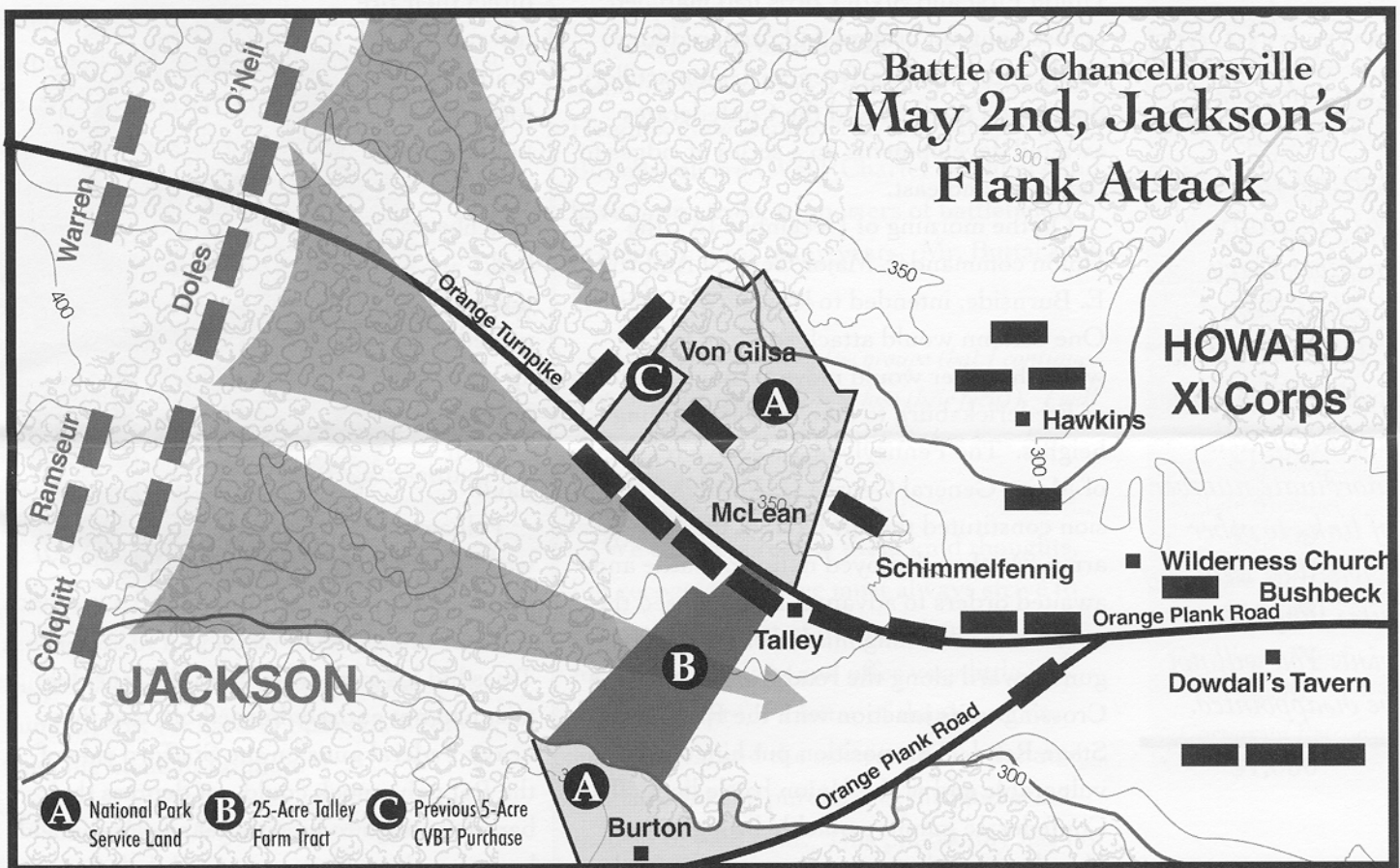


On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Jackson's Flank Attack Site Preserved CVBT Purchases Talley Farm on Chancellorsville Battlefield



Since our Fall 1998 newsletter, we have been telling members of our active interest in obtaining a portion of the Talley Farm, at Chancellorsville. At long last we can report success. On September 3rd, 1999, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust closed on a 25 acre tract for \$190,000.

