



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

### Welcome center to open near Sharpsburg

By DAVE McMILLION, Hagerstown Herald-mail, May 31, 2010 SHARPSBURG

Joshua Newcomer found himself in the middle of chaos during the Battle of Antietam.

From the front of his house, Newcomer and his family would have seen the wounded being carried over a nearby bridge crossing Antietam Creek, said John Howard, superintendent of Antietam National Battlefield.

Like many farmers caught in Civil War conflicts, Newcomer and his family lost all of their crops as a result of the battle, Howard said.

Then there would have been the fear. "They would have been terrified because they would have had artillery flying over their heads," Howard said. The house, which still stands along Md. 34 east of Sharpsburg, is about to enter into a new phase in area history.

The Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau and Antietam National Battlefield have entered into a cooperative agreement to open a welcome and exhibit center in Newcomer's old house.

The theme of the center will revolve around the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, which promotes stewardship of historic, cultural, and natural Civil War resources. Washington County along with Carroll and Frederick counties are the focus in the heritage area.

Although Civil War history will be featured at the center, visitors there will be able to learn about other area attractions such as the Washington County Rural Heritage Museum, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park and the National Museum of Civil War Medicine,

according to Tom Riford, president and chief executive officer of the Hagerstown-Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Officials have scheduled a grand opening for the visitors center for Sept. 17-19 and plans are to have the center open seven days a week from April to November, according to a news release.



Ric Dugan | Staff Photographer  
The Newcomer House on Md. 34 will be the site of a Civil War museum expected to open in September.

The Newcomer House used to be owned by a private individual who constructed a statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee near the house. The previous owner also planned to have a museum in the house and erected some exhibits inside, said Charissa Beeler Stanton, a Washington County Heritage Area assistant who has been working on the new visitors center.

After the museum closed, the National Park Service acquired the property.

Under the agreement between the park service and the convention and visitors bureau, the National Park Service will be responsible for ongoing maintenance at the Newcomer House and the Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau will be responsible for training volunteer staff and keeping informational supplies stocked, according to a news release about the center.

One can almost imagine past life in the house with the worn wooden floors inside and a bank barn across the street that was part of a complex of buildings on the Newcomer farm.

Walking through such historic buildings is something tourists appreciate, Howard said.

"It's wonderful preserving these places. That's what we're here for," he said.

### Lincoln seamstress Elizabeth Keckly given Largo grave marker

By Liz Skalski, Washington Post, June 3, 2010

Years after slave Elizabeth Hobbs Keckly bought freedom for herself and her son, she earned a place in American history for becoming dressmaker to Mary Todd Lincoln and eventually writing a book on the Lincolns' years in the White House.

But for nearly 50 years, her remains were buried in an unmarked grave at Largo's National Harmony Memorial Park.

"No one knew she was there. The best that anyone ever knew was that her remains were put at a mass grave at Harmony," said Richard Smyth, 59, of Milford, Pa., who spent two years researching where Keckly was buried and worked with county groups to fund a grave marker. "It began as a journey, and now the journey was completed."

On May 26, 103 years after Keckly's death in 1907, her memory and historical significance were honored with a ceremony to dedicate and lay a bronze grave marker on a granite slab detailing her role in presidential history -- a ceremony attended by the self-described amateur historian, along with the Clinton and Washington, D.C.-area volunteers who helped make the day possible.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Keckly, who was born into slavery in Petersburg, Va., eventually bought freedom for herself and her son and used her sewing skills to become the designer and seamstress for President Abraham Lincoln's wife. Keckly died at age 89 on May 26, 1907, said Laurie Verge, museum director for the Surratt House Museum in Clinton, which focuses on the history of the Civil War and Lincoln's assassination.

Keckly owned her own dress shop in the District. She was recommended as a seamstress to Mary Todd Lincoln by other society ladies, including the wives of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, Verge said.

In 1868, Keckly wrote a book, "Behind the Scenes," about her relationship with the Lincoln family, Verge said. The book, which upset Mary Lincoln and ultimately caused the two women to end their relationship, has provided historians an account of life inside in Lincoln White House.

After her death in 1907, Keckly was buried in the Columbian Harmony Cemetery in the District. In the 1950s, that cemetery was bought by developers and many of the 37,000 bodies buried there, including Keckly's, were moved to the Largo cemetery -- though the grave markers were not, Verge said.

Keckly has no living relatives or descendants -- her only son died during the Civil War -- and historians believed Keckly's grave could not be located, Verge said.

