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WALMART ABANDONS PLANS TO BUILD SUPERCENTER ON WILDERNESS BATTLEFIELD

CWi, January 26, 2011

In an unexpected development, Walmart announced this morning that it has abandoned plans to pursue a special use permit previously awarded to the retail giant for construction of a supercenter on the Wilderness Battlefield. The decision came as the trial in a legal challenge seeking to overturn the special use permit was scheduled to begin in Orange County circuit court.

"We are pleased with Walmart's decision to abandon plans to build a supercenter on the Wilderness battlefield," remarked James Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Trust. "We have long believed that Walmart would ultimately recognize that it is in the best interests of all concerned to move their intended store away from the battlefield. We applaud Walmart officials for putting the interests of historic preservation first. Sam Walton would be proud of this decision."

The Civil War Trust is part of the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition, an alliance of local residents and national groups seeking to protect the Wilderness battlefield. Lighthizer noted that the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition has sought from the very beginning to work with county officials and Walmart to find an alternative location for the proposed superstore away from the battlefield.

"We stand ready to work with Walmart to put this controversy behind us and protect the battlefield from further encroachment," Lighthizer stated. "We firmly believe

that preservation and progress need not be mutually exclusive, and welcome Walmart as a thoughtful partner in efforts to protect the Wilderness Battlefield."

In August 2009, the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved a controversial special use permit to allow construction of the Walmart Supercenter and associated commercial development on the Wilderness Battlefield. A wide range of prominent individuals and organizations publicly opposed the store's location, including more than 250 American historians led by Pulitzer Prize-winners James McPherson and David McCullough. One month after the decision, a group of concerned citizens and the local Friends of Wilderness Battlefield filed a legal challenge to overturn the decision.

National Parks chief praises Walmart

By CLINT SCHEMMER,
Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star,
January 28, 2011

The National Park Service's chief is among those praising the world's largest retailer for deciding not to build a Supercenter at the Wilderness.

National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis reacted to Walmart's abandonment of plans for a 143,000-square-foot store a cannon-shot from Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

"Walmart has crafted a solution where battlefield resources and the visitor experience will be protected, while still providing for the commercial needs of Orange," he said. "This is the end of three years of controversy and, hopefully, a new beginning for cooperative preservation."

Jarvis commended Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, a local nonprofit that preserves historic Ellwood Manor off State Route 20, and the larger preservation community for "their steadfast opposition to major commercial development at the gateway" to the Wilderness battlefield portion of the park.

On Wednesday, the second day of pretrial hearings in a lawsuit challenging a permit for the planned Supercenter, Walmart announced it wouldn't build on the site near State Routes 3 and 20 and would preserve the land "for future generations." The company said it plans to build a similar-size store elsewhere in eastern Orange's Route 3 corridor.

The crossroads area, which Civil War historian James McPherson has called the Union army's "nerve center" during the Battle of the Wilderness, was pivotal in that May 1864 fight.

Led by the Friends group, preservationists sued to stop Walmart's development. The trial had been expected to start this week.

"Those involved in the suit and their partners have done a service for which we should all be grateful," Jarvis said.

Others protesting against the 240,000-square-foot project included the Piedmont Environmental Council, National Parks Conservation Association, National Trust for Historic Preservation and Civil War Trust.

Walmart's turnabout, Jarvis said, is "good news for historic preservation, especially as we near the start of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and the commemorative activities that will highlight the Wilderness and many more events and the people



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who lived and died during a time that shook our nation to its foundation."

Park Superintendent Russ Smith expressed empathy for those disappointed by Walmart's switch.

"I know that it will be hard for some people to see a 'win-win' in this, but I think that's exactly what it is," he said. "It's just a shame that it's taken this long and cost this much to get to this point."

Smith said he hopes Orange officials and the Park Service will now collaborate on planning the future of the Wilderness area.

"I think there are folks in Orange County who really do care about the battlefield and tourism boost that it brings to the county. There's no choice but that we need to work together," he said.

