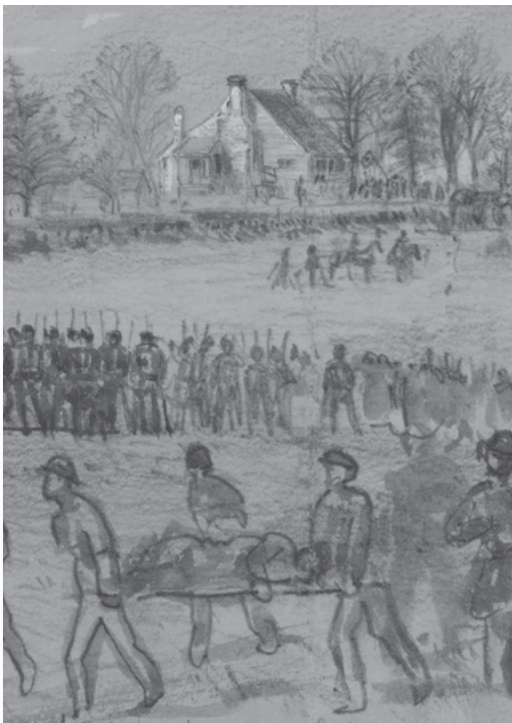




ON THE skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

The David B. Kinney Tract Closes Off Commercial Development in the Flank Attack Sector



No wartime structures survive in the flank attack sector, but in 1863, Dowdall's Tavern was a battlefield landmark within sight of the Kinney property. Additional photos on page 4.

CVBT IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT ANOTHER PART of the Flank Attack sector at Chancellorsville has been acquired. The area on the south side of the Orange Turnpike (modern State Route 3) has been a focus of our efforts since we acquired a portion of the Talley Farm in 1999. Since then, we have stitched together a growing section of that battleground, parcel by parcel, and have also removed visual intrusions such as a decrepit residential trailer and a souvenir/relic shop built to look like a castle. This latest acquisition, with frontage on two roads, finally closes off the potential for any new commercial development within that battlefield terrain.

The former owner, a gentleman named David B. Kinney, had a deep interest in history, which he shared with his children. We had talked with them for years, always on friendly terms, but not coming to terms on a price, as the land was zoned for commercial use and thus a bit more expensive than what we were then paying for other nearby acreage. As that part of the Flank Attack sector became a more cohesive assemblage of protected land, however, it became time to renew our discussions with Mr. Kinney's family.

In late 2016, we came to an agreement to acquire his 1.18 acre parcel for \$130,000, which is below its appraised value, but which the Kinney family accepted as a fair price. We are pleased to call this property the **David B. Kinney tract** in honor of a man who happily took his kids to this area's battlefields and instilled in them a love of history. We hope our members will recognize in him a kindred spirit and help to pay off this purchase so we can press on to the next one.

This Year's 2017 Annual Meeting Weekend Will Cover a Lot of Ground

The CVBT has focused much of its attention on the four battlefields of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House, but we have always been prepared to pursue acquisitions beyond this immediate area. We are proud to say this flexibility has allowed us to assist in significant gains at Brandy Station, where a well known cavalry action occurred and where the Union army spent the winter of 1863-64. In this expansive mode, we are going to take our annual meeting tours to some other fields as well.

This year, we will begin the weekend by taking our guests into Culpeper County. On Friday morning, National Park Service historian Greg Mertz will guide us through the action at Cedar Mountain, where elements of Major General John Pope's Army of Virginia slammed into Confederate General Stonewall Jackson's divisions on August 9, 1862. Less than three weeks after the sharp encounter at Cedar Mountain, the main armies would fight the second battle of Manassas, to be followed by the Maryland Campaign. There are nearly 500 acres of historic ground preserved at Cedar Mountain. It is a battlefield remote

from major highways and thus has a powerful immediacy that we know our members will appreciate.

