



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

A Surprising Find at Gettysburg

By Gregg Clemmer, DC Civil War Heritage Examiner, August 10, 2011
 We can still learn much from visiting battlefields. You see, there is indeed something that remains ... something that endures in the land. Consider "witness trees," those still-living, silent spectators--and in some cases, survivors--of the carnage of Blue and Gray a century and a half ago. Last Thursday, 4 August, a Gettysburg National Military Park maintenance crew, on a routine clearing of a fallen oak tree on Culp's Hill, chain-sawed into minie balls imbedded in the trunk.



Stump of the Culp's Hill Witness Oak with minie ball four inches to the left of NPS employee Bob Jones's thumb – photo James Kirby, National Park Service

Visitors hardly notice such aged sentinels of the past unless park rangers or battlefield guides point them out. Yet the next time you seek some ice cream relief in Gettysburg, pause to view the two huge sycamore trees on the east side of Baltimore Street just north of its intersection with Steinwehr Avenue. They were there ... then. And perhaps like their once thriving compatriot tree on Culp's Hill, they still survive the wounds of that long ago, but never forgotten war.

"Culp's Hill is one of the areas on the Gettysburg Battlefield that saw intense fighting," noted park Superintendent Bob Kirby. Finding such bullets in this day and age, he said, "is a rarity." Sections of the tree have been removed for preservation in the park's museum collection. The rest of the fallen tree will stay on the battlefield slope where it fell, against a boulder next to the Joshua Palmer marker, just east of Culp's Hill highest point.

As it turns out, this marker is to the memory of Maj. Joshua G. Palmer, 66th Ohio, who fell mortally wounded on July 3, 1863. Confronting a determined, surging line of Confederates, the 66th's intrepid Lt. Col. Eugene Powell led his men across the Union works and formed them perpendicularly to the rest of his brigade so as to enfilade the southern attackers. Reported Powell, **"We poured a murderous fire on the enemy's flank. After a short time, I found that the enemy had posted sharpshooters at the foot of the hill, behind a fence, who were annoying us very much, I ordered my regiment to take up a sheltered position behind trees and stones, and direct their fire on the sharpshooters, whom we soon dislodged."**

And who were Powell's opponents that day? And who "probably" fired those lead bullets that lodged in that oak tree 148 years ago? Virginia men ... from the 27th, 33rd, 5th, and 4th regiments ... members of arguably the most famous Confederate command, the Stonewall Brigade, now led by Brig. Gen. James Walker of Maj. Gen. Ed "Old Alleghany" Johnson's division of Ewell's Second Corps.

You see, the battlefield still speaks.

Gettysburg's Powers Hill next to get 1863 look

BY SCOT ANDREW PITZER, Gettysburg Times, July 21, 2011
 Three artillery monuments stand atop Powers Hill at Gettysburg National Military Park, but are rarely visited by the park's two million annual tourists. Visitors can't see those monuments, as non-historic trees currently block them from public view.

However, that's all about to change. The National Park Service plans to continue its landscape rehabilitation program this summer, by removing up to six acres of non-historic trees from Powers Hill.

According to park historians, the tree removal will uncover the east side of Powers Hill, where the Union Army placed artillery to combat Confederates during the three-day Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. The hill is located adjacent to the Baltimore Pike near Cemetery Ridge, across from Spangler's Spring, but that viewshed is missing, with the non-historic tree growth.

"All of it has grown up in the past 80 to 100 years," said GNMP historian John Heiser. "You should be able to see all the way to Cemetery Hill and Evergreen Cemetery, without the growth."

As a result of the tree removal, the area will be more accessible to visitors, who may not otherwise know that monuments are located on the hill. There are a total of five monuments, with two near the base of the hill, and the other three near the crest. The five monuments located on Powers Hill are: the 77th New York Infantry; Rigby's Battery Monument; Battery E, Penna Light Artillery; the 1st New York artillery; and the Slocum monument.

Powers Hill is situated at the intersection of the Baltimore Pike,



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south of Gettysburg, and Granite School House Road, which was used by the Union Army in 1863 to move troops, and haul equipment and supplies. Now, visitors are unable to gauge or understand the strategic importance of the hill, with the non-historic trees.



Gettysburg National Military Park historian John Heiser discusses the strategic importance of the seldom-visited Powers Hill, along the Baltimore Pike. The park is removing non-historic trees from the east side of the hill, to open historic viewsheds. (Bill Schwartz/Gettysburg Times)

Heiser explained that the hill served as a platform for artillery, with its elevation, as it is located at the base of the Union fishhook. The hill is located within the park's 6,000-acre boundary.

