



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Historical Items Vanish from National Archives

By Jacqueline Trescott

*The Washington Post*

Washington, DC — Hundreds of letters and photographs are missing from the National Archives and its regional offices, including one presidential library. Many are suspected stolen.

The extent of the losses is detailed in a series of reports from the organization's investigative office, but the value of the items is difficult to determine because that largely is measured by historical importance and rarity. The items include color photographs of Nancy Reagan and the king and queen of Jordan, letters from Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and a stately portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

At one time, three letters written during the Civil War by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant were missing. One has been recovered.

The problem was reported by a Washington, D.C., radio station that used the Freedom of Information Act to retrieve investigation reports dating to 2000. The Office of the Inspector General at the National Archives also provided the reports to *The Washington Post*.

The Archives, the nation's official repository of documents from the Bill of Rights to presidential menus, has no strict registration system for most of the 10 billion items held across the country. Thus, it isn't always obvious when materials have been lost, stolen or misplaced. Even in the investigative reports, some documents simply are listed as "missing."

The disappearance of any material rattles the archivists and staff, said Susan Cooper, the spokeswoman for the Archives.

"Is there a problem? Yes, there is a problem. Is it pervasive? No," Cooper said. Given the volume of materials collected by the Archives, almost all are right where they are supposed to be, she said.

"The National Archives takes these incidents very seriously. ... When employees learned of a theft by another employee, they were outraged," Cooper said.

In its most-publicized case of theft, a cache of presidential pardons and other materials valued at \$100,000 was stolen by an employee, Shawn Aubitz. He was convicted and sentenced in 2002 to 21 months in federal prison.

That incident led to an overhaul of security procedures, including installing cameras in research rooms, background investigation of volunteers working with original records, and development of a pilot program with the University of Maryland on the feasibility of electronic tracking.

"There are some sound and strong measures that have been taken to address the internal problems," said Paul Brachfeld, the Archives inspector general. "But the potential for theft is there."

The Archives until recently had few measures of the value of a document. Collectors and autograph dealers had selling prices, but the Archives believed that the real value was historical.

The Internet now is helping collectors find some documents that the Archives didn't know were missing. The Aubitz crime was discovered when one of the items appeared for sale on eBay.

The Archives has recovered a letter written by the Confederate Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Armistead that is not mentioned in the investigative

reports. "A person saw a document being traded," Brachfeld said. That researcher alerted the Archives that he had used the source — a letter written by Armistead when he retired from the federal army to join Confederate troops. Archives officials then noted the disappearance, and the matter is being investigated by the Justice Department, Brachfeld said.

### Battlefield Billboards Start Fight

Uniontown, PA Herald Standard — 12/05/04

Hagerstown, MD. (AP) - Five miles north of the Antietam National Battlefield stands a billboard marking the front line of a fight over scenic preservation.

There is nothing remarkable about the back-to-back advertisements for cars and financial services. It is the sign's location along State Highway 65, the two-lane road most visitors take to Antietam, which became a flash point for those bent on preserving the pristine Civil War site. History buffs, tourism promoters and outdoor advertisers say the dispute in western Maryland represents a new twist in landscape preservation that may be repeated elsewhere as Civil War marketing expands beyond the battlefields to include the routes that soldiers took.

"Anybody that's involved in the tourism industry knows that the gateway to a site is very important. You want to have an attractive, welcoming transition to whatever site you're promoting, so protecting those gateways is important, too," said Jim Campi, spokesman for the Washington-based Civil War Preservation Trust.

More than 7,600 acres of private land around Antietam already are



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protected from development by landowner sales of agricultural and scenic easements to government agencies and private groups, according to the National Park Service.

