



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Relic hunter to serve time in prison

by K. Burnell Evans, Progress-Index.com, March 22, 2012

RICHMOND - A 52-year-old relic hunter who hoarded more than 9,000 Civil War artifacts in his Walnut Hill home will serve one year and one day in a federal prison for raiding Petersburg National Battlefield.

U.S. District Court Judge James Spencer sentenced John Jeffrey Santo yesterday to one year and one day of active incarceration followed by three years of supervised probation and ordered him to pay \$7,356 restitution to the battlefield for the damage that his illegal excavations caused.

The Petersburg resident, who admitted to violating federal laws by digging for artifacts in the battlefield on at least three occasions between 2009 and 2010, entered into a plea agreement with prosecutors in December. A diary Santo kept that investigators discovered while searching his Oakland Street home last February referenced at least 122 separate treasure hunting trips to the park over a five-year period.

As part of the agreement, he was ordered to pay \$100 for each of the three charges to which he pleaded guilty: two counts of damaging archaeological resources, each of which carries a maximum penalty of two years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000, and one count of depredation of government property, which can result in up to 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Guidelines for Santo's sentencing based on his criminal record - which included a 2007 conviction for metal detecting on Petersburg city property - called for up to two years imprisonment. Prosecuting attorney N. George Metcalf asked Spencer to

bear in mind that Santo had gone relic hunting the day of his Petersburg court hearing, and on 1,014 out of a possible 1,826 calendar days between 2006 and 2010, according to the defendant's own journal entries.

"[Santo] doesn't know the meaning of the word 'No,'" Metcalf said. "I ask this court to send a clear message that this conduct under these circumstances will not be tolerated."

When given the opportunity to speak after three hours of arguments and witness testimony, Santo declined, saying "I don't believe I can now." He sat forward in his seat with his elbows on the table for much of the hearing, occasionally whispering to his attorney, Mary Maguire of the Federal Public Defender's Office.

Maguire asked the court to consider her client's past alcohol addiction and the ongoing psychiatric care he has been receiving since 2000 for various disorders, including depression and anxiety, before remanding him to custody.

"The bottom line is it's a repeated violation and it comes to the point where you have to pay the price," Spencer said, before announcing his decision. Spencer sentenced Santo to one year and one day in prison for each of the three charges, which Santo will serve concurrently.

Spencer said that the guidelines would allow for a fine ranging from \$4,000 to \$40,000, but declined to tack on the punishment, citing Santo's lack of employment and the precedence that restitution payments should take over court costs. Petersburg National Battlefield will recoup \$7,356 that it incurred in assessing the damage caused by the nearly 100 holes that park service workers catalogued after Santo's digs.

The battlefield's cultural resource manager, Julia Steele, said that the actual number of disturbances was much higher, but that they were too strapped for time to catalogue everything. Still, she said, it would be impossible to put a price tag on the damage Santo caused.

"I was really heartsick over it," Steele said, of the looting. "It was very clear that he had found a hot spot of activity. ... Something happened there and there was a lot of priceless data that was lost."

Steele, a trained archaeologist, said that an artifact's true value comes from the historical context that it can provide. A row of spent fuses, for example, could help historical interpreters pinpoint the exact location of a line of fire during the Siege of Petersburg - one of the most critical engagements in the most significant conflict ever to occur on American soil.

"The one thing I think we've tried to make abundantly clear is that this was very bloody, hallowed ground," Steele said. "[Santo's] holes may have been small, but they could have gone right into the body of a fallen soldier."

Law enforcement officers recovered 8,515 bullets, 47 fuses and 11 shells and cannonballs among other items from Santo's 1,100-square-foot home. The artifacts were kept in jars and buckets of dirt, scattered about the house and garage. Most of the items were in his bedroom, according to April Michener, a special agent for the National Park Service who oversaw the investigation.

"It was immediately apparent that we were going to be there for a long time," she said, of her first impression of the home. The journals that Michener helped recover inventoried items that investigators could not



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locate, including seven breastplates, 13 buckles, additional knife tips, buttons and a total of roughly 18,500 bullets. Subpoenas of online auction houses and local retailers did not yield any results, but prosecutors said that Santo must have found a way to monetize the work he was doing on an almost daily basis. Spencer ordered Santo to allow his probation officer to begin inspecting his financial records upon his release from prison.

Petersburg National Battlefield's chief ranger, K.B. Taylor, said that Spencer's decision to incarcerate Santo was heartening.

