

On Richmond's FRONT LINE

Volume 11, Number 1

Winter 2012

A Look Back, A Look Ahead

A DECADE OF DEDICATION

In early 2001, a small band of area residents concerned about the unchecked suburban growth in the Richmond metropolitan area formed the Richmond Battlefields Association. These citizens came together for the express purpose of protecting and preserving the endangered Civil War battlefields around Richmond, Virginia.

This past June, at the RBA's annual meeting, Julie Krick announced she was stepping down as president of the organization she helped create. After ten years at the helm, Julie felt it was time for a change. Board member Sam Craghead will serve as RBA's new president.

In the past decade under Julie's leadership, RBA has grown from the grass roots effort of a few dozen local citizens to a nationwide organization with several hundred members. In the beginning, Julie enrolled several prominent Civil War historians to serve as an advisory board and began recruiting members through a mass mailing campaign. By the end of that initial year, RBA had roughly 100 members. The original RBA board of directors began its mission by canvassing local landowners, offering battlefield preservation as an alternative to land speculators and real estate developers.

In the Fall of 2002, this outreach effort bore fruit. RBA achieved its first victory at Fort Harrison, purchasing 10 acres with funds borrowed from the Civil War Preservation Trust.

Julie was confident that the groundwork done in that first year had laid the foundation for eventual success. Within a year, RBA had raised the funds to repay the loan and the historic property at Fort Harrison was incorporated into the Richmond National Battlefield Park.

Since that early victory, RBA has concluded more than a dozen land transactions, preserving hallowed ground at numerous Richmond area battlefields.



Julie Krick, former RBA president, sporting her familiar Minnesota Twins cap at our annual meeting (Drewry's Bluff 2006).

The relationships cultivated by Julie over the years, along with RBA's excellent reputation, have resulted in several generous bequests. These funds have been used to leverage the contributions of our members by securing matching funds for battlefield preservation.

The fight to preserve our Civil War battlefields, championed by Julie Krick, continues. Thank you for a decade of outstanding service and a job well done! ❖

PRESERVATION FUNDS AWARDED TO RBA FOR GAINES' MILL TRACT

Governor McDonnell
Announces Virginia Civil
War Battlefield
Preservation Grants

Details Inside

MALVERN HILL SITE DEEDED TO NPS

The Richmond Battlefields Association has transferred a four acre tract on the Malvern Hill battlefield to the National Park Service. As described in an earlier newsletter, Confederate soldiers of General Lafayette McLaws' Division maneuvered through this area during the battle. This land, located north of the parsonage, is a welcome addition to the Richmond National Battlefield Park. ❖

RECAP OF RBA 2011 ANNUAL MEETING & TOUR

Last June, RBA members and guests were treated to a unique tour of the Gaines' Mill battlefield led by National Park Service historian R. E. L. Krick. This was the first public tour of the battlefield given from the perspective of Confederate troops.

Starting from RBA's property, participants followed in the footsteps of Hood's famed Texas Brigade across the killing fields above Boatswain's Creek. Here

numerous Confederate assaults were broken up by determined Union resistance leaving the ground strewn with the dead and dying. The tour group crossed the creek onto the adjoining National Park Service property and traced the Confederate breakthrough up the wooded slopes and out onto the open plains around the Watt House where nightfall ended the battle.

Joining us this year were representatives from Hood's Texas Brigade Association Re-Activated (HTBAR). Our friends from the Lone Star state have raised funds to erect a monument on RBA's newly preserved property. Richmond Battlefields Association will host the dedication ceremony on May 19, 2012.

At the business meeting that followed, long time president Julie Krick handed the reins over to RBA board member Sam Craghead (see "A Decade of Dedication"). ❖

OUR BATTLE FOR THE BATTLEFIELDS

As we enter our second decade of fighting for battlefield preservation, it is time to reflect on the accomplishments of the Richmond Battlefields Association over the last ten years.

