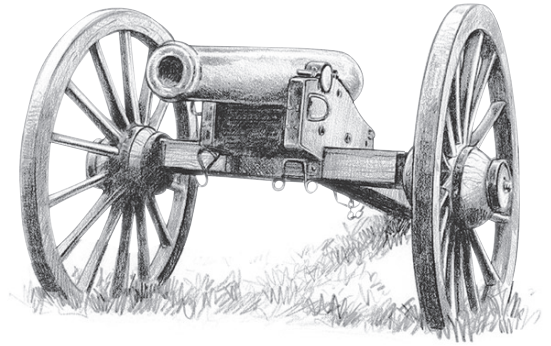


SAVE HISTORIC



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I spent several minutes staring at a blank screen trying to find something good to say about 2020. It has been a tough year for all of us. Let's hope 2021 will be much better.

We did have a SHAF Workday in March, just when the COVID pandemic was becoming an issue, but we social-distanced, masked up, and accomplished a great deal. The good news is that almost all the nine acres of the Poffenberger Tract are cleared, and it is now looks much like the meadow it was in 1862. The bad news is that the American Battlefield Trust and National Park Service have not yet struck a deal that will allow us to demolish the house and outbuildings. Hopefully, a deal will be made this year.

Of course, the Annual Meeting and Fall Workday were cancelled, the safety of our membership being paramount. The battlefield itself has not closed, but the Visitors Center was shut down most of the spring and summer. It is open now only for the bookstore, restrooms, and the front desk for NPS staff to orient and greet visitors. Nevertheless, on weekends there are a lot of people out and about the battlefield. Many are recreational users, but there are lots of folks touring the field, too. All appreciate the good work we've done in the past several years.

We are going out on a limb a bit and scheduling a Workday for spring and an annual meeting in late spring. Dates, which are to be determined, will be disseminated by email, the website and on our Facebook page.

We also are grateful that many of you are still contributing to SHAF, and our membership is holding steady at about 350 individuals and/or households. Because SHAF has no paid staff, our overhead is small -- in fact, printing and mailing this newsletter are our biggest annual expenses. We see several potential property purchase opportunities in our future but nothing concrete. Be assured: We will call on you when the time comes.

Also, we are excited about the recently surfaced map of the Harpers Ferry battlefield (see newsletter for more) and hope you will answer the appeal connected with it. As always, we are grateful for your support and input.

