

On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

The Civil War Preservation Trust Says:

Chancellorsville Still Among the Most Threatened

The Civil War Preservation Trust has identified Chancellorsville as one of the nation's Ten Most Endangered Battlefields. This recognition is not surprising and is certainly not the first time that national attention has been focused on this site. In 1998, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed Chancellorsville as one of its Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places.

The CWPT's designation cites two main threats, with which CVBT members will be familiar. The first is the development of land along State Route 3, steadily moving west from Fredericksburg and Interstate-95. This area has become an outer suburb of Washington D.C. and houses and shopping centers are inexorably taking the place of woods and farmland.

The second major threat is a proposed new highway that is supposed to relieve the existing congested roads. Traffic is certainly clogging the

road network. The proposed relief for this situation, however, is an ill-conceived outer connector that provides the illusion of a solution. Unfortunately, fifty years of experience in building highways reveals that this new road will inevitably open up vast areas of land for even more suburban development. The construction and congestion cycle will surely continue if this road is actually built.

Other viable solutions to traffic problems have been explored and recommended by a coalition of local organizations, including the CVBT. This coalition believes that new development and traffic congestion must be responsibly considered and addressed. Unfortunately, the road builders (more

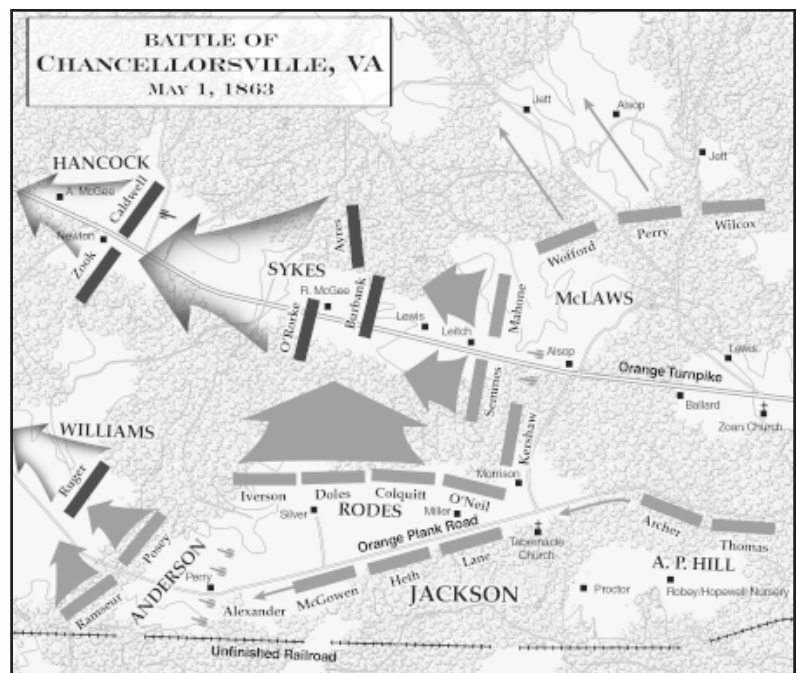
continued on page five

The May 1st battlefield in Chancellorsville is among the most threatened in the United States according to the Civil War Preservation Trust.

Headquarters Location of CVBT Changes

In February, the CVBT moved from its small office at 604 William Street to the George Washington Executive Center on Princess Anne Street. The new location has larger meeting areas where our Board of Directors can better conduct business and plan long-range acquisition strategies. Our mail delivery, however, has been diverted to a Fredericksburg post office. Our new mailing address is:

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc.
PO Box 3417
Fredericksburg, VA 22402



The Trust Acquires Another Piece of the Chancellorsville Battlefield

The CVBT has closed on a 6.5-acre parcel of land on State Route 3 (Orange Turnpike). The price was \$92,000 because it had already been developed as a house site. In fact, a brand new home once stood there, in full view from battlefield land (McLaws' Wedge) purchased by the CVBT and since sold to the National Park Service. The house burned, though, and the property owner put the lot on the market rather than rebuild.

This site abuts another CVBT purchase to the west. Total acreage preserved in this area (without counting the 100 acres at McLaws Wedge) amounts to 11.5 acres. The earlier purchase included a section of a Federal trench, used by skirmishers during May 2nd and 3rd. The latest purchase includes the area where Confederate skirmishers deployed, to cover their lines on the ridge above. In between the two lines (and purchases) is Nine Mile Run.

