

THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

From the Editor

I recently received an email from one of our members asking me to send her newsletter to her by email and take her name off the mailing list. As some of you know, I tried to set up an email list in the past but, due to the variety of computers out there, sending out the newsletter as a word attachment was not very successful. Some folks with older versions of word were unable to open up the newsletter at all while some got a garbled version. I am happy to say that, thanks to Nils Lehneis, the BCWRT Web master, I can now send out an email with a link to the website and those with Adobe Acrobat can open and read a full color version of the BCWRT Newsletter. (If you don't have Adobe Acrobat, you can download it directly from the BCWRT website. It's easy and it's FREE.)

I encourage all of our members to do this. The roundtable mails out about 250 newsletters each month. At \$.37 per copy that adds up to around \$93 per month. Times 12 is a total of \$1110.00 yearly. If even half of our readers went to the website instead of getting the news letter in the mail, we would have an additional \$550 to donate towards preservation at the end of the year.

My email address is: moondance1@comcast.net. If you would prefer to receive your newsletter electronically, please send a message to me from the email address you would prefer to have it sent to. I can set up a mailing list and send out a link to the newsletter to all on the list each month.

There are several plusses to this approach. First, you will be able to get the newsletter a few days earlier. Second, photos will be in full color. You can read it onscreen or print it

out. Third, it will encourage you to look over the BCWRT web site. Nils has done an excellent job and I believe our site is one of the better ones available.

Antietam to Showcase Birth of Modern Medical Care

Associated Press

Originally published April 24, 2005 SHARPSBURG - Visitors to the Antietam National Battlefield often come knowing about the deaths. Starting this spring, they can learn how lives were saved by modern medical concepts pioneered at the Civil War site.

Efficient systems for sorting and transporting patients and managing medical supplies can be traced to a red-brick farmhouse at the battlefield's eastern edge where Union surgeon Jonathan Letterman oversaw the care of thousands of soldiers wounded on the bloodiest day of the war.

The building opens to the public Thursday as the Pry House Field Hospital Museum. Run by the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in nearby Frederick, it achieves a long-held goal of the National Park Service.

"We've never been able to do an adequate education on the medical care that was here," park Superintendent John W. Howard said. "With the Pry House opening up, it's a great opportunity to bring that part of the interpretive story into the light, where it will get the attention it is due."

Letterman, born in Washington, Pa., was director of medicine for the Army of the Potomac. He is known as the father of modern battlefield medicine for revamping the Army Medical

Corps. The blueprint for the reorganization was Letterman's report on the Battle of Antietam, also known as the Battle of Sharpsburg, fought Sept. 17, 1862, on rocky farm fields about 60 miles west of Baltimore. There were nearly 23,000 casualties - including about 3,700 killed, 17,300 wounded and 1,800 captured or missing.

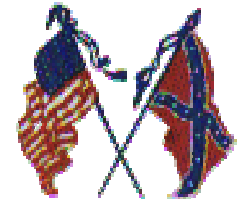
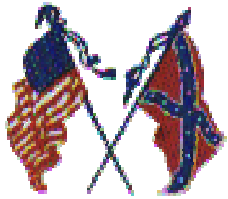
"What he set up as a medical system still affects military medical care and civilian medical care to this day," said George Wunderlich, executive director of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine.

The white barn on the grounds will provide conference space for groups too large for the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in downtown Frederick, about 15 miles east. That facility opened in 1996, after organizers failed to obtain a battlefield location.

Gettysburg Museum Foundation Gets Challenge Grant

April 26, 2005-CWi-A Philadelphia philanthropist has issued a matching gift challenge of \$4.5 million in support of the Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation's Campaign to Preserve Gettysburg.

H.F. (Gerry) Lenfest will match, dollar-for-dollar, \$4.5 million in gifts the Foundation receives through June 30, 2005, Foundation President Robert C. Wilburn announced today. This all-or-nothing gift $\frac{3}{4}$ the Foundation must meet the entire \$4.5 million challenge $\frac{3}{4}$ will mean an additional \$9 million toward construction of the new Museum and Visitor Center for Gettysburg National Military Park, preservation of the park's collection of artifacts and



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archives, restoration of the Gettysburg Cyclorama painting and restoration of portions of the battlefield to their 1863 appearance.

"This is an incredibly thoughtful and generous gift and, to the extent we needed one, even more incentive to meet our fundraising goal of \$75 million in advance of the ground breaking for the new Museum and Visitor Center planned for June 2," Wilburn said.

