



The Dispatch

Volume 2 Number 1

Winter 2002

News & Happenings of The Friends of South Mountain State Battlefield

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I was asked recently "What are The Friends primary concerns?" Who are we?

Preservationist? If so, our imprint on protecting the legacy of South Mountain's past has begun. The trials and tribulations of the preservation process-from idea to fruition in our transient society-are many.

A Heritage Society? Yes, our interests are dedicated to interpreting the fascinating and worthwhile history of South Mountain for its future utility and adaptive educational uses.

Civil War Enthusiasts? Re-enactors are rediscovering our prominent past and the forgotten fighters of 1861 to 1865 when more than three-quarters of a million men in blue and grey camped, marched and fought up and down the South Mountain region.

Are we a Trust? Certainly aspects of our organization are tasked to establish South Mountain's separate identity as a Landmark site and to protect its significant historical associations.

We are fortunate to have members interested in all of these areas and more - members of skill, experience and energy. We are uniting as an important leadership collaborative in which each member is a contributor and supporter of the others efforts. Together we are becoming one recognizable character "The Friends" of South Mountain.

Bill Clipper, President

BATTLEFIELD UPDATE

Things continue to happen fast and furiously for the battlefield. Renovations to the Washington Monument office are going well. Over \$24,000 worth of office equipment, computers, carpeting, HVAC etc., will be going into this effort. This will eventually become the office for the battlefield operations. I have hired two new seasonal employees to work at the museum at Washington monument, which is going through it's own facelift to get it open for summer too. I am checking into the budget to see if it will be possible to hire a second seasonal for Gathland too. Chuck Wierer will be back in his role as an interpreter at Gathland again and he has already signed his paperwork. There will also be a seasonal ranger hired for the mountain. They will work primarily as a maintenance person, but will also assist the rangers by opening and closing parks and some patrol work. Just like the rangers themselves, the seasonal rangers will rotate through Greenbrier, so you will actually see several different people working on the battlefield through the summer. The interviews for the two Park Service Associate positions will start soon. These are the two classified positions that will help me with the interpretation of the battlefield. So hopefully, before too long, we will actually have a staff here for the battlefield.

I have been talking with Antietam Battlefield personnel, along with several other people, about loans of Civil War related items and artifacts. These are being arranged and, once we have some display cases, we will be able to

borrow these items for display purposes.

The dedication program for the park's new cannon, which hasn't arrived yet, will be on May 11 at 2:00 at Fox's Gap. That location was chosen due to it's being in the condition most like it was during the battle. There will be a few surprises and extra treats for everyone, so plan on being there. Other events for the battlefield will include; park clean up day on April 6, several other artillery demonstrations, the candlelight tour in August, our living history weekend in September, and a reunion of "The Iron Brigade" in June. A full list will be out shortly. A dedication of the Blue & Grey Education society's interpretive markers is also planned for September.

As always, please contact me directly (301) 432-8065 with any questions or if you want additional information. This is looking to be an exciting year and I hope you are as enthused about these events as I am.

Ranger Al Preston

NEWS

Townsend and Boneventure Letters Acquired The Friends have been very fortunate in acquiring 17 letters written by George Alfred Townsend to his son-in-law Edmond Boneventure. The letters were left in a box at the Thrift Shop of the Samaritan Center in Ooltewah, TN and staff gave them to Mr. John Lamb, the Fundraising Coordinator. Mr. Lamb was raised in

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News Continued

MD and thought the name Townsend sounded familiar, so he looked in the Internet, found our site and contacted us. The rest, as the saying goes, is history. The box also contained about 600 letters to Boneventure from his family and friends, many of which are in French. The Friends wish to thank Mr. David Rasmussen, Townsend's great-great grandson, for the generous donation he has made to purchase the family letters. The Friends are planning an exhibit of the letters and never-before-seen photographs in June. The exhibit will be open daily from 9:00 am – 5:30 pm until October 27th at Gathland State Park. If anyone is fluent in French and can assist in translating some of the letters for the exhibit, please contact Marge Magruder at (703) 443-8475.

The 2002 Museum Season begins on April 6th. Two new interpreters have been hired, and along with Docent Chuck Wierer, will be staffing the museums and developing new interpretive programs. This year the museums will be open 7 days a week from 9 am - 5:30 pm. The Friends still need docents, especially those interested in the Civil War aspects of the area, to interpret on a regular basis and at special events (see calendar in newsletter). If interested, call Chuck at (301) 293-2812 at the end of March.

