

Civil War News Roundup - 06/28/2007

Courtesy of the Civil War Preservation Trust

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State grants nearly \$1M to battlefield park project
By KEVIN WALTERS, Staff Writer

06/26/2007

Nashville Tennessean

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070626/COUNTY090101/70626043>

FRANKLIN – The state of Tennessee is now poised to become one the largest investors in Franklin’s Civil War battlefield park.

More than a year after Franklin officials bought the 110-acre Country Club of Franklin, the state's Heritage Conservation Trust Fund today approved a \$900,000 grant for the project.

The group’s executive committee approved 3-0 the grant request from Franklin’s Charge, the private coalition of local groups supporting the land purchase.

"We are excited about moving forward on this in the months and years to come," Robert Hicks, co-chairman of Franklin’s Charge, said. "It’s not like Franklin’s Charge won anything today. I think all of Tennessee is a winner today."

This grant nearly equals the \$1 million combined in grant money from both the Washington, D.C. based Civil War Preservation Trust and the American Battlefield Protection Program.

The land purchase cost \$5 million, with half coming from city public funds and the rest provided by a loan secured by Franklin's Charge. That loan would be repaid by the group through pledges and donations.

Hicks credited the numerous, smaller donations of just a few dollars as being as important to the project as the large grants.

"You still could not have done it without the literally hundreds and hundreds of individuals," Hicks said.

Land of Lincoln: How He Belongs to the Ages

By David Rapp

06/25/2007

American Heritage.com

<http://www.americanheritage.com/people/articles/web/20070625-abraham-lincoln-civil-war-andrew-ferguson.shtml>

Since Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865, the torrent of books about him has never let up. It started with the fascinating but unreliable biography by his former law partner, William H. Herndon; in just the past few years it has included, most prominently, studies of his management style in dealing with his cabinet (Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*), his oratorical brilliance (Douglas L. Wilson's *Lincoln's Sword*), and even his sexuality (C. A. Tripp's *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln*). Now Andrew Ferguson, a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, has written *Land of Lincoln: Adventures in Abe's America* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 288 pages, \$24) about our fascination with Lincoln itself.

Note that the title puts the emphasis on the nation, not the man. It is, Ferguson writes, "the country that Lincoln created and around which . . . he still putters, appearing here and there in likely and unlikely places." Its relationship with its sixteenth President is complex, to say the least, and Ferguson opens the volume with an example that shows just how complex—the recent dedication of a statue of Lincoln in Richmond, Virginia, the former capital of the Confederacy. Many local businessmen, politicians, and journalists supported the statue as a welcome tourist attraction and expression of civic pride. But other citizens were appalled by the idea. "To worship Lincoln, right here, is an insult to the Confederate soldier," one of them tells Ferguson, who later visits a conference held by a group of what might be termed Lincoln deniers, featuring Thomas DiLorenzo, author of the 2002 book *The Real Lincoln*, a revisionist history that portrays the man as a dishonest, swaggering tyrant.

Such vilification is the clear exception. Most Americans seem to perceive Lincoln as a sort of secular saint, the man who saved the Union, who freed the slaves, who gave his life for his country. When Ferguson visits the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, in Springfield, Illinois, which opened in 2005, he paints it as a kind of hagiographic Lincoln Disneyland, heavy on visual entertainment and short on facts and figures. He speaks with Louise Taper, one of the foremost collectors of Lincolniana, whose holdings extend far beyond books and papers to include Lincoln's chamber pot, the monogrammed cuff link he wore the night he was shot, and a lock of his hair. Ferguson portrays Taper as having little interest in Lincoln, the man; she's much more interested in Lincoln's stuff.

The author explores the many ways Americans have made money off the Lincoln myth. Dale Carnegie, in his 1936 bestseller *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, used Lincoln as an example that all successful people should follow. "Let's pull a five-dollar bill out of our pocket," he wrote, "look at Lincoln's picture on the bill, and ask, 'How would Lincoln handle this problem if he had it.'" As Ferguson puts it, "WW\$5D?" He attends a corporate consultant's workshop for middle managers that presents Lincoln as an example of how to lead your fellow employees. And he joins Lincoln impersonators as they don

stovepipe hats and fake beards to spout “Honest Abe” bromides at conferences and conventions.

Land of Lincoln is a fascinating and entertaining survey of the numerous ways Lincoln runs through American culture. It shows that for many people the idea of Lincoln and the idea of America have grown inseparable. And as that has happened, Lincoln himself has sometimes gotten lost. “He’s been hated and loved, pondered and studied, honored and mourned so intensely for so long that it doesn’t seem to matter why,” Ferguson writes. “He’s reached the zenith of American celebrity. He’s famous for being famous.”

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Gen. Grant's Sword Draws \$1.6M Bid
By The Associated Press

06/25/2007

The New York Times (NY)

http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/us/AP-Civil-War-Auction.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

GETTYSBURG, Pa. (AP) -- A diamond-adorned sword once owned by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant brought a winning bid of more than \$1.6 million in an auction of Civil War items.

The sword given to Grant, who later became the 18th president, was one of the marquee items among the 750 to be auctioned Sunday and Monday by Heritage Auction Galleries of Dallas.