The Highway 65 billboard isn't visible from the battlefield, and its setting is barely rural. It stands on a strip of commercial land between some industrial property and the road. Across the highway, on what was recently farmland, 773 homes are going up in the new Westfields subdivision - the southern edge of Hagerstown's accelerating sprawl. Still, opponents feared that the billboard, erected this past summer after a fight, would become the first in a procession of signs tourists would see after exiting Interstate 70 and heading south through the hilly landscape toward Antietam. "Starting to put billboards on 65 destroys the rural and scenic entrance to the battlefield," said George Anikis, a Washington County planning commissioner. "You'll have people coming off 70 and being treated similar to those people who want to go to Gettysburg. Gettysburg is trashed. They just don't set you up for being in a rural area." Last month, the Board of County Commissioners approved rules capping the number of billboards at the current level of about 200 and prohibiting new signs along county-designated scenic or historic routes, including Highway 65. New billboards are allowed only in industrial and commercial zones, and only to replace signs removed from other areas.

The county's decision reflects a compromise.

Critics wanted an outright ban and removal of all signs in Washington County; billboard owners lobbied

successfully for the "cap and replace" provision.

### **Monocacy Battlefield Visitor Center to Move to Higher Ground**

Wednesday December 15, 2004

Frederick News-Post

Frederick, Md. (AP) - Exhibits documenting "the battle that saved Washington" will be saved from potential flooding when the Monocacy National Battlefield moves its visitor center to higher ground. A \$3.5 million federal appropriation approved by Congress last month will pay for construction of a new building at the Civil War site just south of Frederick, Superintendent Susan Trail says. "We should be breaking ground next spring or summer," Trail told The Frederick News-Post. "We're looking at opening in 2006."

The 7,848-square-foot building will house offices and visitor services on the first floor while the second floor will be devoted entirely to exhibits, Trail said. The added space will give the National Park Service room for more displays and hands-on exhibits, Trail said.

The visitor center has been housed since the park's 1991 opening in a remodeled mill alongside the Monocacy River. Flood waters have entered the building at least four times and have approached the building "more times than I care to remember," said Cathy Beeler, the park's chief interpreter. Trail said the new building also is needed to accommodate the battlefield's growing popularity. Last year, 17,000 people visited, she said. She said new exhibits will focus on different parts of the battle fought on July 9, 1864, when 6,000 Federal troops led by Gen. Lew Wallace

engaged about 15,000 Confederate troops intent on capturing Washington, about 40 miles away. The Confederates were led by Gen. Jubal A. Early.

The battle bought a 24-hour delay of the Confederate advance at the cost of 1,436 casualties. The Union dead numbered 123, with 603 wounded. The Confederates suffered as many as 275 dead, with 435 wounded.

### **Organization Asks for Loan to Convert Schoolhouse on Gettysburg Retreat Route**

by Tara Reilly

Hagerstown, MD Herald Mail – December 9, 2004

Washington County - A group planning to convert a former schoolhouse in Cearfoss to an education center that would offer a driving tour of the Confederate retreat of 13,000 wounded soldiers from Gettysburg, Pa., asked the Washington County Commissioners on Tuesday for a \$60,000 low-interest loan to help purchase the property.

Rick Lank and Rebecca Rush of the nonprofit Forest Glen Commonwealth Inc. said the organization plans to create a Regional Heritage Education and History Technology Center at the school at Greencastle and Cearfoss pikes.

The school property is the site of an attack on a "Wagon Train of the Wounded" by Union Cavalry regiments, according to information supplied by Forest Glen. The train, carrying injured soldiers from Gettysburg, included stops in Cearfoss and Williamsport.



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Forest Glen has a contract to purchase the building, which Rush said would cost \$300,000.

County Commissioners President Gregory I. Snook said the county would consider Forest Glen's loan request. He said first the group must apply to the county to be on a list of groups eligible to receive county money.

Commissioners Vice President William J. Wivell said after the meeting that the county holds public hearings for groups that apply to be on that list.

"Just because they're on the list doesn't mean they're going to get funding," said Wivell, who also said the county has the option of not adding groups to the list.

Wivell said groups should apply to the Washington County Gaming Commission for money.

"I really think that's the direction most of these groups ought to go," he said. Snook asked Lank and Rush to submit the group's business plan to the county.

The education center offerings would include tours, speakers, special annual events, weekend sutlery, preservation workshops and possible virtual tours of historic places.

He said Forest Glen hopes to draw tourists visiting Gettysburg to the education center.

