

American Battlefield Trust Leads Effort to Save 128 Acres Connected to 1862 Maryland Campaign

National nonprofit seeks to protect additional land at Antietam and Shepherdstown

Mary Koik, ABT, October 14, 2022

(Sharpsburg, Md.) — The autumn of 1862 was a moment of crisis for the United States as, following a summer of demoralizing defeats, the Union faced multi-pronged invasion from the Confederacy. The events that unfolded in Kentucky and Maryland rippled across the nation and into our history books, changing the course of the Civil War. Now, 160 years later, the American Battlefield Trust, the nation’s premier historic land preservation group, has launched a national fundraising campaign to protect 128 acres of battlefield land tied to the Maryland Campaign, including properties on the Antietam and Shepherdstown battlefields.



Antietam National Battlefield Noel Benadom

“Antietam National Battlefield may have been established in 1890, but its current state is the result of ongoing work by dedicated preservationists. Now, we’re hoping to expand its preservation footprint even further,” said Trust President David Duncan.

“And less than a six-mile drive from Antietam, we’re simultaneously seeking to head off residential development at the scene of the worst fighting at Shepherdstown.”

Today, as national park visitors stand at the iconic, restored Dunker Church, their sight lines to the battlefield are obscured by a 1970s brick house, a garage, a barn and a modern tree line. On September 17, 1862, this land was at the edge of what was known as the Reel Farm, just south of the West Woods. If the Trust is successful in acquiring these six acres, which are adjacent to other Trust-protected properties, they will be restored to their wartime appearance, removing non-historic structures and utility poles.

After the unprecedented bloodshed at Antietam, the shell-shocked armies clashed again two days later at the Battle of Shepherdstown. The Army of Northern Virginia was retreating to safety across the Potomac River, when elements of the Union force struck their rearguard. Early the next day, a Confederate counterattack — timed for when the Union soldiers were crossing the river — inflicted heavy casualties, nearly annihilating the new 118th Pennsylvania regiment and ending the Maryland Campaign of 1862. Now, the Trust has the opportunity to save 122 acres at the touched-by-battle Osbourn Farm, an area long-eyed for residential subdivision development.

The Trust has already raised much of the \$2.75 million cost associated with these 128 acres at Antietam and Shepherdstown. Through multiple federal and state matching-grant sources, including the Trust’s first award from West Virginia’s Outdoor Heritage Conservation

Fund, support from the Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association Inc. and Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and a generous Antietam-loving donor, the private fundraising need is only \$343,837 — meaning all gifts are multiplied \$8-to-\$1.

The American Battlefield Trust has a proven track record of success on these fields, with 464 acres saved at Antietam — which remains America’s bloodiest day and even prompted President Abraham Lincoln to issue his Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, declaring “that all persons held as slaves” within Confederate states “are, and henceforward shall be free” — and 621 acres at Shepherdstown. Learn more about this latest effort at www.battlefields.org/128AcresMarylandCampaign.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America’s hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 55,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

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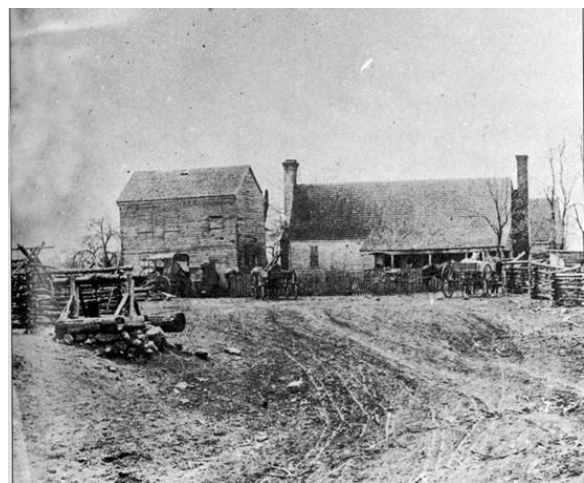
Revolutionary and Civil War History Preserved at the 137-Acre Site of Todd's Tavern

A landscape touched by figures like the Marquis de Lafayette and Ulysses Grant is now preserved forever due to the efforts of the nation’s leading battlefield preservation nonprofit and its partners

Colleen Cheslak, ABT, September 29, 2022

(Spotsylvania County, Va.) — Home to a rich assortment of American history, the Commonwealth of Virginia has swathes of land that have been touched by warfare across centuries. As such, the leading battlefield preservation nonprofit American Battlefield Trust jumped at the chance when presented with an opportunity to save roughly 137 acres of hallowed ground in Spotsylvania County, with both Revolutionary and Civil War ties. Efforts to fundraise on behalf of the site — once host to the 19th Century Todd’s Tavern — launched last year, receiving multifold support that has now resulted in the Trust’s most recent preservation victory.

