

Volume 11, Number 1 | Winter 2007



# ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

## \* From the President: 2006, the Year in Review \*

AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR, I WROTE THAT WHILE THE CVBT HAD PRESERVED A CUMULATIVE TOTAL of 484 acres by the end of 2004 that number had not changed by the end of 2005. We were not embarrassed by what looked like a lack of results because we knew we were working very aggressively behind the scenes. Still, I wanted to reassure our members that we had not lost momentum. Well, a year later, it is my distinct pleasure to report that during 2006, an additional 279 acres of hallowed ground were protected for all time. This acreage includes a 205-acre farm on the Fredericksburg battlefield and another 74 acres on the Chancellorsville battlefield.

**W**hile these deals were still in the works, however, the Trust held its tenth anniversary annual meeting on a portion of the May 1, 1863 battlefield at

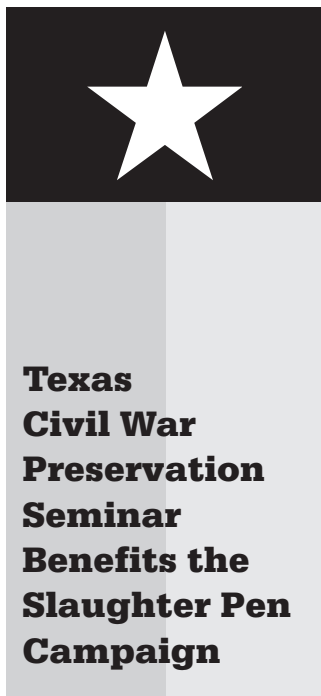
Chancellorsville, acquired in 2004. We celebrated ten years of preservation effort with a full weekend of activities. Our first ever (and possibly the last) canoe trip allowed a group of hardy members to experience the Rappahannock River. Floating past Banks Ford, Scott's Ferry, and the remnants of canals and dams, it was not too difficult to imagine the 1860s landscape. A drop near a Colonial period dam, however, caused several canoes to spill their intrepid contents. Luckily, the wet paddlers were within sight of the take-out point, where lunch awaited them and where they could rightfully brag that they had participated in the "full" river experience. Whether we have the nerve to try to drown loyal members again remains to be seen.



An afternoon tour of the opening engagement at Chancellorsville provided another new experience, led by National Park Service historian Frank O'Reilly. Following our traditional barbeque dinner, the CVBT Board presented Ed Bearss with its Ralph Happel Award.

The annual meeting was great fun, but the Trust's reason for being is the acquisition of ground. The deals for two large parcels acquired this past year were literally years in the making. They also reveal an effective partnership between our local group (the CVBT) and the nationally active Civil War Preservation Trust, each organization playing to its strengths to preserve hallowed ground. This partnership is larger than just preservationists, though. We were also able to work with developers willing to protect land as well as the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors. As a result, 2006 was a very good year, not only for

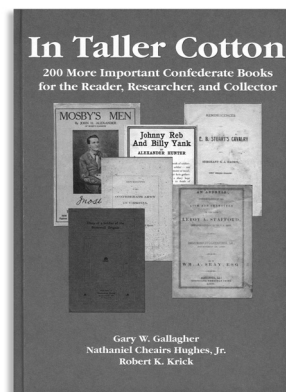
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the 13th Texas Civil War Preservation Seminar recently explored the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. At its conclusion, Dan Laney, co-chairman of the Seminar and President of the Austin Civil War Round Table, Inc. announced: "We not only studied these two remarkable Confederate victories with some of the greatest Civil War scholars in the country, but we also substantially benefited the finest local Civil War preservation group in the nation, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust. When this seminar was conceived more than a decade ago, we had no idea it would last this long and do this much good. The total amount we have now raised from all the seminars comes to more than \$165,000, with a cumulative attendance of over 3,150." John Verslius, the other Seminar co-chair, added: "The 13th Seminar raised approximately \$12,000 for Civil War preservation, with an attendance of 200. In an unprecedented move, all of our proceeds went to the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, to help save the Slaughter Pen at Fredericksburg."

The CVBT thanks these generous Texans and invites them to join us this spring at the Slaughter Pen, for our annual meeting and exclusive tours of this evocative ground. **sl**

## CVBT Benefits from Publisher's Generosity



North Carolinian Thomas W. Broadfoot, owner of Broadfoot Publishing Company, announced several months ago his plan to donate to the CVBT all the proceeds of a special edition new book. In the spring of 2006, Broadfoot published *In Taller Cotton* and made the first fifty numbered copies into

a limited edition signed by the three authors. The \$200 per copy price for the special edition all came to the CVBT, without even reserving any of Broadfoot's cost.

