

Historical plaque slated for US 15 to mark calvary clash at Buckland Mills

By JAMES IVANCIC
Observer staff

Historical events can be forgotten unless someone makes an effort to see that they are kept alive. A step in that direction was taken May 11 when a historical marker was dedicated near the site of the Battle of Buckland Mills.

It will stand along US 15, near the historic community of Buckland, to commemorate the cavalry clash on Oct. 19, 1863, in which J.E.B. Stuart's Confederate force routed Union forces that included a brigade led by George Armstrong Custer. The South termed the clash and hasty pursuit that followed "the Buckland Races."

The marker, to be located near the Madison Crescent retail and residential development, includes a brief summary of the battle. Before its eventual posting in the

ground, the arrival of the marker received a formal unveiling and ribbon cutting on the afternoon of May 11 in nearby Crescent Park, which lies behind the shopping center where Harris-Teeter is the anchor store.

Boy Scout Troop 581 of Gainesville presented the colors and led the Pledge of Allegiance; band members from Battlefield High School performed; and members of the Black Horse Cavalry were there on horseback to provide an aura of authenticity.

Sean Connaughton, Virginia Transportation secretary and Wally Covington, Prince William County Supervisor representing Brentsville District spoke.

Mark Trbovich, president of the Prince William County Historic Preservation Foundation, summarized the Battle of Buckland Mills. Linda Wright and David Blake of the Buckland Preservation Society:



From left, Linda Wright, David Blake and John Rhoad unveiled the historical marker for the 1863 Civil War Battle of Buckland Mills at Madison Crescent in Gainesville on May 11. Wright is president of the Buckland Preservation Society, Blake is its board chairman, and Rhoad is the principal officer of RMJ Development, which hosted the unveiling ceremony.

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Rob Clapper, chief executive officer of the Prince William Chamber of Commerce, and John Rhoad, principal officer of RMJ Development, which developed the Madison Crescent property, assisted with the ribbon cutting.

In his welcoming remarks, Thomas E. Knock, chairman of the Prince William County Historical Commission, noted the long history of what became known as Buckland. He included the days when an American Indian village occupied the site.

Connaughton said that "with growth comes challenges of growth in preserving and passing on our heritage for future generations." He recalled that a historic preservation office was created in Prince William County by the county board of supervisors when he served on that board. He said that state dollars are flowing for historic preservation and that the administration of Gov. Bob McDonnell just the previous day had approved \$3 million for preservation efforts in Middleburg, in partnership with the Civil War Trust.

Connaughton interjected a bit of local history by saying that George Washington recorded in his diary during his early days as a surveyor in the 1750s that he traveled to Buckland.

"So it's not just our common history but of the entire country," Connaughton said of the site's significance.

In his remarks, Covington noted the historic marker will stand next to a road that "carried the hopes and dreams of many." Local dollars on the county level as well as funding from the state secured through the efforts of State Sen. Charles Colgan have helped preserve and enhance sites such as Rippon Lodge, Historic Brentsville and Ben Lomond. "Partnerships" formed between the county and groups like the Buckland Preservation Society have also made that work possible, he said.

BUCKLAND DISTRICT
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