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The Battle at Gettysburg, 143 years later

By Kate McGinty, USA TODAY, 8/2/2006

GETTYSBURG, Pa. — Time and a tight budget are taking a toll on historic buildings and artillery pieces at one of the nation's bloodiest battlefields.

"You start to look around, and there's work everywhere that needs to be done. We just don't have the money or people to do those things," says Marc Pratt, acting chief of maintenance at Gettysburg National Military Park. "It's a red flag that we're getting behind, and it appears to be getting worse."

Nearly \$50 million is needed to restore the park, the site of a fierce three-day battle in 1863, to its ideal condition, says Katie Lawhon, public affairs specialist at Gettysburg. That's about 37% above a 2001 estimate because the work is accumulating, she says.

At least 10 buildings are in "serious condition," according to a park audit, and nine positions to replace roofs, repair utilities and clean historic structures are unfilled because of the budget, Pratt says.

The park is operating this year on a \$5.65 million budget, up from \$5.07 million in 2001, says Brian Kennedy, communications director for the House Resources Committee. Though there are "sympathetic ears in Congress," Kennedy says war funding in particular has made for budget constraints at Gettysburg and other national parks.

Although many of the buildings needing repairs are not open to the public, they still "are critical to understanding what went on on the battlefield" for the 1.8 million people who visit the Civil War site annually,

Pratt says. One such place, he says, is the Patterson House, which served as a Union general's headquarters and a hospital. Its floors have rotted.

In another section of the park, Victor Gavin, supervisory exhibits specialist, directs artillery restoration.

The park owns more than 400 cannons. They sit on cast-iron carriages, century-old replicas of the wooden carriages used during the war. About 10 years ago, the park stopped on-field repairs because of warnings about the dangers of the lead paint used on the carriages. For some time, Gavin says, the artillery pieces "just sat there and rusted and deteriorated."

Now, the lead paint has been sandblasted off by an outside company at a cost of \$1,000 per carriage, and the carriages have been returned to the park to be repaired and painted. Gavin says, however, the artillery shop operates with only two employees and is unable to keep up with the workload.

With no place to store the carriages awaiting repairs, the vehicles are usually left in deteriorating barns that further expose them to wind and damaging rain.

Libby and Victor DeMaria of Hampstead, Md., visit the park often and say it is discouraging to watch the park struggle.

"This is such a huge, huge part of our history," she says.

Gettysburg narrowly supports casino deal

By Meg Bernhardt, Hanover, PA Evening Sun, August 16, 2006

The Gettysburg Borough Council approved a deal with casino investors Monday night that guarantees at least \$1 million from gaming profits would be paid to the borough annually if a proposed slots parlor is built in nearby Straban Township.

The deal, approved in a 5-4 vote, has been considered by the council for more than four months. It still includes a few sticking points council members have cited in the past.

It does not include, as council members requested, language that would increase the amount of money to the borough as time goes on to adjust for inflation. It also maintains language stating the council agrees Crossroads Gaming Resort and Spa will provide an "excellent economic benefit" to the Adams County region and public and private interests. But the language endorsing the project has been changed to acknowledge the excellent economic benefit is an opinion shared by Crossroads and Gettysburg Borough, and is based on information Crossroads has provided about how the casino will operate.

And the agreement will not be signed until the state Gaming Control Board has decided the agreement is legal under state gaming law.



Victor Gavin, supervisory exhibits specialist, does repair work on an 1888 bronze figure dedicated to the 4th New York Independent Battery. The monument was one of three badly vandalized in February at Gettysburg National Military Park. Gavin says there's nothing budgeted for vandalism repairs.



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But despite those concerns, the council members who voted in favor of the agreement said they felt the final version is acceptable.

"Anyone can sit here and look at our records and see how desperate for money we really are," said Councilwoman Holly Giles. "We are being offered \$1 million by a major corporation and, by God, no one else has stepped up (to do that)."

Council President Ted Streeter said Crossroads has assured him the borough could get more than the \$1 million guarantee in years to come through a voluntary increase in the grant amount.

David La Torre, spokesman for casino investor group Chance Enterprises, said the group is very pleased a deal is in place.

"We respect the feeling of those council members that have an apprehension about gaming," La Torre said this morning. "But there is the big picture: Gettysburg stood to make nothing due to an oversight in state law. Now we're making sure they do benefit from this."

Talk of the agreement first became public April 4, a day before the council testified in favor of the Crossroads project to state gaming regulators.

The council had made it clear it would testify on the economic impact a casino would have, but waited until April 4 to decide which side to take.

The offer, which most of the council admitted they hadn't seen in writing before the April 4 vote, tipped the scales for a 6-3 vote in favor of testifying positively on the Crossroads project.

"The taxpayers in Gettysburg can no longer afford to pay for the increasing needs of visitor support, and at the same time, provide for the required

needs of the town," Mayor William Troxell said at the time.

Casino opponents called the deal a bribe and said financial support shouldn't be predicated on positive testimony.

Monday, the council room was filled with residents – including No Casino Gettysburg chairwoman Susan Star Paddock and Pro Casino Adams County members Tommy Gilbert and Jeff Klein – who came to listen to the deliberation on the agreement.

The agreement accepted Monday guarantees Chance would give \$1 million of its profits each year to Gettysburg Borough through a community-benefits program. The money can be used for anything that would benefit the community, Crossroads attorney Jeff Ernico said.

The agreement also states Chance would help the borough seek at least \$2 million of public-share casino funds from the state. If the borough gets money from the state, that sum might replace the share it would get from Chance's profits.

