

Civil War News Roundup - 02/01/2008
Courtesy of the Civil War Preservation Trust –
www.civilwar.org

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CWPT touts '07 successes
By Drew Houff

02/01/2008

The Winchester Star (VA)

http://www.winchesterstar.com/article_details.php?ArticleID=4384

WINCHESTER — The Civil War Preservation Trust is on a winning streak, having permanently protected 1,616 acres at 12 different Civil War battlefields in five states during 2007.

These successes enabled the CWPT to reach a historic milestone of 25,000 acres saved during its two decades of preservation work.

Its overall success, according to a press release from the Civil War Preservation Trust, includes the protection of 25,289 acres of battlefield land at 99 sites in 18 states.

Its 2007 preservation efforts included four sites in Virginia — Glendale, McDowell, Petersburg, and White Oak Road — as well as a battlefield in Summit Point, W.Va.

"Our business is buying dirt, and in 2007, business was good," said CWPT President James Lighthizer, according to the press release. "Not only were we able to protect land at battlefields in Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, but this organization also passed an important milestone — in the past 20 years, our members helped save more than 25,000 acres of irreplaceable American history from becoming strip malls and housing developments."

The trust began its efforts in 1987 when a group of historians, concerned with the destruction of Northern Virginia battlefields, formed the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites.

In November 1999, that group merged with the similarly aimed Civil War Trust to form the current organization.

Last year's most significant land acquisitions came at the Glendale battlefield in Henrico County, where historians estimate that the organization has now successfully preserved 75 percent of the core fighting area.

With a \$4.1 million price tag, the 319 acres at Glendale were also the CWPT's most expensive purchase of the year. Yet, as of the first of this year, the trust already has received in excess of half of this fundraising goal in received gifts and commitments.

Lighthizer said the preservation effort has enjoyed strong support.

"At Glendale, we have done something truly unique," he said. "We have preserved nearly the entire battlefield from scratch, not merely filled in gaps left by previous preservation efforts."

This is ground that, according to eminent historians, saw some of the fiercest hand-to-hand fighting of the war."

In fall 2007, the CWPT completed its most ambitious historic interpretation project, installing nearly five miles of walking and biking trails on the battlefield at Third Winchester in Frederick County, making it accessible to visitors who do not have a knowledgeable guide to take them through the grounds.

Despite the past successes, Lighthizer said time is fleeting to save the remaining Civil War battlefields.

"If we do not act soon, in some cases in the next few months, these hallowed grounds will be lost to us forever," he said. "The development pressures facing many communities with Civil War battlefields are immense, but we will continue our efforts to protect these unique resources for future generations."

On the Internet...www.civilwar.org

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Battle of Rivers Bridge reenactment this weekend
By LARKIN HIOTT, T&D Correspondent

<http://www.thetandd.com/articles/2008/02/01/news/12940953.prt>

Orangeburg Times and Democrat (SC)

EHRHARDT -- The 143rd Reenactment of the Battle of Rivers Bridge, along with living history demonstrations, will be held this weekend on private property just southeast of Rivers Bridge State Historical Site and S.C. 641.

Activities are planned from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

The event is sponsored by the 25th South Carolina Volunteers, Palmetto Battalion Inc., with assistance from Rivers Bridge SCV Camp #842.

A battle reenactment will be staged at 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Infantry, artillery, Calvary and living history demonstrations can be seen throughout the weekend, along with first-person living history scenarios. Religious services will be held at 10 a.m. Sunday. Modern vendor and SCV displays will be featured at the event as well.

On Feb. 2-3, 1865, a contingent of 1,200 Confederate soldiers made a stand at Rivers Bridge on the Salkehatchie River against Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's sweep across South Carolina during the final months of the Civil War. Behind stout earthen fortifications, the Southerners fought a division of about 5,000 Union soldiers.

Union troops crossed the swollen swamp on both ends of the Confederate line to finally win the battle. The burning of Columbia followed soon after.

Today, Rivers Bridge State Historic Site is the only state-operated site that preserves and interprets a Civil War battlefield.

Reenactment units, fitted with black powder weapons, cannons, Calvary horses and boasting recreated uniforms of both the Confederate and Union soldiers, will be arriving Friday evening to camp.

"People really get into these reenactments," said Paul Clayton, a retired Civil War reenactor. "It is really great getting out there, all dressed out with the booming of those black powder guns going off. They don't use live ammunition, but just the powder exploding... it is the loudest thing you've ever heard."

Visitors will be able to walk the path carpeted with soft pine needles and dried leaves from the front of the battlefield to the swamp area. Interpretative panels are placed around the grounds with illustrations of the generals, an illustration of the land before the Confederate Army dug the earthen defense fortifications and facts about the two-day battle.

