

Civil War News Roundup - 08/20/2007

Courtesy of the Civil War Preservation Trust

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Trench digging remembered at Harpers Ferry
By BOB ZIMBEROFF / Journal Staff Writer

08/20/2007

Martinsburg Journal (WV)

<http://www.journal-news.net/News/articles.asp?articleID=11346>

HARPERS FERRY — In April 1861, as the Civil War began, Confederate Gen. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson said, “I would rather take Harpers Ferry 50 times than defend it once.”

On Friday, preservation groups came to the defense of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and fired some shots at Washington concerning what representatives of the four groups say was a criminal act undertaken nearly one year ago.

The Civil War Preservation Trust, National Parks Conservation Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Friends of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park held a torchlight vigil where they say park ground was illegally disturbed.

No charges related to the incident have ever been filed.

According to Mary K. Goundrey, deputy director of communications for the Civil War Preservation Trust, at 7 a.m. on Aug. 19, developers began to dig two trenches to lay 6-inch sewer and 16-inch water pipes. The trenches cut a 1,900-foot swath through a 37.3-acre tract of land that is referred to as Perry Orchard — the center of Jackson’s siege of Harpers Ferry which commenced in mid-September 1862. The siege ultimately forced the largest surrender of troops in U.S. history.

The pipes connect the Sheridan subdivision, near U.S. 340 west of Perry Orchard, to a wastewater plant that is being built in the Old Standard Quarry property. The stretch of line that runs through Perry Orchard runs parallel to U.S. 340.

“We are out here tonight commemorating what happened a year ago,” Goundrey said. “One year ago, developers came in and without any permit or authorization from the National Park Service and dug two trenches.”

A row of torches marked the 1,900 feet where the trenches were dug.

“We’re here ... to really call upon the folks in the federal government who are still looking into this matter,” Goundrey said. “No charges have been filed yet, but the investigations are still ongoing.”

Goundrey said that Lee Snyder, Gene Capriotti, Herb Jonkers and Jim Gibson represent the developers that dug the trenches. The developers have an easement on the land and applied for a permit to dig the trench, according to Goundrey.

“However something happened as they were waiting for their permit process to go through,” she said, “and they decided they didn’t want to wait. They came in and did this unannounced and on their own,” she said.

The developers involved have maintained they did nothing wrong.

The trenches were dug as the park celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Niagara Movement, which was the beginning of what became the NAACP. The movement innovated civil liberties in the U.S. and met in Harpers Ferry in August 1906.

“They did this on a weekend when there was a major event going on elsewhere in the park,” Goundrey said. “It was tapping a lot of their resources.”

Robert Nieweg, the director of the Southern Field Office at the NTHP said in his speech that the vigil was “really a miserable anniversary.”

“Bulldozing national park land is an irresponsible act,” he said. “Under federal law, an undertaking like digging the sewer line requires a federal approval or has some kind of federal assistance or support and there’s the potential for harming a historic research.”

He said that those two requirements trigger a three-step review process that the developers neglected. The first step in the process is to decide whether there is a historic resource in the way. The second step is to review if the development could disturb that historic resource. The third step is to work with experts, and local and federal government to avoid harming the historic resource while still accomplishing the development.

Goundrey said that artifacts were proven to be disturbed by an investigation undertaken by the park.

According to Scot Faulkner, president of the Friends of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, the park has done all it can to investigate the matter and action against the developers has stalled at the federal level since November when the information was submitted to the Department of the Interior and the Justice Department.

“That activity has not been moved on by the Justice Department,” Faulkner said.

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Vigil marks anniversary of sewer installation on 'hallowed ground'
Group says action desecrated historic land
By JOSHUA BOWMAN

08/18/2007

Hagerstown Herald-Mail (MD)

http://www.herald-mail.com/?module=displaystory&story_id=172795&format=html

HARPERS FERRY, W.VA. - More than 50 people gathered Friday night at Perry Orchard near Harpers Ferry National Historical Park to mark the one-year anniversary of what they called a desecration of historical land.

"This is hallowed ground. Now, sewer runs beneath it," said Scott Faulkner, president of the Friends of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

In August 2006, Jefferson Utilities laid water and sewer lines across the property near the intersection of W.Va. 27 and U.S. 340. The land is owned by Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

The lines were installed to serve about 179 houses in the Sheridan housing development.

Several groups, including Faulkner's, have argued that the utility company did not secure the appropriate permits to lay the lines. Those groups met Friday night to hold a candlelight vigil and discuss their frustration with the federal government, which they said should be investigating the matter more quickly.

Participants lighted torches along the roughly 2,000 yards of land where the lines were laid. Several people said the land needs to be preserved because of its historical significance.

Faulkner said the land was the site of an 1859 attempt by John Brown to incite a slave rebellion.

Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Preservation Trust, said he wants to see the U.S. Department of Justice prosecute the utility company, which he said refused to wait for a permit before digging trenches on the land.

Attorney J. Michael Cassell, who is representing Jefferson Utilities, said Friday that his client had a right to do the work.

Cassell said Jefferson Utilities obtained an easement allowing the company to lay the water and sewer lines on the property.

"Any assertions to the contrary are just plain wrong," Cassell said.

