



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Baltimore Mayor Announces Review of Confederate Statues

Special commission will examine monuments and launch public conversation about their appropriate role

BALTIMORE, Md. (June 30, 2015) – Today Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced that she will call for a special commission to review all of Baltimore's Confederate statues and historical assets.

Under the request, Mayor Rawlings-Blake will direct the special commission to launch a conversation about each of the different Confederate-era monuments and other historical assets and make recommendations for their future in Baltimore. The recommendations might include, but are not limited to, preservation, new signage, relocation, or removal. Mayor Rawlings-Blake will select the special commission from among members of the Baltimore City Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and the Baltimore Public Art Commission.

"I believe it is important for us to take a thoughtful, reasoned approach to these Confederate-era monuments, rather than rush to simply 'tear them down' or 'keep them up' in the heat of the moment," Mayor Rawlings-Blake said. "A special commission, under the guidance and direction of CHAP and the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts, will take the time to thoroughly research the background and significance of each of these items and make a recommendation that recognizes and respects the history that we need future generations to understand."

Mayor Rawlings-Blake said she expects the commission to seek input from independent experts in history, art, culture, and race in the city's history, as well as representatives of the community. Representatives of city agencies that work with Baltimore's historical monuments and other public artwork, including the Department of Recreation and Parks, would also participate in the commission's work, and legal research would be conducted to understand any requirements that might be associated with the items.

The commission will gather information on how other cities have handled similar questions regarding historic monuments – looking at Confederate-era statues in American cities, as well as elsewhere around the world. The commission will also invite public input to be part of its evaluation, perhaps through public hearings or a one-day symposium on monuments.

Once the commission members are selected, Mayor Rawlings-Blake asked that it aim to report its recommendations within six months.

Maryland Governor Hogan wants to recall Confederate plates

By Yvonne Wenger, The Baltimore Sun, June 23, 2015

Governor Larry Hogan will pursue action to stop the state from issuing license plates bearing images of the Confederate battle flag, aides said Tuesday, as momentum seemed to swing decisively against the controversial symbol of a divided America.

Hogan, a Republican, joined the Democratic governor of Virginia in taking steps toward ridding their states of the Sons of Confederate Veterans plates on a day that retail

giants Amazon, eBay and Sears followed Wal-Mart in banning Confederate flag merchandise. A major U.S. flag maker said Tuesday it would stop manufacturing and selling the flags.

The flag, flown in battle by Confederate troops during the Civil War but adopted by white supremacist groups, segregationists and opponents of civil rights in the 20th century, has come under fire since the shooting deaths last week of nine black men and women inside a storied African-American church in Charleston, S.C.

A white man who appears in photographs online with the flag in one hand and a gun in the other has been charged with nine counts of murder in what authorities are describing as a hate crime.

The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration has been issuing license plates bearing an image of the flag to members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans for nearly 20 years.

The Supreme Court ruled last week that Texas is not required to issue a similar plate there, and aides said Hogan has approached the MVA about stopping the practice in Maryland.

"It is the governor's desire definitely not to have these issued anymore," spokesman Doug Mayer said. "How we go about doing that is what has to be determined."

More than 30 state lawmakers called on the MVA to pull the license plates from the 900 specialty tags that it now offers and to begin recalling the 175 that are in circulation. Two lawmakers requested a legal opinion on the matter from Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh.

But some warned that a debate over symbols could distract policymakers



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

and the public from addressing more important concerns.

Del. Curt Anderson, a Baltimore Democrat, called the debate "a waste of time."

"Will it resolve the poverty problem in Baltimore? Probably not," said Anderson, who is black. "Will it resolve the high death rate in Baltimore City? I don't think so.

"You can't change American history. What I would like to do is change America's future, at least the future of Baltimore."

Still, Anderson said, if the matter came before the General Assembly for a vote, he would support recalling the plates.

Others said purging store shelves and government property of the flag is a start.

