

WILDERNESS DISPATCH

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Inc.

Vol. 14 No. 3 • Summer, 2009

“Taming the Wilderness” Returns Sept. 27

Popular Event Features “Do It Yourself” in 1790s

By DALE BROWN

FoWB Director and Event Chair

How did the massive beams for William and Betty Jones’s new home go from live trees to finished lumber?

Where did the dresses worn by young Betty Churchill Jones (later to be Mrs. J. Horace Lacy) come from?

Who forged the iron rims for William’s favorite carriage?

Who were those rugged-looking frontiersmen with their long rifles that passed through Ellwood Plantation from time to time?

How did those lovely baskets that Lucinda Gordon Jones used to hold freshly picked flowers come to be?

These are a few of the questions that will be addressed at the third annual “Taming the Wilderness” event to be held at Ellwood on Sunday, September 27 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The event is free and open to the public.

This has been one of the most successful events sponsored by Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Inc., attracting visitors from near and far to see experts practice their trades and crafts as they would have been practiced in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Guests will be able to observe – and possibly assist – a timber framer in preparing a log for use as a support beam for a frontier house like Ellwood.

There will be a demonstration, again with some hands-on participation, of how a chimney top for an 18th century house would have been produced from brick and mortar.

Open-hearth cooking, the making of split-oak baskets, spinning of fibers and weaving of cloth will be demonstrated.

Guests will see and talk with frontier hunters and learn how they spent months on end tracking game; see the tools of their trade; and hear stories of their exploits.

There might even be a tavern wench or



Blacksmith at last year’s event

two on hand to explain some of the travel accommodations and customs of the colonial period.

And a craftsman will talk about and demonstrate the tools that would have

been used to keep things in good repair on a working plantation.

Last but certainly not least, kids and their parents will be able to see and play some of the games that families of the 18th and early 19th centuries would have enjoyed together.

Light snacks and soft beverages (water, juice drinks, etc.) also will be available free of charge, with appropriate donations encouraged.

Donations will be gratefully accepted, with all proceeds going to the restoration of Ellwood Manor, itself.

The next phase of the restoration is the completion of the four bedrooms and hallway on the second floor.

Free tours of the house will be available throughout the day, with experienced historic interpreters who are FoWB volunteers.

The entrance to Ellwood is on Route 20, Constitution Highway, about a half mile west of the Wilderness intersection of Routes 3 and 20.



A Scout learns how a two-man crosscut saw might have been used to make boards for Ellwood .

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Web site: <http://www.fowb.org>

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Varied Activity Surrounds Ellwood This Summer

By CAROLYN ELSTNER
FoWB Vice President and Ellwood Chair

The sights and sounds at Ellwood this visitor season are many and varied.

Forty-eight interpreters are conducting continuous tours on weekends and holidays May through October. The house is also open Fridays and Mondays until August 22.

As of July 7, 1,595 visitors have crossed the threshold since the first of May, the most distant visitor being from Sidney, Australia.

Envision interaction between visitors and interpreters, stimulating for both.

Picture children enjoying the Children's Box, a hands-on presentation including Union and Confederate soldiers' caps, canteen, appropriately filled haversack, bullets, Confederate money



Tom Burdette replaces Ellwood siding.

and 19th century toys.

All the while, summer breezes are keeping the newly restored first floor fresh and cool.

Each weekday morning, National Park Service staff members **John Stoddard**, **Tom Burdette** and **Steve Willis** arrive to work on the exterior of the house, replacing and painting compromised siding, particularly on the north side.

They prepare materials at the still-standing 20th century cinderblock brooder house and scale the scaffolding at the work site.

Burdette admits, "I'd rather work at Ellwood than anywhere else in the Park."

And there is no dearth of activity on the Ellwood grounds.

Farmer Lyons has plowed the fields that have seen 230 years of cultivation, primarily in corn and wheat. Rain deterred his work, but he has now planted silage corn to feed his dairy cattle this winter.

The Ellwood Ground Force is on hand weekly to mow, weed-eat, weed, trim and do whatever else is needed.

Members of an Alabama family recently visited and commented that they had never been to a historic building in such a beautifully manicured environment.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park Chief Historian **John Hennessy** continues to lead his team in planning for permanent interior exhibits.

A cultural landscape design for Ellwood moves toward completion, too.

Readers, put Ellwood on your 2009 must-see destination list.

NPS 'History at Sunset' Features Ellwood by Candlelight on Aug. 7

Evening near Ellwood served as the setting for the amputation of Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson's arm during the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863 and the meeting at Ellwood in which Federal General Gouverneur K. Warren concluded that he could not report to Washington the large number of casualties his command suffered in the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864.

