

Civil War News Roundup - 7/20/2009
Courtesy of the Civil War Preservation Trust

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Webb Adds His Support for Preservationists
By Clint Schemmer

7/18/2009

Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star (VA)

<http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2009/072009/07182009/480610>

Historic preservation can make for odd political bedfellows, and it certainly is doing so in the Wilderness Wal-Mart controversy.

U.S. Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., Gov. Tim Kaine, also a Democrat, and Virginia House Speaker Bill Howell of Stafford County, a Republican who has frequently battled with Kaine and other Democrats, see eye-to-eye on the land-use issue in Orange County.

Earlier this week, Kaine and Howell urged the Orange County Board of Supervisors to work with Wal-Mart to find an alternate site for the giant retailer's proposed Supercenter in Orange.

Such a tract, they said, should be in the vicinity of the proposed site off State Route 3--but not on the Wilderness battlefield, and it should be out of view from Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

Webb endorsed that position yesterday.

"As a longtime advocate of preserving our Civil War battlefields I believe it is vitally important that respect and reverence guide all land-use decisions affecting these historic sites," Webb said through his press secretary.

"I hope that Wal-Mart, the Board of Supervisors and all of the parties involved are able to reach a conclusion that respects the Wilderness battlefield site, in order to move forward with a project that will spur economic growth in the area," he said.

Virginia's other senator, former Gov. Mark Warner, a Democrat, is leaving it to the Orange supervisors to decide the matter.

"Senator Warner understands the importance of local input and control over zoning decisions like this, and he trusts that Orange County officials will recognize the importance of preserving historic sites as they make their decision," his communications director, Kevin Hall, said.

Rep. Eric Cantor, the 7th District Republican in whose district the Wilderness retail center would be built--was busy with floor votes yesterday afternoon, and unavailable for comment, his spokeswoman said. Cantor is the House minority whip, the chamber's No. 2 post.

Rep. Robert Wittman, R-1st, isn't jumping into the fray.

"He's monitoring the issue, but since it's not in his district and there is no federal role involved, he's kind of staying out of it," said Mary Springer, Witt-man's chief of staff.

The Wal-Mart site is along Wilderness Run, the boundary line between Orange and Spotsylvania counties and Cantor and Wittman's districts.

The two rivals for Kaine's job, Democrat Creigh Deeds and Republican Bob McDonnell, have also staked out positions on the matter.

State Sen. Deeds wrote Michael T. Duke, president of Wal-Mart Stores Inc., asking him to move the Supercenter away from the battlefield, noting there are several large parcels suitable for a Route 3 store within two or three miles.

McDonnell expressed confidence that Orange officials will find a middle ground that "preserves the Wilderness battlefield while also allowing for commercial development."

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History Endangered: Natural Gas Line Proposed for Historic Valley

By Karen Gardner

7/18/2009

Frederick News-Post (MD)

<http://www.fredericknewspost.com/sections/news/display.htm?storyID=92760>

Middletown -- For most of the nearly 300 years that western Frederick County has been settled, the farmland along Marker Road west of Middletown has been kept intact.

There's a threat to that rural solitude.

In January, Dominion Transmission bought the former Fox's Tavern and 135 acres of surrounding farmland to build a compression pump for its natural gas transmission line.

The compressor won't be built in the near future, but it's in the pipeline.

The region has seen important slices of this nation's history. Troops, including one Lt. Col. George Washington, marched through on the way to what is now Pittsburgh during the French and Indian War in 1755.

Washington often returned to Fox's Tavern, or Fox's Inn, as it was also called at some point, to catch up with old military buddies.

Civil War soldiers marched through the fields as they ascended Fox's Gap during the Battle of South Mountain, an important precursor to the Battle of Antietam in September 1862.

Abraham Lincoln probably passed through the gap after the battles.

Dominion Transmission, which operates in six states from Ohio to Virginia, plans to build a compressor station in the area to move natural gas from storage to markets in the mid-Atlantic region, said Bob Fulton, manager of media and community relations for Dominion Transmission.

Before it can build on the Fox's Tavern site, Dominion needs permission from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, as well as the state Public Service Commission.

It won't be built anytime soon, Fulton said.

"The project has been suspended for the review process," he said. No time frame has been set.

If the compressor station is built, it would be about the size of a medium-sized barn, Fulton said.

"We would make every attempt to blend it with the landscaping," he said.

Turbines and cooling fans inside the structure will emit a hum of about 55 decibels when operating, about the level of a human conversation.

The station would be most active in winter and the middle of summer, when natural gas is needed most.

Preservationists and local residents aren't happy about Dominion's plans.

Richard Maranto is president of Citizens for the Preservation of Middletown Valley, and has lived in the vicinity of Fox's Gap since the late 1970s.

"There are lots of industrial sites that were available (to Dominion)," Maranto said.

Fox's Tavern and the surrounding farm are zoned agricultural, and the farm is part of the Mid-Maryland Rural Legacy Area.

"There's a big block of preserved land around that property," said Tim Blaser, Frederick County planner in charge of agricultural preservation.

If Dominion does build the compressor station, Blaser said, "That would be very inconsistent with everything we've done out there to try and preserve the land. We would do everything we could about getting the information to the appropriate agencies about the impact."

The site is just outside the South Mountain State Battlefield, said Audrey Scanlan-Teller, a Middletown resident who participates in Civil War re-enactments. Artillery massed on the farm to prepare for the battle. The inn, which by then was a farmhouse, was used as a hospital after the battle.

