

THE RICHMOND NATIONAL PARKS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK
MAGGIE L. WALKER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



The Superintendent's Letter: Holding the High Ground

By Cynthia MacLeod

My job as superintendent allows and requires me to visit other units of the National Park System. I marvel at the beauty of the natural sites and the depth of the history of the cultural sites, and I appreciate the dedication of the men and women of the National Park Service. I am always proud to come home and compare our staff favorably with any other. Not a week goes by that I do not receive a letter or a call remarking on the excellence of the park employees and our volunteers here in Richmond, Virginia. I do know a secret of the front-line employees; that is that their jobs are some of the personally most rewarding in the National Park Service. When I have a chance to be at the front desk or on a battlefield talking with the visitors, I have some of my best days, too! The visitors to the Richmond National Battlefield Park and the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site bring a great level of enthusiasm, if not knowledge as well to the parks. Visitors have come in good numbers to the special battlefield evening walks and talks, to book-signing lectures at Tredegar, to Maggie Walker celebrations, and to our daily regular visiting hours. We hope that we are being good stewards of your resources and providing for your enjoyment of them now and forever. I thank our volunteers who give of their time and expertise cheerfully and generously. And, I thank our employees, both front-line and behind the scenes, who reliably and expertly devote their career to the National Park Service.

New Photographs Found and Placed on Exhibit

A temporary exhibit at the Tredegar Visitor Center opened on July 25, featuring dozens of photographs of Richmond from 1865. Although some of the images of the burned-out section of the city are familiar and timeless, many other are less well known. The exhibit draws visitors' attention to many military and economic landmarks during Richmond's short life as capital of the Confederacy. The display may be viewed on the second floor of the visitor center. It will be in place through the autumn.

In the course of research for this project, park historians discovered a cache of rare 1865 views taken by the Philadelphia firm of Levy & Cohen. That photographic team's work around Richmond was not unknown, but its volume and quality came as a pleasant surprise. The Library Company of Philadelphia has preserved the Levy & Cohen views. Some of the gems in the collection include a wider-angle view of the famous Chimborazo Hospital and several new images of Drewry's Bluff. Photographs taken inside Hollywood Cemetery, at the Arsenal and near the Penitentiary all offer clear details. A pair of photographs showing soldiers of the triumphant Union army camped on Libby Hill, in the city's east end, is particularly intriguing.

Levy & Cohen visited the area in the summer of 1865 and recorded at least 30 separate shots. Some of them were sold commercially as cartes-de-visites (cdv's), and thus are known among historians and collectors, although even the cdv's are extremely rare. But the Library Company also owns a stack of glass plate negatives, representing views that apparently were not converted into cdv's. Most of those remain unpublished, and are a valuable resource in the constant effort to understand wartime Richmond, its nearby battlefields, and their 19th century appearance.

As it grows gradually more difficult to unearth important new sources on the Civil War, fresh photographs of wartime Richmond and its landmarks constitute an especially exciting discovery.

Interpretation Update: Our Seasonal Rangers

By David Ruth, Assistant Superintendent and Chief of Interpretation

Every year the National Park Service hires thousands of seasonal employees to fulfill the expectations of millions of visitors. Like our visitors, "seasonals" as they have come to be known, hail from all over the United States and the world. Some are working as a summer break from college; some are retirees; and some hope to become a permanent NPS ranger. All have a love for the National Parks and take to heart the Park Service creed: "To preserve and protect for future generations." For the 2001 season 12 rangers were hired to assist with interpretive operations at Richmond National Battlefield Park and Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site.

Most of the seasonal rangers reported to the park on June 1. First on the agenda was a week-long training session to prepare for the programs scheduled for the summer. During the week members of the permanent staff, and even some of the returning seasonals, presented programs and led discussions about subjects relating to interpretive techniques, Civil War history, and park operations. Our training objective was to go beyond simply handing out uniforms

and badges to our seasonals, but to do the best job we can preparing them to meet a public who has come to expect well informed and professional communicators whenever they visit a National Park.

We are extremely proud of the men and women who comprise our seasonal staff. While several are in their rookie season, most are returning for a second, third or even sixth season. Two seasonals, Judy Anthis and Charles Spicer, have been associated with our site for more than ten years. Our newest seasonal, Kawther Elmi, was born in Somalia and has been a U.S. citizen for two years.

Our other seasonals all bring special experiences to their daily duties. Lindsay Gray has worked at other historical sites in the Richmond area, and was part of the Park's living history program back in the 1980's. Glenn Brasher is finishing his Ph.D. in history. Wendy Migdal came from Ohio last year and liked the area so much she got a teaching job in Spotsylvania County. Shelby Davis has a degree in English and is quite the Civil War enthusiast. Mike Gorman, who has been with us for several seasons, has a goal to become an expert on all things pertaining to Civil War Richmond; he has a good start on it with his web site that catalogues photos and other materials of the Civil War. John Robison is starting his second season and is also a musician with "Southern Horizon," a band that plays Civil War-era music. John does Civil War music programs at Tredegar. Ken Brown grew up in Richmond and has a great interest in the role of black troops in the war. Jeff Seal recently received his degree in Criminal Justice and Ben Cleary is a freelance writer.