NPS historian **Janice Frye** and FoWB will take visitors through Ellwood, and its grounds and cemetery by candlelight.

The one-hour programs begin at 8:00, 8:15 and 8:30 p.m.

Medical Interpreters coming to Ellwood

Living historians will present "Civil War Medicine" at Ellwood on July 25 and October 10.

John Pelletier and **Dr. Thomas A. Wheat** will demonstrate medical practices of the era. Both are members of the Society of Civil War Surgeons.

Pelletier said their mission is "to preserve the good name of civil war surgeons and their staffs and nurses.

"We want to educate the public of their techniques that saved so many lives and dispel today's stereotypical views of medicine and the doctors of this period."

He has been presenting medical living

history for 12 years. One of his ancestors was a Confederate hospital steward.

Dr. Wheat is a retired U.S. Army surgeon and has been a re-enactor and living historian for 50 years. He is on the board of the Society of Civil War Surgeons.

Gen. Grant is quoted as saying after battles, "Give the wounded men every attention possible and make no distinction between Federals and Confederates."

Pelletier and Wheat will set up their 1860s medical practice in Ellwood's north room from 11 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. both days.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

By ZANN NELSON

Editor's Note -- On May 4, the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition held a news conference (above) at Ellwood at which actor Robert Duvall, Congressman Ted Poe of Texas and Peter Welch of Vermont spoke to oppose the proposed site of a Walmart Supercenter across Route 3 from the battlefield. FoWB president Zann Nelson represented FoWB. Here are the remarks she made that day. They represent FoWB's stand.

In 1995, a small group of local residents saw a need. Friends of Wilderness Battlefield was formed with a single purpose: to function as a partner with the Fredericksburg Spotsylvania National Military Park in its commitment to preserve the Wilderness Battlefield.

As tough as most relationships are, this one between the Park and FoWB has been touched by a bit of magic. It works remarkably well.

In 1927 Congress found it fitting, no, a national mandate, to protect this battlefield and so it did. Today, the National Park Service has developed truly a living monument; a place to walk, a place to reflect and a place to learn. But neither the plans nor the work are finished.

Together with the park, we are committed to two major endeavors, both predicated on two beliefs: 1- that "seeing is believing" and 2- the value of a "hands on" experience.

We expect to have this incredibly historic house that served as Gen. Gouvenor Warren's headquarters during the Wilderness battle and as a recovery hospital for the Confederate soldiers following Chancellorsville, designated as a battlefield visitor center.

The Wilderness Battlefield is the

most visited tourist attraction in Orange County and we all know the value of tourism revenue. It is almost like found money, no need for more schools, police, waste management or government services.

An added bonus for Orange County is that it doesn't even have to foot the bill for the development or maintenance of this grand asset.

The second endeavor is to restore the landscape behind you ... to the east ... to its 1864 viewshed.

I can tell you with certainty, that if Walmart rises up on the hillside to the north, the restoration of the viewshed will be a farce and will not happen.

The large force of local members and "friends" are vividly aware and fiercely proud of the significance of our work. Specifically, the FoWB job description includes the words "educate" and "advocate" and the duties often include painting canons, repairing signs, mowing grass, interpreting at Ellwood, providing educational programs and of course, raising money.

We are stewards — caretakers, if you will — of soil that has been consecrated by the blood and hardship of our grand- and great-grand fathers and mothers, yours as well as mine.

By 1864, 35 stars were stitched on the flag of red, white and blue. Of the tens of thousands of soldiers that fought and fell on the very ground you were able to walk this morning, represented were all 11 Confederate states and 18 of the 24 Union ones, constituting 80% of the nation.

Among those were an estimated 18,000 Virginians, including all the Orange County Units: the 6th Virginia Cavalry, Co. I, the Orange Rangers and the 3 companies with the 13th VA Inf., several of those would be wounded and killed here.

Men came from Minnesota and Mississippi, Texas and Vermont, not for personal gain or for the big salaries. Perhaps, they followed the sage advice of a crusty character by the name of Print Ritter who said, "Don't measure your worth in money."

Much like their counterparts in WWI, II, Korea, Vietnam or Iraq, they answered the call because they wanted to take a stand for freedom and integrity and leave a legacy duty and honor.

Lest anyone misrepresent our position, let me be very clear, Friends of Wilderness Battlefield like our associates on the Coalition is *not* opposed to free enterprise and the building of a new Walmart. We do, however, believe there are other more suitable locations and a win-win solution for all.

The Wilderness Battlefield is a National Monument, of no less significance than any of those in our nation's capitol.