Then, in 2009, Smyth, a real estate agent who said he has been interested in the Civil War and Lincoln's assassination for about 30 years, began research on historical graves and stumbled upon information on Keckly's.

The cemetery's ledgers and books located the plot and section where Keckly was buried, Smyth said.

Smyth said he has worked with National Harmony Memorial Park and The Surratt Society -- the 1,500-member volunteer associate of the museum that sponsored the project -- over the past two years to get the grave marker.

"It's a lot of the history that you don't find in the history books, and it's still out there and kind of exciting," Smyth said.

Smyth said the marker, which cost about \$5,000, was paid for solely by donations from project sponsors and contributors, including National Harmony Memorial Park; The Surratt Society; Black Women United For Action, a Virginia-based organization that works to improve the lives of women; The Lincoln Forum, a national organization that works to learn about and preserve the memory of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War; and the Ford's Theatre Society.



Sheila Coates, left, Edna Medford, Sandra Walia, Thomas Buckingham and Cecelia Logan unveil a grave marker last week at National Harmony Memorial Park in Largo for dressmaker Elizabeth Keckly. (Christopher Anderson/the Gazette)

Sandra Walia, a research librarian at the Surratt House Museum, said she learned about Keckly when she portrayed her for 10 years in Ford's

Theatre's annual black history program.

"I didn't know much about her until I portrayed her," said Walia, who composed Keckly's grave marker. "I think [the grave marker] is long overdue."

Walia said she worked with Smyth over the past two years to research the grave.

Sheila Coates, of Virginia, the founder and president of Black Women United for Action, said Keckly is an inspiration.

"She gives me inspiration, encouragement," Coates said. "I'm so thankful we could be a part of it."

### Washington County Rejects Special Status For South Mountain Battlefield

HAGERSTOWN, Md. (AP) — Washington County is refusing to support a state effort to place three South Mountain battlefield sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

The county commissioners took no action Tuesday after hearing a staff report that fewer than half of the affected private property owners have indicated support for measure. Owners of 37 of the 68 properties responded to a county survey. Those who responded were overwhelmingly in favor, but they constituted a minority of the total.

The commissioners indicated they would consider an endorsement if proponents can muster support from a majority of landowners. The listing would make property owners eligible for tax breaks.

At least 4,000 soldiers were killed, wounded or declared missing in action on South Mountain on Sept. 14, 1862.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Appomattox Prepares for Satellite Museum

The Lynchburg (VA) News & Advance, May 25, 2010

A museum displaying such artifacts as Gen. Robert E. Lee's uniform, sword and the pen he used to sign surrender documents to end the Civil War could be a tremendous tourism draw for Appomattox.

Officials with the Richmond-based Museum of the Confederacy say it won't be much longer before construction can begin on a satellite museum that would house those artifacts near the surrender site at the McLean House. They have raised \$6 million of the \$7.5 million they will need to pay for the new structure.

"We're getting really close," said Sam Craghead, a public relations official with the museum. "The groundbreaking is in the foreseeable future."

Most of the money has come from private individuals and grants. The public phase of the fund drive is expected to begin soon and generate the balance of the money needed for the museum.

Craghead estimated it would take about 18 months to construct the facility, which would put its completion date early in 2012.

The 11,000-square-foot museum will be located on eight acres near the intersection of U.S. 460 and Virginia 24 in Appomattox. The proposed site is a mile away from the Appomattox Court House National Park, which contains the McLean House and a number of other structures that date back to April 9, 1865, the day the bloody war came to an end.

The satellite museum will not just be an important addition to tourism in Appomattox. It will also give the Museum of the Confederacy a

chance to expand the display of Confederate artifacts it has gathered over the years. Craghead estimated that visitors to the Richmond museum see less than 10 percent of the entire collection.

And anyone who has been to the Richmond museum knows there are enough artifacts and information on display to keep a visitor busy for at least a day.

Other satellite sites have been planned for Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania County and Fort Monroe at Hampton Roads.

Craghead said the satellite museum will be a perfect fit for Appomattox because the site is close to the surrender grounds, is easily accessible to the Court House and could help keep visitors in the area for a longer period than is presently the case.

The public relations official said the museum is looking forward to participating in the ongoing sesquicentennial observations of the Civil War, which will end on April 9, 2015 — 150 years after Lee surrendered to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House.

"That's the important date," Craghead said. "But we'll be doing a lot of other things out there before then."