Under Pennsylvania law, only the host township receives revenue directly from area casinos, so Gettysburg wouldn't receive casino money other than the possibility of a yearly development fund that benefits Adams, Franklin and York counties.

The resolution adopted by the council Monday says Crossroads and Gettysburg agree a casino in Straban would cause significant impact on the borough government. The resolution says a casino would mean Gettysburg would need money for police, fire and other emergency services, to maintain, repair and service the borough's infrastructure and to complete other municipal improvements.

The three council members who voted against positive testimony in

April – Marty Qually, John Murphy and Dick Peterson – voted against accepting the agreement Monday. They were joined by Robert Miller, who did not comment on why he voted against it.

Qually, Murphy and Peterson all tried to get the other council members to wait until it is clear how much money Gettysburg will get from the state before signing an agreement with Crossroads.

"I don't want to be beholden to a casino, I want to be beholden to our legislators who have treated us right in the past with many grants," said Peterson.

The other council members, Caroline Smith, Bill Monahan, Jamie Fleet, Giles and Streeter voted to approve the agreement rather than table it again.

They said they wanted to take the money they knew they'd get.

"A part of something is better than all of nothing," Streeter said.

Carpenter's discovery rescues Clara Barton office

By Linda Wheeler, The Washington Post, August 16, 2006

WASHINGTON -- Red Cross founder Clara Barton must have had a guardian angel when she followed the troops onto the battlefield and nursed the injured. As she cared for one young soldier, a bullet tore through her sleeve and killed him.

After the Civil War, she headed an office in Washington that searched for soldiers missing in action and reconnected them with their families. Now that office space, carved out of an apartment where she lived, has a guardian angel. He is Richard Lyons, a General Services Administration carpenter who stumbled on Barton's living and working quarters when he



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discovered government files and clothing she'd stashed in a space above her bedroom in 1869 before leaving for Europe. Barton returned to the area and in 1897 set up her home and headquarters in suburban Glen Echo, Md., now home to the Clara Barton National Historic Site.

Nine years ago, the D.C. building at 437 Seventh St. NW was to be demolished. Lyons, checking the roof for leaks, noticed an envelope between a ceiling and the attic. That led him into the space, where he found files, a metal sign for the missing soldiers offices and a blouse with a bullet hole.

Lyons became an instant hero to the preservation community.

The GSA reversed a demolition order and announced plans to create a museum dedicated to Barton's Civil War work.

Since then, Lyons, 59, has protected the third-floor space.

The Barton building is part of a long row of Victorian commercial buildings on Seventh Street with restored facades and new interiors.

As the rest of the Barton building, once a shoe store, has been turned into office space, Lyons' job has been to ensure that no one damages or alters the third floor.

For him, it's personal.

"I remember it was the night before Thanksgiving, and I came here to check the roof," he said as he stood in the soft light of the 7-foot windows that once lighted Barton's office. "I was by myself. I heard something in the back, but when I checked, I didn't find anything. There weren't any lights here, and I was using my flashlight.

"Then someone tapped me on my shoulder. I thought it was one of my co-workers come by to help me, but there was no one there. It was then

that I saw the envelope stuck up by the ceiling."

Lyons' domain is a series of rooms with wallpaper that has fallen away from the plaster, collapsed ceilings and dust and dirt of a century of disuse after the building's owner closed off the third floor in 1900.

But there are hints of Barton's presence. Her office was listed on the sign out front as No. 9, and a dark brown door is still in place with a numeral 9 painted on it.

Nine years after Lyons' discovery, the GSA's program manager for historic buildings, Caroline Alderson, said the museum is still very much in the works.

"We've stabilized the building, put in an elevator for the public, installed air conditioning and heating for climate control," Alderson said. "We've brought the building up to code."

Fort Mifflin, PA Caretaker Trips Over History

By Edward Colimore, Philadelphia Inquirer, August 27, 2006

Caretaker Wayne Irby was mowing the grass at Fort Mifflin this month when he was literally swallowed up by the history of the place - up to his knees.

Irby "turned the mower loose" just as the ground collapsed beneath him.

Curious, he shoveled aside a few feet of earth over the next couple of days and made a stunning discovery: a tunnel and a two-room jail cell recalling the sad tale of a decorated Civil War soldier, a murder, clemency pleas to President Lincoln, and the only execution at the fort.

The barred cell at casemate No. 11 once belonged to convicted killer William H. Howe before he was hanged Aug. 26, 1864.

One hundred forty-two years later - almost to the day of Howe's hanging - Irby pointed a flashlight above a

doorway and eyed, with surprise, a name, both handwritten and printed: *W.H. Howe*.

On a door nearby was another message: *Shun this place, oh man, whomsoever thou art.*

"Finding the rooms was very exciting," said Irby, 55, who on Friday stood in the cell littered with bottles, a tin cup, a plate, a chamber pot, a cannon vent pick, and many other artifacts.

"But the name identified the rooms with a function and personality. It gave them a story and took it from a great thing to a fantastic thing." Historians and fort officials were thrilled.

The site, where a few hundred patriots braved a British bombardment during the Revolution and where Civil War deserters were held, is off the beaten path for tourists, next to Philadelphia International Airport - and now hopes to capitalize on Irby's propitious accident.

William Mifflin, a descendant of the fort's 18th-century commandant Thomas Mifflin and member of the board of directors of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware, called the find remarkable, "another significant chapter in the fort's long history."

"It not only gives us one more educational and interpretive opportunity - but it's entertaining," he said before ducking down a small, muddy hole that opened into the tunnel.

