the cannons will not move.

"We have veterans here who are willing to chain themselves to these cannons," she said. "You don't mess with a veterans' post."

But Violette said the Legionnaires' zeal is misguided and the cannons need to be sheltered to be preserved.

"The (Legionnaires), and I mean no disrespect, but it wasn't their war," he said.

"These cannons are not being taken care of. They're being destroyed by the elements. They need to be put in a museum before they are stolen or end up in someone's private collection."

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Lawmakers Debate Making Local Roadway into National Heritage Area
By Sharia Davis

01/19/2007

WHAG-TV NBC 25 Hagerstown (MD)

<http://www.nbc25.com/content/fulltext/?cid=10366>

Local legislators recently introduced a bill to preserve historical land in the Four-State Region, but are local historians thrilled about the idea?

"You have presidents, you have war, innovations, technology; all these things that come together in this one area of country, so it really is deserving of status of national heritage area," said Dennis Frye, Harper Ferry's Chief Historian.

Legislators recently introduced "The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area" as a proposed bill to Congress in hopes of protecting parts of Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

"It's all a part of our history, our life, and the past needs to be preserved I feel," said Wendell Stewart, Brunswick Historian.

If Congress decides to pass the legislation, 175 miles along U.S. Route 15 will become the nations 38th National Heritage Area.

"This will benefit all these counties in the area. People will be able to come here and not just see our site, but all the sites in a way they've never seen them before," said Frye.

So far, other senators and representatives said they will support the legislation and leave historians with the hope that it will one day pass.

Senators pushing for the National Heritage Area legislation are Senator John Warner of Virginia, Senator Barbara Mikulski, and Ben Cardin of Maryland, and Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania.

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Civil War Hospital Needs Urgent Care
By Bill Banks

01/18/2007

Atlanta Journal Constitution (GA)

<http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/clayton/stories/2007/01/17/0118clxhospital.html>

For more than 30 years, the Gayden-Sims-Webb House in downtown Jonesboro has eroded beyond any practicable use.

Depending on one's perspective — or imagination — the old brick and stucco edifice is either an eyesore or emblematic of Jonesboro's Civil War roots.

Historical Jonesboro, the local preservation society, falls in the latter category. The group has a long track record of saving and preserving venerable structures, including the Stately Oaks antebellum plantation house, which is its home base.

Now the group wants to preserve the Gayden-Sims-Webb House, which historians say served as a field hospital in 1864. The group would like to transform the house into a Civil War medical museum.

Barbara Emert, president of Historical Jonesboro, plans to meet this month with Eldrin Bell, chairman of the Clayton County Commission. She hopes the county can provide some money to help complete the restoration of the 150-year-old building, which local historians believe was a hospital during the Battle of Jonesboro in 1864.

In recent years, thanks mostly to three grants, the home's exterior has been reconfigured to look pretty much as it did during the 1860s. Workers have replastered the front and added a roof.

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The inside, however, remains a cavity.

Ted Key, former president of Historical Jonesboro, figures it would cost "between \$40,000 and \$50,000" to authentically replicate the basic four-room, mid-19th century interior.

In interviews, four local historians pointed as a model for the planned museum to the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, which has locations in Frederick, Md., and the nearby Antietam battlefield.

All four agreed that the Gayden-Sims-Webb House would have been some type of field hospital, given its proximity to the swirl and stench of fighting — the house was directly behind Confederate lines on the battle's first day.

Where was Gayden?

Many other houses also would have been makeshift wards. Notable examples are the Crawford-Blalock House on Jonesboro Road and the Warren House, also on Jonesboro Road, which has autographs and scrawlings from northern soldiers on the living room wall.

"I don't think there's any question it was a hospital," said Joe Moore, author of the "History of Clayton County, Georgia, 1821-1983." He said it was the only brick house in Jonesboro during the war.

A doctor named Francis Gayden owned the house. He was one of 10 Jonesboro physicians listed in the 1860 census. Moore writes that his house was the town's best example of "pure Greek Revival Cottage," a style very popular then.