Donald Campbell, park superintendent at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, said Friday that the easement agreement, which was drawn up with the property's prior owner, stayed intact when the land was sold to the National Park Service.

But he said additional regulations went into effect when the property became parkland to ensure the work complied with the National Environmental Policy and Historic Preservation acts.

"When you go to construct on land owned by the park service, certain laws will apply," Campbell said.

Jefferson Utilities applied for a permit to install the lines, and the park service put out a notice for public comment. About halfway through the public comment period, the utility company began to dig the trenches, Campbell said.

The U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Justice and Environmental Protection Agency are looking into the matter, Campbell said.

Cassell said Friday he was not aware of a federal investigation.

Calls to the U.S. Department of the Interior were not returned Friday.

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Wilson's Creek Observes 146th Anniversary
By Amy Brant, Republic Monitor

08/16/2007

Christian County Headliner News (MO)

<http://www.zwire.com/site/tab6.cfm?brd=2841>

Stifling heat, flies buzzing around the horses, the rumble of wagons on rutted ground and dozens of mounted soldiers riding through the field in blue uniforms carrying rifles.

It could have been 146 years ago when the Battle of Wilson's Creek raged Aug. 10, 1861.

However, this weekend the setting didn't echo shouts of "fire," rather it was "cut," as Wide Awake Films of Kansas City, filmed more than 100 living historians recreating the Civil War battle for a new Visitor's Center video for the battlefield.

The shooting included the reenactors dressed in period clothing, 15 to 20 cavalry horses, and two horse-drawn artillery teams in various locations throughout the battlefield, from Price's headquarters at stop four on the tour road to Bloody Hill.

The Wilson's Creek Foundation sponsored and funded the filming for the 40- to 60-minute DVD documentary and a 20-minute interpretative film for the Wilson's Creek Visitor's Center. According to information from Foundation Executive Director, April McDonough, the DVD documentary will be sold to visitors at the park and to history buffs online and through other distribution channels, while the new 20-minute interpretive video will replace the current Battle of Wilson's Creek film that was produced more than 25 years ago. It will incorporate modern film techniques to recreate realistic battle scenes using high-definition format and 5.1 stereo sound.

Wide Awake Films also filmed the anniversary celebration April 10 with Civil War Preservation Trust President, Jim Lighthizer, as the guest speaker.

The celebration kicked off with opening remarks from Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Superintendent Ted Hillmer. Hillmer spoke about having read a novel, "100 Years of Solitude," about a silversmith in a town that its residents were losing their memory. The silversmith started cataloging items so people would know how to use things, but then was cured of his memory loss. Hillmer shared a little about how the silversmith felt.

He compared the book to the anniversary of the battle. He said the purpose is to commemorate the battle, but to also remember those in 1950 who organized the foundation and bought the land.

"Sometimes we forget where we have come from," said Hillmer.

Following Hillmer, living historians presented the colors.

Foundation President Ron Elkins shared how he has striven, over the last 10 years as president, to make each year better than the last. He said his goal is to make Wilson's Creek the best battlefield in the country.

Lighthizer took the podium and spoke about how proud he is of the relationship the Civil War Preservation Trust has with the National Park Service at Wilson's Creek.

He said there is a two-fold purpose at Wilson's Creek-one to save the land, and two to educate the people about the Civil War. He said it is rare that he gets to visit with a group, such as the Battlefield Foundation, that's sustained itself over such a long period of time.

"What you've done for the preservation is unlike any I've ever seen anywhere around the country from the private sector," said Lighthizer. "That tells me there's foresight here."

He said the National Preservation Trust will be coming to Wilson's Creek next April for the National Conference. He said that will bring more than 400 people to the battlefield for a week.

Lighthizer shared two illustrations about how community involvement is vital to preservation.

"You've got to know what's going on," said Lighthizer. "The land developers do know what's going on."

He explained that urban sprawl is the number one enemy of preserving lands such as the battlefield.

The ceremony ended with a presentation of a memorial wreath by reenactors, a volley of gun fire, a cannon discharge, and the playing of "Taps."

Everyone in attendance was then invited into the visitor's center for refreshments provided by the Battlefield Foundation.

According to McDonough, the foundation serves as the fundraising arm and "friends" group for the battlefield. Since 1951, the member-supported Foundation has helped the park build new structures, restore and furnish historic structures, purchase additional land, and acquire library and museum collections.

"We very pleased to be working with Wide Awake Films on this project. We feel very lucky to have found a Missouri company with so much experience making Civil War films and a genuine passion for the accurate portrayal of the period," said McDonough.

Wide Awake Films is a full-service video production firm that has built a national reputation as a producer for historic site films, museum interpretive videos, and historical documentaries, especially those focusing on the Civil War.

Wide Awake's creative team, which won an Emmy award this spring for its documentary about the Battle of Franklin, Tenn., combines a passion for history and a dedication to current and future technology that provide innovative filmmaking capabilities.

According to McDonough, the battlefield has changed little from its historic setting, except for the vegetation, providing the visitor with a near-pristine condition of the actual battlefield.

Reenactors also gave weapon firing and artillery demonstrations throughout the weekend, when filming was not going on.

