

THE STONEWALL

March 2000



THE NORWICH MILITARY ACADEMY

BY ROBERT POIRIER, AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN

During the course of the American Civil War, 930 West Pointers served in the Union Armies. Surprisingly, Norwich provided 750 men to the Union. At least 56 Norwich alumni fought for the Confederacy. Among Norwich's alumni stood Major Generals Robert H. Milroy, Grenville Dodge, William "Bull" Nelson, Horatio G. Wright, "Fighting Joe" Mower Alfred H. Terry and Truman Seymour. They served in units such as the Iron Brigade and the Second Corps famous "Harvard Regiment," the 20th Massachusetts. Thomas Bragg, Braxton's brother, served as the Attorney General of the Confederacy for a time. Colonel Andrew J. Dorn commanded a regiment of Indians who fought for the Confederacy. Our speaker, Robert G. Poirier will fill us in on the details of this most important, but often overlooked military institution.

Additionally, he will offer his book for sale to BRCWRT members for \$25.00 (regular selling price is \$29.95)

By the Blood of Our Alumni, Norwich University Citizen Soldiers,
Robert G. Poirier

Time Life's The Civil War: The Bloodiest Day

When: Thursday, March 9, 2000, 7:30 PM

Where: Centreville Regional Library

Check out the revamped
BRCWRT web page at
www.geocities.com/bullruncwrt/

Stone House Intersection Update

By John P. McAnaw

On 17 February 2000, representatives from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) conducted a "public meeting" at the Visitor Center located within the Manassas National Battlefield Park (MNBP). The purpose of this "public meeting", which lasted from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., was to brief attendees on the latest (and undated) VDOT Environmental Assessment (EA) relative to the project "Route 29/234 Intersection Safety Improvements." This document addressed, *inter alia*, proposed VDOT construction projects vicinity the historic Stone House Intersection (U.S. Highway 29/Route 234) located in the very heart of the MNBP.

The so-called "public meeting" on 17 February consisted, in reality, of only several stations manned by VDOT representatives who briefed on various aspects of the planned construction projects for the Stone House Intersection.

Numerous attendees at the "public meeting" vociferously objected to the construction projects planned for the Stone House Intersection and other aspects of the Draft EA. In fact, VDOT representatives were on the defensive throughout the evening. By far, the largest contingent of protestors came from the Bull Run Civil War Round Table. VDOT plans were roundly criticized.

The VDOT "public meeting" on 17 February 2000 marked the only opportunity citizens had to weigh in and state their objections on what VDOT has planned for the heart of the MNBP, *i.e.*, the Stone House Intersection. A VDOT representative claimed that cited agency was not required to have even a single "public meeting". The presumption is that we citizens do not count regarding the future of the MNBP—one of the finest jewels in the National Park Service's crown.

The VDOT representatives appeared to be well rehearsed. Generally speaking, they kept their composure. None of the six VDOT contractor representatives that we spoke with can state that there was no public opposition to VDOT's plans for the historic Stone House Intersection. In fact, there was highly vocal and widespread opposition.

Some time in March 2000, the "Final" Environmental Assessment will be published. If this document is approved by the National Park Service, a 30-day period for public comment will follow. Then, if no unexpected major problems are surfaced, VDOT will, at some subsequent date, commence construction vicinity the Stone House Intersection.

I extend my sincere thanks to every member who showed up on 17 February 2000 at the Visitor Center. Your presence and comments were more important than you realize.

Opinion and Editorial

By John C. McAnaw

The VDOT "Public Hearing" on 17 February 2000 marked the only opportunity we citizens had to weigh in and state our objections on what VDOT has planned for the heart of the MNBP, i.e., the Stone House Intersection. The so-called "public meeting" on 17 February consisted, in reality of only several stations manned by VDOT representatives who briefed on various aspects of the planned construction projects for the cited intersection.

Several briefers acted as if the construction projects for cited intersection were a "done deal." VDOT's answers to questions were often misleading. There appeared to be a conscious effort on the part of some to shift the "blame line" regarding certain issues to the National Park Service.

The "station" or "county fair" style of meetings is often preferred by bureaucrats who fear public objections to their pre-determined plan. In other words, they do not want to give dissidents an opportunity, before an assembled crowd, to express opposition to particular projects. These tactics were also used by VDOT in its disgraceful efforts to ram through the infamous "Roberts Road Extension" in Fairfax County, despite the fact that well over 80% of surrounding community members opposed the project.

Initial planning for construction projects in the vicinity of the Stone House Intersection was discussed at a number of "closed" meetings. According to the Draft Environmental Assessment, the interagency task force for the project included representatives of the National Park Service, the Federal Highway Administration, Prince William County, the American Automobile Association, VDOT and "a local citizen." No representatives from Civil War preservation groups were invited to attend. Why was not the public informed of these meetings, or, in a timely manner, advised of the results of the meetings? Proposed plans for the intersection remind one of what would be expected in an autocracy or an oligarchy.

WHERE ARE THE LEADERS?

