



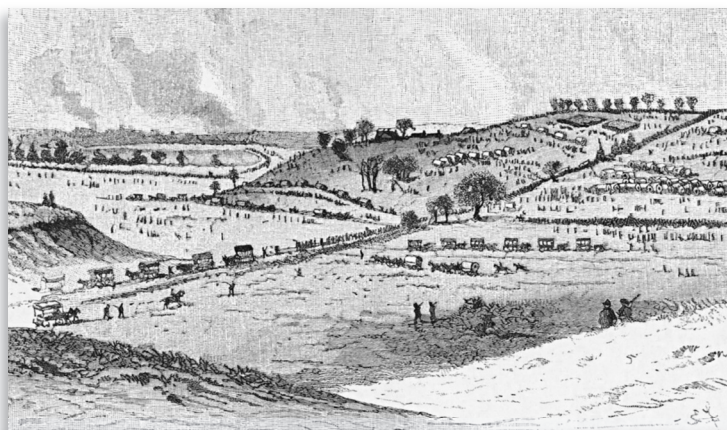
# ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## CVBT Acquires the Historic Gateway to the Wilderness

In July of this year, the CVBT purchased an option on a 93 acre tract in the area where Walmart proposes to construct a supercenter. The property is adjacent to the Wilderness Tavern site, east of Wilderness Run, and includes 31 acres that are within the National Park boundary. It includes significant road frontage as well as the historic cross-roads of the Plank Road and the Orange Turnpike. It is, in fact, the historic gateway to the Wilderness battlefield.

Ownership is the surest way to ensure control of battlefield terrain and the Trust sought to make sure this site would not be the next place to succumb to development. We had been in contact with the property owners previously because they too did not want to see the farm subdivided and paved. Over the years other projects had more immediate threats, but the impetus of the Walmart development pushed us all to conclude a deal. Without this effort, the site would face substantial loss. The Trust will



VIEW FROM THE WILDERNESS TAVERN, LOOKING TOWARD THE BATTLEFIELD, FROM A SKETCH AT THE TIME.

close on the property by July 2010, at a cost of \$930,000. We will seek to raise as much of the purchase price as we can by next year, so the mortgage will be as small as possible. The more we can pay up front, the less will carry interest charges.

The terrain looks much as it did when the Army of the Potomac moved through the

area in May 1864, to open what came to be called the Overland Campaign.

In addition, the size of the property and its location at the gateway to the Wilderness battlefield will open new opportunities for visitation and interpretation. We are very excited about this property and call on our members to step up and help preserve it. Generations will now be able to come to this site and better understand the events of that fateful summer when the destiny of a nation hung in the balance.

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## Historic Significance of the Wilderness Crossroads

Combat in the Wilderness of Spotsylvania County always gravitated toward open terrain. The dense thickets were entirely unsuited to rapid movement and severely limited fields of fire, so the various road intersections gained tremendous importance in 1863, during the battle of Chancellorsville, as well as in 1864, during the Wilderness campaign.

The significance of the open ground was not always evident to Park visitors until the National Park Service engaged in a program to restore the 1860s scene by reestablishing historic clearings. Visiting the Wilderness in the 1960s, for instance, one encountered a forest of trees at the exhibit shelter at Saunders Field. When the historic tree lines were reestablished, the entire visitor experience changed dramatically. The battlefields at Chancellorsville and the Wilderness are better understood when the open ground can be seen in relation to the impenetrable woodlands.

## Chancellorsville

During the opening moves of the Chancellorsville campaign, the Union army moved upstream from encampments near Fredericksburg and crossed the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers. Their objective was to get in behind the Confederate army, wintering in Fredericksburg. The fast moving Union columns crossed into Spotsylvania County at Germanna and Ely's Fords and then moved downstream to uncover United States Ford.

