

SAVE HISTORIC



ANTIETAM FOUNDATION

preserving
Antietam
since 1986

December 2009



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There is a potential new feature in this issue. Taking advantage of my many hours of reading veteran's letters to the Battlefield Board, I have decided to share a few of them with you. The first is from the commander of a battery of artillery in the Army of the Potomac. Send us a note at Contact@shaf.org if you like this feature and want to see more letters in the future.

Mannie Gentile, a multi-talented NPS ranger at Antietam National Battlefield and owner of the blog *My Year of Living Rangerously* (www.volunteersinparks.blogspot.com), provides us with an account of the discovery, analysis, and ultimate return to his native state of the recently unearthed remains of a casualty of the Battle of Antietam. Be sure to follow the link at the end of the article to view a video of the ceremony shot and edited by Mannie.

We also continue to feature our member profiles written by Board member Mary Abroe. This issue's member is an old friend of mine and of Antietam Battlefield. Perry Jamieson's book, *Death in September*, has long been a popular book and his generosity to SHAF is well established, so we are pleased to feature him in this issue.

We end this year with a hope for all of you that 2009 has been a good year, that better times lay ahead for all of you, and that your commitment to battlefield preservation will not waver. We expect to hear good news about the Cement Mill property at Shepherdstown Ford soon; it appears that Jefferson County has struck a deal with the owners, and a sale may soon be in the offing. We also are looking at some property near the historic John Brown cabin where we could help create a buffer for that historic site.

Thanks to your help and the help of many others, Antietam continues to improve in appearance. The Miller House is being restored; the Joseph Poffenberger House has been repaired and repainted, this last made possible by a large donation from SHAF. New fencing lines the roads, and new trails have been created. Antietam's future looks bright, and we are proud to play a role in it. Wishing you a happy and prosperous 2010, we look forward to seeing you soon.

Tom Clemens
President, SHAF

New Logo Merchandise Coming Soon

Merchandise (hats, shirts, etc) featuring our new logo will be available soon.

The clothing logos will be stitched. Keep an eye on www.shaf.org to find out when these items will be available and for ordering information.

Our Mission

The mission of SHAF is the preservation and protection of historic sites within the Antietam valley that are related to the Battle of Antietam, the Maryland Campaign, or other Civil War activity in the region. We will accomplish our mission through public education, solicitation of funds, promotion of protective easements and advocacy.

SHAF was incorporated in 1986. It is chartered in Maryland as a non-profit corporation and is exempt from federal tax by Section 501 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible.

Remains of New York Volunteer Returned to Home State

by Mannie Gentile, NPS Ranger,
Antietam National Battlefield

Exactly one year ago, December of 2008, I was up in the observation room of the Visitor Center presenting my battle orientation talk to a group of about thirty visitors. As I spoke of the lasting legacies of the battle, which includes mentioning the 23,110 casualties of September 17, 1862, I cast my eyes northward toward the Cornfield, and for a moment my talk took on a whole new significance for me. In the far distance I could just make out the two white tents and truck of the Park Service archeology team of Dr. Steven Potter, excavating the remains of one of those very casualties of whom I was speaking. For me, it was a battlefield moment unlike any other, an immediate and tangible connection to the event of which I was speaking, it literally gave me a chill.

Two months earlier those remains were discovered by a park visitor who had strayed off the Cornfield trail. The bones, including a fragment of a jaw with four intact teeth had been brought to the surface by groundhog activity. Within 48 hours of the visitor bringing the discovery to the attention of Park personnel the Park Service dispatched an archeologist to make an initial assessment and recommendations.

Recovered, conserved, and analyzed, the remains remained in the care of the NPS archeology office awaiting final disposition. Altogether about 20% of the skeleton and several uniform and equipment fragments were recovered. In that time a great deal was learned about the young soldier. The coat buttons that were recovered with the remains established that the soldier was from one of the New York regiments that participated in the fierce combat in the Cornfield area. As some of the buttons were mismatched it was clear that this soldier had been campaigning for some time already, replacing missing New York State seal buttons with whichever Union eagle buttons were handy. Even though he was no rookie, the young soldier, based upon the forensic evidence, was no older than nineteen years of age, a sobering reminder that often the men fighting this war were only teenagers.

The final journey of the young soldier took place between September 15th and 17th of 2009, 147 years following his death and hasty burial by comrades in that high, rocky area of the Cornfield. In a simple ceremony characterized by dignity, respect, and affection, six Park Rangers, supervised by superintendent John Howard, carried, with great solemnity, a



simple pine coffin containing the remains which they transferred from the lodge building of the Antietam National Cemetery to a waiting hearse and the custody of members of the New York National Guard.

