

## 2006 Annual Meeting

This year the annual event is scheduled for Saturday, June 10, at the Malvern Hill battlefield, beginning at 10.00 a.m. and ending at about 1.00 p.m. Historian and author Frank O'Reilly, best known for his book on the Battle of Fredericksburg (*Winter War on the Rappahannock*), will lead a walking tour of two portions of the Malvern Hill battlefield. Additionally, the annual business meeting, which is open to all members of the RBA, will take place as part of the event. The event is free and everyone is welcome, including non-members.

### Tour Details

Traditionally the RBA summer tour attempts to get participants onto sections of area battlefields that normally are not accessible. This year is no exception, although sooner or later we are going to exhaust opportunities of this sort.

The National Park Service owns approximately 1000 acres at Malvern Hill, making it one of the best preserved battlefields in central Virginia. There are only a few key areas outside of the current preserved NPS boundary. One of those areas is the Poindexter Farm, where much of Stonewall Jackson's section of the Confederate army spent July 1, 1862. The O'Reilly walking tour will visit the Poindexter Farm, walking down the original dirt farm lane used by Stonewall to get his cannon into action. The fields where the Confederate batteries deployed remain virtually

unchanged. O'Reilly will talk about the unequal fight waged by those batteries, about Jackson's personal role in the battle, and related topics.

The Poindexter House no longer stands, but on July 2, 1862, it served as headquarters for Confederate army commander R. E. Lee. While there, he hosted a famous strategy meeting with



Jefferson Davis and Stonewall Jackson. We will visit the site of the house on this tour.

Retracing our steps, the tour will conclude by visiting the ruins of French's Mill. Although the site did not see any real fighting during the battle, it is a fascinating location in an out of the way place. Late in the battle the Confederate brigade of Jubal Early attempted to work its way through the woods to the front lines. The brigade

passed through the mill complex, with General Early using the mill-dam itself (which still stands).

### Be Prepared

If you plan on coming to the tour and annual meeting, bear in mind that the total distance covered on foot will be approximately two and a half miles. There will be many stops along the way, with expert interpretation from O'Reilly. The Poindexter Farm portion of the tour will be (mostly) in the open, with only a brief foray into the woods. But French's Mill is hidden back in the woods, accessible only through briars and woods. Malvern Hill is notorious for its heavy concentration of ticks, so please dress and plan accordingly.

[For further reading on Lee at the Poindexter Farm, see Douglas Southall Freeman's *R. E. Lee*, volume two pages 222-224. To learn about the Poindexter portion of the big artillery duel at Malvern Hill, see Keith Bohannon's article "One Solid Unbroken Roar of Thunder," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Richmond Campaign of 1862* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pages 217-249.]

**Members: At this year's annual meeting, we (you) will be voting on an important amendment that will affect the term limits of board members.**

# Update on Frayser's Farm / Glendale Progress

The Winter issue of *On Richmond's Front Line* announced the current project at the Frayser's Farm/Glendale battlefield. The 40 acre tract is being purchased in a collaborative deal between the RBA and the Civil War Preservation Trust. Response to this opportunity has been predictably enthusiastic. In fact, any non-profit organization in any endeavor would be thrilled to receive a similar response. Upon learning of this opportunity, nearly half of the current members of the RBA replied directly to the appeal. They donated, on

average, approximately \$245 per person.

As usual, nearly every one of those dollars will be applied directly to retiring the RBA's portion of the Frayser's Farm/Glendale debt. Newsletter and postage costs are the only substantial regular expenses incurred by the RBA.

The first of our two payments on this land is due in May, and we have the funds on hand to meet that obligation. For the moment, at least, we remain short of the amount needed for the second installment, due later in 2006.

The appeal stirred up some delinquent members, too, and overall the project has energized the organization.

The only problem with these otherwise heartening statistics is that the RBA's membership is lower than ideal. The board of directors is mulling over strategies for increasing the group's membership, both to ensure the continued health of the RBA and to have a steady foundation for future preservation projects that hopefully will crop up on Richmond's battlefields.

