



ON THE
skirmish line

Newsletter of The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

2010 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

AT THE BEGINNING OF 2010, THE CVBT HAD TWO PROJECTS underway. The first, which has been on our plate since 2006, was the Slaughter Pen Farm acquisition, on the Fredericksburg battlefield. The second is a property we closed on in December 2009, which we call Wilderness Crossroads. At the end of 2010, we still have these two projects in the works, but are moving along nicely to pay them down. More about those later, though.

Our annual meeting in April 2010, held in downtown Fredericksburg, proved a great success. The hotel was situated approximately midway between the upper and middle pontoon crossing sites used on December 11, 1862. Fredericksburg was roughly handled during the war. It was occupied off and on since the spring of 1862 and used as a vast hospital in the spring of 1864. In winter of 1862 and spring of 1863 it became a battleground. Our tours left on foot from the hotel and participants were immediately immersed in what had once been a war-torn town.

In the morning, Park historian Greg Mertz led a group through the fighting of December 11, 1862. On that day, the Union army forced its way across the Rappahannock River, causing tremendous damage to the once quiet Colonial town in the process. Artillery smashed into houses and street fighting introduced a manner of warfare for which no one had been trained. The result was a brutal day of close fighting.

The numbers of troops involved was not very large. The Confederates committed only a brigade to hold the town, while the rest of the Southern army marshalled on the heights behind the town. The Federals could only push forward a few regiments at a time, although Union artillery provided considerable support. As is usual, the casualties among the engaged infantry were high. Downtown Fredericksburg is not within the boundaries of the National Park, but it is a designated National Register

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Bearss Dinner a Smashing Success

During the week after Thanksgiving, seven guests were treated to a memorable evening with the incomparable Ed Bearss. The setting was The Sentry Box, an eighteenth century home overlooking the Fredericksburg wharves, built by Revolutionary War General George Weedon. That location, however, put it within range of Union artillery positioned near George Washington's boyhood home. The heavy Civil War damage has long since been repaired and The Sentry Box is now the meticulously restored home of Weedon's descendant (and long time CVBT supporter) Charles McDaniel and his wife Mary Wynn McDaniel.



On November 30, 2010, this distinguished group met for dinner at The Sentry Box, the elegant home of Mary Wynn and Charles McDaniel. The home was built by George Weedon, whose portrait hangs above the fireplace, in the background.

the Fredericksburg area.

During an elegant dinner, the group enjoyed additional stories of Ed's old Park Service days, particularly those related to his association with former Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter. As a remembrance of the special gathering, each guest received a presentation copy of Ed's new book, *Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg* and also had their photo taken with Ed.

Special thanks are due our hosts. The evening was a grand success thanks to the generosity and gracious hospitality of Mary Wynn and Charles McDaniel, who opened up their lovely home

The group received a special tour of this beautifully decorated house, during which Ed provided his usual interesting commentary on different aspects of the Revolution and the Civil War as they occurred around the Sentry Box and

during this busy holiday season. We wish to thank Ed Bearss for everything he tirelessly does for battlefield preservation. Thanks are also due to our guests, who helped us to raise \$14,000 for the preservation of more "dirt and grass!" SL



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*Contributing Authors
This Issue:*

Erik Nelson

Photographs:

Tom Van Winkle
Alan Zirkle



2010 CVBT victories included preserving Wilderness Crossroads which witnessed U. S. Grant's southward move to Spotsylvania.

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Historic District. Many antebellum buildings were destroyed that day, but many survived the battle and are still in use as homes and businesses, the holes in their exterior repaired, but occasionally exhibiting damage on the inside.

In the afternoon, John Hennessy, Chief Historian of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, led a tour of buildings used as hospitals during the war. Most any large building in downtown Fredericksburg can be assumed to have sheltered wounded soldiers, but John's tour included numerous first person accounts from 1862 and 1864, read on the actual site that they described.

Dinner and the annual meeting were held at a brand new Marriott Courtyard in downtown Fredericksburg. The tour on Sunday provided our members a look at the new Wilderness Crossroads property, where we walked the remnants of the old road that had witnessed the passing of armies as well as the cavalcade of General U.S. Grant as he turned his forces south, toward Spotsylvania Court House and beyond.

The year 2010 was a good year for special tours. On September 18th, Logan Creek Designs worked with CVBT board member Tom Van Winkle to provide a tour of the Fredericksburg battlefield, with a special side trip to Moss Neck, the beautiful plantation on the Rappahannock River where Stonewall Jackson had established himself for a brief period during the winter of 1862/63. The result was a memorable day, with the benefit of funds raised to support battlefield acquisition.