"(Dominion's) approach to land acquisition is very different than what we think it should be," Maranto said. "It's, 'If you're nice to us, we'll work with you, if you get in our way, we'll bypass you.'"

The Civil War Preservation Trust included South Mountain State Battlefield on its annual Ten Most Endangered Sites list in March because of the Dominion purchase.

"Dominion knows nothing about the historic significance of this property," Maranto said.

In three years, South Mountain State Battlefield will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the 1862 battle. Every September, re-enactors descend on the battlefield site to do a living history demonstration of the battle.

"We are aware of the historical significance of the building," Fulton said of Fox's Tavern. "A determination will be made as to how we proceed. We will talk with local preservation organizations."

The compressor station is likely to be about four stories tall, Maranto said. The 55-decibel hum will be audible to neighbors, he said.

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Tourism Pros: Bring History Alive

By Erin James

7/18/2009

Hanover Evening Sun (PA)

http://www.eveningsun.com/ci_12851155?IADID=Search-www.eveningsun.com-www.eveningsun.com

Marci Ross remembers clearly the time she saw a class of youngsters use interactive technology at the National Museum of the American Indian to complete a school project.

What sticks with her the most, however, is the moment she realized not one of the students had glanced up to notice that the arrowhead artifact they were studying was right in front of them in a display case.

"They were so dialed in to technology," she said.

It's a lesson that Ross - the resources manager at the Maryland Office of Tourism Development - said she's taken to heart ever since.

That lesson: Today's students learn in different ways than those of generations past, and it is up to heritage-tourism professionals to find new ways of bringing history alive if the industry is to continue to prosper.

Ross was one of three heritage-tourism industry experts who spoke Thursday in Gettysburg as part of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground partnership's three-day conference. Each speaker addressed a different aspect of industry trends and the planning process for the Civil War's 150th anniversary.

But the central theme of the presentations was the need for historic sites like Gettysburg - the local economy of which depends on tourist dollars - to continue adapting to changing trends and marketing to a broader audience.

That broader audience, especially, includes young people, said Richard Lewis, public relations manager for the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

With PowerPoint slides of yawning children playing behind him, Lewis said industry professionals need to find ways of engaging the younger generations - members of whom traditionally regard history as "boring," he said.

"We have to get rid of that notion," he said. "It's going to be up to us to understand that viewpoint."

But there is good news, Lewis said. When it comes to spending money, heritage tourism largely depends on a demographic of older, educated adults with some disposable income.

Of all traveling adults, Lewis estimated that 81 percent visit historic sites. That adds up to 118 million people annually, he said.

"What we have in front of us is a ready-made audience that can and will spend money," he said.

Yet, "somehow attendance at a lot of historic sites is down and has been going down," Lewis added. Locally, visitation has remained steady, but spending by tourists was down slightly last year, according to a study by the Gettysburg Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Lewis said industry professionals should be working to find new ways of telling the story of American history. For example, he said, go beyond military tactics and invite people to learn about the plight of women or African Americans during the Civil War.

"There's much more than battle smoke," he said.

Ross said she there are four main factors influencing heritage-tourism trends today. They are the struggling economy, reduced marketing budgets for state tourism offices, the influence of technology on visitor experiences and the price of gasoline.

The trends themselves, she said, are that people are taking shorter trips and staying closer to home when they do decide to travel.

With that knowledge, Ross said her office has abandoned national marketing and instead focuses on the region.

"Now we look at a much more centralized geographic market," she said.

But the game is almost sure to change dramatically in a few years - when the historic sites of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground corridor begin to commemorate their 150th Civil War anniversaries. Gettysburg will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the battle in 2013, and thousands - perhaps millions - more visitors than usual are expected.

The Journey is a historical partnership spanning four states. The non-profit organization is dedicated to raising national awareness and increasing tourism from Monticello in Virginia to Gettysburg.

Barbara Franco, executive director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, said statewide planning for the anniversary is already under way. A Web site will launch later this summer.

The overall idea is to communicate the idea that the Civil War may be over, but that it fundamentally changed American and that its influence on society continues today.

"We're not just talking about an anniversary of four years," she said. "But we're talking about a legacy of 150 years."

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Kaine, Howell Oppose Wal-Mart Close to Wilderness Battlefield
By Fredrick Kunkle

7/16/2009

Washington Post (DC)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/15/AR2009071503691.html?hpid=topnews>

Threatened with the possibility that an army of cashiers with barcode-reading guns could invade hallowed ground near the site of one of the Civil War's most hellish battles, Virginia's two most powerful political foes have united in a bipartisan stand to relocate a proposed Wal-Mart in Orange County.

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine (D) and House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell (R) -- who have been on warring sides of many state issues -- have written to the Board of Supervisors, asking it to help Wal-Mart find a site farther from the Wilderness battlefield.

"We strongly encourage your Board to work closely with Wal-Mart to find an appropriate alternative site for the proposed retail center in the vicinity of the proposed site yet situated outside the boundaries of Wilderness Battlefield and out of the view of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park," says Monday's letter co-signed by Kaine and Howell. In their letter, Kaine and Howell also offered state resources in helping to work out an alternative.

Kaine has made his preservation of 400,000 acres of open land a centerpiece of his tenure; Howell is a Civil War buff who has also been co-chairman of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission.

