

THE RICHMOND NATIONAL PARKS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK
MAGGIE L. WALKER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE
Future Visitor
Center at
Tredegar Iron
Works

Superintendent's Corner: A Letter from Cindy MacLeod

Dear Park Friends and Neighbors:

This newsletter is the first of our quarterly efforts to communicate with you in this manner. I invite your comments in response!

It is also an opportunity for me to say thank you publicly to a fine, truly valued member of the park family, Mr. Jim Bell, who is retiring from the National Park Service in September. People don't come any better than you, Jim! We are pleased the you will be with us as a volunteer.

The years 1999-2001 are arguably the most exciting years in the history of the two national parks in Richmond, VA. Numerous activities are coming to fruition in these years. In chronological order, those activities are as follows:

The battlefield park is adding 700 acres to its current 765 acres through a donation from the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites. The property consists of significant portions of the battlefields of Glendale and Malvern Hill. The park's legislation, which restricts growth to donations and that prohibits the use of federal funds to buy land, has stymied protection efforts of valuable Richmond battlefield resources. This wonderful donation of undeveloped land was a giant step forward for the park and the people who will be able to enjoy the park for generations to come.

An associated initiative is the opening of a visitor facility at the Glendale Cemetery Lodge on Rt. 156 to offer interpretive services to amplify a visit to

those battlefields. If that facility is anywhere near as popular as our expanded facility at the Cold Harbor battlefield, it will be a great success.

A new visitor center at the Tredegar Iron Works, developed with funding secured by the Richmond Historic Riverfront Foundation and gracious cooperation from the property's owner, the Ethyl Corporation, is scheduled to open in the late spring of 2000. This partnership effort offers benefits that the park could not achieve alone. The new space is larger than the current visitor center, will be located in a vibrant part of the historic City on the riverfront in a National Historic Landmark complex, and will offer stimulating ways to learn about the battlefields. Our beloved Chimborazo location will remain park headquarters and will be transformed into a special place to learn about Chimborazo hospital and the state of medical care in the Civil War.

The Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site is ready to start on its final leg of restoration/development in 2000, pending congressional appropriations. Finally those buildings will all have their historic porches and will be completely rehabilitated to serve visitor and park needs. The project's construction investment is budgeted at 1.7 million dollars. A significant corner in historic Jackson Ward will be anchored by a much improved sight and increased activity. David Ruth has chronicled other major improvements in the park in his section of this newsletter.

I give my heartfelt thanks to an inspired, dedicated staff and to our partners in creating the vision and in crafting the results for Richmond National Battlefield Park and Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site.



NPS
Patrice Ferrell,
Education
Coordinator

Freeman Tilden Award Winner at Richmond Battlefield

In 1998 our own Patrice Ferrell of Richmond National Battlefield Park received the Northeast Region's Freeman Tilden Award. Every year the National Park Service, in partnership with the National Parks and Conservation Association, presents this award. Freeman Tilden provided a philosophical basis for interpretation in his book *Interpreting Our Heritage*. This award was created in 1982 to stimulate and reward creative thinking and work by National Park Service employees which results in having positive impacts on the visiting public. Each

National Park Service region nominates an employee who is judged on creativity, originality and positive contributions to enhancing the public's understanding of the National Park Service and the resources it protects. Pat received the award for creating "Penguins Across the USA", an innovative program which involves students in a journey through national parks through an adopted mascot. As a regional winner, Pat went to Alaska for the National Association for Interpretation Workshop. The workshop culminated in the announcement of the winner of the National Freeman Tilden award, among others. Although ultimately the national award went to Sally E. Griffin of Catoctin Mountain Park in the National Capital Region, for her interactive computer program presenting water quality issues of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, we are nonetheless very proud of Pat and the prestige her regional award brings to Richmond National Battlefield Park. As a final note, this year Pat was asked to help pick this year's Freeman Tilden award winner for the Northeast Region. Way to go, Pat!



