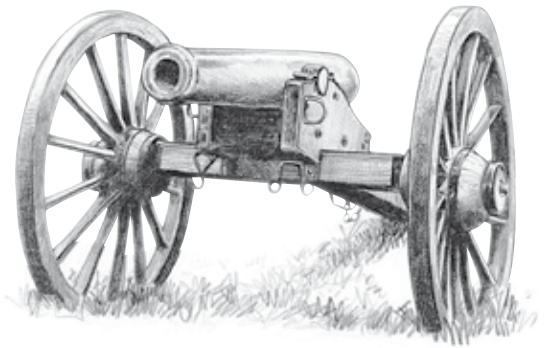


SAVE HISTORIC

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Greetings folks!

As 2014 comes to a close we'd like to give you a summary of what we've done this, and what we see on the horizon. As always, we want to thank you for your support and generosity over the past year. We also want to keep you up to date with what is happening at Antietam Battlefield.

HARSH AWARD

Our 2013 Harsh Award recipient, Ms. Jamesina Thatcher, has produced a very interesting and useful topographical study of the battlefield terrain and the role it played in the combat of the September 17, 1862. Her paper, with coordinates of all the terrain features mentioned in Ezra Carman's history of the battle, is now posted on our website.

The 2014 applications received did not meet the standards we set, and no award was made for that year.

BURNSIDE BRIDGE DAMAGED

The cold winter aggravated the freeze-thaw pattern of Burnside Bridge causing part of the upstream face of the bridge to collapse into Antietam Creek. Luckily the damage was slight and was repaired by early summer. The bad news is that a structural study of the bridge indicated that more problems will occur without a major repair program. The NPS folks are planning and seeking funds to accomplish this task, but nothing is definite at this time.



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.

SHAF MEMBER PROFILE: SHARON MURRAY

Those of us who care about Antietam come from all over the United States and abroad. We are women and men of diverse backgrounds who are engaged in all kinds of work. What we share is our passion for one special place and its preservation. Happily, Sharon Murray and this writer have something else in common: we discovered that we are birthday twins! She's also from a state that would seem to make her a bigger fan of western wilderness parks than a Civil War battlefield in western Maryland. Perhaps most interestingly, Sharon is the first individual of her gender to pass the rigorous series of exams that qualify her to be a Certified Antietam Guide. And she was kind enough to respond to a series of questions in order to provide the material for this profile. Here, then, is Sharon Murray in her own words:

I was born and raised in McCall, Idaho. In first grade I went to school with six other students (Grades 1 through 8) in Warren, Idaho, a historic mining town that dates from the early 1860s. The remainder of my schooling prior to college was at McCall-Donnelly grade school, junior high, and high school. I went to college at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho. In December 1977 I received a BA in political science and history. The following year I received an MA in history, and in 1984 an MS in mining engineering.

During summer vacation while attending the university, I worked underground at the Lucky Friday Mine in Mullan, Idaho for Hecla Mining Company—an awesome experience. After graduation in 1984, I worked two summers for the U.S. Forest Service in minerals management and then four seasons for Coeur d'Alene Mines at the Coeur-Thunder Mountain Mine adjacent to the Frank Church Wilderness in central Idaho. From 1989 to 2009 I worked for the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) as a mineral resource technician, mineral leasing specialist, and finally as a minerals program manager dealing with mined land reclamation and mineral leasing on the state's endowment lands. For five years, while with IDL, I worked on an incident management team in wild land fire suppression.

I enjoy traveling, photography, collecting antiques, and sharing time with my Rottweiler, Shiloh. Before my traveling companions—husband, mother-in-

law, and brother-in-law—passed away, we used to take family vacations yearly to Europe, South and Central America, Africa, and various places in the United States. I still travel some now, mostly to Civil War battlefields.

I always enjoyed history, thus my initial interest in the subject as a college major. (In fact, I wrote my MA thesis on the history of a mining district in central Idaho.) Initially I intended to go to law school, but that did not pan out so I got an engineering degree instead. Combining my interests, I have published a number of articles on Idaho mining history in various professional magazines. I also have won awards in several photo contests for pictures taken at historic sites and Civil War fields. I dabbled in Civil War history while in college, and eventually my husband and I came east in 2003 to Harpers Ferry, Antietam, and Gettysburg. We both enjoyed the trip, and after my husband passed away in 2004 I got interested seriously in Civil War history and traveling to battlefields. (It gave me something to focus on after his passing.) My study of Civil War history has snowballed from there.