Also in Culpeper County, between the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers, is the community of Brandy Station where a hard fought cavalry action occurred in June 1863. On Friday afternoon, Clark "Bud" Hall will conduct a tour of that contested ground, which is rather impressive at more than 2,000 acres of protected battlefield terrain. Of special interest will be a place called Fleetwood Hill, which is where the CVBT involved itself and where modern houses were recently removed, to restore the area to its wartime appearance.

There is no evening program on Friday, but folks are encouraged to get out and about in Fredericksburg. Near the hotel are the usual set of restaurants familiar to weary travelers nationwide, but a short trip to downtown Fredericksburg will take you to a variety of local eateries that might also be attractive.

We will get under weigh early Saturday for tours of places not recently saved, but sites acquired by the federal government long ago near Richmond. Our first stop will be Drewry's Bluff, a unit of the Richmond National Battlefield Park, where an earthen fort still stands from Richmond's defenses along the James River. The next stop will be City Point, a unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield located at the confluence of the James and Appomattox Rivers. In 1864-65, City Point was a



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This sketch by Alfred Waud depicts Federal troops at Dowdall's Tavern, as Jackson's flank attack develops on May 2, 1863. View is looking west, along the Orange Turnpike. The properties acquired by the CVBT are where trees are shown in the background, on the far right.

A North Carolina Soldier at Wilderness Church

The following account was written from an area within site of the CVBT's flank attack purchases:

After the fighting [on May 3, 1863]... I went to the hospital three-fourths of a mile back, and by 11 o'clock a.m. the wounded began coming in.... Never since the war began have I seen so many severely wounded, or so many amputations necessary. The work of butchery began about noon on the same day and continued with little intermission until ten o'clock on the following day. Arms and legs were scattered and tossed about with utmost indifference, wounds probed and dressed, balls extracted, and the sufferers made as comfortable as the nature of the case would possibly admit. Details were sent on the battle field to pick up blankets and yankee tents, overcoats and in fact anything ... that would prove useful. Such articles lay scattered in the greatest confusion over the surrounding hills and fields. Our hospital was located at "Wilderness Church" around which was a fine grove of pines. Outside there were large fields, cultivated last year, but now fenceless, desolate and torn into great furrows by the maddening wheels of artillery hurrying to and fro; and lying at intervals of a few rods were dead men and horses slain in the battle on Saturday evening [May 2nd].

bustling supply depot supporting the Federal armies that were strangling the capital of the Confederacy. At that time, it was overrun with wagons, railways, weaponry, warehouses, and all manner of logistics support that an industrialized nation could provide. Today it is a spectacularly scenic spot, with many stories to tell.

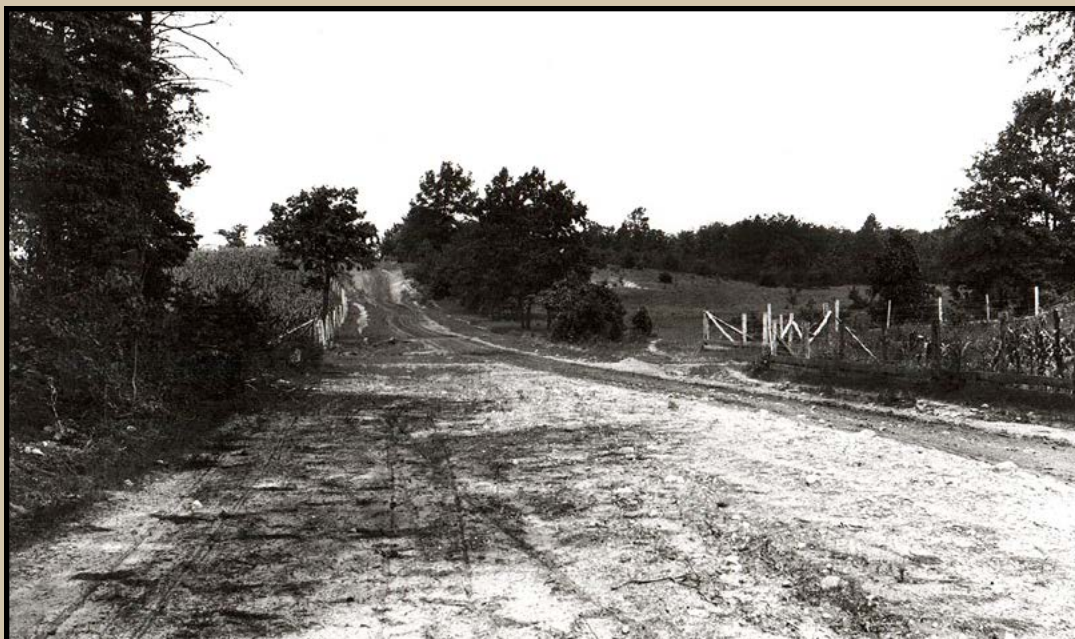
Saturday's lunch will be at a Colonial-era tavern on the road between Richmond and Petersburg. In fact, it is called the Halfway House. The Civil War connection is Major General Benjamin Butler, who used the building as his headquarters during the ill-fated Bermuda Hundred campaign in 1864. The term "hundred" dates back to the earliest days of the Virginia colony. It referred to a settlement that could support one hundred homesteads. The Bermuda Hundred settlement turned into Bermuda City and eventually Charles City.

