

On

# Richmond's FRONT LINE

Volume 15, Number 2

Fall 2016

## Annual Meeting & Deed Transfer Ceremony

### RBA GAINES' MILL SITE CONVEYED TO RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK!

At this time last year, the Richmond National Battlefield Park dedicated the Beulah Church site at Cold Harbor, core battlefield land saved by the Richmond Battlefields Association. So it is with great pleasure that the Richmond Battlefields Association once again announces a new addition to the Richmond National Battlefield Park.

This fall, RBA will transfer 3 acres of core battlefield land at **Gaines' Mill** to the National Park Service. Our 2016 annual meeting will include a special *deed transfer ceremony* cosponsored by the Richmond National Battlefield Park. The ceremony will take place on the RBA "Boyette Tract" north of the NPS Gaines' Mill Unit. This event is free and open to the public!

There had been no preservation at the Gaines's Mill battlefield since Douglas Southall Freeman and his friends in the Richmond Battlefield Park Corporation secured 60 acres on the Union side of the creek in the 1920's. The tract saved by RBA was the first preservation success at Gaines's Mill in more than 80 years, and it was the first land preserved on the Confederate side of the creek. Since RBA's initial purchase in 2011, the battlefield preservation outlook at Gaines' Mill continues to improve. ❖

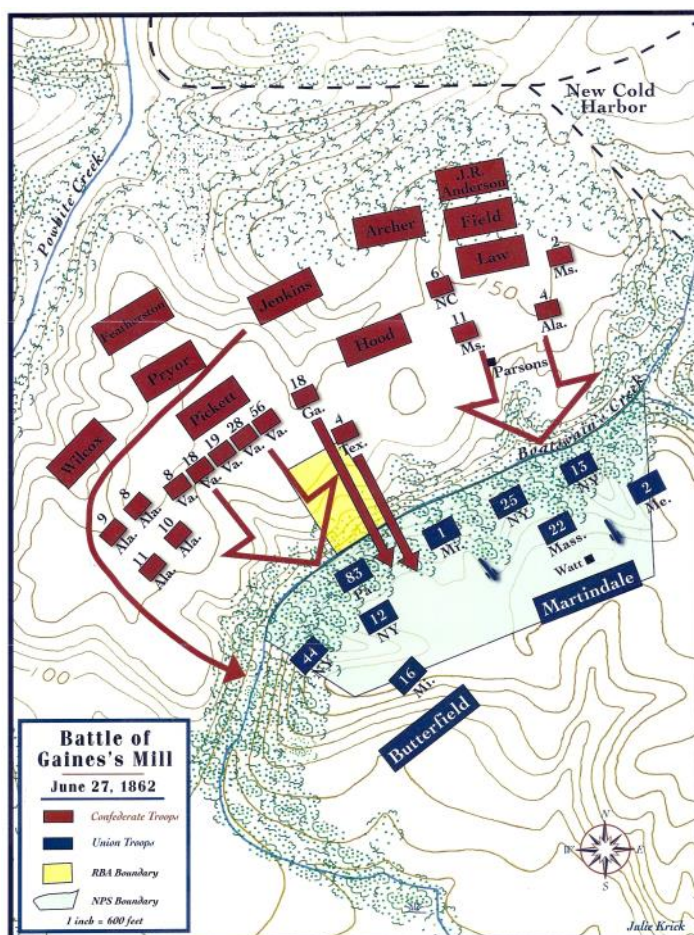
### RBA ANNUAL MEETING & TOUR

Saturday, October 22, 2016

10:00 AM

Gaines' Mill Battlefield

*Details inside*



### “TEXANS ALWAYS MOVE THEM”

In the early morning of June 27, 1862 the rear guard of the Union Army of the Potomac retreated eastward from Beaverdam Creek to a strong position behind Boatwain's Creek. The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia pursued, arriving here during the afternoon. A series of disjointed and bloody assaults were launched against Gen. Fitz John Porter's isolated V Corps, the last U.S. army corps remaining north of the Chickahominy River. Attacking Confederates had to cross an open field under a deadly bombardment from massed Union artillery positioned around the Watt House. Those who reached the cover of the wooded creekshed found some relief from Union



*"On the brow of this hill, the dead bodies of our Confederate soldiers lay in numbers. ... Instead of halting, we rushed down it, yelling, and madly plunged right into the deep branch of water at the base of the hill. Dashing up the steep bank, being within 30 yards of the enemy's works, we flew towards the breastworks, cleared them and slaughtered the retreating devils as they scampered up the hill towards their battery."*

— Lt. Decimus et Ultimus Baziza, 4th Texas Infantry

artillery, only to face the combined firepower from three tiers of Federal infantry behind log breastworks on the opposite hillside. Each attack was repulsed with heavy loss.