“While Todd’s Tavern — which had in-all been a residence, tavern, post office and store — was destroyed sometime before 1884, the land alone speaks volumes to its place in American history,” said Trust President David Duncan. “It tells the story of our nation’s hard-fought beginnings under the leadership of a loyal and determined Frenchman and the divisive struggle that arose and touched this very same landscape 84 years later.”



18th-century Todd's Tavern at junction of Brock, Catharpin and Piney Branch Roads, circa. 1861-65. Library of Congress

The site of Todd's Tavern, positioned at the intersection of the Brock and Catharpin Roads in Spotsylvania County, stands as a prime example of the power of place. Now preserved, future visitors may experience a heightened sense of learning and recognition that only comes from standing in the precise locations where history unfolded.

In the aftermath of the 1781 Battle of Guilford Courthouse, British General Charles Lord Cornwallis marched his army to Virginia but was trailed and taunted by a Continental force under the Marquis de Lafayette. On the way to shield the vital logistical center of Fredericksburg from the British, Lafayette brought his command along the Brock and Catharpin Roads, on the south and the eastern portion of the 137-acre tract. It was this maneuvering of Lafayette and Cornwallis that ultimately led to Yorktown, where the British famously surrendered.

On the night of May 7, 1864, Union Generals Grant and Meade rode south along Spotsylvania's Brock Road, skirting the 137-acre tract and stopping briefly at the one-and-a-half story inn known as Todd's Tavern. A few days later, on May 14, Confederate Gen. Thomas Rosser's cavalry brigade spent the night at the tavern. The following day, Rosser marched east on the Catharpin Road and engaged the 2nd Ohio Cavalry and 23rd Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops. It is there that Union Gen. Philip Sheridan and Confederate Gen. Fitzhugh "Fitz" Lee waged one of the most intense and important cavalry battles of the Overland Campaign.

Acknowledging the site's valuable past, the American Battlefield Protection Program, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia

Battlefield Preservation Fund, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust and persevering Trust donors joined the American Battlefield Trust on its preservation journey to ensure that this largely pristine acreage was not lost to a residential subdivision or utility-scale solar farm — a sight that has become quite common in the Commonwealth.

“Honoring the wishes of the past owner and understanding the memories engrained in this historic land, we are proud to stand beside the American Battlefield Trust to ensure that this property's fate is safe and secure,” said Central Virginia Battlefields Trust Executive Director Terry Rensel. “Men marched along, fought on and sacrificed upon these grounds; we must continue to protect and uplift their stories.”

This victory comes on the heels of the Trust receiving a \$94,000 Preservation Planning Grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program to launch a strategic study on Virginia's wartime history, so that the public may experience battlefields as indigenous landscapes and settlements, sites of enslaved agricultural and industrial labor, and freedmen's post-war settlements, as well as sites of our nation's defining conflict. The organization's efforts in Virginia are multifold and continue at a rapid pace.

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HOW THE SHOTGUN BECAME A FAVORITE AMONG CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS

These inexpensive Belgian guns were well-loved by Southern troops.

By Albert L. Labure, Historynet, 10/17/2022



Liege shotgun, circa 1850 (Heritage Auctions, Dallas)

In the 1840s and 1850s, companies in Liege, Belgium, produced thousands of double-barreled percussion shotguns. These imported 12-gauge models were popular among American hunters. At the onset of the Civil War, there is no evidence that state or national entities purchased these weapons in any significant number, but many merchants would for private sale.

While most of these imports did not have many markings on them, some did bear the popular Liege stamp, and a few had information linking them to American dealers inscribed on their barrels. Markings were typically located on the gun's lock. Some, however, displayed markings on the barrel rib, the piece connecting the two barrels.

