

On The Skirmish Line

The Newsletter of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

National Park Service Awards Trust

After saving over 114 acres of battlefield in less than three years, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT) is being hailed as one of the most effective battlefield preservation groups around. In recognition of the Trust's accomplishments, on March 15th, the National Park Service presented the CVBT with its 1998 Northeast Regional Conservation Award in Williamsburg, VA.

Marie Rust, director of the park service's Northeast region, said, "A group of concerned citizens decided it was time to stand up to the senseless destruction of our heritage. I applaud them."

The CVBT was chosen out of 25 entries from more than 100 park service site from Virginia to Maine. It was the first time the award was bestowed on a group protecting Civil War battlefields.

In addition to the award, the park service presented the Trust with a new printer to help facilitate the ever increasing membership requirements.

The park service has been grateful for the Trust's efforts in preserving significant battlefield sites, notably helping with the acquisition of Willis Hill in 1997 and the 100 acres McLaws Wedge site in Chancellorsville. Shortly after the Annual Meeting, on May 1st, the Trust will turnover to the park service another five acres of property in the heart of the Jackson Flank Attack.

"It's been an enormous contribution that this organization has made," said Sandy Rives, superintendent of Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park. "It's far and above anything we imagined when this group was formed."

If it is Springtime ... then it's Annual Meeting Time!

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust's Annual Meeting is upon us. In previous years, your Board of Directors takes pleasure in providing the members with an entertaining and educational annual meeting. This year is no different, with the Annual Meeting coinciding with the 136th Anniversary of the Battle of Chancellorsville, "Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville" is appropriate.

This year's CVBT Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 1st and Sunday, May 2nd on the Trust's 5-acre parcel located in the heart of Stonewall Jackson Flank Attack. The parcel located next to the recent 40-acre NPS purchase which will help with the interpretation of this crucial portion of the Battle of Chancellorsville.

On Saturday, May 1st, the Trust will present a symposium on Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville which includes such notable historians as Don Pfanz, Frank O'Reilly and Robert K. Krick. Don Pfanz will help to clear up many misconceptions about the Union Army's right flank with his talk on "The Eleventh Corps at Chancellorsville". Frank O'Reilly will be addressing Stonewall Jackson's Flank March and Attack.

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Marie Rust, Northeast Regional Director of the National Park Service along with Sandy Rives, Superintendent of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park presenting the 1998 Northeast Regional Conservation Award to: (l. to r.) Enos Richardson, John Mitchell, Carroll Hayden, and Steven Stanley.

From the Archives

On the Chancellorsville battlefield, the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has purchased two tracts of land. Both of them are on State Route 3 (Orange Turnpike), but several miles apart. Most of our members will already be familiar with these parcels because they have helped to preserve them. The tracts we called McLaws' Wedge, since transferred to the National Park Service, was the area held by Major General Lafayette McLaws' Confederate troops on May 2nd, 1863. While McLaws' veterans fixed their attention onto the Federal army to their front, Stonewall Jackson marched a formidable striking force onto the Union army's exposed flank. Our second tract at Chancellorsville, which we will transfer to the Park Service upon an affirmative vote by our members at the annual meeting on May 1st, is the area where Jackson's troops burst out of the woods in the late afternoon. According to an 1893 letter, these two properties were within sight of one another in 1863.

The letter, dated July 3, 1893, is from Randolph Burton to Augustus C. Hamlin (who later wrote a book on Chancellorsville). It reads, in part, as follows (spelling and punctuation has been left as written):

Wherein you say "Lee did not hear Jacksons guns at all" I think in substance you are mistaken - Col Marshall tells me that while late in the afternoon of the 2nd May Genl Lee was waiting most anxiously to hear them, from a elevation perhaps on the left of Anderson, at a great distance he saw the flames from Jacksons guns pointing towards

the Anderson-McLaws line; the reports of the guns were not audible but both Genl Lee & Col Marshall knew what the shots meant and immediately Col M was dispatched to orderr McLaws to attack

Linking historic documents to the actual terrain is always a thrill. Our members should be proud of their accomplishments in preserving these tracts for future generations.

Acquiring More Land
What's Next?