A mile away, visitors can walk through the burial ground where 11 Rivers Bridge soldiers were reburied in 1876 at the site of a church that was destroyed by Union troops. Eleven stone markers, ensconced by a wrought-iron fence, name the Georgia regiment soldiers who bravely fought and died in the battle. Also, visitors can view the memorial to World War II veterans who hailed from the surrounding areas of Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell.

General admission for this weekend's event is \$5 for adults, with free admission for children 12 years of age and under and seniors 60 years of age and over.

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Editorial: Preserving the nation's history

1/29/2008

Chattanooga Times Free Press

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/>

Protecting and preserving the nation's historic battlefields and other sites associated with the Civil War is an ongoing process made more difficult by the passage of time and by an increasingly mobile and land-hungry population. Preservation in those circumstances is often tough, but it is vital work. Happily, there is a variety of groups and institutions that willingly shoulder the task.

The Civil War Preservation Trust is such a group. Its mission is to protect and preserve the battlefields of the most divisive war in the nation's history. The task is arduous, but the group has had notable success over the years. A report on the trust's work in 2007 summarizes significant accomplishments that benefit all Americans.

The nonprofit group permanently protected 1,616 acres of historically significant ground at 12 Civil War battlefields in five states during the year. Cumulatively, the CWPT now has preserved more than 25,000 acres of historic land at nearly 100 locations in 18 states in two decades of work.

The land protected forever in 2007 includes: Half an acre at Franklin, 88 acres at Parker's Cross Roads and 6 acres at Shiloh in Tennessee; 96 acres at Perryville and 300 acres at Richmond in Kentucky; 144 acres at Champion Hill and 3 acres at Brice's Crossroads in Mississippi; 319 acres at Glendale, 422 acres at McDowell, 10 acres at Petersburg and 9 acres at White Oak Road in Virginia; and 219 acres at Summit Point in West Virginia.

Those sites — large and small, familiar and relatively unknown — will now be protected permanently from encroaching development. Preserving the land is a powerful reminder that Americans are neither divorced from their history nor free of the strong connections between what took place generations ago and the present. Moreover, protecting the land allows those who choose to do so to honor those in both blue and gray who served honorably in a fratricidal war.

The trust's accomplishments of the past year and the organization's successes over decades of work are noteworthy of acknowledgment. They all are a reminder of how much remains to be done. The truth is that the spread of urban and suburban life into the once rural areas where many of the Civil War's battles took place poses a constant threat to historic sites. Only prompt action by nonprofit agencies like the CWPT and other public and private groups can prevent the loss of additional chunks of the nation's patrimony.

The list of the CWPT's successful preservation work in 2007 should strike an especially resonant chord in Chattanooga and the surrounding region — an area where many Civil War battles and skirmishes occurred. The protection effort is an entirely satisfactory way to preserve the past for the benefit of future generations.

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Groups Align to Protect Endangered Civil War Site
\$2 Million Grant Would Help Preserve Spring Hill Battlefield
By Jill Cecil Wiersma, Staff Writer

1/24/2008

Nashville Tennessean (TN)

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080124/COUNTY090101/801240344/1327>

SPRING HILL, TN - For the past three years, Spring Hill battlefield has been listed among the 10 most threatened Civil War sites in the country. Soon it could be getting some protection.

Tennessee Historical Commission is seeking a \$2 million grant to buy and preserve the Battle of Spring Hill land.

The organization submitted its 101-page application last month to the Tennessee Department of Transportation, the state agency that administers the federally funded enhancement grant program.

TDOT has \$18.5 million to distribute this year and expects to award the grants in August or September, said spokeswoman B.J. Doughty.

The Historical Commission is partnering with the Civil War Preservation Trust, which compiles the annual list of endangered battlefields, in its application, which is purposefully timed to coincide with the 2011 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, which began April 12, 1861, when Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, S.C.

Tennessee is one of the first states to create a sesquicentennial planning commission to observe that event.

City officials approve

The Spring Hill Board of Mayor and Alderman voted to endorse the grant application late last year.

"The Battle of Spring Hill is an important episode of the Civil War and an important part of Tennessee's historical heritage," Mayor Danny Leverette said.

Because the city consists largely of young professionals and their families, preserving the land for public use also could be a helpful economic development tool, Spring Hill Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Cindy Jobe said in her letter of support.

"Parks and greenways are an attractive and inviting facet to an active community," she said.

Alderman Jonathan Duda, who serves on the city's historic commission, wrote in his letter of support that the grant could help make the land more of a focal point in the community.

"Only a very small portion of the core battlefield land at Spring Hill is preserved or accessible to the public, and almost none of the core battlefield land has interpretive facilities for the public," he said.

Development encroaches

The application notes that the timing is also important now in order to prevent the land from being lost to development.

