



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Gettysburg Seminary receives grant for Civil War museum

By Steve Maroni, The (Hanover, Pa.) Evening Sun, November 7, 2011

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The historical society is packing up artifacts, and moving them out of Schmucker Hall in preparation for construction, which is expected to begin in December.

The museum is expected to be ready by spring 2013.

Army museum's oddities resettle in Silver Spring

Associated Press, October 21, 2011

SILVER SPRING, Md. — The bullet that killed Abraham Lincoln is mounted under glass, like a diamond in a snow globe, in its new home at the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

The lead ball and several skull fragments from the 16th president are in a tall, antique case overlooking a Civil War exhibit in a museum gallery in Silver Spring, just off the Capital Beltway.

The military museum, known for its collection of morbid oddities, moved in September from the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. At Walter Reed, visitors had to pass through a security gate and find the museum on the campus, where parking could be a problem.

The new building stands outside the gates of Fort Detrick's Forest Glen Annex. Visitors can just drive up, walk in and come face-to-face with a perpetually grinning skeleton directing them to an exhibit on the human body. There, one can see a hairball from the stomach of a 12-year-old girl and the amputated leg of a man with elephantiasis — a disease that causes limbs to become bloated. The leg floats upright in a glass jar like an enormous, pickled sausage.

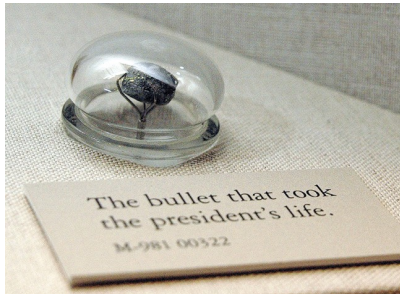
The museum's collection of 25 million objects includes plenty to inspire fascination or disgust — or both. But it's also a treasure trove for researchers like Candice Millard, author of the new book "Destiny of the Republic," about the assassination of President James Garfield. She wrote in her



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acknowledgements that she held in her gloved hands at the museum the section of Garfield's spine pierced by a .44-caliber bullet from Charles Guiteau's gun.

Guiteau's brain and partial skeleton are also in the museum's collection. Deputy Director Tim Clarke Jr. said the museum will close in January and reopen by May 21 with its largest-ever display of objects to mark its 150th anniversary. The scope of the exhibits is still being decided, he said. "We are sure, though, that we are programming and planning an exhibit that will astound our visitors," Clarke said.



The bullet that killed President Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865 is among the items on display at the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Silver Spring. Photo courtesy National Museum of Health and Medicine

The \$12 million relocation established a permanent home for an institution that has had 10 addresses since 1862. That's when Surgeon General William Hammond directed medical officers in the field to collect "specimens of morbid anatomy" for study at the newly founded museum along with projectiles and foreign bodies. A photograph nearly covering one wall of the museum's new Civil War exhibit shows amputated legs stacked like firewood.

The exhibit also includes the shattered bones of U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles' lower right leg, mounted for display beside a 12-

pound cannonball like the one that hit him during the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg.

Most of the museum's objects, including 2,000 microscopes and hundreds of thousands of human brain specimens, are in an off-site warehouse. They will be moved by next spring to a renovated warehouse across the street from the new museum.

Clarke said the requirement to safely pack, move and unpack each artifact will enable the museum to get a better handle on the number of artifacts in any given collection and the grand scope of the entire collection.

If You Go...

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE is at 2500 Linden Lane in Silver Spring, Md., at the Fort Detrick-Forest Glen Annex; <http://nmhm.washingtondc.museum/> or 301-319-3300. Open daily 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Free admission.

Obama designates Fort Monroe as national monument

By Julian Walker and Kate Wiltrout, The Virginian-Pilot, November 2, 2011

President Barack Obama signed an executive order Tuesday granting national monument status to Fort Monroe, ending a five-year, grassroots effort to protect a storied spit of land that witnessed the beginning and end of slavery in the United States - and lots of military history in between.

