



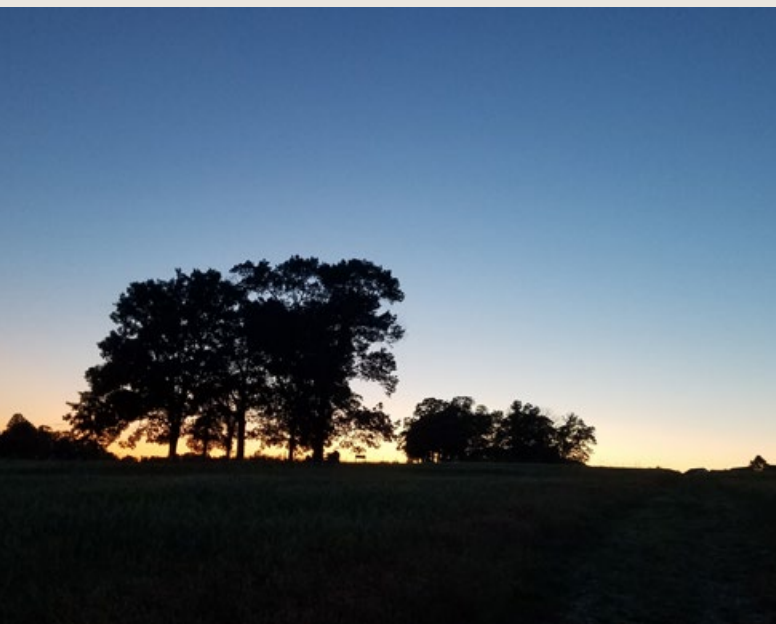
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SAVE THE DATE

Central Virginia Battlefields Trust 2021 Annual Conference



April 16–18, 2021



We are looking to the future and taking inspiration from the past.

Memory, meaning and all the stories of courage drive CVBT's preservation mission at the battlefields of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, The Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. Saving hallowed ground and creating outdoor classrooms are a perfect intersection of allowing the past to teach the present.

Your support is vital and always appreciated. As our way to say "thank you," we are planning a special anniversary conference for 2021. Save the date and plan to join us!

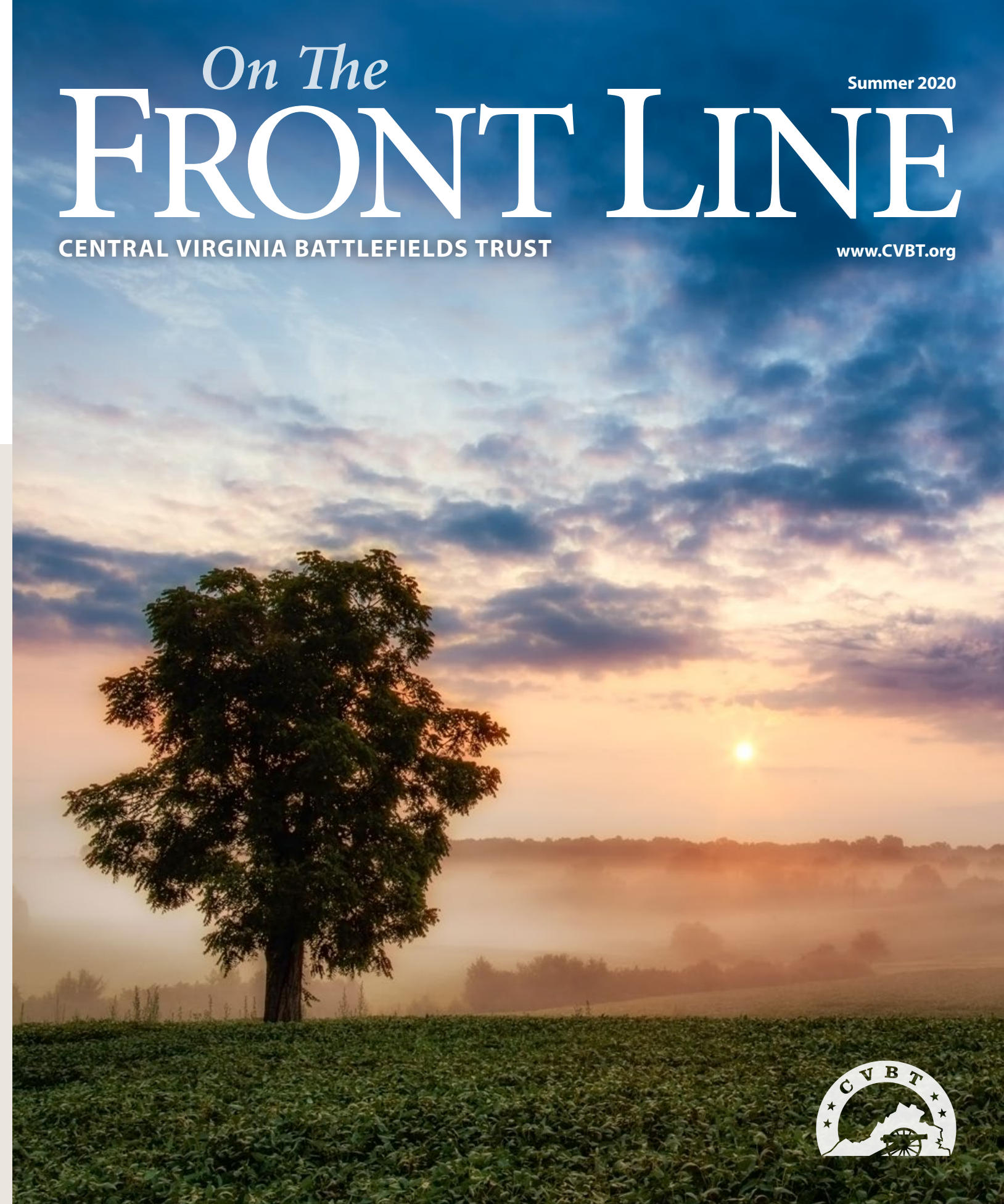
Central Virginia Battlefields Trust's 25th Anniversary
Back to Our Roots

On The FRONT LINE

Summer 2020

CENTRAL VIRGINIA BATTLEFIELDS TRUST

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EVER FORWARD! PRESERVATION CONTINUES IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA



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The Flank Attack Field at Chancellorsville

Photograph by Buddy Secor. Used with permission.

Dispatch from the President

Spring is now well underway, flowers are blooming and the trees here on The Wilderness Battlefield, where I call home, are creating their thick canopy. Conversely, civilians are hunkered down in their homes; food and supplies, generally taken for granted, are still illusive. The nation's economy is akin to a roller-coaster ride, and daily life has changed in ways never anticipated. Uncertainty is the new norm.

No, I am not referencing the Civil War, rather commenting on our current national challenge.

I am writing this in early May to make a printing deadline, but I am optimistic that by July's mailing of this magazine, we, as a people and a nation, will begin inroads toward what will certainly be a different looking normal. The effects of this pandemic will change the way we interact and conduct our daily lives for the foreseeable future.

What I am pondering are the parallels we now face that civilians during the war also struggled with, albeit for a much different reason. No, I am not comparing COVID-19 to the Civil War, but if you think about it, we are now facing similarities in the disruption of daily life. Much is studied of battles and leaders, and we have well documented those stories. Thankfully, with the preservation of those battlefields, we can stand on the ground and picture those events in our mind's eye. Yet today, as ordinary civilians facing a worldwide pandemic, we are living many of those same challenges, in a modern sense, faced during the war.