Spring Hill is one of the fastest-growing communities in the country, having jumped from 7,115 residents in 2000 to an estimated 23,462 last year, according to a special census the city conducted.

On its Web site, the Civil War Preservation Trust lists the land, which extends from Kedron Road to Main Street, as "highly threatened by development."

The Battle of Spring Hill was one of the most important battles of the American Civil War, according to the application's writers. On Nov. 29, 1864, the Confederate force failed to stop the movement of Union troops to Franklin, where the Battle of Franklin took place the next day.

The congressionally appointed Civil War Sites Advisory Commission designated the Battle of Spring Hill as a Class B battle in 1990, meaning that it involved an important strategic objective and that the battle had an impact on the Civil War. The site was placed on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

Past grants have averaged \$330,000-\$350,000, Doughty said. There is no maximum or minimum amount specified, but the applicants are required to make a 20 percent match.

The historical commission's application describes its plans as costing \$3 million for land acquisition. Of that amount, it will commit \$1 million at its local match.

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Battlefield Guides Vote to Move
By Caitlin Heaney, Evening Sun Reporter

1/21/2008
Hanover Evening Sun
http://www.eveningsun.com/localnews/ci_8033869

GETTYSBURG, PA - The Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides could start operating out of a downtown Gettysburg office as soon as March after agreeing Friday to relocate its headquarters.

The group voted 78-32 to move to a building behind the Farnsworth House and off South Street that it plans to lease, said president Rick Hohmann. The group will use the building primarily for offices, a library and meeting space, he said.

"We're hoping that this is going to enable us to expand the business and also to accommodate more visitors," Hohmann said.

But guides, currently operating out of the Gettysburg National Military Park Visitors Center, will still have space in the new park visitors center when it opens later this year.

"There'll be a waiting room for guides waiting to go out on tours at the new visitors' center," Hohmann said.

The group mailed out ballots about two weeks ago to its entire membership, but anyone who was not a member and wanted to join was allowed to do so Friday night, Hohmann said. Those new members were allowed to vote, he said, and members were allowed to change votes they might have already sent in.

"Anybody who was swayed by a debate during the meetings were able to reclaim their ballot," Hohmann said.

Hohmann said the building the group plans to lease is zoned for medical use but Gettysburg Hospital "has no interest in it." A hearing on a zoning variance for the property is scheduled for Jan. 23, he said, and a waiting period would follow. But Hohmann said he expects the group could move in by March 1.

"There's a small amount of work that has to be done on this facility," he said.

Hohmann said he would not comment on the group's reasoning for moving. He has said previously the group will offer tours starting at Gateway Gettysburg, the American Civil War Museum on Steinwehr Avenue and elsewhere, such as borough hotels.

The guides, created by Congress in 1915, and the National Park Service clashed recently after the group criticized a reservation and payment system the Gettysburg Foundation proposed

for tours. The foundation, a private, nonprofit organization raising money for and overseeing the new \$125 million visitor center project.

Katie Lawhon, public affairs specialist for Gettysburg National Military Park, said 1.7 million people visit the park every year. Of that number, about 16 percent hire licensed battlefield guides, she said.

"It's an excellent service," she said.

In the summer, park rangers provide some free walking tours and programs, she said. The tours given by licensed guides are different in that they are "commercial and directly for the visitor," she said.

The park found problems in the manner in which visitors could hire a tour guide, Lawhon said.

"Generally, we did not allow reservations for individuals and families," she said. With no advance reservations, some faced a first-come, first-served situation, she said. To better serve visitors, the park created a reservation system that could be paid for in advance with a credit card, she said.

The Gettysburg Foundation, which will operate the park's new museum, now manages ticket sales and reservations for licensed battlefield guides, she said.

"We're improving our visitor service," she said.

In the past, most guided tours were offered on a daily basis as visitors entered the park's visitor center.

Guides would put their names on a rotational list, and visitors chose from available battlefield tour times. That system matched visitors to guide availability and kept the guides' downtime to a minimum, association officials say.

But the park abolished that system. Starting this month, tickets are sold for guided tours and other park attractions.

Tours used to be limited to larger groups in vans and buses that paid a higher tour fee than smaller groups, but the new system takes reservations for groups of all sizes and allows visitors to choose their tour times. Under the new procedure, park visitors will miss out on tours, which means guides will lose income, and idle time will consume too much of the touring schedule, said Chris Rebmann.

"We're forced to choose between efficiency and a fair distribution of bus reservations," he said. "Many of our members depend on bus reservations, especially in the spring."

Visitors paid guides in cash after tours since 1915, and Hohmann has said he opposes the proposed payment plan because it could hurt guides' ability to swap tours with each other and limit tips. Now, guide fees are paid in advance to the Gettysburg Foundation, a private,

nonprofit educational organization working in partnership with the National Park Service. The foundation pays the guides every two weeks.