Historic preservation is important, as it provides visual reminders and the physical presence of landscapes and man-made features that enable us to experience cultures and history that preceded us. I became interested in and supportive of historic preservation for many years before I became associated with Antietam or SHAF. I cannot completely define why Antietam holds such a unique interest for me or why its existence compelled me to uproot myself and move 2,500 miles from my lifelong home. Having said that, however, I think Antietam is important for what it represents: the opportunity to recognize and honor the soldiers who fought and died there. I also believe that the protected battlefield offers the chance for visitors to learn about and hopefully appreciate the sacrifices of soldiers and civilians who impacted and were impacted by the battle of Antietam. I joined SHAF after visiting Antietam in 2003. Joining the organization and now participating in SHAF events is my small way of contributing to and promoting the battlefield's preservation for current and future generations.

While studying family genealogy over the years, I found out I have at least two ancestors who fought

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for the Union in the Civil War. Louis Seiler, a great-great-grandfather, was an immigrant from Hesse-Cassel who fought with the Fifth Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery. Another relative, James A. Joslin, was with Company D, First Rhode Island Cavalry; he was taken prisoner on June 18, 1863 at Middleburg, Virginia—but later exchanged. The irony of my having moved east is that now I live within a couple of hour's drive of the burial sites (Salisbury and Somerset, Pennsylvania) of Louis Seiler and another great-great-grandfather, William Murray—both of whom were coal miners. Maybe, after all, I just have returned to my roots.

WORK DAYS

Our Spring Work Day was quite successful with a turnout of about 14 people, and we cleared a large section of fence line near the Middle Bridge. I never get tired of working the restore the historic landscape around Sharpsburg, and from the support shown this day, I am not alone. If you've never attended one of our work days, I encourage you to come out to one. It is an incredibly rewarding experience.



The November Work Day was cold, a bit rainy and thus not well attended, but two hearty volunteers braved the elements that day. They cleared several truck-loads of dead locust trees from the portion of the Piper farm bordering the Boonsboro-Shepherdstown Turnpike (rt. 34). By their efforts a view of the Bloody lane tower is now possible from more parts of the field. We will post the Spring Work Day dates on our website as soon as they are confirmed.

Wilson Farm

Many of you are familiar enough with the battlefield to know the post-war farm just south of the Cornfield, known as the Wilson farm. This triangular-shaped property of approximately 44.4 acres borders on Cornfield Avenue, Hagerstown Pike and Smoketown Road, and was the site of more casualties on September 17 than the Cornfield itself. This property is under an older, weak easement, and is still privately owned, the last large tract on the northern part of the field that is not accessible for battlefield trampers.

Sadly, Mr. Wilson died this spring. The buildings of the farm are in disrepair, and it is unclear what the family will do with the farm. If they choose to sell it, SHAF will be ready to assist in its acquisition and also aid in restoring the land to its war-time appearance.



East Woods Intrusion



Many of you who have visited Antietam will remember the small house along the Smoketown Road in the East Woods. It has been there for many years, and while it should not be there, it is fairly unobtrusive. Unfortunately the house was a rental property owned by a neighbor on an adjacent farm who is, mildly stated, no friend to the National Park Service. That person recently sold the house and about 5 acres to the person renting the house, no public listing of the sale was ever made. The new owner is taking advantage of a loose easement from the 1970's that did not prohibit building for agricultural use. The result is that a new barn is going up on the five acres property and near the house. Worse, it stands out very clearly to people traversing the tour route.

How can such a thing happen, you might ask? This new intrusion highlights an old problem: loose easements on inholding properties. When the park began buying easements the dominant threat was housing subdivisions. In order to get local farmers to put land under easement to prevent new houses the NPS had to allow farming activity to continue, and restricting any new farm buildings was a deal-breaker for many people. The easements were never reviewed or updated as time went by, and given the current tight financial situation (see related story) there is no money to buy more restrictive easements now. SHAF has talked about pursuing easement holders about selling more restrictive easements, and it will be discussed at the march General Membership meeting.

The entire NPS battlefield boundary is under a Washington County special Zoning restriction, limiting size, appearance, etc. Unfortunately it too only applies to houses and commercial structures, not agricultural structures, so the Historic District Commission had no jurisdiction.

The new owner was required to consult with Superintendent Trail of Antietam National Battlefield, but she did not have the option to deny the permit, only to consult on size, location and exterior appearance. She did the best she could to locate it near where an older smaller building once stood. It is possible that some screening trees will be planted along the tour road to minimize the visual impact of the structure. We at SHAF regret this new intrusion, but for the time being, it is now a part of the visual landscape of East Woods and there isn't anything we can do about it.

From January 15, 2015 Herald-Mail SHARPSBURG — The National Park Service is proposing to increase fees at Antietam National Battlefield for 2015 — a step that also is being taken at about 130 other national parks across the country. The proposal for the first potential increase since 2006 would raise per-person fees from \$4 to \$5 for three days and per-vehicle fees from \$6 to \$10 for three days. Annual passes would increase \$10, from \$20 to \$30, according to a park service news release.

