

# SAVE HISTORIC



## ANTIETAM FOUNDATION

preserving  
Antietam  
since 1986

*March, 2010*



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*A*ello, and I hope your winter has been better than what we've experienced here in western Maryland. I cannot remember seeing so much snow covering the battlefield for so long a time. In fact, it is still covered as I write this. We've only seen the grass a week or two since mid-December. Very unusual for this area. Yesterday I walked the Burnside Bridge area and saw more cross country skiers than other tourists. But we know spring is coming: robins are appearing, and when the melt-off occurs we'll be back to walking the fields and enjoying the splendid views here in the Sharpsburg area. Our spring Work Day is scheduled for March 27; the details are elsewhere in this newsletter. We'll probably be planting trees, either in the East Woods or along the creek. A busy summer schedule is shaping up, and the museum expansion in the Visitor's Center is coming along well. A rejuvenated Sharpsburg Historical Society is meeting and I hope to convey plans for a September Heritage Festival in our next newsletter.

There are a few new things in this newsletter. Mannie Gentile has the first in a regular column about the battlefield, our new shirts & hats are finally available, and Wes Hanson's music CD is delightful. We hope to see you stomping the fields of Antietam, though you may want to wait until the white stuff is gone.

Until then,

Tom Clemens  
President, SHAF

### **NEW LOGO MERCHANDISE IS HERE!**

**Merchandise (hats, shirts, etc) featuring our new logo are available. See page 5. Keep an eye on [www.shaf.org](http://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.

# INSIDE *Antietam*

by Mannie Gentile

## Landscape turned...white.

What a doozie of a winter this has been. December's Battlefield Illumination provided foreshadowing as four inches of snow brought challenges to that event for staff, volunteers, and visitors alike. That was, I believe, four snowstorms ago. Today the battlefield is under more than two feet of snow, with the maintenance division working long hard hours trying to keep the park roads plowed and the walks shoveled.

I'll use the covering of snow as a metaphor for the purpose of this new column "Inside Antietam". Just as the snow hides the battlefield from view, so is much of the field unseen or unnoticed by many casual and serious visitors the the park. Through this column I'd like to bring to your attention some of the more out of the way and less noticed nooks, crannies, and corners of this beautiful jewel of a National Park.

As a Park Ranger I get to roam these fields every day, watching the seasons change, and catching up on the various restoration and conservation projects that are underway, from the restoration of the Joseph. Poffenberger farm, to the restoration of the East Woods, to the efforts to bring the Piper Lane back to its 1862 appearance. These are just a few of the things I'd like to share with you as the seasons unfold.

And as those seasons unfold the snow will finally melt. As spring approaches the nearly 45 guns on the field will take on a much overlooked purpose, that of providing shelter and incubation for our healthy population of swifts. These silent iron sentinels that wrought enough havoc to earn the Battle of Antietam the sobriquet "Artillery Hell" now provide quiet sanctuary for the eggs of these beautifully iridescent acrobats of the sky. (See photo at right)

I'd always noticed the swifts hanging out around the guns but it wasn't until I was collecting images of the insides of the gun tubes that I started noticing nests, eggs, and hatchlings. The current generation of tiny digital cameras has provided a



wonderful way to photograph the interior of gun barrels as the camera flash is in such close proximity to the lens that both are accommodated by the muzzle of the gun. The result is a clear bright picture of the types of rifling that characterize the various makes and calibers of guns on the field, as well as, surprisingly, the cozy feather and moss lined nests and delicate light blue eggs of our population of swifts.

Next time you come for a visit in May or June step out into the back yard of the Visitor Center on the ridge overlooking the Mumma Farm. Relax on one of the shaded benches and scan your eyes about two feet off the ground and you'll start to see the swooping, diving, and turning-on-a-dime, aerobatics of the swifts in their endless hunt for insects, lunch for themselves, as well as for their high-caliber offspring in a nearby cannon. You'll never let them go unnoticed again.

Think spring. Until then, I'll see you on the battlefield.