For some guides, this change causes a financial hardship, Rebmann said.

"For others, it's a matter of principle," he said. "This attempt to collect our earnings in advance and pay us later is an inappropriate intrusion in our financial relationship with our clients."

Under a new system, visitors also would be able to reserve guides by credit card through a Web site, but the foundation would hold the guides' money until a twice-monthly pay period following the tour.

Lawhon also said that despite the existence of the association, the park and the licensed guides have a "one-on-one relationship."

"We are happy to work with the association," she said.

However, Lawhon said park Supt. John A. Latschar received a letter from an attorney hired by the association. Last week Latschar responded with his own letter.

"First, the members of the (association) did not vote overwhelmingly to reject the new reservation system," Latschar's letter read. ". . . the guides were asked if they were willing to participate in a reservation system that does not work. Put that way, I probably would have voted in the negative myself . . . Since all our indications are that the system will work, I have largely discounted the validity of that particular question."

The letter also states that more than 85 percent of the guides have already completed and returned availability forms indicating dates and times they are willing to guide in 2008.

Latschar's letter also states that meetings were held in September and October to discuss how the new system would work. Guides, including association members and non-members, attended.

"Every guide who attended that meeting received a 9-page handout detailing how the system will work," Latschar stated. "Not a single guide at that briefing asked a question or expressed an opinion that could remotely be considered a rejection of the new system."

Dru Anne Neil, spokeswoman for the Gettysburg Foundation, said she didn't want to comment on the issues between the guides and the park.

The foundation works to preserve, honor and protect the natural and cultural resources associated with the park, the Gettysburg Campaign, and the Eisenhower National Historic Site, Neil said. It also partners with the national park system to "provide service to everyone," she said.

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Historic Fort Pike Battles Back
By Kia Hall Hayes

1/20/2008

New Orleans Times-Picayune

http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2008/01/historic_fort_pike_battles_bac.html

ST. TAMMANY BUREAU - Standing in tall marsh grass and looking out at Fort Pike and the adjacent Rigolets, Joseph Yarbrough shuddered to think what would happen if the structure continues its steady decline, which was accelerated by Hurricane Katrina.

It would be like losing the French Quarter, offers Yarbrough, president of the Fort Pike Foundation.

"If these structures were to fall, there would be no replacing it," he said. "We need to preserve it."

State officials are doing just that, giving the historic site a much-needed facelift and developing plans for more significant renovations. Fort Pike is set to open next month for the first time since the storm.

The 19th century fortification at New Orleans' easternmost shore has been closed since the 14-foot-high structure was completely submerged more than two years ago. The waters left waist-high marsh grass, wild animals and significant structural damage to the 190-year-old site, which had already fallen into disrepair due to decades of neglect and erosion.

Fort on endangered list

Fort Pike -- along with Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip, both in Plaquemines Parish -- was listed as among the 10 most endangered battlefields in the United States last year. The list was compiled by the Civil War Preservation Trust, a nonprofit group in Washington, D.C.

Officials say a flurry of activity will take place in the coming weeks to get Fort Pike ready to open, and landscaping crews will come in and clear the marsh grass and mud and other remaining storm debris.

"This was just like the Gulf of Mexico," Yarbrough said of the once-flooded site along U.S. 90.

Support buildings surrounding the fort, which were washed away in the storm, have been replaced, and the walkway, bridge, picnic pavilion and restrooms have been rebuilt. The nearby boat launch, which sustained pre- and post-storm damage and is also owned by the state, reopened several months ago.

"Everybody's anxious to see it open and get people back to the area and try to revitalize the tourist trade," said Yarbrough, who hopes Fort Pike will eventually become one of the most popular tourist attractions in the New Orleans area.

Damage is visible

Signs of the more significant damage are still visible on the fort, which was held by Confederate soldiers until it was taken over by Union forces around 1862. Cracks in the citadel walls that were several feet wide before the storm have expanded enough to walk through. Pieces of old houses and boats, remnants of storm debris that covered the entire fort after the storm, still litter portions of the grounds.

The most heavily damaged areas will remain closed to the public, but visitors will still be able to walk on the grass-covered upper level and around several of the casemates where guns were housed, said Stuart Johnson with the state Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

"You'll still be able to get that experience to look out like a soldier in the fort," he said.

To correct decades of neglect, the state has hired John Miller & Associates to conduct a full evaluation of the fort and develop a five-year construction plan. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has given a verbal commitment to cover the projected \$18 million cost of the project, which includes correcting structural damage and creating barriers to prevent further erosion, Johnson said.

Two other forts fare poorly

Other local forts damaged by Katrina aren't faring so well. Fort Jackson, along the Mississippi River south of Buras and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, held storm surge for weeks after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita because it is surrounded by levees that trapped the water, which had to be pumped out.

