

CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST

Saving America's Hallowed Ground

John L. Nau, III
Chairman

James Lighthizer
President

July 8, 2009

Charles K. Gyory

Address

Peter G. Gyory

Address

Dear Messrs. Gyory:

The Civil War Preservation Trust ("CWPT"), the nation's largest non-profit historic land preservation organization, welcomes the opportunity to provide a historic significance statement for a conservation easement to be placed on your 453-acre tract located in the Battle of Brandy Station battlefield. Attached is a statement prepared by one of our historian advisors expert in the battle of Brandy Station and Civil War activity in the area.

CWPT considers the Brandy Station battlefield one of the most significant in the United States. In 1993, the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, appointed by Congress, listed the Battle of Brandy Station a top priority site for preservation.

Please note that due to your tract's preservation importance, CWPT can pay for all or portion of certain costs associated with the conservation easement, including the appraisal, legal fees, and survey, subject to the approval of our Board of Trustees. At your convenience, I would like to meet with you to discuss this further, as well as tour your property.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be involved in the preservation of your property.

I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Gilmore
Director of Real Estate

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Statement of Historical Significance

Gyory Family Property

Brandy Station, Virginia

Historian Douglas Southall Freeman termed the Rappahannock River as “achieving a strategic prominence in the eastern theatre of the Civil War every bit as significant as the Mississippi in the western theatre.” Another historian, Daniel Sutherland, penned the phrase, the “Dare Mark Line,” in describing the Rappahannock’s military utilization by the Confederates as a defensive bulwark throughout the Civil War.¹

Many times in four years of war, the Rappahannock River was attacked over by Federal forces as Union infantry, cavalry and artillery swept into Culpeper from Fauquier County. Beginning in 1862, a succession of Union armies invaded Culpeper from the north, and in each case they found the Confederates fully prepared to receive Northern incursions.

Put succinctly, there is no piece of Piedmont plain in Culpeper County that witnessed more infantry and cavalry actions than the Gyory property, situated as it is just south of the Rappahannock, and interdicted at its eastern fringes by the Carolina Road and the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Indeed, this hugely significant acreage stands squarely in the path of any invading force, and the existence of major north-south transportation arteries near and on the property allowed Union commanders the means to attack their foes “in a hurry.”

In July 1862, Gen. John Pope’s 45,000-man Army of Virginia attacked across the Gyory property as the Cedar Mountain Campaign got underway. Following his defeat at Cedar Mountain, Pope retreated back across the Gyory property while being quickly pursued by General James Longstreet’s forces directly atop the Gyory property. Heavy artillery fighting took place on the Gyory acreage.

In June 1863, Federal Cavalry attacked across the Rappahannock River to initiate the Battle of Brandy Station. During this threshold, mounted combat—the largest cavalry battle of the Civil War and the inaugural action of the Gettysburg Campaign—Federal cavalry raced across the Gyory property to the attack, only to be driven back by counter-attacking Southern troopers. Spirited cavalry skirmishes took place on the flat, open plains now comprising the Gyory holdings.

In the fall of 1863, the entire Army of the Potomac crossed the Gyory property on three separate occasions as Union commanders deployed to attack Rebel forces in Culpeper County. Following the Battle of Rappahannock Station. November 7, 1863, the defeated Confederates fell back across the Gyory property toward the Rapidan River.

In early December 1863, the Army of the Potomac’s Sixth Corps—20,000-men—camped on the fields around and upon the Gyory property, and the “beef depot” that served to feed the entire 120,000-man army was situated directly atop the Gyory property.

¹ The “Dare Mark Line,” captures a phrase often used by Southern forces to taunt their opponents north of the Rappahannock, to wit: “We *dare* you to cross the river.”

So when considering that the Gyory property proved to be of great strategic and tactical prominence to the Civil War, there is no doubt whatsoever that this pristine land is historically significant to a high degree.