



CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR GAINES' MILL BATTLEFIELD RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK



CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR GAINES' MILL BATTLEFIELD

RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK
HANOVER COUNTY, VIRGINIA

*"...shall I break up my reserve,
and have no provision for the
avalanche of suffering which a
great battle before Richmond
would send down upon us?"*

—Frederick Law Olmsted,
writing of the Seven Days
Battles of 1862

SITE HISTORY

EXISTING CONDITIONS

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

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Title Page: Caption. Quoting Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), from "Hospital Transports. A Memoir of the Embarkation of the Sick and Wounded from the Peninsula of Virginia in the Summer of 1962," Compiled and Published at the request of the Sanitary Commission. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge the roles of those who have contributed to the completion of the *Cultural Landscape Report for Gaines' Mill Battlefield*. This work is the outcome of a collaborative spirit held in common between park staff and Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation program staff.

From Richmond National Battlefield Park we especially recognize former park Historian Bob Krick for both his overall project guidance and his co-authorship of portions of this document. Bob has served as an expert guide, generously sharing his sources and insights into the battlefield. Without Bob's coaching and critique, this report might never have become finalized. We thank him for his devoted service to the nation's parks and wish him health and happiness in a well-earned retirement. Integrated Resources Program Manager Kristen Allen helped to conceive of this project and to prepare justifications and proposals for funding it. Kristen also advocated and supported Bob Krick's enhanced role as a project team member in this work. She also took time to engage with us throughout the lengthy process and to provide helpful guidance in responses to draft submittals. Park archeologist Lexie Lowe, a recent addition to park staff, carefully reviewed draft submittals and returned thoughtful comments on drafts as among the first of her official duties.

Brenden Bowman, a participant in the Olmsted Center's "Designing the Parks" internship program, prepared the initial draft of the battlefield site history. Brenden's involvement with this project was made possible by a partnership with the National Council for Preservation Education. This partnership was facilitated by Paloma Bolasny, Youth Programs Coordinator in the WASO Cultural Resource Office of Interpretation and Education. John W. Hammond, a former Historical Landscape Architect with the Olmsted Center and author of the *Cultural Landscape Report for Glendale Battlefield* (2019), was contracted to edit and embellish Brenden's draft, reporting with greater detail the history of recently acquired battlefield acreage. Historical Landscape Architect Tim Layton and GIS Specialist Kelsey Little worked to complete the mapping included in this project. Tim and Kelsey's work is acknowledged for compliance with national geospatial data standards that will allow this report's cartography to be repurposed by leadership and resource managers in support of other needs. Eliot Foulds took on completing additional edits and punch-list items required for publication. Olmsted Center

Program Director Bob Page provided oversight and guidance. Administrative Specialist Lisa Cutone provided administrative support.

This report has reached a successful conclusion having navigated turnover in project staff and the disruptions to the workplace and project research and travel caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. We are truly grateful for having made this journey working together with the park, and hope that this volume well serves the present and future stewards of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield.

FOREWORD

Are there new lessons to be learned from Civil War battlefields? If we could precisely document the historic terrain and field patterns, could one fully understand both how and why battles unfolded as they did? If we could momentarily blot out modern distractions, the airplanes overhead, and the hum of the highway in the distance, could our imaginations return our hearts and minds to those perilous times?

Presented here is another volume among many concerning an important battlefield of the American Civil War. The *Cultural Landscape Report for the Gaines' Mill Battlefield* provides a capable account of the pivotal battle, it documents existing landscape conditions, and suggests themes in history conveyed and reflected in this special place. The difference between this report and other documents covering the Gaines Mill battlefield is its purpose. Prepared by staff and partners of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, the completion of this report has been a practical as well as an academic exercise. Throughout their work, the authors have kept in mind the central question; what is to be done about it? This question regards present-day circumstances and those practical measures that might be gently pursued to better evoke the past.

The aim of this question and of all historic preservation is education. Evoking the past at Gaines' Mill may support learning of military tactics, about the lives of those both famous and nameless, of heroism and cowardice, of the powerful and the enslaved. Lessons drawn from this outdoor classroom may include apprehending the human tragedy of warfare. All learning is personal; and old lessons become new when encountered for the first time. Passing important lessons on to future generations is central to the mission of the National Park Service, as expressed in the NPS Organic Act of 1916.