The Wilderness marked the first clash between Gen. Robert E. Lee and Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and culminated in a savage exchange of fire in a jungle-like inferno of scrub oak and pines. The May 1864 battle killed or wounded 24,000 soldiers. The National Park Service owns 2,800 acres of the core battlefield, whose larger area extends across almost 7,000 acres.

Wal-Mart has proposed a 138,000-square-foot store and parking lot on a site that is considered a gateway to the battlefield. Located on a hilltop overlooking the battlefield, the site had been zoned for commercial development for some time but still has little more than a small shopping plaza opposite a Sheetz gas station.

Preliminary plans also called for the discount store to be adjacent to a retail, office and residential complex called Wilderness Crossing. Neither the supercenter nor the larger complex would be built on the battlefield. A study commissioned by the company said the proposed site lacked historical and archaeological significance.

Keith Morris, a Wal-Mart spokesman, said the company believes the current plan is sensitive to the battlefield's historic importance.

"We wholeheartedly agree this project presents the unique opportunity to bring the interests of battlefield preservation and smart development effectively into balance, and that is precisely what we have accomplished with our current proposal," he said, noting that the site has been zoned for commercial development for more than 20 years and serves an area where more than 5,000 homes and compatible commercial development exist.

Jim Campi, a spokesman for the Civil War Preservation Trust who publicized the joint letter yesterday, said a similar proposal to find a more suitable location had been floated this year by the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition, an organization of national, regional and local preservation groups.

"There are a couple options we looked at," Campi said in an interview. He said the corporation would be more respectful of the nation's history and better off economically by locating farther west on Route 3, closer to

commercial centers on the way to Culpeper. Although the site had long been zoned for commercial activity, he said no one thought it might be on Wal-Mart's scale.

"What's being proposed here is four times the existing commercial at that site," Campi said.

The two candidates who hope to assume Kaine's seat -- state Sen. R. Creigh Deeds (D-Bath) and former attorney general Robert F. McDonnell (R) -- also have publicly urged Wal-Mart to move farther from the battlefield, Campi said.

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Gov. Kaine, Howell urge new Va. site for Wal-Mart
By Steve Szkotak

7/16/2009

Associated Press (NAT)

<http://www.forbes.com/feeds/ap/2009/07/16/ap6662255.html>

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine and the speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates are encouraging Wal-Mart and Orange County officials to find an alternative site for a Supercenter proposed near a Civil War battlefield.

The 138,000-square-foot store is planned near the Wilderness battlefield, which Kaine and Speaker William J. Howell said "ranks supremely important" among the many Civil War battlefields in Virginia.

"Every acre of battlefield land that is destroyed means a loss of open space and missed tourism opportunities, and it closes one more window for future generations to better understand our national story,"

Kaine and Howell said in the letter dated July 13 to Lee Frame, chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

The letter added two more voices to a litany of opponents who have urged Wal-Mart to select another location in rural Orange County for its store. The retailer has said the site was selected after an extensive review and that it would not adversely impact the battlefield.

Wal-Mart's proposal to build in Locust Grove, less than one mile from the formal boundaries of the Wilderness battlefield, has stirred a tempest. It has drawn protests from more than 250 historians across the U.S. and a coalition of preservationists and criticism from congressmen from Texas and Vermont.

The battlefield in the county of 32,000 about 50 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., is where 29,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were injured or killed 145 years ago. It's also the place where Robert E. Lee first met Ulysses S. Grant in battle.

In a statement on Wednesday, Wal-Mart said, "We wholeheartedly agree this project presents the unique opportunity to bring the interests of battlefield preservation and smart development effectively into balance, and that is precisely what we have accomplished with our current proposal."

Supervisor Teri Pace, a critic of Wal-Mart's site selection, said it would be "disappointing to not accept such a generous offer from the state." She said it is an opportunity to protect history and "promote and enhance our future economic prosperity."

Frame, who has been careful about taking a public stand on the issue, said the letter from Kaine and Howell would be considered with other arguments when he casts his vote on the Wal-Mart proposal.

"These are important decision-makers and they've expressed an interest," Frame said. He called the state's commitment to assist the county "significant" but said the letter raised no new issues.

Preservationists welcomed the news and said it could sway the board's decision. Supervisors are believed to be leaning to approval of the special use permit Wal-Mart needs to build. A public hearing is scheduled July 27. A vote is not expected that day.

"I think that this letter is likely to be influential," said Robert Nieweg of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "Now we have the governor of the state of Virginia and the leading Republican in our state making absolutely clear this is one of the most important places in the state of Virginia."

But Orange County residents who welcome the store have said it will generate much-needed tax revenue, hundreds of jobs, and provide a shopping option closer to home.

In their letter, Kaine and Howell urged Orange County and Wal-Mart to find an alternate site beyond the Wilderness and other Civil War parks in the Fredericksburg area. The two offered the technical services of the state.

In a statement, the Civil War Preservation Trust said: "We firmly believe that encouraging Wal-Mart to move to an alternate location is in the best interests of both the National Park and Orange County residents."

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Editorial: Orange County Supervisors Can Still Do What's Right

7/14/2009

Culpeper Star-Exponent (VA)

http://www.starexponent.com/cse/news/opinion/op_ed/article/orange_co_supervisors_can_still_do_whats_right/39392/

» To save our history, they must work with Wal-Mart and a key landowner to select a site away from the Wilderness battlefield.