During the 2001 summer season this talented seasonal staff will have ample opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with visitors. Each day six visitor centers are in operation and twelve interpretive programs are scheduled throughout the park. Each Friday night from June 29 through August 10, a special interpretive tour will be conducted at one of our sites, and throughout the summer other anniversary programs, bus tours, and living history encampments are scheduled. Without the seasonal rangers, the summer programs would consist of little more than simply operating the visitor centers.

Volunteer Profile: Jennifer Trucano and Cameon Eisenzimmer

Richmond National Battlefield Park welcomes two volunteer summer interns, Jennifer Trucano and Cameon Eisenzimmer, all the way from the Dakotas. They were recruited through the Student Conservation Association (SCA). This organization locates interested volunteers from all over North America and places them with state and federal conservation agencies like the National Park Service. Jennifer and Cameon will be working with Kristen Gounaris-Allen (whom you may recall from an earlier profile), the Resource Management Specialist this summer on several important projects. These include earthwork monitoring, trail maintenance, an invasive plant inventory, and GPS inventories of park signs, cultural attributes and boundary monuments.

Jennifer comes from South Dakota and is minoring in Environmental Science at Wake Forest University. She enjoys being in a city with so much history and is busy learning the local flora. Cameon comes from North Dakota and is majoring in Archeology at Minnesota State University, Moorhead. She is very interested in Civil War history and is busy mastering the story of Richmond during the war.

Midway through their stay at Richmond National Battlefield Park, Jennifer and Cameon have already completed much of the work that was laid out for them and are wonderful additions to the park staff. We hope they return to their universities as more well-rounded people for having spent the summer at Richmond National Battlefield Park.

The Arrowhead Receives a Facelift

You may have noticed something slightly different on the upper right hand corner of the front page of this newsletter. The arrowhead, authorized in 1951 as the official National Park Service emblem by the Secretary of the Interior, has a new look. Changes were made to make the symbol clearer and more recognizable, although the elements meant to symbolize the major facets of the national park system remain the same.

Here is a breakdown of the symbols within our favorite logo. The Sequoia tree and bison represent protected species of vegetation and wildlife. The mountain and lake represent the scenic and recreational sites in the system. The arrowhead itself represents parks with historical and archeological values.

Depending on the usage, as you travel through our national parks you may see different versions of the arrowhead, ranging from a flat, black and white image, like that on our front page, to a high resolution graphic which makes the arrowhead look as if it has been carved out of wood or rock.

We hope you enjoy our updated look as we traverse the new millenium together.

Employee Profile: Dan Hodgson

This issue's employee in the spotlight is Daniel Hodgson. He is our new Facility Manager and started working for Richmond National Battlefield Park/Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site on May 20, 2001. As Facility Manager, Dan is responsible for all maintenance and construction for the park. He has also worked at Rock Creek Park National Park, in the National Capital Region, where he was in charge of Facilities, Roads and Trails for the park. Dan has 28 years of experience in the construction/maintenance field, including 17 with the federal government. He has also been with the Navy Reserve Seabees for 21 years.

Dan was born in Pennsylvania, although he has spent the last 37 years living in Virginia. He and his wife, Kerry have been married for 28 years. They have two grown children, Sean, a fire fighter, and Elizabeth, a public affairs specialist. They also have two grandsons, Sean's children with his wife, Casadi.

When asked why he joined the National Park Service, Dan said, "Pride in the Service and the distinction of working for an organization that greatly contributes to this nation and its people." He is very glad to be able to stay in Virginia and still further his career and in ten years expects to still be involved with the Facility Management Program within the National Park Service. Glad to have you aboard, Dan!

2001 Governor's Conference on Education: Promoting the Positive Image of Public Education

Nearly 1,000 educators including teachers, superintendents, legislators, and governing officials attended the annual Governor's Conference on Education in Richmond, Virginia on July 24, 2001. The purpose of the conference, sponsored by the Office of the Governor and the Virginia School Boards Association, was to offer school board members, superintendents and other participants an overview of successful educational practices throughout Virginia.

The featured luncheon speaker, Governor James S. Gilmore, spoke about education reform and revision in the Commonwealth. Governor Gilmore stressed the importance of maintaining effective and excellent education and encouraged new levels of success. The education conference provided an exciting agenda of inventive ideas, successful practices, and a sharing of current educational issues.