The book, conceived as an elaboration of the classic 1978 title *In Tall Cotton* by the late Rick Harwell, provides details on the favorite Confederate books of three historians: Gary W. Gallagher, Nathaniel C. Hughes, and Robert K. Krick. The selections conform to the three authors' specialties.

Gallagher chose mostly new books, Hughes focused on the western theater, and Krick selected primarily old rarities. Broadfoot has sold the majority of his special run of fifty numbered copies, and forwarded the money to the CVBT. For the few that remain, and the rest of Broadfoot's publishing ventures, see his website at [www.broadfootpublishing.com](http://www.broadfootpublishing.com).

The Trust applauds Broadfoot's stellar generosity, one of the many ways that the public is supporting CVBT's crusade to save the battlefields before it is too late. **sl**



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### The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors



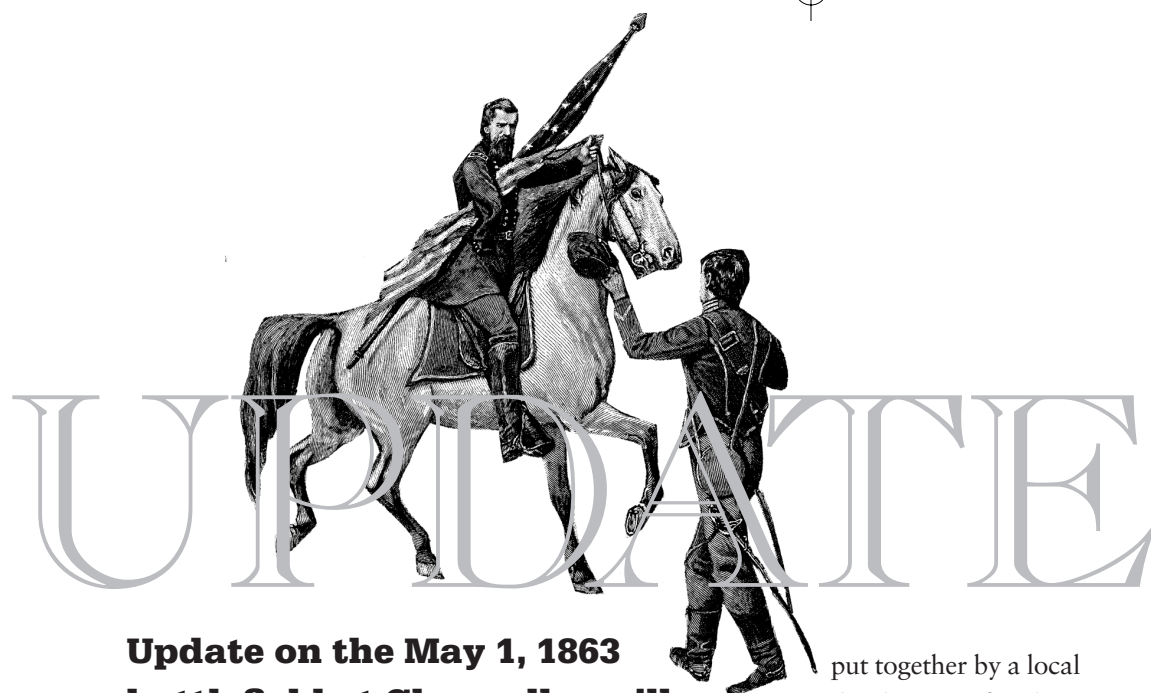
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## Update on the May 1, 1863 battlefield at Chancellorsville

On November 14, 2006, the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to support a zoning request that resulted in preservation of 74 acres of hallowed ground. This acreage adjoins 140 acres that were similarly preserved in 2004. The result is a 214-acre site that is now known as the First Day at Chancellorsville Battlefield.

This result was certainly not a foregone conclusion, though. Previous elected officials had supported a

major highway that would have cut through this battlefield. The potential highway drew a developer who proposed building 2,000 homes on this blood soaked ground as well as 2.2 million square feet of commercial space. In fact, the County even rezoned the area where the opening shots of the Chancellorsville Campaign were fired so this commercial development could begin. Opposition by local residents and the CVBT, however, eventually led to a compromise deal

put together by a local development firm known as Tricord. In 2004, a partnership between the County, Tricord, and the Civil War preservation community resulted in preservation of the initial 140 acres of the May 1, 1863 field.

