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Grapeshot

Schimmelfennig Boutique

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Franklin Dedicates One Battleground, Moves Houses From Future Park Site
By Gregory L. Wade

Franklin, Tenn. — The ongoing evolution of local battlefield parks continues with the removal of one house and another to be moved shortly from land acquired in order to create a new park.

The battleground, part of a park to be known as Carter's Hill, will soon return, at least partially, to its battlefield appearance largely thanks to the Franklin's Charge preservation group.

One of the buildings, known locally as the Neal house, was moved to another site to be used as affordable housing. Another, the Holt Home, was partially salvaged and removed a couple of years ago. In the near future, other properties will likely be moved.

Franklin's Charge is a coalition of groups formed in 2005 when another tract, now known as the Eastern Flank Battlefield, was purchased for about $5 million.

This 110-acre tract, only a few hundred yards from Carter's Hill, was recently dedicated with full interpretive signage, walking paths and informational kiosks on the grounds.

With a new access road and other improvements total investment to turn the former golf club into a new park is about seven million.

The site was slated for housing until local preservationists, led by Bob Web, a former golf club owner, led a preservation group.

Carter's Hill is known as ground zero, the center part of the Federal lines that were broken during the attack and where several Confederate generals, including Patrick Cleburne, were killed. Only Federal troops plugging the gap prevented what might have been a shocking Confederate victory.

Over the years this area was covered with small retail establishments and houses, leaving the Carter House, which was in the middle of the battle, as the only place for tourists to contemplate the carnage that took place there.

Franklin's Charge has long-term goals to erect some type of cotton gin exhibit, according to board member Stacy Watson. The gin was a focal point of the battle mentioned in many battle accounts.

The gin replacement will take place when a commercial center

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Dave Bastian presented "Grant's Canal" to The Civil War Round Table at its 73rd regular meeting on May 9, 2014. Bastian has devoted his career to studying rivers, starting while in college working for the Army Corps of Engineers at Vicksburg. While there, he became interested in the Vicksburg Campaign and in particular the attempt to bypass the guns on the bluffs above the town by digging a canal across the base of DeSoto Peninsula where the Mississippi took a sharp hairpin turn. After graduation, he was assigned permanently to the Corps at Vicksburg. During study of river engineering in the Netherlands, he contemplated why the canal project did not succeed. Back in Vicksburg, he commenced research and eventually saw his book published.

The idea of a canal across the peninsula was revived after the town was recaptured, but the effort was abandoned because of what we've done with the battlefield preservation.

Carter House, Franklin

The idea of a canal across the peninsula was revived after the town was recaptured, but the effort was abandoned because of what we've done with the battlefield preservation. The peninsula is alluvial flatland formed by annual flooding, approximately 1.5 miles across and ten river miles around. The land on the Mississippi side is loess formed into bluffs which presented a formidable obstacle for ships passing Vicksburg.

The idea of a canal across the peninsula is not new, but was stymied at Vicksburg. When shell ing failed to bring about the town's capture, Farragut attempted to re-route the river by digging a canal at the base of the peninsula. The theory was that as the elevation across the peninsula was relatively more pronounced than the drop over the ten mile route down river, water would travel more swiftly across and down the base and carve out a new channel. Work began in June, 1862, when the river level was dropping. Although troops under General Williams and slaves impressed from local plantations made good progress, further drops in the river and a hostile climate made additional digging impractical, and work stopped in late July, 1862.

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With a new access road and other improvements total investment to turn the former golf club into a park is about seven million.

The site was slated for housing until local preservationists, led by Robert Hicks, Julian Bibb and Ernie Bacon, visualized a battlefield reclamation.

This ground was the right Confederate flank of the disasterous November 30th, 1864, charge that saw the Army of Tennessee under John Bell Hood virtually destroyed.

Bibb, a Franklin’s Charge founder, said at the Eastern Flank Battlefield dedication, “We have seen the tourism experience completely change in Franklin because of bringing in so many partners and because of what we’ve done with battlefield preservation.”

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A. A. Humphreys wrote a study before the war which concluded that the soil in the peninsula was too hard to permit a canal to work. Also, river lore maintained that a prominent eddy at the mouth of the canal prohibited the project. Bastian pointed out that the river itself contradicted Humphreys and that an eddy could not prevent water from flowing into the canal. With his considerable knowledge and study, Bastian makes a case for Grant’s Canal. It was not merely something to occupy the men but a legitimate opportunity for the Union to achieve its strategic goal of ‘unvexing’ the Father of Waters.