Many months have passed since the Trust has been able to purchase additional historic ground. This lull is certainly not due to a lack of effort, but rather to some pretty exorbitant pricing. Some property owners believe we will pay any price for their land and this misunderstanding causes delays. Members should take heart that developers are also not likely to pay exaggerated prices for these properties either. The Trust keeps tabs on numerous properties and will move forward when a price becomes realistic.

In addition to monitoring land prices, we remain selective in what we consider for purchase. We deliberately focus on significant sites, for instance, where we know that maintaining the historic terrain intact will have far reaching impacts on the battlefields. We can always find land to purchase, but we prefer to concentrate on areas where the threat to the integrity of a battlefield is the most imminent.

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

The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc. Board of Directors

Enos Richardson, Jr. <i>President</i>	Michael P. Stevens, MD <i>Treasurer</i>	Carroll Hayden Jean W. Jones John D. Mitchell	James M. Pates Anne W. Rowe Steven Stanley
F. Baldwin Harrington, MD, <i>Vice-President</i>	Erik F. Nelson, <i>Secretary</i>		

The Destruction of a Battlefield

Progress Wipes out Salem Church Battlefield

As we have informed our membership previously, the Commonwealth of Virginia has approved a route for a major federal-aid highway that will cut through the Chancellorsville battlefield. The National Park Service is very concerned about this road because it will have enormous effects on an important national treasure (the battlefield). Other, local organizations are in active opposition to this highway because it will also intrude on the wild and scenic Rappahannock River. Those who are not preservationists, but still concerned about uncontrolled growth and sprawl development should be worried as well because this road is a prime example of the wrong road in the wrong place. A new road through a relatively undeveloped portion of the county will generate the type of sprawl development that has already enveloped much of Spotsylvania County.

The road builders are pushing hard to clear any obstacles to getting pavement down and they have little patience for a discussion of your heritage. During a meeting with the state highway builders, one of the state planners skeptically inquired if the National Park Service could name an instance where a battlefield had suffered adverse effects from a new road. Without a moments hesitation, the Park Service representative stated: "Salem Church."

Those who are familiar with the Chancellorsville Campaign know that Salem Church became a critical site in the afternoon of May 3rd, 1863. At that time, a Federal column, under the command of Major General John Sedgwick, moved west from Fredericksburg toward the sound of guns at Chancellorsville. In their way, however, was Confederate General Cadmus Wilcox's brigade of Alabamians. Wilcox had been guarding the Banks Ford crossing of the Rappahannock River while the main battle unfolded in the tangled woods to the west. When this North Carolina officer shrewdly determined the Federals would not force a crossing there, he judiciously took his small force to confront the Union threat coming out of Fredericksburg.

While Wilcox maneuvered to delay the

Federal column, Confederate reinforcement, under Lafayette McLaws, pulled out of their lines and moved east. Although tired from two



FREDERICKSBURG/SPOTSYLVANIA NMP



STEVEN STANLEY PHOTO

days of hard fighting, these Southern veterans moved as quickly as possible to the Salem Church ridge. William Mahone's Virginians filed into place on the left of this new line. Paul J. Semmes formed on their right, followed by Joseph B. Kershaw's South Carolinians, Wilcox's Alabama troops, and William T. Wofford Georgians. Our long time members

A testimony to destruction, Salem Church as it appeared in the early 1900s (top photo) and the modern view from the same perspective (btm. photo).

Battlefield Preservation Comes into Question

Why do we save battlefields? What is all this hype about the preservation of hallowed ground? These questions and many more always are thrust upon us, and while everybody has his or her own reason for remembering the past, the CVBT's mission is straightforward. The following is a speech, from Dr. Mike Stevens, Treasurer and Board Member of the CVBT, given at a recent function.

"Good evening, I'm grateful for having been allowed these few minutes to talk to you about Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT) specifically and about battlefield preservation in general. . . . The missions are two. First, to purchase significant Civil War battlefields so as to save them in perpetuity, and second, to act as advocates for battlefield preservation at local, state, and national levels. The pledges are also two. First, to put as much of every dollar contributed to us as possible into "dirt and grass"; we are still all volunteer, no one gets paid a cent, and while members get a quarterly newsletter, they will not get fannypacks or coffee cups or ashtrays with our logo. Every cent except of rent for a small office, postage, phone, etc. goes toward the purchase and saving of hallowed ground. Our second pledge is to stay the course, to hang in there, to be involved right to the very end. And this in spite of ever-increasing opposition.