Another showcase item up for bid was Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's frayed battle flag, which was auctioned for \$896,250. Another item of note was a "Bonnie Blue" flag carried by the 3rd Texas State Cavalry, which drew a bid of \$47,800.

The priciest item was Grant's sword, which went for \$1,673,000 to an unnamed bidder. It was presented by citizens of Kentucky in 1864 to honor Grant's promotion to General-in-Chief of all Union forces.

The silver and gold sword contains a 28-diamond monogram and is covered with intricate designs, including engraved battle scenes on its 33-inch blade.

Gary Hendershott, Heritage's director of Civil War auctions, described the sword as maybe the finest from the Civil War period.

"It's really a hallmark of American silversmith craftsmanship."

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Power Line Aimed At Md. Interstate Proposal Called Threat to Treasured Sites
By Philip Rucker Washington Post Staff Writer

06/23/2007

Washington Post (DC)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/22/AR2007062201018.html>

A new high-voltage line that would deliver electricity to the growing mid-Atlantic region could stretch across parts of Western Maryland and end just shy of the Montgomery County line under a plan endorsed yesterday by the operator of the region's electricity grid.

The proposed \$1.8 billion power line is being billed as an important part of an effort to improve the electric power grid serving the East Coast. It would carry enough electricity to power an estimated 2.5 million homes, making it the highest capacity transmission line in the nation, industry sources said, larger than the controversial Dominion Virginia Power line proposed in Northern Virginia.

The approximately 300-mile transmission line would start at a coal plant in Winfield, W.Va., pass through Bedington, W.Va., and end at a substation to be built in Kemptown, Md.

Its specific route has not been determined, but it would likely cut through environmentally sensitive and historically significant terrain, which includes the Potomac and Kanawha rivers, the scenic Allegheny Highlands and the Civil War battlefields at Antietam and South Mountain.

That concerns local officials, residents and environmentalists who are already voicing opposition, arguing that the new line could threaten the rural character of Frederick and alter scenic areas that local and state governments have spent money protecting.

"It could go through our rural legacy area, which we would oppose," said Jan H. Gardner (D), president of the Frederick County Board of Commissioners. "The rural legacy area certainly protects the history of that area, the South Mountain battlefield in that area. . . . It could have impacts on the scenic view shed of Sugarloaf Mountain."

Pennsylvania-based PJM Interconnection, which controls the electricity transmission grid serving 13 mid-Atlantic states and the District, voted yesterday to authorize two power companies, American Electric Power and Allegheny Energy Inc., to build the line.

By routing electricity from Appalachia and the Midwest to the more densely populated East Coast cities, the line will help relieve overloads that PJM anticipates will occur as early as 2012.

"The Baltimore-Washington area is an area of growing demand and diminishing resources," PJM spokesman Ray Dotter said. "It's all about how to keep the lights on. If a power line will be overloaded, how do you avoid it being overloaded."

The \$1.8 billion cost of the power line would be split between all the power companies operating in PJM's network, Dotter said.

In PJM's network, which serves about 51 million people, electricity use is expected to increase by about 17 percent in the next decade, Dotter said. He likened the electricity grid to an interstate highway system and said the new line is akin to a major new interstate, which could help relieve bottlenecks throughout the network.

PJM's vote yesterday opened the process to build the line. The two power companies said they will begin mapping out a detailed route and studying any environmental or other impacts.

Then the companies must present their plan to state regulators in Maryland and West Virginia for approval. But this power line, like the one proposed in Virginia, could test a new law that gives the power companies authority to bypass the states and secure land through the federal government if their services are deemed vital to national energy interests.

American Electric Power spokeswoman Melissa McHenry said the company is "fully committed to work with the state process."

"It's not our intention to circumvent the state," McHenry said.

The first 250 miles of the line between Winfield and Bedington are proposed to be 765,000 volts. For the remainder, between Bedington and Kempton, it would change to twin 500,000-volt lines.

Along the route would be hundreds of 125-foot towers with cables running in between on a corridor estimated at about 200 feet wide, said Allen Staggers, a spokesman for Allegheny Energy.

Frederick County resident Rolan Clark said he wrote letters of objection to state and federal officials. "Frederick is going to be like a birdcage," he said. "You'll look up and all you'll see is wires."

Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) has not taken a position on the power line, aides said. Neither has Rep. Roscoe G. Bartlett (R-Md.), whose Western Maryland district includes the area where the line would end.

Gardner said Frederick commissioners will not take a position on the power line until the route is set.

To protest the Virginia and Maryland lines, environmentalists and residents formed the Mid-Atlantic Area Concerned Citizens Energy Coalition. The group believes that authorities should consider alternative energy options, organizer Barbara Kessinger said.

Executives for the two companies responsible for the new power line issued statements yesterday saying the line is needed to relieve congestion on the existing power grid.

PJM also authorized yesterday a second power line that would run about 130 miles from northeastern Pennsylvania to northern New Jersey. The 500,000-volt line would cost \$930 million to construct and would address overloads projected to occur as soon as 2013 in those states.

Both power lines are similar to the Dominion Virginia Power line proposed last year for Northern Virginia. The 500,000-volt Dominion line would wind through Loudoun, Prince William, Fauquier and Rappahannock counties.