NPS

New interpretive
waysides at the
Parsonage

INTERPRETATION UPDATE: David Ruth, Chief of Interpretation

As interpreters of the national treasures that comprise Richmond Battlefield and the Maggie Walker site, we are constantly looking for opportunities to expand visitors' understanding and appreciation of our park stories. On page 6 you can read about the recent addition of Mrs. Walker's office desk to the Maggie Walker visitor center exhibitry. This desk stands as a powerful symbol of her courage and business accomplishments. Positive changes are also taking place on the battlefields; here are just a few that should inspire you to come and spend a day with us.

A pedestrian bridge has been installed at Beaver Dam Creek, allowing visitors to cross over the creek and see the site of the heaviest fighting of the battle. Four new waysides have also been added, and the landscape has been transformed to its 1862 appearance.

At Gaines' Mill, the existing interpretive trail has been extended nearly a mile. Ten new waysides have been placed along this trail, and this fall a monument will be erected to the members of an Alabama brigade who fought valiantly in the closing hours of the battle. Meanwhile, at Cold Harbor a new exhibit was added to the visitor center that describes the experiences of the Union Heavy Artillery units who left the security of the Washington defenses and marched to Cold Harbor, where they suffered tremendous casualties.

This summer the new visitor center for the battles of Malvern Hill and Glendale opened at the Glendale National Cemetery lodge. The feature exhibit is a new fiber optic map designed by the park staff that tells the comprehensive story of the battles. Utilizing the new acreage added to the park at Malvern Hill, a new 2 1/2 mile trail has been built with seven interpretive waysides. The ruins of the Parsonage site, where prominent Confederate officers watched the battle unfold, has been preserved and interpreted as a stop along the driving tour. Over 40 acres of trees have been removed to restore the landscape to its 1862 appearance and four Confederate cannon have been placed in the now open grassland. For the first time visitors can see the opposing lines of artillery that once were obscured by thick woods.

Finally, after some 30 years of mothball status, Parker's Battery was opened to the public on June 19. Five new waysides and a walking trail now tell the story of this impressive Confederate earthwork defended by Richmonders for nine months of the war.

See what you've missed if you haven't been to the park lately? Come and see us and call if you have any questions about tours and park hours.

Employee Profile: Jim Bell



NPS
Jim Bell at the
entrance to
Maggie L.
Walker NHS

James Wayne Bell was born on August 17, 1942. Jim started working for the National Park Service in 1969 at the Southeast Regional Office, after serving his country in the Air Force and Department of Defense from 1962 to 1969. When asked his reason for joining the National Park Service, Jim replied, "I had a cousin employed with the Park Service and he recommended the job to me." Since Jim was born in Richmond, it was only natural for him to gravitate toward Richmond National Battlefield Park in 1971, where he worked until 1979. After working in private industry from 1979 to 1993, Jim returned to the NPS, working at Petersburg National Battlefield from 1993 to 1997. Ever since then he has been at the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site.

Jim has four daughters, three of whom were born during his employment at Richmond National Battlefield Park. Jim can be seen most days providing tours of Maggie Walker's house and occasionally at Fort Harrison and other areas of Richmond National Battlefield Park. Jim has recently been recognized for his efforts to clean up Evergreen Cemetery, where Maggie Walker is buried. When Jim is not working he is involved in his church and manages a gospel quintet, consisting of him and four of his cousins. Jim is also the keyboardist for the group.

When asked for this article where he saw himself in ten years, he replied, "sitting on a riverbank, fishing." Looks like starting October 1st, he will have plenty of time for it. Jim will be retiring from the National Park Service at the end of September. He has been a real inspiration to us all and we will miss him in the green and gray uniform but are delighted that he will appear regularly at the Maggie L. Walker site as a volunteer.



NPS
An EARTH
participant from
years past

E.A.R.T.H. Celebrates 20 Years!

This summer marks the 20th anniversary of EARTH, Richmond National Battlefield Park's summer childrens' program at Fort Harrison. EARTH, which stands for Environmental Activities Related to History, has been inspiring children ages four to twelve to learn more about the Civil War since its inception in 1979. Pat Ferrell, Richmond National Battlfield Park's education coordinator, has been there from the beginning. "When EARTH first started, it was 90% environmental. Now it's 90% history," she says.