Despite growing local and national opposition, a Wal-Mart super center — and all the clutter it brings — could soon be a reality directly across the street from the Civil War's Wilderness battlefield.

And that's sad.

What needs to happen is simple: The store should be built a short distance away from the battlefield but still in Orange County. One nearby landowner has offered his 2,000 acres, which sits strategically closer to Lake of the Woods, but Wal-Mart won't bite because that land is not zoned for commercial use.

In a perfect world, the Orange County Board of Supervisors should quickly rezone that land and work with Wal-Mart to allow for construction as far away from the national park as possible.

The next step would be for a major preservation group — such as the Civil War Preservation Trust — to mount a fundraising campaign to buy the sacred ground, forever ensuring its protection. The CWPT has done this many times with great success, including a \$12 million land acquisition at the Slaughter Pen in Fredericksburg.

The key to this plan is the five-member Orange County BOS. The board needs to proactively facilitate not only what's best for Orange County, but what's best for our nation's history. Given recent events, however, we're doubtful that will happen. After all, this is the same board that voted 3-2 to fire the county administrator after he publicly suggested an idea similar to the one we just proposed.

With so much at stake, it's time for Orange County's elected leaders to step up and do the right thing.

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Editorial: Seek Compromise at Battle Site

7/14/2009

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (VA)

<http://hamptonroads.com/2009/07/seek-compromise-battle-site>

A modern-day battle at the Wilderness just got considerably wilder.

For months, a large group of historians - including best-selling authors David M. McCullough and James McPherson - has been urging Wal-Mart to reconsider plans to build a store less than a mile from a national park commemorating the 1864 Battle of the Wilderness.

Now, as the Orange County Board of Supervisors nears a decision on the project west of Fredericksburg, some unusual troop maneuvers are taking place. The tactical strategy is rife for second-guessing.

After a closed meeting July 3, the board voted 3-2 to fire County Administrator Bill Rolfe. The timing was interesting, to say the least. Rolfe, an Old Dominion University grad who grew up in Portsmouth, had recently sent board members an e-mail suggesting they seek a compromise.

"The question that begs to be asked is, 'Why isn't the county trying to broker a deal that keeps Wal-Mart in the county and moves it further from the congressionally approved boundary line of the Wilderness Battlefield?' Both would be in our best interest," Rolfe wrote to the board June 15, according to The (Fredericksburg) Free Lance-Star.

Rolfe's critics on the board objected to his recommendation of a specific site nearby for the Wal-Mart. They said other, unspecified matters also played a role in his dismissal.

Some preservationists disliked the details of Rolfe's e-mail, too. They say the site he pitched is still too close to the park.

But Rolfe's general call for a compromise was certainly reasonable - one, in fact, that Wal-Mart accepted in the mid-1990s to end a fight over plans for a store next to George Washington's boyhood home at Ferry Farm, on the outskirts of Fredericksburg.

Orange officials would be wise to remember that bit of recent history, as well as more distant history, before they rush to approve a project that would do lasting damage to the county's tourism appeal - and to a national landmark. All the combatants involved need to find a solution that protects property rights as well as the battlefield.

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Nearly 150 Years Ago, Sketches Recorded Aftermath of John Brown's Raid
By Courtlin Hicks

7/13/2009

Charleston Daily Mail (WV)

<http://www.dailymail.com/News/statenews/200907120271>

Long before the advent of newspaper and magazine photography, artists hastened by horseback or rail to scenes of important events to sketch what was happening for readers of popular publications such as Harper's Monthly.

One of the most talented artists of the mid-19th century was a man born in 1816 in present-day West Virginia.

His name was David Hunter Strother, but he was known nationally by his pen name, Porte Crayon.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of John Brown's Raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry. The famous abolitionist's small band of devotees failed in their attempt to spark an insurrection among slaves, and Brown was eventually condemned to the gallows.

Strother recorded the historic event for posterity.

To commemorate the anniversary, Strother's sketches of the raid's aftermath are on display in the J. Hornor Davis Family Galleries at the Wise Library on West Virginia University's downtown campus. The exhibit opened June 20 and will run through the fall.

Over a period of years, Strother's descendants donated a wealth of the artist's visual treasures to WVU, said John Cuthbert, curator of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection.

Strother was a wordsmith, too.

"He was among the most literate people of the era as well as a skilled artist," Cuthbert said.

In addition to hundreds of drawings from Strother's lengthy career, WVU possesses his diaries, manuscripts and letters, Cuthbert said.

"It's possibly our most valuable collection," he said.

The raid took place on Oct. 16, 1859, when Brown and 19 men stormed the armory.

Strother arrived within 36 hours. It was by chance that he happened to be so close to the action.

He was visiting a Charles Town woman who would later become his second wife when he heard about the big news in Harpers Ferry, according to historical accounts.

When authorities retook the armory on Oct. 18, Brown was beaten in the head.

Strother gained access to Brown as he lie bleeding on the floor of a makeshift jail and interviewed him even before authorities did.

Strother remained in Harpers Ferry until Brown was hanged on Dec. 2.

According to the noted West Virginia historian Boyd Stutler, who died in 1970, Harper's ran Strother's material for a few weeks until a problem arose back in the home office in New York.

It turned out that Strother had come from a family of slaveholders, and his objections to the prospect of emancipation colored his work, his editors believed.