Tom Clemens
President, SHAF

Our Mission

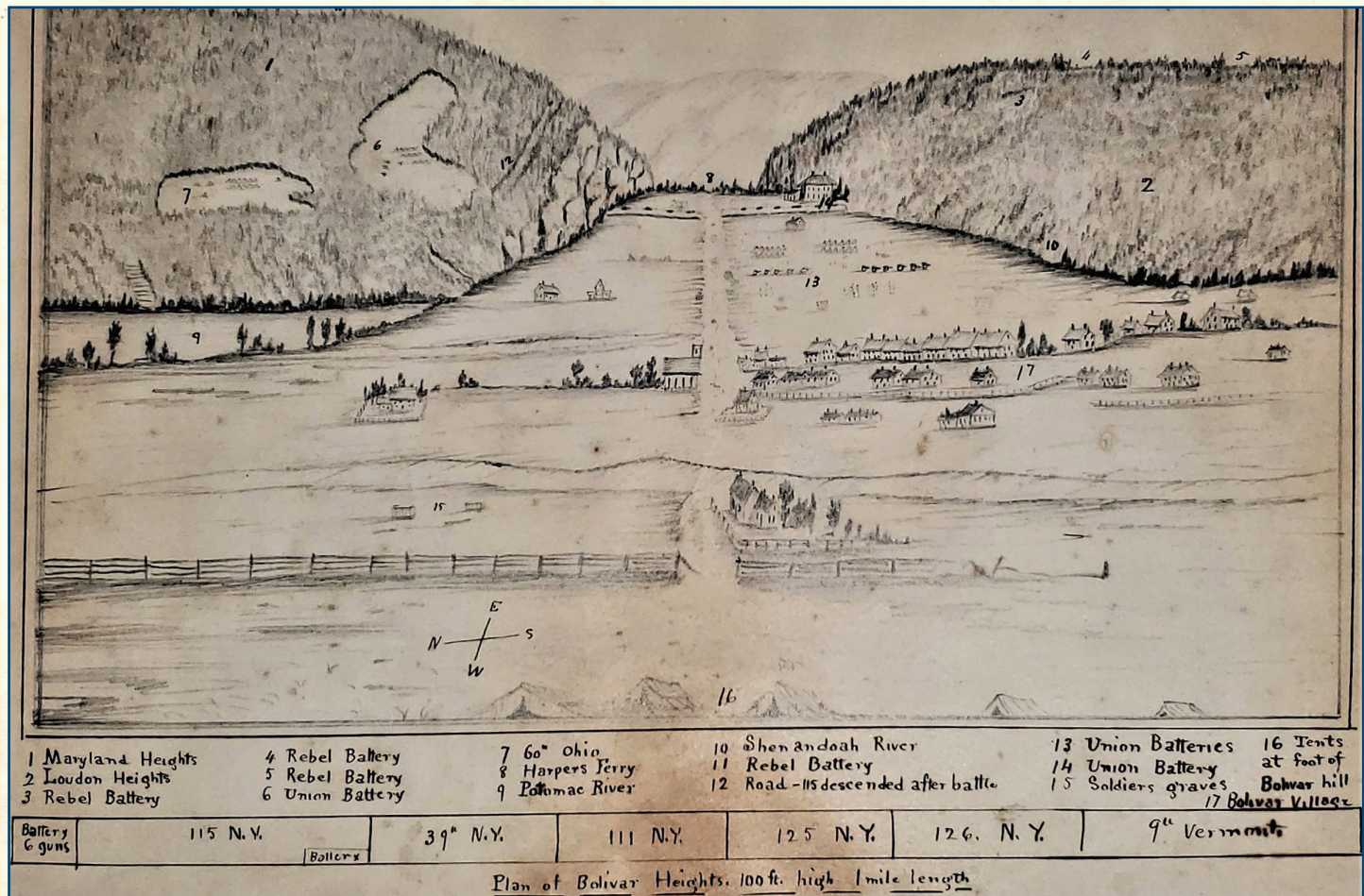
The mission of SHAF is the preservation and protection of historic sites within the Antietam valley that are related to the Battle of Antietam, the Maryland Campaign, or other Civil War activity in the region. We will accomplish our mission through public education, solicitation of funds, promotion of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



UNIQUE HARPERS FERRY ARTIFACT DISCOVERED BY SHAF

By Dennis E. Frye | Co-Founder



SHAF board member Bill Maharay purchased this war-time map of Harpers Ferry at auction.

Maps define a battlefield. Maps harmonize locations, materialize landmarks and contextualize stories.

Maps are the prints that imprint a battle. Discovery of a publicly unknown battle map - especially one prepared immediately following an action - is rare. A battle map that doubles as art ... well, that rates off the charts.

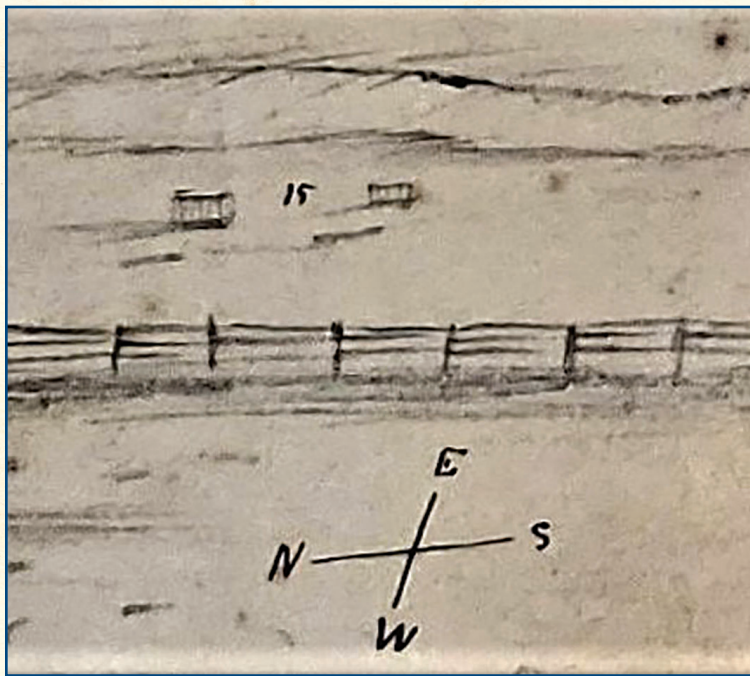
SHAF's acquisition (at auction) of a map previously held in a private collection represents the first artifact acquired by the organization in its 34-year history. And what an object! The map depicts the Battle of Harpers Ferry, prelude to Antietam, as Stonewall Jackson's Confederate forces surround and bombard the U.S. garrison.

As Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park for 20 years, I attest this map is extraordinary. I have seen nothing like it. The subject and presentation are unique.

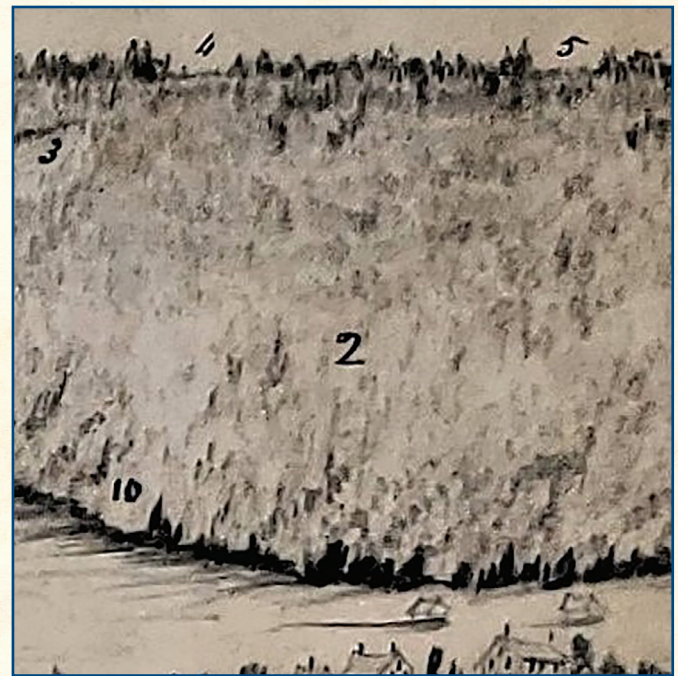
Most Civil War maps feature flat surface, two-dimensional red and blue lines that represent troop maneuvers. Not this one. Landscape defines this rendering. Mountains show the story. And they should.

No one can understand the Battle of Harpers Ferry without first understanding the mountains.

Another remarkable aspect is a map key to identify landmarks. It's like a treasure map, with numbers marking significant sites of mystery. The key permits the landscape to dominate, highlighting features without the clutter of identifiers. The accuracy of the drawing is also remarkable.



Melvin W. Cole, a musician in the 115th New York, even marked soldiers' graves (15).



Cole marked Confederate batteries (Nos. 4 and 5) on Loudoun Heights.

The Harpers Ferry water gap in the Blue Ridge is perfect. The subtle rise and supremacy of Maryland Heights over Loudoun Heights is absolute. And the proportions are exact at Camp Hill, the knoll in the middle.

So, who is our mapmaker? An artist, of course. Melvin W. Cole enlisted as a private in the newly organized 115th New York Infantry one month before he was captured by Jackson (along with nearly 13,000 other US soldiers) at Harpers Ferry on September 15, 1862. He mustered in as a musician, and eight months later, mustered out as "principal musician" of Co. K.

Cole was skilled drawer and painter, and his talents were displayed in his map. His vantage parallels his perspective. As a member of the 115th NY, he is looking east into the water gap, stationed near the road highlighted in the center foreground.

This road is "Furnace Road," still visible and in use today. If you attempt to align this vantage with the current National Park Service vista on Bolivar Heights, you will fail. Cole's position is one-half mile north of the NPS vista. It's impossible to replicate his view today, as it's blocked with heavy vegetation. Another word about Cole's pinpoint accuracy: You will note No. 15 as "Soldiers graves." This corresponds exactly with today's Pine Grove Cemetery north of Furnace Road. U.S. dead buried here were disinterred and re-buried in the Winchester (Va.) National Cemetery soon after the war.

The village in the middle ground (Bolivar) also is accurately depicted, showing the correct number of antebellum structures and the gentle rise along Washington Street to the right.