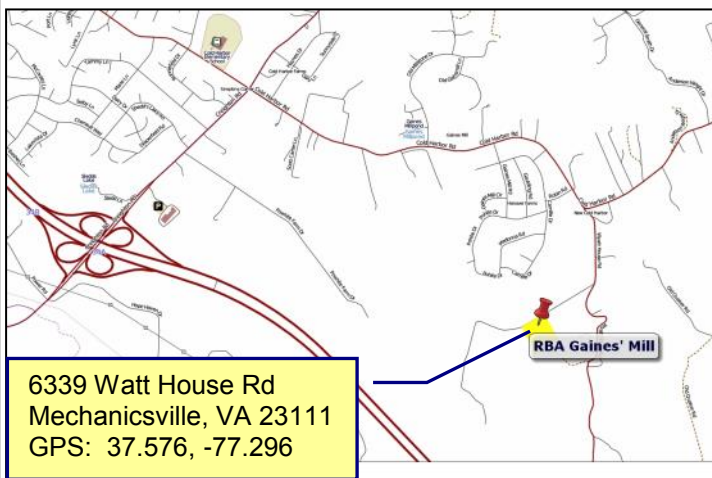
Late in the day Gen. Robert E. Lee gathered his men — as many as 60,000 — for one grand assault, the largest of his career. Even this massive attack stalled and Lee committed his last reserve, Gen. Chase Whiting's small division consisting of the brigades of Col. Evander Law and Gen. John B. Hood. Lee personally directed the troops into position. With evening coming on Whiting attacked. The 4th Texas Infantry surged across Boatswain's Creek, led by Hood himself and followed by the 18th Georgia Infantry. Their attack penetrated into the heart of the Federal position breaking the defensive line. With Confederates in front and rear the Union defense collapsed. Only approaching darkness diverted a complete disaster for Porter's V Corps.

The defeat convinced Union Gen. George B. McClellan to abandon his *On to Richmond* campaign. That night, the Federals began a long and costly retreat to the James River. ❖

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

In August, the Richmond National Battlefield Park celebrated the 100th birthday of the National Park Service by offering a free all-day bus tour to 100 lucky registrants — *"100 for 100: History and Preservation of Richmond's National Parks"*. The Richmond Battlefields Association was invited to participate in the event. Led by park rangers Bert Dunkerly and Mike Gorman, participants explored the history of the Richmond National Parks with a special emphasis on battlefield preservation.

The tour stopped midday at the newly preserved Beulah Church site on the Cold Harbor battlefield. As the crowd found relief in the shade, RBA president Bernie Fisher took the opportunity to explain the role of the Richmond Battlefields Association in preserving these irreplaceable historic sites (*right*).



Fisher shared RBA's preservation success story in saving the very ground the visitors were standing on. The Richmond Battlefields Association wishes to congratulate the National Park Service on its 100th anniversary. We look forward to a sustained and rewarding relationship with the Richmond National Battlefield Park. ❖

## 2016 RBA ANNUAL MEETING & TOUR GAINES' MILL BATTLEFIELD

— SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22 AT 10:00 A.M.

The Richmond Battlefields Association's annual meeting will be held on Saturday, October 22nd at our Gaines' Mill property. Many of you will remember this as the site of the Texas monument dedication in May 2012. This event, hosted by the Richmond National Battlefield Park, will include a brief *deed transfer* ceremony. Afterwards, Mike Andrus, our resident historian, will lead a walking tour of the property. RBA's annual business meeting will follow the tour. Snacks and drinks will be provided. This event is free and open to the public. Come out and discover what the Park has planned for this site.

(Map above) The RBA Gaines' Mill site is 0.3 miles west of Watt House Road (Va-718) at 6339 Watt House Rd (GPS 37.576, -77.296). ❖



NPS Anniversary Tour — RBA president Bernie Fisher explains our organization's role in preserving this Beulah Church site on the Cold Harbor battlefield.

*Masthead photo on page 1:  
Gaines' Mill Battlefield collage*

RBA NOTES

RBA members continue to opt for electronic delivery of the RBA newsletter. You too can help us save money by choosing electronic delivery of “*On Richmond’s Front Line*”. Just send your name and email address to:

1862rba@gmail.com

Don’t forget to stay up to date with RBA news & events on our website and Facebook page.

