



Civil War Preservation Trust

Saving America's Endangered Civil War Battlefields

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Morris Island, South Carolina, April 12, 1861: Virginian Edmund Ruffin fires one of the first shots on Fort Sumter to open the American Civil War.

Morris Island, July 18, 1863: The Battle of Fort Wagner, immortalized for millions of people around the world by the film "Glory," depicts the doomed charge of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, a regiment of all black soldiers.

Today, after literally years of work and behind-the-scenes negotiations, you can now help the Civil War Preservation Trust save the most important remaining 117 historic acres of Morris Island, as a memorial to all who fought there!

Dear Fellow Member,

30 to 1.

I ask you to keep those numbers in mind as you examine the enclosed CWPT Map of the Battle of Fort Wagner, and as I quickly brief you on the situation that has recently come up regarding this extraordinary piece of hallowed ground.

As I mentioned above, after many years of hard work, sensitive negotiations, back-channel conferences, thousands of phone calls, e-mails and meetings, the preservation of 117 acres of historic land on Morris Island, at the mouth of Charleston Harbor in South Carolina, is about to become a reality.

The ground that shook with some of the first shots of the war, and saw later bombardments unlike any other battlefield . . .

The land that was soaked by the blood of American soldiers, black and white . . .

And the sandy soil in which Americans of uncommon valor almost certainly still lay at rest today is about to be protected forever.

Let me anticipate your question: "Why – aside from the amazing history – is this particular opportunity so remarkable?"

Remember 30 to 1? That is the amount of leverage that this deal carries for every dollar you contribute to help save Morris Island today!

The other partners in this historic effort (the state of South Carolina, the City of Charleston and the Trust for Public Land) are counting on CWPT to be the "final dollars in" (\$100,000) for this amazing pact.

That's right . . . those other entities have already either raised or pledged \$2.9 million of

the total \$3 million purchase price!

They pay 96.7 percent of the purchase price, the CWPT pays 3.3 percent, and together, we save some of the most important hallowed ground anywhere in the history of the Civil War! (In my book, that's called a bargain, and a pretty good one, to boot!)

For \$100,000, you and I will ensure that the inspiring story of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment's assault on Fort Wagner will be remembered forever.

You and I will ensure that future visitors to Ft. Sumter will not have to endure a Morris Island blighted by gargantuan luxury residences or other inappropriate development.

And you and I will ensure that this crucial story of Charleston and the Civil War – stretching from before 1861 to after 1865 – will not be destroyed by development, as so much of our history has already been lost.

I do, however, need to raise \$100,000 immediately to cover our portion of the deal. But remember, our \$100,000 will be matched by \$2.9 MILLION!

This \$30-to-\$1 is the largest multiplier that CWPT has been able to secure in several years. You and I have taken part in many \$1-to-\$1, \$2-to-\$1 or even \$4-to-\$1 matching grants before. You know that CWPT always actively seeks out these ways to leverage your generous support, multiplying the power of every dollar you commit to battlefield preservation.

Especially now, with the economy so tight for a lot of people, I see it as my duty to put together these types of transactions, to maximize every dollar which you entrust to CWPT.

I cannot recall any preservation group, however, being able to take \$1 given by a member like you and – overnight – turn it into \$30.

Especially when the land to be saved is as important to our nation as Morris Island.

The history of this place is absolutely deserving of our best efforts to save it.

As far back as January 1861, even before Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated, Confederate fire from Cummings Point forced the merchant steamer Star of the West – loaded with supplies for the Union garrison in Ft. Sumter – to sail back out to sea.

Then, in April 1861, came the firing on Ft. Sumter itself. Captain G. B. Cuthbert, who was in direct command of the Palmetto Guards on Morris Island, spelled out Edmund Ruffin's role in the battle:

“The mortar battery at Cummings Point opened fire on Fort Sumter in its turn, after the signal shell from Fort Johnson, having been preceded by the mortar batteries on Sullivan's Island and the mortar battery of the Marion Artillery. At the dawn of day, the Iron battery commenced its work of demolition. The first shell from columbiad No. 1, fired by the venerable Edmund Ruffin, of Virginia, burst directly upon the parapet of the southwest angle of the fort.”

Later, on July 18, 1863, two weeks after the Battle of Gettysburg and the fall of Vicksburg, (and almost exactly 145 years ago from today), this hallowed ground would once again take center stage, becoming the site of the action that most people remember today when they think of Morris Island – the

Union assault on Fort Wagner, which was depicted in the movie “Glory.”

For the Union that summer of ’63, Ft. Sumter was the key to controlling the Charleston harbor, and Morris Island held the key to retaking Ft. Sumter. But to control Morris Island and its perfectly placed batteries, they had to get past Fort Wagner.

This formidable fortification, garrisoned by around 1,800 Confederates, extended across the northern quarter of the low and sandy island. The southern-facing wall ran for 630 feet from the eastern ocean to salt marshes on the west. That wall was up to 30 feet high and a wide, shallow trench stretched in front.

During the afternoon on the 18th, Fort Wagner “received a pulverizing bombardment” from Union gunboats, writes historian Bruce Catton.

Then, as night fell, the 650 men of the 54th Massachusetts spearheaded the advance of 5,000 soldiers up the beach, behind their 25-year-old Colonel, Robert Gould Shaw.