Tom Kiernan, president of the National Parks Conservation Association, said yesterday that more than 30,000 of its activists sent letters to Walmart's CEO asking the company to relocate its store to another site along Route 3.

He noted that historian McPherson, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his book "Battle Cry of Freedom," says the Wilderness is as significant as the Battle of Gettysburg. It's where Gen. Ulysses S. Grant took command of the Union Army and began relentlessly pushing Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederate forces south; Lee's army surrendered 11 months later at Appomattox.

"This decision is a victory for protecting our priceless historic landscapes that tell our shared story," Kiernan said of Walmart's new stance. "All involved now have the opportunity to work together to preserve this site so that it remains compatible with the national park's meaning and character."

Calling the superstore fight "one of those classic confrontations," state Sen. Edd Houck, D-Spotsylvania, said Walmart's decision was "welcome news." House Speaker Bill Howell, R-Stafford, said he was "delighted" by the change.

"I'm sure they'll find another spot in Orange nearby," Howell said this week.

Stolen Civil War Weapon Finally Found

By Angela Pellerano, WTVR.com, January 19, 2011

RICHMOND - A gun used in the Civil War, then stolen from the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond has been recovered more than three decades after the theft.

The museum considered the .36 caliber Spiller and Burr revolver used by General George Washington Rains one of its most prized possessions.

"This is one of the very first and one of the only Confederate manufactured handguns," said Museum of the Confederacy Collections Manager Catherine Wright.

Wright says only 1,450 of the guns were made. That is one reason why the museum called the FBI when the gun, with an estimated value of \$50,000, disappeared from the collection in 1975. Wright says the gun was stolen when the museum collection was moved out of the White House of the Confederacy and into a new museum building.

"It may have been a casualty of some sort of opportunistic thief who saw a loose case or a door which may have been standing ajar. The security measures were lax in those days," said Wright.

Flash forward 35 years.

In December 2010, Wright says a Knoxville, Tennessee woman found the revolver in her late father's

belongings. When she tried to sell the weapon to an Ohio antique dealer she learned of the revolver's true identity.

The antique dealer looked up the weapon in a Confederate firearms book, traced it back to the Museum of the Confederacy and contacted the museum.

The woman who found the gun will not face charges. It remains a mystery as to how her father got his hands on the gun. We are told he never lived in Richmond, but was a collector of Civil War items. The revolver will go on display at the museum in February.

Monitor's Iconic Engine Gets TLC

By Andrea Mustain, ouramazingplanet.com, January 12, 2011

The order to abandon ship came just after midnight. The USS Monitor, a Union ironclad, was taking on too much water, caught in a violent storm. At approximately 1:30 a.m. on Dec. 31, 1862, the Monitor was overcome, engulfed by the crashing waves.

Almost 150 years later, conservators are getting the first up-close look at the sunken Monitor's 30-ton steam engine, an engineering wonder of its day, and the mighty heart of a ship that played a notable role in America's Civil War.

The USS Monitor went down in treacherous waters 16 miles (25 kilometers) off North Carolina's Cape Hatteras. The wreck was discovered in 1973, resting upside down on the ocean floor in about 235 feet (71 meters) of water. In a massive undertaking in 2001, the ship's engine was brought to the surface.

It was no ordinary steam engine. Designed by Swedish inventor John Ericsson, it was a "vibrating side-



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lever" engine with pistons that worked horizontally, an innovation that had allowed the compact, 400-horsepower engine to be entirely belowdecks, behind the Monitor's armor and impervious to enemy fire.

Freeing a giant

For almost a decade after it was recovered, the engine lay in a 35,000-gallon tank at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Va., soaking in purified, alkaline water, meant to loosen the barnacle-like sediment covering about 85 percent of the engine's surface.

"The water was clear, which almost made it more tantalizing. Because there it is — just waiting," said David Krop, the conservation project manager for the museum's Monitor collection.