How did we as a nation struggle through those times? The answer: We as a people are strongest when collectively challenged. History shows when something, or someone, challenges us, we will band together to defeat that adversity. That is true now as we work through an enemy we were not prepared for. We are currently performing those measures we need to survive and to assist our neighbors in this unfamiliar time.

We have all made sacrifices in the past several months in the auspice of furthering the reduction of this virus's spread. It seems every event planned has been postponed or canceled, schools have closed, many jobs have been lost and many of those

working are doing so from home, apart from our brave first responders and medical personnel.

As you are aware, CVBT made the difficult choice to cancel our 2020 annual conference in favor of keeping everyone safe. We have sent out reimbursement checks to all who had registered.

For those who made those registration fees a donation, we thank you.

This economy has all but halted the donations we need to keep this organization running, but continue we will. Our Board of Directors meetings have gone

digital, most of us have figured out camera angles, so we no longer watch each other's foreheads or left earlobes. We have closed our CVBT office, and the staff of two are diligently working from home.

What the population endured during the Civil War passed, as will this new challenge. These are difficult times indeed. History, as we all know, shows we will persevere, conquer the enemy and return even stronger in time.

Looking forward to the future, CVBT has announced our 2021 annual conference will be held April 16, 17 and 18, 2021. It will be a celebration of the our 25th anniversary. The theme, "CVBT at 25- Back to Our Roots," means this will be a fun and exceptional event with special programs and guests. Save these dates!

From myself, and all of us at CVBT, be safe, be mindful of our duty to each other, and we will prevail. As the Civil War taught us many lessons, so shall this moment in time.

Tom Van Winkle
President, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust

Executive Director Letter

As I write this in early May, it has been 10 months since I joined CVBT as the executive director, and I cannot believe



Terry Rensel

that it has been this long already. It is an honor to do the work of preserving the dirt and grass of these battlefields, and helping to tell the story

of our history. The more time that I spend walking the land, the better understanding I have of the battles, the soldiers and our history as a nation.

I have also been enjoying getting to know you, our partners in preservation, through your emails, phone calls, and responses to our fundraising asks, and meeting you in my travels. Unfortunately, we did not get to meet at this year's conference, but as Tom said in his message, we are already working on making next year's conference, "CVBT at 25," special, and I look forward to meeting many of you then.

Even though we have been working from home, the work does continue. Since the last issue, we have received grants from both the Virginia Battlefield Protection Fund and the Roy A. Hunt Foundation toward saving Myer's Hill, and I hope to have more news about our ongoing efforts there soon. We also continue working on other preservation opportunities. As they come to fruition, we will let you know about them.

I hope that you enjoy our "At Ease" program. You can sign up for free or see the archived emails and videos at www.cvbt.org/at-ease. Finally, I would like to thank you, our partners in preservation, for your support.



Caption to come

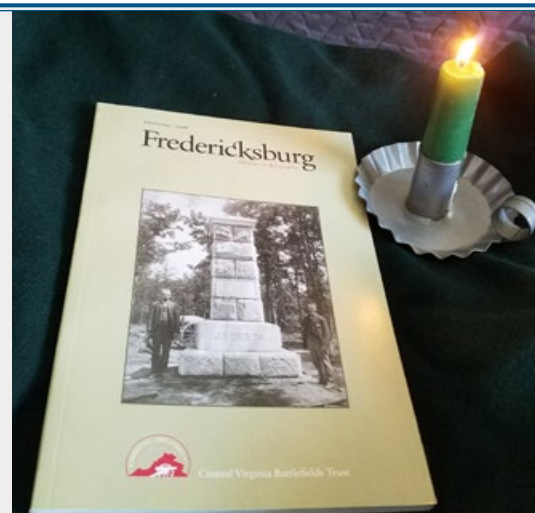
A New Look at CVBT's Fifth Corps Tract

Sometimes, when we preserve land, it needs work to be restored to an 1860s appearance. That was the situation at 14.4 acres along historic Brock Road. Thanks to the continued support of our preservation partners, significant land restoration progress has been accomplished.

In November 2019, we announced that demolition of a 20th-century structure had begun on the property. Now, thanks to your support, we are thrilled to share that it is complete! It's been a journey — and one with a few more steps than expected — but the area where Union General Warren rallied his men for attacks at Spotsylvania is now looking similar to the way the soldier boys would have seen it.

CVBT Journal Sale

You know them well, and if not, here is a golden opportunity to become acquainted. CVBT's *Fredericksburg History & Biography*, otherwise known as the "Journal," is now available at a huge discount. Beginning in 2002 through 2017, CVBT has published these extremely popular books that have been enjoyed by thousands of readers and are included in area libraries. In this time of "stay at home" CVBT has decided to make these publications available to all at an unheard of discount. You may now purchase these informative and entertaining books for a mere \$3.00 each. Why? Because we want to continue our mission of education in this time when tours and conferences are on hold. We know you will enjoy these, and if you have been collecting, here's an opportunity to complete that collection.



This is just another way the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust continues its mission to promote history and preservation. So, take advantage of this offer now. And like they say on TV, but wait! There's more! If you order now, you will receive it before the other person. Sorry, \$3.00 is best deal we can give.

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2020 CVBT Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award Winner Glenn Trimmer – Stafford Civil War Park

BY TOM VAN WINKLE

Nestled in the woods of Stafford County, Virginia, are 41 acres where the Union Army of the Potomac camped with its new commander, Gen. Joseph Hooker. During the winter of 1862–63, more than 135,000 Union soldiers constructed huts, fortifications and roads while General Hooker rebuilt his army. This vital time has been described in soldiers' letters as the "Union Army's Valley Forge."

This encampment site had all but been lost to history until Glenn Trimmer, a retired Air Force colonel, and a group known as The Friends of Stafford County Civil War Sites became interested. Trimmer was the director of the nonprofit group at the time. He stated, "The Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites provided research and proposed that a new park should be built on the 42 acres of land owned jointly by Stafford County and Fredericksburg to honor the Union soldiers who encamped throughout Stafford and Fredericksburg during the winter of 1863."

Trimmer retired from the military in 2002 after amassing a storied career. He entered the Air Force in 1978 as a second lieutenant, spending most of his career in the nuclear missile field as a missile crew member, missile instructor, missile commander and squadron commander. Trimmer attended the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, graduating in 1995 and returning in 2000 to be an instructor. He taught Air Force ROTC at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and was awarded the Leo A. Codd Memorial Award as best Air Force ROTC instructor. He also fielded the first deployment of USAF ground launched cruise missiles in Belgium.

After retiring from the military, Trimmer worked for Booz Allen Hamilton, General Dynamics and Dahlgren Naval Station for a total of 10 years. He completely retired in 2011 to pursue the effort to build the Stafford Civil War Park.

As director of The Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites, Trimmer and the group developed a request for an Innovative Readiness Training exercise during which soldiers and air personnel of the Virginia National Guard could hone their combat and road building skills while honoring those who came before them. As he remarked, "The Guard provided the leadership, equipment, fuel, stamina, perseverance and hard work to do this heavy construction."