"We wouldn't allow someone to print out license plate tags with swastikas on it; that's no different, not to me," said City Councilman Brandon M. Scott. "That kind of stuff, for me, it lets me know where I am not welcome. As a state entity, we should not be issuing those."

Jay Barringer, state commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, said he was disappointed that Hogan had decided to take a "low road and not defend the First Amendment."

Of the hundreds of plates offered by the state, Barringer said, he's sure people could take offense to any number of them. He said he finds comparisons between the Sons of Confederate Veterans and hate groups to be "repulsive."

"I was hoping the governor would look past this knee-jerk reaction we see happening," he said. "I am very disappointed to hear this, and regret that the governor is falling in line with a delusion that does not address the deeper problems."

Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has backed a recall of the plates, which she has called "divisive and offensive."

She also agreed with Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz that Robert E. Lee Park — 450 acres owned by the city and operated by the county — should be renamed. Lee lived in Baltimore while he oversaw the construction of Fort Carroll, which began in 1848.

A group of state lawmakers from Baltimore expressed support for changing the name.

"We should not honor an individual who led the forces in rebellion against the United States of America on behalf of secessionists who sought to perpetuate slavery," they wrote to Rawlings-Blake. "When both children and adults visit this park, they should be inspired by the action we urge you to take, not the honor we once bestowed on a leader of the Confederacy."

Also Tuesday, Kennard Alexander Wallace, president-elect of the University System of Maryland Student Council, called on "student leaders, administrators and community members" throughout the university system to support an immediate ban of the Confederate flag on all 12 campuses.

In Pennsylvania, the Valley Forge Flag Co. said Tuesday it would not make or sell the flag.

"When you have a sea change moment like you have with the tragedy in Charleston, we felt it was simply the right thing to do," said Valley Forge Vice President Reggie VandenBosch. "We don't want to do anything that causes pain or disunity for people."

Maryland and Virginia are among nine states that offer the Sons of Confederate Veterans plates. Others

include Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

The Supreme Court decision last week upheld the authority of states to restrict the type of speech on license plates.

In Maryland, nearly 500 tags have been issued since the Sons of Confederate Veterans qualified for a specialty plate in 1996. More than 175 remain in circulation.

State officials tried to pull the tags shortly after they were introduced, but a federal judge ruled that the state had to continue offering them.

State lawmakers, in their letter Tuesday to the MVA and the Department of Transportation, called the flag "the nation's leading symbol of secession, armed rebellion against the U.S. government, slavery and racism."

"To be sure, every symbol has multiple connotations, and not everyone who displays the flag means the same thing by it," they wrote. "But there is no doubt that for millions of Marylanders, the Confederate battle flag's meaning is reasonably and uniquely identified with the history of slavery, white supremacy, and racial violence."

They expressed hope that the agencies will "conclude that the state of Maryland has both the legal authority and a clear reason to disassociate ourselves from a symbol that may reasonably be regarded as a 'badge and incident' of slavery."

State Sen. Jamie Raskin and Del. David Moon, both Montgomery County Democrats, asked Frosh to confirm that the agencies have the legal grounds to recall the plates without the need for legislation.

Mark Graber, a law professor at the University of Maryland, said the state has a clear path under federal law for the state to stop issuing the plates.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

The Supreme Court held that the plates issued in Texas were government speech, not private speech broadly protected under the First Amendment.

"There is no federal bar to getting rid of the Confederate plates," Graber said. "The mere fact that the state allows lots of plates doesn't mean that the state can't disallow plates the state finds offensive."

Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe called his state's plates "unnecessarily divisive and hurtful." He directed officials there to begin the process of replacing the plates in circulation in Virginia as quickly as possible.

"These steps will, I hope, make clear that this Commonwealth does not support the display of the Confederate battle flag or the message it sends to the rest of the world," McAuliffe said.

Aides to Hogan said the governor directed the administration to research the legal issues that would be involved in recalling the plates, and whether he can act on his own or needs approval from the General Assembly.

"Governor Hogan is against the use of the Confederate flag on Maryland license plates," spokeswoman Erin Montgomery said. "Our office is working with the Motor Vehicle Administration and the attorney general to address this issue."

Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield guides celebrate centennial

By Britt Charles Isenberg, *July 2015*
Civil War News - Preservation Column

In the aftermath of the war's bloodiest battle at Gettysburg, thousands of civilians flocked to Gettysburg to find their loved ones or to gawk at the devastation of a battlefield.

These heart-wrenching efforts always involved the visitor seeking information from locals and this simple act kick-started a myriad of events that would bring people to the small Pennsylvania town for years to come.

From the moment the guns fell silent, the perpetuation or preservation of the memory of Gettysburg embarked upon a winding journey that may not always have held the best intentions by those involved, but eventually blossomed into one of the most respected historical institutions in the country.

The story of preserving the story of Gettysburg in more ways than one began with the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery on Nov. 19, 1863. As Abraham Lincoln may have both incorrectly and correctly spoken that day, "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

Through the dedication ceremony, the idea of perpetuating the memory of the events that unfolded upon the sacred ground at Gettysburg was born.

Even as the war ended and the respective parties tried to move beyond the horrid four years of conflict, civilians continued to travel to Gettysburg to try in some way to become connected with the transcendental event.

As these early tourists stepped off the train, very quickly they were hounded by local civilians trying to make a dime.

By contrast, there were a number of individuals in the early days who were not only highly knowledgeable with regards to the battle's history, but also very interested in maintaining the story's integrity in the name of those men that lost their lives there.

Among them was the park's first historian, John Badger Bachelder. He had traveled with the Army of the Potomac early in the war and became the foremost collector of primary accounts in the years after the battle. He also spent a great deal of time on the battlefield with the veterans who had participated in the great struggle. William D. Holtzworth was another of these early "keepers" of the memory. He was a Gettysburg local who had served in the 87th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry during the war. With his soldier's perspective, he led visitors around the battlefield and showed them where the most important actions took place.

Eventually veterans' reunions became common and Holtzworth was one of many men who helped these men and their families around the field, another impetus for collecting stories of the battle and preserving the memory.

As the years went by, more and more "battlefield guides" began proliferating in and around Gettysburg and many of them were known more for their profiteering than for their historical integrity.

By the early part of the 20th century, the United States War Department, which ran the battlefield park, realized that it was time to provide visitors with a consistent experience that focused upon sharing the story of the battle with the utmost historical integrity.

The first test was administered on Oct. 17, 1915, and through this official process, Licensed Battlefield Guides were born.

In the past 100 years of Licensed Battlefield Guiding, men and women who have earned the badge as members of this respected institution have been preserving the memory of the battle of Gettysburg.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Their efforts extend far beyond saving the sacred story through oral history though. Many Licensed Battlefield Guides have been and remain at the heart of organizations that are to this day working hard to save battlefield ground all around the country, from the Civil War Trust, to the Adams County Land Conservancy, to the Gettysburg Foundation, to the Historic Gettysburg-Adams County preservation society. Their leadership is invaluable to these causes.

The artifacts of the war are also in so many instances entrusted to the knowledge and professional abilities of so many Licensed Battlefield Guides at institutions like the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg and the Adams County Historical Society. These facilities serve to teach visitors or researchers through the tangible items that still remain.

The dirty work does not escape the radar of Licensed Battlefield Guides either. Many are involved at a basic level in protecting Gettysburg National Military Park itself. They are the eyes and ears of the park service when it comes to monument preservation and battlefield upkeep.

Guides are also involved in the park's volunteer "Adopt-A-Position" program through which clean-up days are held twice a year. This could involve anything from picking up trash to building fences on the battlefield.

During this 100th Anniversary year, the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides has offered increased programming to involve the general public. Free National Cemetery Walks are being offered every evening at 6 from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

The Fall Seminar, "Battle Between the Barns," will provide visitors with a detailed look at the fighting along the Emmitsburg Road.

A memorial service will be held in November to honor all former Licensed Battlefield Guides who have so faithfully carried out their duties in preserving the memory of the Gettysburg story. Finally, in October, an anniversary banquet will be held to celebrate the passing of 100 years as keepers of the story.