Art Raffle This years art raffle will be a Rick Reeves' print titled "South Mountain." It depicts the mortal wounding of Brig. Gen. Samuel Garland, Jr., C.S.A. at the Battle of South Mountain.. It is beautifully matted and framed. A wonderful tribute to the 140th Anniversary of the Battle of South Mountain. The print will be on display throughout the season at Gapland Hall in Gathland State Park. The drawing will be at Gapland Hall when we celebrate Museums by Candlelight on December 14th. Tickets are available at Gathland State Park or on the FSMSB web site: www.fsmsb.org Please support this fundraising event.

Feature Article Presented by Anne Long

THE MYSTERY OF LT. JOHN MOONEY, 9TH NEW HAMPSHIRE VOL. INF.

Antique stores often yield mysteries and the one in Bunker Hill, WV was no exception. An old paper with typewritten information on it, told me that the small picture, a collapsible drinking cup and a soldier's "Housewife" for sewing supplies had belonged to Lt. John Mooney of the 9th New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry. These were troops that had fought at Fox's Gap before going on to Antietam and fighting at Burnside's Bridge. It would be easy to write up a brief summary of Lt. Mooney's part in the action. I could not imagine the surprise that awaited me when I received a copy of the regimental history.

Lieut. John Mooney of Company A. Ninth New Hampshire volunteers, was born in Holderness village (now Ashland), November 19, 1840. His real name was Rufus M. Merrill. His father was John Mooney Merrill, also born in Holderness, and was in his time one of the most prominent business men in this town. His mother was the daughter of Deacon Moses Cheney, and a sister of Gov. P. C. Cheney. Young Merrill's father died in 1857, and a year or more later he went South, to Thomasville, GA., where he was employed upon a railroad. There the Rebellion caught him. Not being able to get through the military lines, he was impressed into the Confederate army. His regiment was stationed for drill and guard duty at Fernandina, Fla. Late in the autumn of 1861 he, with a friend named John I. McCarthy, of Philadelphia, who had also been impressed, stole a boat and put to sea. They had but little food and only a small supply of fresh water, and with no compass were soon out of sight of land. They drifted they knew not where. Their provisions and water were soon gone. After drifting in this manner for several days, and when nearly dead from hunger and thirst, a vessel came

in sight of them, which they signaled. This proved to be a United States gunboat, in command of Captain Goodon, afterwards Commodore Goodon. They were taken aboard, carried to Hilton Head, and turned over to Gen. O. W. Mitchell, who, after questioning them as to the Confederate armies in South Carolina and Georgia, sent them to New York, each going from there to home. Merrill reached his home, in his Confederate suit, about December 20, 1861, in feeble condition.

The following summer, having partially regained his health, he enlisted in the Ninth New Hampshire under the name John Mooney, was commissioned a lieutenant, and went to the front with his regiment. He served with his regiment faithfully (being closely engaged at the Battle of Antietam with a Georgia regiment), until in 1863, when stationed in Newport News, Va., his health again failing, he resigned and returned to New Hampshire. He afterwards was employed as a clerk in Willard's hotel, Washington, D. C., until the summer of 1866, when he completely broke down in health and went to the old folks home, where on December 23 of that year he died of consumption. The foundation of his disease was undoubtedly laid in the sufferings incident to his bold escape from the Confederate service. Lieutenant Mooney was a true patriot, a genial companion, and had friends wherever he was known. At Willard's hotel he often met Commodore Goodon, who was his friend during his life. He was never married, and his remains lie in Green Grove cemetery, at Ashland, beside those of his father and mother.

This information was copied from History of the Ninth Regiment, New Hampshire Volunteers in The War of the Rebellion, Edited by Edward O. Lord, A. M., Concord, N. H., Printed by the Republican Press Association, 1895 Copyrighted by Wakefield, Wilcox & Blaisdell, Publishing Committee, 1895.

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Feature Article Continued

Was there a Captain Goodon, or a General O. W. Mitchell, and was he at Hilton Head in the fall of 1861? Was Merrill, alias Mooney, really scripted into the Confederate Army, or did he join voluntarily? In the next edition of The Dispatch, follow the story that turns up more mysteries.

**Civil War Preservation Trust Park Cleanup Day - April 6th.**

Members of The Friends of South Mountain Battlefield will be joined by local volunteers to spend the morning sprucing up Gathland State Park for the opening day of the parks museums. If interested in volunteering for this event please contact Anne Long at (301) 371-7195.

