

Core Kernstown Battlefield Ground At Risk of Development

12/09/2024 – by Gary Sheppard

Three tracts of land became available for sale on Middle Road, Winchester, Virginia. These properties are in direct line between Pritchard's Hill and south Sandy Ridge, historical Civil War sites on the current Kernstown Battlefield property (light blue on the map). These tracts include a 68 acre tract owned by the Glass-Glen Burnie Foundation (GGBF) (green on the map); a 36+ acre lot known as the Jones Tract (yellow); and a 3+ acre lot known as the Chasen Tract (reddish). The KBA has been working with our partners to save these lands.

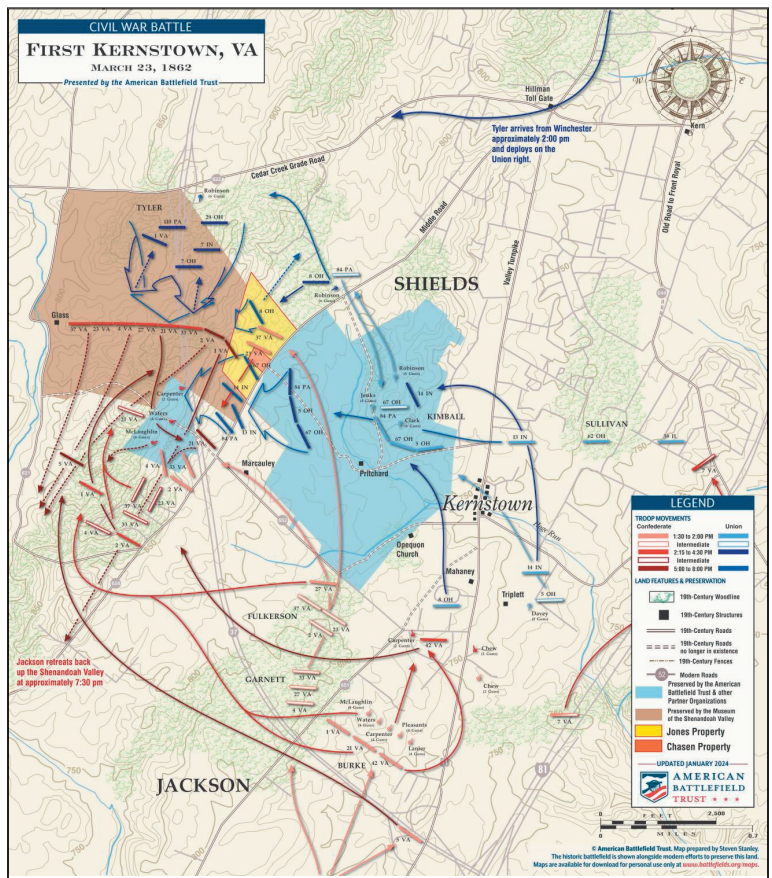
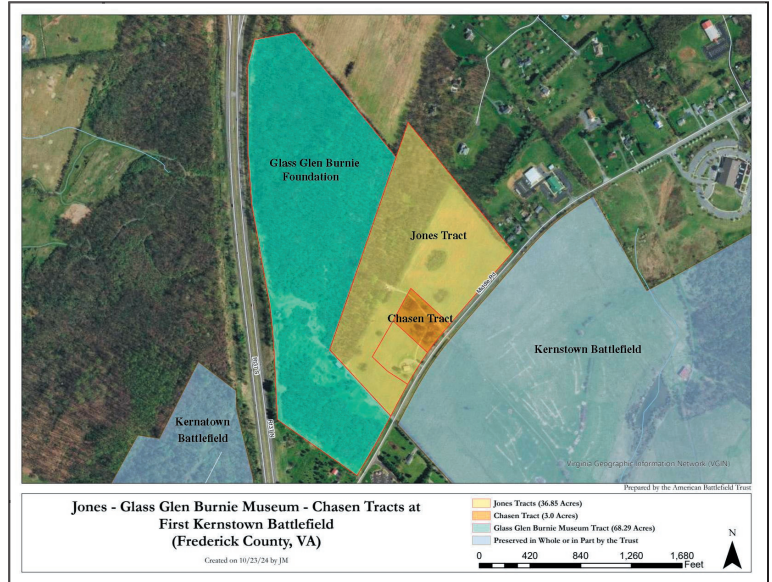
The preservation of these three tracts of land provides a unique opportunity to save key landmark sites of three Civil War battles – First Kernstown, Second Winchester, Second Kernstown. The Jones and Chasen Tracts have been secured by the American Battlefield Trust (ABT). The ABT has previously saved south Sandy Ridge from development, transferring it to the KBA in December 2022. The ABT is now seeking assistance paying for the purchase of these tracts. For south Sandy Ridge, the KBA contributed significantly for that purchase.