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## Support from the Roundtables

The RBA continues to receive gratifying support from Civil War organizations around the country. One particularly aggressive bit of assistance in spring 2005 was crowded from the columns of this newsletter until now. The Austin (Texas) Civil War Roundtable organized a special fundraiser for the RBA at a military museum in Austin. The evening's proceeds netted \$1250 for Richmond's battlefields. Nor was this the first time that the preservation-minded roundtable in Texas's state capital had earmarked money for the RBA.

These particular Texans drape a flag over their lectern during meetings, inscribed with the names of battlefields the roundtable has helped to protect

through donations. Their \$1250 has been applied directly toward the RBA's portion of the bill for the current Frayser's Farm/Glendale project, and we think the folks in Austin should add that battlefield's name to their crowded flag.

Many other Civil War roundtables have directed money toward Richmond battlefield preservation lately. The venerable Richmond Civil War Roundtable has been a strong supporter of the RBA specifically, and of battlefield preservation in general, for many years.

Another innovative scheme is afoot at the Powhatan Civil War Roundtable, west of Richmond. That group is only about as old as the RBA, yet in that short time it

has blossomed into a large and active group. An anonymous member of that roundtable recently offered to donate \$200 for every month that the roundtable raised \$100 for the RBA, thus ensuring that someone's \$1 donation was worth \$3. It is unclear how long that offer will be on the table, but even a month or two of that generosity will make a memorable chapter in the history of the RBA and preservation.

We are aware of other roundtables plotting a variety of fundraising schemes for the Frayser's Farm/Glendale project. Perhaps the cheerful details of those projects will appear in future columns of this newsletter.

# Details on the Poindexter Farm

[There are no known photographs or sketches of the Poindexter House at Malvern Hill. But Dr. Poindexter, in common with many other farmers around Richmond whose plantations had suffered from the attentions of the visiting armies, offered his property for sale after the battle. The following is the sales notice. It is the best available description of the house where Lee, Jackson, and Davis met the day after the battle]:

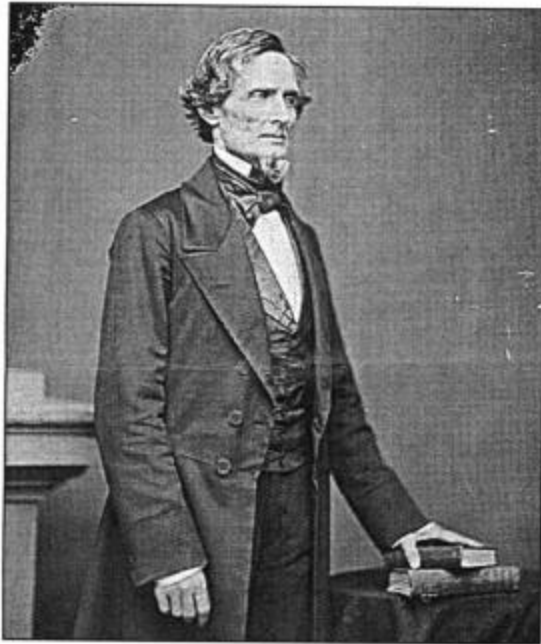
A Valuable Farm in the County of Henrico, 15 miles east of Richmond, at Auction. At the request of Dr. Poindexter, we will sell upon the premises, on Monday, the 13th day of October, commencing at 12 o'clock M. the valuable Farm, located...within 3 miles of James river, and lately occupied by him. It contains 681 acres of land of which 425 acres are cleared and in a high state of culti-

vation; the remainder is heavily wooded with pine and oak of vir-

Stables, Barn, Ice House and every other outbuilding needed upon a plantation. There is also upon the farm an abundance of marl, easy of access. Possession can be had at once.