On September 17th the young soldier's journey came to an end as he was interred with great ceremony at Saratoga National Cemetery; the young soldier was home at last.

The entire event was an object lesson for all friends of the park; the battle of Antietam continues to resonate in real and immediate ways, with tangible reminders of the service, and of the sacrifice that characterize "America's Bloodiest Day".

See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9OefwyhR_E for a video of the ceremony.



Photos by Mannie Gentile

From the Archives

by SHAF President Tom Clemens

In hopes that it may interest our readers, and to give them a taste of the memoirs of many veterans of the battle, we will from time to time run a few letters from men who survived the battle. These letters come from the National Archives Antietam Studies files, transcribed for clarity.

Here is a letter from Capt. John D. Frank, Commanding Battery G, 1st NY Light Artillery. Formerly a Private, Corporal, Sergeant and First Sergeant of Light Battery A. 2nd U.S. Arty, Frank was made Captain of this volunteer battery early in the war. He served under Brevet Maj. Henry J. Hunt, Brevet Maj. John Sedgwick, Brevet Lieut. Col. Horace Brooks, Capt W.F. Barry and Capt J.C. Tidball before the war, and commanded his battery with distinction at Antietam. He was mustered out of the service in the spring of 1863.

Lamartine

Fond du Lac Co Wis.

Aug. 16th. [18]93

Col. J. C. Stearns:

Sir.

Your letter herewith enclosed was received by me yesterday, having been forwarded by Capt. Ames, who as Lieut. in Battery "G 1st NY. Light Arty; was absent during the Antietam Campaign on account of sickness contracted during the Penninsular Campaign. In my endeavor to answer you questions for any practical purpose, I am compelled to violate rules of brevity.

1st On the night of Sept. 16th the Battery was not in line.

2nd On the morning of Sept 17th, when the Battle commenced was advancing to, and in Column of Sections, awaiting orders, about 1/2 mile to the right of and in a direct line with Dunker Church and about 1/4 mile in rear of said line.

3rd Upon Sedgwick's repulse advanced (without orders) to a Ridge about 1/2 mile in line with and to the right of Dunker Church; to the head of a Ravine, commencing at the foot of Dunker Church Woods, crossing the Ridge and ending in a piece of heavy timber in our rear, said position being taken to prevent the threatened advance of three hostile Brigades forming at the foot of the Ravine behind the Dunker Woods, with the evident intention of taking French (who after Sedgwick's repulse and before Smith's arrival was thought to be our extreme right) in flank and rear.

4th During the night of the 17th bivouac(k)ed on the position held since about 9.30 A.M. of the 17th.

If more accurate information is desired, would respectfully refer you to Col C. D. Green, Adj't. Gen'ls. Dept. who, as Ass't. Adj't. Gen'l. of Smith's Division gave me the 6th Maine of Hancock's Brigade in support, visited the Battery several times during the heaviest part of the engagement, and for the purpose of his field report would naturally take close notice of topography. He will more readily remember Capt. Frank as the First Sergeant of Brooks's and Barry's Lt. Batty in 2nd U.S. Arty, while himself serving as Lieutenant of said Regiment at Fort Leavenworth.

Respectfully

Your Obedt. Servt.

Jno. [John] D. Frank.

Battery "G"

1st N York Light

Capt Jno D Frank

SHAF Profile: Perry D. Jamieson

Perry Jamieson, a longtime SHAF member, was born in Detroit, Michigan and spent his boyhood in one of its suburbs, Farmington. He grew up reading Bruce Catton, T. Harry Williams, and other historians of the Civil War centennial era. Perry's parents encouraged his interest in history and they gave him his first look at the Antietam battlefield, on a summer vacation trip. That memorable visit made the battle seem more real to him. The terrain of Sharpsburg's farms and the words on the War Department tablets reinforced the historical accounts that he'd read. The experience confirmed in his young mind that there really had been a Battle of Antietam: it wasn't a story made up by Bruce Catton and other writers.

During his university days Perry was glad to learn that it might be possible to make a living at something he loved, American military history. That discovery eventually led him to earn a doctorate in history, to teach for a short time at the University of Texas at El Paso, and to work for many years for the Air Force. He wrote two books about air power history; *Death In September*, an overview of the Maryland campaign; and three other works about the Civil War and the period after it. Throughout his career, Perry always has enjoyed meeting people with an interest in the American past and in historic preservation.

The Antietam battlefield has been the scene of a number of milestones in Perry's life. For example, he met Stephanie Deats at Michigan State, they married, and spent part of their honeymoon at Antietam. "Ever since then," Perry reports, "I've had people—especially women—tell me that it was an odd thing for me to drag a new wife to a Civil War battlefield. I've never understood that. Antietam is a much better place to visit than Niagara Falls."