The program changes every year, keeping repeat visitors guessing. "I want to play Civil War baseball!" yells one ten-year-old.

"We aren't doing that this year," replies Quita Stowe, a seasonal ranger with the program.

"Good," says a younger child; "I hate baseball."

Pat gets her ideas from books, other parks, activities that worked in years past and personal epiphanies. There is a preschool program as well as that

EARTH program, which is for first through fifth graders. This year the preschoolers are learning about children in the Civil War and why national parks are important, while the EARTH program focuses on the more complex story of Fort Harrison and the soldiers' daily lives.

If you or your children attended the program in the past, write to us and tell us your favorite memories. We would love to hear from you. Happy birthday, EARTH!

Schedule of Upcoming Events

October 2,3--Second Street Festival. Open House at Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site.

October 2,3--135th Anniversary of the battle of Fort Harrison. Living History with Confederate and Union soldiers at Fort Harrison. Walking tours throughout the weekend; candlelight tour at 8:00 p.m., Sat. Oct.2.

October 16, 17--Living History Encampment at Drewry's Bluff. Living History with Confederate sailors and marines portraying garrison life at Drewry's Bluff. Walking tours throughout the weekend.

October 31--Wilcox Monument dedication ceremony.

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE.

Volunteer Programs Booming at Richmond Battlefield and Maggie L. Walker Site

Here at Richmond National Battlefield Park and Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, volunteers are a critical part of what we do. From Resource Management to Living History, we couldn't do it without our volunteers. Church groups, boy and girl scouts, and organized living history companies, as well as individuals, assist at the parks throughout the year.

Volunteers In Parks, or VIPs work in all of the National Park Service's approximately 375 units, from Maine to Hawaii, from big cities to remote wildernesses. At Richmond National Battlefield Park and Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, VIPs work side by side with National Park Service rangers and staff doing a variety of jobs. These include the following: working the information desk answering visitors' questions and handing out written

information, participating in special park events, participating in EARTH, our summer activities program, and designing visitor brochures.

Over 850 visitors attended Artillery Through the Ages, a special event that took place at Malvern Hill last year. Volunteers from all over created a timeline ranging from the 17th century to modern day, and fired period artillery pieces. This event could not have been done without the volunteers. They provided time, uniforms and in some cases the weapons themselves to make this event a success. At the Maggie Walker site over 700 visitors toured the house during last year's Second Street Festival. VIPs manned the visitor center desk, guided tours through the house, counted the number of visitor contacts, manned a second desk in the middle of the festival and provided children's games and entertainment during the festival.

As for the future of our VIP programs, we would like to see it continue to be a big part of what we do. Recently our VIPs received a sneak peek at the future visitor center site at Tredegar Iron Works, which should open in the spring of 2000. Once the new facility opens, we will count on and need more volunteer assistance.

If you are interested in joining our VIP staff, please call one of our volunteer coordinators. At Richmond National Battlefield Park, talk to Ed Sanders; he can be reached at 226-1981. At Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, call Celia Suggs; she can be reached at 771-2017. Be sure to visit the National Park Service's Volunteer in Parks area on the Internet at www.nps.gov/volunteer for more volunteer opportunities. An electronic application form is provided so that you can apply to become a VIP right from the Web. If you do not have Internet access, you can contact Richmond National Battlefield Park and receive a National Park Service volunteer application.

Please consider setting aside some of your free time to become part of our team. We hope to hear from you soon!



NPS
Mrs. Walker's
Desk

New Exhibit at Maggie L. Walker NHS

There is a new exhibit at Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site's visitor center, one that is sure to fascinate fans of this illustrious woman. The National Park Service has restored the desk Mrs. Walker used at her office during the last part of her life. The desk was specially designed for Mrs. Walker to accommodate her wheelchair, to which she was confined from 1928 until her death in 1934.

It took two weeks of intense restoration by a professional curator to complete the desk in time for Mrs. Walker's birthday on July 15th. One of the more interesting aspects of the desk are the worn marks where Mrs. Walker's wheelchair rubbed against it. Please come view our latest treasure when you have the chance. Visitor center hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Saturday.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.