Abb Dickson, a Jonesboro magician and funeral home director, has long immersed himself in the Gayden-Sims-Webb House. He said recently that he has "looked into every nook and cranny of that house."

Dickson and Ted Key say they believe Gayden was in charge of medical services during the Jonesboro hostilities. Both believe he performed surgeries there during the battle and afterward.

Other local historians, notably Peter Bonner, who has long given "Gone With the Wind"-related tours of Jonesboro, aren't sure if Gayden was even in town during the battle.

What's known for sure is that Gayden was an early member of First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, and that he built his house across the street from the church in the mid-1850s, Moore says.

In 1860, he organized a local cavalry unit, the Clayton Dragoons, then resigned his command in 1862. He sold his house in 1873, but he may have moved to Rankin County, Miss., before then.

"I've long found Dr. Gayden a fascinating character," Bonner said. "But what galls me — I can't find out what happened to him. Lord knows I've tried, but I can't find anything that said he was there during the battle."

The past and the future

Whoever was in the house during the Battle of Jonesboro would have witnessed grizzly scenes.

Although medicinal techniques progressed during the 1860s — accelerated, no doubt, by war demands — field surgeries were pretty crude. The National Museum of Civil War Medicine says most surgeries were amputations.

Anesthesia was equally crude, usually chloroform, ether, or a bottle of whiskey with a bullet for the patient to bite.

First Baptist Jonesboro bought the house years ago, using it as space for Sunday school classes and, later, storage. The church gave the building to Historical Jonesboro several years ago, Emert said.

Now the group hopes to transform the house into a museum.

"We have local re-enactors who specialize in the medical end — people who have very fine collections — who've offered to donate them to us when the house is finished," Key said. "I think we could get stretchers, surgical instruments, drug kits, tourniquets, and possibly some prosthetic limbs."

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Study May Look at Newtonia Battlefields
Area Could Become National Park or Part of Wilson's Creek

01/16/2007

2/4/2007

Springfield News Leader (MO)

<http://www.news-leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070116/NEWS01/701160377/1007>

Newtonia — Rep. Roy Blunt is again seeking congressional approval of a plan to study whether two Civil War battlefields in Newton County should become part of the National Park Service.

The U.S. House approved the plan last month, but the Senate did not consider it in the final days of its last session.

Blunt, R-Mo., has reintroduced the proposal, which calls for a study to evaluate the national significance of the 1862 and 1864 battlefields at Newtonia.

"The educational process has been started," said Blunt spokesman Dan Wadlington said. "Now, it's up to Congress."

The goal is to create either an independent unit of the national park system or a satellite of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield near Republic.

"That has been an idea of ours for the past 10 years," said Larry James, president of the Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association.

However, he said, "This is the first time it was introduced on a national level."

James said members of the association currently handle the site's maintenance, mainly through donations.

"If this eventually goes all the way through, we wouldn't have to concern ourselves with the details of day-to-day operations," he said.

If the battlefields were to become part of the national park system, the association could apply for federal grants for which it currently isn't eligible, James said.

Kay Hively of the Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association told a congressional panel in September that the battlefields deserve preservation by the National Park Service because the First Battle of Newtonia is believed to be the only Civil War battle in which full American Indian units fought on both sides of the conflict.

The Newtonia Battlefields Protection Association owns 26 acres, including the Ritchey Mansion, which served as a hospital during the Civil War.

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Park Service Looking Outside

Without the Work of Volunteers Who Maintain and Run Facilities, Historic Sites Like Ellwood in Orange County Could Not Stay Open.

01/15/2007

Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star (VA)

<http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2007/012007/01152007/250943>

WASHINGTON--The National Park Service's new director says the agency will increasingly look to outside sources for money to help maintain parks.

"We're much more business-savvy than we used to be," said Mary Bomar, a career employee who became director in October, in one of her first interviews as head of the agency.

A Government Accountability Office report last year said the Park Service is increasingly cutting back on visitor services, education programs and protections for natural and cultural resources because funding has failed to keep pace with operating costs. The agency also has a huge maintenance backlog.