When they enlisted, many mounted Southerners brought their personal shotguns with them. The 52-inch length allowed a cavalryman to reload easily while riding, and the two barrels delivered heavy damage at close range. They could also be reloaded quicker than the 20 seconds it usually would take to load a rifled musket.

Southern blockade runners continued importing inexpensive Belgian shotguns throughout the war, as verified by the presence of several cases among many U.S. naval vessels' prizes-of-war lists. Some of these captured shipments show markings of the Confederate gun companies to which they were being shipped, put there by an agent who had inspected the weapons for his

company before it was shipped from a European port.

At the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Mo., in August 1861, and during the 1862 New Mexico Campaign, close combat favored Confederates armed with shotguns against Union troops carrying rifled weapons.

The Trans-Mississippi Theater was not the only place shotguns were used, however. In June 1864, a makeshift force of about 350 Virginia State Troops, and about 125 disabled factory workers and locals, accounted well for themselves in defending the Staunton River Bridge during the Wilson-Kautz cavalry raid in southwestern Virginia. Nearby Danville was a major Confederate supply hub, and the determined militia held off the attacking Federals until reinforcements could arrive, inflicting heavy casualties with their double-barreled shotguns.

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PTSD, medically defined as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, is a common psychiatric diagnosis that has afflicted military veterans over the centuries. Many combat stressors amplified within a period of time can result in emotional breakdown, recurring nightmares, hallucinations, panic attacks, chronic depression, and even complete psychological breakdown to the point of disassociation from reality. It's often associated with "Survivor's Guilt" syndrome.

It's believed a large number of Civil War combatants suffered from the same PTSD symptoms. However, military historians have overlooked the conditions of PTSD among Civil War veterans as nothing more than a footnote in wartime traumas far

behind the graphic horrors of amputations, grotesque battlefield injuries, and death on a mass scale. More often, the typical Civil War combatant is viewed as “stoic, determined, brave, enduring, heroic, and disciplined in the face of combat.”

Part of the reason the psychological traumas of Civil War soldiers have been overlooked by historians is because weapons of mass destruction—such as lethal gas and chemicals, aircraft, mechanized vehicles, and individual use of automatic weapons—were not involved. It was only with the wholesale use of those weapons in later wars that spotlighted soldiers’ psychological breakdowns and physical collapses. By disregarding those afflicted during the Civil War, they couldn’t have been further from the truth.

“Melancholy”

Military combatants from both sides were often accompanied by their relatives, immediate family members, friends, neighbors, school mates, and close relations developed during their service. The trauma of seeing them critically wounded, violently killed, captured, or missing in action would often lead to bouts of mental breakdown and “melancholy.” Or, what was later termed “Soldiers Heart” by family members to describe emotional distress caused by acute war trauma. Physicians at the time offered little evidence describing these emotional disorders, preferring to justify their diagnosis as the need for “*bed rest, fresh air, and return to spiritual beliefs.*” Those afflicted were often left to deal with the strong psychological effects simply because there was not a medical description developed to describe the trauma, much less a competent treatment.

Concussions

Also not understood was the repetitive concussive effects on the brain which, until recently, was not well understood even in the medical field. PCS—or “Post Concussive Syndrome”—was attributed in World War I to “shell shock.” In World War II and the Korean War, it was attributed to “battle fatigue.” Not until the Gulf Wars did PCS become the official term to describe concussive brain trauma.

During the Civil War, shelling by mortar and cannon was the preferred way to dislodge and destroy a mass formation of troops and disrupt supply lines and encampments. Frequent and mass use of these weapons contributed greatly to the concussive effects of brain injury and associated neurological effects. Until recently, it would have been difficult to describe these conditions as cause for so many cases of various neurological and emotional disorders among Civil War veterans.



"Whooping it Up" in the Wild West, by C. M. Russell | public domain

Violent Behavior

Memories of the horrors of war can sometime surface into reality and result in dramatic displays of physical or verbal

violence or hyper-emotional outbursts. Similar displays of behavior were often described among Civil War combatants and often led to violent behavior in later years. Veterans also were involved with the move to the Western U.S. Territories and often prone to violence and criminality against former enemy combatants, civilians from opposing states, and Native Americans. Basically, anyone deemed “the enemy” was sufficient reason for expressing violence. The “Wild West” was populated by many of these displaced veterans, including many who remained in Union service during Western expansion or joined up after serving in the Confederate military.

