



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★
PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

DAVID N. DUNCAN
President

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

They were historic turning points.

Four individual battles across three states in the Western Theater of the Civil War that changed the course, and ultimately, the outcome of the American Civil War.

Today, you and I have the incredible opportunity to save forever five tracts totaling over 400 acres at these four pivotal battlefields.

As you can see on the enclosed battle maps, the five tracts are in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee, and include the Battle of Corinth, the Battle of Champion Hill, the Siege and Battle at Port Hudson, and the Battle of Chattanooga.

And for now, I'll just point out that, at each battle, Union forces carried the day, and the cumulative weight of these victories — like dominoes slowly falling — eventually led to the end of the war itself.

These valuable properties combined have a transaction value of \$2,850,600! That's a really big number, I know, and if we had to pay full price to save these places, well, we just couldn't do it. But here's the amazing part I think you'll appreciate ...

Thanks to private, state, and federal grants the Trust is working to secure, you and I can save all five tracts ... a whopping total of 407 acres ... for only \$307,450.

I say *only* \$307,450 because, although it's still a hefty sum to raise and most certainly an amount that requires deep commitment from our loyal members, it is still less than 11% of the total value and cost. That means that for every \$1.00 you can commit today, we can multiply it into more than \$9.27 worth of saved hallowed ground.

A \$9.27-to-\$1 match is like buying \$200 worth of groceries for \$21.57 ... or a \$25,000 car for less than \$2,700! That sounds like a pretty good deal to me, and I hope you agree. And while we always work to maximize the power of your donation dollar on every effort to save battlefield land, the truth is that it is rare to be able to multiply your generosity by a factor of \$9.27 or more, so we really cannot let this opportunity go to waste.

I am in awe how often friends like you answer the call when these important opportunities present themselves. That's important, because we almost never get a second



AMERICAN
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THE COLOR BEARERS

DAVID N. DUNCAN
President

Dear Friend and Color Bearer,

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chance to save these lands, and once they are sold to a developer or other entity, there is no turning back time or reclaiming this moment. That's why we must act immediately.

Now, if you'll allow me, I'd like to make the case as to why these 407 acres are worthy of your urgent and generous support by sharing the remarkable history of each of the tracts. I'm going to take them in chronological order because I believe that is the best way to understand one battle's impact on the next and, ultimately, on the outcome of the entire Civil War.

The Battle of Corinth: A Fight for Vital Rail Lines

The dominoes started falling in May of 1862 in Corinth, a town of about 2,500 people at the time, located in northeastern Mississippi. Corinth, as you may recall, held immense strategic importance, as it was the junction of the Mobile & Ohio and Memphis & Charleston railroads. Control of the rail lines passing through the town meant access to the Confederate heartland and served as a means to reach the South's key coastal ports, and the Union captured it in a mini-siege known as the First Battle of Corinth.

Five months later, a Confederate force under General Earl Van Dorn returned, intent on recapturing Corinth.

The small parcel of ground you and I have the opportunity to save in Corinth — just 0.6 acres in size — played a BIG role in the fighting there.

In the pre-dawn hours of October 4, 1862, during the Second Battle of Corinth, Union skirmishers took position on this property, remaining there until a Confederate division advanced in the late morning. In three charges against the main Union line, the Confederates' left flank crossed and re-crossed this tract. The 9th Texas Cavalry (dismounted) and the 35th Mississippi Infantry both fought on the property, sustaining heavy casualties, in what turned out to be the culminating action of the battle.



Junction of the Memphis & Charleston and the Mobile & Ohio railroads in downtown Corinth, Mississippi, today.

The Union Army retained control of Corinth, and now had the opportunity to strike towards the garrison city nicknamed the “Gibraltar of the South”— Vicksburg.

Given the parcel's history ... plus the fact that it has been listed for sale on the local real estate market ... and the fact that it is located literally across the street from the

Corinth Civil War Interpretive Center, you can understand why the National Park Service has targeted these six-tenths of an acre as a “high priority.”

With your generous support, we will buy the land outright, stewarding it until we can transfer it to the Park Service.

Now, let’s move on to the next battle, which some folks believe is one of the most important not only in the Western Theater, but in the entire Civil War:

The Battle of Champion Hill: Bloody Prelude to Vicksburg

As you may recall, I wrote you a few months ago about the Trust’s efforts to purchase outright and preserve forever a 144-acre tract at the very heart of the battlefield — a portion of the area known as the “Crossroads,” formed by the intersection of the Jackson, Middle, and Ratliff Plantation roads.



Looking across the 3rd Battery, Ohio Light Artillery position at Vicksburg National Military Park.

Thanks to generous friends like you, we have completed this historic transaction, but the news gets even better: The Champion family (whose members have faithfully protected ancestral lands on which much of the fighting took place) have agreed to let us acquire a much larger parcel — 393.7 acres, to be exact — on the northern portion of the battlefield, highlighted in yellow on your enclosed battle map.

commercial development or new housing projects is what is best for this tract so this important chapter of our nation’s history can be available to future generations.

I think you’ll agree, saving the Champions’ land from

General Ulysses S. Grant’s Army of the Tennessee and General John C. Pemberton’s Army of Vicksburg clashed on and around Champion Hill, now regarded as the most decisive battle of what many believe is the most crucial campaign of the entire war — the Vicksburg Campaign!

The Battle of Champion Hill concluded when Confederate troops, after hours of some of the most intense combat ever seen, were finally driven from the field in what has been described as “wild confusion.”