Park spokeswoman Katie Lawhon noted that in addition to the tree removal, the park also plans to demolish a non-historic house that was obtained in the fall of 2010. GNMP Chief of Resource Management Scott Bolitho expects the tree removal to begin by August, and pointed out that crews plan to mobilize within the next week.

Orrtanna-based Pennington Tree Co. has been under contract with the Park Service since 2003, in a contract valued at \$569,675. Removal of six acres of trees in the Powers Hill and Spangler's Spring area will reopen historic views, that gave the Union artillery an advantageous position in participating in the repulse of

Confederate infantry from Culp's Hill, the morning of July 3 in 1863.

The park's General Management Plan of 1999 aims for the removal of 576 acres of non-historic trees. According to officials, park contractors have removed 324 acres over the last decade. Tree removal is entering its eleventh year at Gettysburg National Military Park, where crews are trying to convert the 6,000-acre battlefield to its Civil War appearance. Park officials estimated previously that the 10-year effort has cost about \$2.3 million.

The landscape of the battlefield has changed dramatically since 1863, when the three-day Civil War battle was fought in Gettysburg, resulting in the tree removal program. During the Civil War, there were 898 acres of woodland on the battlefield. Studies from 1993 show that the wooded areas covered 1,974 acres. In the 147 years since the battle, park records show that the landscape has changed significantly, evidenced by the growth of new trees, changes in field dimensions, and the gradual eroding of farm lanes, orchards and fences.

Harford Confederate family honored with grave-marking

BY BRYNA ZUMER, Baltimore Sun, August 9, 2011

The cemetery at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Abingdon is full of Confederate history, and the local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy hopes to bring more recognition to a major Civil War-era lieutenant, as well as his sister and sister-in-law, who are buried at the site.

"I consider it the most Confederate place in Harford County," Beth Manchester, president of the Harford

Chapter 114 of the UDC, said of the cemetery.

Manchester helped organize a ceremony attended by roughly 100 people Saturday to dedicate an Iron Cross at the grave of Lt. Edward Hill Dorsey Pue and lay a UDC insignia marker at the graves of Cornelia Calmese Dunn Pue and Mary Elizabeth Pue Preston.

"This is the first one that we have done in Harford County but we have done some in Cecil County," Manchester, who has been with the group for 13 years, said about the ceremony.

She noted that nine past presidents of the United Daughters of the Confederacy as well as three Confederate veterans are also buried at St. Mary's.

"We do plan to do some more in the future," she said about grave-markings in Harford.



Members of the Maryland Division SCV Color Guard stand at attention during Saturday's Iron Cross dedication ceremony at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Abingdon. Photo - Matt Button, Aegis staff

Manchester said she was impressed by Lt. Pue's reputation during the Civil War. He was wounded 11 times in more than 200 skirmishes. He died in 1905 at 65 years of age.

"I was really intrigued by Lt. Pue because if you read his obit, he is like a god. He's a tall, handsome man who charges in every battle and doesn't think twice about it," she said. "I just read about him and I thought,



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'Wow, an impressive man,' and then I realized his wife was [Confederacy leader] Jefferson Davis' goddaughter. She was from Louisiana."

Davis, the president of the Confederate States of America, had strong ties to St. Mary's, she said.

His son, Jefferson Davis Jr., attended school and was confirmed at St. Mary's sometime around 1872 — seven years after the war ended. Manchester said the father would visit when he was in the area for business. The elder Davis, she added, also stayed several times with the Pues, who lived at the nearby Woodview estate (also called Gibson's Ridge). Because of those various connections, Manchester thought it was important to mark the grave of Lt. Pue together with those of his sister and sister-in-law.

Monterey Pass Battlefield site gets donations

By SAMANTHA COSSICK,
publicopiniononline.com, August 8,
2011

Several recent donations are bringing a Monterey Pass Battlefield site and interpretive center closer to becoming a reality.

Two weeks ago, Washington Township officials received an anonymous donation of \$30,000 for the battlefield, said Mike Christopher, township manager.

That, in addition to their own fundraising and a \$41,900 Keystone Grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, brought them about \$15,000 short of their goal of \$100,000.

"Once we reach this goal, we'll be able to purchase this property," Christopher said. The property is owned by Mary Rae Cantwell.