In March the Foundation announced it already had identified \$69.4 million in funding for its Campaign to Preserve Gettysburg. Recent gifts represented in this total include \$500,000 from the Chicago-based Exelon Corporation, parent company of PECO Energy, and \$250,000 from M&T Bank in Buffalo, NY.

The Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation is a nonprofit educational institution working in partnership with Gettysburg National Military Park to preserve the resources of the park, to tell the story of the Gettysburg Campaign, and to give visitors a deeper, more lasting appreciation for what happened there.

Fredericksburg Sunken Road Rooted in the Past

Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star

4/22/05

By Rusty Dennen

DURING THE Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862, Confederates used Sunken Road--a thin ribbon of compacted dirt snaking below Marye's Heights--to get to defensive positions that would give the South one of their greatest victories of the Civil War.

Soldiers rested, ran, fell and died along the wagon-rutted road and the

stone wall along its edge, which would become etched in a nation's collective memory.

As part of an effort to re-create the look and feel of the spot, the National Park Service is winding up a project that may be unique in the annals of historic preservation, according to John Hennessy, chief historian for Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park.

Hennessy thought it would be relatively simple to re-create a dirt road.

He was wrong.

"I think we have looked at every conceivable mixture of gravel, sand, cinder and clay known to humanity," Hennessy said earlier this week as workmen were finishing up the job.



John Hennessy, chief historian of Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, walks along a restored section of Sunken Road in Fredericksburg. The re-created Civil War-era road is a combination of dirt, gravel and clay. (photo courtesy Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star)

The original plan was to use a soil-concrete mixture.

"We had used that on trails and like it for that, but not on the road. It was lighter and more compacted than we wanted. It looked like an airport runway," Hennessy said.

Park historians and technicians then got busy on a solution.

"We did about 25 test panels in our quest for a perfect road surface," Hennessy said. Some modern road surfaces were considered, even shredded tires.

The answer lay in the past.

"We concluded that to find the best surface, we had to look backward."

A mixture of clay, dirt and gravel was deemed suitable, but not just any combination.

"We experimented again with a dozen different mixtures. We wanted one that would look good and function well with a minimum of erosion and would be durable to walk on," he said.

"All of our high-tech aspirations," he noted, didn't work. Hennessy, a career researcher, did his homework and came up empty. He couldn't find any other parks that had attempted a similar project.

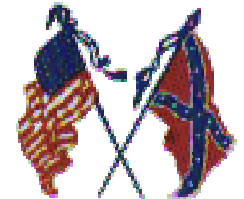
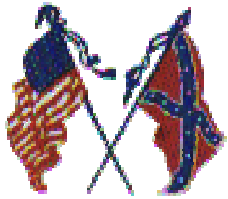
"In this case there's no centralized think tank. We canvassed a lot of parks and talked to lots of different people" about potential materials.

Because of the historical prominence of the site, "we wanted to take the cautious route. We didn't want to get into the situation of using a new material that hadn't been well documented."

From a distance, Sunken Road now has the light tan appearance of an Outer Banks beach at low tide. Underfoot, it's solid, with chunks of stone creating a slightly irregular surface. The reconstructed road runs about 1,000 feet.

Known as Telegraph Road for the wire that ran along the route during the Civil War, the name was later changed to Sunken Road because part of the surface was lower than the surrounding terrain.

Sunken Road was dirt and gravel until the 1930s when it was paved. The portion of the road between



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Hanover Street and Lafayette Boulevard was permanently closed last August.

When crews scraped off the layers of asphalt, underneath they found a compacted gravel road base.

"We had to supplement that aggregate base and to get the elevations on the road surface itself that would work" for drainage.

"The road now is a little higher than the original," Hennessy said, adding, "Contrary to popular belief, the road was not more sunken in 1862" than in modern times.

Visitors, he said, won't see a dramatically sunken road. The only truly sunken part during the war was in front of Brompton, a mansion on the hill.

Hennessy said the next step is getting grass planted along the shoulder so that the road will resemble its meandering and somewhat overgrown wartime appearance.

"Our purpose is to create a historical setting in 1862, not a finely manicured park," Hennessy said.

Sunken Road has been a historical work in progress since 2001. Last fall, stone masons rebuilt a long section of the stone wall behind which Confederates hid and decimated Union troops as they attacked repeatedly across an open field.

Paths have been added and sites of the Martha Stephens and Ebert houses that once stood along the road still need to be marked and other exhibits installed.

"I think that once we're done, it will not only be an incredibly evocative place, but a very, very nice place" for visitors, Hennessy said.

Sunken Road will be rededicated on May 29 at 2 p.m. with a whole day of activities including a dramatic reading, re-enactors, and

descendants of Confederate and Union soldiers who fought there.