The Talley Farm ridge constitutes the high ground on the western part of the Chancellorsville battlefield. The Orange Turnpike (State Route

3) cuts along its spine. On May 2, 1863, Federal troops of the Eleventh Corps, Army of the Potomac, were deployed in this area facing south. As the day progressed, scouts and pickets reported a Confederate force moving across this front, from east to west. The higher levels of command, however, did not grasp this movement's potential threat to the army's right flank. As a consequence, the Union line still faced south when Stonewall Jackson's line of battle

exploded out of the woods to the west.

Jackson's flank march and deployment for battle took time and his assault did not occur until late in the afternoon. He had meant to attack up the Orange Plank Road (State Route 621), but a reconnaissance of the Federal position from a rise on the Burton Farm indicated the Confederate columns needed to push farther west. If they had advanced as

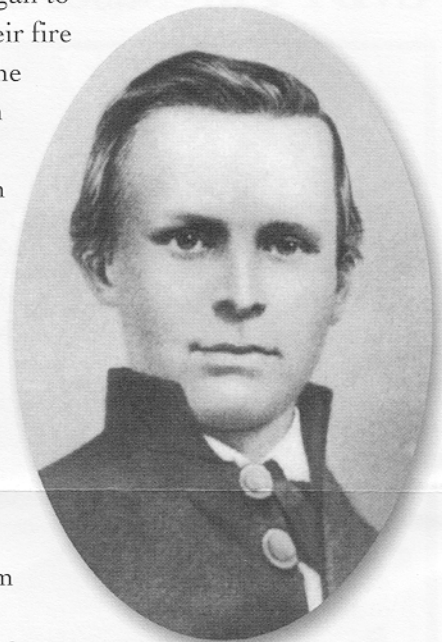
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Pelham's Corner
The CVBT Saves a Piece of Civil War Lore

The opening shots of the December 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg were fired from a Confederate 12-Pounder Napoleon, under the direction of Major John Pelham. Two days before, the Federal Army of the Potomac had forced its way across the Rappahannock River at three crossings. At the lowermost site, blue-clad troops of the Union First and Sixth Corps had marched across pontoon bridges and prepared for battle with little interference. Union artillery dominated the field and the Confederates awaited developments on a series of ridges to the south and east.

On the morning of December 13th, the Union commander, Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, intended to launch two assaults. One column would attack south of town while the other would move through the town of Fredericksburg to take the surrounding heights. The Pennsylvania Reserve regiments of Major General George G. Meade's Division constituted the left flank of the Federal army. As they deployed in line of battle and awaited orders to advance, Pelham used the cover of the morning mist to bring a single gun forward along the road from Hamilton's Crossing to its junction with the Richmond Stage Road. This position put him on the vulnerable end of the Union battle lines. The Confederate gunners quickly brought their Napoleon into battery and waited for further instructions.

Through the mist, Pelham watched the Union soldiers, less than 400 yards away. When he thought the time right, the major gave the order to fire and the Battle of Fredericksburg had begun. The Union infantry quickly lay down to avoid the raking cannonballs. Union artillery, on the other hand, began to direct their fire toward the Southern force of unknown size which had unexpectedly appeared on their flank.



Pelham was well positioned to weather this storm of metal. Trees hid his guns from view, the morning mist had not entirely burned off, and the heavy Federal guns on the Stafford side of the Rappahannock could not depress their barrels enough to hit a target so close. Field batteries, though, concentrated their fire on the aggressive Southerners and two regi-

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www.cvbt.org

Our web page continues to expand, through the generosity of member Gary Embry. The CVBT web site is well worth a visit and includes an inordinate number of links to other Civil War web sites. Pay us a visit. You will not be disappointed.

On *The Skirmish Line*

is published for the CVBT membership at 604-A William Street, Suite 1, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Telephone numbers are 540-374-0900 (local), 888-374-0900 (toll free). The CVBT is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. A financial statement is available, upon request, from the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs.

