

History in our Backyard

Q1 2019



Compiled by:



FRIENDS OF WILDERNESS BATTLEFIELD

To preserve, protect and interpret the Wilderness Battlefield in partnership with the National Park Service

FoWB

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Friends of Wilderness Battlefield is a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to the preservation, advocacy, and interpretation of the Wilderness and the battlefield. For more information, or for information on joining, please visit our website at www.fowb.org.



PREFACE

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield, Inc. (FoWB) began in 1995 as a small group of local residents who recognized a need to assist the National Park Service (NPS) in the preservation and maintenance of the Wilderness Battlefield which was located in their back yard. Over the years the organization has evolved and grown to over 200 members with dozens of member volunteers who not only provide maintenance assistance to NPS, but also provide education and advocacy for the Park, the battlefields and the local area.

One of the pressing questions we, as an organization, continuously ask is “How do we instill a sense of ownership in the general public so that they feel compelled to preserve our national treasures, like our battlefields?” One of the answers is “Educate folks on the rich and varied history of the area in which they live”.

This series of articles called **History in our Backyard** will hopefully help local residents, and all visitors to the area for that matter, realize that the local history of Orange and Spotsylvania Counties needs to be preserved and shared with generations to come.

Kudos to all of our volunteers who have taken the time to write these great articles!

Mark Leach
President FoWB



INTRODUCTION

History in our Backyard, a product of the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB), was created by FoWB's Special Programs and Education Outreach Committees. It consists of a series of articles designed to share the history of the Wilderness region with the residents who live in and around this hallowed ground. The articles focus on either a particular event or a historical period that brings to life the area's rich and vibrant history dating from the earliest settlers to the present day. These brief glimpses into the Wilderness' history are intended to encourage residents of all ages living in and around Spotsylvania and Orange Counties to learn and appreciate the significant impact that this area has had on our local and national history.

For years the Battle of the Wilderness has been under-appreciated by most Americans. Experience tells us that local residents have a limited knowledge of the 1864 battle's impact, as the first battle in the Overland Campaign and the first face-to-face encounter between Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. Further, many residents are unaware that the history of the Wilderness in general is both a microcosm of Virginia history even predating the birth of our Nation and a story of agricultural and general economic development in a rural setting.

History in our Backyard is also designed to capture our FoWB members' wealth of knowledge about various aspects of the Wilderness. We encourage our volunteers to share with others a particular moment, event, or period in Wilderness history about which they are knowledgeable. These are not intended to be scholarly works of history but rather tidbits of information about the land for the people who share that land today. We hope our neighbors will become more engaged with their surroundings by having their neighbors – our volunteers – share their insights into the region through this brief picture.

Our initial concept was to make these short pictures into history available to local communities' newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and websites. But **History in our Backyard** is growing beyond our initial expectations. We anticipated no more than a handful of articles a year but that number is increasing and we are reaching more local communities and at least one county-wide medium. Possibly the most significant expansion will be this compilation of all the articles, as they get published elsewhere, residing on our webpage.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for improving our product and for future subjects. We would even welcome your participation as an author of an article on a topic that is of interest to you and would add to the knowledge of our readership.

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1 UNTOLD STORIES 2019: “LOOKED FOR IN THE HOUR OF DANGER – BUT TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT IN THE TIME OF PEACE”



Black History Month Special Event

Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FoWB) is co-sponsoring a Black History Month event on February 22 (rain date, March 1) composed of four vignettes in several churches in old town Fredericksburg. Each vignette will depict a scene portraying African American involvement in one of four major wars, from the Revolutionary War to World War II (WWII). The history of the nation’s response to their service is conflicted!

From the outset, African Americans performed with honor, and many died in service to their country. They fought on both sides during the Revolutionary War with a promise of freedom from slavery after the conflict ended. During the Civil War, nearly 180,000 blacks served in the Union Army and Navy. Twice that number (350,000) joined the American Expeditionary Force in Europe in World War I, and over 700 African Americans died in the European and Pacific theaters during World War II. Many of these veterans were awarded medals for courage.