Much as I might hate to admit it, there are a great many people who simply can't understand why anyone would want to preserve a battlefield. These folks see battlefield preservation only in terms of lost profit opportunities or tax base, and they see battlefields only as vast underutilized wasteland.

Well, there are of course any number of reasons for saving these battlefields. There are, for example, reasons of history and heritage. Battlefields are a part of the mosaic of all the battlefields, historic homes and landmarks throughout the country which, together, define who we are and where we've come from as a nation. There are environmental reasons. If we want to preserve open space, some areas of green and peace and quietude, in the midst of all the concrete and buildings, battlefields allow us to do that. There are economic reasons. Battlefields bring tourists to our communities, bringing clean dollars which don't require roads and schools and utilities, etc. There are reasons of education. Battlefields allow an opportunity

for kids to come to the fields and, perhaps, have stimulated an interest in the war which will prove to be lifelong. Military personnel are afforded an opportunity of learning about their craft from the unique perspective of walking these grounds.

All of these are good and valid reasons. But the overwhelming most important reason for those of us involved with CVBT is a spiritual one, having to do with these men, these ordinary men who did such extraordinary things, on these fields. These ground are hallowed, having been consecrated by the blood of men who pledged their lives and honor for a cause higher than themselves, and as such this is simply sacred soil.

The Civil War was arguably the most important event in this nation's history, having helped define our national character, and we who live in and love this country owe a great debt to these men for having helped shape modern America.

An equally great debt is owed them for what they can teach us about the higher virtues of honor, and duty, and loyalty, and patriotism, and love of country, and cause, and comrade. These are not fashionable virtues today, but we of CVBT believe that thy must be kept alive if America is to remain strong and quiet.

These men, therefore, these heroes on both sides of the conflict, have earned the right to be remembered and honored for as long as there is an America. And what better way to do that than to preserve the ground they fought and died upon, to recognize that to deface or destroy that ground is do dishonor their accomplishments and their memories, which is both an abomination and an outrage.

Finally, I'd like to finish with a quote from Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, from his speech at the dedication of the Maine monuments at Gettysburg on October 3, 1889. This has been so commonly quoted that it risks the danger of being thought trite, but if you listen to the words, really listen to the words, it articulates precisely what CVBT is all about:

In great deeds something abides. On great fields something stays. Forms change and pass; Bodies disappear; But spirits linger, to consecrate ground for the vision-place of souls. And reverent men and women from afar, and generations that know us not and that we know not of, heart-drawn to see where and by whom

www.cvbt.org

Our web page continues to expand, through the generosity of member Steve Stanley. 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.

Annual Meeting

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Following Don and Frank, Robert K. Krick will be discussing the decision of Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee on May 1st and also will be bringing to light new evidence about the Wounding of Stonewall Jackson.

After the symposium, a picnic-style dinner will be served on the site of Jackson's brilliant military achievement, after which the CVBT's Annual Meeting will take place. The evening will come to a conclusion with a candlelight ceremony commemorating the last meeting of Lee and Jackson at the Bivouac site exactly 136 years to the date and hour of that meeting on May 1st, 1863. Our hosts that evening will be Robert K. Krick and Ed Bearss. What a way to end an event filled day.

On Sunday, May 2nd, Frank O'Reilly will lead a motorcoach tour of "Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville" highlighting sites that have been made famous by Stonewall Jackson. During the bus tour, for the first time ever, you will be able to walk the Flank Attack on the newly acquired Flank Attack parcels.

This educational and entertaining weekend is just \$100 for the weekend package, which includes the symposium, dinner and bus tour. Or, for only \$55, you can enjoy either Saturday's symposium or Sunday's motorcoach tour. If you are only able to make it out for dinner on Saturday night, the price is just \$15 for a barbecue-style dinner and evening activities. If you would like to participate in the Trust's Annual Meeting weekend, then call (540) 659-6819 or (703) 551-4462 before April 25th to register.