The Union 11th and 12th Corps (Oliver O. Howard and Henry W. Slocum commanding, respectively) swung the farthest west during this initial maneuvering, crossed at Germanna Ford, and passed through the property recently preserved by the CVBT. Confederate cavalry held the crossroads, but wisely moved back in the face of the more powerful Federal columns.

Following Stonewall Jackson's flank attack, the Confederate army established a hospital at Wilderness Tavern. The area preserved by the CVBT soon became a vast Confederate hospital. Stonewall Jackson had his arm amputated there and Confederate wounded convalesced on the site for several months.

## Wilderness

The armies came back to the Wilderness in the spring of 1864. The property recently protected gained a much greater military importance to the Union army than its earlier use as a hospital site.

There are places on battlefields where a visitor can gain an immediate insight. Professional soldiers and experienced battlefield visitors, for instance, will quickly realize the importance of Banks Ford, during the Chancellorsville campaign, even though no shots were exchanged there. At the Wilderness, the Brock Road/Orange Plank Road intersection is also a place where the military significance of the site becomes evident. The CVBT's latest acquisition is another area where the nature of the Wilderness battle becomes more comprehensible.

On May 4, 1864, the Union 5th and 6th Corps crossed at Germanna Ford. These formations were commanded, respectively, by Generals Gouverneur K. Warren and John Sedgwick. Warren described the Wilderness Tavern area as a place "where roads radiate like spokes."



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ORIGINAL ROAD TRACE OF THE BROCK ROAD



ELLWOOD CEMETERY IS VISIBLE FROM THE WILDERNESS CROSSROADS PROPERTY.

Four Federal batteries were sent up to the hilltop where Ellwood stands, to protect the intersection that CVBT is calling Wilderness Crossroads. Cavalry moved out the roads toward the Confederates. The cavalry did not do its job properly, though, and the Federals were caught within the woods, where their advantage in numbers and in artillery was negated. Open ground became important as places to deploy and prepare for insertion into battle or to rally and regroup.

As fighting erupted in the clearing of Saunder's Field, Confederate formations were also approaching the Union army further south, along the Orange Plank Road. A.P Hill's men were rapidly closing in on its intersection with the Brock Road and would reach that critical junction before Winfield Scott Hancock's 2nd Corps could block them. With a tactical disaster imminent, George Getty's division, of the Union 6th Corps moved along a narrow road from the Wilderness Crossroads toward the critical intersection and arrived in time to stop Hill's Southerners.

The CVBT property constituted the high ground from which other Union formations were fed into the develop-

ing battle. The open terrain allowed forces to prepare for battle before moving into the fight. Forces that became disorganized during the battle and retreated were able to recover in the open ground.

On May 6th, Ambrose Burnside's 9th Corps moved through the newly acquired ground to advance between the two wings of the Union army, then fighting on both the Orange Turnpike and the Orange Plank Road. As the Wilderness burned that night and the exhausted troops faced one another across ground strewn with dead and wounded soldiers, General Grant and Meade moved across the CVBT property, heading south toward another battle on roads that lead toward Richmond.

The area became a large hospital once again, only this time the wounded soldiers were Northerners. They did not stay as long as the Southerners had in 1863, though. The injured men were moved, either by ambulances or under their own power, to Fredericksburg, for further transfer to hospitals farther North. Within a few weeks, the war would move beyond the Rappahannock valley. **sl**

## Amazon and History Channel Help Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

The holidays are coming quickly and many of us order gifts through Amazon.com and the History Channel store. In fact, many order through these two stores all year. Well you may have noticed on our always new and updated web site, [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org), that you can now access both Amazon and the History store directly from our site.

Purchase your Civil War books or any other items through the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust—Amazon and Central Virginia Battlefields Trust—History web links and from 4% to 15% of your purchase amount will be given to CVBT for battlefield preservation. It's that simple.