No matter what we do as an organization—tours, special events, etc.—the bottom line is that everything is

geared toward preserving hallowed ground. Our focus continues to be our efforts to pay off our two current projects—Slaughter Pen Farm (Fredericksburg) and Wilderness Crossroads. In 2006, we pledged \$1 million to the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) as it assembled the resources to pay \$12 million for those critical 208 acres. To date, we have paid \$850,000 of this amount, leaving only another \$150,000 to go. It should be noted that CVBT has not sought any public funding for this project, leaving those resources for the CWPT to pursue. One result is that we have taken many years to retire this obligation.

For the Wilderness Crossroads, on the other hand, we have pulled together resources other than member donations to pay off the note for that 93-acre property. The overall cost is \$952,322 and we have managed to obtain grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia and the American Battlefield Protection Program in excess of \$645,000. What this outside funding has meant for us is that every dollar donated by a member has turned into three dollars for the overall project. Through the generosity of our individual members, Civil War round tables, and the Civil War Preservation Trust, we only have \$150,000 to go on this acquisition as well.

A small organization like ours takes a while to pay off notes of this magnitude, but we keep plugging along. Since we cannot preserve everything, we concentrate on what is the most important. Jim Lighthizer paid us the compliment of stating that CVBT “buys the right land for the right price.” To this end, we are looking at other critical properties even as we work to close out these current projects. The year 2010 was a good one, but we look to have exciting announcements in 2011. **SL**

The CVBT's 2011 annual meeting promises to be an exciting one and will be held over three days, April 29 through May 1. In addition to our usual Saturday/Sunday schedule, this year's format will include additional activities on Friday afternoon and evening.

On Friday, April 29th, we will depart Fredericksburg by bus, early in the afternoon, and head for Richmond. The first stop will be the new exhibit at the Virginia Historical Society entitled: *An American Turning Point: The Civil War In Virginia*. We will also visit the nearby Confederate War Memorial Chapel, built in 1887 by the Confederate Veterans of R. E. Lee Camp #1 Soldiers Home. The day will conclude at the Museum of the Confederacy, where we will tour the Museum and the adjacent White House of the Confederacy. We will also get a special behind-the-scenes look into the Museum's flag room. Drinks and a barbeque dinner are also planned for the group that participates in this event. This Friday tour is limited to the number of people who will fit on a single bus, so make your reservations early.

Saturday's activities will feature a rare opportunity to tour two venues not often seen by the casual visitor. The morning program will focus on the November 1863 Mine Run Campaign. Preservation at this relatively forgotten battlefield has occurred primarily through the efforts of the CWPT. The afternoon will include a visit to Robert E. Lee's 1863 winter encampment. This location is on private property and not normally accessible, so you will not want to miss it. A catered lunch is also included in this tour.

Our dinner and annual meeting will take place Saturday evening. As usual, we will be able to enjoy drinks and catch up with one another prior to dinner. We will also conduct a silent auction of a great variety of items typical for these types of events as well as some more esoteric stuff. So bring your check books! In addition, we have a provocative after dinner event planned. Noted historians Robert K. Krick and Gary Gallagher will be on hand to present: "The Best and Worst Civil War Books of Recent Years." Those who have experienced tours with this dynamic duo know that this discussion will be lively and



great fun. Those of you who have books by these authors should bring them if you would like to have them inscribed after the evening's events.

Recognizing CVBT's fifteen years of preservation activity, the Sunday morning tour will look at our past successes, present

activities, and future plans. To celebrate this anniversary, we will provide a champagne breakfast on one of our properties and then visit several sites, focusing not only on their historical significance, but also discussing the behind-the-scenes strategies involved in acquiring and protecting historic terrain. We will discuss identification of funding, evaluating partnerships, determining whether to seek an easement or to pursue outright fee simple purchase, handling political intrigue, and more.

Headquarters for the weekend will be the recently renovated Country Inn & Suites, located at 5327 Jefferson Davis Highway. We have secured a block of rooms for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights at a special rate of \$82 per night. You may make your reservations by calling 540-898-1800 and asking for the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust rate. Reservations should be made no later than April 8 to guarantee this special rate.

All in all, this occasion of the CVBT's fifteenth anniversary promises to be a very exciting weekend that you will not want to miss. In February, we will be sending out the formal notice of this annual meeting, along with a detailed agenda and a registration form, but you can make your reservations sooner by mail, by e-mailing us at execdirector@cvbt.org, or by calling us at 540-374-0900. We believe our Friday afternoon tour will be extremely popular and the odds are it will sell out very quickly. We encourage you to act now if you want to reserve your space.

