

ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Trust Resets Historic Marker at Pelham's Corner

THE BATTLEFIELD TERRAIN THAT THE CVBT acquires is usually just natural woodlands or open areas that are part of the larger battlefield. At Pelham's Corner, our land includes a stone marker that was placed there in 1903 by a former Confederate named James Power Smith. The marker, which many of you have seen, reads as follows:

STUART AND PELHAM
BATTLE OF
FREDERICKSBURG
DEC. 13, 1862

As a member of Stonewall Jackson's staff, Smith had been intimately involved with the comings and goings of the upper echelons of the Army of Northern Virginia. In the opening hours of the Chancellorsville campaign, it was he who had been dispatched to Robert E. Lee's winter headquarters on April 29, 1863, to report that the Union army had crossed the Rappahannock River. He had also slept at the bivouac site where Lee and Jackson conversed for the last time on May 2, 1863. That evening, under a near full moon, he helped to carry the wounded Jackson from the field and later held a lantern at the field hospital at Wilderness Tavern, where surgeons amputated his commander's left arm.



Long after the war, the aging veteran then known as Reverend Smith, worked with the firm of Cartwright & Davis and the Fredericksburg Granite Works to develop a set of ten stone markers to be placed around the Fredericksburg area battlefields. Three of them mark places associated with Jackson, four reference Lee, and one includes the names of both Lee and Jackson (at the bivouac site of their last meeting). He also placed one marker at Salem Church, noting the Union and Confederate brigade commanders who fought there, and another at the site where John Pelham brought a cannon into battery on the flank of a Federal assault formation and raised havoc. It is this latter granite marker, on the Fredericksburg battlefield that is now the responsibility of the CVBT.

The markers were funded by Thomas F. Ryan, a Virginian by birth who had become a tremendously successful businessman in Baltimore and New York. He had been a boy of 14 when Lee surrendered at Appomattox, but his philanthropy in later life extended to commemorating the Confederacy. It was Ryan who financed the iconic murals called *The Four Seasons of the Confederacy*, painted

(Trust Resets Historic Marker at Pelham's Corner, continued on page 2. Photos on page 4)

by Charles Hoffbauer in Battle Abbey, a building now owned and maintained by the Virginia Historical Society.

Sponsoring a set of simple stone markers in and around Fredericksburg was a comparatively minor project, but they identified places of interest to those who travelled to the actual battlefields to see where the war had been fought. Seven of them are now within the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Of the three markers outside the National Park, one, the Pelham marker, is on land owned by CVBT.

The Reverend Smith placed the markers to be convenient to visitors touring the area's battlegrounds, to be read from a carriage or an automobile. As the world around them has changed, they have occasionally been moved out of the way of modern road development. The Pelham marker experienced such a move in 2006, when Benchmark Road needed enhanced travel lanes. At that time, it was placed within a 20 x 25 foot preserved area to which several wayside panels were added as mitigation for the disruption of the road widening. As our members know, the CVBT has acquired and expanded the once confined (20 x 25 foot) Pelham site to nearly 4.5 acres.

After placing a replica cannon to make the isolated Pelham site more visible, the Trust began to address the needs of visitors. First, two interpretive panels were reoriented to face the direction in which Major Pelham's cannon was firing on the morning of December 13, 1862. The bases were refurbished and reused, and new panels designed with wording that fit their new orientation. This task has been completed. The next phase has been to relocate the granite marker slightly and provide a protective base. This work is underway.

Sponsoring a set of simple stone markers in and around Fredericksburg was a comparatively minor project, but they identified places of interest to those who travelled to the actual battlefields to see where the war had been fought.

In addition to the CVBT, there are two organizations that have been key components of this work at Pelham's Corner. First, we received a grant from the Duff McDuff Green, Jr. Fund of the Community Foundation. The Community Foundation actively raises funds for a host of needs throughout the region and they added \$2,500 to the Trust's funds to get this overall project underway. Asking only to be reimbursed for actual costs, Found and Son Funeral Services has also provided their equipment and expertise to handle the granite marker. That firm had moved

another monument to Pelham at Brandy Station, in Culpeper County, and we asked if they could help out in Fredericksburg. They have pulled the old monument from the ground, obtained additional granite pieces to establish the protective base, and will reset the monument when the base is complete.

The Pelham site is somewhat isolated from other portions of the Fredericksburg battlefield, but our own Mike Greenfield has spearheaded this effort to make it a compelling tour stop, recognizing not only the battle action that occurred there, but also highlighting the Reverend James Power Smith and his early memorials. SL

E-Newsletters available
Some folks prefer to receive certain types of mail in electronic format and that option is available for CVBT newsletters. If you would like to change your current newsletter mailing to an electronic distribution, please contact us at comdir@cvbt.org and we will make that change for you.