We look forward to seeing you in May for a fun-filled and educational weekend.

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.

CVBT Financials

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc.

Balance Sheet

Year Ended December 31, 1998

(unaudited)

ASSETS

Current Assets:	
Unrestricted cash	\$ 91,383
Board restricted cash	11,682
Deposit on land contracts	<u>74,521</u>
Total Current Assets	\$ <u>177,585</u>
Total Assets	\$ <u><u>177,585</u></u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities:	
Note payment	\$ <u>25,000</u>
Total Current Liabilities	\$ <u>25,000</u>
Net Assets:	\$ <u>152,585</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ <u><u>177,585</u></u>

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, Inc.

Income Statement

Year Ended December 31, 1997

(unaudited)

Revenues:	
Dues and donations	\$ 172,723
Interest	<u>341</u>
Total revenues	\$ <u>173,064</u>
Expenses:	
Rent	\$ 4,779
Telephone	993
Licenses and fees	5,456
Insurance	439
Printing and Postage	7,472
Office expenses	3,952
Supplies	10,533
Dues	0
Promotion	397
Repairs and maintenance	0
Internet web site	550
Interest expense	11,161
Annual meetings	16,516
Professional fees	1,200
Grants and donations	<u>30,000</u>
Total Expenses	\$ <u>93,448</u>
Change in Net Assets	\$ 79,616
Net Assets, beginning of year	<u>72,969</u>
Net Assets, end of year	\$ <u><u>152,585</u></u>

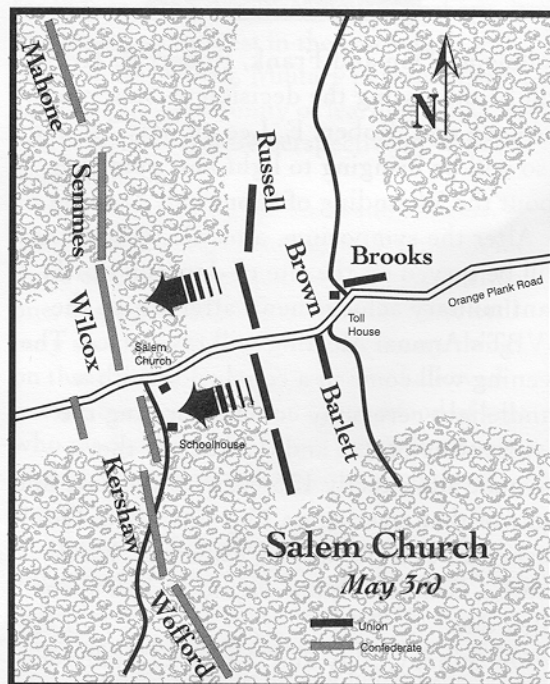
Salem Church Battlefield Gone from page 3

will recognize these troops as having fought on and around the McLaws Wedge tract, which they helped purchase and which has since been incorporated in the National Battlefield Park.

William T.H. Brooks (commanding the First Division, Sixth Corps) headed the Federal command closing in on these deployed Confederates, although without realizing the strength of the force that awaited him. North of the Plank Road, Pennsylvania and New Jersey troops of John Newton's division moved forward. South of the road, the advancing force consisted of a brigade (from Brooks' division) comprised of troops from New York, Pennsylvania, Maine, and New Jersey. In the late afternoon, these Union veterans soon crashed into the Confederate line, but did not break through.

The next day, May 4th, Jubal Early's Division moved into the Federal rear when it reoccupied Fredericksburg. In response, Sedgwick pulled back from Salem Church and consolidated a line around the Banks Ford crossings. General Robert E. Lee arrived on the field (Hooker was still in his defensive wedge just back of the Chancellorsville crossroads) and established his headquarters in a distinctive, brick Gothic dwelling called Idlewild (owned by a family named Downman). Lee hoped to destroy the isolated Union Sixth Corps, but an attack on the new Union line did not commence until that evening. A skillful Union defense combined with the exhausted

Without the help of preservation groups, the destruction of Salem Church battlefield was inevitable.



condition of the Confederate attackers, as well as the onset of a dense fog at dusk, allowed the Federals to withdraw across the Rappahannock River in relative safety.