*Photos by Mannie Gentile*

# From the Archives

by SHAF President Tom Clemens

*NOTES: Colonel William Henry Palmer was also corresponding with Carman. He was Adjutant and later Major of the 1st Virginia Infantry, in the same brigade with Maury's 24th Virginia. Palmer became a staff officer for A.P. Hill and died in 1926.*

*William Richard Terry was born Liberty Virginia March 12, 1827. He graduated from VMI in 1850 and later from Univ. of VA. He served as Captain of the Bedford Co. cavalry company at First Manassas, and was then made Colonel of the 24th Virginia Infantry. Wounded seven times during the war, Terry was promoted to Brig. Gen'l. in 1864. He survived the war and served in the VA Senate after the war. He also was the superintendent of the penitentiary and of the Confederate Soldiers Home in Richmond. He died in 1897 just a few months before Maury wrote this letter.*

*Peter Hairston Jr. was born in Henry Co. Virginia became Lt. Col. of the 24th Virginia in September of 1861. He was wounded at Williamsburg and Second Manassas and resigned in April of 1863. He served in the Virginia Legislature and was a revenue collector as well. He died in Martinsville VA in 1915.*

*Richard Launcelot Maury was born in Fredericksburg October 9, 1840, the son of Matthew Fontaine Maury, the famous naval explorer and theorist. He joined the Confederate army as a private, but was quickly made Major of the 24th Virginia Infantry. He was promoted to Lt. Col. April 9, 1863, and was wounded at Seven Pines, and Drury's Bluff. Paroled at Appomattox, he returned to Richmond and practiced law for many years. He died Oct. 14, 1907, just a few days after his 67th birthday.*

*Benjamin F. (most likely "Franklin") Powell of Henry Co. VA entered service as a private and became a 2nd Lt. in Co. H of the 24th Virginia.*

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.

**October 29 1897**

**Gen'l. E. A. Carman U.S.**

**Antietam Battle Field Board**

**War Department Washington D.C.**

**Dear Sir,**

**At the request of Col. Palmer, on your behalf. I have made inquiries from several officers of the 24th VA of its position at Sharpsburg during the battle of Sept. 17th 1862. In that action the regiment was commanded by its Col. W.R. Terry the other field officers were Lt. Col. Peter Hairston and myself. Major but both of us had been badly wounded in action shortly before and were not present then. Subsequently Lt. Col. Hairston resigned and I succeeded him and after the Battle at Drury's Bluff in May 1864, Col. Terry was promoted brigadier and I succeeded him. Gen'l. Terry is now dead.**

**For the information you desire I have communicated with several of my former officers and through Lt. Col. Hairston [P.O. Martinsville Henry Co. V.A.] I learned from 2nd Lieut. [of 24th V.A.] B.F. Powell [same P.O.] who commanded his Co. during the interaction and was present upon the field the whole day and who was a most gallant and meritorious soldier and officer and who with myself fought to the finish and were paroled at Appomattox C.H. April 10th 1865 as follows;**

**Lieut. Powell writes -**

**"I was with the Regiment at that time commanding Co. H... and well remember the movement of the Regt. that day. Early on the morning of the 17th Gen'l. Longstreet rode up in person and ordered Col. W.R. Terry who was then commanding the 24th to move it to the right of Gen'l. Lee's lines on the road leading from Harpers Ferry-; and to support the batteries that commanded the bridge across the Antietam, opposed the enemies left. The 24th was then placed in front of the batteries, and south of the road that crossed the bridge with its lines extending along the Harpers Ferry Road. And I well remember Gen. A.P. Hill passing us along this road leading from Harpers Ferry with a part of his command. The 24th supported these batteries the entire day. I do not know what batteries they were. That night after the firing had ceased the regiment was ordered back to the place from which it had moved in the morning, and rejoined the 1st + 7th [VA] and the other regiments which composed of Kemper's Brigade which was in line of battle on the ridges, S.E. I believe; and near the town of Sharpsburg."**

**Powell is known to be thoroughly reliable a cool collected and most gallant soldier a man of observing and thoughtful habits, whose account of what he did, or saw, in action I would accept with every confidence.**

**Yours Very Truly,  
Richard L. Maury  
Col. 24th VA**

## SHAF Profile: MANNIE GENTILE

When asked by this writer to submit professional and personal information for inclusion in our next “SHAF Member Profile,” Mannie Gentile did the same thing as Perry Jamieson, the subject of the December newsletter’s profile: he wrote it himself! Our thanks go to each gentleman for his time, expertise, generosity, and passion for preservation—a passion that binds us all as members of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation. Here, then, is Mannie Gentile—in his own words: Mannie Gentile of Boonsboro, fifty-seven, owes his lifelong interest in the American Civil War to his parents (both of whom identified and nurtured that early interest with books), those wonderful Marx toy soldiers, and eventually trips to Gettysburg, Monocacy, and Antietam.

Some of those books followed him as he left his parents’ Michigan home to serve in the U.S. Navy from 1970 to 1974 as a radioman stationed on Guam as well as to serve on destroyers whose home port was Long Beach, California.