In the Fredericksburg area, for example, the park service does not have enough funds to do more than stabilize and maintain the historic Ellwood estate in Orange County. The Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield group has stepped in, raising funds to return the house to its appearance when it served as Union headquarters during the battle.

"Work is to begin in February to restore the first two rooms," said Greg Mertz, the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park's supervisory historian. "If not for them, that building would just be some stark walls."

Bomar said the Park Service acknowledges it has challenges, including shrinking staff, aging facilities and a diminished visitor experience. Parks have also lost some of their relevancy and connections to younger generations, she said.

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She said philanthropy will be a big part of a plan to revitalize and restore parks for the agency's 100th anniversary in 2016, announced this year as an effort called the "centennial challenge."

The agency wants to "look at projects where we could match and leverage funding," she said. "Why not?"

The agency is bringing in around 12 percent of its budget from outside sources, while a decade ago almost all of the budget was federally appropriated. Officers have been holding meetings with private interests to increase awareness of the agency's fundraising efforts.

Besides the Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield, area park officials have gotten valuable help from a number of other friends of Civil War battlefields groups. The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and national Civil War Preservation Trust, for example, have donated services and money, and buy up important land in and around the parks' boundaries.

These include last year's purchase of Slaughter Pen Farm, a key component of the 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg, and additional land that was part of first-day fighting in the 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville in Spotsylvania County.

Additional help has come from such groups as the Friends of the Fredericksburg Area Battlefields which, among other things, helps coordinate with area Scouts the Memorial Day luminaria at Fredericksburg National Cemetery at Marye's Heights.

Much of the private support for national parks comes through the National Park Foundation, chartered by Congress in 1967. In past years, companies such as American Airlines Inc., Discovery Communications Inc., Eastman Kodak Co. and Ford Motor Co. have each donated millions to parks.

Some critics have been concerned that more private funding could cross a line. In 2004, the agency proposed letting some employees solicit donations, accepting alcohol and tobacco company donations for the first time and giving donors the right to put their names on rooms, benches and bricks.

Those proposals were scuttled last year after criticism, and Bomar said she has no plans to revisit them.

As part of the centennial challenge, the parks plan several "signature projects," including a new visitor center at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and restoration of Ellis Island in New York Harbor.

The Park Service has acknowledged that the aging Ellis Island complex has been neglected over the years, and the agency hopes to use some private dollars in an effort to restore the historic immigrant gateway.

Bomar said she has no plans to reopen the Statue of Liberty's crown, however, which has been closed to visitors since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

She was less forthcoming about other park policies, saying it would be "inappropriate to discuss" the issue of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park.

A temporary plan caps the number of snowmobiles entering Yellowstone at 720 a day and allows 140 snowmobiles a day to enter Grand Teton National Park and the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Parkway, which connects the two parks.

Critics say the vehicles contribute to noise and air pollution in the parks.

Late last year, the agency issued a draft statement proposing to maintain the current plan. A final decision is expected by next winter.

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Park, Group Defend Costs
Officials: Changes Made New Visitor Center More Costly
By Angie Mason

01/14/2007
York Daily Record (PA)
http://www.ydr.com/newsfull/ci_5012019

Jan 14, 2007 — The construction of a new museum and visitors center at Gettysburg National Military Park has taken years longer than expected and plans have changed along the way, driving the cost up to nearly \$100 million, officials said last week.

The last cost estimate that the Gettysburg Foundation - the nonprofit organization raising the money to build the center - gave was \$95 million. That number's probably closer to \$100 million now, said spokeswoman Dru Anne Neil.

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"We're still looking at that," she said. Originally, the center was supposed to cost about \$40 million.

The cost of the project was questioned last week by Eric Uberman, owner of the American Civil War Museum in Gettysburg. Uberman, a longtime critic of the project, sent newspapers copies of a letter he received from Gettysburg National Military Park Superintendent John Latschar, defending the rising costs of the project.