An example of acute mental disorder is Confederate veteran William James, who displayed signs of distress right after the war. As a POW in a Union camp, he was paroled physically ill and whose mind was described as “much disordered.” As an Alabama farmer prior to the war, he returned to his former life by cropping fields in late fall of 1865. However, within the year, James had become uncontrollably violent, threatening to kill his father, and then attempted to kill himself by jumping into a well. As discussed, violence and threats of harm and suicide are all examples of PTSD symptoms. Postwar lunatic asylums were filled with numerous records of uncontrollable rage against family members and suicide attempts. Again, all are typical of PTSD or severe expressions of survivor’s guilt.

Dying by Suicide

Civil War veterans with PTSD were also at greater risk of dying by suicide. Unfortunately, accurate recordings of suicide or attempts at suicide are virtually nonexistent. Yet, conclusions may be drawn

from more recent evidence among modern-era veterans. What is known is 20% of Vietnam veterans made suicidal attempts and another 20% were preoccupied with suicidal thoughts. This can be attributed to survivor’s guilt or the inability to reconcile the stressors associated with warfare. It is therefore reasonable to extrapolate the same percentages among Civil War veterans. Eric T. Dean Junior’s breakaway study “Shook Over Hell” determined over half of the residents of an Indiana Civil War veterans’ home either attempted suicide, contemplated suicide, or were emotionally suicidal.

In the case of Albinus Snelson, a Georgian who served in the Confederate Cavalry, a recovery-to-relapse cycle with multiple suicide attempts illustrates the difficulty Civil War veterans had with survivor’s guilt and the PTSD syndrome. Snelson was a teen when he enlisted. It was noted in his military record he struggled as a soldier leading to an early discharge. Entering a Georgian asylum, he attempted to burn himself alive and throw himself out of windows to kill himself. He finally succeeded in 1871 after ingesting strychnine.



Central State Hospital in 1937, also known as Georgia State Lunatic, Idiot, and Epileptic Asylum | NPS

Delusional Paranoia

Civil War soldiers also suffered from what can be described as delusional paranoia, one of the most extreme cases of PTSD and one of the most violent. Confederate veteran John Williams was afflicted with this terrible mental disorder. Admitted to the same Georgia asylum as Snelson, Williams was diagnosed with “post-combat hyper-vigilance.” According to accounts he was “constantly frightened.” He continually complained that people were trying to kill him and, in a state of extreme agitation, he cut his own throat. In another example, 40-year-old Joseph Pearman, a harnessmaker from Petersburg, Virginia, also took his life in 1875, a full ten years after war’s end, protesting that “someone was coming out from the city to kill him.”

Revised military estimates now conclude that earlier figures of Civil War deaths should be revised to 750,000 actual battle deaths, with another 100,000 dying afterwards due to wounds, psychological issues, and disease contracted during the war. It is apparent that while the circumstances driving the Civil War were very different from modern warfare, the violent history of that war leaves no doubt that Civil War veterans also contended with the same emotional and psychological issues as today, even if it were not recognized during their lifetime. Today’s various psychiatric treatments and medications could very well have effectively treated the cases described. Unfortunately, it came too late in history for Civil War veterans.

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HOSPITALS ARE ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA, AND OTHER VITAL LESSONS FROM THE CIVIL WAR

They had plenty of guns, cannons, and uniforms – but they also needed this.

By John Lustrea Historynet, 10/11/2022



Ambulances such as this one were vital to transporting the wounded to better care, but were in short supply at early battles during the war. (Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield)

On August 11, 1861, Philip C. Davis, a U.S. Army surgeon, looked at the mayhem around him in Springfield, Mo., and saw the wretched result of civil war. “The churches, hotels, court house, and nearly all of the private dwellings were filled with wounded of both sides,” he wrote. The previous day, a battle had raged along the banks of nearby Wilson’s Creek, resulting in 1,800 wounded and more than 550 dead between U.S. and Confederate forces. For many of the wounded, their sad ordeal had only just begun.

Wilson’s Creek was the first major battle west of the Mississippi. In the war’s early days, Federal soldiers had sparred with the Missouri State Guard, a secessionist militia unit, for control of the strategically important state. With access to both the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, a Federal arsenal in St. Louis, and vast natural resources and manpower, it was vital to the Union cause that Missouri not fall under Confederate control.