In addition to the money, they also received a donation last week of Civil War artifacts off the battlefield from Charles and Cathy Roberts, Waynesboro.

"He felt, based on the news that we received the large cash donations, that we were closer to our goal of being able to purchase this property and they'd like to have these artifacts displayed for the future," Christopher said.

Roberts, a history buff, began searching for historical objects when he was still in high school.

After graduating high school in 1964, his interest in local battlefields, such as Gettysburg, Sharpsburg and Monterey Pass, grew stronger.

"In the late 1960s, I got a metal detector and just started working that area," Roberts said. "Back in those days, there was nobody else doing it."

His collection of Civil War relics comes from all over Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia; however, Roberts said he prefers to search locally.

In his searches at Monterey Pass, he has found a bayonet, a belt buckle, hundreds of bullets, a canteen, gun parts, buttons and more, he said.

For years, Roberts kept all the items for himself and never had an interest in selling them.

But after seeing the interest people were trying to bring to Monterey Pass, Roberts knew the time was right to donate the items.

"I thought this would all fall apart, but now I see they're pretty legitimate and pretty tenacious about what they're doing," he said "It's time that battleground is recognized."

The most exciting part of searching for items in wooded areas is the realization that comes with a find, Roberts said.

"What really hits you is the last person that touched that gun, that bayonet, those bullets was the Civil War soldier and here it lays in the ground," he said. "It connects you to that era and that's the biggest thrill of it."

The artifacts are being cataloged and photographed by John Miller, battlefield historian for the Friends of Monterey Pass Battlefield group.

"They will go on display, it may not be anytime soon, but for the most part if there are any special events, then the artifacts will definitely be exhibited," he said.

Once the property is purchased, they hope to establish a climate controlled permanent display case for the items, Miller said.

Purchasing the property is the first phase of the Monterey Pass Battlefield site plan, Christopher said. Phase two involves removing the mobile home on the site and building the interpretive center for visitors and historical reenactments, he said.

The last phase will involve acquiring additional land and artifacts as they become available, Christopher said.

"We're working with any and all agencies that can help us," he said. "We're really close to the finish line and we just need a little help."

The Battle of Monterey Pass is believed to be the second-largest Civil War battle fought in Pennsylvania and is a historic Franklin County event. It was the first major action to occur after the Battle of Gettysburg on the night of July 4 and morning of July 5, Miller said.

"Union forces, if they could have held long enough, they could have possibly shut the pass down and forced (Gen. Robert E.) Lee to take another direction back into Virginia," he said.



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Monterey Pass was the shortest route from Gettysburg to the Potomac River. However, additional Confederate reinforcements arrived and the battle spilled over into Maryland with Lee and his forces making their way out, Miller said.

"It was the only battle fought on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line," he said.

Township officials and the Friends of Monterey Pass Battlefield hope their efforts will bring more awareness to this event, Christopher said.

"We just feel like the Battle of Monterey Pass has been overlooked for all these years," he said. "Particularly, we want to educate the young people that live here that a piece of history actually occurred here."

USS Monitor's tank drained for public display

By Teresa Annas, The Virginian-Pilot, July 19, 2011

NEWPORT NEWS - From certain angles, it looked like Gary Paden was in a mine shaft chiseling away at some stubborn clump of coal, a bright light trained on his business.

His face was smudged and sweaty. He had been working this spot for more than a day, all bent over beneath a massive iron structure that was filthy, rusty and damp.

And did we mention stinky? The tank in which he labored smelled like century-old swamp mud laced with decaying sea life.

Paden is an objects handler working in the USS Monitor Center at The Mariners' Museum. He was gently nudging, hour after painstaking hour, a wrought-iron stanchion from the 9-foot-tall revolving gun turret that once sat atop the Civil War ironclad.

The stanchions rimmed the roof of the Monitor and held up a canvas awning to shelter the crew from the broiling sun. The stanchions needed to be removed so they could be separately treated for conservation.

Last week Paden strived to remove one of those stanchions from its bracket using a hydraulic jack. "I spent seven hours on it yesterday," Paden said. "So far it's been the most difficult one."

Several other workers came in closer to watch, including Dave Krop, manager of the Monitor conservation project.

Paden said most of the tools used in restoring the various components of the Monitor brought up from the ocean's floor were improvised. The hydraulic jack is an auto body tool used to fix dents.

He pressed the jack into the point where the stanchion met the bracket. A moment later, the stanchion fell from its 149-year-old position.

