



ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

REMEMBRANCE CVBT's Annual Meeting Honors the Fallen

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust held its 2015 annual meeting from May 22-24, coinciding with this year's Memorial Day weekend. After three years of coordinating with sesquicentennial programs hosted by the National Park Service, we returned to our normal 3-day format this year. On Friday afternoon, retired NPS historian Don Pfanz led us on a tour of the Fredericksburg National Cemetery on Marye's Heights. Don shared much information about the creation of the cemetery, the soldiers who were interred there, and its evolution over the last 150 years, both as a site for interpreting the 1862 and 1863 battles of Fredericksburg, and as a somber memorial to the soldiers laid to rest there. We then enjoyed a rare opportunity to visit the privately owned Rowe House on Hanover Street. This historic Federal-style home, built in 1828, is one of the prominent landmarks from the 1862 battlefield that remain today.

On Friday evening, we reconvened at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House for our annual meeting and dinner. We were honored this year to welcome acclaimed author



Mike Stevens gratefully accepts a generous donation from Marc Thompson and the RVCWRT.

and historian William C. Davis as our keynote speaker. Mr. Davis is the author or editor of more than fifty books on Civil War and Southern history, and a four-time winner of the Jefferson Davis Award for book-length works on Confederate history. Mr. Davis's presentation, "Grant and Lee, The Generals Nobody Knows," included fascinating information about both men, with a good deal of humor woven into his speech.

In his opening remarks, Mike Stevens welcomed all guests, and acknowledged Marc Thompson, President of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table. Marc presented CVBT with a check for \$1,880 from their recent quilt-based

fundraising efforts, in cooperation with the ladies of the Zion United Methodist Church. This gift brings the Round Table's total donations to CVBT to more than \$33,000. Thank you! Mike also introduced new Chief Administrator Ben Brockenbrough to the members present, and applauded the efforts of both Board Member Charles McDaniel for providing us with a new office—at no

{Remembrance: CVBT's Annual Meeting, continued on page 2}



Retired NPS historian Don Pfanz leads the charge up to Marye's Heights!

(Remembrance, continued from page 1)

charge—and Director of Communications Tom Van Winkle for our new and improved web site.

On Saturday morning, Bob Krick led a tour to several Confederate burial sites that many visitors never see. The largest of these is the Confederate Cemetery and the adjacent Fredericksburg City Cemetery. Together, they are the final resting place for more than three thousand Southern dead, including six generals and many familiar figures from both Civil War and modern times. We also had the opportunity to honor and visit the grave of CVBT's longtime Board Member, Executive Director, and our dear friend—Jerry Brent. We then visited several private cemeteries, including the Kenmore Cemetery and the Thornton Family Cemetery. After a final stop at the

Masonic Cemetery, we enjoyed a delicious sit-down Italian lunch at Ristorante Renato.

We then headed southeast into Caroline County to visit “Moss Neck,” the magnificent 1856 Greek Revival home of the Corbin family. Stonewall Jackson and the II Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia established their winter headquarters here from December 1862 to March 1863. With his troops sleeping in tents, Jackson chose to live in an outbuilding on the grounds rather than in the manor house. While at Moss Neck, Jackson developed an endearing friendship with the Corbins' five year old daughter Janie. Sadly, Janie was stricken with scarlet fever just before Jackson and his men broke camp, and he was devastated to learn shortly thereafter that she had died. While walking these grounds, we were able to visit the family



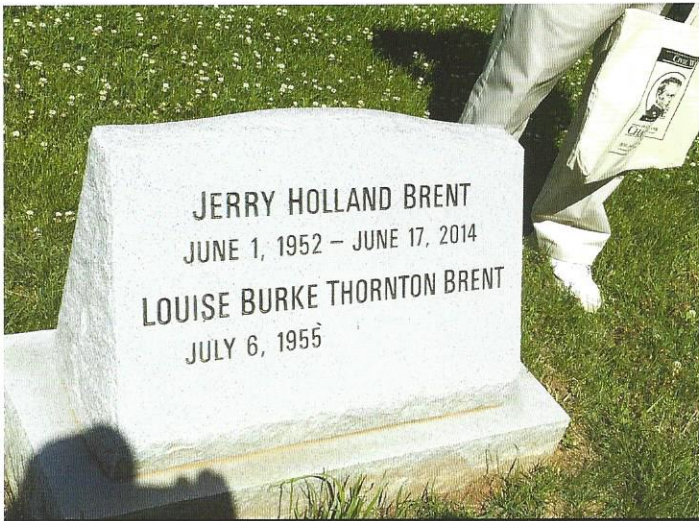
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Remembering our dear friend Jerry Brent—the very heart and soul of CVBT.

cemetery where Janie is buried. The property was restored in the 1990s, and has now been preserved under a conservation easement managed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Since the land and home are privately owned, and touring opportunities are strictly limited, we were delighted to have an opportunity to visit Moss Neck.