If it isn't already book marked, and I'm sure it is, set our web site up so you always click it when ordering from these two stores. That way you will automatically be helping your organization to preserve our history. **sl**



## Walmart Comes to the Wilderness

Despite the intense pressure of preservationists, over 250 historians, actors such as Robert Duvall, Ben Stein, and Richard Dreyfuss, even high ranking Virginia officials, the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to approve a special use permit that will allow Walmart to build a super center close to the National Park Service's Wilderness Battlefield.

The argument was never about not wanting a Walmart in Orange County, which is perfectly fine, but just its location. The 51 acre site is zoned commercial although only for a building less than half of what was just approved for Walmart. Walmart will come with its usual array of satellite businesses, and of course traffic.



The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has been steadfast in its resolve to protect the "Gateway to the Wilderness" and that is evident with our recent announcement to purchase 93 acres just one quarter mile away from Walmart's proposed location. This tract dubbed, "The Wilderness Crossroads", will not become another contested commercial site; it will be protected in perpetuity. Members of the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition will weigh all options for possibly continuing their campaign.

The coalition penned a letter and sent it to Michael Duke, President and Chief Executive Officer Walmart Stores, Inc, reaffirming its concern over the proposed site. To read this letter visit, [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org), and click on the Walmart (Speak out) link. **sl**

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## Central Virginia Battlefields Trust Announces Plans for 2010 Annual Meeting

The 2010 Central Virginia Battlefields Trust annual meeting promises to be quite a different and exciting event. April 24th and 25th will be our 15th annual meeting and will be held in historic downtown Fredericksburg. The area is rich with not only the well known Civil War battle of Fredericksburg in 1861, but is also ripe with colonial heritage as well.

Members will also have the unique option of staying in a new hotel recently completed in the historic town, the Marriott Courtyard. Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has arranged for a special rate on a block of rooms especially for our members. Between tours, dinner, shopping and site seeing, members may return to the hotel to freshen up, grab a nap or even a libation or two.

A tour of the Fredericksburg battle is being arranged that will include the urban fighting and powerful artillery bombardment of the town. With many "military firsts" being accomplished in the December 1861 battle there is much to see and learn.

We are also expecting to take a trip out further west on the battlefield trail to the Wilderness. The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has just signed an option to purchase 93 acres of important Wilderness Battlefield land. The area is just short of the new Walmart that has been approved for construction next to the battlefield in Orange County.

An educational talk will be held to cover the importance of the land in both the battles of Chancellorsville in 1863, the Wilderness in 1864, as well as the importance of saving it from the onslaught of modern day development.

Our dinner will also be energized, new and most interesting. First we will have a silent auction of many donated items of interest. The proceeds will help to pay our new mortgage on the Wilderness battlefield. *(So bring your check books)*. The business meeting, as well as a program or two will also be included.

As a primer to the Fredericksburg battle tour don't forget our acclaimed new DVD, "Civil War: Fredericksburg Then & Now". The battle overview will get you well prepared for the tour. The Than & Now photos will put you right in the middle of the town in 1861. You can order this DVD from the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust web site. All proceeds go toward battlefield preservation.

Further information will come, much earlier than usual, on this event but you may reserve your rooms at the Marriott Courtyard now. CVBT guest rate is \$119 per night. This rate will be available on both Friday and Saturday nights (April 23rd and 24th). The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust web site has a link to the Marriott's page. You should call in your reservation to 1-800-321-2211 and ask for the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust rate.

Our 15th annual meeting is shaping up to be our best yet! We look forward to seeing you all. **sl**

# Civil War: Fredericksburg Then & Now DVD Completed



It took a year and a half, thousands of hours of research, writing, filming and editing. Community involvement and interest was overwhelming. Stock in aspirin and antacids skyrocketed from the Executive Producer's sheer consumption of both, yet it is now complete. Accomplished solely by volunteers, the project has

been widely acclaimed by those who have previewed it.

"Not bad at all for four guys who simply have a passion for our Civil War history, preserving it and know enough about movie making to be dangerous", stated Executive producer Tom Van Winkle.