### Neo-Nazi rally permit approved in Gettysburg

By TIM PRUDENTE, Hanover Evening Sun, May 18, 2010

A permit was granted late Monday afternoon for the neo-Nazi group Aryan Nations to hold a rally at the Gettysburg National Military Park, according to park spokeswoman Katie Lawhon.

Aryan Nations - which identifies itself as a white-supremacist organization and has been called a "continuing

terrorist threat" by the FBI - will hold the rally on June 19 from 1 to 3 p.m. on the park's lawn west of the Cyclorama Center, according to the group's website.

"Because the land is publicly owned, we're obligated to make it publicly available for exercising First Amendment rights," Lawhon said last week when the permit request was received.

And Col. Gordon Young, who heads the Maryland chapter of Aryan Nations, said he never doubted the permit would be granted.

"I told them if you don't approve me then we'll be in court and that's a fight they don't want to have," he said.

The rally will include speeches from Aryan Nations members and discussions on current events and political issues, according to Young.

"We're going to talk about immigration and how these Mexicans are pouring over our borders and taking our jobs and putting white Americans out of work. We blame them for our downfall of the economy," he said. "And we'll talk about how homosexuality is wrong and 9/11 was an insider's deal. Today's world is so screwed up and we're just trying to teach our children the right ways of life."

In 2006, the World Knights of the Ku Klux Klan had a similar rally, and park officials have said the event proceeded without complications.

"In general, the event went smoothly in 2006 and there was a lot of coordination and we had a lot of excellent assistance from other law enforcement agencies," Lawhon said. Young, who attended the 2006 rally, agreed and cited only minimal disturbances.

"It went great and the law enforcement did a really good job. One guy ran towards us with a



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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rainbow flag, which stands for homosexuals, but the cops grabbed him," he said. "Some of the black and Hispanic officers tried to entice our guys to say things but I told them to shut up and we're not going to stoop that low."

In response, the YWCA plans to hold a "celebration of diversity" event to draw visitors away the rally.

"There are some people who feel it's better to ignore (Aryan Nations), but people around here aren't going to tolerate this," YWCA Missions Director Ashley Andyshak Hayes said last week. "It's important for us to speak out and send a positive."

### **CWPT Donates 54 Acres of Perryville Battlefield to Commonwealth of Kentucky**

CWi, June 2, 2010

At a land transfer ceremony this afternoon, the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), the nation's largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization, formally donated 54 acres of hallowed ground associated with the October 1862 Battle of Perryville to the Commonwealth of Kentucky for integration into the Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site.

"Today we celebrate a great step forward for one of Kentucky's outstanding historic sites," said Tourism, Arts and Heritage Secretary Marcheta Sparrow, who accepted the donation on behalf of the Commonwealth. "The gift of this land will provide an enriched experience for visitors for generations to come."

James Lighthizer, president of CWPT, remarked that the transfer's timing as the opening event of the

organization's Annual Conference held this week in nearby Lexington was especially meaningful. "As illustrated by the presence of our conference in Kentucky this week, protected battlefields draw tourists who want to explore them in great depth," said Lighthizer. "On the eve of the Civil War's 150th anniversary, it is particularly important that we set aside such irreplaceable sites for the curious generations of the future."

The Battle of Perryville, fought on October 8, 1862, was the largest battle fought in Kentucky and the culmination of Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg's invasion of the Bluegrass State. Although a tactical Confederate victory, Bragg retreated into Tennessee shortly thereafter, leaving Kentucky in Union hands for the remainder of the war. Coinciding chronologically with the Maryland Campaign in the war's Eastern Theater, the failure of these twin Southern offensives constituted a major turning point in the war.

"The Battle of Perryville was had strategic significance for the war west of the Appalachian Mountains far beyond the size of the two armies actually engaged there," said historian Kent Masterson Brown in his remarks. "The bold Confederate attempt to invade Kentucky was turned back, never to be attempted again. With all of Kentucky and much of Tennessee firmly in Union hands, it was only a matter of time before the Gulf States fell to Union forces."

CWPT purchased the 54 acre property in 2006 at a total cost of \$156,679, which was partially offset by a federal matching grant for historic landscape protection. Located on the southeastern side of the battlefield, the site marks where Confederate Gen. William J. Hardee launched assault against the Union

center. From the high ground at the eastern end of the property, Captain T. J. Stanford's Mississippi's battery engaged in a lengthy artillery barrage with Gen. Don Carlos Buell's Federal army.

According to CWPT Chairman John L. Nau, III, who also spoke at the event, it has always been the organization's desire to see the land become Commonwealth property and part of Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site. The park already has plans to add walking trails and other educational and commemorative markers.