Exhibit 1 US Colored Troops during the Civil War

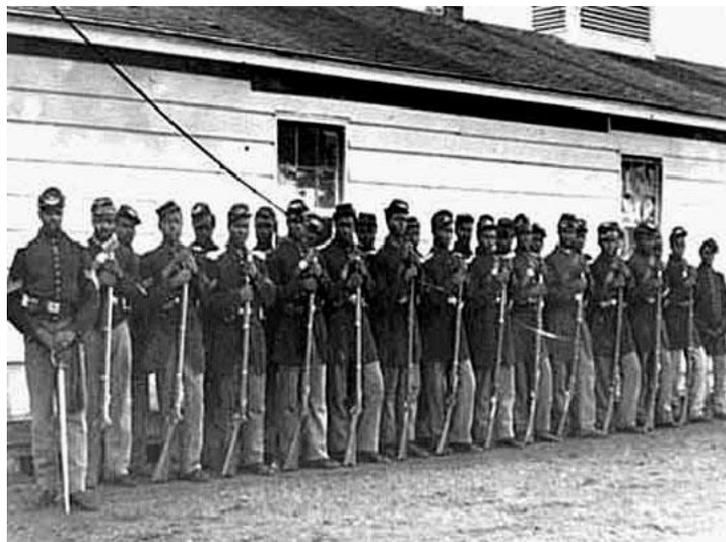




Exhibit 2 Phillis Wheatley



Yet their brave service and sacrifices, both during wartime and after they returned home, were often not recognized. In wartime, African American participation was usually marked by prejudice and the segregation of races. After hostilities ended, they returned home to a continuation of Jim Crow opposition and enmity. It wasn't until President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in 1948 that the Armed Forces were officially integrated. Even after that, resistance persisted.

Next month, there will be an opportunity to experience some of this history "first hand". Each vignette will have local actors portraying scenes

based on real people and their service before and after a particular war. Included will be a look at the relationship between George Washington and Phillis Wheatley, the first U.S. female African American poet; a view of the "lost" Camp Casey near the present day Pentagon that served as a training ground for the all-black 23rd U.S. Colored Infantry; a moment in a foxhole in France with Dr. Urbane Bass, a Fredericksburg physician who gave his life for his country; and finally, a discussion with a local resident who served with the Navy during WWII.

Exhibit 3 Dr. Urbane Bass



This is FoWB's 2nd annual Black History Month Untold Stories event and is co-sponsored by the John J Wright Educational and Cultural Center and the churches in Fredericksburg. To attend, visit www.FoWB.org; a \$10 donation is your entry fee. For more information, contact Dick Rankin at 972-2862 or Barry Thompson at 972-3757.

Author: Barry Thompson

Date: January 2019



2 I'M SHOT, GET THE DOCTOR! (PART 1 OF 2)

Imagine you are a young Civil War Soldier and you have just been wounded on the battlefield. Immediately, you want the assistance of the regimental doctor. But, who was that doctor and how capable was he? (A surgeon, assistant surgeon and a hospital steward were optimally assigned to each regiment.)

At the outbreak of hostilities the surgeon was likely to be the community doctor where the company of which you were a member was recruited or formed. Not all community doctors were equal. Some of them might have gotten their medical knowledge through their career as a drug salesman. Others might have been pharmacists who simply hung up their shield and began treating the needy. Many were not accredited! These lesser-trained doctors were more likely to be assigned as the assistant surgeon with the regiment.

If he had the financial resources a future surgeon may have studied at a university (such as Virginia or Maryland or South Carolina) or a medical school in the eastern United States such as Philadelphia's Jefferson Medical College. The curricula at those institutions in the late 1840's and 1850's usually consisted of 4 to 7 lectures, which were bought individually. In the first year the student studied those topics in the lecture hall. The same series of lectures were repeated in the second year and an optional written thesis was added. When the thesis was accepted the student was granted his medical degree. At almost no point during those two years of study did the student experience laboratory or practical application of his classroom studies. He certainly had little experience in treating gun-shot wounds or cannonball shrapnel injuries or broken bone injuries prior to his assignment to his regiment.