ON THE SKIRMISH LINE is published for the CVBT membership at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. Contact CVBT at **540-374-0900** or **www.cvbt.org**. The CVBT is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. A financial statement is available, upon request, from the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs.

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Michael P. Stevens
<i>President</i> | Brad Gottfried
Robert Lee Hodge
Pete Kolakowski
Kevin Leahy
Charles G. McDaniel
Jim Pates
Eric Powell
Linda Wandres | Tom Van Winkle
<i>Communications Director, Web Master</i>
Erik Nelson
<i>Newsletter Editor</i> |
| Harriett Condon
<i>Vice President</i> | | |
| Lloyd B. Harrison
<i>Treasurer</i> | | |
| Robert K. Krick
<i>Secretary</i> | | |
| Ben Brockenbrough
<i>Chief Administrator</i> | | |
| J. Michael Greenfield
<i>Lands Management</i> | | |

CVBT 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

This year, the CVBT celebrates two decades of actively preserving battlefield dirt and grass. In 1996, we organized and established a battlefield preservation group in the midst of working to protect 11 acres of ground at Marye's Heights, at Fredericksburg. In 2016, we can look back on having preserved and helped to preserve over 1,000 acres of historic terrain. We are proud of that record and hope our members will join us in celebrating these 20 years of concerted effort in which their role was absolutely critical.

This year's annual meeting weekend will extend from April 29 – May 1 and will focus on the battlefields of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. On Friday afternoon, National Park historian Frank O'Reilly will conduct a tour through the town of Fredericksburg, following the fighting from the river crossing and street combat on December 11, 1862 through the assaults on Marye's Heights, on December 13th. Frank has written the definitive study of the Fredericksburg campaign and his tours are compelling and insightful. The Fredericksburg battle extended across two major sectors, one action fought in and around the town itself and the battle that unfolded several miles



Rob Hodge and Ed Bearss have been battlefield comrades for as long as CVBT has existed. They will be the main event at our 20th anniversary annual meeting.

tour will cover the fighting in Fredericksburg, on ground that is within the National Military Park as well through the streets of Fredericksburg's Historic District, where private residences still exhibit battle damage.

On Saturday, the day's tour will take folks to the downriver area of the Fredericksburg battlefield. Not too long ago there was no protected ground in that sector, but an important assemblage of acreage has since been acquired and protected,

the Fredericksburg portion of the National Military Park. Our tour guide will be National Park historian Eric Mink, who has an intimate knowledge of the battlefield and the several significant sites that were preservation victories in recent years. The Slaughter Pen Farm is the most prominent addition to the Fredericksburg battlefield, but we will also see Pelham's Corner as well as the Confederate battery position at Latimer's Knoll. Lunch will be at Braehead,

the ante-bellum house that the CVBT acquired and then sold with preservation easements on it. The day will wrap up at Belvoir, site of the Yerby house, which was used as a hospital during the December battle and where Stonewall Jackson stayed with his wife and child prior to the battle of Chancellorsville. This privately owned site is a remote but fascinating place, where the foundation of the home and a nearby cemetery can still be seen.

The annual meeting itself will be conducted on Saturday evening, after folks have had a chance to clean up after tramping the dirt and grass of central Virginia's battlefields. First, however, we will have an opportunity to catch up with old friends and new at happy hour. Dinner comes next, followed by a program we are calling *An Informal Conversation with Ed Bearss*. Ed, of course, is a national treasure whose passion and exuberance have made his battlefield tours insightful and memorable. Those tours, however, have been important not for their entertainment value, but for the insight and appreciation he has imparted to legions of citizens for preserving the very ground where history unfolded.

{CVBT 2016 Annual Meeting, continued on page 4}

TRUST RESETS HISTORIC MARKER AT PELHAM'S CORNER



The granite Pelham marker in 2012. The wayside panels were oriented to the intersection rather than Pelham's field of fire.



In 2015, CVBT volunteers pulled the wayside panels away from the Pelham marker. The metal bases were refurbished and the panels amended to reflect their new orientation.



Found and Sons carefully removed the Pelham marker so a protective base can be constructed. They will reset the marker when the base is completed.



A new granite surround will protect the historic stone from 1903.

Ed will be introduced and interviewed by our own Robert Lee Hodge. Rob has gained national attention as one of the subjects of Tony Horwitz's book *Confederates in the Attic*, but he should not be seen as just a reenactor. The intensity and attention to detail that Rob brought to the reenacting community is also evident in his body of research, the broad range of visual productions with which he is involved, and the concerted fundraising he brings to battlefield preservation. Rob and Ed, in fact, are very much alike and the conversation of these battlefield comrades is likely to go in many directions. This promises to be a very special evening.

We will wrap up the evening with a brief business meeting. Outgoing Trust president Mike Stevens will pass on his duties to incoming president Tom Van Winkle. Tom will review the Trust's finances, conduct the necessary election/reelection of board members, and go through other such administrative issues that a non-profit must do once a year with its members present.

