HALLOWED GROUND

NEW STATE PARK TAKES ROOT IN VIRGINIA

PLUS: Forgotten Fronts in the Old Northwest
IT IS HARD FOR ME TO RECALL, an issue of Hallowed Ground packed with more remarkable, long-sought good news than this one. Not only do we note the remarkable threshold of 55,000 acres saved forever, but we also mark the Trust’s attempt to save hallowed ground in our 25th state, Ohio. If you could travel back in time and talk with those who gathered on July 18, 1897, at a Fredericksburg, Virginia, restaurant for the first meeting of our predecessor organization, I doubt any of them could have envisioned that the work they began would one day touch half the states of the Union.

We also celebrate the conclusion of a campaign that took nearly half of the time between that founding and the present day: the effort to preserve the Slaughter Pen Farm. Once the tipping point of one of the Civil War’s greatest battles, then a quiet dairy farm facing a string of development proposals, to a real estate listing dubbing it Virginia’s prime site for industrial potential, to a battlefield preserved forever, that hallowed ground has been on quite a journey. But now, thanks to your steadfast and generous support, its future is secured forever.

It is remarkable enough that our $12 million fundraising campaign spanned 16 years, but staff involvement in negotiating its purchase and advocating to prevent development proposals well predates that point. Making the last payment on our loan in May and announcing complete victory on this project at the outset of June was a fulfilling achievement, and I am keenly aware of how many members, allies and friends made it possible. You have my deepest thanks.

And if that were not enough, we also recently cheered another long-sought initiative coming to fruition: the Commonwealth of Virginia authorized creation of a Caliper Battlefield State Park. Created from the Trust’s donation of 1,700 acres (about twice the area of Central Park in New York City) of battlefield land, when the park opens on July 1, 2024, it will welcome visitors interested in history as well as outdoor recreation. For the next two years, we will work closely with state agencies on a transition plan for the land and seek to enhance the park by acquiring even more land using additional state-appropriated funds.

As natural as it might be to pause to reflect on these milestones, I assure you that the Trust has no intention of slowing down. So long as historic battlefields are menaced by inappropriate development — recall that many sites face escalating threats from data centers and utility-scale solar farms, not just strip malls and subdivisions — we stand ready to fight for their preservation, to encourage smart, balanced growth in historic communities, and to educate the public about what happened on that hallowed ground and why it remains relevant today.

Amid all this good news, I must acknowledge that we are all facing challenging economic times right now. But during my 22 years of being part of this organization, we have been through rough patches like this before. If the past is any guide, I can tell you that if you remain dedicated to the cause and continue to support our efforts to the extent you can, I guarantee we will save many more thousands of acres of hallowed ground critical to a thorough understanding of America’s exceptional history. In fact, we have pledged to do so with increased emphasis on battlefields of the Revolutionary War, as we mark the 250th anniversary of that conflict. Standing beside the Old North Bridge in Concord, Mass., on the anniversary of the “shot heard ’round the world,” I stated our intention to protect 2,500 acres of those battlefields in the coming years. It is an ambitious goal, but I know that, together, you and I will soon add this to our list of remarkable achievements as well.

David A. Duncan
President, American Battlefield Trust

NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE OLD NORTHWEST AND BEYOND

Through efforts to secure the survival of their people, cultures and homes, Native Americans made invaluable contributions to the war that shaped the nation we know today — especially in the Ohio Country, which often functioned as the staging ground for skirmishes between settlers and the tribes. Expand your perspective of Native American military history today by exploring biographies, articles and more at www.battlefields.org/honoree-the-start.

Explore Ohio

With a rich history that covers a plethora of personalities and conflicts, Ohio has no shortage of attractions! In territory originally colonized by French fur traders, Ohio fell into British hands following the French and Indian War in 1754. Upon the American Revolution’s end, the British ceded the territory to the United States. Ohio was also the home of many influential Native American leaders, such as Tecumseh and Little Turtle. Not only that — it is often called the “Mother of Presidents,” with seven Ohioans sent to the White House since 1869. Plan your trip to the Buckeye State with our latest travel guide. www.battlefields.org/itineraries.

Ohio in the Civil War

During the conflict, Ohio was one of the more situations, saving the Battlefields Trust and America, however, Ohio offered up about 60 percent of its infantry-age men for service in the war — the highest percentage of any state in the Union. Learn more about the role the state played and some of its most important players by listening to our podcasts and perusing an entire of the American Battlefield Trust’s Lightning in the video Ohio in the Civil War at www.youtube.com/americanbattlefieldtrust.

Learn about the Ohioan who served and later moved to 100 Pennsylvania Avenue as president of the United States in the Headliners History article “Presidents in the Making: Buckeye in the Heart of the White House” on the website at www.battlefields.org/find/headliners-history.
CELEBRATING CULPEPER BATTLEFIELDS STATE PARK!

Commonwealth of Virginia will accept Trust's donation of 1,700 acres; Park opens July 1, 2024

“Virginia is getting a long-desired state park in the Piedmont region protecting four Civil War battlefields, including Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain!” The measure was included in the two-year, compromise budget plan adopted by the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates on June 1 and signed into law by Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a champion of the state park proposal, on June 21. “The protection of Culpeper County’s historic battlefields has been among the great success stories of the American Battlefield Trust over the past 35 years, and we celebrate the state’s decision unreservedly,” said Trust President David Duncan. “The creation of a state park from these protected landscapes is the culmination of a tremendous vision shared by the preservation community, local residents and elected officials across the Commonwealth.” The backbone of Culpeper Battlefields State Park is a critical mass of more than 1,700 acres on the Civil War battlefields of Cedar Mountain (fought August 9, 1862, as part of the Northern Virginia Campaign) and Brandy Station (the opening clash of the Gettysburg Campaign on June 9, 1863) that the Trust is donating to the Commonwealth. The land also includes elements of the battlefields at Kelly’s Ford and Rappahannock Station, creating recreational access to the Rappahannock River. The region — previously underserved in the state park system — is rich in history and culture, retaining the heritage of its first Native people and the generations that followed. Advocacy toward the new state park began in 2016, when the Culpeper County Board of Supervisors and the Culpeper Town Council both passed resolutions endorsing the concept, supported by a long-standing and bipartisan coalition of state legislators, national and local preservation organizations and residents. But the effort took on new vigor in 2022, when Governor Youngkin came out in support of the state park.

“This park will be a great resource for the people of Culpeper County and will bring in impact tourism dollars,” said Virginia Sen. Bryce Reeves, long a champion for the proposal, who was instrumental in its progression. “I want to thank the great team at the American Battlefield Trust for their consistent efforts to get us across the finish line.” In addition to creation of the park, the budget also includes a $36-million appropriation to allow the Trust to acquire additional land, up to 800 acres, that will enhance the new facility. The Trust is donating its 1,700-acre holdings to the state outright to create the park.


Read more about the campaign to protect Slaughter Pen Farm

Cedar Mountain Battlefield
Culpeper County, Va.
JOEDITH MUFFLEY
TRUST WILL SEEK TO PROTECT 2,500 ACRES to mark 250 years

AMERICAN'S FIRST citizen soldiers forged a new nation through valor and sacrifice on battlefields, from the “Shot Heard ‘Round the World” at Lexington and Concord to the “World Turned Upside Down” at Yorktown. To honor the legacy of this diverse group of minutemen and Patriots, the American Battlefield Trust announces a campaign to preserve 2,500 acres of Revolutionary War battlefields for the 250th anniversary of America’s founding conflict.

The ambitious goal was announced on Patriots Day at Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts, where the first armed conflict of the American Revolution took place on April 19, 1775. Joining the Trust in announcing this goal were representatives of the National Park Service, Daughters of the American Revolution and Sons of the American Revolution.

“Protecting and interpreting Revolutionary War battlefields, we ensure [that] the current and future generations of Americans retain tangible links to our nation’s founding era,” said Trust President David Duncan. “The preservation of these historic landscapes will ensure a lasting legacy of this milestone anniversary that we can pass on to our children and grandchildren.”