Fees for the events are as follows, per person:

Friday tour: \$65

Saturday tour only: \$60

Saturday dinner only: \$45

Saturday tour and dinner: \$105

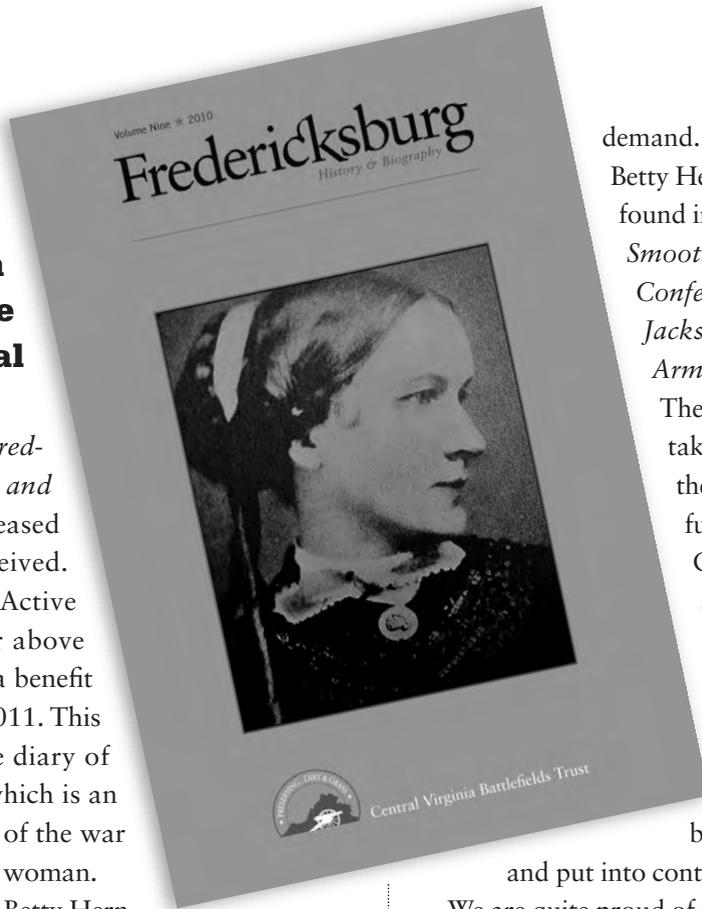
Sunday tour: \$50

Entire weekend: \$195

**Fredericksburg
History and
Biography
Presents an
Incomparable
Wartime Journal**

The 2010 volume of *Fredericksburg History and Biography* has been released and has been well received. CVBT members at the Active Level (\$135 per year) or above will be mailed a copy as a benefit of membership, in early 2011. This new volume presents the diary of Betty Herndon Maury, which is an exceedingly rare account of the war years by a Fredericksburg woman.

The importance of the Betty Herndon Maury diary cannot be overstated. It is a wonderfully blunt first hand account from a Virginia community caught up in war's upheaval. It appears in Richard B. Harwell's bibliography *In Tall Cotton: The 200 Most Important Confederate Books for the Reader, Researcher, and Collector* (1978). Its significance has not translated into availability, though. In 1938, Alice Maury Parmalee, Betty Maury's second daughter, saw to the private publication of only 25 copies of the diary, which are now in great



demand. An excellent discussion of the Betty Herndon Maury diary can be found in Robert K. Krick's book *The Smoothbore Volley That Doomed the Confederacy: The Death of Stonewall Jackson and Other Chapters on the Army of Northern Virginia* (2002). The version published by CVBT is taken from the original on file in the Library of Congress and carefully transcribed by Carolyn Carpenter, of Richmond. Other articles include a look at the Constitutional debates in Spotsylvania County, in 1787-1788 and publication of another primary account of wartime Fredericksburg, discovered by local student Breck O'Donnell

and put into context by John J. Hennessy.

We are quite proud of this volume and the developing set of these journals in general. They provide an impressive and growing collection of first person accounts from Fredericksburg civilians as well as well researched articles of not only the Civil War, but of other periods of this region's history. We also have more articles in the works for next year. If you do not receive this publication automatically (Active Member or above), they are also available at local book stores, at the National Park's Fredericksburg Visitor Center, and through our website. **SL**

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. As 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 (we are not like magazines that like to get renewals six months in advance of expiration). You might also consider upgrading your membership level, to increase our capability to save hallowed ground in central Virginia.



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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.

Membership Categories

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