Terms--One third cash; the balance at 1 and 2 years, for negotiable notes, with interest added, and secured by a trust deed.

James M. Taylor & Son  
Aucts.



[A postscript added the following]:

After the sale of the Farm will be sold all the Farming Implements, consisting in part of one Wheat Fan, one Threshing Machine, one Cob crusher, Carts, Wagons, &c, &c.

gin growth. The improvements consist of a two-story framed Dwelling containing seven large rooms, together with a Kitchen, Negro Quarters, Smoke House,

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## A Sign of the Times

Late in 2005 the RBA became aware of a land auction on the Cold Harbor battlefield. A tract of approximately 15 acres, with a rather small house included, went up at auction. The land in question is just north of the Old Cold Harbor crossroads and just south of Beulah Church (scene of last year's RBA annual meeting). It figured in the preliminary Cold Harbor fighting of both May 31 and June 1, 1864.

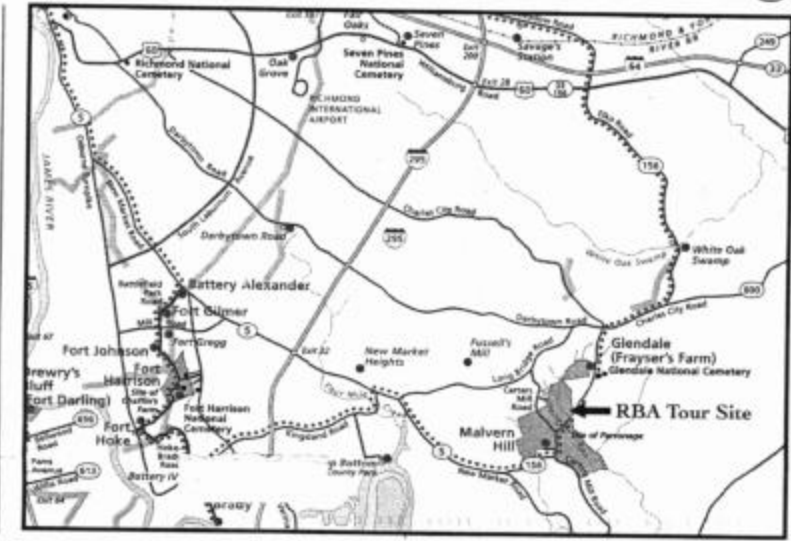
Seeing an opportunity to preserve this portion of the battlefield, the RBA directors investigated the land's value and attended the auction with high hopes. But the property sold for nearly 25% more (including the buyer's

premium) than the appraised value. Confronted with that, the RBA could not make a bid and lost the land, probably to development. This discouraging event highlights the volatile nature of property values in the Cold Harbor area, and brings the preservation battles there into a sharper, grimmer focus.

Very often the biggest obstacle to battlefield preservation around Richmond is the absence of willing sellers. Finding a cooperative seller with battlefield land sometimes seems to be harder than paying for the property. But in this instance the seller was willing but the cost was unjustifiable.

# Map & Directions to Annual Meeting

The tour will begin at 10.00 a.m. in a large, open, unmarked field on the western side of Route 156. The primary National Park Service parking lot at the crest of Malvern Hill is well to the south. The Parsonage, with its parking lot, is a few hundred yards to the south of the meeting site. All cars will be parked on the dirt in the edge of a farmer's field, with easy access back to Route 156. If you know of friends who plan to attend, see if carpooling is feasible, as parking might be an issue in the limited confines of the field.



**YES!** I WANT TO HELP PRESERVE OUR NATION'S HERITAGE, PLEASE SIGN ME UP.

(Please print)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership:

\$1000 Benefactor     \$500 Patron     \$250 Sustaining Member     \$100 Active Member     \$35 Annual Member

Additional Contribution:  \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed membership form with a check payable to: Richmond Battlefields Association  
Mail completed form to: Richmond Battlefields Association, P.O. Box 13945 Richmond, Virginia 23225



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