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Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute to these items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at editor@chicagocwrt.org or (630) 295-8046.
1st–3rd: Battle of Cold Harbor, VA. Grant’s attack goes nowhere, with great loss of life.
1st: Skirmish at Allatoona Pass, GA
4th: In Ga, Joe Johnston withdraws from the Dallas-New Hope line to Lost Mountain - Pine Mountain - Brushy Mountain
8th: The Union Party/Republican National Convention in Baltimore nominates Abraham Lincoln to run for President and Andrew Johnson to run for Vice-President
8th: President Lincoln, nominated for a second term, calls for an amendment abolishing slavery
10th: Battle of Brice’s Crossroads, MS. Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest’s troops rout a Union force led by General Samuel “Pinch of Owl Dung” Sturgis
12th: Battle of Trevilion Station, VA. Wade Hampton’s Confederate cavalry turn back Phil Sheridan’s Union forces.
14th: While inspecting his lines, Confederate Lt. General Leonidas Polk is killed at Pine Mountain, Ga by an artillery shell.
15th: Battle of Petersburg, VA. William F. Smith [US] and Winfield Scott Hancock [US], with a combined army of nearly 30,000 men are held off by General P. G. T. Beauregard with about 4,000 men. Union forces settle down for what becomes the “Siege” of Petersburg.
17th: Battle of Lynchburg, VA. Jubal Early’s Confederate army defeats David Hunter’s Union forces.
19th: Following an hour battle off the coast of France, the CSS Alabama sinks after being hit by several rounds from the guns of the USS Kearsarge. An English yacht rescues the crew.
22nd: Battle of Kolb’s Farm, GA. John Bell Hood’s attack on Union lines is repulsed.
27th: Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, GA. Sherman’s Union forces are bloodily repulsed.
28th: Fugitive Slave Laws repealed by U.S. Congress.

This month in the history of the Chicago CWRT

1964 (50 years ago): Grady McWhiney spoke on “Confederate Defeat”
2009 (5 years ago): Tom Cartwright spoke on “Cleburne and Sherman at Missionary Ridge”

Special August Meeting

The CWRT has set up a Special meeting for Friday, August 15th, to be held at the Rosewood Banquet Hall and Restaurant, 9421 West Higgins Rd., Rosemont, Illinois. The CWRT wants to see if a meeting place outside the Chicago Loop will be more convenient for our members. Author Lance Herdegen, an always-entertaining presenter, will speak on “The Iron Brigade”. More details will be forthcoming.
Award-winning journalist Lance J. Herdegen is the former director of the Institute of Civil War Studies at Carroll University. He previously worked as a reporter and editor for the United Press International (UPI) news service covering national politics and civil rights and presently works as historical consultant for the Civil War Museum of the Upper Middle West. Herdegen is the author of many articles and is regarded around the world as the authority on the Iron Brigade. His many book credits include Those Damned Black Hats!: The Iron Brigade in the Gettysburg Campaign; Four Years with the Iron Brigade: The Civil War Journal of William R. Ray, Seventh Wisconsin Volunteers; The Men Stood Like Iron: How the Iron Brigade Won its Name; and In the Bloody Railroad Cut at Gettysburg.

Washington — The Civil War Trust is raising $113,975 to match $370,975 that is in place for the purchase of three tracts totaling 57 acres at the Glendale (Frayser’s Farm) Battlefield.

The Henrico County engagement was the next to last of the Seven Days’ battles during the Peninsula Campaign, followed by Malvern Hill on July 1, 1862. The target properties include two active farms and a small tract with a vacant house. Farm outbuildings and the house will be removed in the future.

According to historian Robert E.L. Krick, “These properties are highly significant areas associated with this battle. They include scenes of intense and important combat.”

Trust President James Lighthizer called the purchase the “last chance to save that storied place before it is obliterated forever by rapidly encroaching development.”

He quoted a newspaper story about developers’ interest in expanding east of Richmond, much of the area rural and forested. A developer was reported saying, “It’s no longer a question of whether it (development) is going to go in that direction, it’s a question of when.”

Lighthizer said, “I have no doubt that in less than 10 years’ time, there will be multiple houses on this land and likely even a gas station/convenience-store-type development, which is what this land is already zoned for.”

The three tracts along the Long Bridge Road—where General James Longstreet’s and General A. P. Hill’s Confederates engaged Brigadier Gens. George McCall and Phillip Kearny’s Federals—are adjacent to and across the road from land that is part of the 619 acres the Civil War Trust has already saved.

The June 30, 1862, battle, which started with an unexpected Confederate attack and nearly killed U.S. Gen. George Meade, was one of Robert E. Lee’s best chances to defeat Union forces under Gen. George McClellan.

According to Confederate Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill, “Had all our troops been at Frayser’s Farm, there would have been no Malvern Hill.” Confederate Maj. E. Porter Alexander wrote, “No more desperate encounter took place in the war; and nowhere else, to my knowledge, so much actual personal fighting with bayonet and butt of gun.”

Krick said preservation of the three tracts would add to the existing three-mile corridor of protected ground from the northern end of McCall’s line all the way south to the bottom tip of the Malvern Hill battlefield. He said there has been nothing like the preservation successes at Glendale before in Virginia. “Never before in modern times has anyone preserved a major battlefield virtually from scratch... Once, one could not even find a safe roadside pull-off at which to pause for basic orientation; now, incredibly, almost all of the battlefield will be accessible.” For the first time visitors will be able to see where Meade was wounded and where hand-to-hand fighting raged around Union artillery and follow soldiers’ movements.

In urging support for this project, Lighthizer said, “Had this day gone differently, the entire history of the war and our nation could have played out another way.” That significance “makes this ground not only truly hallowed, but also worthy of our best efforts to protect the memory of what was done there, and it is essential to our shared American story.”

Information about the battle is at www.civilwar.org where donations may be made. Donations may also be sent to the Trust at 1140 Professional Ct., Hagerstown MD 21740.

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