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Gettysburg Unveils Statue of Mt. Pleasant-native General
By Michael Cope, Daily Courier Staff Writer

08/13/2007

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (PA)

http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/tribunereview/news/westmoreland/s_521942.html

Brig. Gen. John White Geary -- a Mt. Pleasant native, Civil War general and governor of Pennsylvania -- was honored in a dedication Saturday that was nearly 100 years in the making.

"He was known as the most romantic figure in Pennsylvania history," said Sheldon Munn, the president of the Harrisburg Civil War Round Table, said of a man who was a general in two wars and played major roles in the history of three states.

Munn welcomed speakers and guests including 26 members of the Mt. Pleasant Historical Society and the Daughters of the American Revolution to Gettysburg on Saturday for a dedication program for Geary at Culp's Hill, a crucial part of the battlefield.

That former governor was honored by Gov. Edward Rendell at the dedication.

"This is something that should have been done 100 years ago," Rendell said of the Geary monument, which was erected 92 years ago without a dedication ceremony.

"He truly was a man who gave his all to the United States of America and the commonwealth of Pennsylvania," Rendell said, adding that it was also a good day to honor the current members of the military serving overseas as Pennsylvania is rich in military history as far back as when the Marine Corps and the Navy were both formed in Philadelphia.

"We should all be proud of men like Gen. Geary," Rendell said.

Charles Fennell Jr., a Gettysburg licensed battlefield guide and historian, said Culp's Hill was where Geary fought on July 3, 1863, leading his 1,400 men against 5,000 Confederate soldiers.

"Geary's men held the hill," Fennell said, adding that Geary's account stated that 277,000 bullets were shot during that battle from 3,000 rifles and 900 Confederates were buried by Geary's men.

"Those men fought longer on the front lines than any other man wearing blue," Fennell said.

Brig. Gen. John White Geary was born in Mt. Pleasant on Dec. 30, 1819.

The significant events in his life included his role in the founding of the American Highlanders, C. B. 2nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment, which he commanded during the Mexican War. He was the first United States commandant of Mexico City, the first

postmaster and then the first mayor of San Francisco in 1850, and led in the formation of the California Constitution. He served as territorial governor of the Kansas Territory in 1856 but resigned because of his unpopular anti-slavery beliefs before returning to Pennsylvania.

Wounded more than six times during the Civil War, Geary went on to serve two terms as governor of Pennsylvania from 1867 to 1873.

As governor, Geary invested heavily in education, social programs, a war orphan's system, compensation assistance to citizens who lost property during the Confederate invasion, mine safety legislation and began the fight for compulsory school education.

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Pats Tight End a Civil War Buff
By John Tomase, Boston Herald Staff Writer

08/13/2007
Waltham Daily News Tribune (MA)
<http://www.dailynewstribune.com/sports/x748942098>

FOXBORO - John Brady always believed his children needed to have an appreciation for those who came before them. And he certainly wasn't going to exempt youngest son Kyle merely because he was a football star.

The former member of the famed 82nd Airborne cultivated in his boy an appreciation for the Civil War that has grown into a scholarly obsession. Whereas most pro football players book vacations to Maui or Cancun, Brady can be found on a battlefield in Gettysburg or Antietam or Bull Run.

His dad wouldn't have it any other way.

``As you progress and reach the levels he started reaching in football, my thinking was you'd better be aware of the people that came before you," the elder Brady said last night from his VA home in Pennsylvania. ``Don't even think you're the greatest thing in the world and get arrogant. Don't walk around thinking you're King (expletive).

``I started reading him (Civil War) books when he was a kid and he was thinking, my God, could I do that? Could I go marching down the road in 95-degree heat with people dying, my best friends dying? People actually did that? Yeah, they did."

The realizations clearly made an impact. Despite being a 6-foot-6, 280-pound behemoth, Brady is soft-spoken and introspective. His eyes light up when talk turns to the Civil War, and he enthusiastically recommends books like Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize-winning ``The Killer Angels."

``It really is a fascinating period of history," Brady said yesterday after practice. ``There were so many events - political, social, the military. It's a really fascinating thing. It can be a little bit of an escape from our daily grind."

Brady's interest in the era of Lincoln and Lee began less than willingly. His father plied a local farmer with Jack Daniel's and filet mignon in exchange for access to 300 acres of land near Manassas, Va., that was home to a number of Civil War camps, both Union and Confederate.

His dad unearthed numerous belts, buttons and bullets from old battlefields and camps. Kyle didn't really grow to appreciate the finds until he was in his 20s. But now he's hooked.

``In the beginning it was kind of forcing him, but he grew to enjoy it," the 73-year-old said. ``It seemed to me a very crucial period in this country's history to know and understand."

Kyle would agree. He's visited most of the major battlefields in the eastern theater and hopes to hit some more down south in Tennessee and near his home in Jacksonville, Fla.

“These are places of terrible carnage, and what actually happened there when you think about it is amazing,” Brady said. “But at the same time many have been restored, with statues and monuments and the old equipment. When you’re there you can sense what happened. You can just feel the history.”