Obama's proclamation on Hampton's Fort Monroe, which he signed in the Oval Office before more than a dozen witnesses, signals the start of a new chapter for the former Army base, built between 1819 and 1834. The National Park Service will manage

more than half the land, including hundreds of acres of undeveloped waterfront property and the moated stone fortress itself.

Tuesday marked Obama's first use of the Antiquities Act of 1906, which empowers presidents to designate federally owned land of significant historical value as a national monument. Politicians from both parties supported the idea, which was first suggested and long advocated for by a local group of history buffs that formed an alliance called Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park.

"This is going to give an opportunity for people from all across the country to travel to Fort Monroe and trace the history that has been so important to making America what it is," Obama said before signing the proclamation. "I am looking forward to not only visiting myself, but also taking Malia and Sasha down there so they can get a little bit of a sense of their history."

Obama noted that the first slave ship to arrive in the Colonies landed at an early fort on the site in 1619. More than two centuries later, Fort Monroe became a refuge for slaves during the Civil War and "helped to create the environment in which Abraham Lincoln was able to sign that document up there," he said, pointing to a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Work on the stone fortress began in 1819 under President James Monroe, who sought to protect the fledgling democracy from invasion after the British navy sailed up the Chesapeake Bay and burned Washington during the War of 1812. When it was completed in the 1830s, the "Gibraltar of the Chesapeake," surrounded by an 8-foot-deep moat, enclosed 63 acres.



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Fort Monroe was a military base until mid-September, when the Army moved its personnel to comply with a 2005 base realignment and closure decision. A little over half of its 570 acres will be managed by the park service. A state entity, the Fort Monroe Authority, will oversee the reuse of the rest of the property, including limited development in certain sections.

"This national monument designation is going to give us the credibility, name recognition and national status that will help us encourage people to visit and jobs to relocate here," Glenn Oder, the authority's executive director, said after watching Obama sign the proclamation.

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The first decorated soldier of the Civil War?

By Gregg Clemmer, DC Civil War Heritage Examiner, **October 25, 2011**

Colonel (and Oregon Senator) Edward Baker was dead. Bodies of Union soldiers littered the Potomac River as far down as Chain Bridge. And after dual, devastating defeats-- in July along Bull Run and now at Balls Bluff--Baker's outraged colleagues in Congress formed the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War.

But in the victorious Confederacy, the South Carolina General Assembly decided to celebrate valor, passing a "concurrent resolution" citing one of their own, Brigadier General Nathan "Shanks" Evans, "for conspicuous gallantry at Leesburg." As a token of their esteem for their heroic native son, the General Assembly commissioned James Allan &



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Company of Charleston to strike a gold medal for Evans.

It would prove the high point of Evans' service to the Confederacy. Yes, he had led the victorious Southern forces at Balls Bluff. And yes, at Manassas, he had redeployed in time to confront the enemy's turning of the Confederate left, an action one historian said "went far towards saving the day for the South."

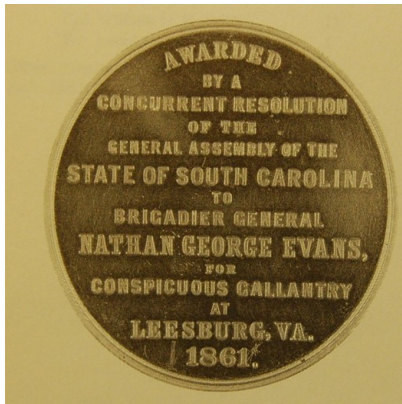


Photo: Museum of the Confederacy

Yet despite the accolades, Evans was quite the rascal. Gruff and roughhewn to the point of insubordination, his piercing stare and full beard aided his bullying. Noted one of Gen. James Longstreet's staff officers, "Evans was difficult to manage ... He had a Prussian orderly, with a wooden vessel holding a gallon of whiskey always strapped on his back, and there was the trouble."