"Wow," Krop said. "You got it off. Pretty awesome! That's pretty awesome!"

Several handlers nearby paused from their snail's-pace labors to savor the moment, beaming in Paden's direction.

The turret from the Monitor is a priceless icon from the Civil War, and it will be in the spotlight even more as the 150th anniversary of its famous 1862 battle is commemorated.

Krop said he and his team feel the weight of the responsibility of conserving the turret, which was a signature feature of the ironclad. The Monitor was the first battleship able to shoot in any direction because of its revolving gun turret.

The Union's Monitor fought the Confederates' ironclad, CSS Virginia, to a draw in a four-hour battle March 9, 1862, in the Battle of Hampton

Roads. From that moment, the wooden battleship was obsolete.

About 10 months later, 16 miles south-southeast of Cape Hatteras, the Monitor sank in a storm to the bottom of the Atlantic. It was raised in August 2002.

The turret was immediately trucked to The Mariners' Museum, where it has been kept in a giant tank of water ever since.

The water's important because if the salt-soaked iron were allowed to dry out, the material would quickly rust and disintegrate.

(Krop estimated the turret will have to soak another 15 years before it can be placed on permanent, dry display inside the USS Monitor Center, which opened in 2007.)

At the center, projects are constantly under way to conserve various Monitor items.

This summer the 120-ton turret is the focus. Through July and August, its tank will be drained on weekdays, allowing the public a chance to see more of the turret than usual.

Krop said he hopes the seven members of the conservation team will be able to remove most of the final layers of sediment and concretion still in and on the turret from its longtime home in the deep.

Concretion is a blend of "sand and shell and calcium and coral and corrosion that forms a hard crust over artifacts," Krop said. At the bottom of the Atlantic, the turret became a kind of artificial reef where small creatures hid.

As the team got started last week, Krop estimated that 80 to 85 percent of the accumulated gunk had been removed through previous efforts. What's left? "Hard, thick concretion in awkward, hard-to-get-to spots," he said.



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By Aug. 31, the last day they'll labor in the turret this year, Krop is shooting to have removed 95 percent of the concretion.

Early on, in the months after the turret was raised from the deep, archaeologists excavated a few hundred objects from it, Krop said: a rubber comb, silverware, leather boots.

The crew is still finding the occasional artifact. Krop said he dislodged three items July 8, including a small, star-shaped whatzit that might be a knob. Another worker found an officer's brass button bearing an eagle and an anchor.



Dave Krop, front left; assistant conservator Will Hoffman, back left; and conservator Elsa Sangouard work inside the turret. The team has removed accumulated gunk from the 120-ton structure but still has more gunk to go. (Steve Earley | The Virginian-Pilot)

For a close view of these activities, the public must pay admission to The Mariners' Museum. Along a hallway in the Monitor Center, visitors may climb stairs to viewing platforms where they can see workers outside the turret's tank and spy the top portion of the turret's exterior.

Usually the turret tank is filled to the brim with water and the turret is far less visible.

Fans of the project also may follow the team's progress on the museum's website, www.marinersmuseum.org, via web-cams.

Visitors in person and online will see a sweaty, filthy crew laboring on an ironclad - and need we say stinky? - ship. Krop said crew members hardly

notice the odor after a while. When they do, they say they don't mind: It's the smell of historic discoveries.

"When you're working in there, and you're sweating and you're hot, you get up from the sediment and look up and see (visitors') faces pressed against the glass," said Krop, who labors alongside his team.

"We're so wrapped up in being inside of 1862, we don't realize the full significance. It's when we step out of the tank." That's when he thinks: "We have to succeed. We can't let the country down."

Krop said he has a sense that people all over the nation care deeply about this project.

"This is a big deal. We have to do it right. We have to do it right the first time."

And so back in the turret he ventured, in his steel-toed boots and his rubber gloves. Into the glorious stench.

South Mountain museum upgrades planned in Md.

Mysantonio.com August 9, 2011

BOONSBORO, Md. (AP) — Maryland's Department of Natural Resources says it's upgrading museums in the South Mountain Recreation Area near Boonsboro in time for the Civil War sesquicentennial.

Park Manager Dan Spedden told a news conference Monday in Hagerstown that the agency will refurbish buildings at Washington Monument State Park and Gathland State Park to add exhibits focused largely on the Sept. 14, 1862, Battle of South Mountain.

At Washington Monument, exhibits will be added to an existing museum that was once the park concession stand.