Our tour continued with a stop at Grace Church, an 1833 antebellum Episcopal chapel on the Bowling Green Road. We were grateful to be granted access to the inside of the church, which served as headquarters for General Robert E. Rodes during the winter before he led his division in the Battle of Chancellorsville. Bob Krick and former CVBT Board Member Champe Corbin shared much of the history of the church with our group.

On the way back to town, we visited the 208 acre Slaughter Pen Farm located just south of Fredericksburg on the Tidewater Trail. Renowned historian Frank O'Reilly has referred to this land as “the very heart and soul of the Fredericksburg Battlefield.” When the Civil War Preservation Trust made a commitment to save this land for the steep price of \$12 million, the members of CVBT stepped forward to help us provide a \$1 million dollar contribution toward the purchase. In June 2012, we retired our pledge to the CWPT with a final payment of \$100,000, thanks to the generosity of our members.

We ended the day with an evening trip to the Fredericksburg National Cemetery and the Confederate Cemetery, for Luminaria commemorations hosted by the NPS and the Fredericksburg Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, respectively. As always, the Luminaria commemorations in Fredericksburg were beautiful, yet somber and evocative. On Sunday, we toured various sites that CVBT has preserved to the west of Fredericksburg. A “Virtual Tour” of these properties follows, for those of you who were not able to join us. **SL**

(Remembrance Tour photos, continued on page 4)



A beautiful day in a place of remembrance—Fredericksburg National Cemetery.



The Confederate Cemetery on Washington Avenue.



“Moss Neck,” the magnificent 1856 home of the Corbin family.



The preserved collage of Corbin mementos from Moss Neck.



Former CVBT Board Member Champe Corbin leads our tour at Grace Church.



Grace Church, the 1833 antebellum Episcopal chapel we visited.

A New Editor for The Skirmish Line

CVBT is pleased to welcome former Board Member and President Erik Nelson back into a position he handled so deftly for many years—as editor and chief writer for The Skirmish Line. Given Erik's years of experience and his dedication to preserving hallowed ground, this is a real coup for CVBT! While I will remain on the Board, I will be putting my red pen down in order to write a history of our organization over the last 20 years. Please join all of us at CVBT in welcoming Erik back!

CVBT Supports Preservation through The Community Give



Founded in 1997, the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region has sponsored The Community Give program for the last two years. The Community Give is a 24-hour day of giving, when individuals are asked to make a donation to the local nonprofits of their choice.

On May 5, 2015, 8,013 donations were made to The Community Give, raising a total of \$822,266 for the donors' chosen nonprofits. Seven local preservation groups—including CVBT—were listed among the recipients. Of the \$35,876 that was designated for preservation, CVBT received a total donation of \$11,175 from 47 separate donors. For those of you who contributed to The Community Give, thank you for your donations, which will be used to help us save more dirt and grass.

The CVBT Board would also like to recognize the extraordinary efforts that our fellow Board Member Tom Van Winkle and his wife Lisa have put forth to bring CVBT into The

Community Give program, to get the word out to our members, and to make our participation such a success. Tom and Lisa share an incredible work ethic, great organizational skills, and a proven track record for everything they have done for CVBT. We give them many thanks for sharing their time, talents and treasures to preserve hallowed ground.

Since The Community Give is an annual program, we plan to participate again next May. Please join in and support us!

CVBT Youth Community Service Day

On Saturday, November 7, CVBT will host its second annual Youth Community Service Day. While we expect many student volunteers to join us in this clean-up effort, we would also welcome the participation of our adult members. If you would like to help, please contact Eric Powell at majorpowellaag@gmail.com for more details. CVBT will provide lunch and a lesson about the Battle of Chancellorsville for all volunteers. We hope to see you there!

Save the Date for Our Next Annual Meeting

We are pleased to announce that CVBT's 2016 annual meeting will be held from Friday, April 29 through Sunday, May 1. As in recent years, our meeting will be based at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel, 2801 Plank Road in Central Park. Our dinner meeting will include a delicious buffet meal and a premium cash bar, as well as a very informative presentation. We are also hoping to include a lunch or evening meal at one of our CVBT-saved battlefield sites during the weekend. Further details regarding our annual meeting and the related tours will be included in our next newsletter, and we will also post this information on our website. We look forward to seeing you for a very special weekend!

