

Not on This Hallowed Ground

A new battle of Manassas: history buffs vs. a shopping mall

In the rolling Virginia countryside some 30 miles from Washington, Confederate troops bloodied Union armies twice in the Civil War battles of Manassas. Now Manassas is up in arms again, this time over a 20th century invader: a 1.2 million-sq.-ft. shopping center that is being bulldozed on a site that served as Robert E. Lee's headquarters in 1862. "Greed is fighting a battle with our heritage," charges Annie Snyder, leader of the Save the Battlefield Coalition, a group struggling to protect the 540 acres adjacent to Manassas National Battlefield Park. "Developers want to pave over ground where brave men are buried."

The latest battle of Manassas began in earnest last January when Hazel/Peterson Co., the largest land developers in northern Virginia, joined Edward DeBartolo, the nation's biggest shopping-center developer, to propose the mall, complete with new highway intersections, commuter parking lots and high-rise office buildings. Down came a barrage of hostile fire from outraged Civil War buffs, including Actor Charlton Heston and former White House Spokesman Jody Powell, a descendant of nine Manassas veterans. Ground where 4,200 soldiers gave their lives, say the preservationists, should not be overwhelmed by noise, traffic and pollution from up to 85,000 mall-bound cars a day.



Annie Snyder in combat dress at the Manassas National Park

The area in contention, known as Stuart's Hill, is adjacent to the park along the Warrenton Turnpike, which cuts through the heart of the battlefield. At the second battle of Manassas in 1862, the hill served as the staging ground for General James Longstreet's counterattack, which led to a Confederate victory.

Developers and spokesmen for the local government claim that the site is "historically insignificant." The location of the actual fighting, they point out, is well preserved within the national park, and a Hazel/Peterson spokesman insists that

the mall architects have gone to great lengths to make sure most of the buildings will not be seen by tourists. Moreover, while historians estimate that 155 men died on or near the hill, a survey of the mall property uncovered only the grave of a dog.

Congress and a growing number of slow-growth rebels have joined the preservationists. "What price are we willing to put on our heritage?" asks Congressman Robert Mrazek, a New York Democrat whose office walls are lined with photographs of Civil War generals. "You can't hallow the sacrifice of those soldiers who died fighting for freedom with a Burger King or a Bloomingdale's." Mrazek and Texas Democrat Michael Andrews have introduced legislation authorizing the Federal Government to seize Stuart's Hill from the developers, at a cost of \$35 million or more.

While Mrazek and 200 allies on Capitol Hill hope to bring the bill to a vote next month, Annie

Snyder and her supporters are sniping from the grass-roots level. "We have Save the Battlefield battalions forming across the U.S.," she says. "Schoolchildren and veterans are writing and sending money." A former Marine officer, Snyder, 66, is a veteran of Manassas campaigns. In 1973 she fought to stop an amusement park planned for the same spot. For that victory, this Yankee from Pittsburgh was awarded the Jefferson Davis medal by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

—By Jerome Cramer/Washington

It's Our Money

Voters want a say in spending

Thirsty West Virginians who plunk quarters into soda machines help finance a state medical school. Cigarette smokers in Washington State cough up \$31.7 million a year to clean Puget Sound, while home buyers in Maryland pay transfer fees that help buy new parklands. This practice of earmarking taxes for specific government functions is growing steadily: at least 18 states have adopted targeted taxes since mid-1984, and dozens more such levies—for schools, police, roads, drug-abuse treatment—are pending in states from California to Michigan.

The fresh popularity of earmarking shows that much has changed, and much has not, since ten years ago this week, when Californians endorsed the tax-slashing Proposition 13 and triggered a national tax revolt. Pollster Mervin Field has found that while opinion still runs against any general tax increase, 7 out of 10 Californians would support higher taxes for specific programs—even efforts for the homeless. South Dakota's former Republican Governor William Janklow, a

populist proponent of earmarking, explains, "People know that if they just trust the money to government, it's going to suck it up like an amoeba, leaving them nothing to show for it. So now people are saying, 'It's our money, and we'll tell you what we're willing to pay for.'"

Many economists dislike earmarked taxes because they make public budgets less responsive as funding needs change. Another pitfall vexes Steven Gold, a tax expert at Denver's National Conference of State Legislatures: "Voters are sometimes misled when they support earmarking, because new revenue sometimes just

offsets money the state was already spending." Nearly \$500 million annual earnings from California's lottery are designated for public schools. Yet the schools' share of the state's budget has fallen by \$443 million. That general-fund money not spent on schools is available for politicians to spend (or squander) on larger staffs, salaries or pet projects.

The major effect of earmarking is not financial but political: it builds constituencies who help sell new taxes and programs. In New Jersey, voters rejected casino gambling in 1974 but approved it two years later when it was limited to Atlantic City and when its tax revenues were pledged to help the disabled and senior citizens.

The appeal of earmarking has attracted interest even from private developers. In Los Angeles the Occidental Petroleum Corp. has sponsored a ballot initiative to allow it to drill for oil near fashionable Pacific Palisades. The proposal upsets local homeowners, but Occidental has plans to offset their votes: the oil company pledges to pay taxes estimated to exceed \$60 million a year for the police, \$40 million for city hall and \$25 million for the schools. All earmarked, of course.

—By Dan Goodgame/Los Angeles



Janklow: we'll tell you what we will pay for