Historian and author Andy Waskie, a Temple University professor who teaches Civil War history and languages, provided some perspective on the nature of the discovery:

"Of all the thousands of prisoners - Union and Confederate - held at Fort Mifflin, to have a direct connection to



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one individual, who was under sentence of death, is astounding."

Howe, a Union soldier of German descent, had distinguished himself during the Battle of Fredericksburg on Dec. 13, 1862.

"He was a war hero," said Lee Anderson, director of public programming at the fort. "He picked up the standard and went forward; he rallied the troops, and they followed him."

Wounded in the fight, suffering from severe dysentery and depressed by the loss of friends and separation from his wife in Perkiomenville, Montgomery County, Howe later deserted and returned home to recuperate.

An enrolling officer, Abraham Bertolet, and two provost marshals later went to Howe's house to arrest him, and a gun battle ensued. Witnesses said Howe fired a rifle from an upper window of the house, killing Bertolet.

The soldier surrendered, was convicted of murder and was sentenced to death by hanging. He was held at Fort Mifflin and escaped, possibly from the newly discovered cell.

On Friday, Irby, the fort's projects manager, pointed out a window, with a wire-mesh screen and bars removed, allowing access to a large ventilation shaft that could have provided the escape route. "The bars are still lying there," he said.

Howe was recaptured and transferred to the more secure Moyamensing Prison on 11th Street in South Philadelphia.

His former commanding officer, Gen. St. Clair A. Mulholland, a Medal of Honor recipient, wrote to President Lincoln, seeking clemency for the soldier.

Howe also wrote to Lincoln, trying to put the best face on the desertion and shooting incident. The President declined to pardon him, and Howe was hanged at the fort between the arsenal and the sutler building (where civilians sold goods to troops), which still stand.

"They were making an example of him and wanted everyone to have the optimal view," said Anderson.

Howe's wife wanted to bury her husband at Keelor's Church in Obelisk, Pa., but the elders declined to have a deserter buried in sanctified ground. He was interred near a stone fence at his house.

William Mifflin said he had contacted city and state officials as well as the University of Pennsylvania to report the find and seek advice and help in preserving the site and its artifacts. "The fort is one of Philadelphia's important historic assets and should be preserved," he said.

Developers Illegally Bulldoze NPS Land at Harpers Ferry, Groups Claim

Aug. 24, 2006-CWi-The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) and the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) issued a statement today in response to the illegal bulldozing of a portion of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park by a handful of local developers. Purposely and without permission, the developers dug a deep trench through historic land owned by the National Park Service and the American people.

"Beginning on the morning of August 19, 2006, a group of local developers moved heavy machinery and work crews onto the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and proceeded to lay water and sewer

pipes on historic land where Stonewall Jackson launched one of the most brilliant tactical triumphs of the Civil War," said CWPT President James Lighthizer. "The developers had neither authority nor the permits necessary to do this."

The purpose of the water and sewer line is to facilitate a planned development of approximately 3,400 houses proposed for construction both inside and adjacent to the Park Service boundary. To date, the developers have not received any local approvals necessary for this development to proceed.

"These developers knowingly and defiantly ignored federal laws regarding construction on public land," said Joy Oakes, Senior NPCA Mid-Atlantic Regional Director. "Americans have a right to expect that land protected by the Park Service cannot be bulldozed outside of an orderly and legal review. We encourage federal and state law enforcement officials to pursue these violators to the fullest extent of the law."

For several years, CWPT and NPCA have been leaders in an extraordinary and successful effort to protect historic lands at Harpers Ferry. With the support of local business owners, civil rights leaders, conservationists, history buffs, recreation enthusiasts, heritage tourism interests, and elected officials, Congress expanded the park's boundary in 2004. Millions in federal grants as well as private funds have been raised to purchase land from willing sellers to add to the national park.

"We are horrified at this premeditated and unprecedented desecration of School House Ridge," said Lighthizer. "For several years, CWPT and NPCA have been working with federal and state officials to protect this property."



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Last year CWPT appealed to our members to help raise the \$1.5 million needed to acquire the site bulldozed this weekend for preservation. We are outraged, and expect immediate restitution from these developers."

Harford County Purchasing Tudor Hall

2-story cottage is 19th-century home of America's first Shakespearean actors, the Booths

By MARY GAIL HARE, BALTIMORE SUN,
AUGUST 11, 2006

When asked to be or not to be involved in the future of Tudor Hall, Harford County answered with an \$810,000 offer to buy the 19th-century home of America's first Shakespearean actors -- and the nation's first presidential assassin, John Wilkes Booth.

County officials settled August 16th on the purchase of the two-story, four-bedroom cottage that acclaimed English-born actor Junius Brutus Booth built in 1847 as a country retreat from Baltimore. After his death, his widow raised their 10 children in the home a few miles from downtown Bel Air. Several of those children had successful stage careers, including Edwin Thomas Booth, considered one of America's greatest Shakespearean actors.

"Edwin played 100 consecutive Hamlet performances in New York City just before the Civil War," said Dinah Faber, a Harford County Historical Society volunteer well-schooled in Booth family lore. "His father, Junius, who chose the plans for the house and oversaw its construction, was famous for his portrayal of Richard III."

But it was another actor son who achieved such notoriety that he nearly destroyed the family's good name. John Wilkes Booth, a dashing,

popular performer, fired a .41-caliber bullet into Abraham Lincoln's head at Ford's Theatre in April 1865 and sealed his place in history as the United States' first presidential assassin.