Sunday will include a tour of the Chancellorsville battlefield, with Park historian Beth Parnicza. Beth is a comparatively new member of the team at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, but she has embraced the role and values of an NPS historian and her tours are excellent. As we will have done on

Saturday, the day's emphasis will be on the sites that the Trust has had a hand in acquiring.

Sunday will start early, on the May 1, 1863 battleground, which was a huge preservation fight that extended over a period of years. We will move on to one of the Trust's early victories at McLaws' Wedge, where fighting occurred on May 1 through May 3. The group will then be transported to the western end of the battlefield, where the Trust has been assembling a series of parcels in the Jackson flank attack area. We will proudly point out what is not there anymore—the intrusive brick castle that we demolished a few years ago.

After a box lunch on the restored battlefield, the tour

will wrap up at Fairview, where Beth will discuss the fighting of May 3, 1863, which was among some of the heaviest of the entire war. The few hours of combat that day was so intense that it rivaled the suffering of the day-long battle at Antietam. The horrendous casualties, however, were reported in the context of the campaign's overall casualties and the Chancellorsville story has typically focused on Jackson's attack the previous day. May 3rd could have gone very badly for the Confederate army and Beth is going to close out the weekend by putting that day in its proper context.

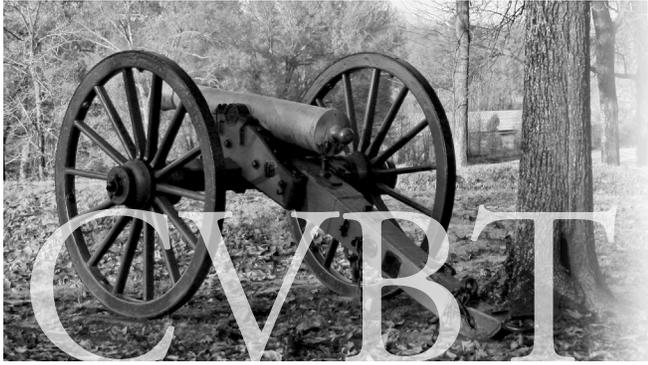
This 20-year anniversary weekend promises to be great fun as well as dramatic. We hope you will join us. **SL**

THE TRUST HAS BEEN QUIET, BUT ACTIVE

ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE NOT BEEN ANY RECENT announcements of land saved, the Trust has been quite busy keeping tabs on numerous properties on several battlefields. The acquisitions at McLaws' Wedge, the Slaughter Pen, and the May 1 at Chancellorsville were dramatic wins and brought significant acreage under the umbrella of protected ground, but there are countless other parcels, sometimes only a few acres in size, that are part of the overall puzzle that must be assembled to create an intact battlefield landscape. Some of those places have houses on them, boosting the price rather than their historic value. Others locations that need to be monitored are nondescript sites with little battlefield significance, yet which have road frontage within the battlefield that could become a service station or a convenience store if not purchased. The Trust follows all of these situations, keeping in contact with property owners, making offers, evaluating rejections, but always keeping track of a set of properties that we identified years ago as important enough to acquire and protect.

Diligently monitoring this range of properties is feasible because we do not pursue every property. The battles fought in and around Fredericksburg extended across a huge expanse. There was never any possibility of protecting all of it, even in 1927 when President Calvin Coolidge signed the legislation that created the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. The protected battlefields at places like Sharpsburg and Gettysburg are huge, and relatively intact, but the fighting in those places was measured in days. At Fredericksburg, the armies campaigned in the Rappahannock valley for years. Some campaigns lasted for weeks. The terrain across which men struggled during the period 1862-1864 has always been too far flung to be preserved in its entirety. Instead, choices had to be made about what would be able to tell the story of those distant events and thereby be of lasting value to history.

We appreciate the support we receive from our members when we have land to buy, but we really appreciate your patience as we spend the time necessary to get critical land under contract. **SL**



Copyright© 2016, by the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc.

The Trust's mission is to purchase Civil War battlefield terrain and to advocate for battlefield protection at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

For information on membership, please write to the Trust at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402; call our office at (540) 374-0900; or visit our website at www.cvbt.org. Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

Annual Member	\$ 35
Active Member	\$ 135
Sustaining Member	\$ 250

Patron	\$ 500
Benefactor	\$ 1,000
Life Member	\$ 5,000

Life Patron	\$ 10,000
Corporate Member	\$ 500
Corporate Patron	\$ 1,000

Design and layout by The I.D. Entity • 540.834.0151



Central
Virginia
Battlefields
Trust

Post Office Box 3417
Fredericksburg, VA 22402
540-374-0900
www.cvbt.org

<p>NONPROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID FREDERICKSBURG, VA PERMIT NO. 500</p>
--