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Talley Farm Purchase Member Generosity Saves Flank Attack Site

The Trust's Talley Farm purchase amounts to \$190,000 for 25 acres. Thanks to member donations and renewal of memberships, we were able to place a sizeable down payment at closing. Still, we are carrying a note for \$100,000 which we are obligated to repay, with interest, over the next five years. Our intent, however, is to repay this loan as soon as possible so we can avoid the full interest costs. A concerted effort will retire this note so we can press on to other ground.

Our members have always responded with unflagging enthusiasm to save hallowed ground. Initial response to news of our Talley Farm purchase has already been encouraging. Mr. John Bass, of Spring Hope, North Carolina, for instance, generously donated \$1,000 to kick off this fund raising effort. We extend our thanks to Mr. Bass for setting the pace for this campaign.

We are also pleased to share some correspondence from a group of Civil War reenactors in England. They represent the Fifty-Fifth Virginia Regiment. One of their number, Mr. Richard O'Sullivan, wrote us from his home in London:

"Many thanks for keeping us in touch with the CVBT program via "On the Skirmish Line." We are particularly interested in ... your plans for acquiring the Talley Farm. The 55th Va. charged across this farm as part of the second wave of Jackson's attack.... Naturally we are anxious to help preserve this site and have collected \$650 for the purpose."

"\$500 of the amount collected was donated by my neighbour, Mrs. Elizabeth Burdett. She is the great-great-granddaughter of Major John D. Keiley of Virginia. He commenced the war as a

private in the 1st Va. Infantry and later served as quartermaster on General Longstreet's staff. He was acting chief quartermaster of Longstreet's Corps at Chickamauga and towards the end of the war transferred to the 3rd Corps and was, by a strange coincidence, quartermaster of the brigade in which the 55th Va. was serving."

Finally, we would like to share some inspiring words from a couple in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey. Mr. and Mrs. Buttacavoli are CVBT Charter Members and have been strong supporters of battlefield preservation for many years. Mr. Buttacavoli recently wrote:

"Sadly there are very few groups that I continue to support (some seem to lose their focus). I will continue to support the CVBT, they have been outstanding."

We truly appreciate these kind thoughts, but recognize that we must always strive to maintain the trust of our members. We ask for your donations and offer very little in return except for a letter of thanks, a few newsletters, and the assurance that donated funds go for the purchase of dirt and grass instead of paid staff. This philosophy has not changed. We will gain ground and keep moving on.

In a constant endeavor to keep our costs down, the CVBT will not send out reminders for membership renewal. Please check your mailing label to see if your membership is due for renewal and clip out the form on the back and send it back to our office.

Membership Categories

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

On The Skirmish Line
From The Archives

The Trust's purchase of a portion of the Talley Farm, south of the Orange Turnpike, provides an opportunity to examine the Jackson flank attack area in more detail. The National Park Service has already acquired a significant amount of acreage north of the Turnpike, including a 5 acre parcel from the

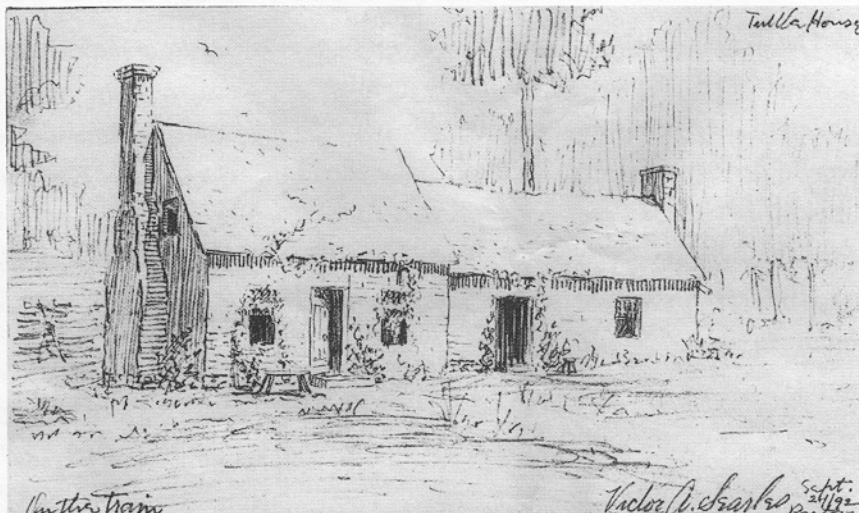
Trust, and this preserved ground is now open to visitors. The documentary record provides a basis for interpretation and it is our pleasure to reprint some of these here.