Starting in May, Union forces commanded by Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Lyon began securing most of Missouri. By mid-July, Lyon's men had outmaneuvered the Missouri State Guard to the state's southwest corner, near Springfield, and felt a decisive victory there would give Lyon the full control he desired.

Lyon's 5,000-man force, however, faced sudden outbreaks of typhoid fever and dysentery—all too common early in the war, with large numbers of soldiers gathered together for the first time and many never before exposed to epidemic diseases such as smallpox or measles. The number of sick quickly outpaced the army's available hospital accommodations and the unfinished courthouse in Springfield was designated for the overflow. Davis was assigned to care for the sick and would end up stationed there for months caring for the eventual Wilson's Creek wounded.

As the armies prepared to fight near Springfield, the lack of ambulances began to concern the medical departments. Each army had only a handful available, and they weren't yet organized into an official ambulance corps. Both generals had plans to surprise each other the morning of August 10, 1861, but rain the night before postponed the Confederate movement. Southern soldiers awoke at 5 a.m. to the sound of gunfire around them. The Battle of Wilson's Creek had begun.

Neither side had a medical director to organize the casualty response. Direction from higher ranking medical officers could have saved many lives. As it was, when the shooting started, individual surgeons sprang into action as they saw fit. Assistant Surgeons Havilah Mowry Sprague and E.L.

Patee of the 1st Kansas set up a field dressing station in a ravine behind the northern portion of the Union line, near where the National Park's visitor center stands today. In addition to being sheltered in the ravine, they chose the location because there was an offshoot of Wilson's Creek that passed through the low spot providing plenty of water. The sheltered nature of the area made it a logical place for wounded to seek shelter when leaving the front line. The wounded who could walk went there for stabilizing medical care.



Havilah

ah Sprague was one of several Union surgeons who had to handle increasing casualties on their own. (American Civil War Surgical Antiques)

Surgeon W.H. White of the 1st Iowa was also on the field, tending to wounded on a slope in rear of his regiment. Few, if any, operations were done at these dressing stations. Rather, wounds would be stabilized by stopping the bleeding and performing triage. With few ambulances available, medical personnel prioritized those to be sent farther behind the lines to more

established hospitals, like the one at the courthouse.

By midday, Lyon was dead and the Federals had been driven from the field. On August 11, they began a retreat to St. Louis, bringing 200 wounded along and leaving Springfield—and other wounded—to the enemy. Surgeon E.C. Franklin was left in charge of the remaining 500–600 Union wounded. He was helped by Davis, surgeon S.D. Smith, and assistant surgeon Samuel H. Melcher.

Not long after the Federals departed, Confederate forces arrived and set up their own hospitals. According to surviving records, Confederate medical personnel seized most of the Federal medical supplies for their own wounded, leaving the Union surgeons with only a small quantity of supplies. Franklin was forced to purchase necessary medicine, spending \$5,000 for the purpose. Between the armies and the local merchants in a relatively rural area, there surprisingly was no lack of medical supplies. Surgeons reported having plenty of chloroform for anesthesia, splints for setting broken bones, and calomel, opium, and other vital medicines.

In addition to caring for the wounded already filling every available space in Springfield, the Federal surgeons focused on providing care to the Union soldiers still on the field desperately awaiting help. It took five to six days to recover all the wounded Union soldiers who faced that predicament—due mostly to the lack of ambulances.

The extensive time it took to bring the wounded in from the field had dire consequences for those left behind. Melcher reported that the wounded brought in from

the field were “swarming with maggots.” Insects were a nuisance in the hospital, too. “The flies were exceedingly troublesome after the battle, maggots forming in the wounds in less than an hour after dressing them, and also upon any clothing or bedding soiled by blood or pus,” wrote Melcher, who ultimately rid himself and his patients of these pests by sprinkling calomel (a mercury-based medication) on the open wound.