Web Site and E-mail. The Wild Acres, LLC has developed FSMSB's Web site. Click on www.FSMSB.org There are photos, history, newsletters, events and more. It is a 'work in progress' that will be updated periodically. Our new E-mail address is info@fmsmb.org

The Dispatch
Sharon Schroebel, Editor

This newsletter is a publication of The Friends of South Mountain State Battlefield, Inc. Its intent and use is solely to promote South Mountain State Battlefield, which is part of the State Forest and Park Service of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The Friends of South Mountain State Battlefield are wholly separate from the Park Service. The Dispatch is published quarterly. The Newsletter deadline is 10 days prior to the first of the month for the next quarterly issue. We welcome your submissions to the newsletter and reserve the right to edit and determine placement of all items submitted.

Dedication of Cannon at Fox's Gap - May 11th. The cannon is a replica of a light 12 pounder bronze cannon, model 1857, commonly called a "Napoleon". The gun will be used for display and programming on the battlefield. This dedication promises to be an exciting time for all. If

All meetings Greenbrier State Park Visitor Center unless otherwise specified. Greenbrier State Park 21843 National Pike (Rt 40) Boonsboro, MD phone 301- 791-4656.

Membership Meetings

All membership meetings 11:00am
May 11th

August 10th

November 9th

Board Meetings

All board meetings 9:00am

May 11th

August 10th

November 9th

Officers/Board Members

Bill Clipper President (301) 834-4491
Chris Anders Vice President CW
(240) 420-6251
Chuck Wierer Vice President Non CW
(301) 293-2812
Marge Magruder Treasurer
(703) 443-8475
OPEN - Secretary
Bob Hayas (301) 371-7785
Sharon Schroebel (301) 416-2865
Bruce Reeder (301) 473-7923
Darce Easton (301) 393-4826
Al Preston (301) 791-4656
Charles Coss (301) 416-2893
Richard Porterfield (301) 293-3676
Willis VanDeVanter (301) 972-7298
Anne Long (301) 371-7195

~ 2002 Calendar ~

Please clip/save and mark your 2002 calendars. Any changes will be reported in subsequent issues of **The Dispatch**.

2002 Events

Apr 6th - CWPT Park Cleanup -
9am to Noon

Apr 6th - Museums Open @
Gathland State Park

May 11th - 2pm - Cannon Dedi-
cation @ Fox's Gap

Jun 22nd & 23rd - Townsend Ex-
hibit @ Gathland State Park

Jul 6th & 7th - Artillery & Infan-
try Demo - 10am - 4pm @ Gath-
land State Park

Aug 17th - 3rd Annual Guided
Candlelight Tour 7:30pm - 10pm

Sept 7th & 8th - Civil War Living
History - 10am - 4pm @ Gathland
State Park

Sept 7th & 8th - Boonsboro Days

(Booth)

Sept 14th - Evening Candlelight
Tour @ Antietam Battlefield

Sept 14th- 2pm- 140th Anniver-
sary Ceremony- dedication of
interpretative signs @ Gathland
State Park

Sept 14th - Antietam Battlefield
(Booth)

Sept 28th & 29th - Middletown
Heritage Days (Booth 10am - 5pm
& Noon - 5pm)

Oct 5th & 6th - Brunswick Rail-
road Days (Booth 10am - 5pm)

Oct 27th - Museums Close

Dec 14th - Museums by Candle-
light at Gapland Hall 2pm - 7pm

PAVILION RENTAL

Gathland State Park pavilion a great place!!! Having a family reunion? Group picnic? Child's birthday party? The pavilion at Gathland is the ideal place to hold these gatherings. For a modest fee you can reserve the pavilion for your exclusive use by calling Marge Magruder at (703) 443-8475.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED!!

Secretary - Seeking detail oriented person to take and transcribe minutes at Board and Membership meetings. For Details call President Bill Clipper at (301) 834-4491.

TIDBITS

Did you know?

56% of American adults volunteer each year.

3.5 hours each week is the average number of hours volunteered.

\$225 billion is the total dollar figure of all volunteer hours in one year (based on \$14.30 per hour value).

Women volunteer more than men. (62% vs. 49%), but men who volunteered gave more time than women (3.6 hrs vs. 3.4 hrs).

86% of people said they volunteered because they felt compassion for those in need.

Source: Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1999.

The Dispatch

Non Profit Org.

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Featured Article by Anne Long

Battlefield Update
