



# Volunteer Newsletter

Spring 2021

## OUR NEW NORMAL

The daffodils are blooming, the trees are greening up, and maintenance staff have begun mowing the sites – it’s officially spring! With one year of pandemic operations under our belts, we’ve become pros at virtual and socially distant park programming. Thank you to our volunteers and staff for your infinite patience – with new guidelines, new technology, and new ways to volunteer. As vaccines become more widely available, we will continue assessing the risks associated with Visitor Center re-openings and a return to other “normal” park operations. Until then, here’s a look at what we’ve been doing, and what to expect in the upcoming months!



Above: Ranger Randy prepares to give an interpretive talk at Park Day. NPS Photo.



Above: VIPs Kevin Johnson (left) and Christine Sabin (right) pose with a car door they pulled from a dump site at Gaines’ Mill. NPS Photo.



Left: SCA John adds fresh substrate to a trail at Malvern Hill. NPS Photo.



# In case you missed it...

## Spring Recap



Above: Firefighters carefully observe the prescribed burn at Malvern Hill. NPS Photo.

### CHIMBORAZO PATIENT PROJECT

Volunteers Linda and Roger Hultgren, Jean Hemphill, and Lorianne Stogsdill continue to make outstanding progress on the patient project. Under the supervision of Ranger Mike Gorman, the Hultgrens transcribe and send on information from the patient ledger, and Jean and Lorianne help with tracking down soldier information. We are closing in on verifying the records of those that were transcribed when we stopped work last March, and will soon be moving on to everything that has been transcribed since. The project to transcribe the roughly 70,000 names is now entering its 3rd year!

In January our Transcription Team did an online interview with the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. You can watch the video here: [The Chimborazo Hospital Records Project - YouTube](#).

### PRESCRIBED BURN AT MALVERN HILL

In late March the park conducted a prescribed burn of about 35 acres at Malvern Hill, assisted by firefighters from Shenandoah National Park and other agencies. Prescribed burns help maintain the historically open landscape, reduce woody and non-native species density, and foster native meadow vegetation. They also enhance the valuable wildlife habitat associated with native plant communities and reduce the park's maintenance costs.

### PARK DAY 2021

April 10 marked the American Battlefield Trust's 25<sup>th</sup> Park Day, an event where volunteers come together across the nation to preserve and maintain battlefield sites. 10 volunteers worked in two shifts at Gaines' Mill to clean up an abandoned dump site and remove agricultural fencing from the woods. With these projects complete, we're one step closer to restoring the historic landscape of this battlefield.



Above: Volunteers from the first Park Day shift pose in front of the newly cleared dumpsite at Gaines' Mill. NPS Photo.



# In case you missed it...

## Spring Recap

### SHELTON HOUSE UPDATES

The Shelton House roof project is now complete, and the scaffolding has been removed. This marks the completion of a long-term goal, and we are so excited to have this historic style roof! Thanks to the Rural Plains Foundation for their great support.

Restoration projects at the Shelton House in the next several months will include:

- Selective brick removals and replacements on exterior elevations.
- Selective raking and repointing to include removal of Portland cement-based mortars.
- Removal of the north gable elevation window. Opening is to be reinstated as a brick wall.
- Brick repairs within the kitchen fireplace (firebox).

### LANDSCAPE AT TOTOPOTOMOY CREEK

Over the winter, several blocks of aging nursery stock at Totopotomoy Creek were removed in accordance with our Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan. In the coming year, the open space will be converted to farmland, enhancing the open agricultural character of Rural Plains and restoring historic views from the Shelton House.

### INTERPRETIVE PLANNING

Park staff recently began a Long-Range Interpretive Plan for both Richmond and Maggie Walker. This is an important document which will guide our interpretive programs and visitor services for the next few years. We still have several steps before completing the project, which should be completed this

summer. When finished we will be better poised to meet the needs of visitors and ensure that our parks are reaching wider audiences.



Left: Shelton House's new roof! Featuring a glimpse of spring daffodils. NPS Photo.

# Upcoming Events

## Summer 2021

### MAY 15: DREWRY'S BLUFF ANNIVERSARY

We'll be open for two in-person tours at Drewry's Bluff at 10am and 2pm to commemorate the anniversary of this battle. For more information, visit our Facebook page.

### LATE MAY: BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

We've put together a group of dedicated volunteers for our annual bird survey, in partnership with the Mid-Atlantic Inventory and Monitoring Network. Data from these surveys will help us understand the status of bird populations in the park and across the Mid-Atlantic region.



Above: VIP Carlton Noll peers through binoculars during the 2017 breeding bird survey. Art Ritter.

### JUNE 5: BIOBLITZ



Above: Volunteers and staff at our first BioBlitz in 2016. NPS Photo.

We'll be working with professors, naturalists, and citizen scientists to document biodiversity in meadow habitats at Malvern Hill. This will be the park's third BioBlitz, focused on cataloging plants, insects, herptiles, and mammals. We're still seeking volunteers!

If interested, contact Marie Pinto.