John P. McAnaw

An ancient Irish saying goes as follows, "After the chieftains fall, the

fight seldom continues." I would like to add to that with the following:
"If the chieftains fail to lead, the likelihood of victory is remote."

Have you asked yourself why the present fight to save the Stone House Intersection is different from past efforts that successfully staved off attempts to widen the intersection and, for that matter, U.S. Highway 29 and Route 234 within the confines of the Manassas National Battlefield Park? The reason was that in the past, the National Park Service (NPS) leaders strongly opposed such injurious proposals. Their stand to preserve the Stone House Intersection was a matter of public record. Who today in the leadership echelon of NPS is prepared to "fall on his sword" regarding cited intersection?

Permit me to quote extracts from the statements of two past NPS leaders. In a letter dated 25 June 1987, NPS Director William Penn Mott, Jr., informed Governor Gerald L. Baliles of the following:

The intersection of Sudley Road and the Warrenton Turnpike (today's Routes 234 and 29) is vital to understanding and interpreting the battles. At First Manassas, Union troops en route to assault Stonewall Jackson's Virginians on Henry Hill passed through the intersection and formed for their successive attacks along Sudley Road (Route 234) south of the intersection. At Second Manassas Maj. Gen. John Pope's headquarters, the nerve center of the Union army, was 100 yards northeast of the intersection. The Stone House, a structure intimately identified with both First and Second Manassas, is at the intersection. At the time of the Civil War, the historic intersection was a rural crossroads, and, while it is now a busy crossroads, it retains much of its former rural character. The widening of the intersection will further constrict access to the area, where visitors to the Stone House park their vehicles, and destroy the last vestiges of a rural crossroads.

In 1994, Disney filed a rezoning application with Prince William County Government. In a letter to the Chairman of the Prince William County Planning Commission, dated 8 September 1994, Roger G. Kennedy, Director of the National Park Service, and George T. Frampton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, stated the following regarding Disney's America rezoning application:

A widening of Route 29 through the Battlefield would violate all accepted criteria for maintaining the dignity and integrity of a national memorial. This is sacred ground, honored by the blood of American heroes. The closing of this road and of Route 234, which together bisect the Park, would resolve safety and visitor experience issues, and would return Manassas to a more complete historical representation of the battlefield. The park must not be sacrificed to short-sighted quick fixes for local traffic problems. No

recommendation for approval of the instant rezoning application should be based on such a course of action. We cannot believe the Disney Company would favor such a course of action.

Two plus years ago, the current NPS Director, Robert Stanton, wrote the following to U.S. Representative Frank Wolf on 7 November 1997:

This intersection was a major rural crossroads before the Civil War and both battles of Manassas were fought at or near the intersection. Major General John Pope's headquarters during Second Manassas were less than 100 yards from the intersection, and dozens of wounded soldiers from both sides in both battles were treated in Stone House, which is at the intersection.

There is no more significant land in this park than this intersection.

Thus, while we share your interest in improving the safety at this intersection, we cannot concur with the solutions that have been proposed to date, due to the drastic alterations they would impose on the historic fabric of the land.

In 1988, Congress passes the Manassas National Battlefield Park Amendments of 1988 (PL.100-647), which added the Stuart's Hill Tract to the park.

Section 10004 of that act directed the Secretary of the Interior to work with State and local agencies to determine when and how Routes 29 and 234 would be closed.

The Virginia Department of Transportation, working closely with the National Park Service, has determined that the traffic on Routes 29 and 234 can be diverted to alternatives outside the park and handle the volume of traffic for the foreseeable future. Since this action would fulfill the letter and intent of the 1988 legislation, we believe all parties should work toward the goal of constructing a bypass. If we can close all or portions of these two roads through the park in the short term, the need for improvements to their (sic) intersection may be eliminated (cont).

We need today strong statements, similar to those quoted above, from the NPS leadership. Their silence is deafening.

***Submissions on any Civil War related areas
of controversy are welcome.***

Send submissions to:

BRCWRT

PO Box 196

Centreville, VA 20122

Kernstown Tour Change
We will depart from the Centreville Library at
7:45AM on Saturday, March 11,
2000. This is a change from the original plan .

Bull Run Civil War Roundtable

Field Trips Spring 2000

By Kevin Anastas

Saturday 11 March
1st and 2nd Kernstown

Tour Sponsor: Gary Ecelbarger and Scott Patchan

Saturday 15 April

Gettysburg, 1st Day + Culps and Cemetery Hill

Tour Sponsor: Kevin Anastas

Saturday 29 April

Centreville/Union Mills and Orange & Alexandria RR

Tour Sponsor: John McAnaw

Saturday 13 May – Sunday 14 May

Petersburg: Summer '64 – Winter '65

Tour Sponsor: John McAnaw

Date TBD (In the fall)

Second Manassas

Tour Sponsor: Kevin Anastas

FY 2000 dues are due!

Please pay at the January meeting or mail them to:

BRCWRT

PO Box 816

Centreville, VA 20122

Individual - \$15.00 Family \$25.00

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