Fort Jackson, which was built in the 1820s and is owned by Plaquemines Parish, has remained closed since Katrina. The fort had cracks before the storms, but trees growing atop its bastion walls and over its casemates are the source of much of the structural damage, officials have said.

Stanley Mathes, the parish's tourism director, said there has been talk among parish officials about Fort Jackson becoming part of a national park, but "that is strictly in the talk stage," he said.

Mathes said he would like to see the park reopened so the parish's annual Orange Festival could return to the site.

"It's something that we'd like to get back because it was a great recreational area," he said.

Fort St. Philip, located just upstream from Fort Jackson on the east bank, was built in 1795 by the Spanish. Its cannons prevented the British from reaching New Orleans in 1815 in the

Battle of New Orleans and fired on Union ships in 1862, but owner Frank Ashby Jr., a New Orleans oil broker, has no plans to restore it.

The 60-acre fort had fallen into disrepair years ago, but, thanks to Katrina, "whatever was left standing is probably not standing anymore," Ashby said.

Plaquemines Parish had expressed interest in acquiring the fort, which is accessible only by boat, but Ashby says he won't part with the land where he scattered his father's ashes decades ago.

"I have no plans to restore it and I never did have any plans to restore it," he said.

'It's just too much to lose'

Walking around Fort Pike while keeping an eye out for snakes, Yarbrough was a veritable encyclopedia of trivia.

"The history here is just phenomenal," he said.

Completed in 1827 on top of a cypress log foundation called "grillage," the structure was home to 400 Confederate troops during the Civil War. Pinkney Benton Stewart Pinchback served here as a second lieutenant before becoming the first African-American governor of Louisiana, Yarbrough said.

During the Civil War, Confederate soldiers held the fort until Union forces took New Orleans in 1862 and the structure was evacuated. Union soldiers reoccupied the building and used it as a training center for former slaves, who were taught to use heavy artillery before joining the U.S. Colored Troops.

The fort was officially abandoned in 1890 and in 1972 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"It's just too much to lose," Yarbrough said.

He plans to coordinate tours with local schools, make the site a bus tour destination and hold arts and crafts fairs on the property. An Open Air Art Festival, the last in May 2005, was held at the fort for four years before Katrina. Yarbrough wants Fort Pike to be even more popular than it was before the storm, when it attracted about an average of 14,000 visitors annually.

"It has the potential if we can get the support from the public and the funds to do it," he said.

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Photos Found of Lincoln's Second Inauguration
By Johanna Neuman, Staff Writer

1/17/2008

Los Angeles Times (CA)

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/politics/la-na-lincoln17jan17,1,1173096.story?coll=la-news-politics-national>

WASHINGTON - The Library of Congress on Wednesday unveiled three photo negatives - long mislabeled -- of the crowd that gathered at the Capitol for Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address on March 4, 1865.

"It's exciting to find additional images related to the Lincoln presidency," said Carol Johnson, curator of photography at the Library of Congress. She specializes in 19th century photography and played sleuth to match the negatives to the correct event.

"It was a wet, rainy day, most people have on long overcoats and hats. . . . You can see some people's expressions -- some who seem to be cheering, one guy raising his hand."

A reader browsing through the Library of Congress' online Civil War photographic collection noticed three glass negatives identified as taken during the administration of Ulysses S. Grant, either at his inauguration or at the Grand Review of the Armies.

The reader, from Berthoud, Colo., alerted the library that he did not think the labels were correct.

Johnson also thought the negatives looked more like 1865 than 1869. And an earlier cataloger had put a margin note on the side of one of them that said, "Lincoln?"

Johnson, who has worked at the library for 25 years, decided to compare the three questionable negatives to the two negatives the library had of Lincoln's second inauguration. A careful visual comparison confirmed her hunch.

"The podium for Grant's inauguration was set up differently," said Johnson, who conferred during the process with the Center for Civil War Photography in Oldsmar, Fla. "These photos matched [Lincoln's inauguration] perfectly."

Johnson made the discovery Jan. 4, and library staff members worked to update the records before announcing the find to the public. Asked why Lincoln discoveries tended to excite interest, Johnson said, "Perhaps because he was such a beloved president."

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Lincoln's Legacy in Kentucky
Search is on for the 'Footprint' of President's Boyhood Home
By Chris Kenning

1/17/2008

Louisville Courier-Journal (KY)

<http://www.courier-journal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080117/NEWS01/801170386/1008>

KNOB CREEK, KY - In a small valley bordered by forested hills and a low creek, Abraham Lincoln's first memories took root: of planting pumpkins, walking to school, nearly drowning in a swollen stream and seeing shackled slaves shuffle along a dusty turnpike.