The preservation efforts made by Licensed Battlefield Guides are constantly evolving to meet the challenges of tomorrow and there is certainly always more work to be done. With 100 years of Licensed Guiding now in the history books, the preservation of the memory that is Gettysburg remains in safe hands.

The efforts of these modern preservationists, Licensed Battlefield Guides, will only continue to cultivate our abilities to preserve that story in the future for generations to come.

"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

Harrisburg mayor calls on National Civil War Museum, a 'monument to corruption,' to shut down

By Christine Vendel, Pennlive.com, July 14, 2015

HARRISBURG- The grand jury presentment against former Harrisburg Mayor Stephen Reed revealed the contorted methods he used to buy the artifacts that now fill the National Civil War Museum, said current Mayor Eric Papenfuse.

"I think after reading that presentment, there can be no doubt that that museum stands as a monument to corruption and it is a chapter we have to close for the city of Harrisburg," Papenfuse told

reporters Tuesday. "The building needs to be repurposed. The assets need to be redeployed to pay down our city's debt."

Papenfuse called upon the board that oversees the museum to dissolve itself, close the museum and hand over the keys to the building as well as the artifacts to the city.

The city owns the building and artifacts and the museum is located in a city park, but the museum is run by a nonprofit organization. Papenfuse has previously called for the museum to shut down because it can't pay its own way, it doesn't benefit the city and it doesn't generate enough money to pay proper rent to the city.

Museum officials, for their part, have said previously that the museum brings millions in tourist revenue to the area.

"I would encourage all of them to read the criminal complaint," Papenfuse said of museum board members. "I think this complaint changes the calculation."

Papenfuse said he hoped board members would agree to dissolve, but "if that doesn't happen, we may have to take legal action."

Court records released Tuesday alleged that Reed used the former Harrisburg Authority as a political ATM machine dispensing hundreds of thousands of dollars to help fund his star-crossed museum projects, often under the guise of "administrative fees."

Papenfuse said he got into politics because of the corruption he believed he witnessed in the capital city. He said the nearly 500 criminal charges filed against Reed by the State Attorney General showed that justice and accountability "may at times be delayed but can never be denied."

The financial shenanigans from the Reed-era left a mark on Harrisburg



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

that residents feel every day, Papenfuse said.

"When they put money in the meters or pay the ridiculous high trash rates in Harrisburg, that is all the legacy," he said. "That is essentially paying off the debt that was amassed by Mayor Stephen Reed."

Papenfuse said upon reading the court records, he was overwhelmed by the many different opportunities people had to stop Reed.

"So many different individuals should have basically stood up and said, 'No,'" he said. "Should have resigned. Should have not let this continue at every single stage. The collective culpability that we all have is something as a city that we're going to continue to struggle with as we move forward."

Papenfuse said he thought the presentment represented "just the tip of the iceberg" and that other criminal and civil cases would follow.

John Wilkes Booth's Childhood Home

By Kim O'Connell, History.net,
July 1, 2015

After the tragic events of April 1865, the *New York Tribune* printed a rumor that the local residents around Bel Air, Md., could easily believe: Abraham Lincoln was probably not the first man John Wilkes Booth ever killed.

During the war, a small band of Unionists had camped not far from the Booth family home in Bel Air—a small town in Harford County, east of Baltimore—which the family had named Tudor Hall. As a border state, Maryland was torn between Union and Confederate partisans, often within a single family, and the Booths were no exception. This was a family of renowned actors, a household where giving free vent to the emotions was encouraged. On at

least two occasions, the *Tribune* reported, the impetuous John, a longtime Southern sympathizer, had rushed into Tudor Hall, grabbed his rifle, and run off to join the local Confederates skirmishing against the bluecoats in the nearby woods.