The Antietam battlefield also played a role in another milestone in Perry's life, his retirement from serving as the Air Force's senior historian. In 1995, while he and Stephanie were living in Crofton, Maryland, they bought a house and cottage in Sharpsburg. For years they rented the residence and enjoyed spending weekends in the smaller building. Perry recently ended his Air Force career and he and Stephanie moved into their Sharpsburg house. The cottage has become an office and guest house.

After moving to Sharpsburg, Perry now can spend more time hiking his favorite place, the Antietam battlefield. He's always been impressed with the sharp contrast between the area's past and present. On September 17, 1862 the Antietam valley was the terrifying scene of horrific events. Today it's a reassuring landscape of peaceful fields. "I've seen a lot of battlefields," Perry says, "ones in the United States and elsewhere—Marston Moor, Culloden, Waterloo, and many others. None of them takes hold of me the way that Antietam does."

Perry is concerned that, as historian Grady McWhiney once put it, "Americans are in danger of losing their history." He and Stephanie appreciate what SHAF has done to answer that threat. "If we don't preserve the Antietam battlefield," Perry believes, "a crucial part of our national past will disappear forever. We can't let that happen. That's why SHAF is so important."

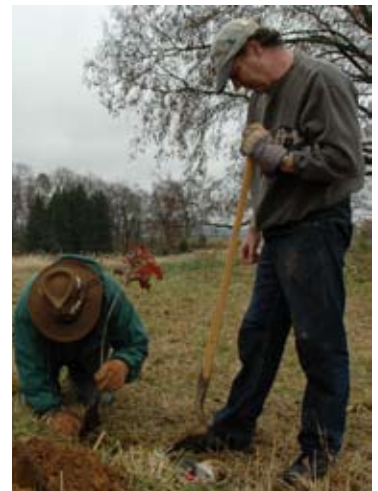
New Book by SHAF Board Member John Schildt!

Long-time author and SHAF co-founder John Schildt has written another book. Many of you know John as the author of over a dozen books, most dealing with Antietam. His latest, *Personalities at Antietam*, is compilation of short biographies of many people connected with the battle of Sharpsburg/Antietam. Not only does John provide sketches of the lives of the leading figures of the battle, and some not so famous, he also includes many people who have been important to the battlefield over the years.

All of the Presidents who have visited the battlefield are included, as are many residents and a few Park employees. Several SHAF members, including Tom Clemens and Dennis Frye, are in the book, as are an interesting collection of other people. This book is now on sale at the Antietam Museum Store or you can email us at contact@shaf.org and we can arrange a signed copy. The book is \$15, and a portion of the proceeds go to SHAF. Thanks John for another interesting book and your generosity to SHAF.

Work Day Photos

Photos by Angela Clemens



Restoration of the East Woods

by SHAF President Tom Clemens

A misty and cloudy day did not dampen the spirits of 15 SHAF members who gathered on Saturday November 14 to replant a section of the historic East Woods. The last of the three major woodlots on the northern end of the field, East Woods was much larger at the time of the battle than its current footprint. Starting last year the Natural Resources group at Antietam began to plant seedlings in a five acre patch adjoining the current woodlot. Our members pitched in with a will, and by noon had planted several dozen seedlings in a cleared lot just south and east of the Cornfield. Although the weather was moist, no hard rain fell, and the damp soil is ideal for tree planting. Our work will be obvious to visitors from the Cornfield tour stop, look for the tubes used to protect the seedlings from the many deer that live in the park.

Our semi-annual Work Days have become a tradition at the battlefield, and the effort to restore the historic scenery of the field is appreciated by the park staff and visitors. We usually work on Saturday mornings, once in the spring and once in the fall. Watch our website, SHAF.org for announcements of our next date. Please join us!

We've Made Our List and Checked it Twice

We have eliminated from our mailing list anyone who has not made a contribution to SHAF since December 31, 2007. This has resulted in significant savings that can be put toward our preservation efforts. If you feel you have been removed from our delivery list in error, drop us an email at contact@shaf.org

Newsletter as e-Letter

This is the first issue of the SHAF newsletter that has been delivered - in part - electronically. The e-Letter features color photographs and clickable links, (web links in the text and banner of the e-Letter should work when you left click on them) which you don't get with the printed and mailed (and much more expensive) paper copy. Every penny saved by not printing and mailing a newsletter means another penny for battlefield preservation. If you'd like to receive the e-Letter (which can also be printed by you, if you wish), drop us an email at Contact@shaf.org. Keep in mind that you must be a current member of SHAF to receive the Newsletter or the e-Letter.