

ON THE
skirmish *line*

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

CVBT Receives \$777,000 in Battlefield Preservation Grants

On Thursday, August 15, Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell announced the latest round of battlefield preservation grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia Civil War Site Preservation Fund. This Fund was established by the Governor and the General Assembly as a permanent fund in 2010. The announcement was made at Ball's Bluff Battlefield Regional Park, the site of a Confederate victory on the bluffs above the Potomac River on October 21, 1861. While this was a relatively minor battle, it had significant political implications, due to the disparity in Union versus Confederate casualties, and the death of Col. Edward Baker, the only United States Senator to be killed in battle during the war.

In announcing 13 grant awards, Governor McDonnell was joined by Director of Historic Resources Kathleen Kilpatrick, Secretary of Natural Resources Doug Domenech, Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority leaders and representatives from a number of battlefield preservation organizations. Executive Director Jerry Brent and Board Members Harriett Condon and Linda Wandres represented the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust at the ceremony.

Funds for this year's grants, totaling \$2,252,663, were awarded by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) based on a rigorous evaluation process. The 2013 grant recipients are the CVBT, the Civil War Trust, Richmond Battlefields Association, and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. These awards will help to protect more than 1,265 acres associated with diverse battles at twelve sites within the Commonwealth: Appomattox Court House, Ball's Bluff, Beaver Dam Creek, Brandy Station, Cedar Creek, Chancellorsville, Glendale/Deep Bottom, Kelly's Ford, Malvern Hill, Rappahannock Station, Sailor's Creek, and Second Manassas.

In announcing the awards, Governor McDonnell stated: "Through concerted efforts to conserve battlefields this administration and our partners are leaving to present and future Virginians a lasting legacy....In doing so, we save hallowed ground and honor the Commonwealth's past while we simultaneously make an investment in its future through heritage tourism." Director Kilpatrick further noted the urgency of preserving hallowed ground: "This year's awards will allow us to secure places with the power to connect us and future generations to the lessons of a

(Continued on page 2)



Photograph by Michael White

Governor Bob McDonnell Announces Battlefield Preservation Grants to Four Recipients. Jerry Brent, Harriett Condon and Linda Wandres Represented CVBT at the Ceremony.

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defining period of our history. Time is running out. Each year, battlefield lands are lost forever.”

CVBT was awarded two grants this year. We received \$77,000 for a 9.2 acre tract on Jackson’s Flank Attack at Chancellorsville, which we have now designated as “The Stonewall Brigade Tract.” Located on the southern shoulder of the Orange Turnpike (modern day Route 3), this is the land where Jackson and his men burst out of the Wilderness to confront the Federal troops of General O. O. Howard’s Eleventh Corps on May 2, 1863. As the Union troops fled eastward, the last of Howard’s force, led by Adolphus Buschbeck of the 154th New York, formed a rallying line of last defense which has since been called “The Buschbeck Line.” After the fall of the Union forces, five Virginia regiments from the Stonewall Brigade camped on the land overnight, preparing for intense fighting the following day.

The second grant we received, for \$700,000, was to assist the Civil War Trust in the acquisition of a 56 acre

parcel of Fleetwood Hill on the Brandy Station Battlefield. Designated as “The Troilo Tract,” this land was the site of General James Ewell Brown (J.E.B.) Stuart’s headquarters during the battle, as well as the site of the largest cavalry engagement to ever occur on American soil, on June 9, 1863. Historian and preservationist Clark “Bud” Hall describes Fleetwood Hill as “without question the most fought over, camped upon and marched over real estate in the entire United States....It is indeed a fact that this unpretentious little ridge has seen more military action than any other piece of ground in American history.”