Whether or not John actually killed anyone there is an open question. But history has recorded that, after Lincoln was assassinated, the neighbors had nothing good to say about him. "[N]one of the neighbors ever liked the family, who were the devil's own play-acting people, and would do anything bad," the *Tribune* quoted one man saying. Rumor had it that the young Booth of Bel Air liked to get his kicks by shooting local dogs or farm animals. Once a killer, always a killer, according to the locals.

And yet the story of Tudor Hall paints a more complicated picture of John Wilkes Booth and his tempestuous family. It was, in some ways, a happy home, given to flights of fancy, grand gestures and elaborate "play-acting." It was a place where John pretended to be Romeo (or perhaps Juliet) from the balcony off his bedroom, where he is assumed to have carved the initials J.W.B. found on a nearby beech tree, and where he "was known to be loved," according to subsequent owner Ella Mahoney, who wrote memoirs of Tudor Hall and the Booth family.

But Tudor Hall was also a house of dark corners, where the mercurial John had deliberately chosen an eastern-facing bedroom because he didn't like to watch the sun set. There, the family mourned the loss of its gifted patriarch, Junius B. Booth Sr., who had chosen the house's design and overseen its construction but died before he could live there.

As a master tragedian, the elder Booth knew something about messy affairs of the heart. In his professional life, Junius had played such tortured leading men as Hamlet, Caesar and Richard III, but his personal life was nearly as dramatic. In 1821 the London-born Booth had abandoned his wife Adelaide and young son in England (a daughter had died in infancy) to accompany his lover, Mary Anne Holmes, to America, where they set up housekeeping in downtown Baltimore. The couple would eventually have eight children together, four of whom would die in childhood. Their life was comfortable, supported by Booth's soaring acting career, which sent him to the tread the boards in Boston, New York and other major cities. He soon longed for a bit of privacy and fresh air, and purchased a log cabin in Bel Air in 1823 to serve as a summer retreat for the family. It was there, on May 10, 1838, that John Wilkes Booth was born.

By all accounts, Junius threw himself into farming, planting a vineyard and orchard, harvesting crops and corralling horses and cows. He sent away for farming journals and studied them closely. Despite his fervor, Junius took a humane approach to his animals. He insisted that no livestock be slaughtered on his property, purchasing meat at neighboring farms. Several of his children, including John, were raised as vegetarians. Junius, who was accustomed to velvet and brocade in his costumes, farmed his land barefoot and was known to neighbors simply as Farmer Booth.

In the mid-1840s, when Junius sought to upgrade their homestead, he turned to an architectural pattern book published by William H. Ranlett in 1847. Ranlett was a well-known



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

architect whose most famous work is the Hermitage, now a national historic landmark in New Jersey. Booth chose Ranlett's design for a 1½-story Gothic Revival cottage with a front-facing gable and Palladian symmetry. The brick house was painted green to reflect its bucolic surroundings, and the interior living rooms and parlors were cozy, with a fireplace in the middle of the main room. A free-standing kitchen was only feet away. For the construction, Booth chose James J. Gifford, a respected carpenter in the region. (Ironically, Gifford would later be employed by John T. Ford to build his theater in Washington, D.C.)

It is perhaps not surprising that a renowned actor could pull off leading a double life. For years, Junius sent money home to support his family in England, and it is thought that Adelaide was none the wiser about his home life in America (though one never knows). But by the late 1840s, the truth was out. Adelaide and Junius were divorced in 1851. That same year, some 30 years after their affair began, Junius and Mary Ann were married. Their official union, like those in the Shakespearian tragedies he knew so well, was short-lived. The following year, Junius contracted consumption of the bowels after a six-night stand in New Orleans and expired on a riverboat en route to Ohio. His last words, according to his daughter Asia, were "pray, pray, pray."

After his passing, one admirer wrote a tribute to Junius in a literary journal, saying, "There are no more actors." For the grieving actor sons, including John and older brother Edwin, also a leading light of the American stage, the death of their father was no doubt the hardest act to follow.