RBA has worked with area landowners to preserve our Civil War battlefields through property donations, land purchases and preservation easements. RBA has saved a dozen parcels on eight battlefields in four jurisdictions.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Schedule of Events

May 19, 2012
Dedication of Gaines' Mill Texas Monument

June 9, 2012
Annual Meeting & Tour

Check the RBA website or Facebook page for details!

The scope of RBA's preservation victories includes historic Civil War sites in Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, and King William counties. These acquisitions of hallowed ground preserve critical parts of the Fort Harrison, Glendale, Cold Harbor, Ware Bottom Church, Second Deep Bottom, Malvern Hill, and Gaines' Mill battlefields.

When appropriate, RBA has partnered with the Civil War Trust for major preservation campaigns, such as the enormously successful efforts at Glendale which resulted in the preservation of 360 acres of core battlefield.

On the other hand, smaller, yet significant Civil War sites have not been ignored. RBA's maxim of "Saving 1 Acre At A Time" is exemplified by our protection of a half-acre fort on the Pamunkey River, the remnant of a once extensive Union defensive line.

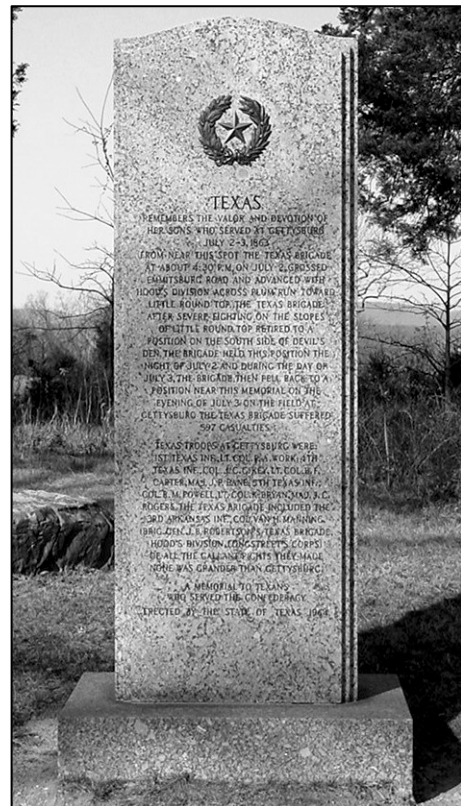
As the reputation of our all-volunteer organization grew, RBA benefited as the recipient of several large bequests. These funds allowed RBA to move quickly to save significant portions of the Cold Harbor, Fussell's Mill, and Gaines' Mill battlefields.

RBA has increasingly maximized your contributions by successfully competing for grants and matching funds. Over the last decade, RBA has played a significant role in protecting more than 435 acres of battlefield land, worth nearly \$5 million.

From our first battlefield acquisition at Fort Harrison using borrowed funds to our most recent victory at Gaines' Mill using matching funds, Richmond Battlefields Association has been sustained by the dedication and generous support of our members.

The struggle to save our historic Civil War battlefields is far from over. Several Richmond area battlefields are in excellent condition, but remain entirely unprotected and vulnerable to development.

RBA is committed to preserving our vital national heritage while there is still time. There is much yet to be done and the clock is ticking. Press on! ❖



Texas monument at Gettysburg.

TEXAS MONUMENT TO BE ERECTED AT GAINES' MILL

Hood's Texas Brigade Association Re-Activated (HTBAR), in cooperation with the Texas Historical Commission, will erect a monument to commemorate the Texas troops who participated in the massive Confederate assault at Gaines' Mill on June 27, 1862. The seven foot monument consists of sunset red granite simply adorned with the lone star of Texas. The accompanying text honors the men of the 1st, 4th, and 5th Texas, as well as Hampton's South Carolina Legion and the 18th Georgia.

It is one of several identical monuments placed at battlefields around the country to honor the contributions and sacrifices of Texas forces during the Civil War. Richmond Battlefields Association will host the dedication ceremony at the Gaines' Mill Battlefield on May 19, 2012. Check the RBA website for details this Spring. ❖

Masthead photo on page 1:
Richmond Battlefields Association
2011 Annual Meeting & Tour
Gaines' Mill Battlefield.