The preservation of the Stonewall Brigade tract at Chancellorsville, and of Fleetwood Hill at Brandy Station, are significant gains in the battle to preserve endangered hallowed ground in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We at CVBT are most appreciative of the grants awarded by DHR to help save these lands, and we are proud to serve as a partner in the State’s public-private preservation effort. **SL**



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CVBT Welcomes New Superintendent Lucy Lawliss



National Park Service

CVBT IS PLEASED TO welcome Lucy Lawliss as the new superintendent of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FRSP). Lucy had been serving as the acting superintendent of the

Park since Russ Smith departed last spring, to become superintendent of the newly created First State National Monument in his native state of Delaware. In announcing Lucy's selection, Northeast Regional Director Dennis R. Reidenbach stated:

"Lucy's expertise and background made her the perfect fit and right choice for this position. She has a combination of resource management and operational experience that will serve the park well. She excels at providing compelling public programs so that the public can understand and embrace preservation of the park's unique resources and also provides many ways for visitors to enjoy their national park. Lucy's thoughtful in her approach to management and her enthusiasm for the National Park Service mission is contagious."

Lucy previously served as superintendent of George Washington Birthplace National Historic Site in Westmoreland County, Virginia and Thomas Stone National Historic Site in Charles County, Maryland. As superintendent, she worked diligently to expand interpretation and resource management, extend community engagement, and improve public access and recreational use of the parks. Prior to that position, Lucy was the resource man-

ager for the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, California.

In response to her appointment, Lucy stated: "I could not be any more excited about this opportunity. Forty years ago this month, I came to Fredericksburg—sight unseen—to start my freshman year of college at Mary Washington College. I came because I loved history and the places that tell those stories. I have vivid memories of my first encounters with Sunken Road, Marye's Heights, Kenmore and Mary Washington's House and the like. I can't wait to work with the park staff, our partners and the communities of Spotsylvania, Stafford, Orange and Caroline Counties to share all of the history contained in this amazing military park."

Lucy has long had a passion for history, and she earned bachelor's and master's degrees in Landscape Architecture, coupled with a master's certificate in Historic Preservation, from the University of Georgia. She is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. In her 22 years with the Park Service, Lucy has helped to develop its Cultural Landscape Inventory, and has written many articles and reports, including an award-winning article on preserving battlefield terrain. She is the chair of the NPS Northeast Region's Cultural Resource Advisory Group, and previously served as the national manager for the Park Cultural Landscapes Program.

The CVBT Board appreciated the opportunity to have an initial meeting with Lucy several months ago. We look forward to working closely with her in the future, as we continue our strong partnership with the NPS, toward our mutual goal of preserving local battlefield lands. SL

Stay on the Skirmish Line!



Take a look at the mailing label on your latest *Skirmish Line* newsletter. You will see that it includes your CVBT membership expiration date. Since we are a dirt and grass outfit, members can help us save on mailing costs by checking that expiration date and sending in their renewal on their own. If the date is highlighted, your membership has expired. While we would like to share the *Skirmish Line* with everyone, we can only afford to send it to current members. So please renew your membership at the appropriate time. You might also consider upgrading your membership level, to increase our capability to save hallowed ground in central Virginia.



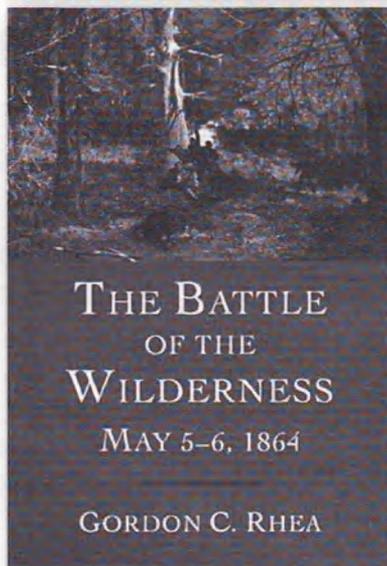
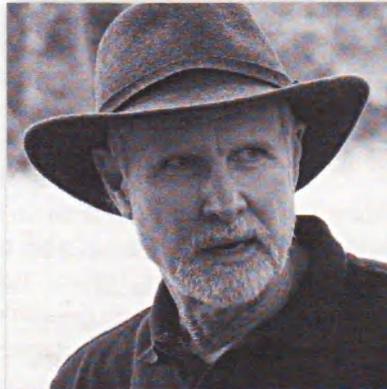
Remember to order all your Amazon.com items through the CVBT Amazon web link. CVBT receives a percentage of the order to help preserve hallowed ground!

DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL MEETING IN MAY!

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust is pleased to announce its 2014 annual meeting, which will coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Wilderness. On Friday, May 2, noted author and historian Gordon C. Rhea will join us to discuss the battle. Gordon has penned many highly regarded books, including *The Battle of the Wilderness: May 5-6, 1864*; *The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern: May 7-12, 1864*; *To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May 13-25, 1864*; *Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26-June 3, 1864*; *Carrying the Flag: The Story of Private Charles Whilden, the Confederacy's Most Unlikely Hero*; and *In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: The Wilderness through Cold Harbor*. Several of Gordon's books will be available for sale in the banquet hall, and he will be happy to inscribe them.

Gordon will also be conducting a tour for the Friends of the Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB) on May 2-3. Details about that tour, which is not a CVBT event, can be found at www.fowb.org when they become available.

The annual meeting will be held at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel, 2801 Plank Road in Central Park. It will include a delicious buffet dinner and a premium brand cash bar. Please join us for this special anniversary event. It is an opportunity you will not want to miss! For those of you who may be interested, CVBT is holding a block of guest rooms at the Hospitality House Hotel, which will be available for the rate of \$85.00 per night, for both single and double rooms. Please note as well that the ground floor of the hotel is "pet friendly." The National Park Service (NPS) will be providing a wide range of events during the anniversaries of the Battles of the



Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. Rather than providing our own tours in conjunction with the annual meeting, CVBT is encouraging everyone to attend the NPS and FoWB events. To accommodate our members who plan on attending these programs, our room block will begin on Friday, May 2 and run through Sunday, May 18. When the NPS program has been formulated you may view it at www.nps.gov/frsp/index.htm.

SPECIFICS

When: May 2, 2014. Cocktail hour at 6:00, followed by dinner, the program and the meeting.

Where: The Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel, 2801 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. For room reservations at the CVBT block rate, please contact the hotel directly at (540) 786-8321. To ensure the block rate, please make your reservation no later than April 10.

Event Cost: \$60.00 (before March 22)

\$75.00 (after March 22)

(Room not included)

If you are interested in joining us, please mail your check to: **CVBT, PO Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402**. You may also pay by credit card on our website, at www.cvbt.org.

Please make your reservations as soon as possible. This event is open to both CVBT members and the general public, so we expect that it will sell out quickly. If you have any questions, please contact us by phone at 540-374-0900 or by email at execdiretor@cvbt.org.

We look forward to seeing you on May 2!

"If these signatures could

Most visitors to the Fredericksburg Battlefield pass "Braehead" when driving the park auto tour. The antebellum home sits along Lee Drive, between Tour Stops 3 and 4. The majority of travelers along this stretch of the tour road probably don't notice the house, as it is screened by trees and lacks any markers or interpretive signs. Braehead is, however, a significant battlefield landmark and is one that still bears scars from the intrusion of war in the 1860s.

John Howison built Braehead in 1859 as the home for his family, which included his wife Ann and seven children. The home is built of brick with a raised basement and a unique plan comprised of two two-story sections connected by a single-story central structure. Howison used salvaged brick from buildings already standing on his property to reduce

**By Eric J. Mink
Historian and Cultural
Resources Manager,
Fredericksburg &
Spotsylvania National
Military Park.**

construction costs, which totaled \$15,000 when finished. During the Civil War, Braehead became a refuge for locals during various Union occupations of Fredericksburg. The house and property sat in the middle of the Confederate defenses for both the first and second battles of Fredericksburg. Rising south and west of Braehead is Howison Hill, upon

which Confederate artillery shelled advancing Federal troops. During the May 1863 battle the Union lines swept across the Howison farm on their way to the crest of the heights behind the house. Other notable events that occurred at Braehead during the war included Robert E. Lee's having breakfast at the house prior to the December 1862 battle, Confederate use of the building to conduct courts-martial, as well as the housing of wounded following fighting in the area.