I have a long history in fundraising and I am wondering why this discussion with Walmart is not about their funding of our two major goals in time for the sesquicentennial, instead of expending untold energy and effort to defend the honor of America's sons and its heritage.

WANTED: \$125,000

The Ellwood Restoration Project is moving into its next phase ... the second floor. The four bedrooms will cost about \$125,000 to restore. Donations of ANY size are GREATLY appreciated in these tough economic times. If you would like to make a donation, write your check to FoWB/Ellwood and send to FoWB, PO Box 576, Locust Grove, VA 22508. If you would like to speak with someone about a donation, contact **Carolyn Elstner** (540) 373-6240 or **Zann Nelson** (540) 547-2395.

145th Anniversary Weekend is a Grand Success Due to Hard Work, Great Supporters, Lots of Volunteers

\$15,000 raised to continue the restoration of Ellwood

By CAROLYN OSTROWSKI

Member, FoWB Board of Directors

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield members and guests commemorated the 145th anniversary of the Battle of the Wilderness with honor and style on May 2 and 3.

FoWB partnered with the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FRSP) for two days of observance and events to mark the anniversary, including a well-attended dinner and auction that raised \$15,000 for the continuing restoration of the Wilderness crown jewel...Ellwood manor.

The weekend was built around the theme of the common soldier and ordinary civilian during the battle...the hardships, victories and courage of these unheralded and little known participants in the conflict. And, for those lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time, the weekend contained some firsts, some surprises and some exceptionally moving moments.



Maggie Lawrence played the part of a soldier's mother in Saturday night's play.



NPS Historian Noel Harrison, center, points out the old Higgerson homeplace site during Saturday's tour of Mrs. Higgerson's farm. More than a dozen of her descendants from all over the U.S. came to the FoWB events.

FRSP hosted Saturday's daytime activities at various sites throughout the Battlefield. Park historians **Janice Frye**, **Noel Harrison** and **Kris White** conducted tours of Saunders Field, Higgerson Farm, Chewning Farm and Widow Tapp Field.

At the Higgerson Farm, tour participants were treated to the first public viewing of the old Higgerson family cemetery, which had been located earlier that week.

Those on the tour of the Chewning Farm heard about the discovery of a previously unknown painting that memorializes an incident at this farm where a lone farmer fooled a Union regiment into thinking he was an entire complement of Confederate soldiers.

Local historian **Joe Rokus** in previous weeks had published a series of articles in local newspapers that told the stories of these families who found themselves caught up in the Battle of the Wilderness.

"*A Wilderness Evening*," the FoWB 7th Annual Dinner and Auction, highlighted Saturday evening. The event was held at the Daniel Technology Center of Germanna Community College in Culpeper, Va.

A record-setting attendance of more than 200 people enjoyed a sumptuous banquet by **Loudeia's** and had fun competing for the more than 70 items up for auction.

The evening culminated in the presentation of an original play produced and directed by FoWB President **Zann Nelson** entitled "Somebody's Darling, Somebody's Pride," the story of one soldier's personal journey as he fought in the war.

Despite a rain-soaked Sunday, attendance was brisk for the festivities at Ellwood.

Kids and adults alike enjoyed cannon firing demonstrations from NPS historian **Stacy Humphreys** and her artillery crew.

Re-enactors set up camp in the rain and showed visitors how soldiers would have cooked their meals during their encampments.

Inside the house, **John Pelletier**, Civil War physician reenactor, presented fascinating facts about the care of sick and wounded soldiers.

At mid-afternoon, guests at Ellwood were treated to haunting 19th-century harmonies sung by the **Joysong Chorale**, under the direction of **Linda Long**. The audience was visibly moved by many of the group's renditions. It was a fitting ending to a weekend meant to honor the sacrifices of those on whose shoulders we all stand.

Finally, toward the end of the rainy day, three soaked Confederate reenactors drove into the Ellwood parking lot. Earlier in the day, they had marched in a parade at Winchester and were returning to their homes in Hampton Roads.

They pulled out their fife, snare drum and bass drum and gave an impromptu concert, performing songs such as "When Johnnie Comes Marching Home Again" and "Dixie" for Ellwood visitors returning to their cars. A fitting ending.

On behalf of FoWB, its Board of Directors, and Ellwood, we express our sincere appreciation to all you participated and contributed to the 145th Anniversary Weekend.

Photos in this issue were provided by Dale Brown, Carolyn Elstner, Tom Elstner, Dorothy Mosso, Carolyn Ostrowski and Craig Rains.