Remembered another contemporary, "If Nathan is the bravest and best General in the C.S., if not in the world, he is at the same time about the best drinker, the most eloquent swearer (I should say voluble) and the most magnificent bragger I ever saw."

His "Barrelita," as Evans called his whiskey man, was never far from his

side. Court-martialed for intoxication and acquitted, then tried again for disobedience of orders and again acquitted, "Shanks" Evans eventually crossed General P. G. T. Beauregard who deemed him incompetent and removed him from command.

After the war, Evans garnered a job as a high school principal in Alabama, but lived only another three years. Yet for his actions at Balls Bluff and Manassas, Evans became the first soldier on either side to receive a medal.

In 1936, Gen. Evans' gold medal was donated to the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia. Enclosed in a purple velvet case 83 mm square with a silk lining imprinted with the maker's name, the medal reflects a golden proof finish and measures 51 mm in diameter. Other examples of the Evans' medal, either in silver or bronze, are rumored to exist. At least one bronze specimen is known.

Longstreet Museum dedicated

By Fred Brown, Knoxnews.com, October 14, 2011

RUSSELLVILLE, TN — Clark Thornton of Baldwin, Ga., says his great-great grandfather, Confederate Gen. James Longstreet, became the scapegoat for the Lost Cause after the end of the Civil War when a cabal of officers worked to undermine "Old Pete's" reputation.

Thornton, who researched his illustrious ancestor's family and military history for 15 years, was the featured speaker Thursday morning at the dedication of the Gen. Longstreet Museum in Russellville on East Andrew Johnson Highway.

The museum was a house owned by the Nenny family during Longstreet's occupation of Morristown and

Russellville in the winter of 1864. The home was built in 1820.

Five years ago, the home was about to be destroyed when a group of concerned citizens formed a non-profit association to save it. It has since been restored and is getting ready to open to the public.

Thornton, who has written a genealogy of his family, said he wanted to help straighten out some "misconstrued aspects of my noted ancestor's career."

He dismissed Longstreet's critics who faulted the general for not showing enough support for Gen. Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

"Longstreet's reputation declined precipitously after the war owing to the efforts of an underhanded effort of a cadre of Southern officers, termed by historians as a 'Lee' cult," Thornton said.

Longstreet's criticism of Lee in newspaper accounts after the war also worked against Old Pete's reputation. He also joined the Republican Party and that "made him a convenient scapegoat for the South's defeat," Thornton said.

The two-story home in Russellville was saved by the Lakeway Civil War Preservation Association, which bought the property from a private owner.

Volunteers and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, a statewide program administered by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, have helped with the restoration.

The museum dedication drew state, federal and local political officials including Carroll Van West, director of the MTSU preservation center, and Susan Whitaker, commissioner of the state Department of Tourist Development.



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About 100 people huddled inside two tents due to rain and another 30 or so stood outside in the drizzle. West and Whitaker praised the museum, which they said is one of a kind for the state.

West said the development of the Longstreet Museum is important in telling the story of the Civil War in Tennessee because Longstreet's role in East Tennessee has been overlooked. The general died in 1904 and is buried in Gainesville, Ga.

Whitaker said that the museum is the only one in the state that served as a Civil War general's headquarters.

She said the museum would now be placed on Tennessee's Civil War Trails, part of a five-state trails system to help in the exploration of the Civil War's 150th anniversary that began in April of this year.

Trees crash on Gettysburg monuments

By Tim Prudente, Hanover Evening Sun, October 31, 2011

The 121st New York was on the verge of collapse. Splintered trees littered Culp's Hill. And a historic cannon carriage was crushed.

Parts of the Gettysburg battlefield appeared almost war-torn in the aftermath of the weekend's bizarre snowstorm.

Several inches of wet, heavy snow caused trees to topple on monuments, fences and roads in Gettysburg National Military Park.