Harper's did not inform Strother of its decision, wrote Stutler, a leading authority on the raid.

Strother therefore continued to report and draw throughout the trial. His manuscripts and sketches were not published until 95 years after the fact.

In 1868, Strother gave a lecture about his impressions of the historic event.

"It must be remembered that it was neither the popular hero, nor the Prophet, that I saw between Oct. 18 and Dec. 2, 1859, but simply John Brown, the man: overthrown, wounded, enfeebled, exhausted - John Brown the Prisoner, clothed in rags and all his human weakness - hedged about with hatred and observed with jealous and unsympathetic scrutiny," Strother said.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the U.S. Army enlisted Strother as a topographer because of his familiarity with the Shenandoah Valley.

Over the next four years, he was at the scene of 30 battles and dutifully recorded his impressions in a notebook.

In 1879, President Rutherford Hayes named Strother to be consul general to Mexico. Six years later, he returned home to West Virginia.

In 1888, at the age of 71, he died in Martinsburg, which was also his birthplace.

He was buried in Green Hill Cemetery, which he designed, drawing inspiration from a graveyard he had seen during his travels in France.

Strother was known for his landscapes during his early career, so it is fitting that one of West Virginia's majestic mountains is named for him.

Mount Porte Crayon is in Randolph County. With an elevation of 4,770 feet, it is the sixth highest point in the state.

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An Inglorious Mess

By Schuyler Kropf

7/11/2009

Charleston Post and Courier (SC)

http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2009/jul/12/an_inglorious_mess89002/

MORRIS ISLAND — This might be where the Civil War was fought, but today's invaders are more likely to be armed with six-packs and dressed in bathing suits.

A quarter-mile stretch of high ground called Cummings Point, just beyond the shadow of Fort Sumter, has evolved into a weekend party haven where beer is consumed by the caseload, dogs run free and the girls sometimes go wild.

Problem is, some visitors don't seem much interested in cleaning up their mess afterward.

July Fourth weekend was the worst.

"It was one huge frat party," said local marine scientist Elizabeth Wenner.

Boats? "We stopped counting at 384," she said.

Crowd size? More than 1,500 people, she guessed.

Skin? One of the larger vessels featured an open-air exotic dancer's pole.

Wenner isn't against fun. It's just that all those snack wrappers, beach chairs and beer cans visitors carried in on the Fourth of July were still there July 5, scattered across the dunes or left to float in the marsh.

One ecologically minded group picked up at least 30 bags of trash after the party was over. Their haul included stacks of broken foam coolers. There were also reports of DJs and vendors coming in offering drinks, hamburgers and burritos for sale.

Don't even get started about cigarette butts.

Fact is, Cummings Point, historic site or not, is where fun reigns supreme — more than any other local boat-beach spot around. Charleston owns most of that part of the island, buying it last year in a preservation deal.

But the goal of keeping the island clean and pristine is getting overshadowed by the weekend partiers, while various water patrol agencies have been strapped to cover an increasingly dangerous Charleston Harbor.

That's about to change. Fed-up with the holiday reports, local police authorities and the state wildlife department plan to crack down. Signs could go up as soon as this week warning against dogs running loose, alcohol consumption and fireworks, just like in every park in the city limits.

"The basic 'no-no' signs," said Lt. Chip Searson of Charleston's police harbor patrol.

Police are looking at using undercover officers to make littering and alcohol cases, a ticket that can prove expensive with fines up to \$520 and 40 hours of community service.

Some visitors just don't realize the historical value of where they are, Searson said.

Though the island's footprint has shifted greatly since the Civil War, Morris Island is where Fort Wagner once stood.

It housed Confederates protecting Charleston Harbor and was attacked by the all-black 54th Massachusetts regiment famously depicted at the end of the film "Glory."

Blake Hallman, of the Morris Island Coalition, said there's a precedent for officials stepping in to police Charleston-area boat destinations that get out of hand.

He pointed out a case on Capers Island, north of Dewees Island near Bulls Bay. On Capers, authorities went undercover, made arrests and brought back a sense of responsibility.

Visitors to Morris Island on Saturday were mixed on whether a law enforcement crackdown is needed. Some said the problems only occur during the summer's "Big Three" holidays — Memorial, Independence and Labor days.

"It's not so much the locals, it's the tourists who are leaving the trash," said Glenn Brown, of James Island, as he relaxed with a cold beverage in his hand.

"Obviously it's coming from out of town," added his buddy, Jay Edgerton of Mount Pleasant.

Claudette Humbert, who said she represents senior visitors, said more policing is needed, pointing to the cussing and the heavy drinking that goes on.

"You wonder how in the world some of them are going to get back" to marinas and boat landings, she said.

John Maurillo of Hanahan said more policing is just recreational overkill by the government and that most people behave themselves.

By 1 p.m. Saturday, there were about 40 boats anchored on the Cummings Point beach. Signs of discarded trash were few, while some dogs ran wild and sausages and hot dogs cooked on a portable grill.

The biggest sightseeing draw included a bachelorette party of girls in matching bikinis displaying an X-rated blow-up novelty and a vendor riding a personal watercraft calling herself the "Burrito Babe," selling burritos for \$6 each.

She produced a business license from Mount Pleasant, but not one from the city of Charleston, which governs the island.

Wenner, the marine scientist, said the issue is not cutting off access to the island but trying to instill a dose of simple courtesy, common sense and protection for Cummings Point for future generations.

