



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Hopkins balks at Confederate banner Changing course after 20 years, university tells groups it won't rent them space for Jan. march

By Stephen Kiehl, Baltimore Sun, November 20, 2008

Every January, descendants of Confederate soldiers gather in Wyman Park to march under the banner of the Confederacy, sing "Dixie" and lay wreaths at the monument to Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, legendary generals of the Confederate States of America.

And afterward, for 20 years now, everyone has gone across the street to the Johns Hopkins University for coffee and refreshments, with some of the 200 descendants and observers still wearing the uniforms of Confederate re-enactors and carrying the flag. But next year will be different.

Hopkins has informed the Maryland divisions of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans that it will not rent space to them. The Jan. 17 event is scheduled for only a few days before the inauguration of the nation's first African-American president. The university received complaints after the march last January and says that it no longer wants to see the Confederate flag flying on campus.

"We're not legally required to rent rooms to anybody who asks, and in this case we have chosen not to rent a room," said Hopkins spokesman Dennis O'Shea. "We choose not to have the Confederate battle flag carried across our campus, particularly at that time of year, so very close to the Martin Luther King holiday."

The National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People, in its position statement on the Confederate flag, calls it a "wretched symbol of hate" and a "sign of disrespect to all those who cherish freedom."

The university is sensitive to racial issues. Two years ago, a student posted an invitation to a fraternity Halloween party on Facebook, dubbing it "Halloween in the Hood" and encouraging those who attended to wear "regional clothing from our locale" such as "bling bling ice ice, grills" and "hoochie hoops." The student was suspended.



A march each January near the Johns Hopkins University campus honors Confederate Gens. Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. (Baltimore Sun file photo by Chiaki Kawajiri / November 20, 2008)

Members of the Confederate groups say they are victims of political correctness run amok. They say they seek only to honor their ancestors and that they have caused no problems in the previous two decades they have used Hopkins facilities. At first, they said, Hopkins gave them space for free. But then prices went up. The groups paid \$375 to rent space in Shriver Hall last January. "We're being singled out for being the descendants of Confederate soldiers," said G. Elliott Cummings, 69, adjutant of the Col. Harry W. Gilmor Camp of the Sons of Confederate veterans. "It's our purpose to remember them and

honor their service. ... We're proud of our ancestors. We have no political agenda whatsoever."

The ceremony will go on. The groups get city permits to gather in the public park next to the Baltimore Museum of Art, where the monument of Jackson and Lee astride horses was dedicated in 1948. The seven-ton, 14-foot-high statue depicts the two generals at their last meeting, in 1863 during the Battle of Chancellorsville, Va. Shortly after, Jackson was accidentally shot and killed by his own men.

In previous years, the ceremony has featured music from the Civil War period, a Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag, a salute to the Confederate flag, and a march from the southern end of the Hopkins campus down Wyman Park Drive to the monument. The march will be shortened this January so the groups do not step on Hopkins property. "I can assure you there will be a celebration of General Lee's and General Jackson's birthday," said Cummings, who counts 20 ancestors, including his great-great-grandfather, as Confederate soldiers. Lee was born Jan. 19, 1807, and Jackson on Jan. 21, 1824.

Cummings, of Towson, said the lack of a reception site will surely depress turnout because it means there will be no bathroom facilities, a particular problem because many of the participants are older.

"I can't encourage people to come if they're going to be uncomfortable," Cummings said. But he remained defiant. "They're not going to deter us from having it. Maybe that was their intention, but that's not going to happen."

Hopkins officials said they have no control or desire to control what happens on public property.



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News of the refusal was first reported on the Web site Inside Higher Ed this week, after appearing on several blogs of Confederate groups and Southern writers last week. The blogs have urged readers to contact Hopkins President William R. Brody. A Hopkins spokesman said Brody has received "some" communications but declined to characterize their nature.

Sons of Confederate Veterans released a letter from Brody's executive assistant, sent after the group asked the university to reconsider its stance. "We have considered our decision and do not wish to change it," said the letter from Brody assistant Jerome D. Schnydman, dated Oct. 14. The Confederate groups say they have been misunderstood, and that the flag to them represents their ancestors who fought in what they call the War Between the States and the Revolutionary War. "You have a situation where we've let other people define us, and in the past haven't spoken out as strongly as we should about other groups who have usurped the use of our flag," said Michael K. Williams, commander of the Gilmor Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

He acknowledged that Hopkins is a private institution, but he said that because it receives federal money it must adhere to federal nondiscriminatory policies when it comes to renting space on campus. Williams said his group is a federally registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Marvin L. "Doc" Cheatham Sr., president of the Baltimore chapter of the NAACP, said his association supports freedom of speech but that he did not have enough information to wade into the debate over whether

Hopkins was denying the First Amendment rights of the Confederate groups. But he said the Confederate flag was a "despicable" symbol that stood then and now for segregation.