A few weeks ago, the water was drained, and Krop and his crew, clad in dark-blue coveralls, finally got to take a crack at the engine, chipping away at a century and a half's worth of gunk to the steady clang of hammer and chisels.

Krop said they had to be careful — a wrong move could crack the corroded cast-iron components of the engine.

"The neat thing is when you uncover a valve or a handle, because the copper alloy is extremely bright and shiny and it looks new," Krop told OurAmazingPlanet. "And just for that moment you realize, 'Wow, the engine must have been absolutely beautiful.'"

Game-changing ship

The engine was also supremely functional, and contributed to the Monitor's role in a symbolic turning point of the Civil War, according to Jeff Johnston, a historian at the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Ericsson had designed and built the Monitor in just 108 days, after



Before and after photos of a part of the Monitor engine — photos courtesy Mariner's Museum

responding to a newspaper ad from the U.S. government calling for ironclad warship designs — a desperate response to the Confederates' newly built ironclad warship, the Virginia.

On March 8, 1862, the Virginia destroyed two Union ships outside the harbor near Norfolk, Va.

But by the next day, there was a new ship in sight, the Monitor: the first all steam-powered warship ever built and the first to ever have a rotating gun turret.

The two ironclads did battle for four hours, the Monitor's two guns proving equal to the Virginia's 10 guns.

"Technically nobody won. It was a draw," Johnston said. "What won was armor: iron warships."

However, Johnston said, the Monitor's performance had a major impact on Union morale.

"At that point, the North really had no major victories in the Civil War — a few skirmishes, but none of the big battles," Johnston told OurAmazingPlanet. "From the public perspective, the South was winning. It gave way to a very much needed

victory in the minds of the northern press and public, whether it was true or not."

Back in the water

At the museum, Krop and his crew removed 4 tons of material from the Monitor's engine in two weeks. Now the engine is soaking again, this time in an electrically charged solution designed to remove yet more of the stubborn gunk.

Krop said that eventually the steam engine will be entirely disassembled so that the parts can be properly conserved, and then put back together, a process that may not be completed until 2030.

In the meantime, the museum is hard at work preserving the hundreds of other artifacts that have been brought up from the wreck. Engraved silverware, a wool coat and furniture have been recovered.

In addition, two fully articulated skeletons were found in the Monitor's gun turret — a sobering reminder that though 46 of the men on board were rescued on that stormy night in late 1862, there were 16 others who died.

Krop said these human stories are writ on the engine itself.

"It has very decorative handles on the valves, and brass wheels on the throttle," Krop said — items turned by hand.

"All of them were left in the exact position they were in when the ship went down," Krop said, "so there are a lot of personal details tucked into that engine."

Archives won't display altered Lincoln pardon

By Lisa Rein, Washington Post, January 31, 2011

WASHINGTON -- A pardon signed by Abraham Lincoln, with a date altered to make it appear to be one of the



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president's final acts before his assassination, will be taken out of circulation at the National Archives, which disclosed the tampering last week.

The document, which the Archives says was changed by a Woodbridge history buff to amplify its significance and promote the man's career, will be kept in a locked vault at the agency's downtown Washington headquarters, officials said.

"People are now going to come through the door and say they want to see it," said Trevor Plante, the Archives' acting chief of reference, whose suspicions about the timing of the pardon were confirmed this month by investigators from the inspector general's office.

"It's now even more historically significant because of this case," he said. "If they're manhandling the document, it will be too much wear and tear."

An investigator at the Archives said the pardon would be a target for theft if the original were available to the public. "It's now a document of such notoriety," said Mitchell Yockelson. "There's no reason to ever pull it out again."

The original record of Lincoln's decision to spare a mentally incompetent Union Army private the death penalty for desertion will be replaced by a high-resolution scan. The reproduction will go into a box in the Archives' stacks, with a note of explanation about the case, said Plante, who delivered the document last Wednesday morning to the Archives' preservation lab.

