



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

Losing 838 acres of sacred battlefield land
to development would be ***unthinkable.***

Help save them and receive a beautiful poster of the
Battle of Gaines' Mill — at no cost to you — with our sincere gratitude.

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

In May 1862, a little over a year into the Civil War, no one could have predicted what lay ahead.

It was unthinkable ...

... that Gen. Robert E. Lee, still a little-known staff officer in Richmond, would rise to become the single most important general for the Confederacy.

... that Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, marred by calls for his dismissal and who looked anything like a general, would command all Union armies.

... that Gen. George McClellan, leader of the largest army in the nation, poised to capture Richmond, would be removed from command and run for president against Lincoln on a peace platform.

In the early years of the war, it was *unthinkable* that two of those men would become legends, and the third, an oft-maligned commander. It was *unthinkable* to soldiers that they would dig earthworks everywhere they went, march 20-30 miles in one day, live in close proximity to the enemy, and fight in a war longer and bloodier than they could foresee. It was *unthinkable* that soldiers who fought at Gaines' Mill would fight again, two years later, on the same ground — at the Battle of Cold Harbor.

Amazingly, earthworks still survive on the tracts we are trying to preserve! The stretches of fortifications, including artillery lunettes, infantry parapets, and personnel pits, are among the largest remaining on the battlefield. It would be *unthinkable* if we let them get destroyed by development, which would unquestionably happen if this land is not protected.

But with your generosity and dedication, *we* can prevent the unthinkable.

Over the past 40 years, thanks to steadfast supporters like you, the American Battlefield Trust has preserved more than 1,200 acres at Gaines' Mill and Cold Harbor alone, and more than 60,000 acres of American battlefield land nationwide. Land that could have been lost forever to development has instead been saved for future generations (check out the “before” map that I enclosed for you!).

But preservation hasn't always been easy, and it hasn't always been successful. The times when hallowed ground has been paved over or desecrated with residential and commercial development — when we were out-bid or when we weren't even given a chance — those are the moments that really stick with me.

They remind me, frankly, that we must pursue opportunities to save our hallowed ground whenever they arise ... and to ignore any of these challenges would be unthinkable.



**Right now, we have the chance to save 838 acres
of hallowed ground at Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor and at White Oak Road —
three battlefields where the nation's fate hung in the balance.**

We need to raise \$431,350.

And we need your help doing it.



These are sacred grounds. Soldiers fought and fell there. You've already helped us preserve more than 1,200 acres at these battlefields. Together, we've worked for decades, parcel by parcel, to preserve the battlefields as they once were in 1862, 1864, and 1865. To lose what remains unprotected and allow new subdivisions or even data centers to destroy this hallowed ground would be truly **unthinkable**.

Please act quickly so we can secure these tracts and preserve them forever. Any amount you can generously give will help us chip away at our goal.



And to thank you for your donation, I'll send you a **remarkable full-color poster** featuring a **one-of-a-kind painting** depicting the Battle of Gaines' Mill from a bird's-eye point of view. Artist David Geister — a self-professed “storyteller with a paint brush” — produced this exclusive painting for the Trust. And now we're sharing it with you for the first time ever!

Many of you may remember the iconic *American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War* from the 1960s. I know I do. As a kid, I would pore over its pages for hours. That book was my gateway into the stories of the Civil War. It sparked my lifelong passion for history and, eventually, led me to this mission of battlefield preservation.

This painting is reminiscent of battle depictions in that book. And that's why we've designed this new poster to not only show off this remarkable painting in full color but also have the look and feel like it came straight from those cherished volumes, complete with original-style notations, and the same immersive visual storytelling that inspired so many of us.

All you have to do is make a donation to support the cause. Your gift will help us protect battlefield land that remains vulnerable, and in return, we'll send you this one-of-a-kind keepsake as a token of our gratitude.

Now, here's what I need your help to preserve:

On June 27, 1862, just east of Richmond, Virginia, Union Gen. Fitz John Porter's Fifth Corps found itself alone and outnumbered. With their backs to the Chickahominy River, Porter's 34,000 men formed near and below a modest structure known as **Gaines' Mill**. Facing them was a determined Confederate force of nearly 60,000 under the newly appointed Gen. Lee.

This clash would become the largest Confederate assault of the Civil War and mark Lee's first major victory as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Fast forward to June 1, 1864. Nearly two years after Gaines' Mill, Gen. Grant ordered his forces to engage once more on these blood-soaked fields during the Overland Campaign. The Battle of **Cold Harbor** was characterized by entrenched lines, devastating frontal assaults, and fearful casualty rates.

On June 3, Union forces suffered thousands of casualties in less than one hour. It was a sobering moment for Grant and a grim reminder of the cost of war.

The gravity of the Gaines' Mill and Cold Harbor battles can still be felt on those fields today.

I would be remiss if I did not also write about the Battle of **White Oak Road** in Virginia. Here, in the final days of the war on March 31, 1865, Union Gen. Gouverneur Warren directed his corps (the very Fifth Corps that fought at Gaines' Mill) against the Confederate entrenchments along White Oak Road,



Cold Harbor Tavern, 1864 by Edwin Forbes.
© Library of Congress



White Oak Road Battlefield
© Kristi A. Gordon, American Battlefield Trust

hoping to cut off Gen. Lee's troops from Gen. George Pickett's at Five Forks. The Union advance was stalled by a crushing Confederate counterattack directed by Gen. Bushrod Johnson, but Warren's position stabilized and his soldiers closed in on the road by day's end. With more than 30,000 troops engaged in battle, this was a crucial move that helped pave the way for Lee's defeat at Five Forks the very next day ... and the breakthrough of his lines the day after.

We now have the chance to protect more than 800 acres at White Oak Road by conservation easement, adding to the 963 acres the Trust has saved previously at this battlefield. This land bore witness to the bloodshed of our forefathers, and we must not lose our opportunity to preserve it for posterity.

It would be unthinkable to let a property like this be lost to development. We can't let it happen!

Instead, let's make history — again.

We need to raise \$431,350 to preserve these 838 acres at Gaines' Mill-Cold Harbor and White Oak Road forever. I hope you'll be part of this important campaign. Every gift makes a difference, and if you send your donation today, regardless of the amount, I'll rush you our exclusive full-color poster featuring a stunning painting depicting the Battle of Gaines' Mill.



Gaines' Mill Battlefield
© Robert James, American Battlefield Trust

If you're like me — and I think you are — you'll spread it out on your kitchen table or desk to examine the points of interest and study the detail. You can learn more about it using annotations on the flip side. It's really quite special, and I think you'll agree. *The American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War* sparked my lifelong passion for the Civil War, and that's the spirit we've captured in this poster.

My friend, thank you for all you do for battlefield preservation. And thank you for making your best gift today. ***Saving battlefields without you would be unthinkable!***



With warmest regards,

David N. Duncan

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. Just about every battlefield preservationist I know has a bookshelf (or two) where they keep their history books and the like. I'm guessing you have some history books and maps of your own. I hope you'll allow me to add to your collection with our exclusive Gaines' Mill poster featuring artist David Geister's one-of-a-kind detailed depiction of a moment in the Battle of Gaines' Mill. This is my thank-you gift to you for supporting our mission to preserve hallowed ground. Please give today by mailing your donation or visiting **battlefields.org/poster**. We cannot do this without you.

We can't do this without you!