"It sends a message to relic hunters that if you want to dig up federal land, you'd better be ready to spend some time in jail," Taylor said.

Did Lincoln really wear THAT hat? Authenticity of \$6.5m stovepipe called into question

By Christine Show, Mailnow.com, April 16, 2012

A stovepipe hat long believed to have been owned by Abraham Lincoln more than 150 years ago is now having its authenticity questioned.

Officials at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois recently admitted that they can't prove how a 19th-century farmer obtained the hat worth \$6.5million.

This has raised doubt about whether one of the museum's most important exhibits is a genuine possession of the 16th American president.

There is no debate about whether the hat, used by the museum as part of its fundraising efforts, is a fake or not. It does have a floral stamp of a Springfield hatmaker from the 1850s,

and it fits a head with about a 22-inch circumference, which is the size Mr Lincoln wore.



© Lincoln Library

However, the background behind how the farmer was originally given the hat is what has stumped museum officials.

There are a number of theories used to explain how the beaver-fur hat ended up in the hands of Springfield farmer, William Waller.

One explanation is that Mr Lincoln wore the hat throughout the Civil War.

Another suggests that the president gave away his hat during a debate in 1858 with Stephen Douglas.

Wes Cowan, co-host of the PBS-TV show *History Detectives*, told the **Chicago Sun-Times** that the tradition that the headgear comes from a hatmaker in the Illinois city is interesting.

The host said: 'But beyond that, it gets squishy. What you really want to see was a newspaper article from...whenever the debate was. "Candidate Lincoln gives local farmer his beaver top hat." That's what you want to find.

Without that unbroken chain of custody, it becomes very difficult to prove any of this. It may be. It may not be.'

The hat was first connected with the Civil War when Waller's daughter-in-law, Clara, signed an affidavit in 1958 that said he had gotten the hat 'during the Civil War in Washington.'

A professor at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale named John W Allen included a statement with Clara Waller's affidavit to support the story.

The hat then was handed off to several museums and libraries through the years with the belief that the hat was something Lincoln wore during the Civil War.

But Clara Waller's story doesn't have much support.

There is nothing to believe that William Waller was ever in Washington, DC during Mr Lincoln's presidency, and the president's assassination prevented him from returning to Illinois.

The story becomes more difficult to believe because there are no newspaper articles, photographs or other types of documentation of the hat exchange and Mr Lincoln was not known for giving his head coverings away.

Harold Holzer, an expert on Mr Lincoln, told the newspaper he had trouble following the story.

'That's my only problem with the story - the logic part,' he said.

New estimate raises Civil War toll

The New York Times, April 4, 2012
For 110 years, the numbers stood as gospel: 618,222 men died in the Civil War, 360,222 from the North and 258,000 from the South — by far the greatest toll of any war in American history.

But new research shows that the numbers were far too low. By combing through newly digitized census data from the 19th century, J. David Hacker, a demographic



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historian from Binghamton University in New York, has recalculated the death toll and increased it by more than 20 percent — to 750,000. The new figure is already winning acceptance from scholars. *Civil War History*, the journal that published Hacker's paper, called it "among the most consequential pieces ever to appear" in its pages. And a pre-eminent authority on the era, Eric Foner, a historian at Columbia University, said: "It even further elevates the significance of the Civil War and makes a dramatic statement about how the war is a central moment in American history. It helps you understand, particularly in the South with a much smaller population, what a devastating experience this was."

The old figure dates back well more than a century, the work of two Union Army veterans who were passionate amateur historians: William F. Fox and Thomas Leonard Livermore. Fox, who had fought at Antietam, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, knew well the horrors of the Civil War. He did his research the hard way, reading every muster list, battlefield report and pension record he could find. In his 1889 treatise "Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865," Fox presented an immense mass of information. Besides the aggregate death count, researchers could learn that the 5th New Hampshire lost more soldiers (295 killed) than any other Union regiment; that Gettysburg and Waterloo were almost equivalent battles, with each of the four combatant armies suffering about 23,000 casualties; that the Union Army had 166 regiments of black troops; and that the average Union soldier was 5 feet 8 1/4 inches tall and weighed 143 1/2 pounds.

Fox's estimate of Confederate battlefield deaths was much rougher, however: a "round number" of 94,000, a figure compiled from after-action reports.

In 1900, Livermore set out to make a more complete count. In his book, "Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861-65," he reasoned that if the Confederates had lost proportionally the same number of soldiers to disease as the Union had, the actual number of Confederate dead should rise to 258,000.

