

CVBT Acquires 81 Acres at Wilderness Tavern

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has added an important new acquisition to our existing holdings in the Wilderness. On December 31, we closed on the purchase of an 81 acre tract, which we have now designated as “Wilderness Crossroads II.” This land consists of three nearby but noncontiguous parcels, all of which have significant frontage on the historic Orange Turnpike (modern day Route 3). The property, which lies on the north side of the turnpike, near its intersection with the Germanna Plank Road, is directly across from the 93 acre tract that CVBT acquired in 2009. While it is located outside of the National Park Service boundary, the property is of such historical significance that CVBT was committed to acquiring it once the necessary funding became available. Founding CVBT Board members John Mitchell and Enos Richardson were instrumental in acquiring and preserving these key parcels of land.

This land was owned by William M. Simms during the time of the Civil War, and it includes the site of the historic Wilderness Tavern. During and after the Battle of Chancellorsville, which was fought approximately three miles to the east of this ground, the tavern and its appurtenant buildings and surrounding grounds, which came to house many tents, served as the site of the Confederate Second Corps Hospital. Many of the Confederates who

were wounded at Chancellorsville were brought to the Wilderness Tavern hospital and other nearby hospitals. At one point, more than 3,000 soldiers were ministered to on this land.

The most famous person to be treated at the Wilderness Tavern Hospital was Confederate General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, who was accidentally wounded in “friendly fire” by men from Jim Lane’s North Carolina brigade in the darkness on the night of May 2. Several of Jackson’s compatriots were also killed, or had their horses shot from under them.

General Jackson’s left arm was shattered by two musket balls, and he was transported to the Wilderness Tavern hospital, where Dr. Harvey Black had a large tent prepared for his arrival. Dr. Hunter H. McGuire accompanied General Jackson to the hospital and performed surgery on him. However, given the severity of Jackson’s wounds,

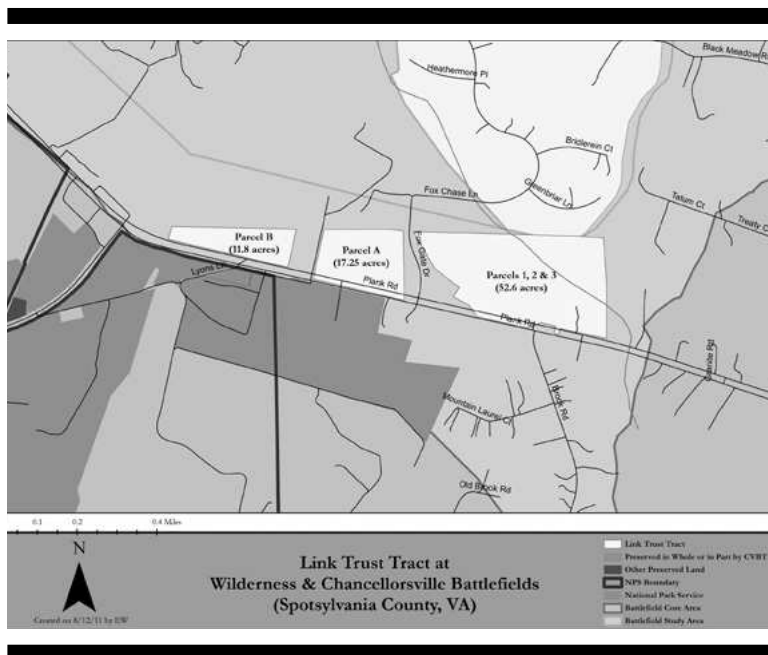
Dr. McGuire had to amputate his arm.

General Jackson was then transported to Guinea Station, where he died eight days later.

During the Battle of the Wilderness on May 5-6, 1864, this land was again the focus of much military activity. The Union Army of the Potomac established its headquarters at this crossroads, and Generals Ulysses S. Grant and George G. Meade were present here. The land today is well preserved, and it appears

much as it did during the time of the Civil War.

The purchase price for these three parcels was \$575,000. CVBT was able to purchase this land using matching grants from both the Commonwealth of Virginia and the American Battlefield Protection Program, along with assistance from our good friends at the Civil War Trust.



The Civil War Trust