Trimmer, and the Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites solicited support and materials estimated at more than two million dollars. There was no taxpayer money used to build this park. The park opened on April 27, 2013. During the opening ceremonies,



Glenn Trimmer led the charge to preserve and establish Stafford Civil War Park.

then Virginia Speaker of the House William J. Howell remarked, "One of the key things that Glenn was able to orchestrate was the effort to get the National Guard involved. They were here on three separate times during the hottest part of last summer... They had more than 500 dump-truck loads of debris that they took away. There were over 720 hours of operating this big, heavy equipment that they brought in, and more than 6,000 tons of donated stones that they put down. It was just an incredible feat."

The park includes five tour stops showcasing the remains of the winter camp, corduroyed roads, a pre-Civil War bridge, an early Stafford quarry and three large earthen artillery battery sites, with interpretive panels explaining each.

It is with great pleasure that the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust honors Glenn Trimmer with the Dr. Michael P. Stevens Preservation Award for his dogged hard work, innovative approach and direction of all partners involved in the preservation of these winter encampments.

A Strange Day for a Staff Officer in the 11th Corps during Jackson’s Flank Attack at Chancellorsville

BY ROBERT LEE HODGE

On the afternoon of Saturday, May 2, 1863, the 68th New York Infantry Regiment took up a position along Orange Turnpike, near and probably on the Rodes-Dole Tract, sometimes called the Castle Property. Part of Gen. Alexander Schimmelfennig’s brigade of Federal XI Corps was swept into the Federal disaster created by the Confederate flank attack. Earlier in the day there had been warnings, and one officer had some extraordinary and life-changing experiences that he later recorded, giving valuable insight into the Union perspective and command troubles that historic afternoon.

“Baron” Von Fritsch, a German aristocrat, had been educated at the military academy in Dresden, becoming a fine horseman, athletic performer and swordsman. After three and a half years in the

1st Royal Cavalry, he was honorably discharged and came to America in December 1856. For several years, he traveled the United States and Mexico. Von Fritsch joined the 68th New York Volunteer Infantry on November 1, 1862, at Centreville, Virginia, and served in Company A. The 68th New York recruited Austrians, Prussians and Bavarians from Manhattan that had served in John Pope’s Union Army of Virginia before being melded into the Army of the Potomac. Almost from the beginning, Von Fritsch served on Gen. Alexander Schimmelfennig’s staff. A Prussian immigrant, political activist and friend of socialist Carl Schurz, Schimmelfennig had been wounded in the 1848 German Revolutions and later opposed the Communist leadership of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

The 68th New York Regiment waited and fought in the vicinity of the Rodes-Doles Tract along Route 3. Sometimes called the “Castle Property,” these 13 acres were preserved in 2012.



The following are excerpts from the main document in Von Fritsch’s pension file. To read the complete article, which includes more medical and military details, please visit: [WILL NEED TO INSERT HTTPS WHEN AVAILABLE](#)

Captain F.O. Von Fritsch, detailed as Aide de Camp to General Schimmelpfennig, commanding 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Division, received the order to ride outside the Union lines to reconnoiter, about 5:30 P.M. He galloped at once towards the outposts [the 11th Corps skirmish-line, facing south from Orange Turnpike], accompanied by two orderlies. From there he rode out alone about one mile, in the direction of the visible camps of General Jackson. Reaching an elevated point, he spied about with field glasses — loaned to him by Captain Renneberg, of the 68th N.Y. — and noticed wagons and troops of the confederate army moving towards the flank of our position. Trying to find out if the whole army was moving, he gave spurs and rode about a mile and half to our right, when three or four bullets whistled around his head and one ball struck his horse in the hind leg. He observed also that a troop of Fitz Lee’s rebel cavalry [horsemen from Thomas Munford’s 2nd Virginia Cavalry] were trying to cut him off and whipping his poor horse with his sword, he [was] chased first through the woods and then over an open plain towards the Union lines. The rebel cavalry outpost was pursuing him, firing all the time. One ball struck his saddle, one the heel of his boot, one damaged his scabbard, one smashed the field glasses, and one wounded the horse in the same damaged leg. The horse — called Jim — was of a superior breed and, excited as it was, managed to get along fast enough on three legs to keep ahead of the pursuers. At once Captain Von Fritsch distinctly heard the commands of Captain Steuernegel, of the glorious 68th N.Y., commanding the outposts [a part of a company on the skirmish-line]: “Wait Boys! Wait!! Now Fire!!!”

Seven to nine bullets must have struck the horse of Captain Fritsch, many bullets whistled about the rider and the charger fell dead. Captain Von Fritsch fell with fearful force on the [McClellan] saddle knob and to the ground. [On the fall, Captain Von Fritsch hit a log and was knocked “senseless.”] “When I awoke I felt a severe pain near the testicles,” said Von Fritsch. The rebels, of course, had turned and fled. Captain Von F. raised himself with great difficulty and sad to Capt. Steuernegel, who stood near the road: “Why in hell did you kill my horse?” “Upon my word, I did not recognize you in the dust and thought it was a cavalry attack,” he answered.



Captain Frederick Otto Von Fritsch, photographed on his 69th birthday. Public Domain

When the dust and powder clouds passed away, Captain Von F. noticed a rebel, whose horse had been shot, running after his comrades.

By this time his [Captain Von Fritsch’s] orderlies came out of the woods and he ordered one on a bay horse to dismount and help him in the saddle. Captain Steuernegel stood by, and said: “You are not off again?” at the same time petting the horse on the beak; the horse kicked and damaged Capt. Steuernegel’s knee, disabling him from service.

A moment later Capt. Von F. was off like lightning; he wanted to capture the running rebel, to pump him out. When he nearly caught up with him, the fellow kneeled down and fired. The bullet struck the horse in the upper hind leg. “Surrender” the Captain halloed, but reaching for his sword, he found

the he had left it when he fell from his horse Jim. Being unarmed, and the blood streaming down his horses leg, he turned and galloped back to head-quarters on the turnpike, to report.

General Schimmelpfennig, an educated soldier, but not very brave, cried out: “Take away that horse, don’t show any blood here — take him to the rear!”

Captain Von F. saluted, and said: “Lee is marching to our flank.”

“Take away that horse or I will have you arrested.”

Capt. Von F. rode off at a walk disgusted, the men cheering him.

Von Fritsch survived the Battle of Chancellorsville, but the effects of his injury and a hasty battlefield medical operation caused life-long pain. His discovery of Jackson’s flank attack, encounter with a Confederate cavalryman and interactions with the generals reveal a lesser-known side of the history of May 2, 1863. It’s an example of the fascinating stories connected to the properties CVBT has preserved. Read Captain Von Fritsch’s full account online: [INSERT HTTPS LINK HERE](#)

The Apogee of a Partnership

BY CHRISTIAN KELLER

The night of April 30, 1863, was a fretful one for Stonewall Jackson as he thought about how the next day would transpire. Earlier, he and Robert E. Lee had decided they would not wait to be attacked by Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's vast Army of the Potomac, but instead meet the larger portion of it — the flanking column consisting of at least three entire corps — head on. It was a daring tactical plan that required audacious leadership, good timing and the cooperation of the rest of the Union Army, under the command of Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick at Fredericksburg. If Sedgwick's Federals moved aggressively from their bridgeheads against Jubal Early's lone rebel division on the high ground west of town, all could be lost. Lee, Jackson and the bulk of the weakened Army of Northern Virginia would be caught in a vise and forced either to "ingloriously fly" or fight in the open where, Hooker, opined, "certain destruction awaits."