The education center might eventually grow to 75,000 visits a year, according to the organization.

Forest Glen, founded in 1999, also works with local public and private schools by holding educational programs. The group has partnerships with the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, U.S. Library of Congress, Veterans Service Organizations and the Washington County Association of Museums and Historic Sites.

### "Other" Gettysburg Cyclorama Looking for a Home

By Mary Giunca

Winston-Salem NC Journal

Ken Wilson Sr. has taken on some big challenges in his 40-year business career.

During the Arab oil embargo, he went to Texas and Louisiana to find new supplies of natural gas. He has helped design a hospital complex in Nigeria. He has sold Intercontinental Airways and what once was known as the Hyatt Winston-Salem Hotel.

But he counts finding a home for a legendary cyclorama as his most difficult challenge.

The painting measures 376 feet long and is about 22 feet high. Wilson said that he believes it is the world's largest painting. It weighs six tons and depicts the battle of Gettysburg at its height on July 3, 1863. The painting was appraised for \$2.5 million 10 years ago.

Wilson has never handled an art transaction before, but something about this curiosity from another age compels him. "It's become a part of me," he said.

He keeps an autobiography on his coffee table of local artist Joe King with an inscription from the author: "To Ken, with warmest personal regards, Joe. Now let us look at the big picture."

The big picture that King refers to is the cyclorama, which he found in a Chicago warehouse in 1965. King worked to find a home for the painting until he died in 1996. He left the cyclorama to Wake Forest University, where it now rests in storage.

Wilson has taken on the job as a trust from the man that he considers a talented artist and a friend.

Sixteen artists worked two years to create the cyclorama and when it was completed in the 1880s, it was one of the wonders of the Victorian age.

Philippe Philippoteaux created four such cycloramas in the 1880s. By then the Civil War was 25 years in the past, and people had the distance to appreciate its history, Wilson said. One of the cycloramas is on display in Gettysburg. That painting is 359 feet long. Two others were lost.

The artist went to the battle site, interviewed veterans and took panoramic pictures of the terrain there. He then constructed a model for his painting to follow. The painting was done on 14 panels, which were later joined.

"Before motion pictures, this was considered a form of entertainment," said J. Reid Morgan, a vice president and counsel at WFU. "The illusion which was created got to be a considerable art form."

National Park Service representatives from the Gettysburg National Military Park looked at the cyclorama several years ago, but their plans for a center to house the painting fell through, Wilson said.

There have been discussions with city officials about building a home for the painting as part of The Gateway (formerly the Southeast Gateway,) but the city had other priorities, Wilson said.

Wilson said he could see the cyclorama being part of a museum display, traveling exhibit or theme-park attraction.

It would cost between \$5 million and \$8 million to restore the painting, but that is only the beginning.

"The big problem is not the sale of the painting, but for it to be put on display requires a major architectural construction concept," Wilson said.



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He estimates that it would cost up to \$10 million to build a circular building to properly display the painting and to maintain it.

Some potential buyers have wanted to chop the painting into smaller pieces for resale, but Morgan has said that WFU wants to keep the painting intact.

The top 20 feet of the painting's sky was cut off years ago, probably to make it fit easier to ship for exhibitions, Wilson said.

Touring was a big part of a cyclorama's attraction, Wilson said.

Landscaping and artifacts were often placed in the foreground to make the effect more realistic. Promoters would have set up a viewing stand so that people could turn and enjoy the panoramic view.

In 1933, the painting was shown at the World's Fair in Chicago.

After that, the painting was lost. King learned about the cyclorama from a friend and spent 30 years searching for it.

He was told that the painting had burned in a warehouse fire. He tracked the address to a new warehouse in Chicago. He found a smoke-blackened wall in the back of the warehouse and asked if he could knock the wall out, Wilson said. King found the painting on 14 rolls behind the wall.

He contacted the owner's son, bought it and brought the painting to Winston-Salem.

King unrolled the painting at Bowman Gray Stadium's football field. He had to have the goal posts taken down because the painting ran into them.