Now without its head, the family moved into their new home, Tudor Hall. Edwin stayed only briefly, but John resided there with his mother, sisters Asia and Rosalie, and younger brother Joseph. According to Asia, there was little for the young Booths to do, perhaps a blessing and curse for youngsters with active imaginations. Occasionally Asia and John attended a church event or dance, but mostly they read aloud to each other or recited lines from plays or whiled away the hours climbing the great cherry tree near the house. Once, when some of Asia's friends visited, John whipped up a simple supper of pancakes. He sometimes fell into melancholy, reminding family and friends that a fortune-teller had predicted he would meet a bad end and die young. As the nation moved toward war, his support of the South became more trenchant, leading to arguments with his Unionist brother Edwin. (Years later, when Edwin received a trunk of John's, filled with costumes and love letters, he burned them.)

By the outbreak of the Civil War, the Booths had rented Tudor Hall to the King family from Washington, D.C. Although they kept some belongings at Tudor Hall, they rarely returned, except for John, who had "a strong affection for his boyhood home and friends," according to Ella Mahoney. He mostly toured the country as an actor whose reputation was growing (his early outings, when he was still a teenager, earned scathing reviews, but he had grown accomplished in his craft). He was well-known to Ford's Theatre audiences, and once pointed directly to President Lincoln in his box during a scene. In his last appearance there in March 1865, he played Duke Pescara in *The Apostate*—the lead role, and a villain.

A month later, John turned his villain act into reality. By April 15, 1865, Lincoln was dead, John Wilkes Booth was on the run in southern Maryland, and soldiers surrounded Tudor Hall. Mrs. King stepped out onto the balcony—perhaps the same one young John had once play-acted on—where the troops called up to her, demanding to be let in. For 10 days they came and went, searching the house and grounds in vain. They didn't know that the assassin was never to return to his beloved home.

The last act of the most dramatic role of his career was playing out, ensuring that his fame would forever eclipse that of his older brother or father. On April 26, 1865, after he was shot at the Garrett Farm in Virginia, John Wilkes Booth died near dawn, the time of day he had loved best.

The Trial of Major General John Gee

By Bob O'Conner, Examiner.com, June 27, 2015

While most people think that Commandant Henry Wirtz of Andersonville Prison was the only Confederate brought to trial for war crimes, others were too. Among them was Major John Gee, who held the same position as Wirtz, only at the Confederate Prison at Salisbury, NC.

The prison had been established in 1861 in an old warehouse located along the railroad tracks in downtown Salisbury to take prisoners from the overcrowded prisons in Richmond.

Gee was charged shortly after the war with war crimes relating to the deaths of thousands of Union prisoners including as many as two hundred United States Colored Troops held in the prison he commanded. Those men died mostly of starvation and disease, as the prison exchange had been terminated



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

in early 1864 and the prisons in general were overcrowded and lacked enough food to feed the prisoners. By 1864 the prison held five times the number it had been built to receive. By late 1864, there were 10,000 prisoners on the grounds.



John Gee

Major General Gee was brought before a military tribunal and charged with war crimes. His trial was held in Raleigh, North Carolina and began on February 21, 1866. The trial lasted over eighty days. More than one hundred witnesses testified. But unlike Wirtz, who was found guilty and hanged, Gee was acquitted, mostly due to community support and the testimony of many that he did his best to make lives at least tolerable for the prisoners. In fact, the military tribunal, made up of nine Union generals, said they found Major General Gee only guilty of "weakness in retaining a position when unable to carry out the dictates of humanity." Gee died in Florida in 1876 and is buried in the Gee family cemetery in Gadsden County, FL.

Today there is a National Cemetery in Salisbury, North Carolina with very few marked graves, as the Union soldiers who died in the Salisbury prison were buried in long ditches. A housing development has been built where the prison once stood.

Adirondack Town Mystery: Who Stole Marker for a Civil War Photographer?

By PAUL POST JULY 6, 2015

JOHNSBURG, N.Y. — Everyone in town, including the police, is asking why. And the answer to that is unknown, since they are also asking another question — who?

For nearly a year, the theft of a commemorative marker has baffled the police and wounded this Adirondack town's civic pride. The sign was located near the birthplace of Mathew B. Brady, a pioneering photojournalist whose images brought the horrors of Civil War battlefields to the public.