Among the 90 invited presenters at the Governor's Conference on Education were Pat Ferrell, education specialist at Richmond National Battlefield Park, and Debbie Hollowell, resource teacher for Seven Pines Elementary School. Their mini-workshop "Penguins Across the USA: A Partnership Between Seven Pines Elementary School and Richmond National Battlefield Park" provided brief overviews of an exciting and effective partnership that provides students and teachers with instructional projects that tap learning to support today's curriculum.

Year One -- Students at Seven Pines Elementary School set off on an exciting year-long school-wide learning expedition in which four stuffed toy penguins were boxed and mailed along a predetermined route of National Parks. At each destination, park rangers entered a log of information about location, history, weather, important sites, and photos. "Ranger Pat" shared travel information during Thursday morning announcements and monthly PTA meetings. In April the penguins returned wearing a collection of pins and badges from their National Park tours. The children connected classroom learning about animals, habitats, weather conditions, landforms, plants, people, and historic places through shared log entries and numerous photographs. The rangers who were on the receiving end of the penguin program were so inspired that they took the penguins on "field trips" to nearby parks that weren't originally on the list. In some cases the penguins went on school trips, representing Richmond National Battlefield Park all over the country.

Year two of the project was called "Penguin Kids Running and Reading Across the USA." This project was designed to enrich learning experiences for students, encourage reading and research, and provide innovative curriculum-based programs that targeted the Standards of Learning and used "Parks as Classrooms." Each class selected a "penguin-visited" park from the previous year, and determined the number of miles it would take to go from Seven Pines Elementary to that park. The children counted each book that was read as one reading mile. Ten laps around the school's track was a running mile.

The school's goal was to "read and run" to 24 National Parks (59,000 miles). Through correspondence with park rangers, daily running and reading and mileage graphs this program integrated the Standards of Learning in a fun and exciting adventure. As an added benefit to the students, the physical fitness tests showed a passing rate of 75% for the boys and 80% for the girls in the one-mile run. This was up from the previous year (39% boys/51% girls).

Seven Pines and the National Parks have continued to bond in other ways including the following:

- field trip to Richmond National Battlefield Park's Gaines' Mill and Cold Harbor battlefields--grade 5
- Civil War Travel Trunk--classroom learning kit--grade 5
- field trip to Colonial National Historical Park, Jamestown--grade 3
- field trip to George Washington National Monument--multi-age grade
- "Reading to the Coral Reef" Buck Island Reef National Monument, Virgin Islands National Park--school-wide project
- "Running and Reading to Yellowstone National Park"--school-wide project
- "Reading and Running to Pago Pago National Park Preserve" (Capital of American Samoa on Tutuila Island)--school-wide project
- National Park Service Northeast Region Educational Conference-"Riding the Wind"--June H. Murphy, Principal/ Debbie Hollowell, Resource Teacher and Seven Pines students presented opening program

Due to the success of the Seven Pines partnership, Richmond National Battlefield Park has teamed up with other area schools including Longan (Henrico County), South Anna (Hanover County), Holton (Richmond), and Crestview (Henrico County) Elementary Schools to help inspire the children to learn about their National Parks.

These partnerships provide students, teachers and park rangers with exciting learning opportunities and adventures that support curriculum education.

Birthday Celebration for Maggie Walker

Maggie Lena Walker always knew how to draw and hold a crowd. On the 134th anniversary of her 1867 birth, on July 15, 2001, a crowd of 3000 assembled in her honor at the corner of 2nd and Leigh Streets in Richmond to enjoy music, fellowship, and learning. The National Park Service joined with Downtown Presents, the Maggie L. Walker Historical Foundation, and several commercial sponsors to put on the birthday event as part of Richmond's Big Gig. Several blocks of Leigh Street and Second Street were closed to traffic in order to give space for three musical attractions: Larry Bland, Renaissance, and the First African Baptist Singers. Children amused themselves with craft activities while their parents kept time to the music and waved fans to keep the warm air moving. Hundreds of participants waited patiently in line to tour Mrs. Walker's home and the National Park Service Visitor Center. Inside they could see her well-stocked library and gracious dining room, among the many rooms of the house, but they had to partake of the birthday cake outside

where the crumbs and crowd could be better accommodated. Many visitors remarked that this was their first visit to the house and that they wished they had come sometime earlier in the twenty years that it has been open to the public as part of the National Park system!

The day of birthday celebration had started early that morning at the Evergreen Cemetery where a crowd gathered to place a memorial wreath on Mrs. Walker's grave. The ceremony was planned by the Maggie L. Walker Historical Foundation and included a motorcade of antique cars and a horse-drawn carriage. The keynote speaker was scheduled to be the Reverend Dennis Thomas of First African Baptist Church, Mrs. Walker's church, but when the arrival of the motorcade was delayed, the Reverend Dr. Wilson Shannon, of the First Baptist Church in Centrailia, delivered his own magnificent words in honor of Mrs. Walker.

We will celebrate Mrs. Walker's 135th birthday anniversary next year on July 15, 2002, so plan to be with us.

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