Preservation of the additional 74 acres is also the result of compromise and a solid partnership. In this instance, the developers are Toll Brothers, who conveyed this property to the Civil War Preservation Trust for half of its market value, in return for permission from the County to construct additional houses

north of the battlefield. Spotsylvania Supervisor Jerry Logan noted that “the overwhelming support shown by the citizens at the public hearing carried the day.” After the vote, Mr. Logan also shared these thoughts with the CVBT. He remembered that as a second grader he had stood in the doorway of the old Chancellor Elementary School looking out over this landscape. “What I saw as a child in 1949,” he said, “was virtually the same as it was in 1863. I am very proud of our County’s decision to now preserve at least a portion of that legacy for our children and our children’s children to see and know as I did.”

We thank Mr. Logan and the full Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors for their unanimous vote that preserved a significant portion of a battlefield resource that will soon be open to the American people. **SL**

## A New Format

Members will quickly note that this newsletter has a different look. As we entered into our anniversary tenth year, the Board of Directors reexamined and updated the Trust logo. We also established standards for colors and other visual qualities, redid our letterhead, and so on. The idea was to develop a more professional look, commensurate with our growing experience and success.

One byproduct of all this effort is a new format for the newsletter. We are a no frills organization, so our newsletter serves as a vital link between the Trust and our members. There has been no additional expense involved in changing its appearance. The design firm who worked with us on the logo has simply stepped up to help with maintaining this vital link to our supporters. There may be some additional tweaking in subsequent issues, so let us know what you think. **SL**

## After Fredericksburg, but before Chancellorsville

Following the December battle of Fredericksburg, the Confederate army dug extensive entrenchments along their Rappahannock River line. On December 13th, the Sunken Road had provided a graphic lesson in the utility of protective works and the Southerners prepared for renewed campaigns by turning over massive amounts of dirt. A few days before the Union army opened a campaign that would culminate at Chancellorsville, Major William Nelson Pendleton wrote a letter describing the Confederate fortifications.

*"The greatest destruction and change in the appearance of the country is from the long lines of trenches and the redoubts which crown every hill-side from ten miles above Fredericksburg to twenty miles below. The world has never seen such a fortified position. The famous lines at Torres Vedras could not compare with*

*them. As I go to Moss Neck I follow the lines, and have "a ride in the trenches." These are five feet wide and two and a half deep, having the earth thrown towards the enemy, making a bank still higher. They follow the contour of the ground and hug the bases of the hills as they wind to and from the river, thus giving natural flanking arrangements; and from the tops of the hills frown the redoubts for sunken batteries and barbette batteries ad libitum, —far exceeding the number of our guns; while occasionally, where the trenches take straight across the flats, a redoubt stands out defiantly in the open plain to receive our howitzers, and deal death broadcast to the Yankees, should their curiosity tempt them to an investigation."*

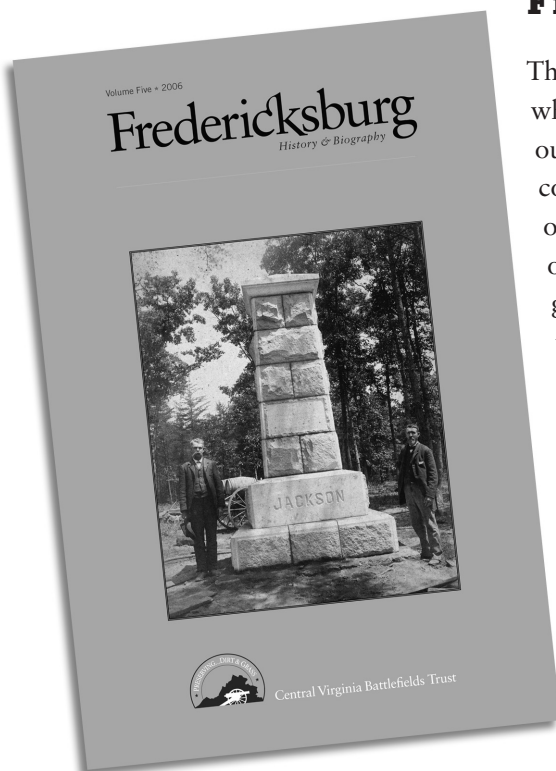
(Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, pp. 256-257)

Portions of this line remain extant in obscure woodlands, but much of it has been obliterated over the years by agriculture and development. The CVBT owns a section of this line below Fredericksburg. SL



## Fredericksburg History and Biography

The fifth volume of the Trust's scholarly journal has hit the streets. Members who have donated \$135 or more during this past year will receive a copy, with our compliments. A generous benefactor covers a substantial portion of the cost of production, while sales cover the rest. This journal allows us to encourage ongoing research and to provide the results as a benefit of membership without cutting into funds donated for battlefield acquisition. A recently discovered glitch in our membership database, however, has revealed that some members who should have received copies of the journal may have been overlooked. If you believe we owe you a journal for a previous year, during which you donated \$135 or more, please contact us immediately. We will be happy to make up for any oversight. ★ Those of you who are not automatically entitled to a complimentary copy of Fredericksburg History and Biography may still purchase copies of this new volume as well as earlier volumes. The cost is \$14 per volume, which includes postage and handling. This low price will remain in effect through the 2007 annual meeting. By then, the earlier volumes will either be sold out or available in very limited quantities. As a consequence, we will increase the price, to help us keep up with increasing costs of production. SL