Those who might like to grab a nap after lunch will not be given the opportunity to become stragglers. The next stop of

the day is the Tredegar Iron Works, in Richmond. A portion of that complex has been converted to a Civil War visitor center and the setting is dramatically instructive as well. Where the James River at City Point is a wide, navigable expanse, the falls of that waterway are a roaring power source for industries. Even if Richmond had not been the seat of the Confederate government, that river city's manufacturing enterprises were still going to be critical to the Southern war effort. National Park Service historians will provide our group with a tour of the still impressive industrial buildings and discuss their function.

Where Tredegar was a noisy place of factories, foundries, canals, railroads, and even a prison camp (Belle Isle), the next stop is the quiet burial ground known as Hollywood Cemetery. It is a 130-acre site overlooking the James River, that waterway that will have been a part of our activities all day. Established in 1849, Hollywood saw an accelerated use during the Civil War.

(Continued on page 4)



This photo, taken c.1890, is the Orange Turnpike, looking west. The ridge on the left is the old Talley Farm, which where the CVBT made its initial purchase of land in the Flank Attack sector.



Through the years, the CVBT has steadily acquired parcels of land on the south side of the Orange Turnpike (modern State Route 3), which in this photo is on the left side of the road. With the help of the CVBT and the Civil War Trust, the National Park Service controls the open land on the right side of the road. The CVBT has removed a commercial intrusion on the south side of the road (the castle) and its control of adjacent parcels will prevent any new commercial activity.

(2017 Annual Meeting, continued from page 3)

There are 28 Confederate general officers buried there as well as 18,000 enlisted men. The carefully maintained grounds still include Holly trees, which gave the cemetery its name.

The Annual Meeting itself is on for that evening, and we will have folks back in Fredericksburg in time to get cleaned up for happy hour, dinner, and the actual business meeting. We will also be presenting the first Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award. This particular honor is a gift from the CVBT Board (not member donations) and is our way of recognizing individuals who have done important work in preservation and who embody a high standard of effectiveness and perseverance.

The evening's featured speaker is Gordon C. Rhea, author of

a superb multi-volume study of the 1864 Overland Campaign. The first book was *The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864*, published in 1994. Other volumes followed, at roughly three year intervals, taking readers through the battles of Spotsylvania Court House, the North Anna River, and Cold Harbor. The fourth book, published in 2002, left us at June 3, 1864. More than a dozen years later, the fifth volume has finally been completed and it will be available in August. It is called *On to Petersburg: Grant and Lee, June 4-15, 1864*, and takes the armies across the James River (there is that river is again). Gordon is a wonderful speaker and we are excited he will be a part of this year's festivities.