Russ Smith, the parks' superintendent, said Sunken Road will be on visitors' must-see lists.

"It's right there to see and experience, and people will have a better idea when they stand behind the stone wall" what the soldiers saw. "And now, they won't have to dodge traffic."

About 80,000 people went through the park's Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center last year.

Many more are expected to visit this year because the park dropped its entrance fees there and at other attractions. Also, area battlefields were prominently featured in a March National Geographic magazine story about battlefield preservation.

Rule Change Threatens Preservation Status

April 28, 2005 (CWi) A proposal to weaken Federal rules requiring investigation of sites for historic resources before they can be altered by development is causing an uproar in preservation circles.

Hearings were recently held in a US House subcommittee to weaken the "Section 106" rules which restrict alterations of historic buildings, or sites which might contain historic resources.

Under the present regulations, in place for decades, any alteration of a historic resource must be investigated and approved by preservation officials if the resource is on the National Register of Historic Sites, or if it would be eligible for inclusion in the register. The subcommittee heard testimony on two proposed changes in the present rules:

--one would prohibit a property from being listed on the National Register

if the present owner of the property objected to the inclusion,

--the other would apparently limit Federal involvement in blocking development to those sites which are either already on the National Register or which are "determined eligible by the Secretary of the Interior."

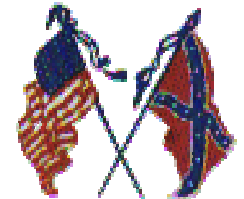
The proposed rule changes were put forward by House Resources Committee Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA), who described the changes as necessary to protect private property rights.

"Congress recognized many years ago the importance of preserving our nation's historic places and landmarks," said Pombo. "However, in our attempts to preserve these places, it is important to remember one of the most important foundations of our great nation, and that is an individual's right to private property."

Subcommittee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-CA) made a similar statement, saying "... there is a disturbing trend of abuse that has emerged, especially in the last decade. The Act has increasingly been used to trample the rights of property owners."

The National Historic Preservation Act, first passed in 1966, requires inspection of all federal projects for their impact on historic properties in accordance with Section 106 of the Act and the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

(Further complicating discussion the matter is the fact that the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) derives all its revenue from a portion of Outer Continental Shelf oil lease payments. Disbursement of that money is controlled by yet another subcommittee. HPF money is distributed in the form of matching



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grants to states for historic preservation projects.)

A joint letter from preservation organizations to the committee chairs says in part:

"Section 4 of the Discussion Draft is most troubling to all of our members. It would limit a federal agency's consideration of "adverse effects" resulting from one of its projects only to those properties listed on the National Register and determined eligible by the Secretary [of the Interior]. This would eliminate protection from millions of structures currently covered under Section 106--more than three-quarters of the present inventory. In addition, this would leave countless, unknown historic places in jeopardy of destruction. Successful examples include the first Spanish settlement in St. Augustine, FL, and the African burial ground in New York, both uncovered as a part of a Federal project. Since 1971 Federal guidelines direct the potential destroyers of historic places--US agencies--to "identify historic places, and CONSIDER the project's effect on the historic places, and take appropriate action that balances the agency's mission, national need and historic preservation values." Section 4 would eliminate this most effective process and do irreparable harm to our heritage.

"Section 2 of the Discussion Draft raises additional concerns. It would prohibit eligibility determinations by the Keeper if the owner objects to listing the property on the Register. In historic districts, this provision would ban such determinations when more than 50 percent of the owners within a district object. As a result, everyone else would lose protection from a future Federal project affecting their properties. Additionally, this change

could mean that even resources previously deemed eligible for the Register by SHPOs, THPOs, and Federal agencies would be disallowed such a determination by the Keeper.

"This proposal would threaten the rights of owners who live in historic homes not already listed on the Register. In order to protect their property from a Federal undertaking, owners would have to pay for preparing a nomination at their own expense. They would bear the burden of having to complete it before the project planning process begins. Once the appropriate reviews start, it would be too late.

"Finally, Section 3 is structured in such a way that it would have a very limited application. No evidence has been presented that this change is needed or will provide additional due process protections. It is also inappropriate for Federal laws to interfere with local land use laws by dictating to those governments how they may regulate their historic resources."

The letter, available in full on the website of the American Cultural Resources Association (www.acra-crm.org/jointnunesletter.pdf) is signed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, American Cultural Resources Association, Society for Historical Archaeology, the American Institute of Architects, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and Preservation Action.

New Gettysburg Visitor Center Groundbreaking Now Set for June 2

April 18, 2005-CWi-A late spurt of fundraising has enabled the planners of the new Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park to set a date of June 2 for groundbreaking on the historic new structure on the south side of Hunt Avenue.