For the first time in his Confederate career, Lee had been operationally outflanked by one of his opponents. In late April, Hooker ordered his army, more than 130,000 strong, well-equipped and re-energized soldiers, to move from their winter camps near Falmouth and execute a bold, multi-part offensive that had as its objective nothing less than the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia. While the majority of Union cavalry would swing around Lee's positions along the Rappahannock River and then wreak havoc on his communications and logistics, three infantry corps under Hooker's personal command were to cross that river and the Rapidan and advance on Lee's rear at Fredericksburg. The remainder of the Unionists under Sedgwick were told to "fix" Lee at the city by creating lodgments on the rebel-held shore and threatening Banks Ford. If opportunity beckoned, they could attack. Lee suspected his enemy was up to something, but it wasn't until the 30th that his cavalry chief, J.E.B. (Jeb) Stuart, stationed on the Rappahannock's upper fords, confirmed enough details to allow the commanding general to react.

Reaction, however, was not what Lee or Jackson had had in mind back in the winter. With James Longstreet and two of his divisions detached on separate duty near Petersburg, the blue-blooded son of Lighthorse Harry and the nephew

of a hardscrabble farmer from western Virginia strengthened a bond of friendship and professional respect that had first blossomed in Jackson's Valley Campaign of the previous June. A common Christian belief in Divine Providence — that God ordained all things, ultimately for good — underpinned that friendship, to the point that the Episcopal Lee and the Presbyterian Jackson attended Sunday worship together and jointly sought the conversion of the army. Stonewall's poor performance in the Seven Days' around Richmond was redeemed in his chief's eyes by his successes at Cedar Mountain, Second Manassas and, especially, in the Sharpsburg



The Last Meeting between Gen. Lee and Jackson by J.G. Fay, 1877.
Library of Congress

Campaign, where his spectacular victory at Harpers Ferry temporarily salvaged Lee's forlorn hopes and mitigated an otherwise disappointing setback. Lee had come to understand the special operational gift he possessed in Jackson, and the Valley General, for his part, not only had a knack for fulfilling his commander's intent, but also shared with him a strategic vision. Through the months of January, February and early March 1863, the two Confederate chieftains met frequently and discussed ambitious plans for a spring campaign that entertained a second great raid of the North, one that targeted

Pennsylvania, its capital of Harrisburg and the coal mines to the east. Stonewall had longed to invade the Keystone State ever since his debut at First Manassas and, his knowledge increased by staff members like Jedediah Hotchkiss, who had lived and worked in Pennsylvania before the war, came to realize that the only way the Confederacy could achieve its independence was to bring a “hard war” to the hearths and firesides of the Northern people. His mind, therefore, thought at the strategic — or war-winning — level, even if his service with Lee as leader of one-half of the army confined his actions to the tactical and operational. But Jackson was content with that; he wished for nothing more than to stay by Lee’s side, whom he once said he would follow “blindfolded.” And the commanding general knew that, accepting and carefully weighing his subordinate’s advice at all levels of war with courtesy and a sense of trust forged both in previous, hard-fought campaigns and in shared religious faith.

Beset by illness in the second half of March and first half of April, Lee found himself frustratingly confined to bed at Belvoir, a stately mansion close by Jackson’s new headquarters. Although he did what he could from the bedsheets, the army commander lost precious time needed for preparation of the anticipated spring campaign. That, and the time required for Longstreet’s divisions to return to Fredericksburg, all but guaranteed the Federals would get the jump on the Confederates and move first. Informed by Stuart’s intelligence that this had indeed occurred, Lee and Jackson thought hard about what to do, even contemplating an attack on Sedgwick in full force. Retreat was never an option for the offensive-minded generals, which was what Hooker expected. After careful consideration, Lee concluded the best course of action was to punch Hooker’s flanking corps in the nose and then exploit whatever opportunities might develop. He gave

complete tactical command over to Jackson, telling him simply to “make arrangements to repulse the enemy.” Now, in the darkness of April 30, a concerned Stonewall ordered his corps chaplain, Beverly Tucker Lacy, who had once ministered to a congregation in the local area, to find good guides who could lead his divisions from their campsites early on the morning of May 1 to meet the oncoming Federals on the Orange Turnpike. Much depended on speed before daylight, he reminded the clergyman, else the Yankees overwhelm the two divisions (Richard Anderson and Lafayette McLaws) Lee had already dispatched westward to check their advance.

Early in the morning on May 1, Lacy and his handpicked guides led Jackson’s divisions from their winter quarters south of Fredericksburg up to the Turnpike and sent them west, headlong toward the Union V, XI and XII Corps that were ordered by a jubilant Hooker to push east from a small crossroads known as Chancellorsville. Named after a prominent mansion that dominated the intersection, Chancellorsville was located smack in the middle of the tangled, second-growth forest locally called “The Wilderness.” Most of the old trees had been cut down to fuel the fires of iron ore–smelting furnaces that dotted the landscape, allowing a hodge-podge mix of saplings, young trees and briars to grow in their place. It was tough terrain to field an army, and the Union leadership knew it. Hooker commanded his flanking force to clear The Wilderness as soon as possible that morning and break into the cleared, rolling farmland to its east. Once there, the Federal weight of numbers and superior artillery should easily push back any resistance Lee had mustered. “Fighting Joe” smelled victory. What he failed to reckon on was the enemy exercising his vote and his own communications and intelligence systems breaking down. Classic fog and friction, à la the theories of the Prussian philosopher of war, Carl von Clausewitz, were about to enshroud the Army of the Potomac.

Overlooking the fields where Jackson’s Corps attacked the XI Corps after an all-day march.

Quite literally, the fog that morning cloaked most of Jackson’s movement down the Turnpike. By the time it cleared about 9:00 a.m. only the tail end of A.P. Hill’s division was visible to the Federal balloons tethered at Bank’s Ford, whose operators sent urgent messages to Hooker — messages he never received because the telegraph line failed. But the line worked just fine to transmit inaccurate information, gleaned from a rebel deserter, claiming “Jackson’s whole corps is opposite Franklin’s Crossing,” at its old position along the Rappahannock. Confident all was still going well, Hooker telegraphed Sedgwick to attack at Fredericksburg, but the message failed to reach him until late in the evening. Most importantly, the vanguard of the Federal V Corps, commanded by the redoubtable George Sykes, an old U.S. Regular, ran into Lafayette McLaws’s division near the Zoan Church, flanked to the south by Richard Anderson’s division and backed up by the bulk of Jackson’s command, which Stonewall had led personally onto the field. The Confederates were almost precisely where, and *when*, they were not supposed to be. “Old Jack” had succeeded in interpreting Lee’s intent by getting his corps quickly to the front and, as Lee fully expected, now boldly confronted the lead Union corps with numerical superiority. It was close to 11:00, on what had become a warm, “proper May Day” as one soldier put it.

Prodded by Jackson and backed by artillery the Valley General dispatched to him, McLaws overlapped Sykes’s flanks and bloodily forced him back. To the south, Stonewall told Anderson to advance against the hesitant XII Corps, whose commander, Maj. Gen. Henry Slocum, had foolishly ordered to deploy into line in deep brush. The rest of the Union V Corps, moving to the north and east under the stolid George Meade, was too far from Sykes to help him, and the XI Corps was too far to the rear. Arriving to the cheers of countless rebel throats, a satisfied Lee reined in next to Jackson and lifted binoculars to his eyes, and the two leaders shared a brief word. Then, suddenly, Jackson sped off into the woods toward the enemy, preoccupied — as he would be the next evening — in discerning for himself the state of the enemy’s situation.