"At a battlefield where there is an existing park entity — especially one with such an outstanding reputation for excellence in stewardship and interpretation — we endeavor to preserve land that will augment and improve those ongoing efforts," said Nau. "We are honored to be a long-term partner for the park, helping ensure it continues to grow and thrive."

In total, CWPT has participated in the preservation of 385 acres at Perryville, and recently announced a new fundraising effort to place a permanent conservation easement on an additional 327 acres on the northern part of the battlefield. The Perryville Battlefield is widely renowned for retaining much of its 19th-century appearance, a quality particularly prized by heritage tourists and other visitors.

"This ground has remained largely unchanged for nearly 150 years and, in many cases, the descendants of those who tended the land in 1862 still work their family farms today," said park manager Kurt Holman. "We are always very proud to say that if a Civil War soldier who fought here were to walk the battlefield today, he



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

would say: 'I know this place — this is Perryville.'

Following the conclusion of remarks, Lighthizer and Nau signed a deed transferring control of the land to the Commonwealth, represented by Sparrow and Holman.

"On behalf of Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear and the entire Commonwealth government, I am honored to accept this generous donation from the trustees, members and staff of the Civil War Preservation Trust," said Secretary Sparrow. "I pledge that we will be responsible stewards of this irreplaceable piece of our shared American heritage."

The afternoon also included a first-ever public tour of the property led by Holman and Brown and a reception featuring light refreshments hosted by Friends of Perryville Battlefield.

The transfer ceremony was the first event in CWPT's six day sojourn in the Bluegrass State. The organization's trustees will meet in Lexington tomorrow, with the Trust's Annual Conference kicking into high gear on Thursday. Hundreds of Civil War enthusiasts will participate in lectures, receptions discussion groups and in depth battlefield tours exploring numerous aspects of the war in Kentucky. Topics will include the Battle of Perryville, as well as the battles of Mill Springs, Munfordville and Richmond, as well as the raids of John Hunt Morgan.

To find out more about Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site and other Kentucky State Parks, visit [www.parks.ky.gov](http://www.parks.ky.gov).

### Col. Robert Gould Shaw's lost sword cuts deep

By O'Ryan Johnson, Boston Herald, June 1, 2010

What happened to Col. Robert Gould Shaw's sword?

The mystery of the war hero's missing blade "sticks like a fishbone in the city's throat," to steal a line from Robert Lowell's poem about the monument to Shaw and the black soldiers of the storied 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment that he led.

"I hope they replace it soon," said Lt. Benny White, a re-enactor with the 54th Regiment, who added that it has gone missing several times before, but seeing the scar on the statue where the sword should be is no less painful.

"They steal it all the time," said 1st Sgt. Gerard Grimes, another re-enactor, who said it happens so often that the city made a rubber sword to replace it. "It's a tradition. Every time a Boston sports team wins, the sword goes missing."



Photo by Ryan T. Conaty  
Re-enactors of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment stand in front of the monument to the Civil War heroes yesterday. Col. Robert Gould Shaw's sword is missing, leaving a mark on the monument.

One park ranger said yesterday he believes the sword is in safekeeping in a superior's office - removed as a safety precaution, so rambunctious fans wouldn't rip it off or even kill someone with it. Another park ranger and a private tour guide said it was

stolen, but they disagreed on exactly when. A 54th re-enactor said he believes it was vandalized during the same 2008 Celtics victory celebration that the ranger mentioned.

Mary Hines, spokeswoman for the city's parks and recreation department could not solve the mystery yesterday. She said it is possible the sword is being stored somewhere, but she suspects it was stolen.

But one thing is certain: the sword was not there yesterday, Memorial Day, when hundreds of tourists paused to admire Augustus Saint-Gaudens' stunning relief, and when the men who honor the 54th arrived to salute the statue and place a memorial bouquet at the feet of the soldiers represented there.

The monument to the Civil War's first all-black regiment was installed in 1897. The unit suffered heavy casualties in the failed battle to take Fort Wagner on Folly Island in South Carolina, where Shaw was killed and buried in a pit with his men.

### National Archives Presents Free Public Programs Related to New Civil War Exhibit in June

/PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -May 14, 2010- The National Archives presents a special series of programming throughout June including author lectures, a panel discussion, and a film screening, inspired by its new major exhibit *Discovering the Civil War*. The programs are free and open to the public and will be held in the William G. McGowan Theater of the National Archives Building on Constitution Avenue between 7th and 9th Streets, NW. Use the Special



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Events entrance on the corner of 7th Street and Constitution Avenue.