Sketch made by Albert A. Carter of the 4th Vermont Infantry.

The scene depicted is the successful Union attack against Lee's Hill on May 3, 1863. Braehead can be seen to the left of the advancing battle lines.

On May 8, 1864, General George Meade directed that the town of Fredericksburg become the hospital site for the Union forces engaged in the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. Thousands of wounded soldiers passed through Fredericksburg on their way to hospitals in Washington, D.C. Protecting the lines of supply and communication that stretched from Belle Plain in Stafford County through Fredericksburg and to the Union army in the field was a garrison of regiments under the command of General John J. Abercrombie. For two weeks, Abercrombie's command

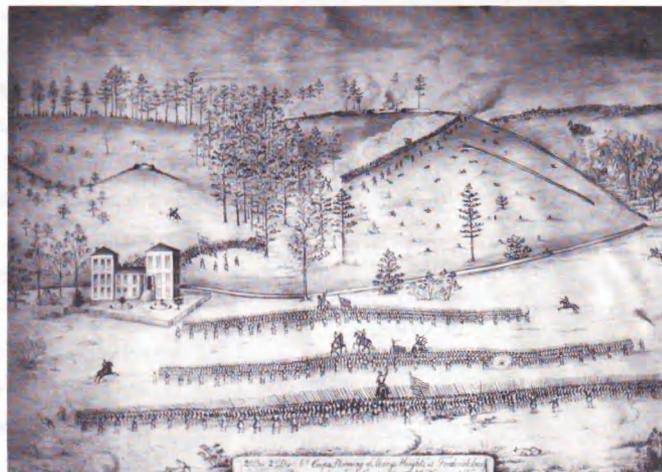


Image courtesy of Jean Findlay, Dickinson, Maryland

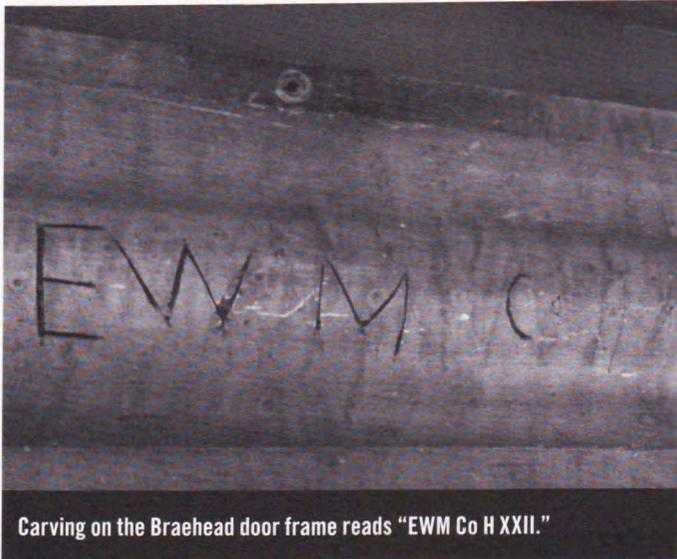
protected the ambulances and supply wagons, as well as the depots at Belle Plain and Fredericksburg. Mary Howison, John's niece, later wrote of the Union presence at Braehead during this period:

"In 1864 the Northern Army took possession of the house and farm. They burnt the good brick barn, killed the cows, ate the chickens, smashed the china, tore up dress goods, destroyed or stole the family Bible which had in it already three generations.