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Culpeper Life: Helping preserve history
By Evangerline Trice, Star-Exponent intern

06/21/2007

Culpeper Star-Exponent

<http://www.starexponent.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=CSE%2FMGArticle%2FCSEMGArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1173351727383&path=%21features>

An initiative of critical importance to the future of Culpeper County is how Brandy Station Foundation described its new fundraising campaign, "Partners in Preservation," Thursday afternoon.

The campaign was kicked-off during an invitation-only event at Germanna Center for Advanced Technology, geared toward the partners and donors of Brandy Station Foundation.

The foundation was formed in 1989 by a group of citizens who wanted to preserve the history of the battle at Brandy Station on June 9, 1863.

Receiving a \$15,000 grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Historic Resources, The foundation is raising money in order to match the grant, which is a 50/50 reimbursement-matching grant.

"The purpose of the grant is to conduct an architectural evaluation of the current condition at the Graffiti House and to provide recommendations for its restoration," said Della Edrington a member of the Board of Directors of the Brandy Station Foundation.

Kayla Pelkey, a 2007 graduate of Culpeper County High School "adopted" the Graffiti House during her senior project with the Leadership and Career Academy. A portion of Kayla's project was to help match the funds.

In an effort to raise money she has been mailing letters to all known descendants of the Civil War soldiers who passed through the house, seeking donations for Brandy Station Foundation. Those who make a minimum donation of \$500 will receive a brick from the original Graffiti House fireplace.

"We are here tonight to invite those attending to also contribute to this worthy cause and ask that the media help us to spread the word of our needs," Pelkey said during the reception.

"Partners in Preservation"

The "Partners in Preservation" initiative has two goals: the preservation of battle land on Fleetwood Heights in Brandy Station, and the restoration of the Graffiti House. The Civil War hospital is recognized for its outstanding collection of Civil War era writings.

Through the increasing growth of Culpeper County, the foundation believes that the battlefield is more threatened now than at anytime in its history.

“Culpeper, is one of the fastest growing communities in the state,” said Ed Gentry, vice president of Brandy Station Foundation. “That progress comes with a price. Many of the qualities of our community have been, or may be, sacrificed in the future to feed the very progress which we have experienced,” he added.

Currently 70 acres - the focal point of the June 9 battle - is for sale.

“The most hotly contested land in the greatest Cavalry Battle this half of the world has ever seen,” said Gentry.

The foundation’s plan to go national with an advertising campaign has already begun this month with articles appearing in four national magazines. The articles highlight the needs of the foundation with respect to battlefield preservation.

“We are approaching a number of national endowment foundations for funds to assist in this project, together with exploring grant possibilities through the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the American Battlefield Protection Program, and through our friends at the Civil War Preservation Trust,” Gentry said. “But, local commitment and support are the keystone to our success.”

The foundation is seeking to raise \$3 million to purchase the valuable battlefield land, but knows that it will take much more than that to restore the Graffiti House.

“A community, indeed a state and a nation, are judged by history, not only for what they accomplish, but what they have chosen to honor, to preserve, and to protect,” Gentry said.

According to Clark B. Hall, one of the original founders of the Brandy Station Foundation and an expert on the Battle of Brandy Station, the impact that the war had on Culpeper was greater than on any other community in this country.

“Today, we have an obligation to recall that history. And, how do you recall that history? By saving the battlefields, saving the historic properties, the landscape where these activities took place,” Hall said. “It’s too important to forget and, shame on us if we do forget.”

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Story of Fort Johnson Hard to Tell as Shore, History Erodes

By Robert Behre

06/18/2007

Charleston Post and Courier (SC)

http://www.charleston.net/news/2007/jun/18/story_fort_johnson_hard_tell_as_shore_history_er/

Anyone visiting the two sites where the Civil War began couldn't find the contrast more jarring.

Fort Sumter — on which the Confederacy opened fire on federal troops on April 12, 1861 — is a national historic monument, maintained by the federal government with the goal of interpreting the Civil War.

But Fort Johnson, from which those shots were fired, is another story.

Today, most of that property is owned by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, which isn't in the history business.

If visitors know where to look, they can find a small stone marker placed in 1961 to explain that the historic mortar shot was fired nearby. There also are two or three modest structures that reflect the fort's late 18th century and early 19th century eras. Some earthworks remain along a nature trail.

That's about it, and that's too bad.

Part of the reason for this lack of historical interpretation is that there's not much left to see. Fort Sumter historian Rick Hatcher noted that the site where the actual first shot came from has eroded away into the water about 50 to 75 yards from the shore.

Also, the fort was an earthen tabby installation; it never was built of brick or stone like Sumter and Castle Pinckney.

Not far from the stone marker at Fort Johnson is a brick powder magazine that survives from the 1820s and two circular tabby structures, remnants of two late 18th century cisterns. "These are the oldest physical remnants you can see of the form Fort Johnson had," Hatcher said.

After the war, the fort served as a quarantine station run by the city and state.

The federal government took over the operation in 1906, and the College of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina took it over in the 1950s. Most of the property was transferred to DNR in 1970.

Another reason for the lack of interpretation is the priorities of the current owners.

Linda Renshaw, a spokeswoman for DNR, says the department welcomes visitors interested in the history of the site but has no money to interpret its story.

