

Date: August 20, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TAMING THE WILDERNESS

Colonial Era of Ellwood to be Examined

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB) will be hosting craftsmen as they demonstrate many of the skills required to survive during the settling of The Wilderness in Spotsylvania and Orange Counties in the late 18th century. Artisans and specialists will demonstrate and discuss timber framing, masonry, basket making, blacksmithing, spinning and weaving and a number of other trades and crafts.

The event will take place on the grounds of Ellwood, a late 18th century manor house located in the Wilderness Battlefield portion of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, on Route 20, one-third of a mile south of the Intersection with Route 3 West. On **Sunday, September 27 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** the public is invited to attend and learn how Ellwood was built and became a thriving plantation. Taming the Wilderness is free to the public, with donations gratefully accepted. All donations will be applied to the continuing restoration of Ellwood.

Constructed circa 1790, Ellwood Manor has an impressive history spanning the early Federal period, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the 20th Century. Today, as part of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, much emphasis is rightfully placed on the stately manor's Civil War heritage. From the wounding of Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville to the terrible fighting in the Wilderness, many important Civil War events occurred in and around the home.

The September 27 event will, however, focus on an earlier period, the "taming" of The Wilderness, some of the wildest land in Virginia in the last quarter of the 18th century.

Activities occurring throughout the day are interactive and will include

- Demonstrations of traditional masonry styles and techniques, by John Friedrichs of New Dimensions Building, Rockingham County.
- Demonstrations of the tools and techniques used to work logs into shape for use in building construction, by Craig Jacobs of Salvagewrights in Orange.
- Blacksmithing and traditional ironworking, demonstrated by Ross Sullivan and Nick Tzortzinis of Cherry Hill Forge, in King George.
- Demonstrations of spinning and weaving, by members of the Fredericksburg Spinners and Weavers Guild.
- Displays of frontier arms and tools by the Westmoreland Longhunters.
- Explanation of joinery and various other structural techniques and interior features of architecture of the period by Langley Freeauf.
- Discussion and demonstration of food preparation and open-hearth cooking by Susan Titus.
- Children's games from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Guided tours of the newly restored portions of the house will be available throughout the day. This is a rain or shine event, with water, juice and snacks available on the grounds.

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield is a non-profit, all volunteer organization devoted to assisting the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in efforts to preserve the Wilderness Battlefield in Orange and Spotsylvania Counties. With more than 230 members, the Friends provide advocacy, educational programs and service

projects for the battlefield. Be sure to visit the group's Web site at www.fowb.org for additional information about FoWB.

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