

Management Recommendations

Given the preceding discussions and the field research documented in Appendix A and Appendix B, it is our opinion that the greater number of terrain and cultural features that define the Battlefield(s) of Auburn as identified by the National Park Service either remain, or are in a current state that allows their historical interpretation. Historic research in this study, other than that directly tied to defining the flow of the battles themselves have been, by stated intent, limited to existing accounts and to the generosity of local citizens who shared a value in the history of the Auburn locale. Visual surveys and controlled metal detector studies (Appendix A and Appendix B) while limited in scope, have successfully located archaeological sites and features key to interpreting significant parts and defining features of the larger battlefield landscape (Figure 28). Our understanding of the Auburn area is greater because this project could build on the earlier work of Thunderbird Research Associates (Gardner and Torp 1993; Anderson 1996), and John Milner Associates (McVarish and Balicki 1999) on the properties within the area of potential effects of the proposed Dam 6 project area west of Auburn. McVarish and Balicki (1999) identified sections of that land that they propose as being relevant to a future nomination of the battlefield (Figure 19).

The actions at Auburn fought on October 13 and 14 as a precursor to the larger action at Bristoe Station fought later in the day on October 14, consist of a pair of closely interrelated skirmishes; a skirmish being defined as: "an irregular engagement between small bodies of troops, especially advance or outlying detachments of opposing armies (New Century Dictionary 1948: 1729). As summarized by Dr. Whitehorne earlier, the significance of the actions lay in what they tell us about the circumstances of the Union and Confederate armies following the July 1863 battle at Gettysburg. Dr. Whitehorne states:

Military operations in Virginia between the end of the Gettysburg Campaign in July 1863 and the start of the Overland Campaign in May 1864 have been largely overlooked. As a result, the events at Auburn in October 1863 are shrouded in obscurity. This is unfortunate as the actions of the opposing forces reflect a great deal about the problems and qualities of leadership at that time in the war. Commanders on both sides were at the mercy of the available intelligence. What they did or did not know is reflected in the choices they made. In fact, Stuart's predicament was a by-product of intelligence gathering. The failings and lack of coordination between his subordinates indicate why intelligence could be incomplete. They also may have been a small reflection of fundamental changes in the Army of Northern Virginia. That force was seriously damaged as a result of Gettysburg. Many top quality leaders were no longer with the army because of death or

disablement. Less proficient men, new to their positions and understandably less assured, had to replace them. These changes may explain the lack of aggression on the part of Rodes's attack on the morning of 14 October. The length of time between his first contact with the Federal vedettes and his renewal of advance was consumed by careful deployment of his artillery and massing his infantry and was not characteristic of Robert E. Lee's Army. Fitzhugh Lee and Jubal Early limited their attacks to artillery harassment.

On the other hand, the Federal reaction to the potentially critical situation was superb. From General Warren on down, every officer reacted coolly and professionally. Correct actions were undertaken down to the battery level, well before orders were received to do so. Especially interesting is the quick and violent reaction of Caldwell's and Hays's divisions when utterly surprised. General Warren rapidly assessed the situation and correctly deployed his forces to retrieve the situation with little loss or delay. The fact that the II Corps got away unscathed and in condition to deliver a sharp blow to A.P. Hill's Corps later on in the same day is a tribute to its leadership and a harbinger of worse things to come for the Army of Northern Virginia.

It is our opinion that information appropriate and adequate to proceeding with the National Register Nomination for the Auburn battlefield exists. We do make the following recommendations:

1. While the nomination of the battlefield should proceed, we strongly encourage community consideration of a broader historic district that would build on an area including the lands understudy but extending to Catlett Station and Three Mile Switch. This region reflects the highly significant agricultural development and prosperity of the Virginia Piedmont and includes the histories of prestigious families such as the Fitzhughs, Carters, McCormicks, and Chichesters. It retains road networks that date to the initial development of the land, includes the coming of the railroads, and allows a discussion of these events as they relate to the changing prosperity and growth of the area. Local mills and the highly significant farm and shop of Stephen McCormick document important local agricultural business and the documentation of post-Civil War era farms and the breakup of some of the land provides evidence for the changing agricultural economy of the area as slavery is removed as a source of labor. From our understanding, many of the sites associated with these issues remain on the land or are in existence as possible archaeological sites, both of which contribute to such research.

2. Across the battlefield landscape, a number of primary plantations and farmsteads have been identified: Spring Hill, Castle Murray (Melrose), Elmwood / Mt. Hible, the Dudley Fitzhugh House, and Longwood, to name a few. These farms potentially included residences, barns, stables, fields, orchards, slave quarters, overseers houses, corn cribs, and other support structures that served to maintain these working agricultural operations. These are as much a part of the battlefield landscape as were the manor and farm houses that supported the primary landowners. As interpretive plans are developed for this battlefield landscape they should include primary archival studies and archaeological field research appropriate to defining the specific character of the individual farms that comprise the battlefield lands.

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