At Gathland, a lodge building will house exhibits about the fighting that occurred in several gaps along 12 miles of the mountain ridge.

Spedden says \$187,000 has been awarded for building rehabilitation. The agency is seeking bids for exhibit construction.

Franklin aims to build nation's top Civil War museum

By Tim Ghianni, Nashville Ledger, July 21, 2011

Author, Civil War student and Franklin preservationist Robert Hicks has seen many visions come true thanks to the teamwork and tenacity of all aspects of the community that has joined the royalty of American historic tourism sites.

Hicks is convinced the crown jewel — the world's foremost Civil War museum — will rise from the ground by the time the Battle of Franklin celebrates its 150th birthday on Nov. 30, 2014.

The former music industry insider who wrote the best-selling *The Widow of the South* — set at Carnton Plantation during that battle — is not shy when talking about the museum or the future.

But it's really just the latest step in an ongoing, communitywide effort that has turned the once almost quaintly ignored battle into a major industry.

In 1974, when Hicks moved to Franklin, it was literally a community with an aged downtown square and not much else to offer.

Those who visit what has become of the Battle of Franklin industry in the last few years likely don't even recall that, in the early 1970s, about the only historic tourism near the battle site was a chintzy little diorama among the 'Carter's Court shops' that also included a tea room.



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That has changed dramatically in recent years with the Carnton Plantation and Carter House – both historic sites – coming under one umbrella, followed by the Lotz House. The combined forces that make up Franklin's Charge, the Battle of Franklin Trust and others have also been behind reclamation efforts that acquired a golf course bound for housing development and used that wide-open space – that once soaked up the blood of North and South – as a large building block in efforts to reclaim the battlefield.

Other plots have been added, and the state has been enlisted in the effort. Just this week, Gov. Bill Haslam delivered \$500,000 of state money to be used to complete the reconstruction of the historic loop road through the eastern flank of the battlefield that once connected Carnton to Lewisburg Pike.

"We are the poster-child for battlefield reclamation," says Hicks, not just of the groups he is involved with but all of the Franklin organizations who have joined hands to turn this town into a premiere heritage tourism site, something that will be well-noticed during this sesquicentennial observance of the Civil War.

"Heritage tourism is now something that affects everyone in Franklin, whether they understand it or not," Hicks adds. "Heritage tourists are the best tourists. They come here. They like to spend money.

"They are the highest-educated tourist demographic in America," he says, noting participants average some post-graduate educations.

"They prefer bed and breakfasts and local hotels and don't like to eat in chain restaurants, choosing locally owned restaurants.

"And they like to stay at least two days at a site," he says.

Hicks doesn't take credit for all that has happened. He likes to point to the efforts of his partners in this vision, including attorney Julian Bibb III, Mary Pearce of The Heritage Foundation, Marianne Schroar and Ernie Bacon in this battle for preservation and reclamation.

Add to that Ken Moore, the mayor and the folks in local tourism, like Mark Shore along with all the individual enthusiasts who have gotten fully behind the effort.

Hicks says if Nashville ever wants to truly compete for Civil War heritage tourists, then there is one starting point.

"They are never going to do what they need to do in Nashville until they come together," he says, again emphasizing how so many agencies and organizations have invested time and energy into the fight to reclaim the Battle of Franklin.

"It's really tough because so much of the Civil War ownership belongs to fringe political groups. We need to get way past all that."

"It's never going to happen in Nashville until someone decides it's time to take off the political gloves and envision that it's really important." And he says the racial divide must be erased, and the African-American community must be embraced and in return embrace the effort.

"You have to be able to stand before a black church and tell them why the Civil War matters to them. I'm not asking them as a white person. I'm sitting at their table and asking them to share some of what they have," he says.

It means the people who own the land, the various political agencies, the preservationists, the descendants of all sides of the war have to break bread and work together to make sure the Civil War is recognized and

remembered for its importance in shaping this nation.

And once that united front begins its assault, the dollars will come.

Hicks wouldn't mind seeing Nashville fully enter the fray.

There are plenty of Civil War "museums, he says" – dusty attic collections of uniforms, armaments and gear.

But what he is envisioning, what his community is planning, is "The Civil War Museum" – a combination of artifacts and interactive exhibits that will capture the imagination of all visitors.

"I'm talking about a museum that tells the story of the Battle of Franklin in context with the Western Theater of the Civil War, putting the Western Theater within context of the whole of the American Civil War and then, and this is most important; placing the American Civil War in context with the life of every girl and boy who walks in the door.