"If they want to pack it in, let them take it out with them," she said of the garbage offenders. "It's our responsibility not to leave that place trashed."

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Wal-Mart Unmoved by Orange Land Offer
By Clint Schemmer and Robin Knepper

7/10/2009

Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star (VA)

<http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2009/072009/07102009/478811>

Eastern Orange County's largest landowner, the King family, has made Wal-Mart an offer its members believe would defuse the national controversy over the retailer's proposed store in the Wilderness battlefield area.

The Kings would sell Wal-Mart its choice of land within the 2,100-plus acres they own near State Routes 3 and 20 at the same price as the site it has currently selected. They would also compensate Wal-Mart for "reasonable" expenses run up in planning the retail center, which is adjacent to the King property.

Historic preservationists oppose the site Wal-Mart has chosen, saying it is too close to the Civil War battlefield park.

"We're willing to offer them a site at the same price they're paying for their present location, less reasonable development costs they have incurred to date," said Orange businessman Kenny Dotson, the family's local representative. "We're willing to give them a viable solution that wouldn't cost them any more than the rezoning time involved."

Charles "Chip" King confirmed the offer during an interview this week.

"The \$64,000 question is, why wouldn't the [Board of Supervisors] take a leadership role to work out a win-win solution that is there for the asking?" he said.

The Kings extended the offer to Wal-Mart's Virginia Beach lawyer--orally and in writing--through Dotson and their Culpeper attorney, John J. "Butch" Davies III, in May and June. The attorney has not responded to the family's offer, King said.

But Wal-Mart Director of Corporate Affairs Keith Morris said this week that the company "reviewed the King property during the original selection process and dismissed from consideration because it is not zoned for commercial use."

Regardless, local, state and national preservation groups, working together as the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition, still hope Wal-Mart--or Orange officials who support the retail center's current proposed site--will change their tune.

Since last summer, a rumpus has raged over Wal-Mart's proposal to build a 138,000-square-foot Supercenter a quarter-mile from Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. The store would anchor a retail center planned by JDC Ventures of Vienna on commercially zoned property just north of Route 3. The Kings--who live in Maryland and Northern Virginia, but also have a house in Spotsylvania County--own more than 2,100 acres astride Wilderness Run in Orange and Spotsylvania counties, with a mile of frontage on State Route 3 and two miles of riverfront on the Rapidan River.

RETAILER WOULD GET ITS CHOICE OF STORE SITES

Selecting a location on the King property would be up to Wal-Mart, Dotson said. The family's land is zoned for various uses.

"We are trying to give Wal-Mart a way out," Dotson said, "but they feel they have a good, viable site, and three [Orange] supervisors who have voiced their support."

The Kings said they'll work with all parties, including preservationists and the National Park Service, to reach a solution that benefits everyone.

The family's offer "has the potential of bringing together all the groups," Davies said, "except the ones, such as the [Piedmont Environmental Council], who don't want to see any development at all in the county."

In April, the Kings joined with the coalition (minus the PEC) to ask Orange and Wal-Mart to jointly plan the future of the Route 3 "gateway" in eastern Orange, seeking to balance their interests with historic preservation and the county's desire for economic development. Their offer of a collaborative planning effort was swiftly rejected by several supervisors.

The county Board of Supervisors will hear public comment July 27 on JDC's request for a special-use permit that Orange requires for "big box" stores of more than 60,000 square feet. Members Mark Johnson, Zack Burkett and Teel Goodwin have publicly indicated they favor Wal-Mart.

At least four major Route 3 landowners, including the Kings, have approached Wal-Mart with other sites for its store.

But Davies said Wal-Mart's reasoning about the King land is, "Why trade a piece of commercially zoned land for one that isn't? It's like trading a small battle for a war."

Addressing that point, Dotson said, "Rezoning is part of the formality, but it's just as cumbersome as getting the [big-box permit], and the two could probably be gotten at the same time. It comes down to what the county wants to do."

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What's Still Great: Wal-Mart in the Wilderness

By Ben Stein

07/07/2009

The American Spectator (NAT)

<http://spectator.org/archives/2009/07/07/wal-mart-in-the-wilderness>

So, here I am at the Ponderay, Idaho Super Wal-Mart. It is beautiful. They've totally redesigned it to be far more wide open, with immense aisles, immaculately clean surfaces, and somehow still a fabulously good selection of items.

Anyone who follows me even a little bit knows I am an extreme fan of Wal-Mart, which basically adds several percentage points of extra income to every worker's pay check by offering such low prices as it does. Plus, the Wal-Mart is a friendly, upbeat shopping experience. You leave the store feeling good.

But I am feeling a bit down about Wal-Mart and a super store it is proposing in an area not far from Orange, Virginia. The problem is that this particular store would be on land that is an important part of the battlefield area of the crucial Battle of the Wilderness. This battle, actually a series of battles, all important, was fought in early May of 1864. It marked the first time that Robert E. Lee and Ulysses Grant had fought each other.

It was a classic of the struggle that would go on between them and their brave armies from then on until Appomattox. Lee showed his characteristic imagination and unorthodox tactics to offset his inferiority in manpower and materiel. Grant, every bit as smart and capable, showed his determination to grind down the Rebels no matter how costly in blood.