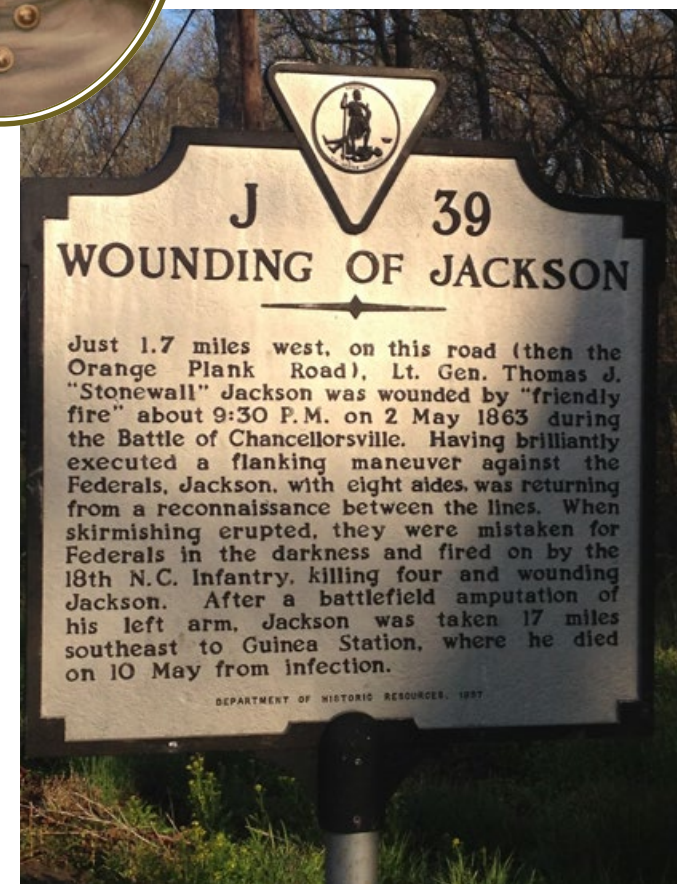
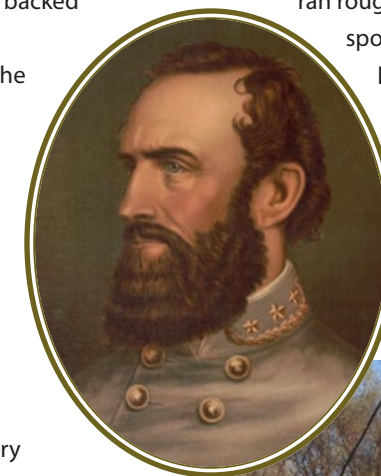
By 1:30, bombarded by bad news from Sykes claiming he was overwhelmed, realizing Slocum and Meade couldn’t help him, and bewildered both by Sedgwick’s inactivity and strange, badly delayed reports received from his chief of staff warning of vast hordes of approaching greycoats, Hooker lost his nerve. “From character of information have suspended attack,” he wrote. “The enemy may attack me — I will try it.” He ordered his incredulous corps commanders back to Chancellorsville

and asked them to prepare defensive works, in expectation of a rebel attack from the west or south. It was a fateful decision, one that ceded the tactical and operational initiative to Lee and Jackson. And that was precisely what the two Confederate chieftains had hoped for. In essence, Lee’s bold decision to attack the Unionists along the Turnpike, combined with Stonewall’s timely and aggressive execution of it, so discomfited the Union commander that he lost faith in his own plan. As he pondered what to do next, before reinforcing Yankee corps arrived to strengthen him, the Confederate generals had a brief window of time to exploit their golden opportunity.

After attempting to press hard on the heels of the retreating Northerners throughout the afternoon, Jackson gave up the chase and at about 7:00 p.m. trotted down the Furnace Road to meet Lee at its intersection with the Plank Road, which ran roughly parallel with the Turnpike to the south. They

spoke for a few minutes in the road, but soon a hidden sniper found their range, obliging the two leaders to seek shelter on a rise of ground underneath some cedar trees. A suitable log offered a decent seat, and the first of two planning meetings that night commenced. Often conflated into one “Last Meeting,”

Lee’s victory at Chancellorsville came at a high cost.



Lee and Jackson actually met twice as they considered how to maximize the new tactical situation. Stonewall initially thought, based on his personal observations of the Yankees' performance, that "by tomorrow there will not be any of them side of the river," but Lee demurred, certain Hooker would still be there, and likely reinforced. Aides were dispatched to determine if the Union center could be successfully assaulted, but they returned with the expected news that it could not. Lee knew from his own reconnaissance that afternoon that the Federal left was too anchored against the Rappahannock to be attacked. That meant the only viable aggressive option was to strike the enemy's right. Both men realized it, but exactly how to do it was another question.

About the time they reached that conclusion, Jeb Stuart rode up, spurs and sword jangling, and triumphantly announced that the enemy right was "hanging in the air." Immediately, Lee seized on the idea and declared, "We must attack on [our] left as soon as practicable." Stuart was sent on his way to determine more specifics, a back-and-forth with Jackson ensued, in which Lee determined the general route to the point of attack but deferred to his subordinate to figure out the specifics. "Show me what to do and we will try to do it," Stonewall said, "his face lighted up," certain of his commander's intent and the boldness of the proposal. After some more discussion, Jackson rose from the log, saluted and claimed, "My troops will move at four o'clock." Finding a suitable place close by to lie down among his staff, Old Jack tried to fall asleep. Lee soon followed suit.

His mind racing, the Valley General found repose difficult and rose between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. on May 2. With so many details to hammer down, he realized the 4:00 start time would not happen, and attracting Chaplain Lacy to his campfire, asked if he knew how to chart the march route. Lacy remembered a roundabout, narrow way using trails cut in The Wilderness by



The site of Lee and Jackson's last meeting is preserved within the National Park.

Charles Wellford, the owner of the nearby Catharine Furnace, and Stonewall sent Lacy and Jed Hotchkiss to find the man and ask about getting a guide. Around 3:30, Hotchkiss galloped back to the intersection with the requisite intelligence and discovered Lee and Jackson seated on discarded Federal cracker boxes, facing each other, their backs against trees. Showing the generals the specifics of the route on a map, Hotchkiss may have lingered to hear the ensuing conversation. "General Jackson," Lee asked, "what do you propose to make this movement with?" Responding immediately to his friend and chief, Jackson looked him in the eye and replied, "With my whole corps." Taken aback, Lee doubtless weighed the risks and possibilities. To double check, he queried, "What will you leave me?" Stonewall answered as predicted: "The divisions of Anderson and McLaws."

This was the personification of audacity, and for a moment Lee paused, thinking. If Hooker attacked him while Jackson was on the way to the Federal flank, or Sedgwick suddenly hit Early and pushed through him toward the Confederate rear, or if Jackson was intercepted. ... There were numerous bad scenarios that *could* occur, but the commanding general had entered the mind of his Union adversary, considered the chances of success against him and, with complete trust in his lieutenant — a trust built over the past year and solidified over the winter — made the decision based on the *probability* of Stonewall pulling it off. There was no other option, frankly, as retreat was unthinkable, only to be exercised if absolutely necessary. With their shared belief in Divine Providence as a bedrock and Stuart's troopers to guide the rebel columns, the chance of achieving a victory was now a real possibility. More than that, Lee must have thought, the opportunity to devastate the enemy suddenly seemed possible. With Jackson, such things could be done. Without him, as Lee later learned, they could not.