This week, National Park Service archaeologists are using shovels, sifters and magnetometers to search for artifacts of Lincoln's Kentucky boyhood, and, if they're lucky, the farm's Holy Grail: The missing footprint of the tiny cabin where the nation's 16th president lived from ages 2 to 7.

"He formed his first impressions here, and his connection to Kentucky followed him throughout his life," said Sandy Brue, an official with the nearby Lincoln Birthplace National Historic site.

The dig at the Knob Creek site, roughly seven miles east of Hodgenville on U.S. 31E, is a prelude to next month's Kentucky kickoff of a sprawling, two-year national Lincoln bicentennial -- celebrating the man many consider to be the greatest leader in American history. Kentucky will play a pivotal role in that celebration, officials say.

"It isn't a one-day event, it's about creating renewed awareness of the Lincoln heritage," said LaRue County Judge-Executive Tommy Turner, who is co-chairman of the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

The inaugural event happens on Feb. 12 when President Bush has been invited to deliver the keynote address at a ceremony at Lincoln's birthplace in Hodgenville. A day earlier, Louisville will be host to a gala at the Kentucky Center, with music, displays and an appearance by TV actor Sam Waterston as Lincoln.

The coming months will feature Lincoln's story in school lessons, exhibits as well as upgrades to museums and historic sites.

"We're hoping to re-position Kentucky as an integral part of the Lincoln story," said Kent Whitworth, director of the state historical society.

Lincoln's connection to the commonwealth began when his grandfather, Capt. Abraham Lincoln, moved to the wilderness in 1782. He was killed by American Indians in a raid two years later while farming with his children, about 20 miles east of Louisville.

Lincoln's parents, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, moved to Kentucky's more populated Washington County (later renamed LaRue County) in the winter of 1808, paying \$200 for 348 rocky acres on Nolin Creek, called Sinking Springs farm. Just two months later, Lincoln was born in a 16- by 18-foot, dirt-floor cabin.

By the time Lincoln was 2, his father was caught up in a legal dispute over the farm and had to move the family to 30 rented acres off Knob Creek, located on the turnpike between Louisville and Nashville. About 10 families lived in the area.

"My earliest recollection ... is of the Knob Creek place," Lincoln wrote in an 1860 letter.

Chief Archaeologist Chuck Lawson, part of a team from the Southeast Archeological Center in Florida, an arm of the National Park Service, stood recently just a few dozen yards from Knob Creek, where young Lincoln was saved from drowning by a friend who pulled him from a rain-swollen creek.

Lawson said it was exciting to hunt for evidence from the place where the Lincolns belonged to an anti-slavery church; where young Lincoln recalled planting seeds that washed away in a flood; where his younger brother died of illness; and where he walked two miles to a one-room schoolhouse with his sister, Sarah.

By the time Lincoln was 7, a flaw in the land title prompted the family to move to Indiana. But park officials say his experiences in Kentucky during a key developmental time helped mold his later views.

Lawson, whose work preceded the park's plan to expand visitor facilities, said some digging had already uncovered several intriguing pottery shards across the road, where some suspect the original cabin stood. But lab work would be required to date them exactly, he said.

Some prehistoric chipped flint, likely indicating that the area was a stopping place to make stone tools, has also been found -- as were the remains of a horse, but officials doubt those remains date to Lincoln's era.

"We're doing shovel tests, and we're using a magnetometer to search for magnetic variations that might signal a fired hearth, metal, ditches or buried objects," Lawson said, noting that the information would first be compiled on a computer.

While a survey in 2004 with ground-penetrating radar failed to find anything Lincoln-related, archaeologist Jessica McNeil, who sifted through clods of dirt and looked for broken glass, animal bones or evidence suggesting a garbage pile, said "the park will mainly want to find evidence of the cabin."

"If we found anything Lincoln, we'd probably stop and bring people from Washington. ... We'd close off the site and take strong security actions," George Smith, an official with the archaeological service, said in a telephone interview.

Once the dig concludes, the park wants to refurbish a representative cabin that sits on the land and a building that dates to the 1930s and has served as a tavern, dance hall and general store. It all won't be ready for several more years, Brue said.

Knob Creek is just one of a dozen Lincoln sites and museums that are doing work or preparing exhibits as the bicentennial approaches.

In Springfield, for example, the Lincoln Homestead State Park is renovating Lincoln's uncle's cabin on a site that holds the home where Thomas Lincoln is said to have proposed to his wife in front of a fireplace.

In Louisville, the Farmington Historic Home, where Lincoln visited his friend Joshua Speed, is planning an exhibit called "The Speeds, Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War -- One Louisville Family's Story."

In Frankfort, the Kentucky History Center is planning to exhibit Lincoln artifacts on loan from around the country in "Beyond the Log Cabin: Abraham Lincoln and Kentucky."