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Stay on the Skirmish Line!



Take a look at the mailing label on your latest *Skirmish Line* newsletter. You will see that it includes your CVBT membership expiration date. Since we are a dirt and grass outfit, members can help us save on mailing costs by checking that expiration date and sending in their renewal on their own. If the date is highlighted, your membership has expired. While we would like to share the *Skirmish Line* with everyone, we can only afford to send it to current members. So please renew your membership at the appropriate time. You might also consider upgrading your membership level, to increase our capability to save hallowed ground in central Virginia.



Remember to order all your Amazon.com items through the CVBT Amazon web link. CVBT receives a percentage of the order to help preserve hallowed ground!

What's New at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park?



NPS Chief Historian John Hennessy welcomed our new citizens and guests with keynote remarks on a beautiful day at Chatham Manor.

On June 6, a first-of-its-kind U.S. Naturalization ceremony was held on the front terraces of Chatham Manor, overlooking the Rappahannock River in southern Stafford County. Chatham, a colonial mansion built in 1771, is the only private home in the nation to have been visited by both George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. During this ceremony, 36 candidates hailing from 30 different countries took the Oath of Allegiance to the constitution and laws of the United States, and became new U.S. citizens.

Park Superintendent Lucy Lawliss welcomed the

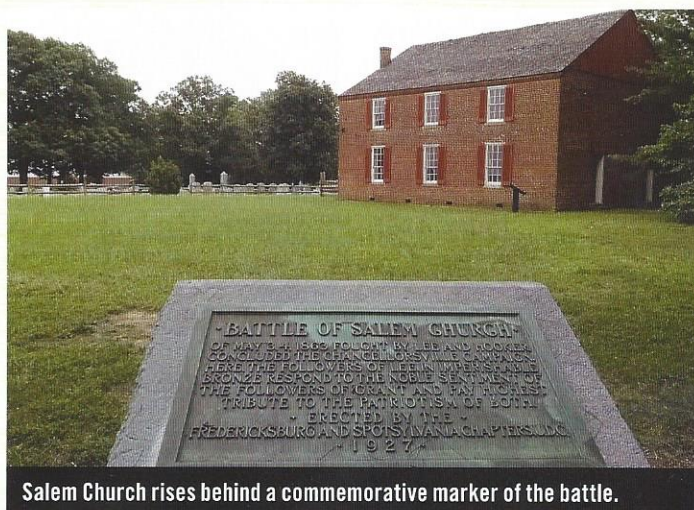
candidates and guests to the event, and the Park's Chief Historian, John Hennessy, provided keynote remarks. He stated that from our country's first days, citizens have continually challenged America to become a better place, and that as a result, our nation has moved forward on an arc of change, toward greater equality, justice and tolerance. John, who also led a walking tour prior to the ceremony, stated that despite their difficult lives, many slaves maintained a constant struggle for freedom, seeking to cross the river and blaze a trail to freedom and eventual citizenship. John concluded

by calling on our newest citizens to challenge America to be better still. Along with this ceremony, Chatham hosted a Living History Weekend, to bring the Civil War era to life, with period music, firing demonstrations, and numerous hands-on activities and other special programs. Guests were invited to explore Civil War soldiers' encampments, and could visit various stations to learn about the work of the Signal Corps, engineers, quartermasters and surgeons, and how to drill like a soldier. These programs were made possible through the participation of a number of living historians who often

share their time and impressions with visitors to the Park.

The Park also brought back its very popular "History at Sunset" program this summer. The 2015 schedule ran from June 12 through August 14, and included talks and walks related to all four of our local battlefields. As always, the NPS historians who staffed these events brought an incredible amount of knowledge and accessibility to attendees. If you will be in the Fredericksburg area next summer, please check the Park's website for its 2016 "History at Sunset" programs. You won't want to miss this special opportunity! **SL**

A Virtual Tour of CVBT's Western Properties



Salem Church rises behind a commemorative marker of the battle.

On May 24, we toured lands that CVBT has preserved over the last 19 years to the west of Fredericksburg. This tour was led by the Park's Chief Historian, John Hennessy, and current and former board members Mike Greenfield, Jim Pates, and John Mitchell. Our goal was to show our members the lands we have saved in the midst of unceasing development; how we make decisions on acquisitions; and the nuts and bolts we have to consider in saving dirt and grass.