He owes his appreciation to his father, who was born in England, moved to Brooklyn when he was 5, and became interested in the Civil War as a 12-year-old when a neighbor recommended Douglas Southall Freeman's “Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command,” a three-volume set on the famed Confederate general.

A standout athlete in his own right, the elder Brady signed as a pitcher with the Giants but blew out his arm during World War II while trying to throw a dummy grenade 100 yards as part of a bet with a West Point quarterback.

“I was stupid,” he said. “I threw it 88 or 90 yards and something in my arm snapped, and that was the end of that.”

He ended up working for 30 years as an insurance investigator, honing the skills and attention to detail that made him so successful at unearthing Civil War artifacts.

“I guess you could say my family was historically inclined,” Kyle Brady said.

The effects on Kyle are apparent. A series of photos hang on John Brady's wall that he calls Humble Row. In one, young Kyle is 9, long before he found athletic stardom. In another he's playing tee ball. In the third he's a high school football player, moments after winning the Eastern Pennsylvania championship.

“He looks humble in every one of them,” the elder Brady said. “What I see on TV and what I read and hear from a lot of athletes annoys me. Everything is about football to some people and that's not right. If I'm proud of anything, it's that when I watch Kyle conduct himself, he isn't arrogant at all.”

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Manor house home built in the 1790s Ellwood shows off its architecture
By KELLY HANNON

08/13/2007

Fredericksburg Free Lance Star (VA)

<http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2007/082007/08132007/308020>

Architecture, not an arm, brought visitors to the historic Ellwood farm this weekend.

The property is renowned as the final resting place of Confederate Army General Stonewall Jackson's wounded, amputated limb. The appendage is buried in Ellwood's family cemetery.

But the rest of the farm, straddling the Orange and Spotsylvania county lines off Route 20, has a rich history.

The centerpiece is Ellwood Manor, built in the 1790s. It was used by the Union and Confederate armies in different years of the Civil War, as both a hospital and strategy center. The Marquis de Lafayette, a Revolutionary War hero, stopped here for breakfast in 1825 on his way to Fredericksburg.

"It's just amazing it's lasted this long," said Janet Baker of Orange, visiting Ellwood for the first time yesterday with her husband, Edward. They were impressed the home was still standing, displaying its original color, dove, a rust red.

Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield organized a series of stations Sunday on Ellwood's grounds. The theme, "Taming the Wilderness," focused on home life and construction practices of the 1790s. Children could play games of the era. Visitors strolled from tent to tent to learn about wood joinery, log hewing, blacksmithing, looms and kitchen tools.

The home was also open yesterday. During the summer, the home is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and weekends during the fall and winter. Volunteers from Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield give 30-minute tours.

The property was sold to the National Park Service in the 1970s, and apart from a few changes, Ellwood Manor looks much as it did when it was built.

"When you go in, you will see the original floor is still there," said Craig Rains of Orange, a Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield board member.

The nonprofit group has more than 250 members from 29 states. It has raised \$270,000 to restore Ellwood Manor, and needs another \$90,000 to complete the project.

The group assists the National Park Service by mowing Ellwood's large lawn, landscaping, organizing events and giving tours.

Susan Titus of Spotsylvania made guests grateful for the convenience of modern appliances and ingredients yesterday at the "Food Preparation" tent.

Ellwood is thought to have had a bake oven in its exterior kitchen, which would've helped slaves at the farm bake multiple loaves of bread at one time.

Otherwise, dishes would've been baked individually over a fire, a time-consuming process.

Preparing food required constant effort in the 18th century, Titus said. And when women were not cooking, or directing a kitchen, they had to think ahead to manage and preserve a food supply for the winter.

"The dailyness of it got you down," Titus said. "The same kinds of things had to be done daily."

Friends of the Wilderness volunteer Carolyn Elstner has a family connection to Ellwood.

Her father, Gordon Jones, a former obstetrician in Fredericksburg, lived here as a child, and her grandparents, Leo and Blanche Jones, lived in Ellwood when she was a child and young adult. They turned Ellwood over to the Park Service in the 1970s.

Elstner demonstrated games children would've played at Ellwood when it was built--lawn bowling, ring toss, and throwing corn husks through a ring.

It came naturally. As a girl, she played games on Ellwood's lawn with her brother and sister.

But the duty of living in a historic home meant games were often put on hold.

The family graciously received curious sightseers long before Ellwood was a national park. "You'd see this car come down the road and you knew your game would be interrupted," Elstner said, laughing at the memory. "And it was."

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Restoration Brings Gettysburg Art Full Circle
By MICHAEL E. RUANE Washington Post Staff Writer

8/12/2007

Washington Post (DC)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/11/AR2007081101179.html>

GETTYSBURG, Pa. - "Everybody ready?" asks the chief art conservator, David Olin.

He pauses for a second, then starts the hoist. With the drone of machinery, a segment of the legendary Gettysburg cyclorama, four stories tall, begins to rise up the wall and back to life.

There, in a corner of the painting, is the famous black dog howling eternally over the body of a slain soldier. Nearby, two men with a stretcher again carry a wounded comrade, whose right arm dangles over the side. In the center, horsemen gallop in the perpetual shadow of battle smoke.