The battle was called the Battle of the Wilderness because it was in a densely wooded area with thick, thorny underbrush that made maneuver difficult and lessened Grant's numerical advantage. Interestingly enough, it was only a few miles from where the famous Battle of Chancellorsville was fought one year earlier. It was there that Stonewall Jackson was accidentally shot by his own men in an incident that ended his life and gravely harmed the Confederate cause.

Historians generally consider the Wilderness a Lee tactical victory because the Yankees withdrew from the battlefield. But in fact it was the beginning of the end for Lee and Dixie because while Grant withdrew, he moved his army in position for yet another battle. Grant began the long, murderous process of endlessly drawing a noose around Richmond and Lee's army, a noose that would eventually hang the Confederacy. It has been reported that when the Union troops saw that they were not going back to D.C. to regroup but were moving to keep encircling Lee and keep him engaged, they cheered.

It was a black moment for Lee for another reason. His top general in the East, James Longstreet, was seriously wounded by his own men -- accidentally -- and required convalescence for months. This was a giant loss, especially after the loss of Jackson and other top officers, that Lee could ill afford.

So, all in all, it was a major battle. About 16,000 Union soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured by the Confederates. Maybe 10,000 Confederates were casualties or captured. In a ghastly "twist," after the first night of battle, a number of wounded from both sides were burned to death when sparks ignited the dry brush between enemy lines where they were lying.

Now, you would think that this ground would be sanctified by American blood. And some of it is. About 20 percent of the battlefield is a national park.

But most of it is in private hands. Some of it, some of the most vital of it, has now been slated to be the home of a Wal-Mart Super Store and several other stores possibly drawn there by Wal-Mart. The Wal-Mart would be almost

140,000 square feet, not counting parking. It would be right across the street from the park entrance. It would be visible from much of the battlefield park.

Frankly, I wonder if the nice people in Arkansas who run Wal-Mart have thought this through. This battlefield is incredibly important environmentally and historically and emotionally. It reeks of the blood of men fighting for causes they considered sacred. How can it possibly be that it will be used even in part for a Wal-Mart Super Store? Wal-Mart is a great American institution. I am, as noted, about as devout a fan as there is in the national media. But a store is a store and blood is blood.

There is plenty of other land in the area that is not historically sensitive. There is ample precedent for commerce to be informed by national emotion: Top brass at Walt Disney canceled its plans for an amusement park at or near the Battlefield at Manassas when its attention was drawn to the vital historical nature of the area some years ago.

Wal-Mart has shown that it is flexible on a number of issues lately, including employee health care. Now may be the time to show that Wal-Mart has a heart as well as a calculator. The blood of those men burned to death, shot through and through, some alive but leaving without their limbs, in what is still America's greatest tragedy, cries out for sanctity. I hope they can hear it in Northwest Arkansas.

Ben Stein is a writer, actor, economist, and lawyer living in Beverly Hills and Malibu. He writes "Ben Stein's Diary" for every issue of The American Spectator.

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Editorial: Exit with Honor Orange County Supervisors Fire Their Administrator for Talking Good Sense

07/05/2009

Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star (VA)

<http://www.fredericksburg.com/News/FLS/2009/072009/07052009/477683>

"PART of this position," former Orange County Administrator Bill Rolfe said in connection with his recent e-mail to Orange supervisors urging them to consider a more history-sensitive site for a Wal-Mart store, "is throwing ideas to see if you get any bites. I like to go fishing once in a while."

Alas, Mr. Rolfe will have lots of time to go fishing: The board, meeting Friday night in special session, fired him on a 3-2 vote. Evidently, some board members--most of whom favor allowing the Wal-Mart Supercenter (and associated big boxes) on land near the Wilderness component of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park--suffered red faces and quivering wattles when the contents of Mr. Rolfe's e-mail became front-page news in The Free Lance-Star. A couple of board members reportedly critical of Mr. Rolfe's overall performance seized upon the Wal-Mart memo as evidence that a loose cannon was rolling around Orange. Truth and justice have had better days, but the cold fact is that a county administrator serves "at the pleasure of the board," and Mr. Rolfe failed to keep his bosses pleased.

Keeping one's honor clean, as the Marines sing, is not always easy, but Mr. Rolfe leaves the service of Orange County with his spotless. He worked hard for two years to clear the bureaucratic thicket for Wal-Mart, but then its location--at one point only a quarter-mile from the national battlefield park and smack-dab in non-park land where the warring armies operated--became a national issue. Historians signed petitions. Out-of-state legislators whose constituents' ancestors fought in the Wilderness raised a hue and cry. Actor Robert Duvall (a descendent of Robert E. Lee, whom Mr. Duvall portrayed in the movie "Gods and Generals") declaimed. A thoughtful person at this point asks, "Might these plaintiffs have a point?"

Mr. Rolfe is a thoughtful person, the more so after he read commentaries in our June 14 Viewpoints section written by three local residents involved in the successful effort, in the 1990s, to dissuade Wal-Mart from building a store near George Washington's boyhood home in Stafford County. The "Ferry Farm Wal-Mart" opened a seemly piece from young George's home place, and Stafford County still got the tax revenues it craved. In his e-mail, Mr. Rolfe wondered why not do that here, garnering the same tax receipts while also protecting the battlefield, a separate county resource that pays dividends in tourism? He pointed to another Orange property of 900 acres whose owners are champing at the bit to host development.