Turning to his friend, the gray-haired commander pronounced his verdict: "Well General, you may try it." Stonewall, "an eager smile upon his face," asked about a few remaining details, rose to his feet and saluted. "My troops will move at once," he replied, and in a moment, was gone. Lee would see him only once more, later that morning about 8:00, as Jackson led his three divisions on the great flanking maneuver that brought him and his friend their greatest — and last — triumph together.

Dr. Christian B. Keller is professor of history and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Chair of National Security at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, PA. His most recent book, *The Great Partnership: Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and the Fate of the Confederacy* (Pegasus, 2019), was just awarded the 2020 Douglas Southall Freeman Prize.

The Charge of the 8TH PENNSYLVANIA CAVALRY

BY ERIC J. WITTENBERG



Charge of the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry by Don Troiani. Used with permission.

After firing the opening shots of the Battle of Chancellorsville on May 1, 1863, Col. Thomas Devin's Second Brigade of the Army of the Potomac's First Cavalry Division took up a position just behind the XI Corps line, and to the right of the III Corps, about one mile from the Chancellorsville tavern on the morning of May 2. Maj. Pennock Huey, commander of the 8th Pennsylvania, spent most of the afternoon at Hazel Grove, waiting for someone to give him orders. "We had been there some little time," recalled Lt. Andrew B. Wells of Company B. "Everything was quiet on the front. The men were gathering in groups, chatting and smoking, and the officers were occupied in much the same manner, wondering what would turn up next." The afternoon dragged on as the horse soldiers listened to the sounds of the battle raging around them. They grew concerned as the sounds of the fighting came closer and closer.

Huey rode off to find his division commander, Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton, seeking instructions for his regiment. Pleasonton was at General Sickles' III Corps headquarters when a panicked staff officer spurred up, dispatched by Maj. Gen. O.O. Howard, commander of the XI Corps, to report that his command had been flanked and was in serious danger. With this stunning news, Sickles, Pleasonton and Huey wheeled and started back toward Hazel Grove. Another staff officer rode up, confirmed the news of the rout of the XI Corps and suggested that a regiment of cavalry be sent to try to check the movement. Sickles ordered Pleasonton to send a regiment.

Pleasanton turned to Huey and told him to report, with his regiment, to Howard as quickly as possible. Neither officer knew where to find Howard, and when Huey asked where to go, Pleasanton responded, "I suppose you will find him at or near the Old Wilderness Church; there is where he was." Huey spurred off to find his regiment.

About 4:00, a mounted officer dashed up to a group of officers playing poker on a hardtack box, asking who was in charge of the regiment. Maj. Peter Keenan responded, "I am, what's the trouble?"

The officer replied, "General Howard wants a cavalry regiment." At that, the staff officer dashed off before further questions could be asked. Major Huey arrived, and the game ended immediately as the five officers stood to prepare the regiment to move out. "The sleepers, as well as the talkers, sprang to their saddles, and a regiment of cavalry was seen in place of a lounging crowd."

Huey and Keenan led the column, followed by Capt. Charles Arrowsmith, commander of the first squadron, Carpenter and Haddock. The Pennsylvanians trotted out of Hazel Grove in columns of twos. "This road was too narrow due to over hanging shrubbery, to accept more than four men abreast," recalled a horse soldier, "indeed uncomfortable for this column of fours. This formation had to continue until the Plank Road was reached. On this narrow road we met a considerable mass of the Eleventh Corps." Dense undergrowth hid the fact that a heavy enemy battle line lay nearby at the intersection of the Plank Road.

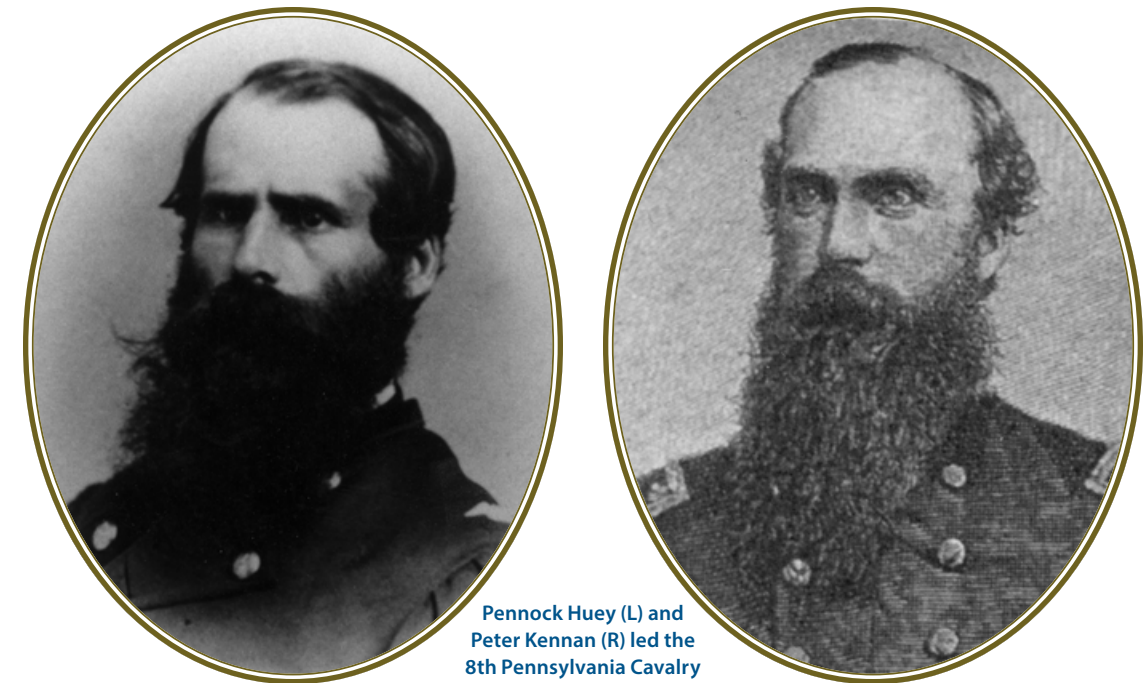
The Keystone Staters marched through the woods toward the Plank Road. None of the Pennsylvanians had any idea that they were riding right into the midst of Jackson's Corps, attacking the XI Corps flank. Accordingly, the men rode with their sabers safely ensconced in their scabbards and their pistols in their holsters, totally unprepared for the gauntlet that awaited them.

When the column reached the Plank Road, Huey realized that they had ridden right into Jackson's flank, "that we were completely surrounded, the woods at that point being filled with the flankers of Jackson's column, who were thoroughly hidden from our view by the thick undergrowth." Seeing no other options, Huey cried, "Draw sabers and charge," which order Keenan repeated. "Never before did three hundred cast themselves with such true aim and so impetuously against twenty thousand victorious and advancing veterans," noted a Pennsylvanian. The horsemen dashed forward, reaching the Plank Road and finding it "packed about as closely with the enemy as it possible could be." The sudden onslaught stunned the Southern foot soldiers. "An attack from, or an encounter with, cavalry in that dense country seemed about as unlikely as an attack from a gunboat," correctly observed one Confederate soldier. Believing that all of the Union cavalry had fallen upon them, many gray-clad infantrymen cried out, "I surrender!"