One account is taken from Volume 36 (p. 202) of the Southern Historical Society Papers. This piece is actually a 1908 reprint of an 1899 article about a post-war visit to the Chancellorsville battlefield that appeared in "The Washington Post."

A mile up the road is the house of a man named Talley (sic), who was Jackson's guide during the flank movement upon Howard [Eleventh Corps commander Major General O.O. Howard]. Talley is a well-preserved man, of rotund build, with a white imperial beard. As he stood on the lawn of his home,...he pointed out the hill not far away [on the Burton Farm], to the top of which he guided Jackson, so that the latter might look down upon the Union army. Talley was with Jackson at the last conference with Lee, and brought the army around by field and road until it had flanked Howard. In simple language he told the story of the day, "but," he said, "I was not with Jackson when he was shot. I had been sent by him with a message to General Stuart."

"Who was in your house at the time?"

"It was occupied by General Devens as his



Sketch of Talley Farm house by Victor Searles.
Princeton University Archives.

From the hill over there Jackson and I could see the Yankee Officers out on this lawn.

headquarters. From the hill over there Jackson and I could see the Yankee officers out on this lawn. They did not seem to be aware that we were in this neighborhood."

"If the officers did not know it," said a Federal officer, "there was not a private soldier in the ranks who did not expect the corps to be smashed. They had heard from many sources that the enemy was marching upon us, but the officers seemed to think that there was no danger. You know they thought that Jackson's army was in retreat. Instead of that it was marching upon us. We were just getting supper at the time, and were not prepared to resist an attack."

Another remembrance is from the collection of the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park and consists of a letter from Fred W. Cross written May 2, 1926.

To the Ladies who reside at the Talley Homestead on the Chancellorsville Battlefield:

I have before me four pictures of a whitewashed log cottage with a large stone chimney topped out with brick on its easterly end standing a little back from the southerly side of the Orange Pike, about a dozen miles west of the city of Fredericksburg. In front of the cottage is a walk bordered with flowers

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Jackson's Flank Attack Site Preserved

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planned, they would have struck the Federal line obliquely. By continuing farther west, they would eventually hit the Federal flank on its more vulnerable side and rear. Achieving this tactical advantage, however, would consume yet more precious time before the attack could begin.

Following his quick, but critically important observation at the Burton Farm, Jackson hurriedly wrote a note to Lee. It would be the last communication Stonewall would have with his commander.

Near 3 P.M., May 2d, 1863

General:

The enemy has made a stand at Chancellor's, which is about two miles from Chancellorsville. I hope as soon as practicable to attack.

I trust that an ever kind Providence will bless us with great success.

The leading division is up and the next two appear to be well closed.

T.J.J.

(Students of the Chancellorsville battle will know that Chancellor's in the above letter refers to Dowdall's Tavern, then occupied by the Reverend Melzi Chancellor and his family).

When the Confederate attack began, the Union formations were subjected to a punishing musketry to which they could not adequately reply. Struggling to reorient their lines, under fire, they were able to hold only briefly before falling back. Although short lived, organized opposition to the Confederate onslaught occurred on the Talley Farm and there are several vivid accounts of the action on this site. Two of these are reproduced in this newsletter.

The Trust's purchase of 25 acres in this area will have numerous benefits. First, it includes the only surviving earthworks of the Union Eleventh Corps' first line. These

