

# On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## History Under Siege:

## Endangered Battlefields Gain National Attention

The four battlefields that receive the CVBT's nearly undivided attention are predominantly located in Spotsylvania County. In the face of what sometimes appears to be overwhelming development pressure, the Civil War Preservation Trust has listed not just the battlefields, but the county as a whole as one of its most endangered Civil War sites. The period of significance is listed as December 11, 1862 through May 21, 1864, which begins with the first battle of Fredericksburg and ends with the march south from Spotsylvania Court House. By December 1862, the principal armies had shifted to the Rappahannock line, in the months following the battle at Antietam. In late May 1864, these same two armies, much worn out from a brutal fighting in the Wilderness and at Spotsylvania Court House, crossed the Mattaponi River, headed toward a confrontation at the North Anna River. In between was the entire Gettysburg Campaign, which followed the battle at Chancellorsville (fought in Spotsylvania County).

Spotsylvania County has become the focus of development, as the Washington D.C. metropolitan area expands in all directions. We have long recognized that there is only a limited window of opportunity to protect key terrain in and around this hallowed ground. Our approach to preservation works within this limitation. The CVBT has carefully determined which ground it must acquire to protect the integrity of the National Park holdings. We have already preserved 484 acres, but estimate that we have another 1,000 acres to go. This is an ambitious



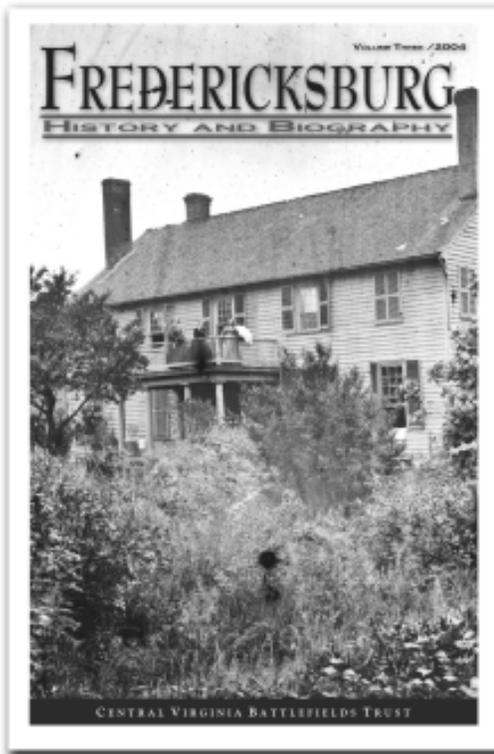
*The May 1st, 1863 battlefield, part of the Chancellorsville Campaign, has been saved from development, but there are plenty more battlefield sites in danger of being lost forever due to rampant development in Spotsylvania County. Photo by Steven Stanley.*

task, but one that can be accomplished with a determined effort. We will always evaluate whether we should acquire threatened historic ground that is not on our list of properties to purchase, but we cannot attempt to save everything. Time is too short and pressure to develop land around Fredericksburg is too relentless. The Civil War Preservation Trust estimates that the nation has approximately 20 years to preserve its Civil War heritage. Development is so intense and so rapid that what has not been acquired or otherwise protected in two decades will be gone. The CVBT estimates that we have only 10 years to accomplish this task in Spotsylvania County.

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## Fredericksburg History and Biography: *The 2004 Volume is Now Available*

The third volume of the CVBT's annual journal has hit the street and copies have been sent to those who are at the Active Member Level or above. Copies are also available at Beck's Antiques and the Wounded Bookshop, in Fredericksburg, and at the bookstore of the National Park Service's Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center. We can also mail copies to folks if they will send us \$14 per copy and provide their mailing address.



This publication is made possible by generous funding from the Sunshine Lady Foundation, which has a strong interest in historic preservation and in historical research.

Previous volumes are also available, and at the same price (at least for now). The three volumes include the following articles:

**Volume 1:** "The Battle of Chancellorsville was lost here:" McLaws versus Sykes on the Orange Turnpike, May 1, 1863

(Frank O'Reilly); Be Careful Where You Park: Archaeology in Fredericksburg's Market Square (Joshua Duncan); Hartwood's Venerable Ledger: Rare 1851 Militia Roll Found (Kelly J. O'Grady); Between the Lines: The Diary of a Unionist Woman at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House (Elizabeth A. Getz); Tobacco to Tourism: The Varying Fortunes of Fredericksburg and Falmouth (Erik F. Nelson).