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How a Famous Photo Fueled Northern Support for the Civil War and Inspired the New Movie 'Emancipation'



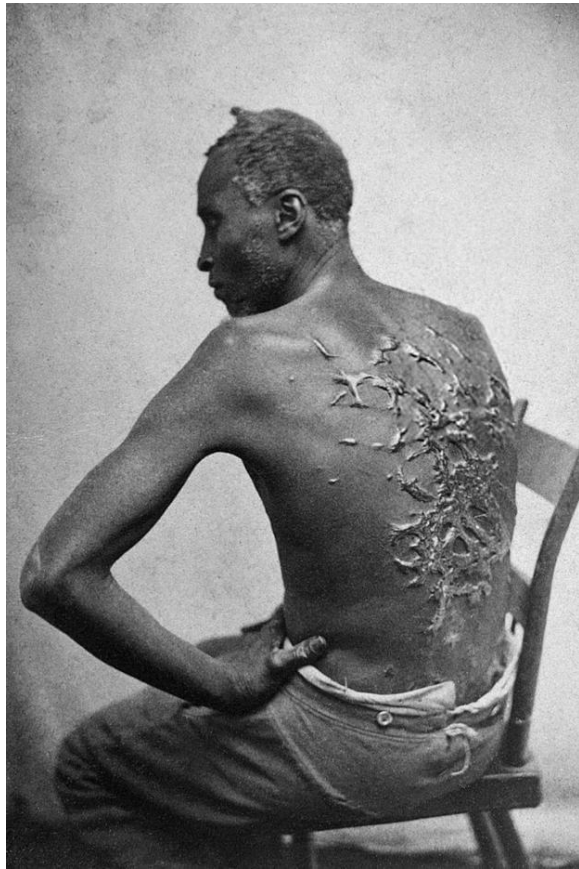
Will Smith stars in the Civil War drama "Emancipation." (Apple TV+)

Military.com | By James Barber

Gordon, also known as "Whipped Peter," was a slave who escaped his Louisiana plantation and endured a 10-day chase through woods and swamps before he reached a Union encampment in 1863. His story has inspired the movie "Emancipation," due to open in theaters on Dec. 2, 2022, and stream on Apple TV+, starting Dec. 9.

Itinerant photographers named McPherson and Oliver were present at the camp and photographed the welts and scars that crisscrossed Gordon's back. That photo was published first in Harper's Weekly and later as a postcard that became an international sensation and solidified support for the war across the Union territory.

The photograph has become one of the enduring images of the Civil War era, and it's still hard to see today as it provides startling evidence of the cruelty that defined slavery.



That image was the inspiration behind "Emancipation," the movie directed by Antoine Fuqua, the noted filmmaker who most recently executive-produced and directed the first episode of the Navy SEAL drama series "The Terminal List" for Prime Video.

Screenwriter William N. Collage ("Assassin's Creed," "Exodus: Gods and Kings") decided to call the character "Peter," since that's the name popularized by the photo. Will Smith, who produced the film, stars as Peter, and the cast features Ben Foster ("Hell or High Water"), Charmaine Bingwa ("The Good Fight"), Gilbert Owuor ("Montana Story") and Mustafa Shakir ("Soul Assassin").

"Emancipation" is very much a Civil War drama, and not just because the lead character of the film made his escape to a Union [Army](#) camp. Photography was still cutting-edge technology during the era, and the existence of the famous image of Gordon's brutalized back was an essential piece in the case for the Union's war against the Confederacy. Southern leaders could no longer dismiss stories about cruelty and abuse as "fake news."

The film was completed before Will Smith's attack on Chris Rock at the 2022 Oscar ceremony, and there's been speculation that Apple would either delay the film's release for a couple of years or drop it altogether. However, the movie was warmly received when it was shown for the first time on Oct. 1, 2022, at a private screening during the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 51st annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C and is now set for release.

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*The Federal Cemetery at Winchester.
(Melissa A. Winn)*

