



*You can help us save "the single most desirable tract on any battlefield" as part of our Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor Saved Forever Campaign. Please help secure Phase 3 - and receive an exclusive Challenge Coin.*

Dear Member and Fellow Preservationist,

I'm sure you are familiar with the saying, "There is a first time for everything."

Well, after 22 years of working to save America's hallowed ground, for the first time ever we have an opportunity to save two tracts of critically important battlefield land associated with five different Civil War battles.

That bears repeating: TWO tracts, FIVE battles!!

Quickly, let me put the importance of this remarkable opportunity into perspective for you.

Back in 2000, not long after I was hired as the Trust's new Director of Membership, I asked then-president Jim Lighthizer, "What is the most important unprotected battlefield land in America?"

Without a second's hesitation, Jim told me about a nearly one-square-mile farm outside of Richmond, Virginia, that was the site of two major, overlapping Civil War battles: Gaines' Mill in 1862 and Cold Harbor in 1864.

My friend, there is only one place in America where nearly one square mile of a "double battlefield" can still be preserved. And there is only one place where that nearly one square mile of hallowed ground is essentially as pristine as it was on each day of those historic battles.

*It has taken a quarter century of determination, cultivation, and negotiation, but thanks to your commitment and generosity, we are well on our way to saving this most-hallowed ground in America!*

Two years ago, we launched "The Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor Saved Forever Campaign," and today, I'm honored and humbled to say that, because of your tremendous generosity and that of your fellow Trust members, we have raised enough funding to preserve significant pieces of the most important land in this country. I can't thank you enough!

On your enclosed map in bright blue are the two areas we've successfully protected to date — the tract we called "Pickett's Charge Five Times as Large" and the tract we aptly named "The Intersection" because of its *intersecting* location for these two epic battles. These acres represent Phases One and Two of our multi-phase campaign.

With these two sizeable accomplishments in hand, we must now begin working on Phase Three to save 45 acres on your map (in yellow) that we're calling "The Juncture at Griffin's Woods." As you know, in any battle, two unconnected wings of any army are more vulnerable to attack and defeat. Affecting a juncture of scattered forces makes you stronger and gives you a better chance of victory.

This key tract of sacred ground serves as that critical juncture — the all-important connection — between battlefield lands we've already saved to the east, west, and north, filling in a gap and completing an uninterrupted and fully protected section of this battlefield.

Griffin's Woods, so-named for Union General Charles Griffin, who defended this part of the battlefield during the Battle of Gaines' Mill, describes the land. It is also completely unchanged from its wartime appearance. The trees among which a dozen brigades ferociously fought are descendants of the forest that so troubled and confused the combatants on June 27, 1862. Both branches of Boatswain's Creek still meander through the woods as important landmarks. The trace of the unnamed farm road that ran eastward from the Watt House also survives.

In full transparency, I must remind you that this larger preservation effort remains very different from any other we have ever undertaken. The main reasons for that difference are the terms of the transaction and how we have agreed to an unprecedented level of confidentiality, specifically requested by the landowner.

Here's what that means: While I can tell you this effort will be among the most expensive this organization has ever faced, I am unfortunately not at liberty to divulge publicly the exact price we are paying.

What I can tell you is that it is one of the larger transactions we have ever taken on, and we have about two years left to raise all the funds we need to complete the Campaign. We are obligated to make timely payments each year or risk defaulting on our agreement.

If successful, the entire nearly square-mile piece of sacred battlefield land will be permanently preserved under a conservation easement.

My friend, this battlefield land is so significant that historians and preservationists alike have labeled it a "must-have."

Historian Robert K. Krick describes this hallowed ground as:

*"Absolutely incomparable. No unreserved battlefield property in North America resonates with higher historical value than this land. Its crucial location on the Gaines' Mill battlefield might be matched by some other sites; so might its importance for Cold Harbor be matched. No single property anywhere, though, ranks as so powerfully significant for each of two distinct battles. In fact, I think it is safe to say that it rates higher than any of the tremendous preservation coups we have achieved to date. It stands alone."*

Our former board member and historian emeritus of the National Park Service, the late, great Ed Bearss, once said of this land: *"Even if you have to sell every other piece of battlefield land the Trust has ever saved in order to preserve this land, you should do it. It's that important!"*

Historian Gary Gallagher (a founder of our modern battlefield preservation movement) described it as "...the single most desirable tract on any battlefield."