SCORNED PROPHET

But a prophet--or maybe just anyone with an ounce of smarts or a gram of foresight--is, it seems, without honor in certain precincts of Orange County. Sometimes he's even without a job.

Of all the 384 major armed conflicts of the War Between the States, the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission--created by Congress to help rescue "the nation's Civil War heritage" from the "grave danger" of its disappearance "under buildings, parking lots, and highways"--ranked just 45 as "having a decisive influence on a campaign and a direct impact on the course of the war." The Wilderness is one of them. Among such "Class A" Civil War battlefields at national parks, the Wilderness was one of 10 at which the commission put the threat level from development as "high." Higher now, surely, than then.

The Battle of the Wilderness, writes Virginia Department of Historic Resources Director Kathleen Kilpatrick, spelled the beginning of the end for the Confederacy by putting Lee permanently on the defensive. The whole "study area" of operations, into which a Supercenter and its retail retinue would crash like asteroids, is preservation-worthy, says Ms. Kilpatrick, because its "roadways along which troop movements occurred, terrain and land forms, and waterways and fords" help tell the battlefield's story. Further, "the preponderance of evidence indicates that this

[Wal-Mart] parcel figured directly in military operations of the Confederate Army during the Battle of Chancellorsville and of the Union Army during the Battle of the Wilderness."

Why would Orange supervisors not prefer a better Wal-Mart site? People they can't fire are asking that question.

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Opinion: Our American History is Disappearing Quickly
By Silvio Laccetti

7/3/2009

Philadelphia Inquirer (PA)

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/opinion/20090703_Our_American_history_is_disappearing_quickly.html

The American nation is becoming a hazy abstraction. For first-generation immigrants from across the world as well as the children of fourth-generation American families down the block, it is divorced from a continuous, meaningful past. American history is disappearing from the imagination and the reality of new Americans.

Actually and symbolically, I felt and saw this during my recent journey to Manassas National Battlefield Park in northern Virginia. Within just a few miles of the park headquarters, not one adolescent working in a gas station or convenience store could give me accurate directions to the site. Older folks, however, were much more knowledgeable: Make this left, go to the end, go left on 234, pass the mall, headquarters is about two miles past the mall.

The Manassas Mall. Part of the problem for the new Americans is that the mall blocks their imagination, like a wall that nothing penetrates. I believe almost every adolescent American knows the way to the local mall.

The first and most obvious reason the young can't locate the Manassas battlefield is that their historical consciousness is obliterated by the bombardment of sales celebrations and the mesmerizing array of invented food, games, and gadgets found in any mall in our land. Commercialism and excess are, after all, what America has been all about since before the Great Depression. Lost in this frenzy, especially for the youth, is the ability to cultivate an appetite for history.

The battle of First Manassas - or First Bull Run, as it is called in the North - was unique. Amazingly, this first major land battle of the Civil War, on July 21, 1861, drew a large crowd of spectators from Washington. Many thought it would end the nascent conflict - a one-and-done affair. Not so!

The results and implications of the first battle of Bull Run should be part of everyone's collective memory of what Americans have gone through in order to perfect our union.

A second cause of the disappearance of American history is more literal: the development of historic sites into malls, condos, thoroughfares, and all manner of public works.

The Civil War Preservation Trust is one of many organizations dedicated to saving historic battlefield sites from the mechanical monsters of development. According to spokeswoman Mary Koik, it has saved some 25,000 acres at 100 different sites.

Koik tells some harrowing tales about the elimination of hallowed ground. In the early '90s, there was a plan to build a Disney park near Manassas. Today's threat to the site is the intended construction of a major power line through the park.

A Wal-Mart might be built across from the main entry point of Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia. A garbage incinerator with a 350-foot smokestack was proposed for Monocacy National Battlefield in northern Maryland. In Hunterstown, Pa., a power plant covers half the field where Custer made an early stand.

Pennsylvania's Gettysburg National Military Park has been on the Civil War Preservation Trust's list of the top 10 endangered sites for eight of the last nine years. One can take a picture there of cannons appearing to shell a fast-

food place across the way. New development creeps to the edges of the new visitor center. A big hotel hovers over the town's public cemetery.

In Richmond, Va., Nashville, Tenn., and Atlanta, historical-preservation problems are especially acute, because these Sun Belt cities have been growing at enormous rates, insatiably gobbling up land.

As America grows and consumes its places and spaces, history disappears from the mind and the national landscape.

Of course, with proper educational and curricular emphasis, American history could still live in the hearts and minds of all those schooled in America. But there is now little time and much to cover as a result of curriculum standards and No Child Left Behind testing.

Still, the creative commitment of classroom history teachers can help carve out a place for history in students' consciousness. At the Stonewall Jackson Shrine in Guinea Station, Va., I had an interesting lesson from Ryan Longfellow, a teacher and seasonal guide at the site. He uses class trips to paint memories from a Virginia landscape filled with historical treasures.

Even without nearby historical sites, the Internet and other resources, such as the wonderful documentaries of Ken Burns, can bring history alive for classes, developing special interests outside the required curriculum and school hours.

Let's revive America's consciousness of itself. For the new generation of schoolchildren, and for those to come, we must resolve to appreciate and understand our common heritage. We must remember our past, or we will lose our future.

In the log book at Manassas, visitors sign in with comments: "beautiful," "wonderful," "c-o-o-l." I signed without comment and left. Then I walked back and wrote across from my name, "Will the new people remember?"