As momentum builds toward the nation’s semiquincentennial commemoration in 2026, so too will renewed interest in the stories of the earliest days of the nation’s founding. This effort will serve both to protect these hallowed grounds from development or neglect and to tell the inspirational but often forgotten stories of colonists and citizens soldiers who took on the greatest empire in the world.

To accomplish this work, the Trust will work closely with individual sites and partner groups, as well as the state and federal agencies that support this work through competitive matching grants that augment private donations from its members. The conflict lasted seven years long after the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, when engagements fought in each of the 13 original colonies, plus the present-day states of Tennessee, Arkansas, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Alabama and Florida.

The Trust has identified tracts of land on dozens of battlefields that could be preserved toward this preservation goal, ultimately working with willing sellers to save places that will inspire Americans for generations to come. The Trust estimates that the project could take a decade to complete and may ultimately cost up to $39 million, with the Trust applying for project-specific, competitively awarded federal grant funding to leverage against matching dollars from state and local government grants and private sector donations, as well as other sources.

The American Battlefield Trust continues to be a leader in creating compelling and innovative content designed to make the past come alive and appeal to a wide range of audiences and knowledge bases. This spring, we were honored with a trio of recognitions for our work on different projects.

Our Gettysburg AR app, which can project interactive animated historical scenes onto a modern landscape using your mobile device, was nominated for the 2022 Auggie Awards — since 2010, the world’s most recognized augmented and virtual reality industry awards. Although we ultimately did not take home a prize, we did make it to the public voting round, a major achievement given our nonprofit status and place-based mission.

Separately, Trust video productions received two silver recognitions in the 43rd annual Telly Awards, which recognize excellence in video and television across all screens and are judged by leaders from video platforms, television, streaming networks and production companies.

Carved in Stone, filmed by Transcend Alamos of Portland, Inc., and created in partnership with the Washington Rocambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail, was honored in the General Non-Broadcast category. Created to coordinate with the Winter 2021 issue of Hallowed Ground, it tells the story of how two French officers who died fighting for American freedom finally received permanent headstones, nearly 250 years later.

How We Became America: The Untold History was honored in the online series group. These videos celebrate that not everything worth knowing exists inside the cover of our history textbooks. The still-growing series is associated with the Driving Force Institute’s larger Untold initiative, which is produced and distributed by Makematic and the University of Southern California’s Center for Engagement-Driven Global Education (EDGE). Ongoing funding has been made available through the H2O Foundation and, in the form of matching grants, the federal American Battlefield Protection Program.
TRUST ASSISTS REHAB PROJECTS at Little Round Top

E T T Y B U R G S ’ major reha-

bilization project to upgrade

facilities and increase safety

at Devil’s Den and Little Round Top received a major boost with a $2-million gift from the American Battlefield Trust and the National Park Foundation. The joint contribution to restore historic Little Round Top was facilitated through philanthropist John L. Nau III, who serves on the boards of both organizations and is the former chair of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

“There is power in place, a unique ability to inspire and teach that comes from being physically present at a site where great events transpired,” said Nau. “Envisioning that such locations are well-situated to offer visits a meaningful and pleasurable experience materially advances that goal.”

Work at Little Round Top will relieve chronically overcrowded parking areas, address erosion concerns, create accessible trail alignments, install new interpretation and otherwise make the area more functional and appealing to visitors. The extensive project is expected to close the area to visitors for approximately 18 months, beginning this summer. Separate but related rehabilitation work to address erosion issues closed nearby Devil’s Den in late March.

“The American Battlefield Trust is committed to safeguarding the unique resources within battlefields using,” said organization President David Duncan. “The very popularity of certain areas of the park can compound how forces of nature wear upon historic landscapes, and ongoing effort is required to keep these places looking as they did when the battle occurred.”

FROM THE TRENCHES

BREAKING PRESERVATION NEWS

TRUST AND DAR JOINING FORCES to create “DAR Pathway of the Patriots” Memorial Grove

DEDICATED, RESPECTIVELY, to the people and places integral to the story of our nation’s founding and independence, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the American Battlefield Trust share a commitment to finding tangible and lasting ways to remember that critical period in history. Our latest collaboration will see the establishment of DAR’s 250-tree memorial grove, the Pathway of the Patriots, on Trust-protected Revolutionary battlefields.

We celebrated the initiation of this vision with a ceremonial tree planting on June 7 at the Old Custun House, headquarters of DAR’s Comité de Rochambeau Chapter, in Yorktown, Va. Speakers included DAR President General Denise VanBuren and Trust Vice Chair Mary Abrose, as well as leadership from the Virginia State Society and local chapters.

“Our two organizations are united in understanding the power of tangible links to the past,” said Abrose. “From physical landscapes to family legacy, there are ties that bind us across the centuries to the essence of the American story.”

VanBuren agreed, noting that Yorktown was an ideal location for this ceremonial planting: “Just as the struggle to win our nation’s independence culminated at Yorktown, it is altogether fitting that this gift to the nation takes root here in order to pay tribute to those who ultimately endured eight long years of war to win our liberties.”

The DAR Pathway of the Patriots was first envisioned in 2019, and DAR members rallied to the plan with individual chapters and members enthusiastically stepping forward to sponsor trees in memory of individual Revolutionary War participants. As the relationship between the two organizations has deepened into multiple collaborative projects, the concept evolved to embrace the Trust’s place-based mission through a grove honoring America’s first citizen soldiers on one of the battlefields where many of them fought.

DATA CENTER THREAT GIVES BATTLEFIELDS DUBIOUS HONOR: Spot on Preservation Virginia’s annual “Most Endangered” list

ACH MAY, Preservation Virginia shines a spotlight on imperiled sites across the Old Dominion with its annual “Most Endangered” list. This year’s 2022 edition included an entry showcasing the threat posed by data centers to historic battlefields, specifically citing Manassas National Battlefield Park and the Brandy Station Battlefield.

As part of coalitions opposing these data centers, the Trust has stressed the detrimental impacts that data centers can have on historic landscapes. While typically seen as a low-impact industry, data centers actually use an immense amount of power, create swaths of impermeable surfaces and have significant noise and visual impacts, therefore placing a blemish on otherwise pristine and cherished swathes of land. Unlike the housing or commercial developments that have infringed on battlefields in decades past, data centers are a new, 21st-century consideration that communities and the conservation community are learning how to address.

“We want the local officials in these counties to understand that as with any type of development, preservation and data centers are not mutually exclusive,” said Trust President David Duncan. “These communities can have both, but it all depends on the careful consideration of location. With its highly regarded report, Preservation Virginia has empowered this important message and turned attention to an issue that is far from over in the Commonwealth and throughout the country.”

Despite public outcry and concerns expressed by the Trust and a vigilant coalition of eight other national, regional and local organizations, an Amazon data center was recently approved by Culpeper County on 230 acres of historic farmland, situated between two nationally significant historic properties. Six landowners have filed a complaint and petition, claiming the rezoning approval was a violation of Virginia and local law.

Meanwhile, the Prince William County Board is considering an expansion of its data center district to allow industrial development near both of PrinceWilliam County’s National Park Service sites — Manassas National Battlefield Park and Prince William Forest Park — a possibility that the Trust and an impressive coalition of organizations has ardently stood against.

Read the full report and discover the other threatened sites at www.preservationva.org/va.

Members of DAR’s Comité de Rochambeau Chapter and Trust Vice Chair Mary Abrose at the Old Custom House in Yorktown, Va.

Learn more about these most recent victories
FROM THE TRENCHES
BREAKING PRESERVATION NEWS

PARK DAY RETURNED TO SITES NATIONWIDE

Volunteers helped bring our country’s historic gems to their best and brightest

As MANY EMBARK on adventures at historic sites across the country this summer, it is important to remember that some of them were readyed for this exciting, busy season with the support of the American Battlefield Trust’s annual Park Day clean-up effort. Between Boy and Girl Scouts, Rotarians, Lions Club members, church groups, ROTC units, youth groups, Wounded Warrior groups and many others, almost 460,000 cumulative hours of labor have been contributed to Park Day since 1996.