Letter to the Editor, BCWRT Newsletter

As many of you are aware, the Maryland Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Col. Harry W. Gilmor Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans sponsors the annual General Lee and General Jackson Birthday Ceremony each year in January on the Saturday nearest to the birthdays of Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. Over the years, the ceremony has included participants from numerous hereditary, historical, military and patriotic organizations including the Baltimore Civil War Roundtable. Other groups have included: the Virginia Military Institute Alumni, the Virginians of Maryland, the Sons of Union Veterans, the Friends of President Street Station, the Army of Northern Virginia, Confederate Military Forces and a number of independent Confederate and Federal reenactment units.

Every year since 1988, the Johns Hopkins University has rented the Clipper Room in Shriver Hall, or on several occasions another facility, to the Son of Confederate Veterans to hold our post ceremony social gathering. However this year is different. The Johns Hopkins University has refused to rent the Clipper Room, or any other facility, to our organization. The sole reason given, per a Johns Hopkins representative, was that we are a "Confederate" organization. Make no mistake about it, we were not denied because the facility was unavailable, or for any other legitimate reason, we

were denied because of who we are. In addition, the Hopkins representative stated that this ruling came directly from the President of the John Hopkins University, Mr. William Brody.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans has had an excellent on-going relationship with the Johns Hopkins Office of Scheduling for over 20 years. There has been absolutely no problem over this long period of time. We have always been good citizens toward Hopkins. We have paid our rent on time, we have always left the facility neat and clean, and there has never been any disturbance of any kind. A letter was written on September 22, 2008 outlining our long history with the University and appealing this unwarranted decision. By letter of October 14, 2008 from President Brody's Office, we were again denied.

Because of this unfortunate situation, I must advise the Baltimore Civil War Roundtable membership and the public at large that, should you decide to join us for the January 17, 2009 ceremony, you must understand that there will be no post event refreshments; and more importantly, no rest room facilities available before or after the ceremony. In addition, the ceremony may be substantially shorter than in previous years.

We are very sorry to report this to you, but feel that we must be candid with the Baltimore Civil Roundtable and others that have supported us over the years. I can assure you that regardless of the number of participants or those in attendance, and regardless of this unjust action by Hopkins against our Confederate Heritage, the General Lee and General Jackson Birthday Ceremony will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. at the Lee and



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Jackson double equestrian monument in Wyman Park. If you would like to contact President Brody to express your thoughts on this decision, his address is:

Mr. William R. Brody
President
The Johns Hopkins University
Office of the President
242 Garland Hall
3400 N. Charles Street
Baltimore MD 21218
Phone - Office of the President:
410-516-4351

You may also contact him at his email address: wrbrody@jhu.edu

Sincerely,
G. Elliott Cummings
Adjutant

Col. Harry W. Gilmor Camp #1388
Sons of Confederate Veterans

A Civil action

Baltimore Sun, November 21, 2008
Our view: Johns Hopkins' choice to oust Confederate commemorators is the right call

These days, the term "political correctness" is used most commonly by the political right to rage against allegedly misguided efforts to minimize public offense, particularly on the subjects of race and sex. There's a better term for the decision by Johns Hopkins University officials not to host on campus - just days before the inauguration of the nation's first African-American president - 200 sons and daughters of the Confederacy, some of whom would be dressed as Confederate soldiers and carry a Confederate battle flag. It's called common sense. People have a right to their romantic images of the Confederacy. Memorials honoring those who served and died in the Civil War, sons of the South included, are important reminders of our nation's history. Certainly, no one should ever be

banned from laying a wreath at a Robert E. Lee monument in a public park, assuming it's done in a peaceful manner - as these organizations have long done. There's even a place for re-enactors.

But this same banner of stars and bars has been used as a symbol of white supremacy and the suppression of blacks for generations. To ignore that connection is to deny 140 years of history from the birth of the Ku Klux Klan to the struggles of the modern civil rights movement and the work of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday is commemorated as a holiday that falls two days after the planned Jan. 17 event.

Hopkins officials have taken the appropriate action and suggested the Confederate groups look elsewhere to share coffee and cookies after the Wyman Park ceremony. That's their right as a private organization. At such an auspicious moment in our nation's history, it's regrettable only that these descendants of the Confederacy can't muster a little more sensitivity, too.

Gettysburg Foundation, Park Service are about to undergo major transitions

BY SCOT ANDREW
PITZER, Gettysburg Times
November 10, 2008

In a few short months, Gettysburg National Military Park will have a superintendent not named John Latschar for the first time since 1994. The park is preparing for life without Latschar, whose resignation is effective March 1, 2009.