“Those of us at Antietam are committed to keeping the battlefield affordable, and we also want to continue providing visitors with the best possible experience,” Susan Trail, superintendent of the battlefield near Sharpsburg, said in the release. “The money generated from entrance and group camping fees is critical to our ability to maintain battlefield facilities and resources and to provide high-quality visitor services.”

Comments on the proposed increases are being accepted online through Feb. 11 at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/antietamfees. The feedback will help determine how, or whether, the increases would be implemented, the park service said.

Recent fee projects at Antietam National Battlefield include emergency stabilization of the Burnside Bridge following the collapse of a small section of stone wall; preservation work on historic structures, including the Roulette House and Joseph Poffenberger Barn; battlefield landscape restoration on the historic Otto Farm; and enhanced interpretive and education services, officials said.

Fee revenues will be used to fund a preservation maintenance project this spring on the Private Soldiers' Monument, known as “Old Simon,” at the Antietam National Cemetery, which is part of the battlefield's preparations for commemorating the 150th anniversary of the cemetery's dedication in 2017, the release said. Antietam National Battlefield attracted more than 500,000 visitors in 2012, generating \$27.5 million for the local economy and supporting 361 tourism-related jobs, the release said.

Planned Giving

Although SHAF has never pushed for a “planned giving” program, we were the recipient of a donation from the estate of long-time member Hugh Ripley. Mr. Ripley was kind enough to provide a donation to SHAF in his will; the first time SHAF has received such a donation. While we do not hope to receive more of these anytime soon, it is a nice way to ensure the permanent preservation of the most critical campaign of the Civil War. Anyone wishing more information on how to go about this may contact us, or any estate planner.

Harpers Ferry Land Purchase

Certainly one of the major aspects of the Maryland Campaign of 1862 was Gen. Stonewall Jackson’s siege and capture of Harpers Ferry. We received a request from Civil War Trust to partner with them in purchasing a portion of the battlefield west of town where Gen. A. P. Hill’s men provided the advance that clinched the surrender of the Union garrison. This property, known in 1862 as the Alstadt farm, also figured in John Brown’s raid of 1859, as slaves were taken from the Alstadt farm by Brown’s men. By donating \$5,000 we were able to leverage \$100,000 towards the purchase of this property. Seldom do we get an opportunity to match donations at a 20-1 ratio! This purchase is a significant step in preserving an important part of the Maryland Campaign, and our board thought it was a wise use of our funds. Those familiar with the area will recognize this land as the big flea market between Bolivar Heights and Schoolhouse Ridge. Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to help save this land and eradicate the commercial intrusion. The land will be donated to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Shepherdstown Ford Progress

Good things continue to happen at Shepherdstown Ford. The National Park Service held their final public meeting on taking this historic site into the NPS system. The “preferred option” is for it to be added to Antietam National battlefield and administered as a satellite site. We are awaiting a final decision, but it appears the addition of the final battle of the MD Campaign will soon attain a better level of protection. In the meantime the SBPA has acquired and leveled two houses on Trough Road in the part of the battlefield near the ford and central to interpreting the site. The court case regarding the large tract at the heart of the battlefield will be heard by the WV Supreme Court soon, and we hope for good news there as well.

General Membership Meeting, March 21, 2015

SHAF has been around a long time. In fact, 2015 will mark our 30th anniversary as an organization. In that time we have accomplished a lot in terms of preserving the Antietam and MD Campaign sites. But with that success we think the time has come to meet and reexamine our mission, goals and structure of SHAF. To that end, we have scheduled a General Membership meeting for March 21, 2015. The meeting is at the Mumma House on Antietam Battlefield, beginning at 10:00 a.m. An agenda will be posted soon on the website. We hope to see you there and are anxious to listen to any suggestions you might have about the future direction and mission for SHAF.

SAVE HISTORIC ANTIETAM FOUNDATION

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Search for a Battlefield

A new and exciting opportunity has come to our attention this month. While the battle on Elk Ridge north of Harpers Ferry on September 13, 1862 is well known, the exact location has not been pinpointed by historians until very recently. This battle, the first real combat of the MD Campaign of 1862, and the first real conflict in Maryland, is also probably the only substantial battle site not exactly located, but we're very close! SHAF board members Tom Clemens, Dennis Frye and Bill Maharay hiked up Elk Ridge to look for the site, with someone who has been searching for, and studying the battle for some time.

While the hike was rigorous, (to say the least, or was it just my age?) the reward was worth it. We found two small trenches, perhaps where Union soldiers of the Harpers Ferry garrison first skirmished with Kershaw's and Barksdale's brigades of McLaws' division in the struggle for control of the key terrain that would determine the fate of Harpers Ferry. Archeological exploration has not found any evidence of severe fighting here, but the process is not complete. If we can verify the site of the main battle we will explore options for easement protection of the core of the battlefield site. The board of SHAF will continue working on this project and hope to have good news early in 2012.