The cavalrymen veered to the left, facing the Confederate column, trying to hack their way through to safety. They made it almost 100 yards through the shocked foot soldiers. The panicked horses trampled those unfortunate Rebels unable to get clear. A heavy volley of musket fire greeted them, killing Keenan, Arrowsmith and Haddock. Keenan toppled against Major Huey and dropped to the ground under Huey's horse. Arrowsmith rode a big bay horse, and fell with his horse, animal and rider toppling together on the right side of the road, not far from Keenan. The 8th Pennsylvania left 30 men and 80 horses dead at the intersection.

Lt. J. Edward Carpenter saw Keenan fall. "He was actually among the bayonets of the enemy, in their line of battle, which was badly thrown out of order by our charge. He fell forward, pitching headlong in the direction of the enemy, and in the direction in which his horse was moving," recalled Carpenter. "Keenan was a powerful man, and just before he fell he was flourishing his saber with unexampled rapidity in the very midst of, and hand-to-hand with the enemy."

Captain Wickersham, who commanded a battalion of the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry, rode alongside Capt. Alexander McCallum, who led a company. The two officers watched the squadron in front draw their



Pennock Huey (L) and Peter Kennan (R) led the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry at Chancellorsville. USAHEC

sabers and take the trot. "The men, comprehending the greatness of the moment, lifted their sabers high in the air." McCallum turned in his saddle as they trotted along, and spotting the massed enemy in their front, declared, "I think this is the last of the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry."

Wickersham replied, "I think so too, but let us go down with our colors flying." They closed in quickly on Keenan's beleaguered battalions, "and from the dreadful fire we were receiving, I feared the road ahead would be obstructed by Keenan's dead and wounded men and horses, and I raised my saber to check the men of my battalion for a moment. At this juncture the fight became, if possible, more furious, the entire command using sabers vigorously while pressing forward. At no time did the regiment lose its formation, the only gaps being caused by those who fell."

The terrified horse soldiers slashed their way to safety, passing Maj. Gen. Howard, who, with tears streaming down his face, tried to halt his broken and demoralized troops by clutching the national colors and calling out to them to rally.

The swarming Confederates completely cut off Capt. Joseph W. Wistar's squadron, bringing up the rear of the 8th Pennsylvania, before they could even reach the Plank Road. Wistar's men had to cut their way through Jackson's infantry in another direction, escaping into the open space between Hazel Grove and Chancellorsville. As they tried to escape, they had to jump over hastily constructed earthworks, adding yet another obstacle to their already nerve-jangling ride.

As the Pennsylvanians mingled with the gray-clad infantrymen, "sabre blows fell thick and fast; some threw down their guns and raised their hand beseechingly. Soon the lines behind them opened fire, and horses and riders tumbled headlong; for several hundred yards the cavalry column ploughed its way through more than one line of Confederate infantry before it lost its aggressive force." Captain Wickersham recalled, "During this charge it seemed as though the enemy were firing almost in our faces, so close were their lines to us, and in one instance where our horses were checked a moment by those in our front, a rebel officer caught [my] bridle, and pointing a revolver at [me], ordered [me] to surrender. The reply was what is known in the sabre exercise as 'left cut against infantry.' The rebel officer did not respond to roll call the next morning." In just a few minutes, it was over, but the horse soldiers had suffered extremely heavy losses.

Most of the 8th Pennsylvania emerged from the woods on the north side of the Plank Road. Huey formed the remnants of his regiment in the rear of XII Corps batteries being deployed along the Plank Road to resist Jackson's savage flank attack. Huey intended to support the artillery and to prevent the gunners from opening ranks before the rest of the horsemen could dash to safety. The sudden and unexpected appearance of the



Alfred R. Waud sketched the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry, crossing at Ely's Ford, before the battle of Chancellorsville Library of Congress

blue-clad horsemen confused the pursuing Confederates, who stopped their pursuit to form and defend against cavalry. By the time the Confederates realized that there would be no grand Napoleonic cavalry charge, it was too late for them to press their advantage, meaning that many more men of the XI Corps made it to safety than otherwise might have. The survivors retired behind the guns, enabling them to see muzzle flashes in the valley below. Finally, the firing petered out as night fell over the bloody, chaotic battlefield.

The 8th Pennsylvania had survived its ordeal, but with severe losses. It had crashed into Brig. Gen. Alfred H. Colquitt's Georgia infantry brigade, which was part of Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes' division, and it had paid the price. "The whole affair was accidental," observed Lieutenant Wells. "We were on our way to report to General Howard, some three miles from where we were camped, and the country that General Howard's staff officer had just passed over in quest of the cavalry had in the meantime been crossed by Stonewall Jackson's troops, and in following the same tracks we naturally ran into them. The officers who were at the head of our column, seeing the situation, had only an instant to determine what was to be done. We could not turn around and get out in the face of the enemy, and the only thing left for us was to go through them, 'sink or swim.'" He concluded, "Can any man who was a soldier for one moment imagine an officer deliberately planning a charge by a regiment of cavalry, strung out by twos in a column half a mile long in a thick wood?" Indeed. No sane officer would.

In fact, Huey later claimed, "Had the real condition of affairs been known, or even suspected, by Sickles when he ordered Pleasonton to send a regiment of cavalry to Howard, such an order would never have been given. As it is, he certainly would not have ordered three hundred men right into certain destruction without one word of caution to their commanding officer." However, circumstances pitched the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry into a crucible along the Plank Road, and it paid dearly. The accidental charge of the Pennsylvanians broke up part of the Confederate pursuit and allowed a lot of panicked Northern infantrymen to reach safety.

The charge of the 8th Pennsylvania Cavalry had unforeseen consequences for the battle that evening. The cavalry's sudden appearance on their flank badly rattled the Confederate infantrymen. Fearing the possibility of another mounted charge, the Southern pickets became especially nervous as night fell over the thick woods. Uneasy about their situation, the distinctive sounds of a body of horsemen made the Confederate vedettes nervous, and they fired on anything that moved, including Stonewall Jackson and A. P. Hill, who were out reconnoitering the Orange Turnpike in front of Jackson's corps. They hit Jackson three times, resulting in the amputation of his arm later that night. If the 8th Pennsylvania had not made its costly charge, the pickets might not have fired on Jackson. The ultimate outcome of the war might have changed as a result of Jackson's ride that night. Keenan's Charge demonstrated that the Union cavalry could show courage and resourcefulness under the most difficult of circumstances, and that the Northern horse soldiers could make a difference on the battlefield if given the opportunity to do so.

Partners Corner

Meet Alan Zirkle – Fredericksburg's Town Crier

BY TOM VAN WINKLE

I have personally been involved in Civil War battlefield preservation in the Fredericksburg region for 25 years. In those years, I have either attended or assisted in presenting more programs than I can count. What I can count are the events at which I would meet Mr. Alan Zirkle — nearly all of them.

Alan is a staple in the historical community, as well as with CVBT. He has been supporting this organization for years. When asked how long he has been a Partner with CVBT, Alan responded, *I can't remember when I started contributing; it was in the early years. It was obvious then, and is obvious now, that if we don't save these battlefields when we can, they will be lost forever.*

I asked Alan what drives his passion for Civil War history. *Maybe it started at birth in Stuart Circle Hospital in Richmond, directly under the watchful visage of Jeb's memorial on Monument Avenue. Or maybe growing up at the Naval Base at Dahlgren (named for the Union admiral), where almost every day I would hear, and often feel, the big guns being fired. But it is probably just that I have always liked reading history and biography and learning new things in general,* was his response.