He'll be taking over as president of the Gettysburg Foundation, the park's non-profit management and fundraising partner, replacing the

outgoing Robert C. Wilburn. "The process is pretty straightforward," Dr. Latschar explained Friday. "The regional office director in Philadelphia, who is my immediate boss, will at some point between now and March put out a vacancy announcement. All of those who are interested and qualified will apply."

Gettysburg National Military Park hasn't had a vacant superintendent's position since 1994, when Latschar was appointed from Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pa., to replace Jose Cisneros. He still doesn't know how many people were considered for the position that he has held for 14 years. "When I was hired, I don't know if there was one or 25 applicants," laughed Latschar. "Nobody knows." The Gettysburg job piqued Latschar's interest in the mid-1990s because of his military and historical background. Latschar is a Vietnam War combat veteran, and earned a master's of art in history from Kansas State University. He was awarded a PhD in American History from Rutgers University in 1978.

"John's background and perspectives as an army officer, a combat veteran, a Ph.D. historian, and park superintendent contributed to his success in addressing preservation challenges at both Gettysburg National Military Park and the Eisenhower Site in innovative ways," said Dennis Reidenbach, Regional Director for the National Park Service Northeast Region. "The projects and partnerships he created have dramatically improved the park's ability to meet its mission now and for the future."

The vacancy in Gettysburg is highly attractive, as the 6,000 acre battlefield was the turning point of the



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Civil War, and the hallowed ground is visited by two million tourists every year.

"Some Park Service folks, like myself, have historical backgrounds, so we tend to gravitate toward parks like Gettysburg," said Latschar. "Some have more of a national resources or science background, so they'll gravitate to places like Shenandoah or Arcadia. That's part of the qualifications that the Park Service folks look for."

A new \$103 million Battlefield Visitor Center opened in April along the 1100 block of the Baltimore Pike, further enhancing the visitor experience in Gettysburg.

"This is one of the crown jewels of the National Park Service," said the 61-year-old Latschar. "I wake up everyday and realize how lucky I am." Latschar oversaw the adoption of the park's General Management Plan of 1999, which laid out a long-term vision for the park. The plan has a common theme: battlefield rehabilitation.

"The work never ends," said Latschar, adding that the next big project on the list at Gettysburg is the restoration of Ziegler's Grove, "and getting that old visitor center down."

Also, the park would like to bury the battlefield's unsightly utility lines, and give the Little Round Top parking area a facelift.

Latschar praises community partnerships, which have helped relieve the park of operational costs that it otherwise would be responsible for paying. The park is teaming with the Gettysburg Foundation to run the new Battlefield Visitor Center. Also, the park has united with Main Street Gettysburg, which intends to operate the David Wills House in downtown Gettysburg once it opens in February 2009.

"You can get so much more done, that it's just amazing to behold," said Latschar.

Technically, his last day on the job is Feb. 28, 2009. If a permanent replacement isn't hired by then, GNMP Chief Ranger Brian Fitzgerald is prepared to take on interim superintendent duties.

"He's been the right hand man in all of the detailed work for the restoration of the Cyclorama painting and getting the museum at the new visitor center ready," Latschar said regarding Fitzgerald, adding that he has played a key role in interpretive programs, law enforcement and museum services at the park.

The superintendent oversees long-term strategic planning at Gettysburg National Military Park, as well as the daily operations of the battlefield and Eisenhower National Historic Site. Also, the battlefield boss supervises a staff of approximately 80 permanent and up to 35 seasonal staffers, including rangers, interpreters, natural and cultural resource specialists, and maintenance and administrative personnel.

Shenandoah Valley Third Winchester Battlefield to be Preserved

By STEVE SZKOTAK, Associated Press, November 12, 2008

RICHMOND, Va. - A 209-acre field in the Shenandoah Valley where one of the fiercest battles of the Civil War was waged will be preserved under a \$3.35 million public-private purchase agreement.

The deal will create a 575-acre preserve that remains much as it was nearly 150 years ago when the Third Battle of Winchester was fought by tens of thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers.

The purchase agreement announced

Wednesday will be funded through a partnership among the Shenandoah Battlefields Foundation, The Civil War Preservation Trust, the state of Virginia and private partners. The sale depends on raising \$690,000 in private funds to reach the purchase price.

The property, called Middle Field, was part of the Third Winchester battlefield. On Sept. 19, 1864, the Union's 19th Corps lost 40 percent of its men and all of its regimental commanders were either killed or wounded.

In a National Park Service study, historian David W. Lowe described the Third Winchester as "the largest and most desperately contested battle of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley."

He wrote that the property east of Winchester ranked among the bloodiest fields of the Civil War, with more than 3,000 casualties.

James Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Preservation Trust, said the 209 acres remain virtually untouched today.

"This is a stage where a great event occurred," he said in an interview. "It's a place where people will come and imagine what happened here. They're actually walking where these people walked."

The preservation deal was struck with the heirs of C.E. Huntsberry, who trace their ancestry back centuries in northern Virginia. Bob Huntsberry, great-grandson of the late C.E. Huntsberry, said the family recognized the Frederick County property's historic importance.

"We felt pretty strongly that it needed to be preserved so we are very happy that it will end up in good hands and that people will someday be able to come and learn about what happened here," he said.



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A fundraising campaign to complete the purchase is expected to be completed in May.

Despite the purchase, only a fraction of the core area at Third Winchester has been protected. In the Shenandoah Valley, more than 17,000 acres of core battlefield land remain vulnerable to development, preservationists said.

Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, said development is the biggest threat to the 50,000 acres of unprotected battlefields throughout the state.

"We have to be very conscious that the hour is getting short and we have little time to preserve," she said. More than 54,000 Americans fought at the Third Winchester battlefield in the opening volley of Union Gen. Philip Sheridan's Shenandoah Campaign. The campaign left a trail of burning and destruction nearly 100 miles to the south, in Staunton. Once the purchase is completed, the preservation groups will create interpretive trails.

Fredericksburg linked to Museum of the Confederacy's new branch plans

BY SARAH WATSON, MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE, November 26, 2008

The first chance for public involvement with the Museum of the Confederacy's new branch planned for Appomattox was unveiled Monday night during a reception for Lynchburg-area leaders and stakeholders.

Museum leaders announced the creation of Friends of the Museum of the Confederacy - Appomattox, a support organization dedicated to preserving the Civil War history in the region.

Those who join the group will play a key role in the Appomattox museum's development, not just with raising money, but providing feedback on various topics and questions, said OT Crowther, the museum's vice president for advancement.

The first focus of the group will be to restore the 18th Virginia Infantry flag, which included companies from Appomattox, Farmville, Danville, Charlotte County and Pittsylvania County, Crowther said. The flag was captured by Union soldiers shortly before the Appomattox surrender and was given to the museum by the U.S. War Department in 1905.

"Because of the connection with the community ... we believe the flag of the 18th Virginia has become a symbol for this region," Crowther said.

Restoration and preservation of the flag is expected to cost about \$25,000 and when complete, it will be one of the first artifacts to be put on display at the Appomattox museum, Crowther said.

"It's good to find something that you can identify with and is a readily available symbol, and you can achieve success in a relatively short period of time," Crowther said.

Those who join also will be tapped to help museum officials identify the cultural, economic and educational programs that will appeal to the Appomattox community, Crowther said. "We are looking for a long-term relationship with the community."

Once the fundraising goal for the flag's restoration is reached, the group also then will be tapped to help raise money for the actual Appomattox museum building, Crowther said.

Museum officials announced in September 2007 they would be creating a branch system as a way to

increase exhibit space. The Fredericksburg area, Fort Monroe in Tidewater and Appomattox were announced as the new sites, each focusing on war themes specific to those regions.

Four acres in Appomattox near the intersection of U.S. 460 and Virginia 24 was recently purchased by the town of Appomattox and will be leased to the museum. The museum hired Williamsburg-based architect Carlton Abbitt to design the building, which will feature space not just for permanent and rotating exhibits, but multi-purpose educational space for school group.

For more information about the Museum of the Confederacy - Appomattox, see moc.org.

Lincoln Statue unveiled on D.C. cottage lawn

By James R. Carroll, Louisville (KY) Courier Journal, November 11, 2008
WASHINGTON -- For the first time in more than 143 years, Abraham Lincoln and his horse were standing yesterday in front of his cottage overlooking the nation's capital.

A 2,500-pound, waxed bronze sculpture of the Kentucky-born president and a standardbred horse was lowered into place on the lawn facing the Gothic Revival house where Lincoln spent the last three summers of the Civil War.

On a sunny but brisk morning, the likeness of the 6-foot-4-inch Lincoln, attired in his trademark stovepipe hat and frock coat, stood looking toward the cottage, one hand resting on his horse's saddle.

With a hint of a smile on his face, the 16th president looked as if he were about to jump up onto his steed for his customary three-mile ride down to the White House.



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Ivan Schwartz of Studio EIS, left, and landscape architect Andrew Balderson discuss the installation of a statue at the Soldiers' Home in Northwest to commemorate the upcoming 200th anniversary of President Lincoln's birth. **Photo Credit:** By Dayna Smith For The Washington Post Photo

The sculpture is just the latest of many tributes being unveiled to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth near Hodgenville, Ky., on Feb. 12, 1809.