A Huge 'Thank You' to the 145th Anniversary Committees

Carolyn Elstner, *Co-chair*
Zann Nelson, *Co-chair*

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Carolyn Ostrowski, *Chair*
Dale Brown, Paula Brown,
Alice Early, Carolyn Elstner,
Janet Jacobs, Zann Nelson,
Susan Nickelson, Elaine Pratt,
Linda Resler, Jeff Slunt, Kelli Slunt

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The Joysong Chorale lifted spirits at Ellwood on Sunday.

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Lake of the Woods Garden
Club
Millie Lane



Buddy Updike of The Auction Man & Assoc. kept the bids rolling during the spirited auction.

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Gallery
Wayside Theatre
DoJe Weaver
Nancy Wilkens
Ann Wood
Chuck Woods
Alan Zirkle

Volunteer Ground Force Keeps Ellwood Landscape the Pride of F&SNMP

By CAROLYN OSTROWSKI
Member of the FoWB Board of Directors

As visitors come up the drive and make their way into the yard of Ellwood Manor, their first impression is of the immaculate grounds.

The grass is mowed and free of sticks, brush and other yard debris.

The hedges are trimmed and the undergrowth is cut back.

The path out to the celebrated cemetery is clear and easy to walk. The graveyard itself is well tended.

All of this happens thanks to the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers who work behind the scenes and with little fanfare to make sure this grand old home looks the best it can.

Led by **Bob Johnson**, the Ground Force works at Ellwood each Thursday of the year.

The crew maintains the property from Route 20 to the tree line above the Wilderness Run, down to the cemetery and the old coach road-trace.

During the summer they mow and trim the vast expanses of grass with a collection of second-hand riding and hand mowers that have been donated or salvaged.

They clear debris from the yard, and make sure there are no hanging branches



Pictured (left to right) after completing the day's mowing and cleanup are members of the Ellwood Ground Force Joe Marks, Dorse Counts, Gary Mauss, John Irvine, Bob Johnson and Lee Woolf.

or other hazards to visitors.

They are responsible for maintaining their equipment....every machine is carefully hosed off and cleaned after each use. They can fix most anything that goes wrong with the machines.

The Ground Force works through the winter months as well, when Ellwood is closed to the public.

The off-season brings brush clearing, land reclaiming, and road clearing.

Working in partnership with the National Park Service, the Ground Force has developed and is executing a plan for some of the longer-term goals for the grounds, including clearing additional land, improving the Ellwood viewshed, and the potential removal of outbuildings that don't fit the Civil War era tone of the site.

The Ellwood Ground Force is made up of 11 volunteers who work under the direction of **Carolyn Elstner**, FoWB Ellwood Committee Chair.

Their length of service ranges from one year back to 1996, the year following FoWB's founding.

To a man, they are quiet, unassuming champions of Ellwood who want to do their part to preserve this treasure. Some have been involved in preservation work for decades, most notably as members of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, maintaining many trails in the Piedmont region.

Says crew chief Johnson: "These are the hardest-working bunch of people I've ever worked with.

"They take a lot of pride in making Ellwood look good.

"You have to be half nuts to cut grass voluntarily in 100-degree weather, but these guys take real pride in what they do."

Visitors to Ellwood would agree that the landscape shows that pride in every corner.

If you are interested in joining the Ground Force, contact **Carolyn Elstner** (540) 373-6240.



FUTURE GROUND FORCE MEMBERS? Cub Scout Pack 171 of Spotsylvania County spread 20 bags of mulch and top soil in the shrub beds at the Saunders Field Exhibit Shelter in May. They also reenacted the battle that took place there in May 1864. Each was awarded a CWPT Park Day 2009 patch for his participation. They were (alphabetically) Nathan Clift, Joey Markiewicz, Christian Lee Maxey, Andrew Moeller, Hunter Ray Powell, Ivan Quinn, Joe Ricker, Chris Smith, Anthony Wolfe and Gregory Allen Wolfe.

First FoWB Advocate Award Presented to Frank Walker

Frank S. Walker, Jr. of Orange County, Va. became the recipient of the first **Friends of Wilderness Battlefield Advocate Award**, presented at the FoWB dinner and auction on May 2.

The award was created to recognize a “worthy person or organization who has demonstrated a lifetime, or substantial period, of significant contribution to the Wilderness Battlefield, e.g. providing advocacy, education programs, or preservation services to the Battlefield.”

Walker was recognized for his contributions to FoWB in countless ways, including serving on the board of directors, providing legal counsel and leading many FoWB fund-raising tours of battlefields and Orange County.

Later, Walker responded, “Now that the shock has worn off a bit, well done—and thank you all so very, very much.

“The creation of FoWB followed by the growth of its programs has been the most significant and successful heritage preservation development to take place in this region during the last decade of the twentieth century.