She says the agency would be open to ideas about changing that, though any changes would need to be vetted through MUSC and C of C, which still own part of the site.

"I think we all recognize the value. It's a matter of getting somebody to take the lead," she says. "We're out to do research in the mission of our own agencies."

Hatcher says he directs people to the fort when asked, adding, "It's getting more and more attention as we have more and more Civil War groups coming to town."

Their experience might not be all they expected. It's possible to wander down to the water's edge and see Fort Sumter in the distance, but finding the marker can be a bigger challenge.

Renshaw says she talked to a man upset because the limb of an oak tree obscured it.

"I'm not going to advise somebody to mutilate that live oak tree just to reveal the marker," she says.

I agree that pruning back an oak limb isn't the answer to improving our appreciation of Fort Johnson's history, but I wonder —especially with the 150th anniversary of that historic shot less than five years away —exactly what is.

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Vance to Relocate Remains of Civil War Cemetery
Town Leaders Plan to Build a Municipal Park on the Land
By Tommy Stevenson Associate Editor

06/18/2007

Tuscaloosa News (AL)

<http://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/article/20070618/NEWS/706180333/1007>

VANCE - The town of Vance is preparing to move a significant piece of history.

Tucked away in the deep woods between U.S. Highway 11 and Wire Road, the small Evans Cemetery holds the remains of several Union and one unidentified Confederate soldier who were killed during the Battle of Trion toward the end of the Civil War.

But now the town has purchased about 40 acres, including the cemetery, from the Wallace Tingle family with hopes of building a municipal park.

To do so, the town will have to move the remains from the Evans Cemetery to nearby Vance Cemetery.

That will require legal advertising, a license from the Alabama Historical Commission and the hiring of a licensed funeral home or registered archeologist to unearth the remains and reinter them properly and in compliance with state law.

Vance Mayor Keith Mahaffey said the advertising is completed and the project will probably be undertaken late this summer.

But, he added while standing at the site of the cemetery, he is not sure just what remains.

"There's one soldier still here," he said, standing beside an "unknown soldier" gravestone erected last year by local chapter of the Sons of the Confederacy. "After the war was over, the U.S. Department of Defense came down here and retrieved all the Union dead."

The battle took place on the morning of April 1, 1865, eight days before the end of the Civil War, as Union Gen. John Thomas Croxton was headed east to Tuscaloosa, intent on burning down the University of Alabama.

When he and some of his 1,500 troops, known as "Croxton's Raiders" got to Trion, now Vance, on the old Huntsville Post Road south of the Black Warrior River, they ran into fierce resistance from a Confederate contingent under the command of Gen. William H. Jackson.

"They called it the 'Battle of Trion,'" Mahaffey said, as he stood on the shoulder of Tingle Tangle Road off what is now U.S. 11 last week.

He gestured toward a large stand of trees to the east.

"It was a 'running battle,' which meant that it raged all up and down the roads and in the woods of the time," he said.

Croxtton's Raiders went on to Tuscaloosa, burning nearly all the buildings on the UA campus on April 4, five days before Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, Va.

Mahaffey doesn't know what will be found when it comes time to move the graves.

"I really think they are going to find nothing in the way of real remains," he said. "There was an article done in The Tuscaloosa News in 1963 about the cemetery, and its history and the fact there was a Confederate soldier buried here.

"Well, needless to say, word got out and the cemetery was desecrated," Mahaffey said as he examined a toppled gravestone, its markings made illegible by the ravages of time.

"People were looking for artifacts and whatnot, and that's happened several times again over the years. You can see that most of the graves have sunken in, and we really don't even know how many people are buried here."

He says there are probably fewer than a dozen graves.

Steve Jones, a cultural resources technician in the University of Alabama Office of Archaeological Services, has moved several such historical grave sites and recommends that the city get a certified archaeologist to move the graves and reconsecrate the remains at the Vance city cemetery.

"We've got a lot of expertise in this sort of thing and a lot of tools, like ground-penetrating radar, that could be useful," he said. "There might not be much in the way of remains left there, but they need to make sure they preserve everything they can.

"They could end up just moving the dirt from the grave sites to the other cemetery, but that has to be treated with care and respect."

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Petersburg Will Mark Union Siege
Buildings Struck by Cannon Fire 143 Years Ago will get Plaques
By David Ress

06/18/2007

Richmond Times Dispatch (VA)

<http://www.timesdispatch.com/cva/ric/news.apx.-content-articles-RTD-2007-06-18-0094.html>

The cannonballs will fly again in Petersburg, aiming for the same buildings they hit 143 years ago. Cannonballs? Well, cannonball-shaped bronze markers. Who's firing them? The city and National Park Service will install the plaques to identify buildings struck by Union artillery during the siege of Petersburg. When?

Beginning tomorrow, the 143rd anniversary of the start of the siege. Will it be a barrage?

Not really. Roughly 100 of the 800 buildings hit by the Union Army during the 9½-month siege are still standing. City officials hope to complete the work by fall. Not great aim, those Yankees, eh?

They hit 800 buildings, but there are 200 buildings that they missed that are still standing in Petersburg. Those will get markers, too. The Union shells, by the way, are blamed for only about a half-dozen fatalities. Can't they leave poor old Petersburg alone now?