The following day, May 17, 1863, Pemberton’s forces were routed once more along the Big Black River and driven into the defenses of Vicksburg, where Grant laid siege to them and the town’s residents. After bravely holding out for what must have seemed

like an interminable 47 days, the garrison surrendered on July 4, bringing to a close the Federals' Vicksburg Campaign.

The Siege & Battle at Port Hudson: The Union Wrests Control of “The Father of the Waters”

At about the same time, Union General Nathaniel Banks was turning his army away from its advance upon Shreveport, Louisiana, and towards the Mississippi River, the South's vital lifeline for goods and supplies. His new goal was to capture Port Hudson, about 150 miles south of Vicksburg. Like Vicksburg, Port Hudson was positioned atop high bluffs and commanded the river.

Banks felt that he would have an easy victory over General Franklin Gardner's Confederate forces at Port Hudson, and that he could then quickly march to the aid of Grant at Vicksburg. However, it took Banks nearly a week to organize his troops, giving Gardner time to reinforce his lines and move artillery into place. Banks finally stormed Port Hudson on May 27th in a series of actions that proved both uncoordinated and unsuccessful. Another Union attack two weeks later also failed. So, Banks, like Grant at Vicksburg, lay siege to Port Hudson.



Confederate siege gun mounted in the river fortifications at Port Hudson, 1863.

The city's brave defenders fought not only the Federals but hunger, thirst, and disease for 48 long, miserable days. As one soldier wrote, “We eat all the meat and bread in the fort ... eat all the beef — all the mules — all the dogs — and all the rats around us.”

When Gardner received word that Vicksburg had finally fallen, he realized his situation was hopeless and surrendered to Banks, thereby ceding undisputed control of the Mississippi River to the Union from the river's source to New Orleans — a game-changing victory for the North.

You and I have the chance to purchase — and save forever — this incredibly historic 2.6-acre tract that lies well within the Confederates' defenses that were impacted heavily as a result of the Union artillery's almost nonstop bombardment of Port Hudson. The property also contains a portion of the post-siege earthworks that were constructed by the Union's Corps d'Afrique, a unit that later became part of the United States Colored Troops.

Our goal is to buy the property outright. It has been listed for sale on the local real estate market. Then we will care for the land until we can transfer it to the State of Louisiana for inclusion in the Port Hudson State Historic Site, which has indicated it will use the property as a starting point for guided, public interpretive tours — a perfect addition to the historic site! It's also important that we can engage in preservation activity at Port Hudson after many years without an opportunity there. Our last project was 265 acres in 1993 and was an early victory for the still-fledgling battlefield preservation movement.

The Battle of Chattanooga: Opening the Door to the Deep South

The final two preservation opportunities I quickly want to call your attention to figured prominently in the Battle of Chattanooga — specifically, the fight at Lookout Mountain in November 1863.

The first tract, a 7.6-acre parcel (which sits adjacent to the 301-acre Reflection Riding tract, which your donations are helping to protect with a conservation easement), includes the area near Lookout Creek at Light's Mill, where Federal troops crossed



Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.

the creek and struck the main Confederate picket line before climbing the western slope of Lookout Mountain to launch a flank attack against Confederate forces positioned above them.

The Union Army's victory at Lookout Mountain and, ultimately, the Battle of Chattanooga, opened the Deep South for a Union invasion and set the stage for General William T. Sherman's March to the Sea the following spring.

Then a town of not even 3,000 people, Chattanooga is today a thriving city of about 185,000 with a "hot" real estate market. The 7.6-acre tract we're fighting to protect — as well as a 2.2-acre tract across the street from it, our fifth targeted parcel, both either listed for sale or are about to be — are the envy of developers because they're sizeable parcels ... have easy access to Lookout Creek ... and can be subdivided into multiple lots and homes.

Given the history of each of these tracts, and given the threats they face, we want to purchase both properties as quickly as possible — hopefully by the end of this month. We'll then steward the tracts before transferring them to one of our local partner organizations who will, in turn, protect the lands until they can be conveyed to the National Park Service.

So, there you have it my friend, five pieces of historic land ... each of which are key components of game-changing battles ... in three separate states ... totaling 407 acres. Together, they have a transaction value of \$2,850,600, but you and I can preserve them forever for just \$307,450, an incredible match of \$9.27-to-\$1!

To show you my personal commitment to saving this land, I will be the first one “over the top” so to speak, as I have already given \$307.45 out of my own pocket toward our \$307,450 goal.

In other words, I’m putting my money where my mouth is. And if you and 998 other members will match my gift, then we will be able to save all this land!

As a thank-you for your gift of \$307.45 — or a gift of any size — I will be delighted to send you a copy of *99 Historic Images of the Civil War in the West*, edited by the Trust’s Chief Historian, Garry Adelman, and Justin Shaw.

This booklet’s stirring black-and-white photographs — many taken at Corinth, Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and Chattanooga — provide a compelling glimpse into Western Theater life, battles, and the tragic aftermath of those battles.

So, may I count on you to send your most generous gift today? Regardless of the amount of your gift, I will be so grateful to know you are with us on this important journey to save these important places. Your gift will enable us to make the final push to save the irreplaceable 407 acres I’ve written about here, as well as further the Trust’s mission all across America.

I will never be able to adequately tell you just how much I value and appreciate your dedication to this great cause. Thank you for all you are doing for our country and its history!

You have my most heartfelt thanks, in advance,



David N. Duncan
President

P.S. Please consider sending a gift of \$307.45 if you possibly can. But if not, your gift of any size will be matched \$9.27-to-\$1 to save 407 acres of key, but unprotected, battlefield land at five tracts ... in three states ... so that the history that unfolded on these hallowed grounds is never lost or forgotten!