"We wanted this not to be a monumental Lincoln, but a very personal Lincoln," said Frank Milligan, director of President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home.

The house opened to the public in February after a seven-year, \$15 million restoration by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Ivan Schwartz, founder and director of Studio EIS in New York, where the sculpture was created, watched his work lifted from a truck by a crane and placed on its base.

Schwartz said extensive research went into creating a Lincoln that visitors will be able to touch.

Lincoln's hat and one of his frock coats, in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, were measured. The president's face and hands were based on life casts and all known photographs of him.

Lincoln escaped the heat and crowds of Washington by living at the cottage in the summers of 1862, 1863 and 1864. Historians estimate that a quarter of his presidency was spent at the retreat. He last visited the cottage on April 13, 1865, the day before his assassination.

The president sometimes worked at the cottage, but most days he commuted by horse or carriage between his 34-room hideaway and the White House.

The commute had such relevance to the cottage site that the sculpture evolved to include Lincoln's horse, Milligan said.

The president's favorite horse, Old Bob, stayed behind in Springfield, Ill., when Lincoln went to the White House.

He rode various horses during his time in Washington, and the horse in the sculpture is meant to represent them. It belongs to a breed likely used for Lincoln's transportation, based on research that included consultation with the International

Museum of the Horse in Lexington, Ky.

"Lincoln loved to ride," Milligan said. "This was his release, his relief, from the White House."

Charges reduced in Civil War re-enactor shooting case

By KATHARINE HARMON, Hanover Evening Sun, November 26, 2008

The aggravated assault charges against the Civil War re-enactor who allegedly shot another re-enactor in the foot in August were dropped Tuesday.

Paul J. Sproesser, 44, of Locust Street in Frederick, Md., was charged with two felony counts of aggravated assault as well as two counts of reckless endangerment and one count of simple assault for shooting the 17-year-old re-enactor.

Sproesser's defense attorney, Steve Rice, said he argued at a preliminary hearing before Magisterial District Judge Thomas A. Carr on Tuesday that the shooting was accidental and that the aggravated assault charges were extreme.

On Aug. 3, Sproesser shot a .69-caliber Springfield black powder rifle point-blank at a piece of canvas over the teen's foot, court documents said. The rifle was filled only with gunpowder and did not contain a bullet.

The shot resulted in powder burns to two of the teen's toes and the partial amputation of one, court documents said.

Carr dropped the two felony aggravated assault counts at the end of the hearing but moved the lesser charges to Adams County court.

Sproesser is scheduled to appear in Adams County court for a Dec. 22 arraignment.



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Copy of famed Lincoln letter turns up in Dallas

By JEFF CARLTON, DALLAS (AP),
November 18, 2008

A Texas museum hopes a document found in its archives turns out to be an authentic government copy of Abraham Lincoln's eloquent letter consoling a mother thought to have lost five sons in the Civil War.

The famed Bixby Letter, which the Dallas Historical Society is getting appraised as it prays for a potential windfall, has a fascinating history.

The original has never been found. Historians debate whether Lincoln wrote it. Its recipient, Lydia Bixby, was no fan of the president. And not all her sons died in the war.

The letter, written with "the best of intentions" 144 years ago next week, is "considered one of the finest pieces of American presidential prose," said Alan Olson, curator for the Dallas group. "It's still a great piece of writing, regardless of the truth in the back story."

Historians say Lincoln wrote the letter at the request of a Massachusetts official, who passed along news of a Boston woman grieving the loss of her five sons. The letter is addressed to "Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Mass." and begins with an acknowledgment that nothing written could possibly make a grief-stricken mother feel better about such a horrific loss.

"I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming," Lincoln wrote.

After thanking Bixby on behalf of a grateful nation, Lincoln wrote that he would pray that God relieve her anguish and leave her with only the "cherished memory of the loved" along with "the solemn pride that

must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

The letter, as was the president's custom in his personal correspondence, is signed "A Lincoln."

"It is so beautifully written," said James Cornelius, curator of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Ill. "It is an extraordinarily sensitive expression of condolence."

There was renewed interest in the letter after it was read in the 1998 film "Saving Private Ryan." It also sparked a new round of debate centering on Lincoln's authorship and the fate of Bixby's sons.

Evidence indicates two of Bixby's sons died, a third was a deserter and a fourth ended up in a prisoner-of-war camp, Cornelius said. A fifth is believed to have received a discharge, but his fate is unknown.

Historians have also argued that John Hay, one of Lincoln's secretaries, wrote the letter. Hay was an accomplished writer who wrote a biography of Lincoln and later became ambassador to the United Kingdom.