The city and park service sure hope not. They think the markers will encourage more visitors to explore one of the largest collections of Civil War-era buildings around: Old Towne Petersburg. Who'd've thought Petersburg?

Of course you knew that the siege is considered the longest land siege in North American history and the campaign that broke the back of the Confederacy. The reason: Petersburg was one of the South's most important transportation and manufacturing cities, and it had played a key role in the South's economy since Colonial times, when it was a major center for trade with Indians of Virginia and North Carolina.

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Opinion: Citizens Should Monitor Fort Monroe Planning Process
By Tom Gear

06/16/2007

Hampton Roads Daily Press (VA)

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/dp-60105sy0jun16,0,4758749.story?track=mostemailedlink>

The Army doesn't leave Fort Monroe until 2011, but anyone who wants the best for that national treasure should pay close attention right now.

In March, a new state law placed me onto a brand-new, 18-person Fort Monroe planning panel. At the first meeting, it turned out that a lot had already been decided behind the scenes.

Gov. Tim Kaine's administration and Hampton's City Council have the actual control. The meeting organizers demanded on-the-spot approval of a lengthy governing document - spelling out the agreement between the state, the city and the planning group - that they hadn't distributed beforehand.

Ever heard of a pig in a poke? We were being told to buy something sight unseen.

The document is important because the planning process is crucial. That's obviously why Hampton fired two of its seven panel appointees - they went against Hampton's behind-the-scenes intentions about the planning process.

To me, that sudden firing seems revealing. Things are happening behind the scenes. Are those things fishy, or even worse? I don't know. I just know we all need to pay close attention.

Here's another reason to pay attention. I'd call this one "shouting news."

On May 24, APVA Preservation Virginia - the statewide preservation organization that administers Historic Jamestowne with the National Park Service - listed Fort Monroe among 11 "Most Endangered Historic Sites in Virginia for 2007."

APVA says Fort Monroe's enormous commercial value threatens its "future disposition."

Disposition? That governing document talks about "property disposition." It would allow "disposition directly to third parties."

What third parties? Behind the scenes, is there some plan for pieces of Fort Monroe, like maybe the marina, to be sold off in a rush?

These are decisions about land that has been publicly owned for four centuries. The decisions will last for centuries more. Haste and closed doors are dangerous.

Here's another reason to pay attention: The Civil War Preservation Trust, the largest organization dedicated to preserving Civil War sites, recently declared Fort Monroe at risk.

Here's another one: Last summer, working with out-of-state consultants and against the public's wishes, Hampton developed plans to overdevelop Fort Monroe with upscale houses. Even though the plan was widely discredited, Hampton recently dredged it up and insisted on it again.

In a written statement, Hampton even insisted, emphatically, that the public actually requested those houses.?

Hampton submitted the statement in a meeting convened by the Army, Hampton's close partner. The Army excluded the press from the meeting.

Another reason to pay attention is all this clamor for early environmental cleanup, before we even really know what the contamination is, or what future we see for Fort Monroe. Everyone wants it cleaned up economically, but is this rush for early cleanup really just a rush to start private development?

I hope we study every option seriously. I'm glad the new state law that established the new planning group asks for study of the national park possibility.

I appreciate that this whole challenge is complicated and that lots of people are working hard on it. I'm not claiming I have all the answers.

But nobody else has all the answers, either.

That's why we need an open, honest process where special interests and behind-the-scenes interests have no more claim on Fort Monroe than you and I have.

I'm worried that's not what we're getting. Bylaws proposed for the planning panel say that meeting agendas need not be made public.

They call for centralizing power in a small executive committee. They call for subcommittees to deal with "lease, acquisition, and sale" of real estate and with "all matters relating to the marketing of real property."

They don't tell how the public can monitor subcommittee work. And as far as I know, these bylaws have not been made public.

I urge concerned citizens to contact politicians, civic leaders, journalists and opinion leaders to make clear that this national treasure must be handled openly and handled right.

Gear represents the 91st District in Virginia's House of Delegates. The district includes Poquoson a parts of the city of Hampton and York County.

Heritage Sites: Landowners Rebuffed on Business Park at W.Va. Civil War Site Debra Kahn,
Land Letter reporter

06/14/2007

Washington Land Letter (DC)

<http://www.eenews.net>

HARPERS FERRY, W.Va. -- The Jefferson County Planning Commission voted unanimously Tuesday evening to oppose the transformation of a Civil War battlefield into a retail and office complex, setting the stage for yet another chapter in the modern battle of Harpers Ferry.

At issue is a 411-acre parcel of land adjacent to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. The former Old Standard Quarry, which developers plan to turn into a 2-million-square-foot office and retail complex, was also the site of a mid-September 1862 battle that immediately preceded the Battle of Antietam. It resulted in the largest surrender of Union forces in the Civil War.

Harpers Ferry, W.Va, as seen in this 1865 photo, Courtesy of the National Archives.

The parcel also borders another quarry site, the Shenandoah River, residentially zoned land and Schoolhouse Ridge Battlefield, which the National Park Service just opened to the public on June 2 in honor of National Trails Day.

Gene Capriotti, Herb Jonkers and Jim Gibson submitted plans to Jefferson County to rezone 330 acres from rural/residential growth to industrial/commercial use, after the City Council of Charles Town rejected their application to be annexed in April.