NPS monument preservation specialist Lucas Flickinger prepares to connect a crane harness to the figure from the 121st New York Infantry monument. Photo by Shane Dunlap, The Evening Sun

The bronze statue atop the 121st New York Infantry monument was bent away from its stone pedestal after a heavy branch crashed down. The bronze was cracked and bent and park staff removed the damaged statue from the north slope of Little Round Top.

"We handle everything from vandalism to what Mother Nature throws at us," said Lucas Flickinger, The statue now joins the never-ending list of monuments and markers in need of repair.

"You're never going to be ahead. While it's a bit frustrating, we're going to deal with it," Flickinger added.

Last week, park staff were finalizing repairs to the 4th New York Artillery monument above Devil's Den. For nearly five years, that vandalized statue, a six-foot bronze soldier, had loomed headless inside the maintenance facility.

Also during the storm, a historic cast-iron cannon carriage on West Confederate Avenue was crushed under a fallen tree. Trees fell across several park roads over the weekend, resulting in closures that continued into Monday afternoon. The road leading up to Culp's Hill was closed as were roads south of Wheatfield Road, according to a park spokeswoman.

Similarly, Soldiers' National Cemetery was temporarily closed but it has since been reopened to visitors.

The unusual October snow was caused by a low-pressure system off the East Coast and cold weather, according to one meteorologist. The 4 to 6 inches of snow in the area was the heaviest snowfall on record in October for Adams and York counties.

In the next few days, park staff will compile a cost estimate and timeline to repair the 121st New York Infantry monument and cannon carriage. But as of Monday afternoon, they were still working to clear and reopen closed roads in the park.

Eight strange and obscure facts about the Civil War you probably didn't know

Smithsonian.com, November 15, 2011

Gertrude Stein said it best: "There will never be anything more interesting in America than the Civil War." Even with the war's vast bibliography—more than 60,000 books have been published since the last shot was fired, in June 1865—some of the odder coincidences and bizarre facts of the period are overlooked. Wilmer McLean became one of the legendary figures of the war merely by trying to escape it. (After his house was shelled during the First Battle of Bull Run, he moved—to Appomattox Court House, where General Lee surrendered to General Grant.) Here are some other noteworthy people and artifacts:

The Unusual Bunker Brothers. Chang and Eng Bunker are best known as "the original Siamese Twins." Natives of Siam (modern Thailand) and joined at the sternum, they became a popular attraction with



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traveling museum exhibitions. In 1839, they bought 110 acres in the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina and settled down. They married sisters, built a successful farm (with slave labor) and became naturalized citizens and devoted Confederates. In 1865, Union General George Stoneman raided North Carolina and decided to draft some of the locals, regardless of sympathies; the names of men over 18 were put into a lottery wheel. Eng's name was drawn, but he resisted the draft. Since Chang's name was not drawn, there was little General Stoneman could do; the brothers were not only joined at the sternum, their livers were fused. Neither one served in the war, but their eldest sons both enlisted and fought for the Confederacy.

The secret hiding place.

In 2009, a woman visited the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, with an acorn-shaped object in hand. It was made of brass and had no inscriptions or markings. She that according to family lore, one of her ancestors (*edit: whoops! thanks for the catch!*), a Confederate soldier, used the device to smuggle secret messages, hiding it in his posterior until he reached his destination. Museum officials were intrigued by what she called a "rectal acorn," but she declined to donate it.



The "rectal acorn." Photo courtesy of the Museum of the Confederacy.

General Lee's chicken.