In a joking spirit they paraded around in a dozen beaver hats which Uncle John had stored up, prodded the floors and folding doors with bayonets, threw the dining room chairs through the window glass and wrote their names and initials in various places. The wonder is more mischief was not done but the five-year old house made sturdy resistance with its strong material and workmanship." Mary Howison, "Braehead," copy in FRSP files.

Some of the graffiti Mary Howison mentioned survived into the 21st century. It belongs to two soldiers who served with the 22nd New York Cavalry. This regiment was attached to General Abercrombie's command at Fredericksburg. Carved into the door frame of a room off the entrance parlor are the letters "EWM Co H XXII." This is the work of Sergeant Edmund W. Merrill, who enlisted at Huron, New York on December 30, 1863. He mustered into Company H as a sergeant on February 2, 1864. His time with the regiment lasted just short of a year, as he transferred to the 1st Company, 2nd Battalion of the Veteran Reserve Corps on November 4, 1864. His military service ended with his discharge on July 24, 1865.

talk...”: Braehead Graffiti



Carving on the Braehead door frame reads “EWM Co H XXII.”



As late as 2003, additional graffiti could be found on the plaster of the basement wall. In pencil was scrawled “D.H. Dickinson—Co. G 22d NY Cavalry—May 26th 1864.” Private David H. Dickinson, whose military service began as a member of the 23rd New York Infantry, left this reminder. On January 16, 1863, Dickinson enlisted in the cavalry at Bath, New York. He mustered in as a private in Company G of the 22nd New York Cavalry and mustered out of service on August 9, 1865. Unfortunately, Dickinson’s graffiti has not survived. Likely due to moisture and humidity issues in the Braehead basement, the writing has disappeared from the wall. Photographic documentation is all that remains of Dickinson’s visit to Braehead.

Taken in 2003, this photo (above, right) shows the graffiti on the basement wall, which has since disappeared. It read “D.H. Dickinson—Co. G 22d NY Cavalry—May 26th 1864.”

Braehead remains a private residence and is not owned by the National Park Service, although the house and property is within the park’s authorized boundary. Descendants of John Howison owned and lived at Braehead until just a few years ago. In 2006, the **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT)** acquired an option to purchase Braehead and 18 acres. An historic easement, held by the **Virginia Department of Historic Resources**, was placed on the house and grounds and in 2008 Braehead was sold to Rob and Diana Almy. From time to time, the Almys have opened the home to the public, such

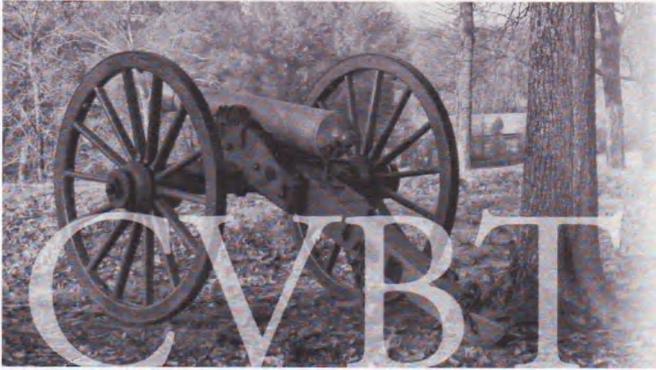


as last year’s Candlelight Tour of Historic Homes hosted by the **Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc.** Rob and Diana have done a wonderful job of restoring and rehabilitating the house and property to include arresting drainage and moisture problems around the basement. The next time you’re traveling south on Lee Drive, glance to the east as you begin your ascent of Howison Hill and you’ll catch a glimpse of Braehead.

Thanks to Rob and Diana Almy for the care they have shown Braehead and for allowing access to their home.

Eric J. Mink

This article is taken from Mysteries and Conundrums, an unofficial blog that explores the Civil War-era landscape in the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania region. All opinions expressed in this blog are those of the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NPS or its management.



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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	Patron	\$ 500	Life Patron	\$10,000
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