And that was that. The Fox-Livermore numbers continued to be cited well into the 21st century, even though few historians were satisfied with them.

Enter Hacker, a specialist in 19th-century demographics, who was accustomed to using a system called the two-census method to calculate mortality. That method compares the number of 20- to 30-year-olds in one census with the number of 30- to 40-year-olds in the next census, 10 years later. The difference in the two figures is the number of people who died in that age group. Pretty simple — but, Hacker soon realized, too simple for counting Civil War dead. Published census data from the era did not differentiate between native-born Americans and immigrants; about 500,000 foreign-born soldiers served in the Union Army alone.

"If you have a lot of immigrants age 20 moving in during one decade, it looks like negative mortality 10 years later," Hacker said. While the Census Bureau in 1860 asked people their birthplace, the information never made it into the printed report. As for Livermore's assumption that deaths from disease could be correlated with battlefield deaths,

Hacker found that wanting, too. The Union had better medical care, food and shelter, especially in the war's final years, suggesting that Southern losses to disease were probably much higher. Also, research has shown that soldiers from rural areas were more susceptible to disease and died at a higher rate than city dwellers. The Confederate Army had a higher percentage of farm boys. Hacker said he realized in 2010 that a rigorous recalculation could finally be made if he used newly available detailed census data presented on the Internet by the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota.

The study had two significant shortcomings. Hacker could make no estimate of civilian deaths, an enduring question among historians, "because the overall number is too small relative to the overall number of soldiers killed." And he could not tell how many of the battlefield dead belonged to each side.

"You could assume that everyone born in the Deep South fought for the Confederacy and everyone born in the North fought for the Union," he said. "But the border states were a nightmare, and my confidence in the results broke down quickly." With all the uncertainties, Hacker said, the data suggested that 650,000 to 850,000 men died as a result of the war; he chose the midpoint as his estimate.

He emphasized that his methodology was far from perfect. "Part of me thinks it is just a curiosity," he said of the new estimate.

"But wars have profound economic, demographic and social costs," he said. "We're seeing at least 37,000 more widows here, and 90,000 more orphans. That's a profound social



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impact, and it's our duty to get it right."

Search for Blood Stains Conducted at Bentonville Battlefield Civil War Hospital

News on the Net, March 29, 2012

FOUR OAKS - Come July the staff of Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site will know if those are just stains on the floor, or the blood of a fallen Civil War soldier. A forensic team recently visited to examine the floors and test the stains there. The site's Harper House served as the Union army's XIV Corps hospital during the three-day battle of Bentonville fought in March 1865.

During the battle and its immediate aftermath, nearly 600 soldiers from both armies were treated in and around the home. For years visitors and staff members alike have often questioned if any of the numerous stains on the original flooring could be attributed to the blood of soldiers treated in the home. An answer will come when the testing is completed.

Dr. James Bailey of Wilmington, professor emeritus in criminology at Minnesota State University- Mankato, and Dr. Maher Nouredine of ForensiGen LLC, a forensic genetics company based in Hillsborough, took multiple samples from the 1850s floor boards in the house, and also searched the crevices between the boards. Samples will be analyzed for the presence of blood and DNA at IntelliGenetics Laboratories of Hilton Head, S.C. in collaboration with Dr. Daniel Demers.

By taking samples for testing, the scientist will be able to verify the existence of blood without the use of

luminol, a chemical that could damage the original flooring. An additional advantage of forensic testing is the possibility of cataloguing any potential DNA found into a database for descendants of Bentonville veterans to compare with their own DNA.

In addition to collecting samples for DNA analysis, a sample was also collected from several rooms for pollen analysis. Dr. Jane Bock, professor emeritus in forensic botany from the University of Colorado-Boulder will examine a sample to determine the presence of any unusual pollen or diatoms.

This is not the first time that Dr. Bailey used DNA to solve a historical mystery. While teaching at Minnesota State, Bailey was asked to verify if skeletal remains in a museum collection were that of Charlie Pitts, a member of the infamous James-Younger gang who was killed shortly after robbing the First National Bank of Northfield, Minn. By comparing the DNA from the skeleton to a descendent of Pitts, Bailey was able to prove that the skeleton was not that of Charlie Pitts. Dr. Bailey and Dr. Nouredine hope to find such definitive information from the samples collected at the Harper House.

In March 1865 the last major Confederate offensive was launched at Bentonville Battlefield, which involved 60,000 Union troops and 20,000 Confederates in a battle that lasted three days over 6,000 acres, in which the Union finally prevailed.