This year, the Trust proudly supported 97 Park Day sites in 27 states, ranging from Massachussets to Nevada, and welcomed more than 3,200 volunteers who contributed in excess of 8,000 hours of labor. Furthermore, the value of this volunteer time is estimated to be the equivalent of $230,000. These passionate volunteers practiced hands-on preservation in a multitude of ways, including — but not limited to — the painting of signs, trash and leaf removal, marker clean-up, trail and fence building and garden maintenance. The Trust extends its most sincere thanks to these volunteers for their exceptional work and dedication to historic preservation.

We look forward to uplifting these historic sites yet again by celebrating Park Day 2023 on Saturday, April 15, and hope you will encourage a park near you to join us in continuing this nationwide tradition of volunteerism!

CRAWFORD RECEIVES two-fold recognition

For decades, Charlie Crawford has been the driving force for the preservation and interpretation of Georgia Civil War history. In May, he was twice honored for this work, receiving major awards from the Trust and the Georgia Historical Society — the presentations of both having been delayed due to the pandemic. Congratulations to Charlie on both well-deserved honors: the Trust’s Shelby Foote Preservation Legacy Award and the Society’s John Macpherson Berrien Award.

LOBBY DAY RETURNS TO CAPITOL HILL

Through its annual Lobby Day events, the American Battlefield Trust has conducted hundreds of meetings with Senators and Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, to share with them our work and organization stories to preserve battlefield land, thank them for their support and ask for their continued backing of federal initiatives that benefit battlefield preservation organizations throughout the country. As a result, we have seen increases in funding for battlefield acquisition both inside and outside National Park Service boundaries, expansions at several major national battlefield parks, and the creation of two new grant programs to restore and interpret preserved battlefields.

This June, in the Trust’s first in-person Lobby Day since the COVID lockdowns of March of 2020, trustees and staff took part in more than 90 meetings with House, Senate and administration officials.

FIELD REPORTS
LOCAL PARTNERS AND ALLIES

TRUST PARTNERS WITH NASHVILLE AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL ALLIANCE to protect historic Fort Negley on St. Cloud Hill

In the last year, the American Battlefield Trust and the Nashville African American Cultural Alliance (NAACA), have been working to protect Fort Negley, the largest inland fort built during the Civil War. Nashville Metro Parks manages the fort and the adjacent Nashville Cemetery, leasing a portion of the land to the Adventure Science Center (ASC).

This popular, family-friendly museum determined it would plant an arboretum as both an educational exhibit and a fundraiser. Unfortunately, the proposed arboretum would encroach on the wartime boundaries of the fort, including an area suspected of containing the graves of those who built the fort, as well as individuals from the historic Bass Street neighborhood, among the first free Black neighborhoods in Nashville.

NAACA’s education mission centers on sharing the stories of those who worked, lived and died during the construction of the fort and the surrounding settlement. More than 4,000 Black workers — some fugitives from slavery, some impressed into service, some freed slaves conscripted by the Union — labored on the fort, with hundreds who died during construction buried in unmarked graves around the park. Many of their descendants live in Nashville today.

The entire area is an important cultural landscape. Union forces built the fort on St. Cloud Hill overlooking Nashville in 1862. Today, it is adjacent to the Bass Street community and the Nashville Cemetery, which boasts its own popular and free arboretum. Fort Negley is listed as a Site of Memory by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the only such site in Tennessee. Clearly, the area is rich with intact archaeological deposits.

Faced with this potentially invasive proposal, NAACA worked with the Trust to get a review by the Tennessee Historical Commission. A hearing was conducted to encourage a review, and arbitration resulted in a victory for Fort Negley. Future plantings, changes, modifications or developments on the leased property will be communicated to Metro Parks and published on its website. Sensitive areas are not currently managed by ASC will not have trees added. Representatives from both ASC and NAACA will be present with professional archeologists to carefully locate trees until the ASC arboretum achieves “Class one” status. ASC and Metro Parks acknowledge the importance of further archaeology at the site and will work cooperatively to develop procedures for additional scientific archaeology.

Fort Negley
Nashville, Tenn.
MICHAEL BYFLEED
SUCCESS STORIES
LAND SAVED FOREVER

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT LAND
at Ohio’s Buffington Island brings the Trust’s work to a 25th state

WHEN the first meeting of our predecessor organization, the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, convened on July 14, 1897, not even the most visionary attendees could foresee the impact their small group would grow to have. As we celebrate our 35th anniversary, we’ve crossed two once unimaginable milestones — 55,000 acres saved forever, spread across more than 150 battlefields — and stand on the threshold of a third: protecting hallowed ground in a 25th state!

“We’re preserving the footprint of the Union and the Confederacy, and the battlefields are reminders of what we’ve lost,” says former Trust President David Duncan. “Not only are we working to save endangered sites, but also demonstrating the broad array of communities where visitors can experience America’s transformative history through the power of place.”

This spring, the Trust began a fundraising campaign to protect land at four battlefields, including Buffington Island, Ohio, where we’ve targeted a 117-acre property. This historic ground, located in Meigs County, southwestern Ohio, is threatened by residential development and nearby mining that would encroach on the battlefield and nearby state memorial park. If successfully acquired by the Trust, the property may eventually be interpreted to enrich the visitor experience at the battlefield and preserve a critical piece of the Buckeye State’s Civil War past.

In July 1863, Confederate Maj. Gen. John Hunt Morgan and his men made their way to Buffington Island, where he hoped to cross back over the river and get out of Ohio unscathed after a daring cavalry raid north. On the very ground we are trying to save, Morgan encountered 3,000 Union artillerymen, infantry and cavalry accompanied by U.S. Navy gunboats. The fighting ended with 700 Confederates surrendering and others captured, wounded or killed. Morgan initially escaped, but surrendered eight days later, ending the reign of his feared cavalry force.

The battle itself took place on the mainland along the Ohio River near the titular island. Today, visitors can visit the four-acre Buffington Island Battlefield Memorial Park located on the banks of the Ohio River to learn more about the battle and see the plaque marking where Maj. Daniel McCook was mortally wounded.

The Buffington Island Battlefield Preservation Foundation is a local friends group partnering with the park to help preserve and interpret the battlefield.

To learn more, visit: www.buffingtonbattlefieldfoundation.org

Included alongside Buffington Island in the fundraising appeal are three other lesser-known sites associated with famous generals:
- 25th Ohio: Grant’s famous 5th Ohio at the November 1863 Battle of Belmont in Missouri and Kentucky
- 1st Ohio: Sherman’s retreat across Ohio in December 1862
- 20th Ohio: a 20-year-old native of Springfield, Ohio, remained at his post with a flashlight to help guide pilots off the capsized vessel. He was one of 429 men to perish in the Ohio, and one of 394 who could not be identified and was buried as unknown.

The campaign to protect pivotal pieces of these four storied battlefield sites is www.battlefields.org/save311.

WARRIOR LEGACY
SERVICE ACROSS CENTURIES

WHILE the American Battlefield Trust’s preservation mission focuses on conflicts of the 18th and 19th centuries, our collaboration with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society brings our place-based approach to history education and interpretation to a wider array of eras.

Since 1863, a total of 3,501 individuals have earned the Medal of Honor, with 655 of them awarded posthumously, meaning that the individual died in the course of performing the deed for which they are recognized. Of those, more than 70 dating from the Civil War through Vietnam, are officially deemed Missing in Action, their remains never recovered or buried in a grave marked Unknown.

As we neared to launch the Medal of Honor Valor Trail in March, word came that one of these men had been accounted for, some 80 years after his death aboard the USS Oklahoma at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. After the ship was struck multiple times in the sudden attack, James R. Ward, a 20-year-old native of Springfield, Ohio, remained at his post with a flashlight to help guide others off the capsized vessel. He was one of 429 men to perish in the Ohio, and one of 394 who could not be identified and was buried as Unknown.