“We can now add to that the momentum of the rebirth of Montpelier taking place in the first decade of this new century, and I think we can look forward to a similar rebirth at Germanna, coming possibly as early as the next decade.

“These are heady times in the heritage business. There’s still no time for leaning on shovels—or closing wallets—but FoWB can be proud of marching at the point on this campaign to recapture our regional roots.

“... For as long as my eyesight would allow, I was very active in matters that involved FoWB directly or indirectly. I enjoyed those years immensely, especially since I knew they would have to end sooner than most people might have anticipated.

“... I am seeing myself as entering another phase of my life that I trust will bring benefits to FoWB, the Park, and to the development of regional heritage generally. This time it will be expressed mainly in cooperation with other, active people.

“Also, I am hopeful that I will be playing a more significant role in guiding development of Orange County’s tourism industry, now that the county has focused on the need to actively pursue that goal.

“I am seeing the award as a thanks for the memories and as a down payment on memories yet to come.”

Thank you, Frank. Well deserved.



Frank Walker Jr. (right) receives the award from Dwight Mottet (left) while Zann Nelson looks on.

SUMMER MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

RENEWALS

Dr. Richard B. BERGMANN, Locust Grove, Va.; Nate BOND, Fredericksburg Va.; Bruce and Anne BOYD, Locust Grove Va.;

Frank BUTTIMER, Locust Grove, Va.; Christopher CONTI, Sharpsville Penn.;

Lloyd M. DOERING, Wadsworth, Ohio; John DONOVAN, Maple Shade N.J.;

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NEW MEMBERS

Curtis and Susan ABEL, Locust Grove, Va.;

Richard BARTON, Fredericksburg Va.;

Floyd ETHERTON, Locust Grove, Va.;

David MUELLER, Abilene, Texas; Zoila ORTEGA, Locust Grove, Va.

Wilderness Brigade

[7]

A Request for Correction has been filed by **Dorothy Mosso** to amend her Wilderness Brigade ancestor.

Capt. Pichegru Woolfolk, Jr. who was originally thought to be commanding the Ashland Battery during the Battle of the Wilderness was actually absent from duty due to wounds received and being captured near Bowling Green, Va. on June 1, 1864.

His absence lasted from Nov. 12, 1863 until Sept. 12, 1864.

Lt. James Woolfolk commanded the company during the entire time that his brother was out wounded or captured. He signed paperwork during that time as “Acting Captain”, thus insuring that his brother would not be replaced.

James was not only a dedicated soldier, but a dedicated and loyal family member.

All four of the brothers, **Capt. Pichegru Woolfolk, Capt. Clarence Woolfolk, Lt. James Woolfolk, and First Sgt. Edmund Woolfolk** are buried in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia.

Mosso wishes to thank **John Henry Taylor** of the Robert E. Lee Camp #1589, Sons of Confederate Veterans, for clarifying this point for her.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP? Your expiration date is shown on your mailing label.

Membership levels: Lieutenant \$25, Captain \$50, Major \$100, Colonel \$250, General \$500. Students \$10. Membership is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Make your check payable to FoWB and mail to FoWB, PO Box 576, Locust Grove, VA 22508.



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Web: <http://www.fowb.org>

Return Service Requested

HAY, ALL FOWB MEMBERS: YOU'RE INVITED TO AN OLD-FASHIONED PICNIC ON THE FARM

Bring your family, bring your friends.

4:00-7:30 p.m., Saturday, August 22 (rain or shine)

Bluegrass music

Horse-drawn-wagon rides

Games, Contests and MORE

YOUR ENTRY FEE: One covered dish to feed six or more.

FoWB will be cooking up all-you-can-eat hamburgers and hot dogs, with all the trimmings, to go along with the covered dishes. Water and soft drinks provided. Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets, plus a little sunscreen.

Zann Nelson Farm
16439 Reva Road, Reva, Virginia 22735

Directions to the farm: Take Route 29 South from Culpeper about five miles to Reva Market and Shell Station on the right. Turn right onto Route 633, Reva Road. Continue 1/3 mile to Route 644 and turn left. Proceed 9/10th of a mile, passing a B&B on the left. At the top of a small rise is a driveway, diagonally across from Duncan Trail. Look for the three-board fence along the driveway. Near the end of the lane turn right at the first pig and watch for PARKING signs. (Also, please do not pet the bears.)

COMING? PLEASE R.S.V.P. by August 15 to dorothymosso@comcast.net or call Dorothy at (804) 360-1719. If she is not there, just leave your name, phone number and the number of your party who will be attending.