Uberman questioned why cost-increasing changes have been made "behind closed doors."

"How come this stuff is being done and nobody knows?" he said. "The public didn't know. What goes on?"

Last week, Latschar said he doesn't consider any of the changes made during the years to be surprises.

"It's an incremental thing," he said, citing exhibit costs as an example. Creating more interactive or audiovisual exhibits costs more, as does cleaning and curating some artifacts that haven't been out of the current visitor center basement in years, he said.

The foundation also decided to use a geothermal heating system that would be environmentally friendly but costlier, Neil said.

"We've just never come out with one big press release and said, 'it's now all changed,'" she said. "They're normal updates that occur in the life of a project."

The restoration of the Cyclorama painting was thought to take about \$1 million but has instead cost about \$12 million, she said.

"That's a huge one," Neil said, noting officials had no similar project to look to for a cost comparison. "We had nothing to go on, and we estimated it and we were wrong. We have no problem saying that."

In Latschar's Jan. 5 letter, the superintendent says the foundation will "soon" make a public announcement about changes in the project and release a new fundraising goal. Neil said the foundation plans to provide an update this month on the changes.

As for a new fundraising goal, that number won't just be for the museum project but will reflect other projects the foundation has taken on for the park, such as land preservation along Baltimore Pike, Latschar said.

Reach Angie Mason at 771-2048 or amason@ydr.com.

Rising prices

The cost of building a new museum and visitor center in Gettysburg has risen since the project's inception in 1998.

- Initial cost projection: about \$40 million

- New price tag in 2002: \$95 million

- Now: closer to \$100 million, but officials say they're still looking at that number, which includes the cost of demolishing the current Cyclorama Center and rehabilitating the battlefield land that building sits on.

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EDITORIAL

Resaca ... Now Is Time

01/12/2007

Rome News Tribune (GA)

<http://news.mywebpal.com/partners/680/public/news774919.html>

THE STATE treasury is in no shape for the General Assembly to take on any "projects" this year. Indeed, the legislators should forego any and all "pork" - defined as fund distributions going to work that could and should be paid for out of local coffers.

The basic needs and services are in such overall bad shape - teetering on the brink of if not collapse then certainly minimum adequacy - that all available resources should be committed to mending them. Education, health care, highways, prisons ... name it and they're already under funded and suffering from past reductions in support.

Indeed, just as at the federal level, the only area for which "more" is being provided is the compensation of congressmen and legislators. Hey, if CEOs get more money for failing then why not politicians?

That said, there's one project on the table that warrants some serious consideration. Noel Holcomb, the commissioner of the

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Department of Natural Resources, has asked the legislature for \$5 million to open up Resaca Battlefield State Park, the 500-acre site in Gordon County bought by Georgia in 2000 and that currently lacks a visitors' center, roads or much anything else.

WITH THE 150TH anniversary of the War Between the States, and an army of Civil War tourists, fast approaching that should be considered an investment sure to ultimately bring back more revenues than what first has to be expended.

The same, using local money, would hold true of Rome/Floyd County developing the languishing Fort Norton site for identical reasons.

The battles of Resaca and Rome are not equals, of course. There were 5,000-plus Confederate and Union dead at Resaca, 200-plus at Rome. Yet Resaca is quite as much as important to "local" and national history as is the comparatively minor engagements within Floyd County. It was Floyd County's own four-gun Cherokee Artillery battery, headed by Capt. Max Van Den Corput of Cave Spring, that was pivotal to the outcome. And it was a future president of the United States, Benjamin Harrison, then a colonel from Indiana, who overcame its position.

Given that, next to the campaign in Virginia, the actions in Georgia leading to the capture of Atlanta were the decisive ones of that great war, there's little doubt about the coming surge of interest in about the only tourism realm that consistently draws large numbers to the state (it sure isn't the Carter Center).

OF COURSE, IT would also be nice if those coming visitors got here on nice roads, driving past modern schools and knew that if they got hurt in transit there were more than six air ambulances serving the entire state.