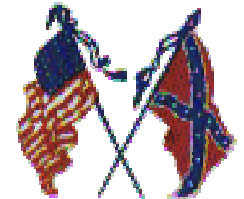
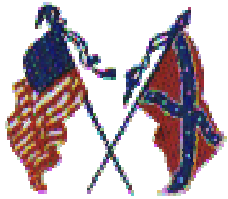
The Foundation told a Congressional oversight committee in testimony last month that it had received nearly \$70 million of the \$75 million needed to start construction. The total projected funding for the center is currently at \$95 million, but that figure includes an endowment and other money not related to immediate construction expenses.

Under an agreement between the Foundation and the National Park Service, sufficient money to complete construction of the "core mission" of the center had to be on hand before construction commenced.

Foundation director of external affairs Elliot Gruber told Civil War Interactive that the group was not announcing the full list of corporate and individual donors to the project.

In recent testimony before a Congressional subcommittee, Foundation board member and former Pennsylvania Gov. Dick Thornburgh broke down the funding sources as follows:

Seventeen percent - \$11.9 million - has been appropriated by Congress. These funds include \$9 million earmarked for the restoration of the Gettysburg Cyclorama painting and an additional \$2.9 million earmarked for the preservation of the park's collection of artifacts and archives.



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Twenty-nine percent - \$20.5 million – comes from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which is investing in the project through its Capitol Assistance Program. The Commonwealth recognizes the significant impact that the Gettysburg Tourism industry has on the state and the Foundation is pleased they have joined us as partners in this project.

The remaining 54 percent - \$37 million – comes from the private sector, with \$12 million of that to be borrowed from commercial lenders and the remainder already in hand or pledged from more than 234 private foundations, corporations and individuals.

Thornburgh added: "Just a few weeks ago, the Foundation announced receipt of more than \$5.5 million in gifts and grants, including: \$1 million from The Pew Charitable Trusts in Philadelphia, also with offices in Washington, D.C.; \$1 million from the McCormick Tribune Foundation in Chicago; \$1.5 million from an anonymous donor in New York; and more than \$1 million from other individuals, corporations and foundations, including \$500,000 from an anonymous donor in western Pennsylvania. Also, two organizations that had previously contributed \$500,000 - a foundation in the Baltimore area and Gettysburg Tours - each increased their commitments to \$1 million."

Gruber noted that the first part of construction to commence will be a "stream restoration" project near a presently disused part of the battlefield that once held a small amusement park known as Fantasyland.

After the June 2 official groundbreaking, Gruber said, the first four months of construction will be focused on the restoration of the

ponds and stream. The work will avoid any disruption of the heavily-used park during the prime tourism visitation season. Once construction begins, probably in November, any disruption to traffic usage should be confined to Hunt Avenue at this stage of work.

Clues Emerge About Monitor Crewmen

**Willie Drye
for National Geographic News,
April 4, 2005**

On a cold and violent winter night in 1862, two U.S. Navy sailors tried desperately to leave the U.S.S. *Monitor* as it was sinking off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. But the men—one middle-aged, the other not much more than a teenager—couldn't escape before the ship sank in 240 feet (73 meters) of water.

The remains of these luckless sailors were found when archaeologists raised the *Monitor's* gun turret in 2002. A revolutionary design for its time, the turret was taken to the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia, for preservation and display.

The skeletons of the sailors were sent to U.S. military forensic investigators in Hawaii, who hope to identify the men. By tradition, the U.S. armed forces seek to identify the remains of dead soldiers and to notify their families, however old the remains may be.

Meanwhile, researchers at the Mariner's Museum hope to answer other questions about the *Monitor's* sinking, including whether a sailor shoved a terrified cat into the barrel of a cannon as the ship tossed on stormy seas.

John Broadwater directs the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary for the U.S. National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration. He said the effort to identify the *Monitor* sailors mirrors the problem faced by investigators who raised another famous Civil War vessel, the Confederate submarine *Hunley*.

The *Hunley* sank in 1864 and was raised in 2000. The remains of its eight crewmen were identified and buried last year in an elaborate ceremony in Charleston, South Carolina.

"We've been in close communications with the *Hunley* investigators," Broadwater said. "We're using a lot of the same tests and identification processes that they did. We have very similar problems in that we've both got many tons of rusty iron, and we're trying to determine the best way to get it un-rusty."