**Discovering the Civil War Part One, Beginnings**, is featured in the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, through September 6, 2010. The exhibit peels back 150 years of accumulated analysis, interpretation, and opinion to reveal a Civil War that is little-known and even more rarely displayed. The exhibition offers visitors the chance to join researchers in unlocking secrets, solving mysteries, and uncovering unexpected events in the Civil War records of the National Archives. Museum Spring/Summer hours (through Labor Day) are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., daily. *The exhibition is presented by the Center for the National Archives Experience and the Foundation for the National Archives.*

**Lecture: The Civil War in 3-D – Thursday, June 10, at 7 p.m.**

In partnership with the Center for Civil War Photography, this illustrated lecture will feature 170 stereoscopic images taken during the Civil War.

Bob Zeller, president of the Center for Civil War Photography, and John J. Richter, director of imaging for the center, will present "Lincoln in 3-D." Audience members will be given 3-D glasses to enable them to step into the tableaux of many of the most famous photographs of Lincoln and the Civil War.

**Film: Gettysburg - Saturday, June 19, at noon**

Based on Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Killer Angels*, *Gettysburg* dramatically depicts three momentous days in American history as experienced by the leaders of the Confederate and Union armies. Filmed at the actual battlefield locations, this epic film displays painstaking attention to detail. Stars

Martin Sheen and Jeff Daniels. (1993; 261 minutes) *Please note—viewer discretion is advised. Presented by the Charles Guggenheim Center for the Documentary Film at the National Archives*

**Author Lecture: Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg - Wednesday, June 23, at noon**

On Independence Day, 1863, not one but two pivotal battles ended in Union victory, marking the high tide of Confederate military fortune and ultimately dooming the South's effort at secession. In *Receding Tide*, **Edwin Cole Bearss**, a recognized expert on both Vicksburg and Gettysburg, tells the fascinating story of this momentous day in our country's history. A book signing will follow the program, and the book is available at a discount from the Archives Shop (202-357-5271) before and during the event.

**Augusta architect believes old lock shut door on the Civil War**

By Susan McCord, Augusta Chronicle, May 26, 2010

As the son of a noted Augusta architect, Willis Irvin Jr. has spent a lifetime forging his own identity while carrying on the legacy of his father.

He has been a tennis pro and has chronicled his experiences at Normandy on D-Day, and now he has a new challenge.

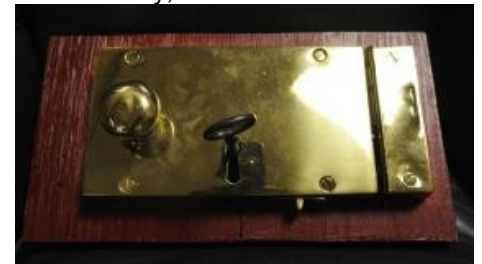
At 85, Irvin said, he's trying to verify the historic significance of a heavy brass lock and key, which he maintains was the last lock turned by Jefferson Davis at the end of the Civil War.

Retreating from Richmond, Va., with the Confederate treasury pulled by mules on wagons behind him, the president of the Confederacy arrived

in Washington, Ga., and decided to dissolve the Confederacy, end hostilities and pay off the troops, he said.

There, at a building in Washington, Irvin said, Davis left the war behind as he locked its door.

"When Jefferson Davis turned the key on this lock, he dissolved the Confederacy," Irvin said.



John Curry/Augusta Chronicle

A heavy brass lock and key, which Willis Irvin Jr. maintains was the last lock turned by Jefferson Davis at the end of the Civil War.

As the building was torn down, a carpenter "cut the lock off the wall" for Irvin's father, who was also a Washington native.

Irvin said he wants to verify the history of the lock and find an appropriate permanent home for it.

"I'm 85 years old, and I don't have too much longer on the planet, and I want to get the story out there," he said.

Robert "Skeet" Willingham, a historian in Washington, is familiar with the building of which Irvin spoke.

The former Bank of Georgia building had residential quarters for the bank's cashier at the time Davis stayed there, but later it was used strictly as a residence, Willingham said.

Situated on the town square, it was demolished in 1904 to make room for Wilkes County's new courthouse, he said.

"People took all kinds of souvenirs off the structure when they tore it down," he said.

Features from the building, such as wrought iron, were added to other houses in Washington, and residents



## **THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER**

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had woodwork from the building made into items such as walking canes, Willingham said. Among the souvenirs could easily have been Irvin's lock, he said.