After his four-year hitch he entered Michigan State University on the G.I. Bill. Gentile notes: “Many of my shipmates and contemporaries speak of being met with hostility upon coming home to the States. Me? I got a free college education, the gift of a grateful nation, and I had no beef with anybody.” That optimism saw him through college and into

a career as a graphic artist at an agency in Grand Rapids, Michigan and as a free-lance cartoonist. Art and history always have been important to Gentile. And it was that passion for history that led him to the Public Museum of Grand Rapids where eventually, armed with a Michigan teaching certificate, he would run the education division of that institution.

At that time, married and raising a daughter, Gentile and his former wife, the artist Virginia Rose Kane, looked toward the day when, with their daughter March graduated and on her own, they could relocate to the more temperate, scenic, and historic counties of western Maryland.

That relocation came in 2005 and Mannie began volunteering at Antietam National Battlefield in February of that year, accepting an appointment as a seasonal ranger that May. Now, over four years later, as the newest permanent ranger on Antietam’s staff, Mannie feels he has returned to the place that always has been his home, doing the thing that he loves most—teaching and rangership at what he insists is America’s finest national park with the nation’s finest rangers.

He is a man of great contentment.

Mannie’s rangership blog can be accessed at the following address:  
<http://volunteersinparks.blogspot.com>

## Goodbye & Thanks

You may have noticed that we have added several new board members in the past few months. We also have some who have cycled off the board, and we need to properly recognize their efforts. First, former Vice President and long-time board member Kevin Rawlings has dropped out for a while. Kevin did a lot of behind-the-scenes work, not much glamour but a lot of effort. You may remember him as the Civil War Santa, a role he has played for many years. We appreciate his many labors on our behalf and thank him for his years of service.

We also need to applaud and recognize Dana Shoaf, editor of Civil War Times and enthusiastic preservationist. Despite wearing several hats at work and putting in countless hours there, Dana spearheaded a number of projects for the board, most recently our new hats & shirts, displayed elsewhere in this issue. His wisdom and wit will be missed by all of us.

## Spring Work Day Set

Our semi-annual work day is set for Saturday March 27 at Antietam Battlefield. As usual we will gather in the parking lot of the Visitor's Center at 9:00. Please dress for the weather, bring gloves and water, the NPS provides tools. We will postpone if there is moderate or heavy rain, or at this rate maybe even snow! Last fall we planted trees in the restoration project for the East Woods. This spring we will either continue that project, or perhaps clear some more brush along the Piper Farm lane towards Middle Bridge. Check the website, [www.SHAF.org](http://www.SHAF.org) for updates and cancellation notice.

### **Become a fan of Save Historic Antietam Foundation on Facebook**

If you have a Facebook account, be sure to become a fan of SHAF! That way you'll receive up-to-the-minute notifications of SHAF doings and upcoming events.

# NEW SHAF PRODUCTS!

Our new logo is now available on hats and tee-shirts.

Featuring a stylized version of the Burnside Bridge, attractively embroidered on a sturdy gray athletic-style tee shirt, or a blue & beige ball cap, these products allow you to proudly display your dedication to battlefield preservation. These shirts will be available at [www.shaf.org](http://www.shaf.org) and through the Antietam Museum Store at Antietam National Battlefield (<http://antietammuseum.stores.yahoo.net>). We will also have our merchandise for sale at the Sharpsburg Heritage Festival in September.



**Hats \$19.95**

**Shirts \$16.95 (XXL \$18.95)**

## New Civil War Music CD

For you Civil War music aficionados we are now selling a brand-new music CD created by long-time SHAF member and supporter Dr. Wes Hanson. Entitled Farewell to the Star Spangled Banner this CD features many rare or seldom heard songs of the era, including track #4 which gives title to the CD. Dr. Hanson has unearthed many of these tunes from some very obscure repositories and using original period instruments he brings them to life as they were intended to sound. The accompanying notes provide details of the origin and author of most tunes, and a background of their purpose. Some familiar names are here, Stephen Foster, George F. Root and Henry Clay Work, but a host of other, less famous, authors lend a unique flavor to this body of music. Dr. Hanson has provided copies of his CD to SHAF as fundraiser, a portion of each sale going to us. We thank him for his generous donation and admire his research and musical skills. CDs available for \$16 plus 2.00 for shipping. Send us a note at [contact@shaf.org](mailto:contact@shaf.org) for ordering information

## 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](mailto:contact@shaf.org) In the coming months, we will be moving to the inactive list those who have not made a contribution since December 31, 2008.

## Newsletter as e-Letter

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](mailto:Contact@shaf.org). Keep in mind that you must be a current member of SHAF to receive the Newsletter or the e-Letter.