**Volume 2:** A Window Into the Past: A Better View of the Fredericksburg Battlefield Through Archaeology at the Willis Hill Site (Kimberly Tinkham); The Court Martial of Joseph Hooker (K. Porter Clark); The Spotsylvania Confederate Cemetery (Chris Ferguson); Dentistry in Fredericksburg: Vintage 1870s (Robert K. Krick); War and Memories of War (Erik F. Nelson).

**Volume 3:** Memories of a Long Life: By Bettie Churchill Lacy, her Family and Friends (K. Porter Clark, ed.); John W. Thomason, Jr.: A Lone Star Marine in Fredericksburg, 1917-1918 (Eric J. Mink); The Marquis Road: Lafayette in Virginia, 1781 (Erik F. Nelson); Focusing on Scotia: The Challenges of Fredericksburg's Civil War Photographs (John F. Cummings and Noel G. Harrison).

### The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

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# History Under Siege

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In addition to identifying the terrain that absolutely must be acquired, the CVBT has concentrated on developing good relations with the local governments. The local governing bodies are key to protecting historic resources because they make the land use decisions that become zoning regulations for various types of development. Every jurisdiction needs to allow for the development of housing and a commercial tax base. As a consequence, any local preservation group that aspires to be effective needs to work with local jurisdictions, not to stop development but to ensure development occurs without compromising history. The City of Fredericksburg has long supported battlefield preservation and CVBT's acquisition of battlefield land along Smith Run (Chancellorsville Campaign) is an example of a successful public/private partnership. The Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors has recently gained a majority of members whose constituents also want to see the County's historic ground protected. In fact, the new supervisors are actively seeking opportunities to accomplish this new goal. Already, the County has been instrumental in protecting a significant portion of the May 1, 1863 battlefield, in partnership with the CWPT, CVBT, and a very astute development firm called Tricord. Time is short, though, and we must keep moving on.

Additional attention has been directed to the Spotsylvania County battlefields, and many others, in the April 2005 edition of National Geographic. Wonderful photos by Michael Melford and a story by Adam Goodheart has resulted in a piece called "Civil War Battlefields: Saving the Landscapes of America's Deadliest War." Our challenge is to use this attention to move forward in gaining more ground.

## *Fund Raising for Preservation:*

### Print Raffle for Don Troiani's New Print

**M**aster Civil War artist Don Troiani has donated two copies of his print *Jackson's Flank Attack* to the CVBT, to help raise funds for battlefield preservation. The drawing for the first print will take place at the Annual Meeting, on Latimer's Knoll, on May 7<sup>th</sup>. This is your chance to win a beautiful print while also helping to save dirt and grass.



*Jackson's Flank Attack by Civil War Artist Don Troiani.*

To view this wonderful print in full color, go to [www.historicalartprints.com](http://www.historicalartprints.com), click on The Gallery and then click on Other Civil War Subjects.

Raffle tickets are \$5 for one ticket or \$10 for three tickets. To purchase tickets, simply send your check, made out to CVBT, for the number of tickets you desire. Mail the check to CVBT, Attn: Raffle, PO Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402.

## CVBT's 2005 Annual Meeting

**O**n Saturday, May 7, 2005, the CVBT will host its annual meeting on Latimer's Knoll, on the Fredericksburg battlefield (members will have received official notice of the meeting before this newsletter hits the street). This site is somewhat off the beaten path, but well worth visiting. In fact, this acreage is protected through a scenic easement, so public access will not typically be allowed. Consequently, the annual meeting will be a rare opportunity for our members to stand where Captain Joseph W. Latimer posted his artillery and see exactly how the ground provided a slight vantage point as well as a modicum of protection to the otherwise exposed gunners.

## CVBT Welcomes its *New Executive Director*

**W**e are pleased to announce that Linda Wandres has accepted the position of the CVBT's Executive Director. Donna Leahy had filled this position previously and we wish her well as she moves on to new challenges. Our members will perhaps wonder what happened to our boast of, "dirt and grass, no paid staff," but the reality is that we have grown as an organization and simply cannot function without someone like Donna or Linda. We have managed to preserve nearly 500 acres of ground, but ownership entails responsibilities of administration. Further, our membership has reached a level that we can no longer provide an acceptable level of

service without at least part time help.

For the remainder of 2005, this position will be paid from funds provided by a very generous donor. Beginning in 2006, however, we will direct a small portion of our member donations to cover staff costs. We hope that our members will recognize that the need for staffing is really a measure of success. If anyone feels betrayed, though, we hope you will contact us. We cannot change our mind because this position is critically needed at this point in our organizational growth. We will listen to any concerns, though, and try to respond accordingly.



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