In 1862, a Virginia farmer gave Robert E. Lee a flock of chickens. Confederate General John Bell Hood's men ate all of them—except for one, who had survived by making her roost in a tree overhanging Lee's tent. Lee took a liking to the chicken. He named her "Nellie" and raised the flap of his tent so she could come and go as she pleased. She began laying eggs nearly every day under the general's cot. On the eve of the Battle of the Wilderness, Lee invited a group of generals to dine with him, but his slave cook, William Mack Lee, couldn't find sufficient food to make a meal. Although he "hated to lose her," the cook said he "picked her good, and stuffed her with bread stuffing, mixed with butter." He said it was the only time in four years that Lee scolded him. "It made Marse Robert awful sad to think of anything being killed," he said, "whether 'twas one of his soldiers or his little black hen."

Mourning rituals.

Wartime convention decreed that a woman mourn her child's death for one year, a brother's death for six months, and a husband's death for two and a half years. She progressed through prescribed stages of heavy, full, and half mourning, with gradually loosening requirements of dress and behavior. Mary Todd Lincoln remained in deep mourning for more

than a year after her son Willie's death, dressing in black veils, black crepe and black jewelry. Flora Stuart, the widow of Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart, remained in heavy mourning for 59 years after the 1864 death of her husband, wearing black until she died in 1923. By contrast, a widower was expected to mourn for only three months, simply by displaying black crepe on his hat or armband.

Glowing wounds. After the Battle of Shiloh in 1862, soldiers reported a peculiar phenomenon: glow-in-the-dark wounds. More than 16,000 soldiers from both armies were wounded during the battle, and neither Union nor Confederate medical personnel were prepared for the carnage. Soldiers lay in the mud for two rainy days, and many of them noticed that their wounds glowed in the dark. In fact, the injured whose wounds glowed seemed to heal better than the others. In 2001, two Maryland teenagers solved the mystery (and won a top prize at an international science fair). The wounded became hypothermic, and their lowered body temperatures made ideal conditions for a bioluminescent bacterium called *Photorhabdus luminescens*, which inhibits pathogens.

The other Jefferson Davis.

Union General Jefferson Davis shared a name with the Confederate president, a circumstance that didn't cause as much confusion as might be expected—with one notable exception. During the Battle of Chickamauga in 1863, as darkness fell on Horseshoe Ridge, members of the 21st Ohio saw a swarm of men approaching but couldn't tell if they were friend or foe. Most assumed they were Union reinforcements, but a few feared they were Confederates.



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As the troops grew closer, one Union soldier called out, "What troops are you?" The collective reply was "Jeff Davis's troops." The Ohio soldiers relaxed, believing they meant the Union general. A few moments later, they were staring down the muzzles and bayonets of the 7th Florida. The Ohioans surrendered. The Confederates won the battle.

Stonewall Jackson,

hypochondriac. The Confederate general thought himself "out of balance." Even under fire, he would raise an arm so the blood might flow down into his body and re-establish equilibrium. (His hand was wounded when he did this during the First Battle of Bull Run). His refused to eat pepper because it seemed to make his left leg weak. He sucked lemons, believing that they helped his "dyspepsia." He was most comfortable standing upright so that all of his organs were "naturally" aligned. He suffered from poor eyesight, which he tried to treat by dunking his head into a basin of cold water, eyes open. And yet he once told a captain that he felt "as safe in battle as in bed."

The Things He Carried.

After President Abraham Lincoln died, on April 15, 1865, his leather wallet was found to contain a \$5 Confederate bill, imprinted with the image of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Lincoln may have gotten the bill when he visited Petersburg and Richmond earlier in the month.

Rick Perry comes out against Confederate flag license plate

Yahoo News, October 27, 2011
Texas Gov. Rick Perry has come out against the marketing of a Confederate license plate in his state,

an issue that could come up again in his bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

As the Austin American Statesman's Jason Embry reports, the plate has been proposed by the Sons of Confederate Veterans, an ancestral history group that has been involved in litigation to display the Confederate flag in state buildings and on monuments around the country.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles board has been considering the application for months. In April, the board deadlocked in a four-to-four vote on the plate, with another vote scheduled for next month.