Our first stop—at historic Salem Church—set the tone for the day: the critical need to preserve hallowed ground. Salem Church was built in 1844 on a low rise along the Orange Turnpike, roughly four miles west of Fredericksburg. This Baptist church first housed civilian refugees from Fredericksburg, and then became a critical site during the Chancellorsville Campaign, when Confederate forces blocked the advance of John Sedgwick's Union Sixth Corps. Union forces soon retreated across the Rappahannock, thus ending the battle. In the 1950s, the congregation built a new church—and donated the historic structure, one acre of land, and several monuments to the NPS. Sadly, the rest of the battlefield has been lost to development in recent years. This is the lesson of Salem Church—to preserve these fields before it is too late.

Our next stop was the 1st Day at Chancellorsville Battlefield. This is where Confederate and Union troops first clashed



John Hennessy shared the history of Salem Church with our group.

on May 1, 1863, when Federal columns crossed two rivers above Fredericksburg and moved east as Stonewall Jackson's forces pushed west. Preservationists' struggle to save this land has been an epic battle in itself. We faced the prospect of county rezoning to support major development; a plan to build a new highway through the field; and a landowner and developer who intended to construct thousands of homes and a huge commercial center. In response to these threats, several local and national groups formed the Coalition to Save Chancellorsville Battlefield. The Coalition worked tirelessly to prevent the rezoning, and the Board of Supervisors surprised many by voting against it. CVBT took a very active role in the Coalition, sought to keep lines of communication open, and attempted to balance the reasonable needs of all involved. In the end, a new developer—Tricord Homes—and CWPT reached an agreement to save 134 acres of the 1st Day field, ensuring that only 284 homes would be built, all well away from the road and the preserved battlefield. Tricord conveyed this land to CWPT in November

(CVBT's Western Properties Tour, continued on page 8)



CVBT Board Member Jim Pates' ancestors were instrumental in transferring the Salem Church property to the NPS.



We learned about the recent battle over the 1st Day field as well as its Civil War history.

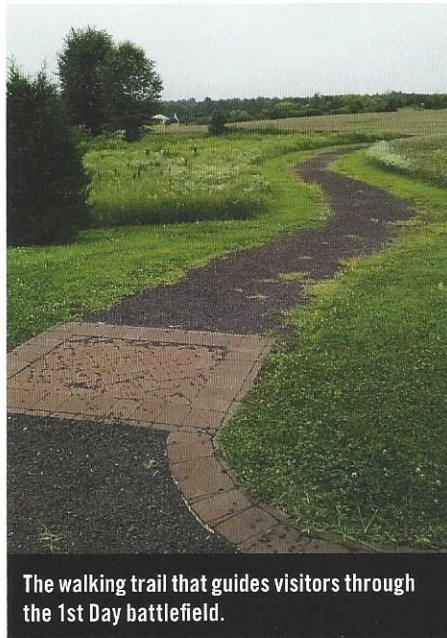
{CVBT's Western Properties Tour, continued from page 7}

2004 for \$3 million, and CVBT contributed \$250,000 toward this effort.

We then visited McLaws' Wedge, a 99-acre tract south of the Orange Turnpike (modern day Route 3). CVBT bought this land in March 1998 for \$450,000, and sold it to the NPS in May 1998 for \$420,000. (This was the highest amount that NPS was allowed to pay, since it cannot pay more than the appraised value for a parcel.) This densely wooded acreage played a key role in the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863. On May 1, it was the scene of the initial Union advance, as well as a later counterattack by Confederate forces. On May 2, the Army of Northern Virginia held the larger Union force in place while Stonewall Jackson led his famous Flank March around the Federals' right. The following day, Confederate troops charged across the land to force the Union Army from the battlefield. After the war, this land was cleared for agricultural use. CVBT named this property for General Lafayette McLaws, who led his division across the field to halt the progress of the Federals.

We then drove by two tracts that CVBT purchased early on. We acquired the 5.1 acre Jackson's Flank Attack parcel in May 1998 for \$73,920. In July 1999, we conveyed this parcel to the NPS for \$66,000. This is the area where Stonewall Jackson launched his Flank Attack on May 2, 1863. We also drove by our Nine Mile Run tracts, totaling 11.9 acres, to the north of Route 3. We purchased these parcels for \$45,000 and \$92,000 respectively in July 1999 and February 2002.

We next ate a picnic lunch at the newly renovated Chancellorsville Visitor Center, where we also got to see a remark-



The walking trail that guides visitors through the 1st Day battlefield.



The 1st Day site includes exhibits honoring individuals who helped purchase the land.

able document—a map that Stonewall Jackson personally sketched and carried during the Chancellorsville Campaign. It is surely one of the last documents he ever produced, and it gives a vivid view of the landscape around Chancellorsville as he understood it.