We need your help to pay off this purchase, so we can keep moving on. Preservation of this area of the battlefield sometimes occurs dramatically, as was the case with McLaws' Wedge. Most of the time, however, this work is one small part of the puzzle at a time. We will need to obliterate any evidence that this site once had a house, but time and nature are on our side. The time in which we must pay off the note is not as forgiving, though. We need your support to retire this debt as

quickly as possible.

As always, your donations will pay for dirt and grass. We have no paid staff and other expenses are kept to a minimum. Our goal is to preserve land and keep moving on.

.....

From our Members

We are always pleased to hear from members and are gratified when they appreciate a purchase we have made. A recent letter came from George Parsons, of Crystal River, Florida. Mr. Parsons was quite familiar with what we thought was a rather obscure battlefield at Smith Run. He even sent us photos of the terrain! Pretty savvy guys these CVBT members.

For others who wish to know details about this engagement, go to our website at www.cvbt.org and look under Smith Run Battlefield.

CVBT Vice-President Harriett Condon accepts the \$150,000 check from Fredericksburg Mayor Bill Beck (left) and Virginia DCR Director David G. Brickley.



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

is published for the CVBT membership at P.O. Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402. 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.

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

John D. Mitchell
President
Harriet Condon
Vice-President

Lloyd Harrison
Treasurer
Rebecca Rickey
Secretary

Robert Lee Hodge
Carroll Hayden
William Kinnamon
Jerry Logan

Erik Nelson
James Pates
Steven Stanley
Michael P. Stevens, MD

COME TO SPOTSYLVANIA FOR

"Fighting Along the Po River"

The CVBT 2002 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust on **May 4 and 5, 2002**, will focus on preservation in Spotsylvania County -- specifically the several places at which the CVBT has played a major preservation role. Saturday afternoon, join historian Eric Mink as he traces the Union attacks on the Confederate left during the battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse. The annual meeting held that evening will be hosted under a tent on recently acquired CVBT land -- the scene of fighting on May 9th, 1864. During the Saturday evening festivities, there will be a walking tour of the Confederate earthworks south of the Po River. Also that evening, there will be a silent auction of Civil War items, prints, books and other special material. On Sunday, join William Matter, author of "If It Takes All Summer" and historian Frank O'Reilly as they relate Grant and Lee's 1864 campaign through Spotsylvania County. For more information call Carroll Hayden at (540) 898-6626 or email cchhayden@aol.com.

CENTRAL VIRGINIA BATTLEFIELDS TRUST ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, MAY 4TH

- 1:00 -2:00 p.m. Overview of the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse
- 2:00 - 4:30 p.m. Walking tour from the Sedgwick monument to the scene of fighting along the Po River led by historian Eric Mink
- 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. Cocktails and Tours of the CVBT's newly acquired Po River property
- 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Barbecue-Style Dinner, catered in the tent
- 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. CVBT Annual Meeting (election of directors)

SUNDAY, MAY 5TH

- 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Tour of Spotsylvania with emphasis on the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse
Bus and walking tour led by William Matter and Frank O'Reilly

PRICE

- Full weekend package **\$115 members/\$150 nonmembers** (includes tours, Saturday dinner & Sunday lunch)
- One day package **\$60.00 members/\$80 nonmembers** (includes Saturday dinner or Sunday lunch)
- Saturday night dinner **\$20.00 adults/\$36.00 couples/\$10.00 children** (under 17)

REGISTRATION DUE BY APRIL 26, 2002

CENTRAL VIRGINIA BATTLEFIELDS TRUST ANNUAL MEETING 2001 REGISTRATION FORM

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

- SIGN ME UP FOR: ☐ WEEKEND PACKAGE - \$115 (MEMBERS) x _____ ☐ WEEKEND PACKAGE - \$150 (NON MEMBERS) x _____
- ☐ SATURDAY PACKAGE - \$60 (MEMBERS) x _____ ☐ SATURDAY PACKAGE - \$80 (NON MEMBERS) x _____
- ☐ SUNDAY PACKAGE - \$60 (MEMBERS) x _____ ☐ SUNDAY PACKAGE - \$80 (NON MEMBERS) x _____
- ☐ DINNER - \$20 (ADULTS) x _____; \$36 (COUPLES) x _____; \$10 (CHILDREN) x _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT: ☐ CHECK