In 1993, one panel of the painting was displayed at Scales Fine Arts Center on the Wake Forest campus. Since then, it has been in storage.

Wilson saw the painting for the first time in 1999, when the panels were

rolled out for National Park Service representatives.

"It was absolutely phenomenal," he said.

"It left you feeling as if you had been at the Battle of Gettysburg."

### **Georgians don Union blue for Bush Inaugural** By Bill Hendrick

*Cox News Service*

Thursday, December 30, 2004

ATLANTA — An Atlanta-based Civil War re-enactors group has been invited to march in President Bush's inaugural parade next month because Vice President Dick Cheney's great-grandpappy was a Union soldier who fought in some of the bloodiest battles in Georgia.

Yep, that's right — 23 descendants of Union veterans who now live in these parts will strut in blue uniforms down Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue behind the flag of the 21st Ohio Infantry Regiment. The vice president's great-grandfather, Samuel Fletcher Cheney, was a captain of the regiment.

The 21st Ohio Re-enactors Unit was invited to march in the Jan. 20 parade in large part because of the efforts of Brad Quinlin, 50, of Suwanee, Ga.

It turns out that Cheney is a Civil War buff and was briefed by Quinlin, head of the re-enactors unit, on four or five occasions — two of them in long, private meetings in the White House. Quinlin told Cheney all about his ancestor and provided copies of rare letters discussing the soldier's exploits.

The 21st Ohio — the real one — was part of Gen. William T. Sherman's army, which chased Confederates all over Georgia, burned Atlanta, and then marched with fiery torches clear to Savannah.

It all started when Cheney toured the Chickamauga battlefield in October 2002. He asked park historian Jim Ogden for information on the 21st Ohio Infantry Regiment, and Ogden pulled out volumes of research that had been donated by Quinlin. Cheney responded, "I would like to meet Brad Quinlin."

About a week later, "I got a phone call from the vice president and we talked for 40 minutes," Quinlin recalled. "I have over 700 letters that men in the regiment wrote, and in every one that mentions [Capt.] Cheney, it says he showed great bravery, and I told the vice president." Later, Quinlin said, "he asked if I was ever in Washington. He said, 'Next time you're up, give me a call.'"

Quinlin and his wife made it to the White House on June 18, 2003. Ushered into Cheney's office, he showed off ribbons and citations praising the 21st.

Quinlin said he offered to give Cheney and his daughters a personalized tour of Chickamauga, and that took place the following September. "That was very hush-hush," Quinlin said.

A couple of months later, Quinlin said, he called one of Cheney's aides to ask "if it would be OK to submit an application to march" in the inaugural parade. The official invitation came Dec. 14.

Quinlin has for 15 years been a member of the 31-man squad that performs re-enactments at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, at the federal historic site at Andersonville, where thousands of Union men died in the notorious prisoner of war camp, and at Jonesboro and Chickamauga.



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### U.S. Nearer an Answer on Monitor Mystery Men

By Michael Kilian

Chicago Tribune National Correspondent

*Published December 26, 2004*  
NEWPORT NEWS, Va. -- The last two unburied dead of the Civil War have not been forgotten. For 140 years, they lay trapped in the turret of the legendary ironclad USS Monitor on the sea bottom 16 miles off Cape Hatteras, N.C. Discovered when the turret was raised by marine archeologists two years ago, the skeletal remains of these two 19th Century U.S. sailors have since reposed at the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, where forensics experts have been painstakingly assessing DNA samples and other evidence in hopes of determining the men's identities. The work is not finished, but historians at the federal government's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary--based here and established to protect the wreckage of the Monitor from treasure hunters and other underwater intruders--are hopeful that a report might be released next year. It is known that four officers and 12 enlisted seamen died when the Union Monitor foundered during a gale while being towed to a new duty station in the Carolinas on New Year's Eve 1862.

But which two these might be has thus far baffled scholars and investigators.