The mayors of Bolivar and Harpers Ferry passed resolutions, and the proposal has also drawn fire from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Conservation Association and the Civil War Preservation Trust.

NPS stands opposed

The National Park Service went on the record unequivocally opposing it for its "devastating impact on the rural, historic landscape."

Traffic and parking for the proposed office building, hotel, 25 commercial buildings -- with an expected 6,000 employees -- would "destroy the darkness and natural silence that is inherent in Old Standard and the surrounding Civil War battlefield lands," wrote Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Superintendent Donald Campbell to the Jefferson County Planning Commission ahead of a June 5 public meeting.

Along with the development, Old Standard LLC would build a wastewater treatment plant to handle the increased sewage. The membrane biotechnology plant, designed to exceed

Chesapeake Bay's standards, would be transferred to the Jefferson County Public Service District for \$1, according to the developers' rezoning application.

The Jefferson County Development Authority, which supports the plan, said "a well designed and landscaped office park would be preferable to the piles of limestone byproduct and old building rubble that currently occupy a large part of the land."

The site of the 1862 Schoolhouse Ridge Battlefield at Harpers Ferry, now part of the National Historic Trails system, with a view of the property proposed for a commercial development in background. Photo by Debra Kahn.

Scot Faulkner, president of Friends of Harpers Ferry, has been actively opposing development of the area for decades. Standing at the top of Schoolhouse Ridge last week, with the edges of the Blue Ridge Mountains visible in the distance, Faulkner pointed out an area across the road that has already begun excavation. Last year, he said, the developers began bulldozing water and sewer trenches without an NPS permit; the case is pending in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia.

"They've thrown out enough red herrings to start their own seafood restaurant," he said. If Faulkner had it his way, the land would be purchased and managed by a state/federal-private partnership, with remediation and a few hiking trails installed.

A cautiously jubilant Faulkner said he was pleased by the planning commission's unanimous vote (two members were absent). "Clearly, the stars aligned," he said. "I'm surprised in a very positive way."

The rezoning matter now goes before the Jefferson County Commission next month. But the struggle may not end there.

A previous rezoning battle on the site of the Battle of Second Manassas, about 50 miles from Harpers Ferry, culminated with President Reagan signing a bill that compensated developer John "Til" Hazel about \$130 million -- far above what he originally paid for the 542-acre parcel of land.

The National Parks Conservation Association's Erin St. John said her group was talking to local leaders about the possibility of enlisting Congressional support but had not contacted federal lawmakers yet.

Congress would need to pass two bills in order to convert the land to parkland, St. John said; one expanding the park's boundary, and one appropriating funds. NPS's Campbell said this was not without precedent, as the 2004 Boundary Revision Act, sponsored by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), expanded the park's borders to encompass Schoolhouse Ridge.

"Certainly a lot of people want to see this property protected," Campbell said.

Although Land Letter repeatedly tried to contact the developers, they were unavailable for comment after the board's vote this week.

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Keeping History Alive: Group Tells Tales of Connecticut's All-Black Civil War Regiment
By Kenton Robinson

06/12/2007

The New London Day (CT)

<http://www.theday.com/re.aspx?re=751403ae-6b2e-4f98-82f0-0d42eb8f7f63>

Norwich — History quiz: In the American Civil War, which Union regiment mooned Confederate soldiers?

The answer, Harrison Mero of Hamden told a gathering of history buffs in the basement of the United Congregational Church Monday night, is the 29th Connecticut under the command of Col. William B. Wooster.

“This unit was the first United States unit that mooned the enemy,” Mero said. “Col. Wooster was not happy to see close to 300 guys drop their pants and say 'Take that!' to the Confederacy.”

Mero, who had two great-grandfathers in that unit and is president of The Descendants of the Connecticut 29th Colored Regiment C.V. Infantry Inc., laughed when he told that story.

But then he talked about how most Connecticut residents — even history teachers he meets when he talks about the regiment — don't even know the state had an all-black regiment in the Civil War.

Indeed, the 29th fought in more than 30 battles, and two companies from the regiment were on hand to greet Abraham Lincoln when he rode into Richmond, Va., the fallen capital of the Confederacy.

“They fought,” Mero said. “They had a reason for fighting.”

And, invoking the memory of the Confederate massacre of black prisoners in Tennessee, they would call out to the rebels they fought, “How about Fort Pillow?”

“They made that their battle cry,” Mero said.

But it was not only in the South that they met with racism. When Connecticut Gov. William Buckingham first proposed the formation of an all-black regiment, many state legislators opposed the idea.

“The opposition had all these crazy notions why you should not have a regiment composed of African-American troops,” Mero said. “After all, you're talking about a thousand guys with Springfield .52-caliber rifles running around. They could kill a whole bunch of white guys and rape their white women. You can't have that.”

Buckingham prevailed, and the rest is history.

But it is a history in danger of being forgotten, Mero said. And so, he and Emanuel Gomez of New Haven, who had a great-uncle in the 29th, and others are working to preserve the memory of the men who fought and the men who died.

They speak to any school or civic group that will have them, and they are now attempting to raise the money to build a monument on Grapevine Point in New Haven, where the 29th was mustered into service.