"Lincoln probably wrote it," Cornelius said. "Hay did on some occasions write letters in Lincoln's name and sign them — or have Lincoln sign them — but probably not something like this that purports to be so personal and individual and heartfelt."

The letter received widespread attention days after it was written. Bixby either sent it to the Boston Evening Transcript or a postal worker intercepted it and tipped off the newspaper, which reprinted the letter, Cornelius said.

The touching note came about two months after Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman had broken through Atlanta on his march to the coast and about

two weeks after Lincoln won reelection. Union spirits were high, Cornelius said.

"The letter was so popular that it was published in newspapers and people copied and sent it to relatives," Olson said. "That letter and the words in it affected the nation. It tugged at people's hearts at the time of a really bloody period in America."

Olson hopes he has an official government copy of the Bixby Letter and not something one relative sent to another. In an era before photocopiers or carbon paper, secretaries hand-copied documents to be retained for their files, he said.

The paper and ink appear authentic to the Civil War era, he said. The historical society has asked an expert at Christie's auction house in New York for an opinion.

Stacy McDermott, an assistant editor at The Papers of Abraham Lincoln, estimated that an official government copy of the Bixby Letter would fetch millions of dollars.

But Cornelius doubts the letter is authentic. He said the Lincoln White House would have been unlikely to make a copy of such a personal letter and points out that a pair of rival New York companies sold copies of the letter as keepsakes beginning in the 1890s.

Olson said he stumbled across the letter over the summer in the historical society archives, which contain about 3 million items. He said he does not know how or why the letter ended up in the archives.

The discovery, Olson said, will provide a teachable moment even if it doesn't prove to be a bankable one.

"If it's not worth a lot of money — too bad," Olson said. "It's still a fascinating story and it's still a great display piece."



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Davis statue may be moving on

Richmond museum wouldn't guarantee group about statue's use

By Will Jones, Richmond Times-Dispatch, November 19, 2008

A statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis apparently won't stand -- or be stored -- at the American Civil War Center, after all.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans are talking to two other sites about the life-size bronze statue after talks with the American Civil War Center at Tredegar Iron Works broke down, said Brag Bowling, a Richmond resident and board member of the Southern heritage group.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans had offered to donate the statue, and museum officials had said they would accept it. That decision, however, came with no guarantee of where or whether the statue might be displayed or how it might be interpreted.

Bowling said yesterday that's not good enough.

"As a steward of SCV money, I'm not going to take that risk, where it might not be displayed or it might be made in a way that denigrates the intent of the statue," he said. "Theoretically, they could take the thing and melt it down. I think Richmond has missed an opportunity to open up the sesquicentennial of the Civil War."

Christy S. Coleman, museum president, said she considers the matter closed even though the Sons of Confederate Veterans left open the possibility of a temporary loan. She said she doubts that will happen because, under the museum's collections policy, officials would still not guarantee how the statue might be used.

Coleman said she would have preferred for the group to have talked to museum officials about a potential gift before offering the statue. "If you're really trying to help an organization, you're looking at what the organization's needs are."

The American Civil War Center opened in 2006 to tell the story of the Civil War and its causes, conduct and legacies from the Union, Confederate and African-American perspectives.

Bowling had hoped the piece would be displayed and interpreted, and used to educate the public about Davis and to attract visitors to the museum. After museum officials announced they would accept the statue, Coleman said it might be helpful in showing how the Civil War is remembered.

The statue, by Gary Casteel of Lexington, depicts the Confederate leader standing with his son Joe and with Jim Limber, a mixed-race orphan who was taken in by the Davis family. The statue will cost more than \$100,000 and is scheduled to be complete this month.

Bowling said he isn't interested in questioning the motives of museum officials or in participating in a fight like the one in 2003, when a statue of Abraham Lincoln was placed at Tredegar over protests of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Bowling said he's now talking to two other sites about the statue, but he declined to name them. He said he had hoped to unveil the statue in Richmond on Feb. 22 -- to mark the anniversary of Davis' inaugural address at Capitol Square. Another option is to present it June 3 to commemorate Davis' birthday.

"This is not some piece of junk. This is a really fine statue," Bowling said. "We'll take it where we aren't hamstrung by policies."

Gettysburg's Wills House artifacts unveiled

BY SCOT ANDREW PITZER, Gettysburg Times, **November 14, 2008**

Artifacts that have never been seen before depicting Abraham Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address and Civil War era life in Gettysburg are just a few short months away from being unveiled to the public for the first time.

The David Wills House Museum in downtown Gettysburg is scheduled to open Feb. 12, 2009, following a \$7.2 million renovation project which restored the house to its 1863 Civil War appearance.