Ward’s identification was the work of the Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DAPPA), a remarkable entity that uses painstaking research and cutting-edge scientific analysis to positively identify the remains of U.S. servicemen and women. Beginning in 2003, DAPPA worked steadily on a comprehensive project to distinguish and identify Oklahoma’s unknown remains, examining more than 12,000 bones in the process.

On Pearl Harbor Day 2021, the project was declared complete — only 33 sets of remains could not be individually identified. Ward’s match occurred in August, making him one of the final sailors accounted for.

Just two months later, DAPPA announced the identification of a second set of remains belonging to a WWII Medal of Honor recipient born in Ohio. U.S. Army Air Force Lt. Col. Addison E. Baker, 96, was the commander of the 328th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 93rd Bombardment Group (Heavy), 9th Air Force. On August 1, 1943, he was a B-24 Liberator bomber during Operation TIDAL WAVE, the largest World War II bombing mission against the oil fields and refineries north of Bucharest, Romania. During its bombing run, his plane was hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire and crashed, but not before he dropped his bombs on their target and avoided crashing into the other B-24s in his formation.

Remains that could not be identified, Baker’s among them, were buried as Unknown in the Hero Section of the Citizens and Military Cemetery of Bolovan in Romania. Following the war, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC), the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel, was unable to identify more than 80 individuals, and they were permanently interred at Ardennes American Cemetery and Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery, both in Belgium.

In 2017, DAPPA began returning Unknowns believed to be associated with unaconutted-for airman from Operation TIDAL WAVE. These remains were sent to the DAPPA Laboratory at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, for examination and identification. To identify Baker’s remains, scientists from DAPPA used anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and Y chromosome DNA (Y-STR) analysis.

The identification of two Medal of Honor recipients — certainly notable, especially because DAPPA’s mission is far broader than that limited universe — is a triumph for a program that has restored a piece of history to its rightful place.
THE PROVING GROUND:
REVOLUTIONARY OHIO

BY KATE EGNER GRUBER

“OUI SHI CAT TO DUE!” Hakesolequaw, beloved to his fellow Shawnee warriors as they faced 1,000 Virginians on October 10, 1774. “We are strong.”

In 1774, Colonel Andrew Lewis led his militiamen from the east to the confluence of the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers, where they met a combined force of between 500-700 Shawnees and Mingo led by Hakesolequaw, sometimes known as Cornstalk. But the Virginians’ flank attack on Cornstalk’s forces won the day, causing the allied Indigenous force to retreat. At the Battle of Point Pleasant, Captain Lewis led his Virginia forces against the Shawnee warriors, and they were victorious. The Treaty of Camp Charlotte was signed on October 17, 1774, along the banks of Scioto Creek, today in Ohio’s Pickaway County.

Across this landscape and its Great River, patriot militiamen declared their rights to life, liberty, and property. British soldiers, Patriots, and Indigenous nations collided in Ohio.

In December 1778, commander of the Continental Army’s Western Department General Lachlan McIntosh established Fort Laurens (located in modern-day Bolivar, Ohio) looking to engage the British atDetroit. The British took advantage of a harsh winter and deteriorating conditions there and, along with allied members of the Wyandots, Mingo, and Delaware nations, laid siege to the fort for nearly a month. The plan worked — the Patriots were in no condition to advance to Detroit and by summer, the fort was abandoned.

Further south at the Shawnee capital along the Little Miami River, near present-day Xenia, Chief Blackfish repulsed an attack by Kentucky militia on May 29, 1779, at the Battle of Old Chillicothe. The skirmish was brought on by years of back-and-forth raids across the Ohio, perpetuated by Blackfish for increasing colonial encroachment and after Chief Cornstalk’s death at the hands of American Patriots in 1777. Though he successfully led the Shawnee to push back the Patriot militia, Blackfish died from a gunshot wound received in the battle.

The next year, General George Rogers Clark mounted a campaign to destroy the Shawnee town of Piqua, not far from Old Chillicothe in present-day Springfield. On August 8, 1780, Clark led nearly 1000 Kentucky militiamen against the Shawnee and their allies, using artillery to smash the town’s wooden stockade. Clark’s men completed a total destruction of Piqua, staying behind for days to burn the town and its fields to the ground. The largest battle of the Revolution west of the mountains had many eyewitnesses, including a 12-year-old Tecumseh whose outlook was shaped by the hostilities perpetuated by Americans there.

Now was the last engagement in the region, despite its backcountry location. Across this landscape and its Great River, patriot militiamen declared their rights to life, liberty, and property. But tensions remained long past the Treaty of Paris.

“Resolved, that we will bear the most faithful allegiance to His Majesty, King George the Third, whilst His Majesty delights to reign over a brave and free people; that we cannot, in the opinion of this company, depend upon any dear and valuable, except ourselves in support of his crown, and the dignity of the British Empire. But as the love of liberty, and attachment to the real interests and just rights of America outweigh every other consideration, we resolve that we will exert every power within us for the defense of American liberty and for the support of her just rights and privileges, not on any precipitate, violent or tumultuous voice of our countrymen.”
Augmented by Kentucky and Pennsylvania militias, Harmar struck out from Fort Washington, outside Cincinnati, in late September. The Americans advanced in three columns, steadily moving north. On October 13, a captured Shawnee informed Harmar that the Miami were evacuating their towns. Hoping to catch them before they fled, Harmar dispatched an advance guard under Colonel John Hardin. They arrived at Kekionga three days later, just a day ahead of the main body, to find it abandoned.

Acting on reports that the Miamis remained in the immediate vicinity, Harmar sent Hardin, along with a contingent of Regulars under Captain John Armstrong, northwest toward the Wabash. That afternoon, Miami warriors under Little Turtle ambushed the Americans near the river, sending them fleeing back to Harmar's camp.

Little Turtle's victory shifted the initiative to the Miami. The news shocked Harmar, who decided to give up the expedition and return to Fort Washington. He started south on October 21. That night, a scout left behind to monitor the Miami reported that warriors had reoccupied Kekionga. Hoping to recover his fortune and possibly surprise his foe, Harmar sent a force back under Major John Wyllys early on the morning of October 22.

Wyllys reached a ford along the Miami opposite Kekionga later that day. Little Turtle and his Miami, along with some Delaware, Sauk, Shawnee, and Ottawa warriors, were indeed waiting for them. Once again, Little Turtle sprang an ambush. This time, the Americans put up a stiffer fight, and the engagement lasted for several hours. Eventually, the Americans broke off and withdrew to Harmar's main column. Dejected, Harmar continued his retreat, arriving at Fort Washington on November 3.

The failed campaign shocked President George Washington's administration. St. Clair, commissioned a major general, relieved Harmar. In March 1791, St. Clair and Washington began planning a new campaign. Following up on their successes, Blue Jacket, a Shawnee chief, traveled to Detroit to confer with...
Wayne thundered that his only order was to **Charge the damned rascals WITH THE BAYONET!**
IN 1812, as the United States and Great Britain spiraled toward another armed conflict, the Michigan Territory emerged as a critical theater of operations, its location north of Ohio (admitted to the Union in 1803) and its border with British-held Upper Canada made it an obvious avenue of invasion. American militiamen were called into service building preparatory roads even before the U.S. Congress declared war against Great Britain on June 18. With the ongoing war against Napoleon in Europe, few troops could be spared for service in North America, forcing British Major General Isaac Brock to depend on the cooperation of the Native American Confederation under the Shawnee war chief, Tecumseh.

American mobilization continued as Brigadier General William Hull, commander of the U.S. forces in the Old Northwest — accompanied by 1,200 Ohio militia and 200 regular soldiers — arrived in Detroit on July 5 and began preparations for the attack. Invasion of British-held present-day Ontario began on July 12. While Hull assaulted the British at Fort Amherstburg, a small British force surrounded and took control of the unaware U.S. garrison at Fort Mackinac. Hull, unable to hold the captured Fort Amherstburg and protect an overextended supply line that stretched back to Ohio, returned to Detroit in the first week of August.