"The Booth family lived through the notoriety, and we should too," said County Executive David R. Craig, a former history teacher who pushed to have the home protected and in the public domain. "This is one of the most significant historical sites in the state. It is the birthplace of Shakespeare in America. The Booth family were the Barrymores of the 1800s.

Plans for the home's future are undetermined, but county officials are considering a theater museum with space for acting troupes. They expect to seek grant money to offset the cost of the purchase and will soon appoint a nonprofit group to oversee theater-related events at the site.

About seven years ago, the home, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, had fallen into such disrepair that it could have been lost. Its location on 8 acres, surrounded by new subdivisions, was eagerly eyed for development. Instead it went to preservationists.

Robert and Beth Baker bought Tudor Hall in 1999 for \$415,000 at an auction that drew more than 100 people, including an Abraham Lincoln lookalike, theater buffs and a throng of national media. Several prospective buyers reportedly considered everything from dismantling the cottage to turning it into a bed and breakfast.

The Bakers outbid any nonprofit group, hoping to purchase and restore the property. Then, the couple put another \$400,000 into refurbishing the home.

"You could not live in it the way it was," said Rob Baker. "We definitely had to work to get it to this point."

The Bakers like the challenge of restoration more than living in the finished product, he said. They are moving on to a Darlington property, similar in disrepair to the original state of their present home.

"We are going to start all over," he said. "We hope Tudor Hall will become a museum and an educational tool."

They put the property on the market last spring at \$925,000. When it did not sell at auction in April, the county began negotiating with the seller.

"We are thrilled that the county is purchasing this important building," said Maryanna Skowronski, administrator of the Historical Society of Harford County. "Too many people dwell on the fact that it was the birthplace of John Wilkes Booth, and I don't mean to gloss that over. But it was long the home of the Booth family. They were the nation's first popular idols and lauded all over the country."

Smithsonian May Loan Sheridan's Horse to Kentucky Museum

By Jacqueline Trescott, Washington Post, August 22, 2006

The Apollo 13 space capsule has been to Hutchinson, Kan.

Lincoln's top hat, the one he was wearing the night of his assassination, visited Danville, Calif.

The loans are part of a plan to get the Smithsonian Institution to empty its closets. In exchange for a \$2,500 annual fee, museums may become Smithsonian "affiliates" and borrow artifacts. Some are less important items. Some are icons. Some go out on a short-term basis; some, long-term. Now 146 museums and cultural



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organizations are part of the program, called Smithsonian Affiliations. The latest is the International Museum of the Horse in Lexington, Ky., which has its eye on a famous stuffed steed from the Civil War.

The Smithsonian owns about 136 million objects. Ninety-nine percent of them are in storage. Through the affiliates program, more than 7,000 have gone on the road in 10 years.

The loans give local museums a stamp of approval and can help boost attendance.

Some affiliates have sent exhibitions to Washington, too. At the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center, curators used objects from the Smithsonian and 11 countries to create a show about the 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War. The exhibition is now in Ottawa and will come to the Smithsonian in December.

Some of the affiliates have extra clout. The Lincoln hat was lent to the Blackhawk Museum, which was founded by Kenneth Behring. The Behring family has given \$100 million to the Smithsonian, the largest gift it's ever received.

Others make the loans a centerpiece of their displays. The prototype for the first Jeep truck was built in Butler, Pa., in 1940. The nearby Heinz Museum borrowed it from the Smithsonian's American History Museum and placed it right in the entry hall, underscoring its industrial importance.

Andy Masich, the museum's president, said that after becoming an affiliate in 1999, the Heinz added 70,000 square feet for traveling shows from the Smithsonian.

"We have seen a more than 30 percent increase in attendance since our affiliations," Masich says.

Curators for the Heinz found an English flintlock pistol Gen. Edward Braddock gave George Washington in 1755 in the Smithsonian's collection.

"The Smithsonian curators said, 'We didn't know we had that!' " Masich says.

The pistol is important to Pittsburgh because Braddock was killed near Pittsburgh during the French and Indian War and Washington took command of his army. The Pittsburgh museum borrowed it for 3 1/2 years, but eventually Smithsonian curators asked for it back. It is now on display in the American History Museum's military wing.

Now about the horse museum. Closter says nobody raised an eyebrow when the application came in.



"No chuckles," he says. "We have gotten used to the fact that there are so many kinds of museums devoted to so many topics that it doesn't surprise us that museums are being devoted to one topic."

Bill Cooke, the Kentucky museum's director, knew a link with the Smithsonian would raise its profile.

The largest horse museum in the world, the International has 52,000 square feet and owns 50,000 items, from bits to carriages. It focuses mainly on the history of the horse and especially thoroughbred racing.

The museum has equine mannequins but no preserved horses. The Smithsonian, however, has one famous animal: Winchester, the beloved mount of Civil War Gen. Philip Sheridan. Winchester was preserved by taxidermists and eventually landed at the Smithsonian in 1922.

Franklin's Plans Gel for Former Pizza Hut Property

By KEVIN WALTERS,

Tennesseean.com, August 16, 2006
FRANKLIN - Call it the "Assault on the Cotton Gin." Or the "Cotton Gin Assault".

Just don't call it "the former Pizza Hut" property.

That's the now-bare patch of land at the intersection of Columbia Avenue and Cleburne Street the city bought last year to commemorate the Battle of Franklin - and smashed to rubble the old Pizza Hut restaurant that sat on the land for decades. That land is believed to be where Confederate Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne was killed during fighting.