I am pleased that the *Cultural Landscape Report for the Gaines' Mill Battlefield* is complete to join other documentation supporting the sound and thoughtful stewardship of cultural resources at Richmond National Battlefield Park. This report is of great value to present and future stewards of the Gaines' Mill battlefield.

Scott Teodorski

Superintendent, Richmond National Battlefield Park

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODS

The National Park Service uses cultural landscape reports as the primary document guiding landscape preservation and long-term management. Cultural landscape reports provide treatment guidance within the context of the site's history and significance, extant features and historic character, and current planning objectives and management goals. Treatment guidelines and recommendations developed in the cultural landscape report are grounded in research, inventory documentation, and analysis and evaluation of the landscape characteristics and features that contribute to the site's historic character.

The methodology used in this report follows *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (1998). Methodology includes primary and secondary historical research to develop a narrative site history; surveys of existing documentation, including historic photographs, plan drawings, and narrative descriptions, to determine historic site conditions; and documentation of existing conditions through direct site observations, photography, and surveys of current and recent site plans and aerial photographs.

This volume, the *Cultural Landscape Report for Gaines' Mill Battlefield*, includes a site history, documentation of existing conditions, and analysis and evaluation of the site's significance, integrity, and contributing landscape characteristics and features. This report does not include a detailed landscape treatment plan, however several preliminary treatment recommendations are offered for consideration at the conclusion of this introduction. The findings in this report may be used as background to inform consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, or as a foundation for a subsequent effort to develop a detailed landscape treatment plan in the future.

PROJECT SETTING AND STUDY AREA

Gaines' Mill Battlefield, located approximately eight miles east-northeast of Richmond, Virginia, is part of Richmond National Battlefield Park (NBP), a unit of the National Park System. The park is composed of eleven Civil War battlefields

and engagement sites and related resources. These sites are variously associated with the events of the Civil War, including the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, 1864 Overland Campaign, naval operations along the James River, and the 1864–1865 Richmond-Petersburg Campaign.

Today, the Gaines' Mill Battlefield cultural landscape comprises 590.18 acres of the battlefield, acquired in eight tracts, including 60 acres of the former Watt farm south of Boatswain Creek. The eight federally owned parcels lay within a mosaic of large and small private properties, all enclosed within a legislated boundary authorized to guide future land acquisition. The authorized boundary line embraces 2,177 acres of public and private lands. This area includes the locations of the center and left of the Union line, which on June 27th 1862 was positioned along the edge and slope of the Watt house plateau, and areas of the approach of Longstreet's and A.P. Hill's divisions, as well as the point at which Gen. John B. Hood's brigade broke through the Union line, compelling a Union retreat. Key resources within the landscape include the Watt house, which served as Union General Porter's headquarters and then as a Union field hospital, and Boatswain Creek and its ravine, a formidable natural obstacle used to advantage by General Porter. The cultural landscape also includes agricultural and domestic features from during and after the historic period, commemorative markers installed in the twentieth century, and park visitor and administrative infrastructure developed from the 1930s onward.

The park setting remains rural, with agricultural properties and suburban development interspersed with forested land. Interstate 295 follows the study boundary to the southwest but is well screened from park areas by trees. Difficult to see, the highway is easily heard, with the sounds of cars and trucks transmitted over long distances. Although the core areas of fighting are contained within the park, significant portions of the battlefield remain in private ownership north and south of the park unit.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE DOCUMENTATION

Land and Community Associates (LCA) of Charlottesville, Virginia completed a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) and Archeological Survey of the Gaines' Mill site in 2000. The scope of this prior work called for development of a base map including all structures and landscape features of the approximately sixty-acre Gaines' Mill Unit; development of a historical narrative description of the site focusing on the period of significance; development of a historic period plan for the year 1862; site analysis of landscape characteristics, including a summary of the significance and integrity of the existing landscape, photographs, and an analysis map; development of a preservation treatment plan; and recommendations for future research. A distinct but related scope of work for archeology included a reconnaissance-level survey and focused on resources from the period 1850-1870,

especially those relating to the events of June 27, 1862. Investigations focused on determining the types of archeological resources present or may be present within the Gaines' Mill Unit, from the time period 1850 to 1870. The archeological component was included as a chapter in the CLR.¹