Still, let's face it: A state that doesn't take pride in preserving the past certainly will never be inclined to deal with the present either.

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"Battle of the Hundred Pines"
The Real First Black Infantry Regiment Made History in Nassau County
By Peg Davis

01/12/2007
Fernandina Beach News Leader (FL)
<http://fbnewsleader.com/articles/2007/01/06/leisure/02aylhundredpines.txt>

Olustee. Natural Bridge. St. Johns Bluff. Civil War historians are well acquainted with the names of the battles that took place in North Florida. Nassau County's own role in the Civil War also seems fairly well documented: from the continuous construction of Fort Clinch, to the raising of local volunteers for both sides, to the blockade and occupation of Fernandina.

So when my brother Clyde recently told me about another Civil War battle that not only took place near our old family homestead near Yulee but involved the actual, first black infantry regiment in the U.S. Army instead of the one depicted in the movie "Glory," I was naturally curious to find out more. It's called the Battle of the Hundred Pines.

Nassau County's sturdy heart-pine lumber and sinewy "piney woods" cattle were prized commodities for both sides during the Civil War, and after Union troops captured Fernandina in March 1862 they began foraging raids up the St. Marys River, going as far northwest as "the Brickyard," Woodstock Mills and Kings Ferry.

Union troops may have had second thoughts about raids up the St. Marys after they became aware of a large quantity of logs the Davis family put behind a boom at Kings Creek. Cutting the boom and releasing the logs would prevent any boat from retreating, "so it was effective enough to preserve the Davis lumber and mill throughout the war," Clyde said.

Another reason the Union soldiers had trouble venturing further upriver was "Company K" of the Second Florida Volunteer Cavalry, a "home guard" unit positioned at Camp Cooper, near the forks of McQueen and Lofton swamps north of Yulee. Camp Cooper was established after Fernandina fell to Union troops.

Early on the morning of Jan. 26, 1863, while the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment famously depicted in the movie "Glory" was still being trained, Company K engaged an expeditionary force of the First South Carolina Volunteers, and the "real" first black regiment in U.S. Army history found itself in its "first stand-up fight," according to its commander, Maj. Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Higginson, an abolitionist and Unitarian minister, was also a prolific writer. After the war Higginson detailed his experience leading the unit in a book entitled Army Life in a Black Regiment.

According to Higginson's book, the initial expedition up the St. Marys was not to engage the Confederates at Camp Cooper, but to obtain lumber from Marion Wild's sawmill, which was between the river and present day US 17, about 1 1/2 miles from the camp.

"The best peg on which to hang an expedition in the Department of the South in those days was the promise of lumber," Higginson wrote. "Dwelling in the very land of Southern Pine, the Department authorities had to send North for it, at a vast expense. There was reported to be plenty in the enemy's country."

Higginson and his men steamed up the river with a half moon lighting their way on Sunday night, Jan. 25, 1863. Landing on the southeast end of the bluff below "Township," which later became known as Crandall, Higginson left 100 men with the boats and set off with a sergeant named McIntyre and approximately 200 soldiers to find the mill.

"There was a trampling of feet among the advance guards as they came confusedly to a halt, almost the same instant a more ominous sound, of galloping horses in the path before us," Higginson wrote. "The moonlight outside of the woods gave that dimness of atmosphere which is more bewildering than darkness, because the eyes cannot adapt themselves to it so well ... Our assailants, dividing, rode along on each side through the open pine barren, firing into our ranks, but mostly over the heads of the men. I could hardly tell whether the fight had lasted ten minutes or an hour ... when I gave the order to cease firing."

Retreating to the river, McIntyre burned the houses and Higginson returned to Fernandina with his dead and wounded. Higginson would later present a piano he took from one of the houses to "the school for colored children at Fernandina."

Two weeks later a soldier in the Second Florida Cavalry named Davis Bryant wrote to his brother from Camp Cooper, telling the other side of the story. "One night, at about 11 o'clock ... one of a picket (a guard or lookout) stationed at the St. Marys River, 5 miles from camp, reported a gunboat passing up. We had expected the Yanks would come that way if they ever came after us." Twenty-nine soldiers and three officers then left the camp to engage the expedition.