On Wednesday, Perry broke his silence on the issue and said in an interview with the St. Petersburg Times and Tampa's Bay 9 News that he opposes the measure—an opinion that could very well shape the vote since the DMV board are all Perry appointees.

"That's just a part of history . . . You don't need to scrape that wound again," Perry said. "It just doesn't need to happen."

But Perry's position could come back to haunt him in South Carolina, a key presidential primary state that has embraced its Confederate history and has approved its own license plate featuring the Confederate flag.

Presidential candidates in past election cycles have run afoul of the state's tricky politics on the issue. Ahead of the 2000 GOP primary, a debate erupted over whether the flag, which then flew atop of the South Carolina state capital building, should be removed.

The flag was removed from atop the South Carolina capital in 2000, but the issue still comes up during the South Carolina's presidential primary, as supporters of the flag continue their efforts to return it to the building.

School bus company argues driver fired over Confederate flag not protected by First Amendment

Jeff Barnard, AP, November 11, 2011
GRANTS PASS, Ore. — A school bus company being sued by a driver fired for refusing to take a Confederate battle flag emblazoned with the word "Redneck" off his pickup truck has asked for the case to be dismissed, arguing the flag does not amount to free speech protected by the U.S. Constitution.

First Student, Inc., filed the motion for summary judgment Monday in U.S. District Court in Medford.

The company said Ken Webber, who drove a bus carrying students in the Phoenix-Talent School District, considered the flag an expression of his identity and lifestyle, not his feelings on politics, race or racism.

"It is a physical manifestation of the lifestyle with which he identifies — living in the back woods, preferring country life to city life, putting family first, hunting, fishing and driving trucks," the brief said. "It does not signify his political ideology. It does not signify his position on racial issues. It does not even signify an identity that he intends to share with others. It is simply a possession that is important to him.

"As such, his flag is not constitutionally protected speech because its message is not a matter of public concern."

Webber's lawyer, Tom Boardman, said he would be filing a response arguing that even as an expression of lifestyle, the flag amounts to protected speech.

"Just because you don't articulate it fairly well doesn't mean you are not



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thinking something more intellectual," Boardman said.

Webber filed the lawsuit to get his job back. Married with four children, he has not gotten another job and is focusing on college classes in juvenile counseling, Boardman said.

No trial date has been set.

First Student also argued that as a private entity, it is not subject to First Amendment protections that might apply to the school district.

The buses are owned and operated by First Student, but parked on property owned by the school district. School Superintendent Ben Bergreen saw the flag on a visit to the bus lot and demanded it be removed from school property, citing a policy prohibiting symbols that could be offensive to minorities. Webber was fired for insubordination after refusing to take down the flag, or park his truck off school property.

Confederate flag causes racial tension in Michigan High School

Dowagiac Union High School still reeling from the rebel flag rebellion

By Rachel Glaser, ABC57 News, October 20, 2011

DOWAGIAC, Mich. — Classrooms were noticeably empty at Dowagiac Union High School on Thursday. It's been almost a week since administrators banned students from wearing anything with the Confederate flag.

Since then, things at the school have been tense, "It's been really hectic, pretty awkward," Brittany Williams said.

Thursday was a half day for students, Williams and her friend spent the day downtown trying to escape the controversy at the high school. "They need to stop. They're doing it

on purpose just to agitate people," Williams said.

To her, it's not just the Confederate flag she finds offensive, it's the students who are wearing it and their reasoning behind it. "A lot of them don't interact with black people," Williams said. "So a lot of them, I think, are being racist." "We're just standing up for what we believe in," Wayne Matthews said. He's one of the students who helped pass out t-shirts before school Wednesday morning. His mother made 32 Confederate flag t-shirts and stacked them up in the back of her trunk.

Williams lives next door to the Matthews family, "They've never liked us and we never did anything to them, so I do think it's because we're black."

Matthews said this has nothing to do with race; it's about his right to freely express himself. To him, the Confederate flag does not represent any one race. "It stands for people that believe in what the Civil War is about and it stands for Southern pride," Matthews said.