Hull surrendered Detroit and the entire Michigan Territory on August 16 after a siege by British and Native warriors, knowing more Native warriors were enroute from the upper Great Lakes, and cut off from American support assembling at the River Raisin close to the Ohio border. The British and their Native allies were able to secure firm control over much of the Old Northwest as they pushed the frontier back to Fort Wayne, Indiana. Upon liberating Fort Wayne, Major General William Henry Harrison soon turned his sights on coordinating efforts to recapture Detroit. He established a base at the Maumee Rapids, south of present-day Toledo, Ohio.

In January 1813, these American forces were assembling for a winter campaign to retake Detroit. Revolutionary War veteran Brigadier General James Winchester, an early arrival, received a request from River Raisin settlers to lift British control of their community. Winchester dispatched more than 350 men from the 1st and 5th Kentucky Volunteer Regiments, under the command of Colonels William Lewis and John Allen to the River Raisin.

American efforts to outflank allied Canadian militiamen and Confederacy warriors proved unsuccessful, and the fighting dissolved into a series of fierce skirmishes through the dense woods to the north. In “the woods the fighting became general and most obstinate,” wrote...
Second Battle at the River Raisin

Arriving before dawn on January 21, and unnoticed by the American sentinels, a force of 600 British Canadians and 400 Native warriors gathered into battle positions along the Mason Run creek, about 230–350 yards to the north of the surrender. British regulars and artillery were positioned in the center, a dispersed clustering of Native warriors made up mostly of Ainnishige (Odawa, Ojibwe and Potawatomis) and Miami, accompanied by some Canadian militiamen, were to the west, and east was a large number of Native warriors, mostly Wyandots, in the forward position, supported by Cana-
dian militia and artillery to their rear.

Reveille sounded, and an American sentry spotted the British in the pre-dawn light. He fired a shot into the forward line that killed the lead grenadier, and the report of his musket sent 1,000 just-awakened soldiers scrambling for their battle positions. Almost immediately, the British opened with their artillery and the infantry pushed forward from its center position. As they drew within range of the settlement, the infantrymen fired a powerful volley at what, in the still-dark distance, had seemed to be a line of soldiers. Assuming they had the advantage, the British made a broad forward, but the target of their fusillade proved to be the prairie fence behind which they were sheltered and not the American line at all. With British artillery overwhelming the mark, and the fence providing ample protection, the Kentuckians were unscathed and un損害ing.

Matters were quite different to the east, where the Canadian militiamen quickly adjusted the aim of their artillery and raked the exposed position of the U.S. 17th Infantry. As cannon fire tore through the encampment and shattered breastworks, the Regulars also had to contend with mili-
tiamen and Wyandot fighters who had taken possession of some nearby buildings from which they could fire at will into the American encampment. The Americans struggled to hold their ground, but eventually faltered when mounted warriors came around their right flank. An attempt was made to send a few companies of Kentucky militiamen to the aid of the 17th Infantry, but the effort proved disastrous.

General Winchester, arriving from his headquarters, ordered the infantrymen to fall back to the north bank of the river where they could render assistance with the Kentuckians. Together they made a brief stand, but were soon overwhelmed by the pursuing Canadian, Wyandot and Shawnee fighters. After a frantic retreat to the south side of the river and another futile stand, the American position disintegrated entirely. Within 20 minutes, about 220 U.S. soldiers were killed and another 147 captured. Only 33 American Regulars managed to escape back to the Maumee River.

But the fighting east and southeast of French-
town barely registered for the British regulars and the Kentuckians still entrenched behind the fence lines. Instead, they remained locked in what seemed to be the main battle area. Over the course of two hours, the British regrouped and made two more frontal at-
tacks, but the Kentuckians position was too strong — British losses were perhaps four times greater than those suffered by the entrenched Kentuckians. As the British pulled back and evaluated their seemingly weakening situation, they received revelations about the status elsewhere. Winchester, now a prisoner of war and unable to give orders to those still engaged, arrived in the area. Told that his men would otherwise be burned out of their positions and attacked by a much larger force of Native warriors, he agreed to send a message encouraging the Kentuckians still within the picketts to surrender. When they received the message, the riflemen Kentuck-
ians balked, feeling themselves still able to carry the day. As Private Elias Darnell later recalled, “Some plead[ed] with the officers not to surrender, saying they would rather die on the field!”

These were brave words, but the Kentuck-
ians’ position was dire. Their ammun-
tion was low, they were completely hemmed in on the south, British artillery was in position to fire volleys of gunfire through their defensive lines and Confederacy warriors were firing into the heart of the settlement while preparing to set it on fire. In short, Major George Madison of the Kentucky 1st Regiment had two choices: to surrender to the British or, as he put it, “be masaccered in cold blood.” Still, Madison was committed to holding out long enough to influence the terms of surrender. After some back-and-forth, the British were the disposition of prisoners, protection from Confederacy forces and care of the wounded, Madison formally capitulated.

Expecting American reinforcements from General Harrison’s troops, the Brit-
ish quickly withdrew due to heavy casual-
ties. The battle was costly for the British Regulars and Canadian militia, but for the Americans it was an unmitigated disaster: Of the 934 who had heard the morning’s reveals, 901 were either dead, wounded or prisoners of war.

A National Calamity Turned Rallying Cry

When the British departed, they left the Americans who were too wounded to walk in the homes of the French inhabitants under a small guard of British troops. On Janu-
ary 25 in retaliation for past brutalities, Na-
tive warriors returned to the River Raisin to plunder and burn homes, killing and scalp-
ing many of the remaining Americans and taking others captive. Official U.S. estimates of the aftermath included a dozen named in-
dividuals killed and up to 60 more who were probably killed in this massacre.

The event that became known as the “River Raisin Massacre” was not a sudden burst of collective violence. Rather, it began as a somewhat incredible confirmation that no U.S. forces had arrived, then progressed to a deliberate taking of valuables and able- bodied captives that was later punctuated by the killing of the most severely wounded survivors. As Dr. Gustavus Bowers later chimed, “the wounds of war had broken our spirit. They did not molest any person or thing upon their first approach, but kept countering about until there were a large num-
ber collected, (one or two hundred) at which time they commenced plundering the houses of the inhabitants and the massacre of the wounded prisoners.”

Even then, the killings followed a method that — however brutal — might be described as utilitarian. The wounded who could not travel were the primary victims, and they were killed swiftly. The looting, the taking of able-bodied prisoners and the burning of buildings and structures were methodically — Dr. John Todd, a sur-
gent with the Kentucky 5th Regiment Vol-
unteer Militia later described these actions as a kind of “orderly conduct.” This deliber-
ateness of behavior did not diminish, and perhaps intensified, the horror many survi-
ers later described. Indeed, the most vivid recollections related to the systematic nature of the killings and treatment of the remains.

The battle ended in what was described as a “national calamity” by then Major Gen-
eral, and later president of the United States, William Henry Harrison. It also left an im-
 pact on the broader American conscious-
ness. The Americans who pushed north to liberate Detroit went on to destroying the British-Canadian-Indian coalition in the west at the Battle of the Thames, near present-
day Chatham, Ontario, on October 5, 1813. Fueled by the battle cry, “Remember the Raisin!” their massive victory over the War of 1812 in the western theater for the United States, claimed the life of the great Shawnee leader Tecumseh, and resulted in the end the American Indian Confederation. In an even broader sense, the aftermath of these battles resulted in the implementa-
tion of U.S. policy of Indian removal from the Northwest Territory at the conclusion of the War of 1812, leading to the Indian Re-
move Act of 1830, a policy that continues to resonate today.”