— RBA NEWSLETTER INDEX —

You can download back issues of “*On Richmond’s Front Line*” from our website. You’ll find many unique & interesting articles on the history of Richmond’s Civil War battlefields, including stories on local history you won’t find anywhere else! ❖

HELP RBA BUY LAND  
NOT PAPER

Save on Printing &  
Mailing \$\$

Sign up for email  
delivery of the  
RBA newsletter

- immediate delivery
- full color
- high quality pdf

Request delivery at:

1862rba@gmail.com

Yr	Season	Vol	No	Topic
2002	Winter	1	1	Richmond's Battlefields
2002	Spring	1	2	Gaines' Mill
2002	Summer	1	3	Cold Harbor
2002	Fall	1	4	Fort Harrison
2003	Winter	2	1	Seven Pines
2003	Spring	2	2	Fussell's Mill
2003	Fall	2	3	Yellow Tavern
2004	Winter	3	1	Civil War Graves
2004	Spring	3	2	Frayser's Farm
2004	Fall	3	3	Battlefield Monuments
2005	Winter	4	1	Second Fair Oaks
2005	Spring	4	2	Cold Harbor: Allison's Farm & Beulah Church
2005	Fall	4	3	Civil War Christmas
2006	Winter	5	1	Glendale
2006	Spring	5	2	Malvern Hill: Poindexter Farm
2006	Fall	5	3	Seven Days Book Notes
2007	Spring	6	1	Drewry's Bluff / Fort Darling
2007	Summer	6	2	Hanover Junction
2007	Fall	6	3	Malvern Hill Brick / South Anna River RR Bridge
2008	Spring	7	1	White House Landing
2008	Summer	7	2	Cold Harbor: Keitt's Attack
2008	Winter	7	3	3 Graves of Gen. A.P. Hill
2009	Spring	8	1	Ware Bottom Church
2009	Summer	8	2	West Point Fort
2009	Fall	8	3	Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid
2010	Spring	9	1	Cold Harbor
2010	Summer	9	2	Freeman Markers
2011	Winter	10	1	Early Battlefield Guides
2011	Spring	10	2	Gaines' Mill / Malvern Hill
2012	Winter	11	1	A Look Back, A Look Ahead
2012	Fall	11	2	Beaver Dam Creek
2013	Spring	12	1	Cold Harbor: Beulah Church
2014	Fall	13	1	Cold Harbor / Fussell's Mill
2015	Spring	14	1	Second Deep Bottom
2015	Fall	14	2	Trent's Reach
2016	Summer	15	1	Cold Harbor / RBA Online Store
2016	Fall	15	2	Gaines' Mill



Published for the RBA membership

Richmond Battlefields Association  
P.O. Box 13945  
Richmond, VA 23225

Phone: (804) 496-1862  
Email: 1862rba@gmail.com

[www.saverichmondbattlefields.org](http://www.saverichmondbattlefields.org)

The RBA is chartered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit 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

- Bernie Fisher, *President*
- Mike Andrus, *Vice President*
- Scott Williams, *Secretary*
- Joe Fisher, *Treasurer*
- Ben Brockenbrough
- Claude Foster
- Marc Ramsey
- Shep Parsons

**RICHMOND DISPATCHES**

**“THE DEAD BRAVE.”** — In charging one of the formidable batteries of the enemy near Mechanicsville on Friday evening, Lieut. W. Kemp Garnett, company D, 55th Virginia regiment, particularly distinguished himself for his gallant bearing and courage in the thickest of the fight. He at last fell mortally wounded, and died on Sunday morning at the residence of Mr. Ligon, on Church Hill. The clothing of Lieut. Garnett shows that thirteen balls had passed through them. He had been literally riddled by the enemy's shot.

- *The Daily Dispatch*: June 30, 1862.

The Battle of Gaines' Mill was the bloodiest of the Seven Days' battles. Lee's first major victory resulted in over 15,000 casualties. In the following days, the Richmond newspapers published lists of the wounded as they were brought into the numerous hospitals in the city. Many of the wounded were carried to private houses. This account of Lt. Garnett's ordeal is just one such example.

**Weather Delay** — We had an unexpected emergency at our Fussell's Mill site. Recent heavy rains, made worse by Hurricane Matthew, stressed the mill pond dam. This required the board's immediate attention. The dam has been inspected by expert engineers and a solution is in the works. We apologize for any delay in sending out this newsletter.

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**

**Contributions may be deductible as provided in 26 USC Sec. 170.**



**Richmond Battlefields Association**  
**P.O. Box 13945**  
**Richmond, VA 23225**

Place  
Stamp  
Here