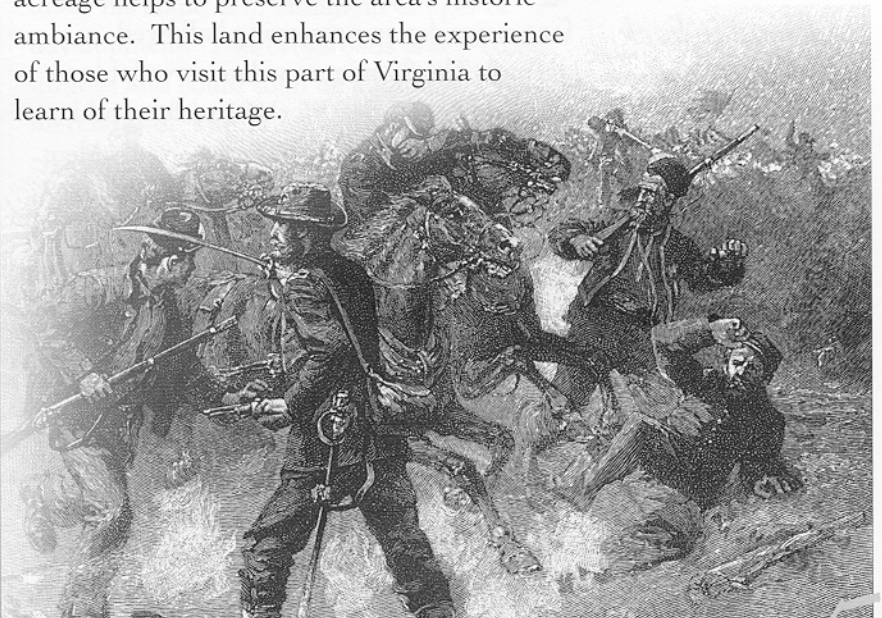
works run parallel to the Orange Turnpike and face south. They are faint, but remain a clear delineation of the Federal position.

The second advantage of preserving this ground is that it can be used to reopen the historic view of the Union line from the Burton Farm. This acreage abuts both the National Park Service's holdings at the site where Jackson observed his objective as well as the flank attack area along the Orange Turnpike. With some judicious tree trimming, visitors to the battlefield will be able to stand where Jackson stood as he surveyed the vulnerable Federal flank and actually see, as Jackson did, where the Union line was situated.

Third, this terrain can help us to understand why the Confederate attack faltered south of the Turnpike, even as it was tremendously successful north of that road. The low ground that is invariably wet in the Spring, the tangled vegetation, and a strong Federal skirmish line were all contributing factors that can now be examined in more detail.

Finally, maintaining the Talley Farm ridge in its natural state enhances this western gateway to the Chancellorsville battlefield. Combined with the National Park Service land to the north, this recently purchased acreage helps to preserve the area's historic ambiance. This land enhances the experience of those who visit this part of Virginia to learn of their heritage.

After Jackson's initial attack, members of the 11th Corps break for the rear (below).



Giving Appreciated Securities

Can Help to Buy Hallowed Ground

As the end of the tax year draws near, giving appreciated securities may be an easy way to make a significant donation to the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust while also enjoying tax benefits. When you give the Trust appreciated marketable securities that you have owned long term, you receive a tax deduction for the full value of the gift. Long term is defined as more than one year and a day. Furthermore, neither you nor the Trust will have to pay the capital gains tax. Several of our members have already chosen this means to give an end-of-year gift.

A charitable gift with tax advantages can

be accomplished as follows:

1. Inform your broker you wish to make a transfer of securities as a charitable gift to the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc.

2. Ask your broker to contact Mr. Enos Richardson, of the CVBT, at (540) 371-4157 or Douglas Stewart of Wheat First Union at (540) 371-2170 or (800) 727-3500. They will ensure your gift is properly credited as well as coordinate the transfer with the Trust's broker.

Your charitable gift will help to purchase battlefield land.

Renewal Note

Please check your mailing label to see if your membership is due for renewal. The date that appears in the upper right hand corner of the label. Clip out the renewal form and send it back.

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Chancellorsville Video Now Available

The wait was long, but well worth it, for the video of the CVBT's 135th Anniversary of Chancellorsville has been released and is available to the public. The video, shot entirely at and around the Chancellorsville Battlefield, provides highlights of the 1998 event as well as an excellent preservation message. "Islands of Green," shot by Wide Awake Productions for the CVBT, brings to light the struggles that preservation groups face every day in preserving hallowed ground. The 20 minute video is available to all members for \$19.95 (VA residents add 4.5% VA sales tax) each. To receive a video, call Mike Stevens at (540) 371-3115 or send your order to: CVBT, 604-A William Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

The video is also being made available to Civil War Round Tables at no charge. CWRT requests must be made on the Round Table's letterhead and faxed to CVBT at (540) 371-4505 or mailed to the above address. This video is an excellent addition to any program on Civil War Preservation and is well worth the twenty minutes spent viewing it.