In Lexington, officials have spruced up Mary Todd Lincoln's house, where she and Lincoln visited on their way to Washington for his term in Congress.

And on Feb. 11, during the Kentucky Center event, Kentucky sculptor Ed Hamilton will display a replica of his new Lincoln statue, which will be unveiled at Louisville's Waterfront Park in 2009.

"It's pretty neat the way the state has really rallied around the opportunity," Whitworth said. "Kentucky is really holding its own. And we're hoping this all has a positive impact on heritage tourism."

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Part of Brandy Station Lost to History

By Bud Hall

1/17/2008

Culpeper Star Exponent (VA)

<http://www.starexponent.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=CSE%2FMGArticle%2FCSEMGArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1173354248893&path=%21features>

Having researched, lectured and written about the Battle of Brandy Station since 1986, I still often trek upon America's greatest and largest cavalry battlefield. The word large is emphasized, because like this immense battle involving 20,000 troops, the battlefield itself is enormous.

The Brandy Station Battlefield stretches from Kelly's Ford seven miles west to Stevensburg; north from Stevensburg seven miles to the northern tip of Fleetwood Hill and from there, three miles east to Beverley's Ford; then, completing the rough square, six miles south to Kelly's Ford. Although the area of tactical deployment is indeed expansive, the heaviest fighting occurred north and east of Brandy Station.

After years of tramping over this grand battle arena, I herein offer there is only one area now effectively "lost to history." What does this assertion mean? The answer is simple: Any historical landscape is lost to history if the terrain has been altered and reconfigured such that it no longer represents the ground upon the day of battle. Further, it is lost if the public cannot see and understand the battlefield's topography the same way soldiers witnessed it. But before this irretrievably lost history is identified, an overview is proper.

Federal attackers poured across Beverley's Ford on the morning of June 9, 1863, and were amazed to find Gray cavalymen in heavy force just south of the Rappahannock. Equally astonished at the surprising Union assault, Rebels counterattacked down the ford road from their camp at the Mary Gee House, east of Beverley's Ford Road, near its intersection with St. James Church Road. Savage fighting broke out on both sides of the ford road as troops clashed murderously. Soon, the sheer momentum of the intrepid Union attack thrust the Rebels back on both sides of the ford road.

Quickly securing a defensive position on the Gee House/St. James Church Ridge, the Confederates established a stout line, extending their right flank a mile east from the Gee House. The highest point on the entire Rebel line was the front yard of the Gee House itself, and a four-gun battery took advantage of this lofty position to pour deadly cannon fire into attackers charging across the plateau beneath the Gee House. A Rebel cavalry brigade took position upon the Gee House Ridge, which gently descended eastward, terminating at Hubbard's Run.

The Union 1st Cavalry Division and an infantry regiment took lodgment east of the ford road, 700 yards north of the Gee House Ridge. The Federal commander extended his left flank two miles to the Rappahannock, so as to "preserve communications toward the river."

Union attackers attempted to seize the Gee House Ridge but were thrown back by Southern firepower.

As the Rebels counterattacked east of the ford road, thousands of men grappled in the fields north of the Gee House. Falling back, Union officers realized it was impossible to seize the Gee House Ridge. Arriving at the Gee House, Jeb Stuart expressed pleasure his men stymied the Yankee attack.

The Rebels could have held the formidable Gee House Ridge all day, but a separate attack at Fleetwood Hill in their rear rendered the position untenable. As the Confederates abandoned the St. James/Gee House Ridge and raced back to Fleetwood, the Union commander snatched the Gee House as his headquarters. The hard-hitting battle continued throughout the long, deadly day and at battle's end, Federal cavalry re-crossed the river, reluctantly yielding the bloody field over to their enemy.

“It is what it is” that the Culpeper Regional Airport and the Industrial Airpark were built directly atop an important phase of the Battle of Brandy Station. The Gee House site and ridge presently overlooks airport infrastructure and the once dominant ridge floats off into a sea of commercial activity. It is a hard fact that the terminal, hangars, apron and runways are situated precisely on top of ground where young Americans fought and died in droves.

The Civil War Preservation Trust owns vital battlefield land to the west of Beverley's Ford Road. But it is what it is that the battlefield east of the historic ford road has now been forever lost to history.

Editorial: Willow Run Would Be Bad on Many Levels

1/16/2008

Culpeper Star Exponent (VA)

http://www.starexponent.com/scripts/isapi_srun.dll/servlet/Satellite?pagename=CSE%2F MGArticle%2FCSE_MGArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1173354230493&path=%21editorials

A developer recently withdrew his rezoning request for the 513-acre Willow Run property, which would have placed a massive commercial and residential complex along U.S. 29 just east of Culpeper Regional Airport in Elkwood.

Had the application not been withdrawn, county planners likely would have denied or tabled it once again. We think that would have been a wise choice.