As the canvas clears the floor, it falls into place with a soft whoosh. Applause breaks out among the art conservators and bystanders. There are tears, hugs, whoops and handshakes.

"It's up," says senior conservator Debra Selden of this Gilded Age wonder, an Imax of its time.

At last.

The depiction of the Battle of Gettysburg's climactic moment has begun the final stages of its return. The circular oil painting survived 124 years of use and abuse. It has been restored in an \$11.2 million, four-year conservation program and will be the showpiece of a new \$7.5 million building at Gettysburg National Military Park.

Last week, a Great Falls, Va.-based firm, Olin Conservation Inc., assisted by a team of Polish cyclorama experts, raised the first of 14 sections of the painting inside the huge new circular structure that will house it.

A gang of conservators -- shoeless to avoid damaging the canvas -- spent all day Wednesday preparing and maneuvering the 26-foot-wide, 950-pound section into place.

At one point, it had to be flipped from its face-down position with a big aluminum roller. It was then hauled up a kind of launching ramp and clamped into the curved steel and oak bracket, or cornice, from which it would hang. Bracket and painting were hoisted to the ceiling with cables and chains.

The project is the work of a partnership between the National Park Service, which oversees the battlefield, and a private, nonprofit fundraising organization called the Gettysburg

Foundation. The aim is to build a modern museum and visitor complex, restore and re-house the cyclorama, tear down the old visitor buildings nearby and return that landscape to its Civil War-era appearance.

The new \$103 million, barn-red visitor complex, designed to suggest a Pennsylvania farm, is scheduled to open next spring, project officials said.

Work on the cyclorama, including preparation, hanging and assembly of the remaining 13 segments, will keep the roughly 360-foot-long, 12-ton canvas closed to the public until fall 2008.

The 1884 painting, executed by French artist Paul Philippoteaux, once hung in pieces in a Newark department store. And until 2005, when it was closed to the public, it had been on display for more than 40 years in the old 1960s-era cyclorama building here.

Last week was a milestone in its often hazardous journey across history.

"This is absolutely incredible," senior paintings conservator Maura Duffy said as the first section was readied for its resurrection. "It's a dream come true."

Cyclorama paintings were the rage in the mid- to late 1800s, a kind of mass entertainment of their time. They required special buildings to display them in all their majesty. Many cities in the United States and Europe had cyclorama or panorama buildings, and the huge paintings, often of epic battles, made the rounds like blockbuster movies.

The paintings were big moneymakers and so popular that season tickets were available.

Nine "Gettysburgs" once were on the cyclorama circuit, according to Susan Boardman, museum coordinator for the Gettysburg Foundation and historical consultant on the cyclorama project.

Four were executed by Philippoteaux, she said. The first was installed in Chicago. The one now at Gettysburg was his second and was originally created for Boston.

Philippoteaux's cycloramas were considered fairly accurate and emotionally effective at the time.

"It is simply wonderful," Union Gen. John Gibbon, who had fought in the battle, wrote after seeing the one in Chicago in 1884. "I never before had an idea that the eye could be so deceived by paint (and) canvas."

The cyclorama in Gettysburg includes several historical figures, along with a self-portrait of Philippoteaux, who is shown leaning against a tree with a saber in his hand.

The painting now in Gettysburg has a tangled history. It was taken off exhibit in Boston in 1890. Later it fell on hard times, doomed by the arrival of movies. It was cut into 27 sections and placed in a 50-foot-long wooden crate in a vacant lot in Boston. There, vandals twice set it afire, and it was exposed to the elements, Boardman said.

In the early 1900s, Albert Hahne, the Newark department store owner, acquired the painting and displayed much of it in his store. Then came the move to Pennsylvania. In 1913, the 50th anniversary of the battle, Hahne and other investors built an unheated building on Cemetery Hill in Gettysburg and put the painting on display. "And it never left," Boardman said.

The National Park Service, realizing the painting's cultural value, acquired it in 1942 and, with the approach of the 100th battle anniversary in 1963, had it restored and installed in a then-new ultra-modern visitor center/cyclorama building. The 1913 structure on Cemetery Hill was demolished.

But that was nearly a half-century ago. Now the 1960s building has grown ragged, and it is due to be torn down.

Throughout, the painting has survived -- battered, patched, trimmed, carved up, touched up and now getting new life. With all that, as conservator Mary Wootton said: "It really is a treasure."

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Saving Survivors From the Field of Battle

By Linda Wheeler

08/12/2007

Washington Post (DC)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/07/AR2007080701974.html>

The field desk looked as if it had been cobbled together without much thought of making it attractive. It was strictly functional and probably would not draw much attention at an antique shop. But at the Harpers Ferry conservation lab for the National Park Service, it was treated as a treasured icon: It had belonged to Gen. Robert E. Lee and was most likely used at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Larry Bowers, who specializes in conserving wooden objects, was in charge of the desk.

"It is very modest and fairly crude, but it is what a soldier would have wanted in the field," Bowers said. "It is not high style. The coolest thing about it is that General Lee used it."

The worn and chipped black desk, with its interior pigeonholes for notes and writing paper, will ascend to star status next year when it is prominently displayed in the \$103 million Museum and Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park, scheduled to open in April. The complex will also house the park's 365-foot cyclorama painting and its collection of more than 300,000 objects and artifacts and 700,000 documents.