Established in 2009 as a National Park, the River Raisin National Battlefield Park in-
terprets the Battles of the River Raisin and its aftermath. To learn more, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/riras.
Catch Me If You Can

John Hunt Morgan’s Disruptive (and Unauthorized) Raid Behind Enemy Lines

by Caroline Davis
the summer of 1863,

Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans and his Army of the Cumberland received orders from Maj. Gen. Henry Hal leuk in Washington, D.C., instructing them to prepare for a march toward Gen. Braxton Bragg's Confederate troops. Bragg was busy trying to establish a strong defensive position in Tennessee, but he needed more time. To buy that time, Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan proposed a plan to keep Rosecrans away from Bragg. The plan was similar to one the Union had used in the spring of the same year, when a young man at Bragg's request led a raid into Kentucky, but in 1863, the operation would be far more ambitious.

Morgan's idea was to take more than 2,000 cavalry through Kentucky to threaten Louisville. Next, he would attempt to destroy the Louisville & Nashville Railroad line that the Union troops depended on for supplies. Morgan proposed to Bragg that his men would then cross the Ohio River into Indiana, then turn east for Ohio, re-cross the Ohio River and make their way back to Bragg through Kentucky or possibly West Virginia. Bragg did not approve of Morgan's plan, but relented that he would allow a raid into Kentucky, under the condition that the raiders would not cross the Ohio River. Ultimately, what was to be a mere distraction before the longer, unauthorized raids of the Civil War.

Morgan entered Kentucky on July 2, and after five days in the Morgan State, the seasoned raider and his thousands of soldiers were hard at work in Cincinnati developing a plan to raid the strip. Burnside ordered all militia units from 32 southern Ohio counties to report to four specific locations. He told the men nearest the Ohio River to dig in and be prepared to head off Morgan should he try to cross the river. Hal leck with no idea what General Burnside was doing in Ohio, ordered him to relocate to Knoxville, Tennessee. When Hal leck didn't receive a response, he sent a telegram to Rosecrans in Tennessee on July 13: "General Burnside has been frequently urged to move forward and cover your left, by entering Tennessee. I do not know what is doing. He seems to feel about Cincinnati." The telegram's timing coincided with Morgan's arrival in Ohio and left Burnside with a tough decision: should he protect Cincinnati or reinforce Rosecrans in Tennessee?

The decision was made for him when he received several reports informing him of the approaching raiders. Ironically, Morgan wasn't planning to attack Cincinnati. He skirted the city and, on July 16, passed to the north through Loveland, Carthage and Glendale before eventually arriving at Camp Dennison. The Confederates spent the night there and moved on quickly at dawn. A few days went by without incident, but as the raiders drew nearer to the Ohio River, things took a turn for the worse. The men Burnside had ordered to watch the riverbanks were ready. Those in West Virginia, Ohio, observed the raiders and watched as Brig. Gen. Edward Hobson and his cavalry followed close behind. This Union force had been secretly following Morgan ever since the Confederates had crossed the Ohio River and entered Indiana earlier in July but, until this point, had failed to catch up. Morgan was also being tracked by a large contingent Burnside had sent out when he saw the Confederates moving past Cincinnati.

Burnside wrote to his fellow general, J. J. White, on July 14, 1863:

Morgan ... is making for the Ohio River, near Ripley. He may be kept from crossing by the gunboats, and he may go above to cross. General Hobson is but 10 miles in his rear with a large cavalry force. They both camped in Clermont County, Ohio, last night. We hope to catch him.

Morgan wished to get out of Ohio and into Kentucky or West Virginia as soon as possible. However, on July 15, 1863, a combination of problems prevented him from crossing, first near Ripley and, again, at West Union. Morgan was thus convinced that his best opportunity to cross the Ohio River would be at Big Run, 120 miles to the east, located on the Ohio-West Virginia border. Morgan had to act quickly; in addition to the two forces on his tail, Union gunboats were patrolling the Ohio River. But reports in a local newspaper on July 17 indicated that the river below Big Run was running about two feet deep, far too shallow for any ship.

Morgan and his men arrived at Big Run on July 18, only to see that the ford was blocked by earthworks put up by hundreds of local militia. The Confederates outnumbered the men hiding behind the entrenchments, but Morgan was unable to launch an attack because the water was too fast and deep, and his cavalry unable to ford the river. Morgan's delay proved to be a critical mistake. As morning approached, Union forces hot on the raiders' trail the past five days converged on Buffalo Island.

When Morgan arrived on July 19, they found themselves surrounded by Federals, who had easily slipped into the surrounding hills and hung around under the cover of the heavy river fog that had blanketed the area overnight. Two Federal brigades attacked immediately. More Union troops arrived and nearly cut off all chance of escape. Close to 3,000 Yankees engaged in battle with Morgan’s remaining 1,800 men. To make matters worse, the river actually was deep enough to allow passage for two Union gunboats, the USS Moose and USS Allegheny Belle, which arrived on the scene and opened fire. A third river vessel arrived a few hours later.

While history has named this engagement the Battle of Buffalo Island, the vast majority of fighting occurred in the Portland area, not on the island itself.

By 10:00 a.m. July 19, 1863, any remaining Confederate hope of crossing the river at Buffalo Island was lost. Morgan’s best option was to fight his way north and hope to find another ford. But the raiders had been sent apart by Federal Forces. In the chaos, Morgan’s second-in-command, Col. Basil Duke, was taken prisoner, along with 750 raiders, while 52 raiders were killed. Morgan made a narrow escape with the remainder of his men and fled upstream. At Belleville, West Virginia, about 300 of them
If I had to be caught, I’m glad it was by another KENTUCKIAN.

The raiders were near Salineville, moving toward Steubenville, when they encountered a group of militia, and Morgan had no choice but to hoist the white flag. Capt. James Burbick discussed the terms of surrender with Morgan. The raiders gave up their horses, arms and equipment in exchange for a safe river crossing. Burbick and his men agreed to join in the crossing.

On the way to the river, Morgan saw two dust clouds approaching. Union forces were heading toward them fast, one from the right and one from the left. Too tired to resist, Morgan baled his men and surrendered again, this time in Maj. George Rue’s 9th Kentucky Cavalry. Morgan recognized Rue, as they had grown up just 30 miles apart and said with a smile, “If I had to be caught, I’m glad it was by another Kentuckian.”

Major Rue later noted: “It was a hot July day and they were the thriftiest lot of fellows I ever saw in my life.” The raiders had covered more than 1,000 miles through three states, terrorizing the Midwest for nearly a month. While the raid ended in defeat, many in the Confederacy saw the elusive and quick actions of Morgan as a success by keeping the Midwest in a panic for weeks and restoring some semblance of hope to those in the South. For the Union, the raid inspired a renewed effort in fighting by bringing the war to the Yankees’ front door and making the conflict more personal for those in the North. With the capture of Morgan, along with the recent victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Tulahoma, came a new and strengthened hope that complete victory over the rebellious Southern states was at hand.

Caroline Davis earned her BA in history from Ball State University and MA in historical preservation with a concentration in public history at Georgia State University. She has worked at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, Stone River National Battlefield, Vicksburg National Military Park and is currently a seasonal ranger at the George Rogers Clark National Historic Park in Vincennes, Ind.
STANDING TALL ON LAKE ERIE
A reminder of fierce naval warfare turned peaceful relations

J
UST FIVE MILES SOUTH of the Canadian border, on an isthmus near downtown Put-in-Bay, Ohio, sits a 352-foot-tall memorial tower overlooking Lake Erie. This solid granite structure—over 10 stories high—is the Perry Victory and International Peace Memorial and commemorates the Battle of Lake Erie and the naval victory of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry on September 10, 1813.

Since August 1812, the British Royal Navy had controlled Lake Erie. But, with Perry’s new fleet, the British were in for a rude awakening. In July 1813, the British abandoned the Great Lake due to the American threat, poor weather conditions, and a shortage of supplies, as Perry’s fleet had severed the critical British supply route from Fort Malden to Port Dover. So, the Royal Navy attempted to break through Perry’s line.

When the British squadron was composed of six ships with 63 cannons, the American fleet was comprised of nine vessels and 54 guns. The British had superior guns for long-range firepower, while the Americans had the advantage in short-range guns, leaving Perry to pray for the wind to work to his benefit.