### EARLY JUNE: WALKER HOUSE VIRTUAL TOURS

Though our Visitor Center remains closed, the Maggie Walker site will continue offering a contact station in the Courtyard for visitors, open Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 2pm. In addition to anticipating extended hours soon, we plan to begin offering virtual tours this summer. Stay tuned to our social media pages for updates!

### MID-JUNE: COLD HARBOR ANNIVERSARY

We plan to host a virtual commemoration of the Cold Harbor Anniversary, similar to what was done last year. Event information and details will be posted on our social media sites in the coming weeks, so keep an eye out!



# Upcoming Events

## Summer 2021

### JULY 6 – 9: MAGGIE L. WALKER SUMMER YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The annual Maggie L. Walker Summer Youth Leadership Institute is seeking students! This year's program is happening online, Tuesday, July 6 through Friday, July 9, 10am to 3pm each day. Though we took a gap year in 2020, our veteran teachers Lisa Williams and Joy Davis Cobb are eagerly anticipating welcoming students age 14 – 18 to participate in our signature youth program, in collaboration with park staff. The [Student Interest Form](#) is active on the website now. Just look for the Leadership Institute tab on the park's homepage to sign up any interested students today!



Above: Teachers, students, and park staff gather outside the Walker House at the completion of the 2019 Youth Leadership Institute. NPS Photo.

### ONGOING: JACKSON WARD COMMUNITY GARDEN

Help wanted! The Historic Jackson Ward Association maintains an urban community garden on Duval Street near Sixth Mount Zion Church. Mary Beth Blinn, the garden coordinator, is seeking help with watering the garden through the summer. She needs individuals or groups of volunteers to choose a day of the week to come in and water the garden. Anyone interested in forming a team from the Maggie Walker NHS to adopt a day to water and work in the garden, should please contact Ajena Rogers or Marie Pinto. Ben and Ajena already went out on May 8 and had a great time just being outdoors and working in the garden. It would be great to have a team to join us!

### JULY 10 AND 15: MAGGIE L. WALKER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND DAY OF SERVICE

On July 10, we'll be working with the City of Richmond to coordinate a service project in honor of Mrs. Walker's birthday. In addition, park staff are putting together a program for a virtual celebration on Mrs. Walker's actual birthdate, July 15. Volunteers welcome and needed!



Left: Volunteers at work in the community garden. HJWA Photo.

# Volunteer Contributions

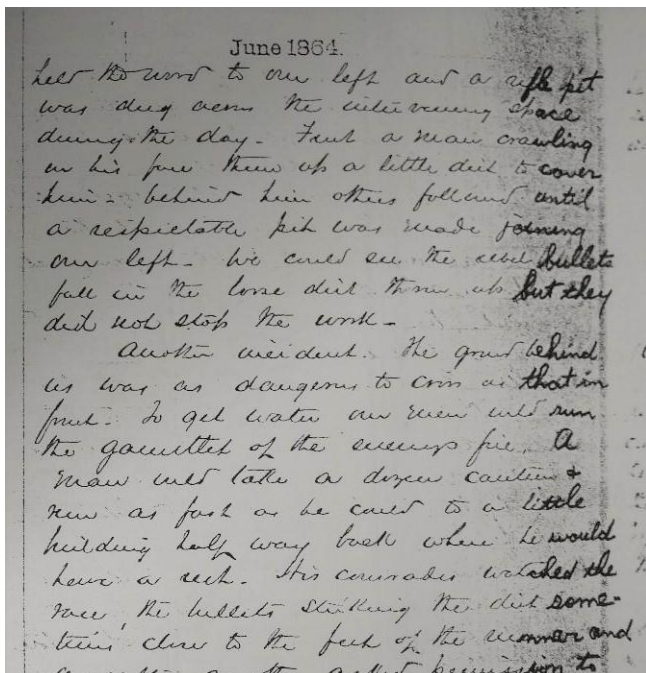
## Celebrating Your Work

### SITE STEWARDS PROGRAM

Pat Ferrell, Bill Handley, John Held, Tim Hoffman, Marshall Johnson, Jim and Elle Kisicki, Howard Motley, Bob Talbot, Art and Diane Wingo, and Adam Zimmerli are all helping as Site Stewards: checking the battlefields for litter, checking trail conditions, and restocking brochures. This is a big help in keeping the sites looking good as visitation picks up this spring.

### HISTORIC DOCUMENT TRANSCRIPTION

Linda Colwell, Richard Lewis, Nathan Raike, Erin Till, and Art and Diane Wingo are working to transcribe original documents like letters or diaries and deciphering nineteenth century handwriting. These documents are then added to the park library and are available for research.



Above: An example of a nineteenth century document ready for transcription. NPS Photo.



Above: The fully repaired cannon. NPS Photo.

### CANNON CREW

Tom Carlton of the cannon crew completed some important repairs and maintenance this winter. Tom repainted the cannon, carriage, and limber; repaired a loose bolt; and greased the wheels. Tom also repaired and repainted the implements such as the sponge-rammer, worm, bucket, and handspikes. The gun and its equipment are now ready for service!

### USCT MAPPING PROJECT

Jim Altieri has been assisting with a mapping project for the park. In cooperation with rangers from three other National Park sites- Petersburg, Appomattox, and Camp Nelson- we are producing a video about USCT troops who fought around Richmond. Jim has created maps which will be an important part of the video. We will announce when it is ready for release this spring.