Almost a year after the city's purchase, the bare ground is now on its way to becoming a battlefield park in time for the Nov. 30, 2006 anniversary of the battle.

At Tuesday's Public Enterprise meeting, aldermen heard Franklin Preservation Planner Shanon Wasielewski detail plans for the site, which include a marker, a cannonball stack, historically accurate split rail fence and naming the small plot of ground the "Cotton Gin Assault." Or it might be "The Assault on the Cotton Gin."



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Fate of Booth's killer remains a Kansas mystery

BY BECCY TANNER, The Wichita (KS) Eagle, September 4, 2006

It's too easy to say Thomas "Boston" Corbett was a "mad hatter," but he had to be, at times, on the edge of sanity.

The world will remember Corbett as the man who shot and mortally wounded John Wilkes Booth, President Abraham Lincoln's assassin.

But more than a century after his disappearance, records show Kansans thought he was a little different.

Corbett was born in London in 1832. His family moved to New York in 1839, and as a boy, he learned how to be a hatter.

There is a theory that the mercury used in the hatters' trade may have caused some of Corbett's mental problems as he aged.

Corbett became an evangelical Christian during a Boston revival and grew his hair long to look more like Jesus. He also changed his first name to Boston to celebrate his baptism.

At the start of the Civil War, Corbett enlisted in the 16th New York Cavalry. In 1864, Corbett was captured by Confederates and held in Andersonville, one of the deadliest prison camps of the war. He was eventually released.

His fellow soldiers periodically complained about the loud prayers that came from his tent each evening. On April 24, 1865, Corbett was selected with 26 other cavalymen to pursue Booth.

Booth was soon cornered in a Virginia tobacco barn. Federal

officials wanted to take Booth to court.

A fire was set to the barn to flush Booth out. As Booth moved inside the barn, a shot rang out and as the barn doors were opened, the soldiers found Booth dying of a wound to the neck.

Corbett claimed to have shot Booth through a crack in the barn boards, although people at the scene said it couldn't have been him.

Corbett said he'd seen Booth raise his pistol, and shot. Corbett was charged with disobeying orders but was freed by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. He received more than \$1,600 in reward money but was immediately discharged from the Army.

In 1878, Corbett moved to Concordia following a mental breakdown. For a time, he lived in a dugout and kept to himself.

But there were instances recorded by local newspapers that claim Corbett pulled his pistols threatening local boys playing a baseball game, on the sheriff and when he was brought to court.

When acquaintances believed Corbett had been slighted recognition by the government for killing Booth, they found a job for him in Topeka.

In 1887, Corbett was appointed assistant doorkeeper of the Kansas House of Representatives in Topeka.

On Feb. 15, 1887, after a prayer, Corbett -- believing the prayer had been mocked -- pulled out his revolver and waved his gun. He was arrested, declared insane and sent to the Topeka Asylum for the Insane.

He escaped a year later, briefly visited a friend in Neodesha and was never heard from again.

A monument to Corbett stands near Concordia in a pasture.

Civil War Buff Improving After Explosion

By Gina Bennett, WTVC-TV, Chattanooga, Tennessee, August 9, 2006

A man who had a Civil War shell explode in his face is doing much better.

Lawrence Christopher is in stable condition at Erlanger Medical Center.

Two weeks ago, Christopher, who is a Civil War buff, was attempting to remove gunpowder from an old shell when it blew up.

Christopher collects war shells at his home in Whitfield County but it looks like there might not be any left when he gets there.

After the blast, a military Explosives Team with the Department of Defense took the remaining shells several miles away to detonate them.

Frederick County supports U.S. 15 heritage

By Clifford G Cumber, Frederick News-Post, August 9, 2006

FREDERICK -- Frederick County has joined a growing list of jurisdictions along U.S. 15 that are recognizing the significance of the roadway to American history.

The county commissioners voted 4-1 Tuesday, with President John L. Thompson Jr. opposed, to support efforts to preserve the historic, 175-mile corridor from Gettysburg, Pa., to Monticello, Va.

Once called the Old Carolina Road, U.S. 15 crosses four states and provides access to six presidential homes, as well as Theodore Roosevelt's cabin.

Along the way is the largest collection of Civil War battle sites in the nation, two world heritage sites, 13 national



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historic landmarks and 47 historic districts.

"Route 15 is the spine on the chapters of our American history," said Cate Magennis Wyatt, president of Journey Through Hallowed Ground, a public-private partnership dedicated to preserving the culture and history of the region U.S. 15 crosses.

The organization is seeking national recognition of its historical significance. One of its goals is to create an investment arm to purchase land to preserve at market value. The group hopes to prevent spotty development that contributes to sprawl along U.S. 15.

"I can say this as a former developer, if we do nothing, Route 15 in Virginia will have spot improvements that turn into the ipso facto private beltway," Ms. Magennis Wyatt said.

None of the national designations will affect property rights of landholders along U.S. 15, she said.

The rights of property owners along U.S. 15 in Frederick were a controversial topic in the county election four years ago.

A proposal to rezone land along the highway to make it harder to develop spurred the creation of a landowners group, Defenders of Citizens Rights, which lobbied successfully against the plan.

Three Defenders' members, Mike Cady, Bruce Reeder and John Lovell, were elected county commissioners.

The now-defunct group is seeking reinstatement of its charter from the state and recently held a meeting on seniors issues.

Mr. Cady on Tuesday took pains to point out that Journey Through Hallowed Ground's efforts would not affect landowners' rights. Land use regulations of local and state jurisdictions will still govern.