☐ VISA

☐ MASTER CARD

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE (REQUIRED FOR CREDIT CARD ORDERS)

Please return completed registration form with credit card information or a check payable to: **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust**.
Mail completed form to: **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, c/o Carroll Hayden, 4911 Guinea Station Rd, Fredericksburg, VA 22407.**

Nelson A. Miles: *A Genius for War*

Annual Meeting
The Trust looks forward to you attending this year's Annual Meeting located on the grounds of the CVBT's Po River property. This year's meeting will surely be memorable. Please see page three for more information and registration form. See you in May!!

On May 2, 1863, Union and Confederate troops confronted one another east of the Chancellorsville crossroads. On May 1st, Union General Joe Hooker had relinquished the high ground in this area (where the modern McLaws Drive was built) when he pulled his advancing columns back into the woods. Confederate General Robert E. Lee quickly seized this advantageous terrain and kept the Federal army's attention focused to the east as Stonewall Jackson moved around to attack the exposed Federal flank from the west.

Aggressive skirmishing occurred throughout May 2nd and renewed on May 3rd. Commanding the Union skirmishers was a young colonel named Nelson A. Miles. His division commander, Major General Winfield Scott Hancock fully appreciated Miles' skill and was careful to reinforce his skirmish line during those two brutal days with units whose commanders would not outrank his young lion.

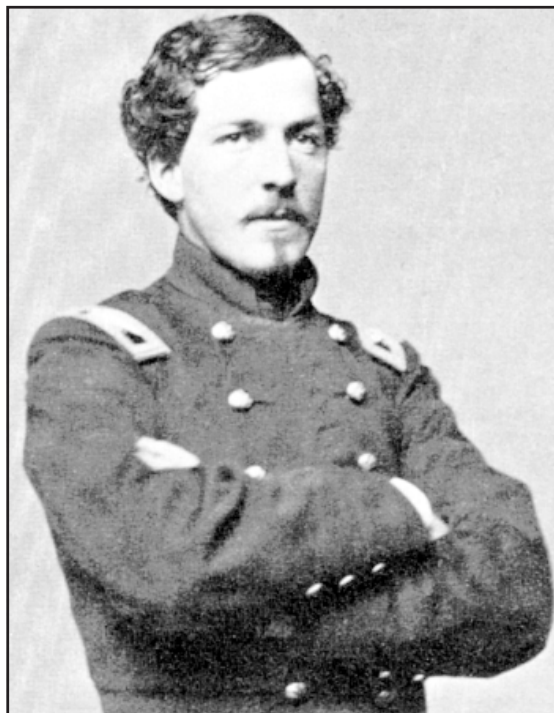
The Trust's latest land acquisition on Route 3 (Orange Turnpike) is closely associ-

ated with Miles in that it was the scene of this intense skirmishing and it was in this vicinity, on May 3rd, that Miles sustained his third battlefield wound. Miles recovered and returned to duty with the Army of the Potomac, and eventually went on to become a professional soldier. His remarkable military career spanned the period from the Civil War (1861) to the beginning of the twentieth century (he retired in 1903).

Miles had no formal military schooling, but certainly had an exceptional aptitude for battlefield command. Before the war, he had worked as a Boston store clerk, pursuing an education at night. When the Civil War came, he was commissioned a captain in the 22nd Massachusetts Infantry, but at the age of 22 he was thought to be too young to command troops in battle. Consequently, he received an assignment as a staff officer during the Peninsula Campaign. He still managed to see action, though, and was both wounded and commended for gallantry. In May 1862, Miles advanced to the rank of lieutenant colonel, in the 61st New York Infantry. He commanded this regiment as its colonel, at Fredericksburg, where he was wounded a second time.

At Chancellorsville, Miles handled the Second Corps' skirmish line. As his wounds attest, Miles was not one who commanded anyone from the rear. He kept close to the skirmish line, reassuring and encouraging the pickets, who often felt quite isolated and exposed, far in advance of their main line of battle. He received a bullet in the stomach, for his trouble, and eventually received the Medal of Honor in recognition of his bravery. The army also acknowledged his exceptional leadership by brevetting him to brigadier general. He was 24 years old.