Archives officials said that Lincoln did pardon Pvt. Patrick Murphy but that it was issued April 14, 1864, exactly one year before his assassination. They said amateur historian Thomas Lowry wrote a 5 over the 4 in 1864

sometime in 1998 using a fountain pen. The lab will examine the alteration and determine whether it can be reversed. But preservation officials said such an effort would almost certainly do more damage.

"If we were to attempt to remove that five, we would be causing more damage, and we still wouldn't have the original four" in 1864, said Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, chief of the conservation lab. "What was is lost. But we will have a dossier on this for the public, a thorough explanation of what happened."

Lincoln's compassionate act was hailed by Civil War scholars as a major historical find when the pardon was discovered by Lowry and his wife, Beverly, in 1998 in a box of rarely touched documents at the Archives. The couple are amateur historians who specialize in Civil War military justice. The discovery jump-started Thomas Lowry's writing career, and the Archives exhibited the pardon in its downtown rotunda.

Archives officials said Lowry admitted this month to altering the document. Lowry, however, denies doing so. Although he acknowledges that he signed a written confession when two federal agents came to his house Jan. 12 after a yearlong investigation, he said he was pressured to confess. He cannot be charged with tampering with government property because the statute of limitations has lapsed.

Archives officials said it is the first case of tampering they know of at the agency, whose vast holdings include letters, reports, maps and charts, photographs, moving images and sound recordings of the federal government. The collection covers 31 million cubic feet. Much of it has never been sorted.

"He duped not only the National Archives but everyone with an

interest in the Civil War, American justice and President Lincoln," said Yockelson, who specializes in military history. "What we're doing now is righting a wrong in history."

East TN community restores cabin of last Civil War widow

BY Beth Haynes, WBIR.com, January 31, 2011

Tucked away off a rural road in Grainger County, there's a tiny, tin roof cabin that is easy to miss.

"The cabin is a little more than 200 years old," says Del Morgan who lives in Blaine.

Aside from the red, white and blue paint, you'd never know it was home to one of the last Civil War widows, Gertrude Janeway. "She married him when she was 18."

The year was 1927. And, her husband, John, a Union Veteran, was 81 years old. "He had no money, it must have been love."

Sadly, John died just ten years later. "She never wanted to remarry."

So, Gertrude lived modestly in her one room cabin. "This was the way she lived- 2 windows and a back door. No water, no electricity, no bathroom up until late 80's."

Gertrude even walked to church, about 12 miles one way. And, her only income was a pension check from the Civil War.

"At her death it was \$70 dollars a month, and that's what she lived off of."

In January of 2003, Gertrude died at home in the cabin.

Recently, Gertrude's nephew donated the cabin and all of it's furnishings to the city of Blaine. The roof will be taken off and moved to a new home at Blaine Crossing.

"It's a piece of history, and we didn't want to lose it. so we're going to



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move it the best that we can, put the mud back in the walls, and put a small porch on the front just like it was 200 years ago."



Photo courtesy WBIR

Once the home is fully restored to Gertrude's original style, it will be open to the public and listed on the National trail of Civil War monuments. It will be a lasting legacy to Gertrude's true love and simple way of life.

History buff wants to recreate cannon called 'Old Sacramento' used in sacking of Lawrence. KS

By Brianne Pfannenstiel, LJWorld.com, January 27, 2011

The cannon that fired on the Free State Hotel during the sacking of Lawrence has lived a long, full life during the Civil War era in Kansas and Missouri. Now, however, it sits destroyed — a giant hole ripped through its side — in the Watkins Community Museum of History, 1047 Mass.

But that cannon, called "Old Sacramento," could have a new lease on life soon.

Kerry Altenbernd, Lawrence native and Kansas history buff, has plans to reconstruct an exact replica of the

cannon that could be fired to celebrate events, such as upcoming Kansas Day, parades and historical re-enactments.

The original cannon has a long tradition with Kansas Day: It was fired in celebration the day Kansas officially became a state Jan. 29, 1861.

It was originally used in the War with Mexico by Missourians before being placed in the public square in Liberty, Mo. In 1856, Old Sacramento was brought to Lawrence by pro-slavery men who used it to fire on the Free State Hotel, which would later be called the Eldridge House.

