

Help Us With A Major Preservation Project At Frayser's Farm!

The Richmond Battlefields Association is thrilled to be able to announce a tremendous preservation triumph, achieved in late December in a collaborative project with the Civil War Preservation Trust. We have closed on a crucial 40-acre parcel in the heart of the Frayser's Farm Battlefield, and now must pay for it with the help of our members and anyone interested in saving Civil War sites from destruction. The tract, acquired from the Donley family, includes the ground where General George G. Meade's Pennsylvanians clashed with Alabamians under Cadmus M. Wilcox.

Protection of the key sites at Frayser's Farm has always been high on the RBA agenda. We welcome the opportunity to protect this property

permanently. It is located on the north side of the Long Bridge Road, about a mile west of the historic Glendale intersection, and is in its original historic condition, completely untouched by any significant postwar development.

The Donley acquisition marks an exciting conclusion to the RBA's long quest for the ideal project. We have looked at several properties in the interval since our purchase of the tract adjacent to Fort Harrison in 2002. One circumstance or another has thwarted those attempts. Now we can rejoice together in a truly important preservation coup.

The RBA is a full partner with the Civil War Preservation Trust in this deal. The opportunity arose unexpectedly, late in 2005, and in order to meet the seller's

short deadline the two preservation organizations quickly forged a plan to take the necessary action.

This land is not yet paid for. Several installments of the payment price are due in 2006 to conclude the deal, including the RBA's portion of the purchase, which is \$175,000. To discharge that debt, to honor our commitment to our partner, and to guarantee the permanent protection of some truly vital ground, we need each member to contribute as generously as possible-and then recruit some acquaintances as well. Please do your best to help us complete this purchase. Much remains to be done around Richmond, but this is a wonderful step in the right direction.

Julie A. Krick,
President

Historic Overview

In this newsletter we come to you with exciting news and a rare opportunity to save part of a major Richmond battlefield, a place where history truly hung in the balance, a place that against all odds has survived to this day relatively untouched.

In June of 1862 General George B. McClellan's 100,000-man Army of the Potomac

could taste victory. His magnificent army had fought the Confederates and the Virginia mud all the way from Hampton up the peninsula to the limits of the Rebel capital at Richmond. There it hesitated. A new Confederate commander took the field, and the page of history was turned. The reinvigorated Confederate army

attacked, and attacked, and attacked, at Beaverdam Creek, at Gaines's Mill, and at Savage's Station. The invading Union host was staggered. Within two days McClellan's grand design, his Peninsula Campaign, was in ruins.

Continued below...

Historic Overview

Continued

The roads of eastern Henrico County were choked with fleeing men, horses and wagons -- all the chaos of a retreating army -- rushing headlong for the protective cover of Union gunboats on the James River. On June 30th the Confederacy's new commander, General Robert E. Lee, stood poised to deliver what he hoped would be the Union army's death blow, at a little crossroads called Glendale.

McClellan himself was not a participant in the battle. He had transmitted a telegram to Washington filled with angry incriminations, accusing President Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton of wrecking his campaign. It was a message so insubordinate that it invited his dismissal. McClellan washed his hands of the debacle and left for the comfort of a Federal gunboat to await his fate. He did not designate any of his subordinates to take responsibility for the retreat, or command of the army. At its moment of greatest peril the Army of the Potomac was without a leader.

Lee's divisions attacked the choke point of the Union retreat from three sides, but his ambitious plan called for a

degree of coordination and execution that the relatively inexperienced Confederate command could not pull off. The fighting was still furious, desperate and bloody, marked



"Southern Cross." One of Civil War Artist Don Troiani's best known prints, represents action around Randol's Battery, on the property we are preserving.

by heroism and sacrifice on both sides. Somehow amidst the confusion the Union generals achieved a remarkable degree of cooperation, improvising from their jumbled commands a defense that held on long enough for their army to slip through Lee's grasp. Bloodied and exhausted, they would exact terrible revenge on Lee's men the very next day at Malvern Hill.

That this important battlefield has survived neglect and development for so long -- and has survived nearly intact -- is a wonder. Much of the

remaining battlefield is held by the Morrow-Donley families. That the battlefield remains undeveloped after so long is a testament to their careful stewardship. But the time has come to protect Glendale permanently. The Richmond Battlefields Association is proud to partner with the Civil War Preservation Trust in this historic effort. The property we have committed to is the western flank of the battlefield where the day's action climaxed in a hand-to-hand fight for Randol's six-gun U.S. battery, which finally fell to the men of A.P. Hill's 47th Virginia Infantry. Here the 47th also captured Union General George McCall, who blundered into the Confederate lines after dark. Here also General George Meade suffered two gunshot wounds, one damaging his liver. The future commander of the Army of the Potomac would ultimately die from that wound ten years later.

Robert E. Lee watched in despair as victory slipped from his grasp at Glendale. We who cherish America's historic places cannot allow it to slip away again.