That the remains were found in the turret has been of little help. "Nobody should have been in there," said Monitor Sanctuary Manager John Broadwater. "While it was under tow, that would have been a real rough place to be. It would have been wet, and up high, so you would have

been tossed around. Once the guns were secured, there would have been no reason for anybody to be up there and probably nobody wanted to be." "It's a mystery," he said. The epic March 9, 1862, battle between the Monitor and the Confederate ironclad CSS Virginia--the first clash between iron-sided warships--changed the course of naval history.

Built from the burned-out hulk of the captured Union frigate Merrimack, the Virginia had easily sunk two wooden-sided Federal vessels the previous day, establishing itself as a Confederate wonder weapon that threatened to break the U.S. Navy's blockade of Chesapeake Bay. The arrival of the Monitor put an end to those ambitions.

The ensuing slugfest between the two forerunners of the modern warship ended in a draw, but the Virginia was prevented from taking any further action against the blockading fleet. Later trapped in the shallow waters of the James River, the Virginia was burned again to keep the Yankees from repossessing her.

By year's end, it was decided that the steamer Rhode Island would tow the Monitor to Carolina ports for use against Confederate vessels there. Passing Cape Hatteras on the Outer Banks, the ships were struck by a ferocious gale.

Monitor helmsman Francis Butts later recalled: "The vessel was making very heavy weather, riding one huge wave, plunging through the next as if shooting straight for the bottom of the ocean and splashing down upon another with such force that her hull would tremble, and with a shock that would sometimes take us off our feet, while a fourth would leap upon us and break far above the turret." Taking on water, the Monitor

requested that the Rhode Island send boats to take off the 60-some crew members, but before all could be rescued, one of the two hawsers, or tow ropes, was lost, causing the ironclad to yaw and roll violently. The last anyone aboard the Rhode Island saw of the ship was the eerie glow of the red lantern that had been affixed to the Monitor's mast.

The wreck of the Monitor was not found until 1974, some 240 feet below the surface.

In 2002, the turret was brought to the surface and then taken ashore as an emergency measure to prevent further deterioration.

It has been placed in a conservation tank at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, where the ship's two 11-inch Dahlgren cannons were removed from it this year for restoration work.

According to Broadwater, the outer casing of the gun barrels was turning soft from the long immersion in seawater.

"They had been engraved after the battle of Hampton Roads," he said. "We had a real struggle trying to figure out how to make sure we didn't damage those engravings, for they make the guns unique. They were both labeled 'Monitor--Merrimack,' and then one was engraved with 'Worden' [after the captain, John Worden] and the other one 'Ericsson,' for the builder [John Ericsson]."

Eventually, the guns will be displayed in the museum, where the Monitor's fully restored propeller and the famous red lantern are on exhibit. The skeletal remains were discovered almost immediately after the turret was brought ashore.

The Hawaii lab, part of the military's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, is primarily concerned



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with the identification of recovered remains of troops from Vietnam, the Korean War and World War II. Its forensics experts could work on the Monitor case only part time. Other challenges have also delayed the identification process. "There was no soft tissue with the skeletal remains that could be used for detailed DNA analysis," Broadwater said. "We were a little disappointed by that. But, according to the forensics folks in Hawaii, we did get some fairly good DNA . . . which gives us some information but not so much as we hoped for." Also, like the cannons and the turret, the remains were covered with mineral concretions from the years in salt water.

"They had to chip away at the concretions and try to clean the bone so they could look for any physical injuries and anything that might provide clues to the identities," Broadwater said.

Another problem was all materials recovered from the Monitor are considered historic artifacts and must be treated with care.

"One of the guys still had his boots on," Broadwater said. "They had to try to figure out how to remove the bones of the feet from the boots without damaging the boots." A number of brass buttons were recovered from the turret and may help narrow the identification process because they were all from enlisted seamen's uniforms.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Johnie Webb, senior adviser of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, said progress has been made in determining the approximate height and age of the Monitor victims but no information will be given out until the report is complete, and that may take some time.

The report will be made to the Navy Casualty Office because the two crewmen are officially considered missing naval personnel. Once the Navy gets the report, Webb said, the really hard part begins. "They have to find a maternal relative of one of the sailors and make a DNA match with a blood sample," he said.

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