"This has probably been the greatest fear of individuals living in the corridor, that government will come in and do something with their land that is not consistent with their best interests," Mr. Cady said.

Mr. Thompson said designating the ground as "hallowed" without efforts to preserve it is contradictory.

"We're going to great lengths to say that, 'well, even though it's hallowed ground we're not going to interfere with those property rights decisions'," he said. "So I don't (see) how we can say it's 'hallowed ground', but yet anyone who wants to stick a shopping center on it is free to do so."

Illinois Celebration to honor female Civil War vet

By Karen Walters,
Pantograph.com, August 16, 2006

SAUNEMIN -- The somewhat mysterious life of a long-dead Saunemin resident will be front and center during this week's Summer Celebration.

Three Civil War reenactment groups will mount "living history" displays Friday through Sunday as part of the 8th annual Saunemin Summer Celebration. One of the displays will depict former resident Albert Cashier. Cashier was the identity taken by Jennie Rodgers when she enlisted in the Union Army in 1862. Rodgers, born in 1844, came to the United States from Ireland. Her true gender was discovered only a few years before her death in 1915. Mayor Mike Stoecklin said the village wanted to bring more attention to Cashier as efforts continue to restore and return his house to Saunemin. "It's a good tie into our history," Stoecklin said. "For 45 years, he lived

here and this seemed like a way to honor him."

Leaders of Saunemin are working to permanently display Cashier's home, which is currently stored inside a garage owned by the City of Pontiac. Cashier's employer built the home for his worker in the 1860s or 1870s. Along with battle reenactments, Stoecklin said, the Civil War groups will demonstrate weapons' usage and blacksmithing.

As part of a contest, reenactment watchers can guess who is depicting Cashier. The winner will be able to fire a cannon.

Stoecklin said presentations about Cashier and his life will be given at his grave site in Sunny Slope Cemetery.

Cashier was a member of the 95th Illinois Infantry, which fought in several bloody battles including the battle of Vicksburg.

After the war, Cashier moved to Saunemin and worked as a laborer, still using the identity of a man. His true gender was discovered only after he was in a car accident. Cashier was sent to a mental institution and forced to live as a woman, but still drew an army pension. He died in 1915 and was buried wearing a Union Army uniform.

Park Service restages historic Fredericksburg photo

By CHELYEN DAVIS, Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star, August 14, 2006

John Cummings placed two sticks in the rock wall to mark the place where a rifle was left leaning 140 years ago. Then he set a replica of the rifle in the spot, consulting a copy of the famous photo of dead Confederate soldiers in a trench beside Sunken Road through the Fredericksburg battlefield. Then he painstakingly



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positioned two re-enactors, putting them approximately where bodies lay in Andrew Joseph Russell's 1863 photo.

The exercise was part of a day of re-enactments and living-history presentations at the national park--the first such living-history exhibit the park has put on at the site of the Battle of Fredericksburg.

All day yesterday, re-enactors and historians roamed the park, giving free walking tours, rifle and cannon demonstrations, musical performances by a fife-and-drum corps, and the photography discussion. The program will be repeated today, with an archaeological discussion and a walking tour of Civil War street-fighting sites.

Frank O'Reilly, a historian with the National Park Service, said visitors yesterday were enthusiastic, asking a lot of questions.

The intent of the event, he said, was to engage the community in new ways. Having historical lectures and demonstrations, O'Reilly said, let people learn about individuals in the

war, and then see how those individuals fit into the big picture.

The Park Service held a living-history event last year on the Union side of the war, at Chatham across the river in Stafford County. But this was the first of its kind on the Fredericksburg battlefield. O'Reilly expects some version of the program to be held next year.

Neill Rose, from Camden, S.C., came with a group that portrays the 2nd South Carolina regiment. He and other re-enactors try to be as authentic as possible, down to the fabric of their jackets and their hand-sewn buttonholes.

Rose said such things make history more real to people.

"The way they teach history a lot these days may be boring to some children," he said. "It's all about educating the public."

Re-enactors also demonstrated a 12-pounder Napoleon cannon, which the Park Service recently acquired. It is a replica of those used to defend Marye's Heights in Fredericksburg and in other Civil War battles.

The Confederate cannons used in the fighting here were mostly operated by

the Washington Artillery of New Orleans, according to park Ranger Stacy Humphries. They fired shells over Southern soldiers manning Sunken Road onto Union soldiers advancing up from the Rappahannock River.

The Confederate troops won that battle decisively, but lost the hill in a smaller skirmish about a year later.

That battle, not the first one, was when the famous photo of dead soldiers in Sunken Road was taken. Despite popular belief, Cummings said historians now believe it was shot during the Chancellorsville campaign in 1863.

He also said he believes Russell, the photographer, moved some of the bodies in the photograph, particularly the bloody-faced soldier closest to the camera. Photographers of the time routinely moved subjects around to create more gripping images.

According to Cummings and photographer Ron Carnegie, the Civil War was the first war in which photographs were taken and published in newspapers, which had an effect on attitudes of those at home.

Photography in the United States was only about 30 years old when the war began. The use of wet-plate collodion photography--which, unlike daguerreotypes, allowed a picture to be reprinted--had come into vogue by the time fighting broke out.

Taking such photographs wasn't easy--photographers had to lug around heavy equipment, including portable darkrooms, Carnegie said. But they took thousands of photographs.

"It was like seeing war, like being there," he said of the published photos. "That's really going to bring this war home to those who aren't fighting."