Bentonville Battlefield is located at 5466 Harper House Road, Four Oaks, NC 27524, three miles north of Newton Grove on S.R. 1008, about one hour from Raleigh and about 45 minutes from Fayetteville. It is part of the Division of State Historic Sites in

the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources. For more information, visit online or call (910) 594-0789.

Groups protest exclusion of Confederate flag at Museum

By STEPHANIE A. JAMES, Danville Times-Virginian, April 4, 2012

The opening of the Appomattox branch of the Museum of the Confederacy drew a crowd in the hundreds, but among them were protesters that had a gripe about the Confederate battle flag not being flown outside of the museum.

The protests were primarily peaceful, including an airplane that flew overhead prior to the ribbon-cutting for the opening of the museum. The plane carried a banner that with a Confederate flag that read "Reunification by bayonet SCV 1896." Prior to the opening, 14 state flags and the United States flag were raised at the "reunification promenade."

After the raising of the flags, some of the protesters circled around the United States pole waving Confederate flags in protest.

Willie Wells, sergeant for the Mechanized Cavalry, said the group was protesting since Museum President and CEO Waite Rawls made the decision not to have the Confederate battle flag flown outside of the museum despite numerous requests from the Sons of the Confederate Veterans to do so.

"Both flags should be displayed. Both sides came together at the surrender," said Wells, who described Appomattox as a sacred place.

He said he heard that the reason Rawls would not allow the flag to be



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flown was so the museum would not risk losing supporters.

Wells, as a member of the museum, toured the museum during a "soft opening" earlier last week. He said he saw controversial exhibits that raised concern as well as sparking questions about their relevance.

For instance, Wells said there was a display of transvestite Rue Paul wearing a dress bearing a Confederate flag. The display was part of a collection of exhibits to show how the Confederate flag is used in present day and its symbolism.

The display has since been removed. When asked about the exhibit, Rawls said that some displays did not work. There is a collection of over 20 Confederate flags inside of the museum.

Members of the Mechanized Cavalry, clad in biker attire, travel to different locations to promote their heritage.

The Mechanized Cavalry were not the only group with concerns about the Confederate battle flag not being displayed. Another protesting group was the Third National Flag of the Confederacy.

The Virginia Flaggers, a group that includes members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, voiced their concerns through e-mail correspondence to the museum, said Rawls.

A reunification promenade outside of the museum features 14 flags that seceded and then reunited after the Civil War.

"We made a decision to do a reunification promenade. Everything about Appomattox is the reunification of the country," said Rawls also noting that in the pledge of allegiance the word indivisible is used. Prior to the Civil War, the word indivisible was not used to describe the country.

The issue of the museum not featuring a Confederate flag began brewing several weeks prior to the museum's open. There were several media reports and information as to why the museum chose not to feature a Confederate flag.

Even word got out – inaccurately – that the Town of Appomattox had a say in the matter.

During a meeting last week, town council member Steve Conner wanted to set the record straight by stating that the town did not have anything to do with the museum's flag choice.

Rawls contends that both suggestions were rumors.

Deadline looms for Franklin Cotton Gin Park project

FRANKLIN, Tenn., Press Release, Franklin's Charge – You can make great pizzas anywhere, but there's only one epicenter of the Battle of Franklin, where nearly 10,000 casualties fell in five bloody hours and 11 medals of honor were won. Local battlefield preservation group Franklin's Charge is within striking distance of acquiring the critical Domino's Pizza strip mall to begin work on the Carter Cotton Gin Interpretive Park, but they must raise more than \$300,000 in less than 60 days to make it happen.

The Cotton Gin Park is a \$3.5 million project, and comprises several parcels. The Heritage Foundation saved a house on Cleburne Street in the late 1990s, and Franklin's Charge purchased a second parcel in 2008 for \$950,000. That debt was retired in December of 2011. The Civil War Trust has purchased a third park parcel for \$200,000, which will be conveyed to Franklin's Charge.

The fourth parcel, the Domino's strip center, has a price tag of \$1.85 million. Franklin's Charge applied for and was awarded a \$960,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Transportation, and the Civil War Trust has offered a matching grant of \$500,000 with a deadline of May 30. The matching grant would cover the remaining cost of the property. To date, Franklin's Charge has raised \$150,000 toward the matching grant. More than 80 individuals have bought \$1,000 "pizzas," with a goal to get to \$200,000 in pizzas sold by May 30. The remainder will likely come from larger individual donors. Angela Calhoun, Mary Pearce, and Stacey Watson are heading up the efforts to sell 200 pizzas by May 30.