Confederate Army regulations were adopted in 1862 requiring an examination of medical applicants before their promotion and/or appointment to a regiment. Dr. Alexander A. McQueen of Alabama passed through the examination process in Richmond. Upon his successful completion, he was appointed to the 2nd NC Infantry Battalion, of Daniels Brigade, Rhodes Division.

At Ellwood, two Confederate Infantry Regiments were left behind when Stonewall Jackson's 2nd Corps moved away following the Flank March after the Battle of Chancellorsville. Dr. John A. Graham was a prominent physician in Lexington, VA prior to his assignment to the 5th VA

Exhibit 4 Civil War Apothecary Case





Infantry Regiment, one of the Regiments left at the mansion house. Dr. Graham, who was medical-school trained, was placed in charge of this convalescent hospital.

The wounded Civil War soldier, if he was fortunate, was retrieved from the battlefield by his recovery/burial unit and taken to a regimental/brigade hospital. If your wounds were too severe, you might be transported to the corps hospital. At any one of these medical stations a doctor might perform an amputation of your seriously injured arm or leg. Recovery from the wounds and surgery would occur at a convalescent hospital like the one set up at Ellwood.

Authors: Bob Epp/Bob Lookabill/John Kanaster

Date: February 2019

3 THE HOSPITAL AT ELLWOOD MANOR (PART 2 OF 2)

After the Battle of Chancellorsville in May of 1863, the Confederate medical staff had at least 132 soldiers who were too severely wounded to be moved. The solution was to create a hospital at the Lacy House/Ellwood roughly one mile from the 2nd Corps hospital at Wilderness Tavern. 2nd Corps surgeon Harvey Black wrote his wife on the 10 May, “All the wounded have been left under the charge of Dr. Graham (John Alexander Graham) at Major Lacy’s house, a beautiful place, fine house and an ice house well filled.” Dr. Lafayette Guild (Chief Surgeon) wrote to Dr. Samuel Moore (Surgeon General) about the situation on 22 May, “Most of the cases were comminuted fractures of the upper head of the thigh and the thigh amputations. They are comfortably provided for with bedding, bunks, change of clothing, medical supplies & dressings.”

While the hospital at Wilderness Tavern is famous as the site of the amputation of Stonewall Jackson’s arm, it also probably provided most of the supplies and beds for Ellwood. We have a copy of the invoice where tavern owner William Simms was reimbursed for “1000 pailings (sic) (for bunks)” (quotes in original document) used in the beds at the field hospital and by association probably at Ellwood. That is the extent of our knowledge about the hospital itself. Dr. Guild states that by 6 June “only thirty will remain at Ellwood hospital, yet in no condition to be moved”.

The staff was led by Dr. Graham. He graduated from Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1858 and the University of the City of New York

Exhibit 5 Dr. Graham





Medical Department the following year. He enlisted as assistant surgeon with the Rockbridge County artillery and was ordered to General Jackson's staff in May of 1862. He signed an invoice in August 1863 for reimbursement to J. Horace Lacy for food stuffs consumed at Ellwood hospital. Dr. Graham returned to Lexington after the war and practiced medicine. Another surgeon was Alexander A. McQueen, born in Alabama. He enlisted as Assistant Surgeon on November 13th, 1861 and transferred to the 2nd North Carolina Battalion on August 18th 1863.

Exhibit 6 Examples of Civil War Era Hospitals



One identified patient is Adam Jehu Wilson, a member of Company L of the 4th Virginia Regiment. On May 3, 1863, he was wounded and his right arm was amputated by Dr. Harvey Black. He survived the war, married and named his second son Harvey Black Wilson. We also know the names of seven men who died while patients. They were buried on the property and later moved to the Confederate Cemetery in Fredericksburg.

It appears the hospital was closed sometime shortly after September 14th 1863, the date of the death of patient Daniel Humphrey. Given Dr. McQueen's transfer on 18 August, it appears the facility was moving toward closure probably with only a few terminal patients remaining.

Authors: Bob Lookabill/John Kanaster/Bob Epp

Date: March 2019