At 7:00 a.m., Perry ordered his two largest ships, USS Niagara and USS Lawrence, to set full sail and proceed directly toward the British line. But the Great Lakes’ notorious winds put up a long fight. Despite Perry’s wishes, the wind wouldn’t back his fleet. Nonetheless, at 10:00, just as he was ready to steer his own away, the wind suddenly shifted, situating itself directly behind the Americans.

Heading the British vessels was Commander Robert Heriot Barclay, an experienced Royal Navy officer from Scotland, who ordered his ships to go with the wind, taking the British vessels into battle.

The British ship Detroit crippled the American flagship Lawrence, forcing Perry to transfer his men to the Niagara. He made sure to bring his battle flag—embazoned with the words “Don’t Give Up the Ship,” the dying words of friend James Lawrence, who had perished capturing his ship in the Atlantic conflict. And despite losing his flagship, Perry managed to disable and scatter most of the Royal vessels.

He received the British back onboard the battered Lawrence to discuss terms of surrender—a deliberate move to force the British to confront the damage they had caused. After the battle, Perry dispatched a letter to General William Henry Harrison, saying, “We have met the enemy and they are ours. Two ships, two brig, one schooner and one sloop.” Harrison, in turn, was then free to invade western upper Canada. Perry was hailed the “Hero of Lake Erie.”

Dedicated in 1931, Perry’s Victory and International Peace Memorial is a testimony of the American victory on Lake Erie and a nod to the long-standing peace among the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. Initially, three American and three British soldiers were buried at the memorial as a reminder of the losses suffered by both sides during the fierce 1813 battle. The bodies were later exhumed and reburied in Defiance Park.

There is no doubt that the towering structure embodies a history of great proportions.
THE TROWBRIDGE FILES: Unwinding the Tangled Web of an Ancestor's Past

Thrown a genealogical curveball, Nicholas Redding took it in stride when he learned that Civil War ancestor George Duane Trowbridge was not what he expected.

ACCORDING TO THE NOTICE GIVEN in a newspaper clipping, Ohio resident George D. Trowbridge departed this earth on Saturday, August 25, 1917. He is painted as a lifelong resident of the town, an honorable veteran of both the Civil War and the husband of a Mrs. Matilda Brabender.

But the truth — first uncovered at the National Archives by Nicholas Redding, a former Trust employee, now president and CEO of Preservation Maryland, and augmented with further research by our partners at Ancestry, Fold3 and Newspapers.com — turns out to be much more complicated.

“My great-great-grandmother was Matilda — George’s second wife, whom he had married in the early 1900s,” said Redding. “But it wasn’t even legal, because he was still married to a woman in Canada. And, as far as we know, Matilda had children from a previous marriage. So, basically, I’m not blood-related to him...which might be a good thing!”

Born in Elmira, New York, on April 5, 1844, George Duane Trowbridge was the eldest son of working-class parents, George and Harriet Trowbridge. The Federal Census of 1850 shows that the family had resided near Elmira, where the patriarch worked as a carpenter and joiner to support his wife and four children, including seven-year-old George.

But during his lifetime, George Redding had a different tale than what the records tell us. For instance, on September 16, 1903, he told a pension official that his adopted name was George Duane Trowbridge. He expanded the story, stating that his adopted family claimed his biological father’s name was Keeve and that his own baptismal name was William Keeve. Of course, this contradicts another affidavit claiming that he had never known anyone by that name.

One year later, George was living in New York City and working as a carpenter in the city of New York. At approximately age 17, the youngest enlistee as “Duane Trowbridge” with the 12th New York Infantry, Company G, on May 13, 1861, in Elmira. On May 28, the unit arrived in Washington, D.C., where, upon arrival, it partook in the defenses of the nation’s capital until July 16. After the 12th New York moved on to Manassas, where the unit fought in the first full-scale battle of the war on July 21. Later, the unit saw action at Upton’s Hill, and returned back to Washington, D.C., where George deserted on September 21.

By November 1, 1861, George had found a new home with the 76th New York Infantry, Company G. The unit remained in New York until January 17, 1862, when it left for Washington, D.C. Yet again, George found himself amid the defenses of Washington. But by April 7, 1862, he deserted once more.

It’s here where the records become really hard to follow. Pension claims, among other sources, deem that George took on the alias of William Keeve, a soldier in the 17th Connecticut Infantry, Company D. Index records confirm that such a man existed. It is also known that the regiment was organized out of Bridgetown, Connecticut, in late August 1862, in keeping with the timeline of George’s supposed wartime service.

Despite the inability to 100 percent certify Keeve as our good old George, it is obvious that Redding’s ancestor was bounty jumping. With no intention of staying for long but with every intention of reaping the financial benefit, bounty jumpers would enlist, collect their bounty, desert, and then re-enlist elsewhere.

Next, Ancestry pinpointed George in the 1870 Federal Census: a 27-year-old boatman living in Auburn, New York. But don’t think that he had “gone straight”: A June 6, 1879, Full River Daily Herald proclaimed George was “OUT OF AUBURN PRISON AND ATTEMPTING THE ROLE OF PRODIGAL SON.” Knowing that a son of Biba Baker, a “reputable and well-to-do” mechanic, had run away and long been considered dead, George attempted identity theft. He was armed with a fanciful tale of adventure, claiming he had been to all parts of the world, accumulated a large fortune, and was home to seek reconciliation and share his wealth. Surprisingly, the Federal Census list missed not one George, but the family and celebration ensued.

However, suspicions within the Baker family grew, and George was called out as the “notorious horse thief” who had just been let out of Auburn Prison. Thrown out of the Baker home, George returned to form, stealing identities and homes. After his arrest in Schenectady, The St. Alburns Advertiser connected him to the Loomis Gang, a largely family group of outlaws who plagued central New York from the 1840s to the 1870s.

Prison records show that George was (re)admitted to Auburn Prison on September 1, 1879. While files are lacking, Ancestry’s community of users assert that — after serving his prison time — he went to Canada and married Margaret Lyons on January 29, 1887. He didn’t stay long.

On July 21, 1896, George filed for a pension while living in Ohio. It claimed that he served with the 12th New York Infantry, 76th New York Infantry and 17th Connecticut Infantry, and additionally noted that he had used the alias of “William Keeve” and was married to Matilda K. Trowbridge. All the while, George was still married to Margaret in Canada, having never sought a divorce.

On February 24, 1899, George left his Ohio residence to serve time in Ohio State Prison, tracked down comrades to back his pension claims, stole more horses, swindled a widow out of $200, served more time — twice — in New York and tried (unsuccessfully) to send a stolen horse to Ohio.

By September of 1901, fate caught up with George and he was taken in for pension fraud and for impersonating a special examiner of the Pension Bureau. He was held in Utica, New York, under a hefty $4,000 bond. For his trial, George turned on the dramatics. Newspapers described him as “almost at the point of death” when he laid upon a cot in the courtroom, Allegedly paralyzed on his right side and blind in both eyes. Of course, when he’d been arrested only a few months earlier, he’d had no signs of poor health. The charges stuck, and George went back to prison.

In March of 1903, George was released for his crimes and promised the judge that he’d never return to New York. And as far as the records show he never did.

That September, KT Meade, special examiner from the Department of Pensions, was sent to find George and secure a complete history of his military operations. Funny enough, he didn’t find a blind or paralysed man, but instead a man known for frequenting “the lowest dives of the city of Cleveland.” Meade interviewed George several times in September and again in October, receiving inconsistent information from him that contrasted with records on file. Meade even emphasized in his report that he had “the feeling that all the information which the soldier gave was wholly unreliable.”

Marriage records show that, on October 5, 1904, George finally married Matilda, a woman he’d been associated with for quite some time — and Redding’s great-grandmother. The 1910 Federal Census lists George and Matilda with three children — determined not to be George’s — living on Buffalo Street in Cincinnati, Ohio. When he passed in 1917, he was buried in Center Cemetery.

“The Civil War has always been real to me, but this takes the story of the Civil War and makes it real for my family,” said Redding. “It paints a realistic story of what happened — not everyone was a battlefield hero; there were people who took advantage of the situation, and that is what happened to be the case with my ancestor.”