WINCHESTER'S BURYING GROUNDS: WHERE NORTH MEETS SOUTH

**Thousands of Union and Confederate
soldiers found their final resting place in
Winchester, Va., cemeteries.**

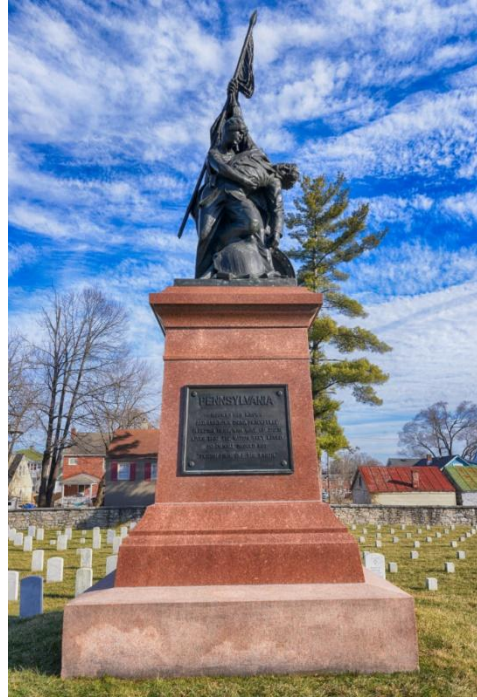
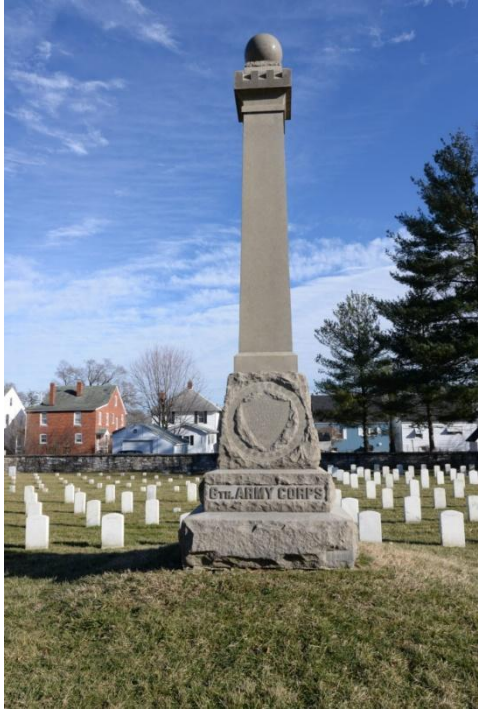
By Melissa A. Winn, Historynet, 10/10/2022

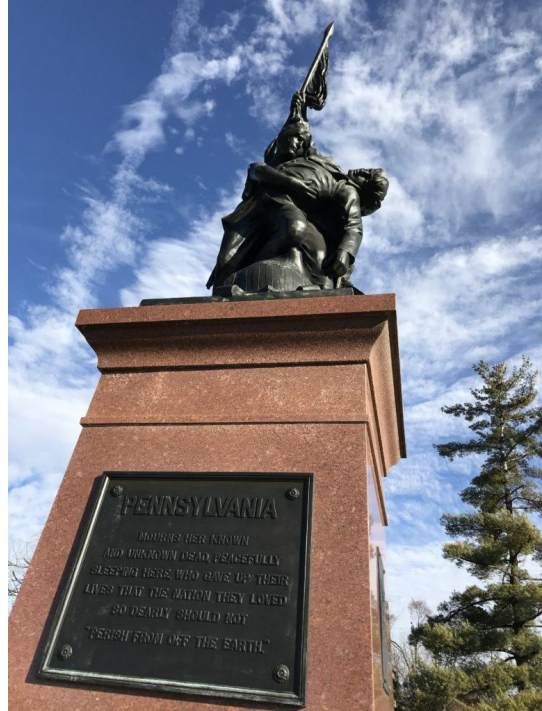
Winchester National Cemetery was established on land appropriated for burials during the Civil War. Although the land was used for burial purposes as early as 1862, the cemetery was not officially dedicated until April 8, 1866. It's the final resting place for Union soldiers who fought and died at the battles of Winchester, [New Market](#), Front Royal, Snickers Gap, [Harpers Ferry](#), Martinsburg, and Romney. There are 14 monuments to Union regiments, corps, and states that either are represented by some of the soldiers buried in the cemetery and/or had participants in the 3rd [Battle of Winchester](#). The oldest monument dates to 1864 and was erected for the 38th Massachusetts Infantry.

Stonewall Confederate Cemetery was established in 1866 for the burial of 2,575 Confederate soldiers who died in battle or in the hospitals in and around the Winchester area. A monument over the mass grave of more than 800 unknown Confederate soldiers is at the center of the cemetery, and there is a section for each state member of the Confederacy. Notable burials here include Brig. Gen. Turner Ashby and his brother Captain Richard Ashby.

(All photos: Melissa A. Winn)







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