“We decided these men needed some kind of recognition,” Mero said.

For more information about the 29th and the organization of their descendants, call (203) 772-1621 or visit the group's Web site at www.thect29th.org.

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Manassas Might Join Journey Through History
Program Could Rev Up Tourism
By Christy Goodman, Washington Post Staff Writer

06/10/2007

The Washington Post (DC)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/08/AR2007060802968.html?tid=informbox>

Manassas area historians want to tap into the city's rich past, and the region's, in the hopes of boosting tourism and stuffing local pocketbooks.

The city's Historic Resources Board plans to endorse a resolution next month to join the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, a group that brings attention to a 175-mile stretch between Gettysburg and Charlottesville. The journey highlights historic districts and attractions, presidents' homes and Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields.

"It will help promote tourism in the area, and it will bring dollars in," said Suzanne Parker, Historic Resources Board chairman, who said many visitors will stop at the sites, as well as eat, shop and sleep locally.

The journey, which roughly follows Route 15, features nine presidential homes, including James Madison's Montpelier, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello and Theodore Roosevelt's Pine Knot, all in Virginia.

Tourists can learn about the Revolutionary War by visiting Willow Grove in Orange, Va., which served as a headquarters for U.S. generals, and the Hessian Barracks in Frederick, Md., which served as a prison.

Gettysburg, Antietam and other Civil War battle sites are all along the route. John Brown's failed raid on Harpers Ferry, W.Va., and Loudoun County's first African American high school, Douglass in Leesburg, are two of several black history sites on the trail.

The partnership, which is asking Congress to designate the route a National Heritage Area, has published a tour guide full of local haunts and history and including several maps to lead visitors through the region. In addition, it has a wine label. The journey has been featured on the History Channel and in National Geographic, said Roxana Adams, acting director of the Manassas Museum System.

"At a time when, in Virginia anyway, museums and historic sites are seeing declining attendance, this opportunity comes at a very good time," she said.

The Manassas Museum had to rely on private businesses and residents to fund two of four educational interpreters after the City Council cut its 2008 budget.

The partnership's Web site, <http://hallowedground.org>, lists the Manassas Museum System's educational programs and field trip kits, which will help promote the area to teachers, Adams said. The museum's position that promoted educational opportunities in Manassas has been vacant for nearly one year, and revenue from school groups has fallen, Adams said. About 480 children participated in outreach programs this school year or visited the museum, half the number in 2005-06, according to the museum.

After congressional approval, the region would be able to apply for federal grants for educational programs and museum exhibits and to promote each area's historical aspects, said Cate Magennis Wyatt, president of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership.

"It is very difficult for any one site to do, but it is incredibly successful and easy to achieve that goal by working collaboratively," she said. Working together on a traveling exhibit, for example, "benefits more citizens and allows the funder more exposure for their generosity and a higher probability of that type of program getting funded."

The Manassas City Council will have final approval on the resolution to join the partnership.

"It is a good initiative to join. We are definitely on the short list of municipalities who are within the area and haven't joined," said member Andrew L. Harrover (R), the council's representative to the Historic Resources Board. Harrover said he does not foresee problems in approving the resolution.

Chickamauga Gets Civil War Site Funding From the Office of the Governor

06/07/07

Rome News-Tribune (GA)

<http://news.mywebpal.com/partners/680/public/news812967.html>

ATLANTA – Gov. Sonny Perdue today announced two cities as recipients of Georgia Land Conservation Grants and low-interest loans.

Chickamauga and Tybee Island will receive land conservation grants. Chickamauga was also approved for a low interest land conservation loan. “Conservation works best when everyone shares ownership of a project,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “Local governments are partnering with the state to protect important natural and cultural resources for Georgia’s future.”

“I want to thank Governor Perdue for his support and recognition of heritage preservation and the economic value that it brings the state,” said State Senator Jeff Mullis. “I appreciate his support for the needs of Northwest Georgia.”

Awards are as follows:

Chickamauga is getting a \$365,000 grant and an \$875,000 low interest loan to protect 7 acres.

This project protects the Gordon Lee mansion historic site and grounds with historical values dating from Cherokee settlements, to antebellum Georgia, to the Civil War, and beyond.

Constructed in the 1840’s, the mansion served as the main hospital for both sides during the Battle of Chickamauga, the 2nd bloodiest battle of the Civil War. The historic post war Blue/Gray barbeque was held here in 1889 and attended by 14,000 surviving veterans of the battle. The mansion houses a large collection of period furnishings and artifacts.

The city will use the property as a living history center. Additional contributions in funding are being provided by the current property owner, the city, and private foundations.

Tybee Island is getting a \$206,000 grant to protect 14 acres.

Aquisition is on the north end of Tybee Island and protects salt marshes adjacent to the Savannah River estuary. Property contains primarily native salt marsh wetlands and maritime stand forest habitats.

Property has outstanding scenic values and includes raised grade of the old Tybee railroad which the city will manage as part of their walking and bike trail with public access.

Additional contributions in funding are being provided by the city and Chatham County. State Senator Eric Johnson said, “Governor Perdue’s actions to protect Georgia’s natural

resources will reap great rewards for our state for years to come. I'm thrilled that Tybee Island, as one of the first land conservation grant recipients, can serve as an example of Governor Perdue's vision."