Although not covered in military glory, George’s story could still serve as a testament to the perseverance of a Hollywood flick — albeit of a very different, though no less interesting sort.”
HIGHSCHOOLERS
WITH A HUNGER FOR HISTORY
The American Battlefield Trust’s
2021-2022 Youth Leadership Team

As their school years came to a close, the Trust’s third cohort of passionate student preservationists took a moment to reflect on what they learned as part of the program — and how their capstone projects might impact their community and how the process shaped their own thinking. Learn more about the Trust’s Youth Leadership Team at www.battlefields.org/ylt.

“We as a population, and a generation, need to care,” proudly declared OLIVIA BUCS of Columbus, N.J. “The history of this nation is something to be studied, and it’s on us to make sure our whole story is told.” She collaborated with two townships, their respective historical societies, the Revolutionary War Alliance of Burlington County and her state representatives to further historic preservation efforts at the Petersen Bridge skirmish site, where Patriot forces clashed with Hessian-led foraging parties in December 1776.

“After receiving the opportunity to visit several battlefields, I now have a fuller appreciation for the historic preservation movement and want to take on a greater role in ensuring future generations have such opportunities,” said JOSEPH CANDELAS of Harter Heights, Texas. He channeled his deep passion for the American Revolution into in-person community discussions of lesser-known battles, supplemented by a widely available podcast.

JUSTIN CHUNG of Anaheim, Calif., enlisted digital artists, video editors and historians to produce a suite of digital content aimed at attracting young audiences to battlefield preservation through an awareness campaign. “Among my peers, history isn’t the most popular subject. This seems to be the case among others as well, as historic land and buildings continue to be pushed aside for other purposes. The Trust understands that this is a critical threat, and I wish to do everything I can to spread awareness about their mission in my community.”

Talking about a battlefield is one thing,” realized SYDNEY KIRAGES of Lake Forest, Ill. “Seeing a battlefield that allows you to truly consider the weight on a soldier’s shoulders —

as they fought for not only their life but the lives of their friends, family and neighbors.” She wrote the children’s book Stories with Pop-Pop: Women in Disguise in the Civil War, which revolves around Jenny, whose grandfather tells her tales of disguised female soldiers during the nation’s bitterly divisive conflict. She also enlisted an illustrator to pair her text with eye-catching visuals.

JOSEPH MARTIN of Richmond, Mo., created a middle school lesson plan about the Missouri-Kansas Conflict (or “Bleeding Kansas”) that profiles 30 individuals who lived during 1854–1865, from the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act to the end of the Civil War. “It is the smallest artifact dug up in someone’s backyard or thousands of acres of America’s most significant land, preserving things and places allows people to better connect with the past.”

“Historic preservation, especially at our battlefields, is critical in teaching people of all ages and backgrounds about not only American history — but also about such concepts as sacrifice,” said ROBYN MORAN of Davidson, N.C. Rory used a combination of primary sources and recent scholarship to build a diorama of the 1874 Battle of Guilford Courthouse that reflected real-life accounts from the figures directly involved in the battle. He even hand painted 500 28mm figures.

CATHERINE SLAVICH of Lanett, Ala., is a natural preservationist, noting, “I’ve grown up in a historic home — an 1854 Greek Revival — that sits below a Civil War fort, so historic preservation has always played a role in my life. There are even marks from Civil War artillery in my sunroom wall.” Her project took her to Fort Tyler in West Point, Ga. There, she led the charge to restore five historical markers with the help of the Fort Tyler Board, a graphic designer, a signage company and community volunteers.

HANK THOMPSON of Richmond, Va., was mentored by historian Dr. Bruce Verter. A Trust collaborator, to produce a video explaining the events tied to the 1864 Kulpaqtrick-Dalghren Raid — through imagery collected during site visits, animated maps and other various graphics. “Many incredible moments of heroism and perseverance — that unfurled on local street corners and quiet fields — would be forgotten if not for organizations like the American Battlefield Trust,” he said.

STEPHANIE WANG of Katy, Texas, found that “American history is rich — full of trials, tribulations and complexities that cannot be fully captured simply by a textbook or website.” She developed a project-based curriculum for students to explore lesser-known Civil War figures, especially women and minorities, and create a digital memorial after performing research on a pre-selected historical figure.

Other members of the 2021–2022 Youth Leadership Team include:

ALEXIS ELLIS of St. Rose, La.,
ABBIE HASTY, Alton, Ill.,
SEAN MYERS, Church Point, La., and
RACHEL WALTERS of Brunswick, Ga.

Catherine Stavish
Sydney Kirages
Joseph Martin
Sean Myers
Rachel Walters
Catherine Stavish
Rachel Walters
Stephanie Wang
America’s History, LLC
2022 Calendar of History Tours

April 6–9—Kilgore Davis, The Klepsidok Odelgred Roston and Richmond and Custer’s Charlottesville Raid—Saratoga, PA

May 14—Women in War: The Revolutionary Experience—Holly Mayer Head of Faculty, Todd Stalzer, Annie Stalzer and others—One Symposium Offered by The Marshall House—Sacramento, CA

June 14—The Revolutionary World of Dr. Joseph Warren—Boston, Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, and more—Christian Olgren and Brian Verster—Waltham, MA

June 15–19—Following Famous Fighting Brigades at Gettysburg—Larry Konicki, Licensed Battlefield Guide—Gettysburg, PA

June 18–21—Wellington vs. Napoleon: The Waterloo Campaign of 1815—Call America’s History for details—Waterloo, Belgium

August 24–27—Virginia: Founding Father’s: Essentially Important for Independence—Edward A. Long and Bruce Works—Richmond, VA

September 7–10—Sullivan’s Campaign against the Iroquois in 1779: Retribution in Genesee—Dr. Glenn E. Williams—Albany, NY

September 14–17—Young George Washington: How Frontier Warfare Shaped His Leadership—David Proctor—Canandaigua, NY

September 21—The American Frontier on Fire: Major Christopher Gadsden’s Raid in 1780—Patrick Meier and Bruce Teeter—in connection with the Fort Ticonderoga American Revolution Seminars—Ticonderoga, NY

October 3–5—Genesee Rivers: Starting Point to Chattanooga—A. Wilson “Will” Grimsley—Binghamton, NY—All meals and some meals are included in the registration fee.

October 10—World War II Conference Bus Tour—TOD—Gettysburg, PA


November 2–5—America’s Heroes: A Nation of Medal of Honor Battlefield Experience—Edward G. Long—Norfolk, VA

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consider membership in the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), a volunteer women’s service organization that honors and preserves the memory of our Patriot ancestors. Nearly 250 years ago, American Patriots fought and sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today.

As a member of the DAR, you can continue this legacy by actively promoting patriotism, preserving American history and securing America’s future through better education for children.
NLY ONE MUSEUM honors American veterans from all branches of service under one roof. Along the Scioto River in Columbus, Ohio, sits the National Veterans Memorial Museum. The museum began as the vision of John Glenn, retired Marine Corps veteran, legendary astronaut and U.S. senator. It opened in 2018 and presents a history of veterans from the Revolutionary War onward, including stories of their time in and beyond uniform.

Permanent exhibits connect the past with the present through the transformative experience of military service. Some highlights include exhibits that illustrate how we honor veterans, emphasize the emotions of military experience and how we remember their sacrifice. A massive floor-to-ceiling stained-glass installation resides in the Remembrance Gallery. The “infinity-flag” display in this gallery is a popular spot for visitors.

Through October 22, the museum features The Twenty-Year War: Our Next Greatest Generation. It features powerful portraits of post-9/11 service members, with podcasts and activities occurring throughout the exhibit. The museum offers guided tours of its exhibits if visitors desire a more in-depth history of the collection. Tickets for veterans, active military personnel and museum members are free. The museum also has a parking garage near the museum for visitor use. Please check online for updates on admission prices, revolving exhibits, events and much more.
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