My favorite discovery is the exact location of Confederate batteries on Maryland and Loudoun Heights. I knew they were up there; knew their armament and their commanders. But until now, I've never seen anything pinning locations. So, what do we do now? First, we must pay for it. My sincere gratitude, in advance, for your generous contributions. We already have completed high-resolution scans, permitting replication without continued use and handling of the original map.

Ultimately, our goal is to donate this artifact to the permanent museum collection at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. It deserves to return to its point of origin.

Because we had to move fast, our treasurer, Bill Maharay, used his personal funds to purchase at auction this rare artifact. We had no time for fundraising. Your contribution now will enable us to ensure the perpetual preservation of this original record of the Antietam Campaign. Thank you. Help us raise \$1,400 to preserve this historic document. Each dollar you give helps us protect our past.

ABOUT THOSE CAST-IRON BATTLEFIELD TABLETS

By Sharon Murray



SHAF board member Sharon Murray preps a tablet for repainting.

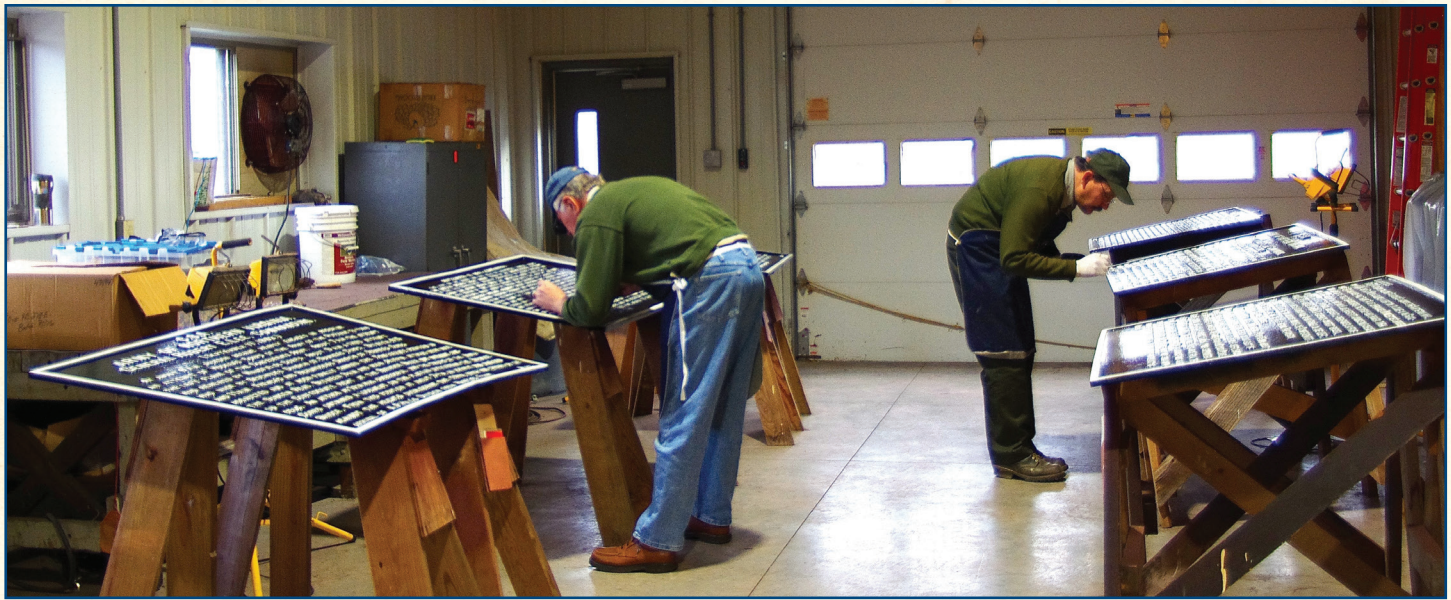
On Aug. 30, 1890, almost 28 years after the Battle of Antietam, Congress appropriated money for “surveying, locating and preserving the lines of battle of the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia.” In 1890, the Antietam Battlefield Board was created under the auspices of the Secretary of War to oversee the work. The original members of the board were Union Colonel John C. Stearns and Confederate Brigadier General Henry Heth.