Whichever of these inspired Alan to become an integral part of this area's preservation efforts, we are pleased. Alan not only supports CVBT, but also several other local historical organizations, a trait many of CVBT's Partners have in common. Alan spends much of his time volunteering for the National Park Service at Chatham. *I work alongside awe-inspiring historians who have made a lifelong career out of their childhood interest in history. It is encouraging when I see young visitors being exposed to this history; they may not become historians, but many of them will be inspired to learn more. When I volunteer at Chatham and I have local visitors, I try to let them know about the available opportunities for learning about our local history and how they can help save it,* Alan stated.

Alan also has an ancestral tie to the Civil War. His great-grandfather, Ephraim Ryan, was in the 136th Virginia Militia in Shenandoah County. The family has few details about his life, but believes he served the Confederacy by working at Liberty Furnace, helping provide scarce iron for products like the armor plate of the CSS *Virginia*. Virginia and Tennessee were the only significant iron-producing states in the South at the beginning of the Civil War. With Tennessee quickly overrun by fighting, Virginia became most important to the Confederacy.

Through the years, Alan has visited Civil War sites from New Mexico to Vermont. He stated, *I am proud that I got my*



"advanced degree" by taking more Ed Bearss battlefield tours than I can remember. Alan figures he has attended between 60 and 70 events with Ed.

Alan has a diverse interest in the Civil War. He is not only interested in the battles and leaders themselves, but also has a keen interest in the technology and its development throughout the conflict.

When asked why he felt saving Civil War battlefields was so important, Alan responded, *Saving large tracts of open lands open to the public is to me a worthwhile cause. If the saved land has historical significance, is a place where we can learn so much about how our country struggled to become what it is today, then we need to give following generations the opportunity to walk this land and absorb its meaning.*

Oh, so regarding this article's title: Why do we consider Alan to be the "Town Crier"? Well, it goes back to his commitment to educating and informing the public about our history. Early on, Alan built an email list of those interested in the historical events held in the area. He began to periodically announce those events via email blasts. This service, which Alan volunteers much of his time managing, has now grown to several hundred individuals on his email list and a website "History Alert" which can be found at (www.azirkle.com/HistoryAlert). I would invite everyone to bookmark this site and check in for upcoming events.

CVBT thanks Alan for being one of our extraordinary Partners and applaud all his efforts educating and keeping the community informed.



Ruins of Chancellorsville House in 1865 Library of Congress

The Chancellorsville House

BY TOM VAN WINKLE

Early in the morning they came for us to go to the cellar, and in passing through the upper porch I saw how the chairs were riddled with bullets, and the shattered columns which had fallen and injured General Hooker, Oh, the horror of that day; the piles of legs and arms outside of the sitting room window and the rows and rows of dead bodies covered with canvas, Mrs. Sue Margaret Chancellor.

Mention Chancellorsville to any Civil War buff and images of the great battle — considered one of Gen. Robert E. Lee’s finest victories — comes

to mind. Lee divided his army, culminating in “Stonewall” Jackson’s famous flank attack on Union General Hooker’s right flank. One also remembers that the victory came at a great cost: Jackson himself cut down by friendly fire.

Chancellorsville is thought to have been a village or town at the time of the conflict, but this is not exactly true. Chancellorsville was a large country home sitting aside what was then a five-way intersection. The original dwelling was built about 1816. The house stood two- and one-half stories tall, and had a two-story front porch, an L-shaped floor plan and a cellar. Several dependencies also stood on the property.

The Chancellor House operated as an inn for travelers on the main road between Orange and Madison, which Sue Chancellor called *those rich up-country counties*. In 1821, the dwelling also contained a post office. By 1835, a two-story brick wing had been added to the structure.

By the time the armies took interest in the area, a widow, Frances Chancellor, occupied the house, along with several other women and children. Susan Margaret Chancellor, 14 at the time of the battle, left a remarkable account of her experience in the home during this tumultuous period.

In the months prior to the battle, the Chancellors hosted many leading Confederate officers, including

J.E.B. Stuart, who reportedly bestowed a gold coin to one of the Chancellor daughters. Once the invading Union army came to roost, the atmosphere at the inn took on a different feel.

On the afternoon of April 30, 1863, Union soldiers of the Fifth, Eleventh and Twelfth Corps took positions on the intersection near the Chancellor House.

Presently the Yankees began to come and they said that Chancellorsville was to be General Hooker’s headquarters and we must all go into one room in the back of the house and say [stay] and sleep on pallets on the floor, Sue Margaret Chancellor.

The Chancellor home and property soon became a focal point for the two opposing armies.

On May 2 at 5:00 p.m., General Jackson launched his surprise attack on the unsuspecting Union right flank, driving the fleeing Federals back about two miles toward the Chancellor House. The battle eventually became a “slugfest” in the woods surrounding the Chancellor House by May.

Well, we got through Thursday and Friday as best we could but on Saturday, the 2nd of May, the firing was much nearer, and General Hooker ordered us to be taken to the basement. The house was full of the wounded. They had taken our sitting room as an operating room and our piano as an amputating table, Sue Margaret Chancellor.

On the morning of May 3, Union Gen. Joseph Hooker was injured while standing on the lower porch of the house. He described his unpleasant incident as follows:

I was standing on the step of the portico on the Sunday morning of the 3rd of May, and was giving direction to the battle, which was now raging with great fury, the cannon-balls reaching me from both east and west, when a solid shot struck the pillar near me, splitting it in two, and throwing one-half longitudinally against me, striking my whole right side which soon turned livid. For a few moments I was senseless, and the report spread that I had been killed.

During the fury of the battle that day, several Union soldiers attempted to hide in the basement along with the Chancellor women.

The fighting was awful and the frightened men crowded into the basement for protection from the deadly fire of the Confederates. An officer came and ordered them out, commanding them

not to intrude upon the terror-stricken women, Sue Margaret Chancellor.

Not long after the officer had evicted the terror-stricken Union soldiers, he again returned to the basement, informing the women that the house was on fire.

Union General Dickenson, the officer who first removed the terrified soldiers from the basement and subsequently returned, escorted the women and children out of the burning dwelling and would continue to shepherd the frightened band to safety.

Cannons were booming in every direction and missiles of death were flying at this terrified band of women and children come stumbling out of the cellar. At our last look, our old home was completely enveloped in flames, Sue Margaret Chancellor.

General Dickinson and Frances Chancellor struck up a friendship and corresponded with each other after the war. General Dickinson attended Frances’s funeral in 1892.

By 1872, a smaller dwelling was constructed on top of a portion of the original Chancellor House. The home fell into disorder, and in 1927 surrendered to destruction by fire.

Between 1966 and 1968, the remains of 1,279 Union soldiers were disinterred from Chancellorsville and relocated to the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

Today, all that remains of this once bustling location is the original foundations of the Chancellor’s tavern. The ruins are now part of the National Park Service and are included as one of its tour stops.



Rebuilt Chancellor House Courtesy National Park Service

Courtesy National Park Service



The Danbury Mint, Civil War, Chancellor House Author’s Collection