Several accounts state that Missouri Sen. David Atchison fired the first of about 30 shots. But being somewhat drunk, Atchison fired the shot up and over the hotel. In the late 1880s, a cannonball was found imbedded in the soil of Illinois Street that is said to be from Old Sacramento.

In 1975 Steve Jansen, then-director of the Watkins History Museum, made a deal to obtain Old Sacramento for display, said Brittany Keegan, acting curator.

"We're not exactly sure how it wound up in the museum, but we're just glad it's here," she said.

Old Sacramento was cast in bronze, and Altenbernd said recreating it out of that same material could carry a hefty price tag upwards of \$20,000. He has organized a group called The Old Sacramento Cannoneers Association that plans to seek out other interested individuals and funding for the project.

He said he has already begun researching foundries across the country that could recreate a working replica of the cannon.

"My basic idea was why not make a new one because the old one can't be used," Altenbernd said. "It would

be very significant. My only regret is that we didn't do this a couple years ago so we could use it this weekend and fire it on Saturday. But better late than never."

Civil War Reconstructed at Atlanta

Archaeologist Mines Atlanta

Landscape for Remains of the Clash Between Union and Confederate Armies

By CAMERON MCWHIRTER, Wall Street Journal, January 31, 2011

KENNESAW, Ga.—When Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman arrived here in June 1864, he wrote to his superiors, "The whole country is one vast fort."

Gen. Sherman and his 100,000 men encountered 65,000 Confederates dug in along 12 miles of earthworks at Kennesaw Mountain. After fierce fighting, the rebels retreated to nearby Atlanta. Several more battles ensued before Union forces took the city, dealing a crippling blow to the South.

The detritus of war—bullets, uniforms, cannon shot, swords and, of course, corpses—was strewn across the region in the aftermath. Trenches, both intricate defenses built over weeks by engineers and shallow pits frantically dug by infantry under fire, snaked for miles.

Today, metro Atlanta—a land of expressways, subdivisions and shopping malls—has grown to about 5.7 million people, from about 10,000 in the 1860s. So it's easy to assume that evidence of the famous clash of armies has been obliterated except for that preserved in museums, parks and monuments.

That assumption is wrong, according to Garrett Silliman, a 36-year-old archaeologist for an environmental and land-use consulting firm. Mr.



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Silliman's employer, Edwards-Pitman Environmental Inc., has a contract with Cobb County and the Georgia Department of Transportation to identify battle sites to preserve—or at least excavate—before bulldozers plow them under. He is hoping that as the 150th anniversary of the Civil War arrives this year, governments will take a renewed interest in preservation.

Battlefield archaeology is meticulous work. It takes years of education and mastery of sensitive equipment, including global positioning systems, ground-penetrating radar, advanced metal detectors and extremely precise mapping software.

But the work's goal is simple: to reconstruct a battle.

"It's just a huge crime scene," said William Lees, president of the Society for Historical Archaeology and a professor at the University of Western Florida. "You are just trying to figure out what happened there by what was left behind."

If Mr. Silliman finds a clump of unspent bullets, he knows it was where men fumbled with ammunition shortly before an attack. If he finds shattered bits of bullets and belt buckles, he knows it is where soldiers encountered heavy fire. This forensic detail helps Mr. Silliman and other archaeologists develop a much clearer picture of parts of specific battles and also helps them understand overall military strategy at the time.

"We can really create a good picture of what was happening even with a limited archaeological record," Mr. Silliman said.

On a cold January morning, Mr. Silliman set out in his Land Rover in search of forgotten battlefields hidden amid heavily developed suburbs. His first stop was a municipal water tank

atop a low hill in the shadow of Kennesaw Mountain. In 2005, Mr. Silliman was surveying at the bottom of the hill when he fell in a hole. Cutting away kudzu with a machete, he discovered what he thought was an advanced trench line. Looking at maps and accounts of the fighting, he determined the unnamed hill was likely an advanced position of Alabama Confederates, captured by Union Midwesterners on June 15, 1864.