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Shenandoah Valley Group Preserves Port Republic Lands

Aug. 2, 2006-CWi-The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation announced today the purchase of a conservation easement on a 220-acre portion of the Port Republic battlefield, one of ten battlefields in the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District. Situated east of US Route 340 in Rockingham County, Virginia, the property is near the site known to Civil War historians as "the Coaling" at the western base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The property comprises about ten percent of the core area of the Port Republic battlefield, central to the final battle of Confederate Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign. Across this landscape, Confederates repeatedly launched fierce attacks on Union artillery on the high ground at the Coaling, forcing them from their position. Confederates took the guns and turned them on the Federal troops. The Battle of Port Republic and ultimately Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign were decided on and around this parcel. "Protecting this property has been an especially high priority for the Battlefields Foundation for a number of years. Securing this easement ensures that a crucial area of the battlefield will continue to tell its story to future generations," said SVBF Executive Director Howard Kittell. "The Foundation actively seeks opportunities to protect battlefield land using conservation easements, thus ensuring permanent protection to battlefields, keeping core area in private ownership, and encouraging local stewardship."

The property also harbors several Shenandoah Valley sinkhole ponds—intermittently flooded basin wetlands that stretch along the western foot of the Blue Ridge—one of Virginia's most unusual and conservation-worthy ecosystems. This unique plant community has been designated a natural heritage resource by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, which purchased 600 acres nearby to protect the same ecosystem in 2000.

The easement also protects a working forest that has been managed for timber production for half a century. The timber will continue to be produced under a forest management plan while preserving the sensitive ecosystem on the property.

"Working forests are an important part of the agricultural landscape in the Shenandoah Valley," said SVBF Program Manager John Hutchinson. "They play a significant role in many farming operations, including the Kaylors'. Maintenance of this forest will help maintain the agricultural economy of the Shenandoah Valley." John Kaylor commented, "My dad loved local history and that love of history passed down to us children. He was an early inductee into the American Tree Farm System and our mother was later honored for continuing that stewardship. The conservation easement allowed the family to protect the land, keep it in the family, and still realize a part of its value."

Kittell applauded the Kaylors' dedication. "Projects like this would not be possible without farsighted landowners like the Kaylor family," he said. "We are grateful for their commitment to maintaining the historical and natural resources of their community."

The easement acquisition took place in partnership with the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), which contributed six percent of the funding, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), the co-holder of the easement.

"We appreciate the participation of the CWPT and the VOF in this effort," said Kittell. "This parcel adjoins seven acres of CWPT land at the Coaling and will ensure that the Coaling will remain undisturbed. The VOF is a key conservation partner for us. In all, this project is a tremendous example of the benefits of partnership." "Protection of the Kaylor property at Port Republic is a real coup for preservationists," remarked CWPT President James Lighthizer. "It increases exponentially the amount of historic land saved on the Port Republic battlefield. CWPT is proud to partner with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation on this latest preservation success story in the Valley."

G. Robert Lee, VOF Executive Director said, "When VOF partners with public non-governmental organizations like the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation the result is heritage and land conservation synergy. The Port Republic project on the Kaylor family farm represents a value-added partnership where the whole is truly more than just the sum of the parts." Since its creation in 2000, the Battlefields Foundation has protected almost 1,200 acres at all ten battlefields where it acquires land, a third of that within the last month. Including those accomplishments, the Foundation has 49 preservation projects underway totaling more than 4,000 acres of core battlefield. This easement is one more step in



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implementing the award-winning preservation plan for the Port Republic battlefield crafted by the battlefield landowners working in partnership with Rockingham County and the SVBF. The plan was completed and incorporated into the Rockingham County comprehensive plan in 2003.

The Battle of Port Republic

Port Republic was the final battle of Stonewall Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign, an operation still studied by the military today for its bold, brash maneuvers and use of terrain. Early on 9 June 1862, Confederate forces advanced north from Port Republic as Federal forces occupied strong positions just north of the property, along the Lewiston Farm Road, now state route 708 and the northern boundary of the property. The Union left skirted the property and was anchored by artillery posted on an elevated position known as "the Coaling." Confederates attacked across the adjacent bottomland fields and after fierce fighting began to fall back from the Lewiston Farm Road. Federal forces pursued them. Later in the day, Confederate reinforcements reached the Lewiston house and assaulted the Union line. The Union line collapsed, with its defeated troops retreating along the road to Conrad's Store (now Elkton) on the path of modern US Route 340. Confederate troops moved from the wooded hillsides of the property against Union artillery on the Coaling. After launching several attacks from the property on the Coaling, Confederates captured the Union artillery, which they later used to shell retreating Federals.

Twin victories at Cross Keys (on 8 June 1862) and Port Republic were the climax of Jackson's famed 1862 Valley Campaign. The Confederates

retained undisputed control of the upper and middle Shenandoah Valley, freeing Jackson to join General Robert E. Lee for the Seven Days battles outside Richmond.

Sons of Confederate Veterans Starts Union Camp

Goal Is To Honor Ancestors on Both Sides of the Civil War

By Jeff Mellott, Daily News-Record, August 22, 2006

LURAY — Members of the Summers-Koontz Camp No. 490 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans gathered around the American flag at a restaurant here last week. They put their left hand on the Bible and their right hand touched the flag as they recited the obligation or oath that officially made them members of the new Luray-Carlisle Reunion Camp No. 1881, Sons of Union Veterans.

The act was an acknowledgement of their ancestors who fought in blue and gray, the new members said.

