

HISTORIC SITE FILE: MANASSAS BATTLEFIELD
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM PARK
RELAYS/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA



◀ Hoops 2000-01

Special section previewing the upcoming
high school basketball season / B1

Sports

INSIDE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2000

Manassas Journal Messenger

A MEDIA GENERAL NEWSPAPER

35 CENTS

BRENTSVILLE • BROAD RUN • BRISTOW • BUCKHALL • BULL RUN • CATHARPIN • GAINESVILLE • HAYMARKET • MANASSAS PARK • NOKESVILLE • YORKSHIRE

NOTEBOOK



Manassas

Headlines ▼

■ **Airport Director Bruce Lawson** performed his last duties as airport director at city council Monday before he leaves his post Thursday.

Council passed a resolution that will allow unused money from a

After the announcement of the purchase of 136 acres surrounding Manassas National Battlefield Park, members of the Civil War Preservation Trust and the Department of Conservation and Trust check out one of the cannon.

HELENE STEINBERG
MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE



By **PATRICK WILSON**
MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE

■ MANASSAS

As he made plans in 1998 to buy land and build a home north of Manassas National Battlefield Park, Greg Gorham was exploring the area and noticed a sign in the weeds. It advertised land for sale, about 143 acres or so.

Gorham, a 41-year-old software analyst, called Weber &

Associates Realty, which posted the sign.

He learned that a Prince William judge in 1996 had put local attorneys in charge of selling the property at the best price they could. The profits would be divided up between heirs who had claim to the property.

Gorham called Robert K. Sutton, superintendent of

▼ See **BATTLEFIELD** / A4

▲ BATTLEFIELD

Continued from Page A1

Manassas National Battlefield Park, to see if the National Park Service could acquire the land and protect it from being developed.

But because the tract is not inside the park's boundaries, there wasn't much the National Park Service could do, Sutton told him.

Sutton suggested Gorham contact the Civil War Preservation Trust and other groups, which Gorham did.

That ultimately led to the purchase of the land Nov. 17, with \$630,000 from state and federal funds, money raised by the Sudley Mountain/Stony Ridge Civic Association and money from the preservation trust, a national organization devoted to preserving endangered Civil War battlefields.

Preservationists, local residents, and government officials held a ceremony Tuesday at the battlefield's Henry Hill visitor center to announce details of the purchase and hail it as a victory against suburban sprawl.

James Lighthizer, presi-

dent of the Civil War Preservation Trust, called the purchase "the saving of an extremely important piece of Civil War battlefield ground."

The size of the land, known as the Davis property, ended up totaling 136 acres. It is located west of Featherbed Lane on the park's west end, and was the site of bloodshed during the August 1862 Battle of Second Manassas.

The trust reports that it has saved nearly 11,000 acres of land at battlefields nationwide.

When Gorham first called the National Park Service and then the preservation trust about the land, Lighthizer took it seriously.

"He didn't have any money, but had a great idea," Lighthizer said.

Before long, local residents helped come up with funds. Gorham, Jack Hermansen, Claude "Brad" Bradshaw and other members of the civic association began raising funds, with serious effort beginning about a month and a half ago. Bradshaw is the fund-raiser.

They have lined up \$80,000 of the \$130,000 they committed to raise for the trust,

Who's paying for the Davis tract:

Civil War Preservation Trust treasury: \$200,000

State and federal preservation money: \$200,000

Sudley Mountain/Stony Ridge Civic Association: \$130,000

Civil War Preservation Trust fund raising: \$100,000

Total: \$630,000

Source: Civil War Preservation

which collects all donations.

The land has always been privately owned, Sutton said. Park Service officials did not know much about it until recently, he said.

Aug. 29, 1862, was the first full day of fighting during the three-day Battle of Second Manassas.

Union troops had been attacking Confederate lines all day, said John Hennessy, an author and the assistant superintendent of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

At 5 p.m., Union troops mounted their largest assault, with 2,500 to 2,700 troops, Hennessy said.

Confederate troops began to yield off of a rocky knoll and onto the land that later became

known as the Davis property. Fighting climaxed when a fresh wave of Confederate forces washed over the property and drove the Yankees back, Hennessy said.

The ultimate goal of the preservationists is to turn the land over to the National Park Service and make it part of Manassas National Battlefield Park.

Even without purchase by the preservation trust, the land might have gone undisturbed, Gorham said. But it just as easily could have been developed, he said.

"We're not done with this until the park has it in their boundaries, protected," he said.

• Patrick Wilson is a staff writer with the Potomac News in Woodbridge