"My goal is to build a museum that is so interactive that when kids leave it, they understand that they are partly who they are because of the American Civil War, that we, as a nation, are who we are collectively, because of those 'four arduous years.'

Alabama still collecting tax for Confederate vets

By JAY REEVES, AP, July 20, 2011
MOUNTAIN CREEK, Ala. (AP) — The last of the more than 60,000 Confederate veterans who came home to Alabama after the Civil War died generations ago, yet residents are still paying a tax that supported the neediest among them.

Despite fire-and-brimstone opposition to taxes among many in a state that still has "Heart of Dixie" on its license



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plates, officials never stopped collecting a property tax that once funded the Alabama Confederate Soldiers' Home, which closed 72 years ago. The tax now pays for Confederate Memorial Park, which sits on the same 102-acre tract where elderly veterans used to stroll.

The tax once brought in millions for Confederate pensions, but lawmakers sliced up the levy and sent money elsewhere as the men and their wives died. No one has seriously challenged the continued use of the money for a memorial to the "Lost Cause," in part because few realize it exists; one long-serving black legislator who thought the tax had been done away with said he wants to eliminate state funding for the park. These days, 150 years after the Civil War started, officials say the old tax typically brings in more than \$400,000 annually for the park, where Confederate flags flapped on a recent steamy afternoon. That's not much compared to Alabama's total operating budget of \$1.8 billion, but it's sufficient to give the park plenty of money to operate and even enough for investments, all at a time when other historic sites are struggling just to keep the grass cut for lack of state funding.

"It's a beautifully maintained park. It's one of the best because of the funding source," said Clara Nobles of the Alabama Historical Commission, which oversees Confederate Memorial Park.

Longtime park director Bill Rambo is more succinct.

"Everyone is jealous of us," he said.

Tax experts say they know of no other state that still collects a tax so directly connected to the Civil War, although some federal excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol first were

enacted during the war to help fund the Union.

"Broadly speaking, almost all taxes have their start in a war of some sort," said Joseph J. Thorndike, director of a tax history project at Tax Analysts, a nonprofit organization that studies taxation.

Alabama's tax structure was enshrined in its 1901 Constitution, passed after Reconstruction at a time when historians say state legislators' main goal was to keep power in the hands of wealthy white landowners by disenfranchising blacks and poor whites.

The Constitution allowed a state property tax of up to 6.5 mills, which now amounts to \$39 annually on a home worth \$100,000. Of that tax, 3 mills went to schools; 2.5 mills went to the operating budget; and 1 mill went to pensions for Confederate veterans and widows.

The state used the pension tax to fund the veterans home once it assumed control of the operation in 1903. The last Confederate veteran living at the home died in 1934, and its hospital was converted into apartments for widows. It closed in 1939, and the five women who lived there were moved to Montgomery.

Legislators whittled away at the Confederate tax through the decades, and millions of dollars that once went to the home and pensions now go to fund veteran services, the state welfare agency and other needs. But the park still gets 1 percent of one mill, and its budget for this year came to \$542,469, which includes money carried over from previous years plus certificates of deposit.

All that money has created a manicured, modern park that's the envy of other Alabama historic sites, which are funded primarily by grants, donations and friends groups.

Legislators created the park in 1964 during a period that marked both the 100th anniversary of the Civil War and the height of the civil rights movement in the Deep South.

Nothing is left of the veterans home but a few foundations and two cemeteries with 313 graves, but a museum with Civil War artifacts and modern displays opened at the park in 2007.

While the park flourishes quietly, other historic attractions around the state are fighting for survival.

Workers at Helen Keller's privately run home in northwest Alabama fear losing letters written by the famed activist because of a lack of state funding for preservation of artifacts. The old Confederate pension tax that funds the park has never been seriously threatened, Rambo said. Backers were upset this year when Gov. Robert Bentley's budget plan eliminated state funding for historic sites because of tight revenues, he said, but the park's earmarked funding survived.

State Rep. Alvin Holmes, a black Democrat who's been in the Legislature since 1974, said he thought funding for the park had been slashed.

"We should not be spending one nickel for that," said Holmes, of Montgomery. "I'm going to try to get rid of it."

Holmes may have a hard time gaining support with Republicans in control of Legislature and the governor's office.

In the meantime, a contractor recently measured the museum for a new paint job, and plans calls for using invested money to construct replicas of some of the 22 buildings that stood on the site when it was home to hundreds of Confederate veterans and their wives.



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