The Gettysburg Foundation, a private, nonprofit educational organization, is raising the funds for the complex, in partnership with the Park Service. Foundation President Robert C. Wilburn said the museum galleries will be arranged so that a visitor sees the exhibits in the context of the war. The planned galleries include causes of the Civil War, approach to the war, the three days of battle and the Gettysburg Address.

"The objects will be displayed in the period in which the event occurred," Wilburn said. "At present, there is no context. Things are just grouped together. We are changing that to help the visitor."

Lee's battered, ink-stained desk will be in Gallery 5, the exhibit area themed "Campaign to Pennsylvania: Testing Whether That Nation Can Long Endure." The gallery names are taken from phrases Abraham Lincoln used in his famous address.

Bowers said that when conserving the desk and other objects, the plan is never to make them look new or even particularly tidy.

"The idea is to do as little as possible, to be as uninvasive as possible," he said.

Bowers is used to working with delicate old wood. In his spare time, he is a violin maker.

The desk had been in storage since 1971, when the Park Service purchased the building in Gettysburg -- now its museum -- and the contents of a private collection housed there. The desk was built in two pieces so it could travel easily in wagons. Bowers gently cleaned the desk, removing dead bugs and old nests but leaving the ink stains and chipped paint. He did a small repair to the leaf that folds out to create a writing surface. A hinge had pulled loose, damaging the wood where it had been screwed in.

He also removed all the metal pieces, cleaned them and coated them with hot microcrystalline wax, a synthetic material, that will keep them from tarnishing.

The desk is ready for exhibit, and Bowers has moved on to conserving a chest of drawers that came from a Gettysburg home and was hit twice by bullets during the battle.

Elsewhere in the lab, conservation on other star attractions for the new museum is taking place. They include the litter that carried the wounded Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson off the Chancellorsville battlefield, a 34-star flag missing most of its stripes, a decorative apron resembling the U.S. flag and a wooden bed used by Lee in the field. None has been displayed before.

A pocket-size, leather-bound prayer book, which had been exhibited at the Gettysburg museum, also received attention. Pvt. John Cassidy of the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry was defending the Union line along a stone wall, known now as the Angle, during Pickett's Charge on July 3 when a bullet slammed into the book and his chest, killing him.

Park Service records are not clear about how the little book ended up at the Gettysburg museum, but it is one of the prized possessions. Its cover is darkened by much handling. The front lower corners are worn away, and the bottom of the spine is frayed, as though it had been shoved into Cassidy's breast pocket many times.

The bullet struck just above the middle near the right front edge, leaving a tunnel in the leather and paper.

Cassidy's prayer book, similar to religious books sold by sutlers at campsites, will have a prominent position in the gallery devoted to the third day of the battle. Nearby will be the spurs Gen. George E. Pickett wore at Gettysburg.

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Area Power Needs Could Trump View of Antietam Battlefield

By Dan Dearth

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Hagerstown Herald-Mail (MD)

http://www.herald-mail.com/?module=displaystory&story_id=172113&format=html

SHARPSBURG - Antietam National Battlefield lies in a corridor where power lines could be raised to satisfy the mounting electricity needs associated with Western Maryland's population boom.

Julie Ruggiero, a U.S. Department of energy spokeswoman, said the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor surrounding Antietam was just one area the federal government recently identified as a problem region.

She said extending power lines across the battlefield - where 23,110 soldiers were killed, wounded or listed as missing during the Civil War - was far from a sure thing.

"The goal isn't to get a line through (Antietam National Battlefield)," said Ruggiero, adding that state and National Park Service lands cannot be seized without permission.

Lee Dickinson, special park uses program manager for the National Park Service, said utility companies have to get a permit from the National Park Service before they can run power lines through a national park.

"Them coming to us and saying, 'We're coming through with a power line' is not automatic," she said.

National Park Service officials would consider a request to run the lines through the battlefield, but she said she doubted they would approve it.

As an alternative, the power lines could be constructed on private property around the battlefield, she said.

If that happens, Sharpsburg Councilman Russell Weaver said the lines would create an eyesore.

He said, to his knowledge, the federal government never approached town leaders to discuss the power lines.

"It's really shocking news ... We've spent years and years and years preserving Antietam," he said.

Weaver suggested it might take political pressure from federal legislators to keep the power lines away from the battlefield.

U.S. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin's office said he would continue to review the issue "as the process moves forward," while the office of his fellow Democrat, U.S. Sen. Barbara Mikulski, did not return telephone messages.

Lisa Wright, a spokeswoman for U.S. Rep. Roscoe Bartlett, R-6th, said the congressman would try to come up with a compromise that would provide electricity and preserve the battlefield.

"He wants to facilitate both goals," Wright said.

Developer Helps Preserve Civil War History

By Kim Shumack

08/10/2007

Baldwin County Times (AL)

http://www.baldwincountynow.com/articles/2007/08/12/arts_and_entertainment/doc46b793ea6e609845488865.txt

GULF SHORES — After guarding the Fort Morgan State Historic Site for many years, the fort's largest operational cannon was in need of protection itself. Tommy Robinson, a partner in Brett/Robinson Gulf Corp., arranged and funded the large crane needed to relocate this cannon to its new home, a water battery overlooking Mobile Bay.