When the board reorganized in 1894, Major George B. Davis, who had enlisted in the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry at 16 and later graduated from West Point, became president, replacing Stearns. Brevet Brigadier General Ezra Carmen, who had served with the 13th New Jersey, was appointed to the board as a “historical expert.”

After locating the lines of battle of the Union and Confederate forces, and securing the permission of the War Department, the battlefield board set about marking the various positions of the armies with cast-iron tablets “bearing historical descriptions of the movement of troops.” Carmen, and to a much lesser extent Davis, corresponded with veterans from both sides to obtain information about troop positions to write the text for the tablets.

Once the research was completed and the tablet text drafted, the War Department let a contract to the Chattanooga Car and Foundry Co., which also cast tablets for the Chickamauga battlefield in northern Georgia.

Tablet production began in earnest in the first four months of 1895. In May 1895, the foundry shipped the first batch of cast-iron tablets and 105 smaller markers to Sharpsburg.



Nigel Wainwright (left) and K. C. Kirkman of the National Park Service complete the final touching up of tablets.

On May 23, the Shepherdstown Register reported that 124 tablets were being placed in position on the battlefield. An additional 43 tablets were shipped in October 1895, and the next year, 90 more tablets were cast and shipped.

In October 1896, the Baltimore Sun reported Carmen “has been engaged for some time in locating tablets at Antietam.” By October 1897, the work was completed for \$7,865. In total, 338 historical/locality/guide tablets were cast and placed on the battlefields ~ 313 were installed at Antietam, five at Harpers Ferry, five at Shepherdstown, six at South Mountain and nine at Crampton’s Gap.

After its work was completed, the Antietam Battlefield Board was disbanded. In its final report, written on March 18, 1898, it noted that “with an occasional repainting at a small expense,” the tablets “will endure for centuries.”

Most of the tablets installed in the 1890s on the fields of battle in western Maryland and at Harpers Ferry and Shepherdstown remain. A few have been damaged and/or removed over the years. Some have been replaced by aluminum replicas. It is unknown how many times the tablets have been repainted in the 123 years since they were placed.

In 2017, Antietam National Battlefield set up a special program that enabled a select number of volunteers to work under the auspices of the Cultural Resource Division to remove the tablets from the field, wire brush off old layers of paint, and

repaint the tablets with a base coat of black overlain by white on the edges and raised lettering. Once the paint has dried, the tablets are put back on their bases on the battlefield. All is done “at small expense” for materials, in hopes the tablets will continue to endure for centuries and enable visitors to learn the history of the brave men who fought in the Maryland Campaign and along Antietam Creek on Sept. 17, 1862.

References | Susan Trail: “Remembering Antietam -- Commemoration and Preservation of a Civil War Battlefield”
“Antietam National Battlefield: Short History of the Park”



Nigel Wainwright and Ed Marfut place a restored tablet on its pedestal.

FIVE MINUTES WITH ANTIETAM BATTLEFIELD SUPERINTENDENT SUSAN TRAIL



The rehabilitation of the visitors center is expected to be done by summer 2022.

What is the latest on the visitor center project?

The NPS awarded a contract for the visitor center rehabilitation project to John C. Grimsberg Co., based in Rockville, Md. It is in the process of preparing submittals and should start mobilizing on site shortly. The project is slated to run for approximately 18 months and should be complete in summer 2022. Initial work will focus on upgrading utility systems to the building and installing a temporary visitor center in our overflow parking lot. Work on the building will include installation of all new systems and some minor additions to increase the size of the lobby and create new office space for staff.

Are there any major changes planned for visitor center exhibits?

As part of the visitor center rehabilitation, the park will replace all exhibits in the building. We are nearing completion of the design phase and will start fabrication in 2021. The primary focus is still the two rooms on the lower floor, with some exhibits in the lobby and along the entranceway to the building. The exhibits will revolve around five universal concepts ~ “Conflict,” “Terror,” “Survival,” “Freedom,” and “Memory.” It is an exciting approach that will place the Battle of Antietam and its legacy within a larger historical context for our visitors. In addition, we will start working on a new film this year, although it will not be completed before the visitor center reopens some time toward the end of 2022.

Are there other major park initiatives on the radar?