Early in the twentieth century, but just over 40 years since the engagement at Salem Church, New Jersey veterans erected two monuments there. The former members of the 15th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry placed theirs north of the road. Men of the 23rd New Jersey placed theirs south of the road. Each monument is somewhat unusual in that they include a plaque that recognizes the valor of their opponents on the field. In the 1950s, more than 40 years after the monuments went up, the Salem Church congregation built a larger church nearby and donated their historic structure to the National Park Service. By the 1990s, another 40 years later, the land around Salem Church has been irreversibly bulldozed and paved.

Interstate 95 swept through central Virginia in the 1960s, enabling visitors to more readily tour these war-torn fields, but also opening up land to homebuilders and developers. Unfortunately, in the rush to subdivide what had been farms, little thought was given to maintaining historic landscapes. The new interstate brought the Washington Metropolitan Area within

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Salem Church

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commuting distance and the houses followed. Once the number of rooftops reached a specific threshold, additional commercial enterprises became viable and strip malls proliferated. Houses, jobs, and shopping areas are now scattered across this historic landscape, all of it held together by long automobile trips. Traffic congestion is the inevitable by-product of this sprawl and the demands become louder for more roads to accommodate the growing number of cars. As a consequence of more roads (the stepping stones to growth and development) this destructive cycle will certainly continue.

There are those who claim that preservationists are trying to save everything. The response is that we need not obliterate everything to prosper. In a rapidly changing world, there is a need to balance growth with the maintenance of areas that are of national significance.

Abandoned shopping centers (and they do get abandoned) can be redeveloped and reused. Our heritage, once consumed for development, cannot be reclaimed. Sprawl development eats into battlefields, step by seemingly innocuous step. At Salem Church, a gas station across the road became the first intrusion. A bank, a shopping center, and widened roads came next. New houses pushed up against the church property to the south. The road was widened again, encroaching onto the New Jersey monuments. The landscape has now been altered so much that a visitor is hard pressed to be able to determine the nature of the terrain.

The destruction of Salem Church battlefield became inevitable when Interstate 95 crossed State Route 3 (Plank Road) and created the basis for dynamic growth and development around the resulting interchange. Sprawl development spawned by this infrastructure devours the landscape, whether it is historic or not. The only realistic remedy to preserve nationally significant lands is to purchase them. The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust has dedicated itself to identifying lands that are critical to the integrity of the four battlefields of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House so we can subsequently purchase them. We will not be looking to buy land around Salem Church. There is none left.



General Robert E. Lee was able to hold back the Union army at Salem Church, but his May 4th headquarters area cannot hold back progress as construction invades the last venue of the Salem Church battlefield.

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Battlefield Preservation

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great things were suffered and done for them, shall come to this deathless field, to ponder and dream, and lo! the shadow of a mighty presence shall wrap them in its bosom, and the power of the vision pass into their souls.

We who have been wrapped in the shadow of this mighty presence must do everything we can to assure that these fields are saved so that future generations that know us not and that we know not of can be afforded the same opportunities and privilege.

These men whom we study and revere made the ultimate sacrifice, and the question arises as to whether we will prove worthy of that sacrifice. So, if the power of the vision has passed into your soul (and how can it not once you have walked these hallowed grounds?), won't you please join us by supporting CVBT (and your own local preservation organizations; battlefield preservation will, ultimately, succeed or fail at the local level) in its effort to save these hallowed grounds, both so as to remember and honor these heroes on both sides of the conflict forever and for all time, and so as to assure that future generations of Americans will have these grounds to walk upon, to ponder over, and to share the sense of the numinous which pervades them.

Thank you very much.

Renewal Note

Please check your mailing label to see if your membership is due for renewal and 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, 604A William Street, Suite 1, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.**

In a constant endeavor to keep our costs down, the CVBT will not send out reminders for membership renewal. Instead, we will publish 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.



**CENTRAL VIRGINIA
BATTLEFIELDS TRUST**

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