"What is unique about the artifact display in the David Wills House is that we've been fortunate enough to get in touch with descendants of David Wills, and they've been very generous," Gettysburg National Military Park Supervisor of Museum Services Greg Goodell said Thursday morning.

Lincoln spent the evening at the house, owned by lawyer David Wills, in November 1863 prior to the dedication ceremonies at Soldiers National Cemetery.

The 140-year-old relics include a saddle cover that Lincoln sat on as he rode to dedication ceremonies Nov. 19 at the cemetery; a figurine that belonged to Mrs. Wills; and a telegram sent to the president by his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, concerning the illness of their son, Tad. "Seventy five percent of those artifacts have never been on display before," said Goodell, adding that 50 artifacts from the park's collection of one million Civil War relics are being transported to the Wills House. When asked about the financial value of the artifacts, Goodell was unable to cite specific figures.



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"We are prohibited by law from making monetary appraisals on artifacts," Goodell said, turning his attention to the Lincoln saddle cover. "You're talking about a truly priceless artifact here. I couldn't ever imagine the number of dollars that this would attract on the open market." Historians believe that the president penned the final words to the three-minute Gettysburg Address during his overnight stay.



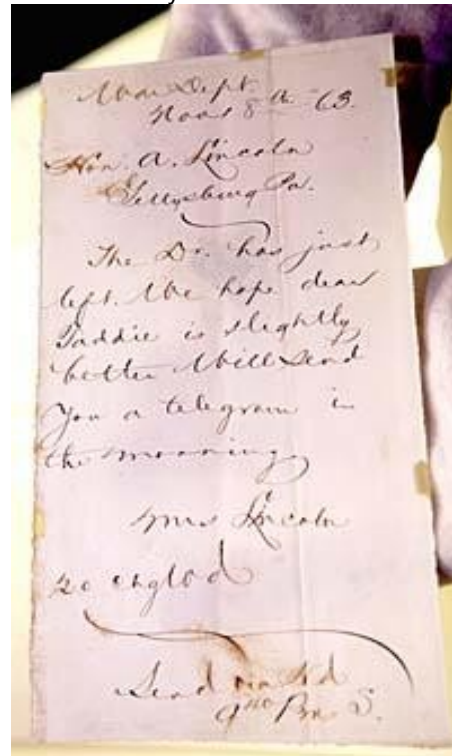
President Abraham Lincoln used this saddle blanket when he rode from the Wills House to Gettysburg National Cemetery on Nov. 19, 1863 for dedication ceremonies.

Wills invited Lincoln to town to dedicate the cemetery in honor of the soldiers who fought in the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3 in 1863. "This isn't going to be a museum on the battle," said GNMP Education Specialist Barbara Sanders. "It's a museum on the battle within the town, why the battle came to the town, and the story of David Wills. We want this to be a sensory experience — we're taking you back in time." The bed that Lincoln reportedly slept upon during his overnight stay at the Wills House is currently being treated at a laboratory in Harpers Ferry. Park officials say that descendants of the Wills family had the bed in Athens, Ohio.

Other relatives, primarily great-great grandchildren, were located in Kentucky and Connecticut. When asked about the authenticity of the artifacts, Goodell replied that

several factors come into play. "It is mainly a chain of good documentation that we were able to assemble that enables us to verify the authenticity of these artifacts," Goodell said, naming newspaper articles and photos as examples. Main Street Gettysburg is partnering with the park to operate the Wills House.

The renovation project was entirely subsidized by federal taxpayers. A grand opening celebration at the Wills House is planned for Feb. 12-16, 2009, coinciding with Lincoln's 200th birthday.



A telegram sent by Mrs. Lincoln to her husband on Nov. 18 to let the president know the condition of their ailing son, Tad.

The National Portrait Gallery Presents "One Life: The Mask of Lincoln"

Art Daily, November 6, 2008

WASHINGTON, DC. - Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12, 1809–April 15, 1865) is one of America's most revered presidents. His leadership during America's most divisive crisis, the Civil War, was essential to the abolition of slavery and the preservation of the union. In this exhibition, "One Life: The Mask of Lincoln," National Portrait Gallery historian David C. Ward continues the museum's "One Life" series with an exploration of how Abraham Lincoln crafted his public persona. "The Mask of Lincoln" will open Nov. 7, in anticipation of the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, and will continue through July 5, 2009.

"The National Portrait Gallery is pleased to participate in the events surrounding the commemoration of Abraham Lincoln's birth," said Martin E. Sullivan, director of the National Portrait Gallery. "Lincoln's role in shaping America cannot be understated, and this exhibition uses portraits from our collection to offer us insight into how he shaped his identity and personality."