CVBT Makes FundRaising Easy

In appreciation of the outstanding participation from the Round Tables and other organizations, the Trust would like to reciprocate. Artist Don Troiani has provided the Trust with a number of his more recent historical prints. We will provide one of these to any round table or historical group that wants to use it as a means to raise funds for the Trust. One of the prints available is the dramatic "Jackson is With You" which depicts Stonewall Jackson at a critical moment at the Battle of Cedar Mountain. The other print is "Fire on Caroline Street" showing the 20th Massachusetts Infantry engaged in street fighting in Fredericksburg, on December 11, 1862. Groups who want to take advantage of these prints should contact the Trust office at the address shown on the newsletter or by e-mail to <webmaster@cvbt.org>. This offer will remain in effect until the supply of prints are gone.

From the Archives

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in summer and leading to a gate by the roadside. At the westerly edge of the dooryard enclosure are two immense trees which I never see without thinking how Jackson's shells screamed past them and through their spreading branches as he opened the great attack which drove Howard's 11th Corps from the fields around the Talley cottage and Wilderness Church and the Hawkins farm and Dowdall's Tavern.

The afternoon of the second of May never returns that I do not think of the events which happened around that cottage on the second of May, 1865.

For that cottage was the headquarters of Brig. Gen. Charles Devens and of the commander of his second brigade, McLean. Gen. Devens commanded Howard's right division, and his command was stretched along the road from just east of the Talley house - perhaps half way down the hill - up past the house and westerly nearly half a mile along the Pike.

Sixty-three years ago this afternoon the regiments were strung along that road, mostly facing south, and all unmindful of the peril which lurked in the forest to the westward. In the field east of the house and extending half way down the hill in succession were the 17th Connecticut and 74th Pennsylvania regiments. West of the house in order were the 107th and [55th] Ohio, the 45th and 41st New York, and two guns of Dieckmann's battery, the latter pointing up the road something over 600 yards from the entrance gate. Two regiments, the 25th and 75th Ohio, lay north of the road in the edge of the woods which then extended down in front of and past the house on the opposite or north side of the Pike. The remaining four of Dieckmann's guns were posted near the 17th Connecticut regiment in the field east of the house and pointing southward.

Tethered along the fence side were many officers' horses, and hardly a minute passed that some courier did not ride up with some information or request or order. Repeated warnings were borne to the door of the Talley house urging Devens and McLean to look to the safety of their flank. General Carl Schurz, whose division lay in part in the hollow where the Pike and the Plank Road separate and in

part around the buildings of the Hawkins farm, in a letter which I have before me says, "the movement of the enemy toward our right could be plainly seen, and the necessity of changing front (toward the west) while there was time was constantly discussed with the corps commander (Howard) during the day." Courier after courier, officer after officer, came back from the woods to the westward and reported that the Confederates were massing in force in the direction of the Luckett farm, but none of the division officers would credit their reports. Gen. Howard, the corps commander, would not believe, nor could he be persuaded, that any danger menaced him from the west.

Pelham's Corner

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ments of Union infantry finally redeployed to clear the crossroads.

Pelham soon withdrew, but his bold stand had delayed the Federal assault for at least an hour. General Robert E. Lee, observing this action from Prospect Hill, remarked to Generals Stonewall Jackson and A.P. Hill: "It is glorious to see such courage in one so young."

The ground where the gallant Pelham made his stand is in imminent danger of development. This crossroads is served by utilities and could soon be a lucrative commercial site. The Trust, however, has purchased two small parcels (less than an acre total) in this area and seeks to build on this piece with additional acquisitions. The outlook is not encouraging, but we are doing what we can. We will keep our members informed as this effort unfolds.

For those members who are interested in further reading about Pelham at Fredericksburg, we recommend Frank A. O'Reilly's excellent and definitive study "Stonewall" Jackson at Fredericksburg: The Battle of Prospect Hill, December 15, 1862.

*It is
glorious to see
such courage
in one
so young.*
Robert E. Lee

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Mail completed form to: **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, 604A William Street, Suite 1, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.**

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