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PRESERVATION FUNDS AWARDED FOR GAINES' MILL

Richmond Battlefields Association received splendid news at the end of 2011. The state of Virginia has awarded RBA a Civil War battlefield preservation grant for the 3.2 acre Boyette Tract on the Gaines' Mill battlefield. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources assigns these awards based on a rigorous evaluation process. The awards are drawn from the Virginia Civil War Historic Site Preservation Fund to provide matching funds for qualified battlefield properties.

"This year's awards will allow us to secure places with the power to connect us and future generations to the lessons of a defining period of our history. Time is running out. Each year, battlefield lands are lost forever." - Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, Director, Dept. of Historic Resources

Nine other state grants, totaling \$1 million, were awarded in commemoration of the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War. These awards will provide vital assistance in protecting more than 530 acres of battlefield land across the Commonwealth. ❖

SIGN UP FOR ONLINE DELIVERY OF THE RBA NEWSLETTER

Richmond Battlefields Association spends several hundred dollars per year on printing and mailing cost. You can help RBA save money by opting for electronic delivery of "On Richmond's Front Line". Just send your name and email address to: **1862rba@gmail.com** ❖



RBA's new homepage...
www.saverichmondbattlefields.org

RBA ONLINE: OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

The Richmond Battlefields Association website has been completely redesigned for 2012. The new site describes in detail the preservation victories of RBA since its inception a decade ago.

Each property is described along with detailed battle maps, military action summaries, photos and relevant links. Browse through past issues of "On Richmond's Front Line" in our newsletter archive. Keep up to date with preservation news and future RBA events.

RBA has taken the plunge into the world of social media. Visit our Facebook page for news, photos, and commentary. Browse through photographs from past RBA tours and annual meetings. Let us know what you're thinking. ❖

[www.facebook.com/pages/
Richmond-Battlefields-Association/
131384336934572](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Richmond-Battlefields-Association/131384336934572)



PRESERVATION NEWS

Congratulations to our friends at the Civil War Trust, who recently announced plans to purchase 285 acres of land at the Gaines' Mill battlefield. The targeted property is adjacent to RBA's Boyette tract.

We'd like to think that RBA's initial victory at Gaines' Mill is the opening chapter in what will become a major battlefield preservation success story. This sequence of events highlights the important role of local preservation groups such as the Richmond Battlefields Association in the fight to save our Civil War battlefields. ❖

Published for the RBA membership

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The RBA is chartered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. A financial statement is available, upon request, from the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs.

Richmond Battlefields Association
Board of Directors:

- Sam Craghead, *President*
- John Weigly, *Treasurer*
- Susan Kuroski, *Secretary*
- Michael Andrus
- Ben Brockenbrough
- Bernard Fisher
- Claude Foster
- Shep Parsons
- Melanie Sark
- Patricia Walenista
- Susan Weigly

RICHMOND DISPATCHES –150 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

FREE FIGHT AMONG THE TIGERS. — We understand that a free fight occurred among some of the members of the *Tiger Rifles* at Briston [sic] Station, near Manassas Junction, on Saturday last, in which one of them was instantly killed by a cut from a bowie-knife, and several others severely wounded. The fight was the result of a drunken frolic.

- *The Daily Dispatch*: January 28, 1862.

For the Civil War soldier mortal danger was not limited to the battlefield. The “*Tiger Rifles*” were part of Maj. Chatham Roberdeau Wheat’s 1st Special Battalion, Louisiana Volunteer Infantry (2nd Louisiana Battalion). Scoured from the New Orleans waterfront, these hard fighting, hard living men were renowned for their lack of discipline. Just five short months later, their charismatic leader would die in battle outside Richmond at Gaines’ Mill.

BREAKING NEWS – LAND DONATION AT FUSSELL’S MILL!

As this newsletter went to print, RBA closed on 1.7 acres at Fussell’s Mill, bringing the total amount of protected battlefield land at Second Deep Bottom to nearly 50 acres. The donated tract protects a threatened view shed at the north end of the millpond and provides a buffer against a modern subdivision. ❖

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