# Volunteer Contributions

## Celebrating Your Work

### ADOPT-A-TRAIL PROGRAM

Bill Koetter, Bill Linka, and Jeanette Linka have continued their work as trail adopters at Malvern Hill and Gaines' Mill. Their work keeps the trails free of overhanging branches and debris, and their reports help us keep track of maintenance issues on the trails. Thank you!

### RURAL PLAINS WAYSIDE PLAN

Several members of the Rural Plains Foundation, including Ann Andrus, Jeffry Burden, Ben Cleary, Bob Giles, and Elizabeth Lipford, are working on a Wayside Plan for Rural Plains. The Plan will outline topics and locations for future wayside markers. The group has already started on text for several of the new markers and been discussing image ideas. This will enhance the visitor experience and provide new details for those who walk the trail.



Above: VIP Ryan Tribbey uses a fence post pulling device to remove abandoned agricultural fencing at Gaines' Mill. NPS Photo.

### OUTDOOR WORKDAYS

Since the beginning of 2021, we've hosted a total of 15 Thursday and Saturday outdoor volunteer workdays. VIPs at these two-hour events have tackled numerous projects including invasive plant management, trash clean-up, trail maintenance, and even gardening. Despite our limits on group size, the help we've had from 31 volunteers (who have contributed more than 130 hours in total this season!) has enabled us to address many maintenance issues across the park, keeping our sites functional and beautiful.



Above: VIP Chris Pinto treats an invasive vine with herbicide at Gaines' Mill. NPS Photo.

Below: Barrels and buckets overflow with trash, collected by volunteers on Earth Day at Malvern Hill – ready to be recycled! NPS Photo.





# Comings and Goings

## New and Retiring VIPs



Above: SCAs John (left) and Arielle (right) pose outside the Fort Harrison Ranger Office. John McIntyre.

### FAREWELL: STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INTERNS, ARIELLE AND JOHN

Arielle Routledge and John McIntyre are wrapping up their terms of service with the park this month. Beginning in February, Arielle and John have been working with our Resource Management division to monitor trails, earthworks, and vernal pools across the park sites. They've also been a great help at our weekly volunteer workdays. We thank them for their 14 weeks of dedicated service!

### WELCOME: HAROLD AND LINDA COLWELL

From Harold and Linda: "We moved to Virginia twenty years ago from Southern, IN and reside in Varina / Henrico area. We love it here, especially all the natural beauty and history the region offers. One of our passions is volunteering with the USO, VA War Memorial and SOAR 365. We are excited about the opportunity with the Park Service."

Above: Lewis Barnett. Richmond Times-Dispatch. Right: Dr. Barnett (center, brown shirt) leads a group of birders at BioBlitz 2016. NPS Photo.

### FAREWELL: STEVE AND COLEEN SYLVESTER

Steve and Coleen are moving to Northern Virginia to be closer to their grandchildren. We will miss them, and we thank them for all their help! We haven't seen the last of Steve, however, as he would still like to return to help with special events. Steve is on the cannon crew and plays the drum. See you later, Steve!

### IN MEMORY: DR. LEWIS BARNETT

Lewis was a beloved member of the Richmond birding community and volunteered with the park for many years to catalog biodiversity through our annual Bird Survey and BioBlitzes.



We were deeply saddened to learn of his passing in January, and we join the Richmond Audubon Society and the University of Richmond in remembering his legacy of kindness and community service.





# Final Wrap-Up

## Closing Thoughts

### CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media sites are a great way to keep up with the latest park news, including upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and re-openings. By interacting with our posts, you can spread awareness of the park to a wider audience, even as we maintain reduced in-person capacity. Thanks for your help as we continue navigating the world of virtual visitor engagement!



Facebook: [Facebook.com/RichmondNPS](https://www.facebook.com/RichmondNPS)  
Facebook: [Facebook.com/MaggieL.WalkerNHS](https://www.facebook.com/MaggieL.WalkerNHS)



Instagram: [@richmond.nps](https://www.instagram.com/richmond.nps)  
Instagram: [@maggiwalkernps](https://www.instagram.com/maggiwalkernps)



YouTube: [Richmond National Battlefield Park](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1)  
YouTube: [MaggieWalkerNPS](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1m1)



Twitter: [@RichmondNPS](https://twitter.com/RichmondNPS)

#### Marie Pinto: Community Volunteer Ambassador

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#### Bert Dunkerly: Park Ranger

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#### Kristen Allen: Chief of Natural and Cultural Resources

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#### Ajena Rogers: Supervisory Park Ranger

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### INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

If any of the projects or upcoming opportunities mentioned in this newsletter have piqued your interest, please reach out! We could always use more help from volunteers, and we have a variety of projects to fit your unique interests and schedule. Contact Marie Pinto for more information about volunteering in the parks, or reach out to a specific staff member if you're interested in a particular project. Looking forward to hearing from you!



Right: Scenic blue skies and green fields at Gaines' Mill in April. Take some time to enjoy the outdoors this spring! NPS Photo.