Even after all that scheduled activity, the weekend will not

end without one more battlefield tour. Sunday morning will take us back to the Rappahannock valley and a short campaign that unfolded in November and early December 1863. Mine Run flows to the Rapidan River, just west of where the battle of the Wilderness would be fought the following spring. The name of that waterway is the one given to this somewhat obscure action.

When the Confederate army re-crossed the Potomac River, ending the Gettysburg Campaign, it would be nine months before the Union army would cross the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers at the beginning of the Wilderness Campaign. During that extended period, the two main armies in Virginia maneuvered and marched, but had minimal contact with one another. The main activity that summer and fall was in the West. James Longstreet's corps had transferred to Tennessee, where it helped Braxton Bragg win the battle of Chickamauga, in September. Two Union corps had followed, and helped the western Federal forces to prevail at Chattanooga, in October.

In Virginia, Major General George G. Meade proved decidedly reluctant to engage in any kind of offensive. In October, he managed to inflict severe losses on Confederate forces that had launched a poorly conducted attack at Bristoe Station, but President Lincoln wanted him to do more. Under orders to bring Lee to battle, Meade moved his forces up to the Rappahannock River and forced two crossings. On November 7, 1863, one Federal corps pushed across Kelly's Ford and elements of another corps executed a well-planned attack at Rappahannock Bridge. Lee withdrew to the south side of the Rapidan River, out of Culpeper County entirely. The Federals repaired the railway to Brandy Station, and began to establish a supply depot for further operations. The Army of the Potomac would spend the winter of 1863-64 at the end of this supply line, but not yet.

Meade's next step was to press on and cross the Rapidan River, to bring the Confederate forces to battle. His plan was to get his five corps across the river at three crossings and rapidly maneuver to outflank the entrenched Confederate line. Some of Meade's corps commanders were not attuned to moving rapidly, however, and all of them were hindered by poor support from the Federal engineers. Meade had an excellent, hard driving chief of engineers in Brigadier General Henry W. Benham, but this Regular Army officer was not on hand to direct operations and Meade did not make sure someone else handled those critical duties. As a consequence, approach roads were not reconnoitered and prepared for the passage of fighting men. Further, the pontoon bridges were not brought forward and put into place in a timely manner. Given the gift of time, Lee was able to thwart Meade's offensive.

The first contact of the Mine Run Campaign occurred on the confusing and narrow roads that still link obscure river fords with the larger turnpikes. Federal cavalry encountered Confederate infantry on the Raccoon Ford Road and the fighting became general at a place called Payne's Farm. The CVBT's

morning tour, led by Chris Mackowski, will visit the Payne Farm, nearly 700 acres of which have been preserved through the efforts of the Civil War Trust. Mine Run is a campaign that is usually overlooked, but it has much to tell us. Meade's failure to ensure rather important details were being appropriately handled, for instance, was painfully revealed in the delays at the river crossings. He was also wrestling with the challenges of being on the attack, having recognized that modern weaponry had given entrenched defenders an overwhelming advantage on the battlefield. The victor of Gettysburg would be similarly inattentive during the Overland Campaign, with the result that Lieutenant General U.S. Grant would find himself having to exert an increasing control over the Army of the Potomac during 1864.

This weekend's ambitious itinerary will take folks to places beyond our usual area of operations and hopefully provide new insights as we study the Civil War landscape beyond our Fredericksburg horizons. **SL**

The 2017 Annual Meeting Weekend Schedule

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

- * Cedar Mountain, with Greg Mertz
- * Brandy Station, with Bud Hall

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, (the James River day) with National Park historians

- * Drewry's Bluff
- * City Point
- * Tredegar Iron Works
- * Hollywood Cemetery
- * Saturday banquet and awards
- * Speaker – Gordon C. Rhea

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

Mine Run, with Chris Mackowski

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The mission of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust is to preserve land associated with the four major campaigns of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House.

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.

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