Bryant described what happened next: "The Captain, feeling secure, carried us at a gallop intending to dismount us at a certain branch and there ambush them. But just as we were approaching our intended ambush ... imagine our surprise on being 'opened on' by a line of Yankees about 60 yards long."

"The shock was terrible, and frightened our horses so that they took us skitin through the woods in all directions," Bryant writes. "The buggers were firing all the while as fast as they could load, and as the bullets were whizzing by ... it was decided advisable that we fall back a little more, particularly as we knew that we could not check their advance at that place. We fell back another 50 yards and collected in the road, when one man was found to be wounded and our First Lieutenant and another found to be missing."

The casualties from the "battle" were few. On the Confederate side the lieutenant was killed and two privates were wounded. On the Union side a private was killed and seven others wounded. One of the wounded would later die. The mission had been a failure. The prized pine lumber stayed where it was.

Camp Cooper existed until the Confederate soldiers left it on Feb. 10, 1864, under orders to go to Lake City. Company K would later fight in the major battle at Olustee, in Baker County.

I asked Clyde to take me to Crandall so we could look at the area now. Time and erosion have taken their toll on the river bluff, and most of the land around Crandall has now either returned to the jungle or been planted with trees by Rayonier. The woods are thick with slash and long-leaf pine, scrub oak and cat briar vines. There are a few, widely scattered houses, but none survive from the 19th century.

As Clyde and I stood on the high bluff along the St. Marys, I imagined the excitement of the "pickets" as they first spotted the Union boats coming up the river. I imagined the Union soldiers, marching through the woods with nerves on edge, listening to the frogs peeping and dogs yelping that Higginson describes. I imagine there is still a "dimness of atmosphere" under a half-moon at Crandall, but the record is clear: Civil War history was made right here, and remains right here, in Nassau County.

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No 4-Lane in Orange Battlefield
By Robin Knepper

01/11/2007
Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star (VA)
<http://fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2007/012007/01112007/250190>

Orange County supervisors have let go of the idea of a four-lane road through the Wilderness battlefield.

"It's time to accept the reality that Route 20 is never going to be four-laned through the battlefield," said board Chairman Mark Johnson. "It's not going to happen."

Johnson's comments preceded the unanimous vote Tuesday night to accept the Route 20 Corridor Plan into the county's comprehensive plan for growth and development.

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The corridor plan stirred controversy by recommending that State Route 20 be widened on its present alignment or a new road built west of it next to Lake of the Woods to accommodate the expected increase in traffic.

The county Planning Commission added language, however, to "discourage development that would necessitate construction of a four-lane highway over any portion of the route in Orange County."

"It is the intent of the county not to undertake improvements that would encourage more non-county related traffic," the commission's language continued. "The study did not seriously explore options other than realigning Route 20 through one of the most significant historical resources in the county."

At Tuesday night's public hearing, representatives from the Civil War Preservation Trust, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and the Piedmont Environmental Council joined local no-growth advocates in asking supervisors to accept the Planning Commission's restrictive language.

Russ Smith, superintendent of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park--which includes the Wilderness Battlefield in Spotsylvania and Orange counties--had voiced the Park Service's objection to an enlarged or realigned road through the battlefield.

The present alignment of the two-lane highway, the only road into Orange County from the heavily populated northeastern corner of the county where it adjoins Spotsylvania, crosses land owned by the Department of Interior and leased to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Although the board's vote was unanimous, Supervisor Rich Wallace, who represents residents of Lake of the Woods and adjoining areas along Route 20, added his caution.

"It's a dangerous highway," he said, "and something has to be done about it. Too many of our local citizens are dying on that road. Something has to be done to address that."

Supervisor C.L. "Sonny" Dodson, whose district includes the town of Orange and north along Route 20 to U.S. 522 at Unionville, agreed.

"Something has to be done," he said, "and will be. But it will be in some other location other than in the present footprint."

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