## CVBT Supports the Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park

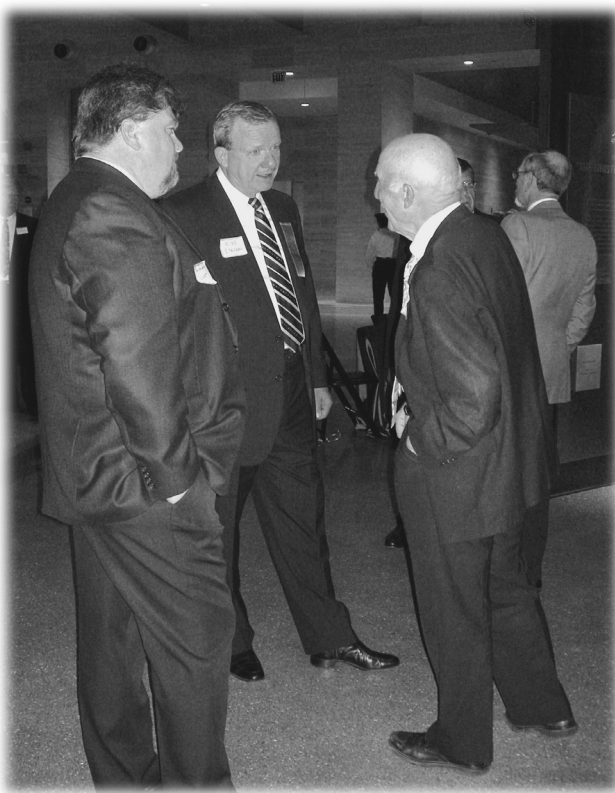
AT ITS MEETING ON DECEMBER 21ST, 2006, THE BOARD of Directors of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust adopted a resolution of support for preserving Fort Monroe as a unit of the National Park Service. Fort Monroe has been in continuous use as a military installation since its construction in the early nineteenth century, but the U.S. Army is scheduled to close this facility in just a few years. The big question is what will happen next?

Local interests are seeking to redevelop the site, but a growing number of citizens think that such a historic site should be preserved for the American people. Consider that Old Point Comfort, where Fort Monroe is located, was visited by the Jamestown colonists. In 1619, the first Africans in the New World were brought ashore there.

Ironically, in 1862, it was to Fort Monroe where several slaves fled, claiming their freedom within Union lines. To his everlasting credit, the Union commander did not return the slaves, rejecting the irate owner's claim to them as property. Instead, he recognized their inherent right to freedom, using the slave owner's argument against him, noting that if they were indeed property, they had become contraband of war.

Fort Monroe, then, is a historic resource of national significance, presenting important associations with military history as well as the African-American experience. The CVBT strongly supports conversion of this military installation to public use, upon its scheduled closure, and has sent its adopted resolution to the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia and to its Congressional delegation.

Persons interested in finding out more about this issue are directed to their website, at [www.cfmnp.org](http://www.cfmnp.org). SL



LEFT: CVBT BOARD MEMBERS MIKE STEVENS AND TOM VAN WINKLE CHAT WITH GUEST SPEAKER ED BEARSS AT THE MARINE MUSEUM GALA EVENT ON DECEMBER 2ND.

## From the President: 2006, the Year in Review

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saving land, but for enhancing a philosophy of cooperation. When we seek win-win solutions, good things can happen.

The CVBT's end-of-year celebration was held on December 2nd, at the newly opened National Museum of the Marine Corps. This special event, in partnership with the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, included a wonderful buffet and the opportunity to tour a really first rate facility. In view of a full size display of the Tarawa landing, Ed Bearss, a former Marine and one of our speakers that evening, spoke to the virtue of keeping faith with previous generations of fighting men. He noted the similarity of Marines leaving the protection of landing craft to move forward through deadly fire and Union soldiers moving up at the Slaughter Pen, also into hostile fire and without cover. General Richard B. Myers, USAF (Ret.), former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, generously praised the CVBT for its preservation efforts and for the values that the preservation of hallowed ground can instill in future generations. What a fabulous evening and a fitting close to an exceptionally successful year. SL





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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	\$ 1000	Corporate Member	\$ 500
Sustaining Member	\$250	Life Member	\$5,000	Corporate Patron	\$ 1000

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