The exhibition includes more than 30 images of Lincoln; most are from the Portrait Gallery's extensive collection, such as the "tousled hair" portrait taken in 1857, and a Mathew Brady photograph that was taken just before Lincoln's groundbreaking 1860 speech at the Cooper Union. The latter image is known as, the "photograph that made Lincoln president." The same photograph appears in a handsomely mounted gold campaign pin. Also in the



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exhibition are the "cracked-plate" photograph of Lincoln by Alexander Gardner, one of the last formal portraits taken of him; a drawing by Lambert Hollis, which is an eye-witness account of Lincoln's arrival in Richmond only two days after the Confederate government evacuated the capital city in April of 1865; and an engraving of the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Americans in the 19th century identified themselves nearly equally by their religion and political party. This exhibition demonstrates that Lincoln was attuned to these cultural customs and used the emerging technology of photography to craft his image and keep himself in the mind's eye of his fellow citizens. He sought out opportunities to be photographed and produced a continuous portrait record of his time in office.

The "One Life" series is one-room exhibition that features the life of one person chosen by a curator or historian. "The Mask of Lincoln" is the fourth installment in the series and follows "Kate: A Centennial Celebration," "Portraits of Sandra Day O'Connor" and "Walt Whitman, a kosmos."

Virginia Battlefields Get Help

By CLINT SCHEMMER,
Fredericksburg Free Lance Star (VA),
November 18, 2008

Virginia stepped forward yesterday to help save portions of 15 Civil War battlefields from encroaching development.

The commonwealth will provide up to \$5.2 million to front-line private groups defending Civil War battlefields--including Chancellorsville and Brandy Station. Preservationists must come up with \$10.4 million to get the 21 matching grants awarded

by the state Department of Historic Resources.

The resulting total, \$15.57 million, would be one of the largest sums earmarked for Virginia battlefield preservation in decades.

"I am pleased that we are able to join with these private organizations to save important open spaces and cultural landscapes while we still have the opportunity," Gov. Tim Kaine said of the initiative yesterday.

"Battlefield protection preserves Virginia's historic as well as its natural landscapes. It is an integral part of my administration's goal to protect 400,000 acres of open spaces by 2010."

Tapping the state's Civil War Historic Site Preservation Fund, established by the General Assembly in 2006, the department's grants will save 1,571 acres.

The money comes not a moment too soon, as Virginia and conservationists race to preserve some of the nation's most threatened hallowed ground from urban and suburban growth.

The grants will save key parcels by enabling private organizations to buy parcels or obtain easement rights on land that will stay in private ownership. Those deals will enlarge or join together previously protected battlefield tracts.

The private groups include the Civil War Preservation Trust, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, Trevilian Station Battlefield Foundation and the Richmond Battlefield Association.

"We are very, very pleased that Gov. Kaine and the state legislature were able to fund this program," Jim Campi, spokesman for the Civil War Preservation Trust, said yesterday. "This is by far the largest single appropriation by any state for battlefield land in recent memory."

Trust President James Lighthizer praised the "visionary leadership" of Kaine, House Speaker Bill Howell, R-Stafford, and state Sen. Edd Houck, D-Spotsylvania, who championed the program.

The 15 affected battlefields lie in the counties of Amelia, Appomattox, Culpeper, Frederick, Hanover, Henrico, Louisa, Rockingham, Shenandoah and Spotsylvania.

The sites' military histories are varied, including significant Union and Confederate victories as well as the scenes of horse-mounted battles, such as Brandy Station in Culpeper County --where the largest cavalry fight in North American history was waged.

"These purchases will allow us to secure places with the power to connect us and future generations to the lessons of a defining period of our history," said Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, director of the Historic Resources Department.

"Time is running out. Each year, battlefield lands are lost forever," she said. "Today, more than 50,000 acres of critical battlefield lands are unprotected in Virginia."

The aid comes as groups across Virginia slate events for the Civil War's sesquicentennial, which begins in 2011. Spotsylvania County was the first locality to start planning for the conflict's 150th anniversary.

In Spotsylvania, the state grants will help acquire land at Chancellorsville's "First Day" battlefield along State Route 3 and the site, miles to the west, where Confederate Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson later launched the famous flank attack that routed Union forces during that battle. About 159 acres will be acquired.

The Battle of Chancellorsville, which raged from April 30 to May 6, 1863, is



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regarded by many historians as Gen. Robert E. Lee's greatest victory.

In Culpeper County, the money will help the CWPT acquire two tracts, totaling 49.5 acres, to preserve the core of Fleetwood Hill on the Brandy Station battlefield. The parcels on U.S. 29 are close to nearly 1,000 acres already preserved by the Brandy Station Battlefield Foundation and CWPT.

The battle, fought at the start of the Gettysburg Campaign, ended on June 9, 1863, when Union attackers were driven off Fleetwood Hill.