"Why not?" asked Robert Moore, commander of both the Confederate and Union camps. "Why can't Confederate and Union descendants come together?" he asked.

Historic Roots

The name of the new Union camp commemorates a meeting of former Confederates and former federal soldiers in 1881.

In that year, members of the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War Union veterans group at Carlisle, Pa., traveled to the caverns at Luray. They sent notice ahead and Confederate veterans feted them with speeches and a banquet.

The Union veterans returned the favor. They raised funds so the Confederate veterans could travel to Pennsylvania for a similar celebration.

One of the former Confederates who served on the committee that welcomed the Union veterans was Samuel Judd of the 10th Va. Infantry. Judd is one of Donnie Seal's ancestors. Seal, 37, of Luray, was among the eight Confederate camp members who pledged to honor the Union camp's obligation, including monument restoration projects and observance of Memorial Day on May 30.

Seal, who works in maintenance for VF Jeanswear in Luray, said it was appropriate that he follow the example of his ancestor.

"They were the ones actually shooting at each other," he said. "If they could get along, why can't I."

Allies

The mention of members of a Sons of Confederate Veterans camp wanting to charter a Union camp raised questions, said James Hanby, past commander of the Maryland Department of the Sons of Union Veterans that includes Virginia. But they approved the charter.

It is not unusual for members of both camps to have a dual ancestry, said Hanby, who is descended from veterans from both sides of the Civil War.

But the Summers-Koontz camp's action makes the new Union camp one of a kind, he said.

National Sons of Confederate Veterans Executive Director Ben Sewell said the SCV has no problems with what the members of the Summers-Koontz camp have done.

In the Sons of Confederate Veterans' pursuit of promoting true history, Sewell said the Sons of Union Veterans have been a good ally battling revisionists and political correctness.

But Sewell has no doubts that some in the Sons of Confederate Veterans



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will have difficulty with what some of the members of the Summers-Koontz camp have done.

Members of the Summers-Koontz camp expect some criticism.

"I don't think there is anything wrong with you if you have a Confederate flag on your license plate," Seal said. "I don't believe you are being a traitor to Southern heritage if you stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance."

Blue And Gray

The Union camp grew out of a challenge by one of the Confederate camp members, Moore said.

The member told Moore, an avid researcher and historian, that he would not be able to find any Union ancestors in his family tree.

Moore found two.

Moore was already aware of his own "dual ancestry." But the discovery of the two other ancestors for the member of the Confederate Sons started Moore climbing the family trees of other Confederate camp members. He found other members had a joint heritage.

"We didn't form this group to agitate," Moore, of Swoope, said. "When I have dual ancestors like this," he said, "I can look at history a lot more objectively."

Seal is proud of all of his ancestors, who as far as he knew, fought honorably during the war. "I don't see how you are dishonoring the one by remembering the others," he said.

The formation of the Union camp by the members of the Confederate camp, said Gregory Kelly, 40, of Luray, will help promote understanding.

"Many people see us as rednecks because we are in SCV," Kelly said. "This shows we are not that way at all."

Kelly, manager of the Food Lion in Stanley, said the members will likely

be ostracized by many people because of the creation of the Union camp.

"[But] if it will help in any kind of way to bring issues to rest," he said, "that is great."

Civil War Trail to help tell Hanover's story

By ASHLEY ADAMS, Hanover Evening Sun, August 14, 2006
Pennsylvania is rich with Civil War history.

But it's not the Battle of Hanover that comes to most people's minds when Pennsylvania and the Civil War are mentioned.

So in September 2005, state first lady Marjorie Rendell sponsored a project called "The Pennsylvania Civil War Trail: A Prelude to Gettysburg."

The trail is similar to Civil War heritage trails in Virginia and Maryland, where each state has sponsored historic signs and special events in former battleground communities.

The Maryland trail ends at the Mason-Dixon Line, and state officials – including Rendell, the state Department of Tourism and the state Department of Community and Economic Development – have started a Pennsylvania trail where the Maryland trail ends.

The trail presents the soldiers' journey through Pennsylvania, stories about the women and children who suffered through the war, and African-American contributions to the war.

"As we focus on Gettysburg, the battle that saved our nation, it is important that we equally respect those parallel events that often go unmentioned," Rendell wrote in a letter to community and state leaders who attended a special working session about the trail last September.

The Pennsylvania trail will feature Hanover, York, Gettysburg, Chambersburg, Carlisle, Harrisburg and Wrightsville, and the events that led up to the Battle of Gettysburg.

Though Gettysburg is noted in most history books as the turning point of the Civil War, little attention is given to the Battle of Hanover.

On June 30, 1863, Brig. Gen. H. Judson Kilpatrick's Union troops clashed with Confederate troops lead by Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart.

The Battle of Hanover kept Stuart for a day, delaying his arrival in Gettysburg until the end of the second day of that battle.

Melissa Speal, marketing/public relations director for the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce, said Hanover was approached by the state for inclusion in the trail project last year.

"They wanted us to tell the story of the Civil War, what lead up to it and what happened after it," Speal said.

Other events will include battle re-enactments, cannon and cavalry displays, tours, demonstrations, lectures, a Civil War-style dance and a church service.

"The focus is to tell the story of the battle itself and what happened in the streets that day," Speal said. "We are trying to give a community perspective to it. It's not just about the battle itself, but a look deeper into what happened in Hanover."

Speal said the community is brought into the discovery weekend through camp tours, the Civil War ball and medical demonstrations.

Speal said the chamber, in conjunction with Hanover Hospital, has been working on the Living History weekend since last September, when the initiative came out.