At 600 yards from the walls of Ft. Wagner, Shaw ordered his men to fix bayonets . . . at 200 yards, the unharmed Confederates, who had emerged from their bombproofs, began firing . . . at 100 yards, Shaw shouted “Charge!” and within seconds, hundreds of Confederate infantrymen appeared on the parapet, and opened a blistering fire of musketry and artillery.

Shaw and dozens of his men were soon killed on the slope of the fort’s walls, and in the growing darkness lit only by the guns, men sliced at each other with swords, knives and bayonets, clubbed each other with musket butts, and even fought hand to hand. “Our men fell like grass before the sickle,” one Union survivor later recalled.

By 1:00 a.m., the battle was over. The Union forces endured frightful losses, and the first rays of the sun illuminated the true measure of the carnage. Of the 5,000 who began the charge, 1,527 were casualties. Of those 650 men in the 54th Massachusetts, 272 were killed, wounded or captured, meaning that this one regiment lost more men in the battle than all of the Confederates engaged, who lost just 222 men.

A month later, in attempt to subdue Charleston directly, the famous Union 8-inch Parrott rifle, dubbed “The Swamp Angel,” was established nearby, “heaving its 200-pound shells, specially filled for the occasion with liquid and solidified Greek Fire, into the city’s streets and houses,” writes the immortal Shelby Foote. After just thirty-six rounds, the breach on this enormous gun spectacularly exploded, and Union attention returned to Fort Wagner.

One more month later, Union guns on land and sea unleashed a barrage of no less than 3,000 shells during a 42-hour cannonade in attempt to pulverize the fort in preparation for another assault. As Union troops moved forward, however, they found that the Confederates had abandoned the fort, laying open Cummings Point, Ft. Sumter and the City of Charleston.

It is not unusual for visitors to Morris Island even today to still find a shell fragment on that heavily bombarded beach, or on one of the dunes nearby.

(To be perfectly frank with you, much of the island eroded away after the war and the actual site of Fort Wagner is today believed to be underwater. But other key Morris Island sites – the site of Battery Gregg, which fired on Ft. Sumter – on the north end of the island has survived. The Union Swamp Angel Battery site closer to Charleston has been preserved. Aside from what the sea has reclaimed, the island

looks much today as it did during the war, and we are fighting to keep it that way!)

So much of America's history happened here . . . so much important history to be preserved . . . and \$100,000 is all that stands between us and saving – forever – this vital battlefield. I hope you'll agree that this is an opportunity that is just too important to pass up.

The other partners are counting on the Civil War Preservation Trust to come up with the \$100,000 to close the deal. Today, it is my honor to ask you to join me in saving this crucial tract of hallowed ground.

With the matching funds in place, you can help save a full acre of Morris Island for just \$854! You can preserve a half-acre for \$427, a quarter-acre for \$214, or an eighth-acre for \$107. Or perhaps you can do more. \$1,708 helps buy 2 acres, \$2,562 will help save three acres or \$4,270 will help save five whole acres.

I know times are tight financially for a lot of folks right now, with some having to look very hard at what charitable causes they will continue supporting this year. I received a letter not long ago in which a member apologized (quite unnecessarily!) to me, saying that he was having to suspend his regular contributions to CWPT because he had recently lost his job, but that he was looking forward to donating again soon. God bless him.

When you are sitting down to pay your monthly bills, and you are doing your own cost-benefit analysis of donating to the Civil War Preservation Trust, all I ask is that you please just remember one thing: \$30-to-\$1.

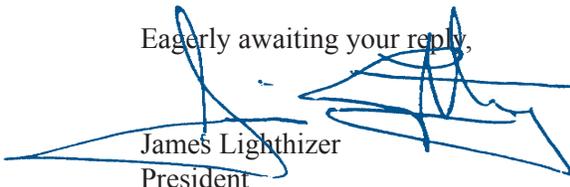
If you can find another organization that multiplies the power of your generosity like that – while saving the places where America was made – then by all means, send them your support.

But it is my greatest hope that our record of accomplishment together, along with the fact that CWPT's management and fund raising costs are among the lowest in the non-profit industry, will give you the confidence to continue making CWPT part of your on-going giving plans.

You deserve all the recognition, credit and acclaim that I can give you, my friend, for saving America's Civil War battlefields. Our distinguished Board of Trustees, my small staff and I all know that you are the key to our success. Your commitment and your financial support are the fuel that keeps the engine running. Without you, we would be hard pressed to save any hallowed ground at all.

Please join me in taking advantage of this unprecedented \$30-to-\$1 match, and help save some of the most important Civil War ground anywhere. Please let me hear back from you as soon as possible, and please accept my deepest appreciation for all you are doing for this important mission.

Eagerly awaiting your reply,



James Lighthizer
President

P.S. I realize that battlefield preservation may not be in the forefront of your mind right now. But how many times in our lives will we be able to save such an important part of our nation's history? Isn't this, in a small way, a crucial part of recognizing who we are as a nation? This is such a unique opportunity. Please join me in saving this good ground now, so it will still be there, unchanged and undisturbed, for all future generations of Americans. Think of it as your gift to our nation, and your children and grandchildren. Thank you again for all you have done. I can't adequately express to you how much I value your support.