Brady's portraits of Abraham Lincoln have adorned the \$5 bill, and Lincoln credited pictures that Brady took of him during the 1860 campaign with helping him become president by making his likeness familiar to voters throughout the country.

"It's incomprehensible to me that whoever, for whatever reason, would do this," said Delbert Chambers, the president of the Johnsbury Historical Society.

In late 2013, the society placed the sign near Brady's birthplace, beside Route 28, which connects Interstate 87 with North Creek, a year-round Adirondack recreation destination and home to a state-run ski resort, Gore Mountain.

Until several years ago, Brady's birthplace was just as much a mystery as the disappearance of the

sign; it had long been believed that he came from nearby Lake George. However, Glenn Pearsall, a local author, while working on his book, "Echoes in These Mountains," used census records, sketches and sleuthing to locate the foundation of the house where Brady was born in 1822.

"The birthplace historical marker is important on two accounts," Mr. Pearsall said. "First, as beautiful as the Adirondacks are, many of us forget the rich human history that is here. Secondly, heritage tourism is an important economic component to the tourism industry these days. That sign, and others like it, encourage an affluent senior market to visit our area during the nonski months."

Last August, the \$1,200 blue-and-gold sign made of cast iron went missing, along with the three-inch steel pole it was mounted on and its concrete footing.

"It could have been for salvage, or maybe somebody needed it to cover a well hole," Mr. Chambers said. "Or it could be that someone really had it in for the historical society."

Whatever the reason, the thief went to considerable trouble.

"You'd need a tractor to pull it out," Mr. Chambers said. "It was not only a difficult financial loss, but an insult to our mission, a moral slap in the face. This is a volunteer organization. When things like this happen, you ask, why bother? It's wrong to steal, but why break people's spirit?"

An investigation by the Warren County sheriff's office has come up empty, though witnesses say they saw someone with an orange Kubota tractor at the location.

"We just haven't identified who it is," Sheriff Nathan H. York said. "Obviously it was someone who really wanted that historical marker."



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

While saddened by the theft, Mr. Chambers and other Brady admirers say they hope the crime produces greater awareness of his contributions to photography — and to history.

"Mathew Brady and those he taught or employed forever captured the vast majority of all of the roughly 10,000 documentary Civil War photos," said Garry Adelman, the vice president of the Center for Civil War Photography. "Therefore, the man himself, his motivations and methods as well as where he came from is important to the perpetuation of our heritage."

Ed Burke, a photojournalist from Saratoga Springs who does extensive work in the Adirondacks, said he felt a kinship with Brady. "I'm kind of intrigued by the whole thing," he said. "I think they should create a Mathew Brady museum in North Creek. It's already a destination. You could really build on this thing."

Brady left Johnsburg when he was 16 and went to Saratoga Springs, where he met the portrait painter William Page and became a student of his. In 1844, they went to New York City, where Brady studied under Samuel F. B. Morse, who also painted portraits but was known as the inventor of the telegraph.

"Morse was enthusiastic about the new art of capturing images through a daguerreotype, having met Louis Jacque Daguerre in Paris in 1839," Mr. Pearsall, the author, said. "Soon Brady was also excited about the new process and established his first photographic studio at the corner of Broadway and Fulton Street. In 1849, he established a studio in Washington, D.C., so that he could photograph the famous men of his time."

Penniless, depressed from his wife's death nine years earlier and an alcoholic, Brady died in 1896 at a hospital in Manhattan, Mr. Pearsall said. His funeral was paid for by the veterans of the Seventh New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, he added.

Now, the Johnsburg Historical Society has begun raising money for a new sign, which will cost about \$2,000, a significant expense for a struggling nonprofit with a couple of dozen members in a town of 2,450 people. The group has started a campaign at Adirondackgives.org.

"I want the sign to come back to this spot," Mr. Chambers said. "It's the best place for it. It draws the public's attention and increases their awareness that there is an historical background to this area."