On June 27, 1862, General Robert E. Lee's Confederates grappled mostly with Union General Fitz John Porter's Fifth Corps in the Battle of Gaines' Mill — the third and bloodiest of the Seven Days Battles. Lee's final and successful assault that day remains the largest attack ever made on American soil, even larger than Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg!

Fast forward nearly two years to the 1864 Battle of Cold Harbor, where Lee's army repulsed General Ulysses S. Grant's troops in a devastating two-week action that cost a staggering loss of more than 17,000 lives.

Both these historic battles occurred on this doubly hallowed ground.

With this history in mind, I hope you'll agree: Of the 55,000 acres you have helped to save all across America, these may be the most important.

But if possible, it gets even a little bit better. That's because you and I now also can preserve a nearly 12-acre tract of land associated with the battles of Glendale, Malvern Hill, and First Deep Bottom! When it rains, it pours, right?

At Glendale, the penultimate Seven Days battle which took place on June 30, 1862, initial Confederate attacks led by General James L. Kemper's Virginia brigade jumped off from this very ground, supported by a single artillery battery.

The next day at Malvern Hill, Confederates pivoted to pursue and attack the Federals who had taken a strong defensive position. As much as half of Lee's army marched over or on the roads immediately bordering this property, as they girded for their doomed advance.

Then, about two years later, at First Deep Bottom, a dismounted line of Federal cavalry established a line in the Long Bridge Road, the northern border of the tract. The troopers, belonging to General David M. Gregg's division, were attacked by several brigades of Confederate infantry. With the bulk of the fighting swirling just north of the road, the temporarily defeated Union soldiers rallied and regrouped on the land we are working to save.

Unfortunately, the current zoning for this hallowed ground allows for the construction of a large single-family home. Imagine for a moment how a huge McMansion would mar the property's rolling, open viewshed and disturb the sacred history of three separate battles.

This 12-acre parcel will, for another "first," physically connect the Glendale and First Deep Bottom battlefields with nearby Malvern Hill, creating an extended "walk through history."

Now for the tough part. The total transaction value of the combined 56 acres we can save at these five battlefields is \$677,299 — a sizeable sum, I realize, especially in these days of high gas prices and plummeting stock values.

Fortunately, we already have the expectation of potential gift grants for up to \$170,000, which means we still need to raise \$507,299, but I am hopeful that I have made a good enough case to you today to earn your support of this historic effort.

And again, this is the definition of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This land has been at the very top of every historian's and preservationist's "must-have" list for more than two decades.

Plus, in my 22 years with the Trust, I can't ever remember an opportunity to save TWO tracts that were part of FIVE battles!

Raising \$507,299 is no easy hill to climb, and I am humbled by the continued generosity of you and your fellow members.

But let me tell you what keeps me awake at night: We're now in a new and urgent race against well-funded competitors who want to purchase unprotected battlefield land for data centers ... warehouse distribution centers ... solar farms ... housing developments ... and so much more!

Open land is at a premium right now, especially in the area between Richmond and Washington D.C.

Every day, we get offers in the mail asking if we'd be willing to sell battlefield land we have saved and still own! If we are getting those offers, you know other private landowners are getting these "top-dollar / close tomorrow" offers, too!

We have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to permanently preserve the 56 acres I've described for you in this letter. We can't let it slip through our fingers. I don't need to tell you how devastating that would be to have already accomplished the first two phases of "The Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor Saved Forever Campaign" and leave the battlefield incomplete and vulnerable to development before it's complete.

I am so proud to be engaged in this noble work with you, and of all we have achieved together, for the good of our nation. I can only hope that you, too, are gratified to be a member of the American Battlefield Trust, because this organization would be nothing ... could do nothing ... without you.

If you will help preserve today 56 acres of hugely important battlefield ground with your generous contribution, the generations coming up behind you and me will be able to walk "The Juncture at Griffin's Woods" at Cold Harbor and Gaines' Mill — plus lands at Glendale, First Deep Bottom, and Malvern Hill (and other sites all across this amazing country) — and learn first-hand lessons about courage, valor, and American history.

I thank you so very much for your time today, and thank you, too, for considering making another major contribution to the cause of historic battlefield preservation.

With warmest regards,



David N. Duncan  
President

P.S. I encourage you to visit the American Battlefield Trust's website to learn more about this effort and your role in saving hallowed ground at Gaines' Mill, Cold Harbor, Glendale, First Deep Bottom, Malvern Hill, and all across our nation! To see more maps, photos, and articles — and to make your donation quickly and securely — go to [battlefields.org/GMCH2022N](http://battlefields.org/GMCH2022N) today. Thank you again for all that you do for preserving our history!