The 32-pounder cannon was fired recently during weekend celebrations at the fort for the 143rd Anniversary of the Battle of Mobile Bay over the weekend.

"I am so very honored that Brett/Robinson could participate in this effort to preserve the area's unique and rich history," said Robinson, an Alabama Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau Board Member. "When Herb (Malone, CVB president/CEO) contacted me, I was more than happy to use my resources to help this worthwhile cause."

Robinson contacted one of his contractors, Russell Chestang of Russell C. Chestang Construction, who agreed to move this cannon from its precarious position within the fort.

"Without this heavy equipment, we had no way to move this cannon," said Mike Bailey, education and events coordinator at the fort. "We had to discontinue firing the cannon because when it was fired the explosion created vibrations, which were damaging the fort's masonry."

The cannon was originally cast at Fort Pitt Foundry in 1833 and fired a solid iron ball or exploding shell at Union enemies attempting to enter Mobile Bay during the Civil War. With a range of one mile, this 7,500-pound cannon was the standard seacoast defense weapon of the United States from 1829 to the mid-1850s.

As the military began using more advanced weapons, it slowly replaced these cannons, which once totaled 74 at Fort Morgan. By the time of the Battle of Mobile Bay (August 1864), only five cannons of this type were still in use at the fort.

Interestingly, the cannon is mounted on a reproduction seacoast artillery carriage, which appeared in the 1989 Civil War-themed movie *Glory*.

"We are very grateful to Tommy Robinson and Chestang Construction for making this happen," said John Neubauer, executive director of the Alabama Historical Commission. "Now we will be able to add to the realism at Fort Morgan and better demonstrate its significance in American history."

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Putting Tourists on the Battlefields

By Blake Farmer

08/07/2007

National Public Radio Text Transcript

<http://marketplace.publicradio.org/shows/2007/08/07/PM200708074.html>

The 150th anniversary of the Civil War's start is four years away, but states that were in the thick of the fighting are planning now to cash in on what they hope will be a boom in tourism. Blake Farmer reports.

Kai Ryssdal: We've got another four years until Civil War buffs get to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the war with special re-enactments of Fort Sumter and what have you. But states that were in the thick of the fighting are planning now to cash in on what they hope will be a boom in tourism then. From Nashville, Tenn., Blake Farmer reports.

Blake Farmer: Standing on the veranda of the Carnton Plantation just south of Nashville, Civil War historian Eric Jacobson explains the home's role in the Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864:

Eric Jacobson: This area was just blistered with artillery fire, but the wounded began to arrive here at about dark.

This was a Confederate hospital. The amputated limbs were said to be piled as high as the smokehouse. Four generals lay dead on the back porch after the fighting. All in all, 9,200 soldiers died that day, considered a Union victory.

The 2,500 people who lived here back then attempted to forget that battle, refusing congressional offers for any kind of commemoration. Jacobson says even the people who lived here at Carnton tried to remove most signs of the battle — including the blood stains.

Jacobson: They were removed, unfortunately, by 20th century occupants. The blood stains were sanded out of the floorboards.

Walking along the perimeter of the plantation, Jacobson reaches down for a recent artifact.

Jacobson: Oh, there's a golf ball. Isn't that funny?

The past was so completely forgotten here that what's practically the back yard of the Carnton Plantation was turned into the back nine of a golf course.

But now, Franklin is trying harder to remember its history. The city and several preservation groups have purchased the golf course for \$5 million, hoping to turn it into a battlefield park and big tourist draw. Communities throughout the Southeast are making improvements to

Civil War sites. They're preparing for a projected influx in tourists during the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

States are jumping on the bandwagon too, with their own anniversary commissions, says Civil War Preservation Trust spokesman Jim Campi.

Jim Campi: Pennsylvania has started a commission, Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia.

And now, the dollars are starting to flow. The state of Tennessee chipped in a million dollars to help finish paying for that golf course property in Franklin. Georgia is looking to build a Civil War visitor center. Pennsylvania's Gettysburg is getting a new museum. Groups in Maryland and Virginia are working up marketing campaigns for their historic sites.

Carole Summers says they're all after a specific group of sightseers called "heritage tourists." Summers is a tourism consultant in Charlotte, N.C.

Carole Summers: In the past 10 years, the heritage tourist has really become kind of the darling of the tourism industry. They are traveling to visit historic sites and they spend more money, they stay longer.

Heritage tourists spend \$620 per trip, compared with \$450 for a beach vacationer. That's according to a 2003 study by the Travel Industry Association. The number of wandering history buffs is growing, too. The association says heritage tourism is up 13 percent from 1996.

Campi, of the Civil War Preservation Trust, says economic forces are driving a new wave of battlefield preservation. He adds that neglected battlefield sites need to capitalize on the interest, because if they wait, developers will likely beat them to the punch.

Campi: I would argue that in places like middle Tennessee, central Virginia, around Atlanta, that we have five years at the outside. In most of those areas, maybe only two or three. Places are getting swallowed up.