"We are so close to having the funds in place to make the purchase and complete the project before the sesquicentennial of the Battle of Franklin," said Julian Bibb, board member of Franklin's Charge and local attorney. "We've gone from being known as one of America's most threatened battlefields to a national model for battlefield preservation in less than a decade, thanks to the help of some incredible partners and supporters. If we can get to \$500,000 in the next 60 days, this will be the centerpiece of a greatly enhanced Civil War offering when we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Franklin in 2014."

The seven-acre site will include a replicated cotton gin and interpretive earthworks that will offer visitors the chance to visualize what happened in Franklin on November 30, 1864, as the Army of Tennessee made a fateful charge into the well-fortified Federal line. Six generals were killed, along with 53 regimental commanders, in what was considered



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to be one of the last gasps of the Confederacy. The property is located across from the Carter House, where the Carter family hid in the basement while the battle raged in their yard. Tod Carter, a young Confederate cavalry captain, had fought throughout the South only to be shot down in his own yard in the Battle of Franklin.

Franklin resident Mike Grainger's \$1,000 gift was the first to kick off the pizza campaign. Grainger serves as the vice chair of the Civil War Trust and is a member of the Tennessee Sesquicentennial Commission, and has seen Franklin rise to the top of American towns that have found ways to commemorate the Civil War for cultural and economic benefit.

"It is exciting to watch this effort gain momentum in my hometown," Grainger said. "What's happening in Franklin is unprecedented, and it's not easy work. As we mark the Sesquicentennial, Franklin has become one of the Civil War Trust's most important reclamation projects."

National Park Service launches Civil War website

NPS, Apr 04, 2012

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As part of its commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial and coinciding with events marking the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh, the National Park Service has launched a Civil War themed website at www.nps.gov/civilwar that provides an overview of the war, with special emphasis on the Civil War sites administered and preserved by the National Park Service.

The website features a wide range of richly-illustrated content, including stories of the Civil War, ranging from causes of the conflict to its

consequences; biographies of notable individuals associated with the war, both military and civilian; places within the National Park System that interpret the Civil War; and information on the ways in which the National Park Service preserves Civil War battlefields, objects, landscapes and other historic resources. New content will be added regularly, so visitors are encouraged to check back to the site often.

"More than a quarter of all national parks preserve Civil War sites or tell stories related to the war. This website offers a single online point of reference for the National Park Service's Civil War resources and will be an invaluable tool for both students of the Civil War and visitors to our historic sites," said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. "It also gives the war and events that occurred a century and a half ago meaning to 21st-century Americans."

Among other features of the new website are:

Plan Your Visit – An interactive trip planning tool includes more than 1,700 Civil War sites around the country, including more than 100 national parks with Civil War themes. With just a few clicks of the mouse, visitors can plan a trip to Civil War sites from northwest Washington state (San Juan Island National Historical Park, where General George Pickett first made a name for himself) to the Florida Keys (Fort Jefferson, where Union prisoners were held, today part of Dry Tortugas National Park) and more than 1,700 partner sites in between, including state and privately administered Civil War-themed historic sites and museums. The Plan Your Visit tool provides maps, distances, turn-by-turn directions, and a description of

and links to additional information about each of the sites.

Timeline – A comprehensive, interactive timeline of the causes, events and Civil Rights legacies of the Civil War spanning nearly 400 years of American history, from the foundations of slavery with the arrival of the first Africans in America in 1619 to the present day.

Civil War Reporter – Follow the adventures of Beglan O'Brien, a fictional Civil War era correspondent, whose daily reports on events from 150 years ago are streamed to the website via Twitter. In addition to the nps.gov/civilwar website, he can also be followed directly on Twitter (search CivilWarReportr) and Facebook (search Civil War Reporter). From the politics of the day to eyewitness accounts of events to fashion of the Civil War, O'Brien's nose for news promises to deliver fascinating updates, rumor and information of the Civil War era.

Related Resources – The website also includes links to other National Park Service Civil War resources, including the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, the more than 100 National Parks that tell the story of the Civil War and its enduring legacies, and Then & Now features showing how the events of 150 years ago continue to influence the America of the 21st century.