The 68 acre tract owned by the GGBF is of major concern. The GGBF is based in Texas. During August 2023, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) entered into negotiations with the GGBF for the GGBF Tract.

By February 2024, the SVBF and GGBF had agreed on a purchase price of \$1.3m for the 68 acres. The negotiations continued on the payout schedule with SVBF asking for up to two years. In late October/early November, the GGBF sent the SVBF a letter terminating the negotiations, presumably over the payout time frame.

The GGBF then reportedly packaged this and other tracts of land for potential developers. As of today, this package now includes a 66 acre tract east of Jones Road and south of the Glass House contiguous to Rose Hill. With the original 68 acre tract, the total package would now be 134 acres for potential development.

The 66 acres are on the west slope of Sandy Ridge. It is an area over which the Confederates retreated during the early evening of 1st Kernstown after exhausting their ammunition on north Sandy Ridge (Rose Hill). They were



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then chased down by Union cavalry and many taken prisoner. This tract is heavily vegetated and rises to ravines and large rock outcroppings up to our Sandy Ridge property.

During November, the SVBF re-engaged on the negotiations and recently submitted to the GGBF an offer of \$2.68m for the 134 acres. As long as the negotiations continue, there is hope that a positive resolution will result.

The significance of these properties to the KBA ...

First Kernstown: During the late afternoon of March 23, 1862, Colonel Nathan Kimball directed Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania regiments to assault south Sandy Ridge from Pritchard's Hill to remove Confederate artillery batteries and support the assault on north Sandy Ridge (now Rose Hill). The attacking Union troops crossed the open fields of these three tracts where they were exposed to severe Confederate artillery and musket fire. The attack, with significant loss of life, was eventually successful and resulted in the only battle loss attributed to General Jackson.

Second Winchester: General Richard Ewell and the Confederate 2nd Corps left the line at Fredericksburg and arrived on the outskirts of Winchester. On June 13, 1863, while General Allegheny Johnson attacked Winchester by the Front Royal Pike on the east, General Jubal Early ordered General Harry T. Hays and the Louisiana Tigers to attack Pritchard's Hill to remove or capture the Union artillery guarding the southern entrance to Winchester. The attack was made and the fighting continued into Winchester and beyond. This victory led to Gettysburg.

Second Kernstown: On July 24, 1864, Union General George Crook lined up his Army of West Virginia along Pritchard Lane facing south, stretching from Valley Pike on the east to beyond Middle Road on the west up on Sandy Ridge. The line was ordered forward and after about 600 yards, Confederate General Jubal Early unleashed the 2nd Corps, flanking both ends of the Union line and breaking through gaps in the middle. The Union troops of Colonel Joseph Thoburn, located on and around Sandy Ridge, initially advanced from the three tracts and eventually retreated over the same tracts when pursued by the Confederates of General Stephen Ramseur's division.

Importance: From the above summaries, it can be seen that the three land tracts played a significant role in the Civil War history of Kernstown. Their preservation would be a significant contribution to the First Kernstown, Second Winchester, and Second Kernstown Battlefield landscapes, especially in the face of ongoing development pressures. Americans were wounded and died on this Hallowed Ground and it needs to be preserved, not developed.

In the GGBF Mission Statement, they include the historical preservation of land as a function of their mission. They also use this mission statement as justification for their 501(c)3 status. By terminating their negotiations with the SVBF, a preservation group, and then potentially seeking a developer, they seem to be in violation of their own mission statement.

With your help we can save this Hallowed Ground. To donate, visit our website at www.kernstownbattle.org. Scroll down on the Home Page to the donate button for Middle Road Properties. Or make your donation by check using the enclosed remittance envelope. Be sure to note on your check "Middle Road Properties".

Saving this Hallowed Ground would have a positive impact on protecting the historical, natural, and cultural resources of the three battlefields, eliminate the possible construction of densely packed multi-story structures obscuring this important viewshed, and enhance the educational and research opportunities presented by protecting this land from that development.

Help to preserve history ~

DONATE!

Save these properties from development.



from Gary Sheppard ...

The President's Corner

Our Annual Membership Meeting was held on Sunday, October 13, 2024. For those of you who attended, you were presented with a full and very entertaining afternoon of events put together by Larry Turner, KBA Vice President. If you weren't there, here's what you missed.

One highlight was the excellent presentation by our good friend Gary Ecelbarger, author of "We're in for it!", an excellent study of the 1st Kernstown Battle on March 23, 1862. Gary's focus was the fight that occurred on south Sandy Ridge, the area now owned by the KBA. Even though he is in the process of writing a follow up book on George Washington during the Revolutionary War, like a good author and historian, he continues to analyze his past writings.