Campi's pitch to the business world: as battlefields leave, so do the tourists.

The message has certainly gotten through back in Tennessee. The town of Franklin has attracted the attention of the National Park Service, which is considering the battlefield site for a military park. With help from the National Park's logo, town leaders expect the number of visitors to jump from 40,000 per year to more than 200,000.

In Nashville, I'm Blake Farmer for Marketplace.

Re-Creating Battlefields Causes New Skirmishes
By Christy Goodman, Washington Post Staff Writer

08/05/2007

Washington Post (DC)

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/04/AR2007080400663_pf.html

Battlefield historians say it will bring a clearer understanding and vision of the Battle of Second Manassas. Environmentalists say it will reduce an already diminished amount of hickory-oak forest in Northern Virginia and further degrade the surrounding environment.

Nevertheless, the National Parks Service plans to cut down approximately 140 acres of timber in the western end of the Manassas National Battlefield Park beginning this month.

"The National Park Service cutting trees is not a common thing," said Manassas Battlefield Superintendent Robert K. Sutton.

However, re-creating historic battlefields is more in vogue since Gettysburg National Military Park won its battle with environmentalists to clear nearly 600 acres of its battlefield, while replanting about 120 acres and a few orchards, said John A. Latschar, the Gettysburg park's superintendent.

During the early years of battlefield protection, Civil War veterans were the caretakers, Latschar said. "When they heard the phrase, 'preserve the lines of battle' . . . obviously, that meant you had to preserve the fields of observation and fire," he said.

Work to re-create those fields will bring visitors "a much more accurate, much more emotional and, we hope, more meaningful" experience, Latschar said.

On the afternoon of Aug. 28, 1862, Confederate Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson ordered his troops to attack a Union column led by Gen. John Pope along Warrenton Turnpike, now Route 29. The battle, thought to be fought at a 50- to 80- yard distance, was waged on the open fields of Brawner Farm, north of Route 29.

Two days later, the fight returned to the area of Deep Cut, just east of Brawner Farm on Featherbed Lane. Union troops were working their way up a hill, but Jackson's army and artillery fired down on them. Visitors finding a heavily wooded hill might find it hard to envision the six cannons that were pointed at the Union troops, Sutton said.

Both areas will have the most dramatic deforestation. A 35-acre site on Matthews Hill, off Sudley Road, will be cut and a 25-acre site a few yards away will be replanted, said Bryan Gorsira, program manager for natural resources at Manassas Battlefield Park.

Several compromises were made for the cut, Gorsira said. There were three hickory-oak forests, totaling 13.2 acres, that officials from the Virginia Natural Heritage Program within

the Department of Conservation and Recreation requested be left alone. The park plans left out less than five acres, Gorsira said.

"They wanted that part excluded, but that was right in the middle of the line of sight, and that would defeat the purpose" of the project, he said.

The land was cattle pasture during the war, but bringing cattle back would require a kind of park maintenance that officials are not prepared to undertake, Sutton said.

Otherwise, the best forest management practices are being used, Gorsira said. Buffers along streams and roads will be maintained, with trees allowed to grow within 100 feet. Planting native grasses with deep rooting systems will replace the treeless area and will be cut for hay by local farmers, he said.

Many large old-growth trees will be spared, giving the field a savannah landscape, which is rare in Northern Virginia, Sutton said.

But others said that the forest that is already there is rare.

The hickory-oak forest is "globally rare" and found in six counties in Virginia and Maryland, said Kim Hosen, executive director of Prince William Conservation Alliance. "We appreciate the need to protect the view-shed, but they are not re-creating the conditions at the time of the Civil War. And this involves cutting down a very rare forest that has significant value to the community in 2007," Hosen said.

There is a reason why this land was preserved as a park, Sutton said. "The reason this park exists is because of the Civil War," he said.

The timber also will be removed using low-impact equipment, and the stumps will be left to rot so as not to disturb possible artifacts in the ground, said Scott Riegel, co-owner of West Virginia-based Clear Creek Forestry, which agreed to cut the forest for the cost of the timber. Riegel, who has been working with Sutton over three years to plan the project, estimates it could cost as much as \$200,000 and last about three months with perfect weather.

"We will lay down saplings, limbs and even some chips" to minimize disturbing the soil, he said.

Sutton said the plans to return the battlefields to their historic vistas were included in the park's long-term plan in 1983. The plans also include clearing 40 acres behind the park's headquarters on the hill where Gen. Robert E. Lee's headquarters had a perfect view of the surroundings but where many trees have since grown.

Although Civil War reenactments are not allowed on federal land, restoring the landscapes is of great interest to such groups.

"It has gotten more professional as time has gone on," said Linden A. "Butch" Fravel, vice president of Cedar Creek Battlefield in Warrenton, where reenactments of the Battle of First

Manassas were held last year. "[The reenactors] have come a long way and continue to improve their knowledge of what they are doing and their interpretation of it," Fravel said. Cedar Creek Battlefield pays its mortgage through reenactments, Fravel said, adding that he thinks it's a great way to subsidize national parks.

"A lot of those [reenactors] are into authenticity," he said.