The Willow Run proposal, which still could be resubmitted, is planned for a bad location. It sits too close to the historic Brandy Station battlefield site, and it's in a rural part of the county not set up for such dramatic change. (For context about the area's rich history, make sure to read Bud Hall's Civil War column in tomorrow's Culpeper Life section.)

The Civil War Preservation Trust and Brandy Station Foundation own more than 1,000 acres less than a mile from the property.

A complex on the scale of Willow Run tends to promote the construction of other businesses nearby - such as gas stations, convenience stores and fast-food restaurants - that could further encroach upon preservation efforts and sully the natural landscape. In addition, U.S. 29 would have to be widened into a six-lane highway, and that brings problems in and of itself.

Building a large-scale commercial complex can be a good thing, but in a different location, perhaps closer to town. A similar proposal at U.S. 29 and the Route 3/U.S. 522 interchange, for example, makes more sense. It's centrally located near the town limits and is in closer proximity to existing infrastructure like water and sewer.

Willow Run, however, has too many downsides. It's a bad idea that should be permanently pulled.

Train Station is On Track to Preservation
Panel Seeks to Shield President Street Site From Demolition, Vast Changes
By Edward Gunts

1/14/2007

Baltimore Sun (MD)

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/bal-to.archcol14jan14,0,7587438.column>

President Street Station in Baltimore is the oldest surviving big city railroad terminal in the United States. The property was a stop on the Underground Railroad used by slaves fleeing from the South. The building played a key role in the first fatalities of the Civil War. It's also sitting vacant in an area of intense commercial development on Baltimore's waterfront.

So when members of Baltimore's preservation commission learned that Mayor Sheila Dixon plans to seek proposals from groups interested in redeveloping the city-owned property at 601 President St., they decided to take steps to protect the former train station from disappearing altogether.

Baltimore's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation will hold a hearing this winter to decide whether to add the building to the city's landmark list to help protect it from demolition or insensitive renovation.

"President Street Station is one of the most important buildings in the city," said Tyler Gearhart, the commission's chairman. "Most people feel strongly that it should remain publicly owned and publicly accessible."

The mayor's office disclosed in late December that it had asked the Baltimore Development Corp. to request proposals from groups interested in buying or leasing the vacant station, home to the Baltimore Civil War Museum from 1997 to 2007. The Maryland Historical Society closed the museum in November, saying it was losing money.

Although the building dates to the early 1850s, it is not protected by local landmark status. Once a building is added to the city's landmark list, an owner cannot change the exterior without permission from the preservation panel. It's a way of giving panel members a say in what happens to it, and a way of notifying future owners or tenants that they must comply with local preservation guidelines.

The station was built as the southern passenger terminal for the old Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore (PW&B) rail line, later part of the Pennsylvania Railroad. On April 19, 1861, 700 members of the 6th Massachusetts Regiment arrived there on their way to Washington and were attacked by an angry mob, resulting in the first fatalities of the Civil War.

Now part of Harbor East, a new neighborhood on Baltimore's waterfront, the building was converted to a museum in the 1990s at a cost of \$1.3 million. The architect was Kieran,

Timberlake & Harris of Philadelphia. Its successor, Kieran Timberlake, was named this year's Architecture Firm of the Year by the American Institute of Architects.

During their January meeting, panel members said they believe any request for proposals should underscore the station's historical significance. They also said they'd like an offering to indicate that the city would prefer that the building remain accessible to the public and continue to impart information about Civil War-era history, even if it has to be combined with some commercial activity.

Gearhart said the landmark designation hearing for President Street Station will be held Feb. 12 or March 11. In the meantime, commission members suggested several possible uses for the building, such as a community center or the setting for a model train garden, possibly with a full-scale train car parked outside.

Panel member Michael Murphy suggested that the building be retained by the city and used for Harbor East residents' community meetings and other activities.

"More and more people are living there," he said. "Can't the city just own that building and let the citizens use it?"

One organization with a keen interest in President Street Station is the B&O Railroad Museum at 901 W. Pratt St.

Museum executive director Courtney Wilson said he has been talking with city representatives about ways to reuse the station and that the museum might respond to the city's request for proposals. But he said the museum most likely would need assistance if it were to become involved.

Wilson said the city's decision to seek development proposals could be good if it elicits ideas that ultimately help give the station new life as a public attraction. He said the emphasis should be on preserving the history represented by the station, not just the structure that's there now.

For example, he said, a train garden inside the building could depict the rail yard and station as they were in 1861 and the events that unfolded, making it valuable as an educational resource. The station might also be marketed in conjunction with nearby hotels, he said, as an unconventional setting for cocktail parties and other gatherings for conventioners.

Above all, "we ought to move to preserve the stories told there," Wilson said. "The preservation of the building will follow."