The team of Bill Huber, writer originator of the concept, Scott "Cecil B." Eyestone, Director, writer and editor, G. Scott Walker, on-screen historian, writer as well as man about town, and Tom Van Winkle, Executive Producer, writer, photographer and Central Virginia Battlefields Trust liaison are all very pleased with the finished product.

As the master disk and cover art were shipped off to be replicated, Editor Eyestone's sigh of relief could be heard for miles. Five thousand DVD's will be the first of hopefully several runs of the film. Four thousand single disks and one thousand special two disk Educator's Edition have been pressed. "The first run was to be more than double that amount" said Tom Van Winkle, "but we were only able to obtain less than half of the target sponsors for this cost"

Thanks to one very generous Central Virginia Battlefields Trust board members donation and a grant from the Fredericksburg Regional Hospitality Council, the run of five thousand was able to be ordered.

The entire purpose of the project that spawned from the Fredericksburg Civil War Round Table was to raise funds for Civil War battlefield preservation in the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania, area. All the work, equipment purchased, *and that was substantial*, untold dinners, lunches and other necessities were paid for by the film makers. The on screen music, pictures and prints were all allowed to be used free of charge by the copyright owners. The Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park lent its top historians to proof the battle overview for correctness. Local political dignitaries and other well known historians and Hollywood actors lent themselves to on-screen time.

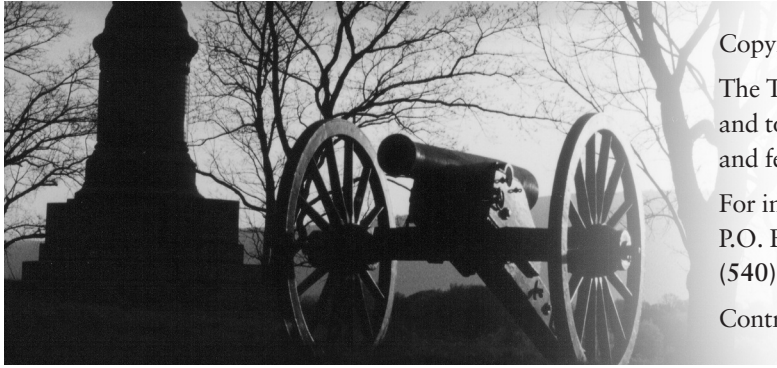
This is a very special project with involvement from the community. The DVD is available for pre order now as it will be released on October 28th at a grand premiere in Fredericksburg that evening. You may visit the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust web site at [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org) to view a trailer of the film as well as order your copy. The DVD's will also be available in the National Park book stores in the Fredericksburg area as well as other locations.

Remember, all proceeds are going to Civil War battlefield preservation; no one is getting paid for their work on this project, its volunteers and donations that made this possible. **SL**



## Stay on the Skirmish Line!

Take a look at the mailing label on your latest Skirmish Line newsletter. You will note your personal Central Virginia Battlefields Trust membership expiration date. To help us save on mailing costs and time, please be sure you are up to date on your membership. Although we will send out reminder letters to all our valued members, which means all members, that have somehow missed that all important valued task of Central Virginia Battlefields Trust membership renewal, we would appreciate your help. You might also consider upgrading your membership level to increase our ability to save the hallowed ground we all seek to preserve.



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The Trust's mission is to purchase Civil War battlefield terrain and to advocate for battlefield protection at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

For information on membership, please write to the Trust at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402; call our office at (540) 374-0900; or visit our website at [www.cvbt.org](http://www.cvbt.org).

Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

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### Membership Categories

|                   |        |             |          |                  |          |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| Annual Member     | \$ 35  | Patron      | \$ 500   | Life Patron      | \$10,000 |
| Active Member     | \$ 135 | Benefactor  | \$ 1,000 | Corporate Member | \$ 500   |
| Sustaining Member | \$ 250 | Life Member | \$ 5,000 | Corporate Patron | \$ 1,000 |

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