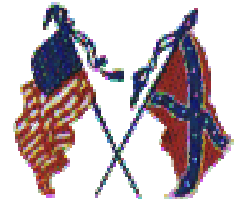
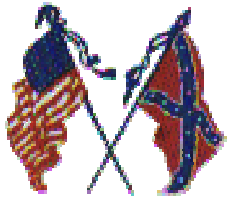
Skeletal Clues

The forensic investigators in Hawaii also had to deal with the rust problem, said U.S. Army Major Rumi Nielson-Green, a spokesperson for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command in Honolulu. All unidentified remains of U.S. military personnel are sent to the lab for identification.

The bones of the two Civil War-era sailors became encrusted with rust that formed on the turret of the *Monitor*, Nielson-Green said. Removing the rust from the bones was a painstaking but worthwhile process, she said.

"What we found is that the temperature and conditions of the water [off Cape Hatteras] were excellent for the preservation of skeletal remains," Nielson-Green said. "The skeletons are in excellent condition. In fact, they're in better shape than a lot of remains recovered from the Vietnam and Korean wars and World War II."

Forensic analysis also uncovered a few details about the two men who



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died in the gun turret of the Civil War vessel. The older sailor was in his late 30s or early 40s and had done a lot of heavy lifting. And a notch worn between his teeth indicated that he'd often smoked a pipe.

The younger sailor was in his late teens or early 20s. Not much else is known about him, because he hadn't lived long enough for his habits to leave an imprint on his skeletal remains, Nielson-Green said.

The forensic investigators hope to identify the crewmen by comparing DNA samples from the bones with samples from descendants of *Monitor* crewmen, Nielson-Green said.

"They will be given a military funeral unless the family member chooses otherwise," she said. "We are optimistic that we will eventually identify them."

Jeff Johnston, historian for the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, said he thinks the remains are those of the men who were trying to keep the *Monitor's* steam-powered pumps operating so other crewmen could be rescued.

"The pumps were the only thing keeping it afloat, and these were the last two guys to leave the boat," Johnston said. "Somebody had to keep the fires going."

Revolutionary Design

The *Monitor* revolutionized naval warfare when it was launched in 1862 during the U.S. Civil War. The ironclad was loaded with ingenious technology, including a revolving turret that allowed the ship's gunners to aim their two 16,500-pound (7,500-kilogram) cannon without turning the entire ship. In March 1862 the *Monitor* engaged in an epic naval slugging match with the Confederate ironclad *Virginia* near Hampton Roads, Virginia. Neither ship could inflict serious damage on the other, but the *Monitor* prevented the



The *Monitor* sinking in a storm off the coast of Cape Hatteras on the night of December 30-31, 1862.

In the background is the USS *Rhode Island* (courtesy US Navy)

Virginia from breaking the U.S. Navy's blockade of Norfolk. That defense dealt a serious blow to Confederate hopes of winning the war.

Later U.S. Navy commanders decided to send the *Monitor* to South Carolina to enforce another blockade. But a vicious storm off the North Carolina coast caught the *Monitor* on the night of December 30, 1862.

The crew was ordered to abandon ship, and the U.S.S. *Rhode Island*, which was towing the *Monitor*, sent rescue boats.

Francis Butts, who had volunteered for duty aboard the *Monitor* only a month earlier, said he was alone in the turret when the ship's cat began "howling one of those hoarse and solemn tunes."

Butts said he removed the muzzle plug from one of the ship's cannons, pushed the cat into the barrel's 20-inch-wide (51-centimeter-wide) opening, and replaced the plug.

Butts wrote about his experience in 1885.

Johnston, the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary historian, thinks Butts's claim is a tall tale. While Civil War sailors often had pets aboard their ships, Butts is the only *Monitor* crewmember who ever mentioned a cat, Johnston said.

The historian notes that newspaper reporters of the day often wrote about ships' pets and that the press idolized the *Monitor* and its crew after the dramatic battle at Hampton Roads. "The crew was given a heroes' welcome everywhere they went," Johnston said. "If there had been a cat on board, I think a reporter would have picked up on it."

When Butts wrote about the cat two decades after the warship sank, the nation was undergoing a revival of "*Monitor* madness." Johnston speculates that this could have motivated the Civil War sailor to spin the cat tale. "In my opinion, Francis Butts told that story, because he needed a claim to fame later in life," Johnston said.

Still, it will be a while before investigators can determine whether Butts was telling the truth, since X-rays can't penetrate the thick barrels of the massive cannon.

The cannon are being treated for preservation, and it will be at least another year before investigators can remove the concretions that accumulated in their barrels during their long stay on the Atlantic Ocean floor.

Then researchers will finally see whether an unlucky feline did indeed go down with the *Monitor*.