Recovering from his wound, Miles did not participate in the Gettysburg Campaign. In 1864, during the Overland Campaign, he commanded a brigade at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. He received a fourth wound at Petersburg.



Union Colonel Nelson A. Miles, wounded in the battle of Chancellorsville, received the Medal of Honor for bravery.

continued on page five

Top Ten List

continued from page one

concerned with moving vehicles than serving communities) are still planning to bulldoze their way through significant natural areas and critical battlefield terrain.

The Civil War Preservation Trust's list of endangered battlefields also includes another site in Virginia - Gaines Mill/Cold Harbor. This extensive battleground is just a few miles east of Richmond. Housing developments are moving into this area very quickly and the newly organized Richmond Battlefields Association is faced with the monumental task of trying to purchase historic terrain before it is consumed by development.

Local organizations are key players in preserving battlefield land. They can identify and track the status of dozens of individual parcels that must eventually be acquired to preserve an overall whole. The Civil War Preservation Trust also has a role because it can often bring additional funding to the table to close a deal. This large national organization working with an active local group is a powerful combination. Support them.

Nelson Miles

continued from page four

Following the war, Miles remained in military service. He served as the commandant of Fortress Monroe, when Jefferson Davis was held there. He also saw extensive service on the western frontier, participating in such endeavors as the capture of Geronimo. During an era of broken treaties and tragic confrontations, Miles remained a man of his word when dealing with the Native American tribes. The warriors who confronted him came to respect this able soldier and gave him the name of "Bearcoat."

Miles rose to the rank of Lieutenant General (U.S. Grant's Civil War rank) and served as the Army's commander in chief during the Spanish American War. Not bad for a former store clerk.

CVBT Hosts Bearss Lecture

As part the Fredericksburg Civil War Weekend May 23rd through May 27th. The CVBT will host a dinner and lecture with legendary Civil War historian and battlefield guide Edwin Bearss on Friday May 24th.

The dinner and lecture, to be held at the Fredericksburg Country Club, will kick off the Memorial Day Weekend festivities scheduled through out the Fredericksburg region. Enjoy an excellent dinner buffet in the Smithfield Plantation on the Fredericksburg battlefield. After dinner sit back and enjoy a rousing lecture on the Civil War in Fredericksburg as only Ed Bearss can do.

Seating is limited for this 6 p.m. dinner and all proceeds go towards battlefield preservation projects of the Trust. Reservations are required. The cost of both the dinner and lecture is \$35.00 per person and \$60.00 per couple. For more information, call (540) 659-6819.

Memorial Bricks to Honor Soldiers

The Trust continues to sell memorial bricks, for display at a wayside park in Fredericksburg. Several of you have already purchased bricks, memorializing soldiers who fought in the Civil War. These were set in place in time for Memorial Day. We have orders for several more bricks and will get those in place later this year.

Persons who would like to purchase a brick should note the following guidelines. The cost per individual brick is \$100. Each brick can accommodate three lines of 15 characters each. Commas, periods, numbers, spaces, and apostrophes count as one character each. Because of the limited space, lengthy names may need to be abbreviated. Information should be limited to the soldier's name, rank, and unit, and perhaps his fate.

For more information, call (540) 374-0900.

Renewal Note

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

RENEW TODAY!!

☐ Renewing Member

☐ New Member

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:

☐ 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

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

☐ CHECK

☐ VISA

☐ MASTER CARD

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE (REQUIRED)

Please return completed renewal form with credit card information or a check payable to: **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust.**

Mail completed form to: **Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, PO Box 3417, Fredericksburg, VA 22402.**

In a constant endeavor to keep our costs down, the CVBT publishes a renewal form in all issues of "On The Skirmish Line". Please check your mailing label to see if your membership is due for renewal and clip out the form above and send it back to our office. If your membership is current, but you know of someone who would like to join, please pass this membership form on to them. The CVBT would be glad to include them in our ever growing list of members.



Post Office Box 3417

Fredericksburg, VA 22402

(540) 374-0900 ■ fax (540) 371-4505

www.cvbt.org