Replica of Civil War sub stuck beside interstate

ATLANTA, AP. March 31, 2012

A trailer carrying a 40-foot replica of a Confederate submarine to Tennessee for a re-enactment of the Battle of Shiloh blew two tires on an interstate in Atlanta and later headed back to South Carolina after repairs.



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The full-sized replica of the H.L. Hunley suffered only minor damage Thursday, but owner John Dangerfield returned to Charleston because of trailer problems, said Kellen Correia, executive director of the Friends of the Hunley.

The Hunley was the first sub to sink an enemy warship.

Dangerfield is a veteran Hunley project volunteer who built the replica from a model used in a TV movie about the Civil War sub. One side is open to view where the crew sat.

Dangerfield is selling it and wanted to show it one last time at Shiloh.



Phil Lemieux waits off the side of westbound I-20 for his partner to return with parts to repair a replica of the civil war era submarine, the H.L. Hunley on Thursday, March 29, 2012 in Atlanta. The trailer lost two wheels near Interstate-20 and I-285. The replica submarine was supposed to be featured in the Battle of Shiloh Weekend in Shiloh, Tenn. Lemieux, who helped build the replica 10 years ago, says the vessel is based in Charleston, S.C., and taken on the road for exhibits, educational purposes and events. (AP Photo/Atlanta Journal-Constitution, John Spink) MARIETTA DAILY OUT; GWINNETT DAILY POST OUT

Richmond woman finds Civil War-era cannonball in her garden

By **Martin Weil**, Washington Post, April 2, 2012

It is the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, and in an event connected to the conflict but not part of the formal commemoration, a woman digging in

her garden in Richmond discovered a cannonball from the period.

While turning up soil late last month, Sharon Johannas reached about a foot below the surface when she struck something.

"It was a fistful of very heavy, rusted round iron," she said.

It had what appeared to be a circular hole for the insertion of a fuse.

She said she had never seen a cannonball before, but a more knowledgeable neighbor assured her that it was one and told her it might be filled with gunpowder.

The Richmond police bomb squad was called Thursday night.

Police spokeswoman Dionne Waugh described the object as a Civil War-era cannonball that weighed about 5 to 10 pounds. She said the bomb squad showed up, secured the scene "and later safely detonated the cannonball."

It was not clear how the antique munition came to be buried in Johannas's yard. Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy and was a major source of munitions and weapons for Confederate forces during the 1861-65 war. Fierce battles were fought nearby as Union armies sought to seize the opposing capital.

Johannas said she was unaware, however, of any actual fighting in her neighborhood, near Byrd Park and west of Capitol Square. However, she said she was told that Union troops may have been encamped there for a time.

The discovery did not come as a total surprise to police.

"We get these types of calls for found cannonballs and munitions about four or five times a year," Waugh said.

"While sometimes the relics are harmless, some are just as good and

dangerous as they were the day they were made."

New trail opens at Pamplin Historical Park

by K. Burnell Evans, Progress-Index.com April 1, 2012

DINWIDDIE - The Battle of Jones Farm, a little-known skirmish that took place as the 10-month siege of Petersburg reached a crescendo, got its day in the sun Saturday with the dedication of a new walking trail created by Pamplin Historical Park and the national Civil War Trust.

The privately-owned park and nonprofit joined forces to preserve and improve the 0.8-mile stretch of land, which is bounded by earthworks that were seized by Union troops during the March 25, 1865, engagement. They were helped along by volunteers from the Army Logistics University at nearby Fort Lee.

"Right now you are in the position of Confederates," Pamplin's Head of Historical Interpretation, Gary Helm, told a group of nearly two dozen participants on the trail's inaugural hike. Helm stopped at an untouched string of fortifications halfway through the walk to situate the engagement in the broader context of the Siege, tying the Battle of Jones Farm to the Breakthrough assault on April 2, 1865.

The hastily-assembled defense lines that the new trail encircles were at the center of a conflict that left 2,800 soldiers dead, wounded or missing. The house from which the farm derived its name was burned to the ground by Vermont troops that were under fire from embedded C.S.A. soldiers. The ensuing pre-dawn attack on April 2 crushed Confederate forces defending Petersburg and helped usher in Gen. Robert E. Lee's



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surrender at Appomattox Courthouse a week later.

"The fact that a 2,800-casualty battle could go largely unknown by many of us ... really says a lot about how bloody the siege was," said Garry Adelman, director of history and education for the Civil War Trust.

Adelman was on hand to help Pamplin's executive director, A. Wilson Greene, dedicate the trail with the ceremonial cutting of a red, white and blue ribbon.