After lunch, we continued west toward our 81-acre Wilderness Crossroads II property, which consists of three nearby but noncontiguous parcels to the north of Route 3. CWPT acquired this property in December 2012 for \$575,000 (using grants), and CVBT agreed to hold it. This land includes the site of the historic Wilderness Tavern and its outbuildings, which served as the Confederate Second Corps Hospital. Stonewall Jackson was treated here after he was wounded in a volley from his own men on the night of May 2. His left arm was shattered by two musket balls, and it had to be amputated due to the severity of his wounds. His arm was later buried in



Part of the historic dirt trace that remains from Civil War days at the Wilderness Crossroads site.



John explained the significance of McLaws' Wedge during the battle.



CVBT purchased the Jackson's Flank Attack parcel in 1998 and conveyed it to the NPS in 1999.

much like it did in 1864. We were able to secure multiple grants to support this purchase, and CWPT also sent us a generous donation. This property includes a significant feature from the past—a dirt trace that still exists from the historic road. Our group was able to walk along this trace.

Heading east, we made two additional stops. The first was at our Rodes-Doles tract, the former site of the “Stars and Bars” castle and relic shop. We acquired this 13-acre site in April 2012 for \$475,000. CVBT had the castle demolished in 2013, and thus much of this land has been returned to its wartime appearance. CVBT Board Member Robert K. Krick called this acquisition

the family cemetery at nearby Ellwood Manor, and he died eight days later in Guinea Station.

Our tour continued past two parcels that CVBT owns at Grant's Knoll, along Route 20. These tracts (six and twelve acres respectively) were donated to CVBT in July 2001 and September 2007 by the Silver Company. This is the land where Union Generals Grant and Meade established their headquarters in 1864, when they had their first confrontation with General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. When the Battle of the Wilderness concluded, Grant made the fateful decision to lead the Army of the Potomac south toward Spotsylvania Courthouse, and to begin the Overland Campaign.

Turning back toward town, we stopped at the 93-acre Wilderness Crossroads site. CVBT purchased this property in December 2009 for \$929,954. This area is the true historic crossroads used by Civil War armies, and today it looks

“a spectacular preservation achievement—the most important CVBT accomplishment in many years.” The land, which played a key part in Jackson's Flank Attack, includes extensive frontage on both Route 3 and the Orange Plank Road.

Finally, we visited our Stonewall Brigade tract, a 9.2 acre site which we acquired in December 2012 for \$264,400. This parcel is less than a mile east of Rodes-Doles, and it is the first land we have preserved on the south side of Route 3 from Wilderness Church to the NPS Visitor Center. This is where Jackson and his men burst out of the Wilderness to confront the Federal troops of General Howard's Eleventh Corps on May 2, 1863. As the Union troops fled eastward, the last of Howard's force, led by Adolphus Buschbeck, formed a rallying line of last defense that has since been called “The Buschbeck Line.” After the fall of the Federal line, Union soldiers fled

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eastward, and the five Virginia regiments from the Stonewall Brigade arrived on this ground to rest. Many of them would die in intense fighting the next day.

As we toured many of these sites, we shared the challenges that we face in deciding whether to acquire a particular tract, and in maintaining the parcels we do own. As our guests at the Castle site saw, there is still a pond on that land, and another structure remains as well. And on the Stonewall Brigade tract, we had to remove a house, but several additional structures are still intact. Wells and other hazards are also frequent issues we must deal with, in addition to basic management issues such

as mowing and bush hogging. Suffice it to say, saving dirt and grass comes with many more complications and costs than one might think. These challenges and their related costs are an integral part of the preservation process.

Given our limited time, we did not have the opportunity to visit the sites of several of our other preservation victories, including the 24.8 acre Talley Farm, the 16.4 acre Talley Farm Ridge, and the 3.9 acre Frazier tract. But we did have a chance to discuss several of these properties while we were on the bus. Many who joined us on this tour stated that it was one of our best tours ever. We were glad that you could join us! **SL**



Our group was able to see both the cleared land by the road at the former Castle site, and some surprises to the south.



Demolition of the Castle was well underway in this photo.



As our members found out, we acquired a pond and some unfinished buildings as well as dirt and grass.



The front of the Rodes-Doles property has now been restored, and the Castle is gone forever!



Victory—after years of trying to save this property.



Demolition at the former Castle site was not an easy process.



CVBT removed this house after we acquired the Stonewall Brigade property in 2012.



Another view of our Wilderness Crossroads property just south of Route 3.



Despite a few remaining outbuildings to the back, the Stonewall Brigade tract is much improved.



Our two parcels at Grant's Knoll, to the west of Route 20, on the high ground beyond the Sheetz station.



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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.

Contributions to the CVBT are tax-deductible.

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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