One critical change he has made is the location of Waters Battery on Sandy Ridge. This is important to the KBA as it assists us in pinpointing other locations to tell the story of the afternoon battle. Gary has now placed Waters Battery north of the Apple Valley Road that once crossed over Sandy Ridge. This battery was the main target of the assault ordered by Union Colonel Nathan Kimball on Pritchard's Hill. This also gives us a better idea of where Colonel William Murray, leading 255 members of the 84th PA, was killed. This also helps us to locate the Confederate Irish Battalion and Lt. Col. John S. Patton with the 21st VA, that created a devastating crossfire on the attacking Union regiments. Great stuff.

At the end of his presentation, Gary was presented with a framed print of the battlefield as viewed from Pritchard's Hill with the inscription: "To honor the long, close association with the Kernstown Battlefield Association, your willingness to conduct tours, providing advice and guidance for our programs, and placing your highly informative well-written books in our Visitor's Center, the KBA sincerely appreciates and cherishes this relationship."

One very special role I get to perform is to recognize volunteers for a President's Award. This is very difficult as we have a very hard working KBA Board and Volunteer crew. They are energetic and very liberal with their time and efforts. Recipients this year were:

George Mangano, Board Director, for his creative initiative and efforts for our two KBA Annual Golf Tournaments, the profits from these events, and on the Mowing Crew maintaining the property.

Dan Heim, Volunteer, for his outstanding service and numerous hours throughout the year searching for and writing grants to fund the many projects on the Kernstown Battlefield, and for pursuing historic designation for the Pritchard House.

John Hess, Board Director, for his creative initiatives managing the KB Visitor's Center, the endless hours ordering merchandise and books, reorganizing and updating the exhibits, and coordinating and scheduling the Volunteers.

One role of the Membership, pursuant to our Bylaws, is to approve one-third of our Board Directors for another three year term. This election procedure was led by Larry Turner, our VP. By unanimous vote, Group I members Mike Cannane, Jim Cutler, Scott Gregory, John Hess, and Gary Sheppard will continue as Board Directors through 2027. There existed in this group a vacancy for a Board Director that was not filled.

The meeting continued with a very delicious light lunch, an overview by Steve Cantu, KBA Treasurer, of our financial health, and a power point presentation on our conservation programs.

On November 13, 2024, we held our monthly Board Meeting. Pursuant to the Bylaws, officers of the Executive Committee are to be elected during the meeting following the Annual Membership Meeting. This was accomplished through the leadership of Gary Crawford. The Board voted Gary Sheppard as President, Larry Turner as Vice President, Charles Hagan as Secretary, and Yale Lewis as our new Treasurer.

Steve Cantu had decided to step down as Treasurer after eight years of dedicated service. He is still on the Board and will assist Yale in his new role. With a tight budget and limited funds, Steve has done an exceptional job in meeting the financial needs of the KBA and keeping us in the real world. Thank you Steve for your years of dedication and service.

As noted above, we have a vacancy in Group I of our Board Directors. That vacancy can be filled by a President's nomination and Board approval. At this meeting, I nominated Dan Heim for this vacancy and the Board approved.

A season ends and a new one begins. Hope all our KBA Membership has a joyous and safe month of celebrations.



Gary Ecelbarger



George Mangano with President Sheppard



Dan Heim with President Sheppard



John Hess with President Sheppard



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Yale Lewis, Treasurer

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Eloise Strader *
Thomas Sullivan

* Deceased



Did You Know? Qualified Charitable Distributions

by Yale Lewis, KBA Treasurer

Recent retirement account tax law changes allow you to make tax-free charitable donations as part of your Traditional IRA's annual Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). These transfers are called Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs). Currently you can donate up to \$105,000 a year to a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization like the KBA.

Qualified Charitable Distributions count as part of your annual RMD requirements. However, the amount of the QCD is not taxed as income like the rest of your Required Minimum Distribution. So, if you don't itemize your deductions and you don't need to live on all of your annual RMDs, consider a QCD to your favorite charities, like the KBA. You'll feel good about your charitable giving AND get a reduction in your income taxes at the same time.

Of course, before taking any action, please contact your tax and financial advisors. Your accountant should be

helpful as to whether this strategy makes sense for you. In addition, the Qualified Charitable Distribution must go directly from your IRA to the 501(c)(3) charity. So, we would need to coordinate the transfer with your financial advisor and IRA custodian. Checks should be mailed to:

KBA
P.O. Box 1327
Winchester, VA 22604

If you are considering a QCD to the KBA, please contact: kba@kernstownbattle.org. We would be happy to work with you and your financial consultants.

We thank you for your continued generous support of the Kernstown Battlefield Association.

Happy Holidays!