In April 2005 Governor Perdue signed into law the Georgia Land Conservation Act, an initiative to encourage the long-term conservation and protection of Georgia's natural, cultural and historic resources.

The legislation established an initial trust fund and a revolving loan fund of \$100 million in state, federal and private funding, available to local governments and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the purchase of conservation lands and conservation easements.

Another \$47.3 million in state funding will be available in fiscal year 2008 which begins in July. Thus far the program has endorsed 34 projects totaling over 37,000 acres.

Applications for land conservation grants or loans are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. Applications can be found at www.glcp.org.

Opinion: Gettysburg's Impact Will Reach Across Midstate
James M. May

06/06/2007

Harrisburg Patriot-News (PA)

<http://www.pennlive.com/columns/patriotnews/asiseeit/index.ssf?/base/columnists/1181079617291050.xml&coll=1>

Heritage tourism is a booming industry, and communities around the country are working aggressively to create new tourist attractions in order to draw visitors and their dollars.

Our region has long benefited from heritage tourism, because we're fortunate to have one of the nation's most significant historic sites right in our own backyard. The Gettysburg National Military Park already welcomes nearly two million visitors to our region every year.

Site of the bloodiest battle ever fought on American soil, with more than 51,000 casualties, the tide of the Civil War turned at Gettysburg in July 1863.

To better accommodate Gettysburg's two million visitors -- and to better preserve Gettysburg's hallowed ground -- a new, state-of-the-art museum is being constructed. When it's completed next spring, the new Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center will attract even more visitors -- and will pump even more money into Pennsylvania's economy. This project will generate an estimated \$24 million in additional spending by Gettysburg visitors each year, 21.5 percent more than what they spend today.

Moreover, a significant number of those tourists will also visit other sites in the region, such as Harrisburg's National Civil War Museum, Hersheypark, Amish country in Lancaster County and York County's various historic sites. The economic impact of an improved Gettysburg will flow far outside of Adams County.

Tourism already accounts for almost 600,000 jobs in Pennsylvania, and the new Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center will strengthen that important sector of our state's economy.

By relocating the visitor center a scant two-thirds of a mile, we will make immeasurable progress in the protection and preservation of Gettysburg's legacy.

Currently, concrete buildings and asphalt parking lots cover the very ground where Union soldiers fought back Pickett's charge. The new center will be located away from the blood-soaked terrain of Cemetery Ridge, allowing the battlefield to be restored and returned to a more natural state.

The Gettysburg Foundation has embraced the opportunity to make Gettysburg a "classroom of democracy," where all Americans will be reminded that we can rise above even the most terrible division and come together as a nation to achieve greatness. Through the "Campaign to Preserve Gettysburg," we have the opportunity to reach out to a much wider audience with these lessons of sacrifice, visionary leadership and reconciliation.

I encourage all Pennsylvanians to join together with the other local individuals and businesses that are embracing this opportunity to preserve one of our state's historic treasures and promote heritage tourism.

JAMES M. MAY is an administrative vice president and unit manager for commercial banking at M&T Bank in York.

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Editorial: Civil War Sites Have Stories to Tell

Hurrah for efforts to preserve a Civil War battlefield. The nation can't escape the horrors of its history -- nor should it want to.

06/03/2007

Roanoke Times (VA)

<http://www.roanoke.com/editorials/wb/wb/xp-119278>

Appomattox town officials are considering a plan to preserve the battlefield at Appomattox Station, where Union and Confederate armies fought the day before the Confederacy met its end.

That historic ground should be saved.

Miraculously, the site in the middle of the town is deemed in excellent condition more than 140 years after the Civil War, a signal event that solidified the nation and redefined the very concept of what it means to be an American.

The war's outcome set the United States on a course, at last, to honor the soaring promise of its founding principles of freedom and equality, and end black slavery as a legal institution.

As with so much of American history, a large part of the nation's Civil War story is the story of Virginia. The commonwealth's capital of Richmond was the capital of the Confederate States of America. Appropriately, the National Parks Service is helping Appomattox keep its chapter of the story alive for this and future generations.

As the heavily visited Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania shows, the land still can bear witness to the historic events played out on it, and speak of what occurred to people who can see only with the mind's eye.

Of course, Gettysburg was the bloodiest battle of the Civil War and, with the North's victory, a turning point -- not to mention the site of President Abraham Lincoln's famous address.

The Battle of Appomattox Station, far less grand in scale, hardly looms as large in the national imagination.

Still, the penultimate battle before Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his Confederate forces played its part in the nation's history. Preserving the site will maintain a link that helps to tell the story of the Confederacy's final, desperate days.

Americans need an accurate historical record to understand who we are, how we have come to be the nation we comprise: what ideas and principles, what battles fought, what sacrifices and compromises have brought us to this point.

By no means does this require Virginia to declare a "Confederate History Month," that racially divisive bow of obeisance to the extinct Confederacy that tried to rip the nation in half.

It does require an embrace of all of the nation's history, from every perspective -- as much as we can gather, anyway, from an imperfect understanding of the past. Where it is painful, let us acknowledge the pain and reconcile the different histories of one people: Americans.