Brittany's friend, Gabrielle Williams doesn't buy it, "Your family is not from the South. You're not from the South. There is no reason to be going around wearing it and trying to offend people by it."

Gabrielle Williams said the all of the controversy does make her high school or her town look bad, but she hopes it will be a reality check for the people who live in Dowagiac.

She also said you don't always see the looks or hear all the comments, but "...Behind closed doors, yeah, I think racism is alive in this city." So far, the battle over the Confederate flag has only created more boundaries between different races and groups at the high school.

Threats of violence have been exchanged both at the school and on the web.

"It is kind of scary going to school and knowing that anything could happen because everyone is upset," said Gabrielle Williams.

Matthews said when he walked into school in his t-shirt, another student threatened to beat him up. "I was confronted by one, a colored kid and he was calling me names and stuff." And it's not just the students, other people in the community are now involved, eager to voice their own thoughts and opinions.

"My brother had gotten called a little mixed breed by one of the parents yesterday," Brittany Williams said. Police officers have posted up outside the school for the last two days, and the school's administration told students they are looking into all of the threats. The students who wore the Confederate flag t-shirts to school on Wednesday did not return the next day.

Gabrielle Williams said she's not sure how the students will heal.

"People that are still angry about it, people that won't let it go," she said. "I really think that they're going to be targeted when this is all over with."

Housing Market Crash Means Boom for Park Service

By Tim Prudente, The Evening Sun, Hanover, Pa., October 16, 2011

Jim Bievenour owned about 2 1/2 acres directly across from the entrance to the Gettysburg Museum & Visitor Center — prime real estate, he was told. Surely, it wouldn't take long to sell — maybe for a hotel to be built or bed-and-breakfast opened. But after six months on the market he cut the price by \$400,000 and still no offers. It took two years for Bievenour



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to sell the property, finally reaching an agreement with a partner of the National Park Service for \$300,000.

"If they didn't come along, it very well could be still on the market," he said.

"The Realtors all told me it was so profitable, but there were no other offers."

As a curious side effect to the crash of the housing market, the Park Service has had increased success buying historic properties around Gettysburg.

"I think what has happened with the current real-estate market is people are opting to call us sooner rather than later," explained Katie Lawhon, spokeswoman for Gettysburg National Military Park. "In a super-hot real-estate market, you might have three offers after an open house. But now you might not have a single offer."

The Park Service has purchased about 112 acres since the market crashed in 2008. That year, the total amount of money from all home sales in Adams County decreased 24 percent, according to the Realtors Association of York & Adams Counties.

Park Service officials say low prices and few competitors made it possible to buy such a large amount of land in just three years.

The six properties bought since 2008, including 95 acres of the former Gettysburg Country Club, are all included in the boundary of Gettysburg National Military Park as established by federal legislation. That legislation, passed about 20 years ago, added to the park 1,800 acres determined to have historic significance. Many of these lands were privately owned and the Park Service works with conservation organizations, including the Civil War

Trust, to buy up these parcels as they hit the market.

Still, there remain about 900 privately owned acres inside the park boundary today.

"A combination of willing sellers and very supportive partners has allowed us to close some really vital properties in the last year," Lawhon added.

The Park Service received national praise in March for buying 95 acres of the former Gettysburg Country Club. On the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, the famed Iron Brigade attacked across Willoughby Run, onto what is now the golf course, driving back a Confederate brigade and capturing its commander, Gen. James Archer.

Zoning in the area permitted hundreds of houses and the acquisition has been called one of the greatest preservation victories in decades.

In May, the park also bought 8 1/2 acres of the Josiah Benner farm in Straban Township, also the site of fighting during the first day of the battle.

Tony Giuffreda bought the farm about 18 years ago and, knowing the historic significance, considered it a safe investment.

"I knew we could always sell it to the park," he said. "With the park it's easy — even in this market."