Garrett Silliman points toward a rifle pit he found this month while using a GPS system in the woods of Smyrna, Ga. Photo: Josh D. Weiss for the Wall Street Journal

Five years after he fell in the hole, Mr. Silliman has come back—with funding, county permission and equipment—to see what is still here. Mr. Silliman, who with a trim rounded beard and knit cap looks like a cross between a hippie and a Civil War colonel, hoisted on his back a GPS device that looked like a futuristic trumpet and pointed skyward. He carried a notebook to sketch battle lines that he would later scan into his computer.

There were trenches made of piled mud and stone, running along the hill. The water tank destroyed trenches higher up the hill. A nearby utility line and a subdivision destroyed more down the hill. But the side of the hill, which is tough to build on, had been spared. The fortifications still stand a few feet high, despite years of erosion.

"It's amazing how well preserved these things are, given everything that's happened," Mr. Silliman said as he tramped through the forest.

Many first-hand reports from the battles and later recollections were wrong. Officers confused by the fighting or eager to impress superiors wrote accounts of battles that often made themselves look better and the fighting fiercer than they actually were. It's like any crime scene. Witnesses can't be trusted, but physical evidence can.

Mr. Silliman's guess is that professionals have surveyed less than 10% of all the battle lines around Atlanta. Like many archaeologists, he considers his work on these forgotten battlefields to be more of a calling than a job. He has ancestors who fought for the Union, and says he wants to preserve what he can for future generations.

"It's our Iliad," he said of the conflict.

Whipping Man, Civil War Drama with a Twist, Makes NYC Debut; Andre Braugher Stars

By Kenneth Jones, Playbill.com, January 13, 2011

The Whipping Man, Matthew Lopez's historical drama about a Confederate Jewish soldier returning home to his former slaves, who are also Jewish, got its New York City premiere starting Jan. 13.

Doug Hughes (*Doubt*) directs the Manhattan Theatre Club's Off-Broadway production at New York City Center Stage I. Opening night is Feb. 1. A one-week extension of the run (to March 20) was announced on the morning of the first preview.

Jay Wilkison (of the film "Rabbit Hole") plays the soldier, and Andre Holland (*Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Brother/Sister Plays*) and



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Emmy Award winner Andre Braugher (TV's "Homicide" and "Men of a Certain Age") are the freed slaves.

Here's how the play (which has been seen in regional theatres around the country) is described by MTC: "April, 1865: the Civil War has ended. Caleb DeLeon, a Jewish Confederate soldier, returns wounded from the battlefield to find his family home in ruins, abandoned by everyone except Simon (Braugher) and John — two former slaves, who were raised as Jews in the DeLeon home. As the three men reunite to celebrate Passover, and recall the exodus from Egypt in light of their own new liberties, they uncover a tangle of secrets... ties that bind them together and that, ultimately, might cost each man his freedom."

Since its premiere at Luna Stage in Montclair, NJ, *The Whipping Man* has been produced at The Old Globe in San Diego, CA, and at Barrington Stage. Lopez's other plays include *Tio Pepe* (Summer Play Festival 2008), *Reverberation* and *Zoey's Perfect Wedding*.

The creative team features John Lee Beatty (scenic design), Catherine Zuber (costume design), Ben Stanton (lighting design), Jill BC DuBoff (sound design), and J. David Brimmer (fight direction).

Braugher has earned two Emmy Awards: in 1998 for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama for work on "Homicide: Life on the Streets" and in 2006 for his starring role in the miniseries "Thief." In 2010, he received his sixth Emmy nomination for the series "Men of a Certain Age," which returned for its second season Dec. 6 on TNT. On stage, Braugher received an Obie Award for his performance in the 1996 Shakespeare in the Park production of *Henry V*. Other New York stage

credits include *Hamlet*, *The Tragedy of Richard II*, *Measure for Measure* and *Twelfth Night*.