The park is working on a battlefield-wide Cultural Landscape Report that will focus on historic landscape preservation and management across the entire park. This work will lead to preparation of a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan and Environmental Assessment this coming year, which will be put out for public review and comment. This resource management-centered document will

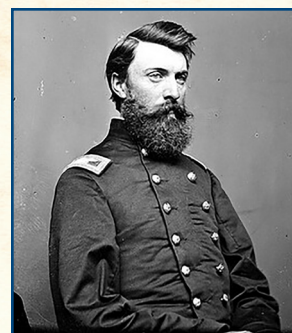
serve as a companion to the 2018 Visitor Access and Circulation Plan/EA, and together the two will replace the outdated 1991 General Management Plan. In 2019, the battlefield received a significant grant to rehabilitate and expand our hiking trail system. COVID-19 derailed our plans in 2020, but in 2021, we will be realigning and rehabilitating the East and West Woods trails. The trail program will take place over the next 4-5 years and cover the entire park, implementing the recommendations in the Visitor Access and Circulation Plan.

Has COVID-19 affected park visitation?

Due to the pandemic, our visitor center was closed in March. We set up a visitor contact station tent in front of the visitor center in June to serve visitors. Traditional battlefield visitation is down, as fewer people have been traveling, but local visitation has increased as people seek outdoor places close to home. We have seen an increase in recreational use, such as hiking, dog walking and running.

Many of our membership have been to Antietam multiple times. What out-of-the way or underrated spot in the park would you recommend for them to visit?

I always enjoy walking from the Mumma Farm past the Roulette Farm and along the Three-Farms Trail to the Newcomer House. It is quiet and peaceful with a wonderful historic setting and great views. It is my favorite area of the battlefield and one I visit often when I need a break from office work.



New Jersey officer Ezra Carman.

If you could visit with one soldier from the battlefield, whom would it be and why?

What would you want to know?

I would love to be able to talk to is Ezra Carman, the New Jersey veteran, both about his experience on that day and about his work after the war to preserve the battlefield. I would like to know what drove his continued, lifelong interest in this work and what it was like working on the Antietam National Cemetery Board and later the War Department Antietam Battlefield Board. He is such a key figure in the early preservation efforts on the battlefield and in how we understand the battle today.

SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT: A DEATH AT A CHURCH HOSPITAL IN SHARPSBURG

By John Banks



On Oct. 5, 1862, nearly three weeks after he was shot at Antietam, Private Horace Lay of the 16th Connecticut was sent to the German Reform Church Hospital with severe wounds in his right leg and left thigh. He had another bullet wound in the groin, probably suffered as he lay incapacitated after he was first wounded in the 40-Acre Cornfield.

A 16th Connecticut comrade who saw Lay at the church hospital in early November recalled that the 36-year-old soldier was “very low” and not expected to recover. A surgeon wrote in his casebook that amputation of Lay’s left leg was imperative because a bullet had fractured the soldier’s femur.

In early November, someone from Connecticut, perhaps Lay’s wife Charlotté, wrote to the soldier who suffered in the small church 350 miles from the state. The letter writer may have inquired about the grievously wounded man’s condition and perhaps offered a few words of encouragement for Lay, one of many soldiers from Connecticut who were treated in the small building on the main street in Sharpsburg. Perhaps the letter writer also noted that Charlotte soon planned to

go to western Maryland to help nurse her husband back to health and that Lay’s 11-year-old son, also named Horace, was concerned about his father.

Sadly, the letter is lost to history, but the envelope for it survives. Postmarked Nov. 2, 1862, in Hartford and affixed with a three-cent stamp, it is addressed to Lay at the “German Reform Church Hospital, Sharpsburg, Md.”

The letter that the envelope contained may have briefly cheered Lay, who probably had his left leg amputated. But on Nov. 16, 1862, nearly two months after he was wounded, Horace died with Charlotte by his side.

Private Lay was buried somewhere in Sharpsburg shortly after his death. His remains were disinterred after the war, and today the shoemaker rests in the Connecticut section at Antietam National Cemetery under a weathered marker, No. 1,100, that simply notes his name, state, and Civil War allegiance.

~ John Banks

SAVE HISTORIC ANTIETAM FOUNDATION

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SPRING WORK DAY

March 20, 9 a.m.

**Meet at the visitors center parking lot.
Bring gloves, tool for cutting shrubs and trees,
mask for social distancing.**

**Follow us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/shafpage/ for updates on location and schedule changes.**