Although all of the Richmond NBP units were administratively listed on the National Register in 1966, most of the park sites were not individually documented. Starting in 2016, the first comprehensive park-wide National Register documentation for Richmond NBP was established by the Public Archeology Laboratory (PAL) of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.² The contents of the registration form included a narrative description; a historic data sheet for all existing resources at Richmond NBP that recorded the resource's name, battlefield, property type, year built/altered, LCS/ASMIS/VCRIS/VDHR ID numbers, contributing status, and photos; a narrative statement of significance addressing how the park and its resources meet National Register criteria; geographic data and coordinates; a verbal boundary description; a boundary justification; several maps representing research analysis; a photolog; and compilation of historic images. In 2018, the updated National Register documentation for Richmond NBP was accepted by the Keeper (NRIS 66000836).

In 2019, the William & Mary Center for Archaeological Research (WMCAR) published an overview and assessment (AOA) of archaeological resources within almost all units of Richmond National Battlefield Park.³ The WMCAR completed this study under an agreement between the College of William & Mary and the National Park Service through the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CW CESU) from 2014 through 2018. The AOA serves as a collection, analysis, and summarization of specific data concerning the spatial, historical, and cultural context of archaeological resources within Richmond National Battlefield. A second major objective was to identify and prioritize areas for future research and determine how best to steward known archaeological resources. The AOA provided baseline documentation for the archeological resources found within the individual park units. It also served to help update the park's cultural resource GIS data and to add to a greater understanding of archaeological sites within its boundaries.⁴

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Richmond National Battlefield Park, inclusive of the Gaines' Mill battlefield, was authorized by Congress in 1936 to be "... established, dedicated, and set apart as a public park for the benefit and inspiration of the people..."⁵ Upon establishment, the new unit of the national park system became subject to the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916. This legislation establishing the service included a statement of purpose drafted by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. at the request of Congressmen William Kent of California:

“...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Olmsted's preamble outlined three broad aspects of the bureau's mission. First, the service was to preserve scenic beauty and/or historical appearances; second, the service was to preserve natural and cultural resources on site in perpetuity, and finally, the service was to provide people with physical access and opportunities to personally enjoy these special places.

Following establishment in 1916, the National Park Service began developing park programs and facilities using a design process involving park “master plans.” The service's planning efforts later evolved to “general management plans” after World War II. Presently, National Park Service planning is centered on the completion of “foundation documents” providing guidance for planning and management, articulating a shared understanding of what is important about a particular park. The foundation document completed for Richmond National Battlefield Park in May of 2017 includes an expression of “Park Purpose,” that centers on landscape preservation.

“Richmond National Battlefield Park preserves, protects interprets, and commemorates Richmond Civil War battlefield landscapes...”

The Richmond National Battlefield Park 2017 Foundation Document further inventories and describes five separate park “Fundamental Resources and Values,” (FRV's), these being those tangible resources and intangible aspects of place deemed essential to achieving the park purpose. Atop the park's list of five “fundamentals” are Battlefield Landscapes, followed by Archeological Resources, followed by Historic Structures, Sense of Place and Setting, and Museum Collections. Other important, although non-fundamental resources and values are listed as being Partner and Community Connections, Commemorative Monuments and Markers, Natural Communities, and Appropriate Recreation.

Considering preliminary treatments to the Gaines's Mill Battlefield alongside the park foundations document suggests limited opportunities where further treatment of the landscape beyond increased maintenance may support or enhance the park purpose of interpretation and commemoration. Implementation of any treatment or changes to the Gaines' Mill battlefield landscape needs to be conceived of and carried out with extreme care out of concern for the unmarked graves of the battlefield dead. In the fog of war and the haste of retreat, many soldiers were left behind. For many, battlefields are mournful places of loss, and should be treated with the care and respect typically afforded to cemeteries. Nevertheless, a small program of landscape preservation tasks is offered below for future consideration and development. These tasks are to the greatest extent focused on the care and treatment of the site's vegetation.

Preserve Broad Patterns of Field and Forest

Long term agricultural use imprinted durable patterns of field and forest present on site between the mid-19th century and the early 20th century. Aerial photographs from the 1930s as well as a legal survey of the Watt house parcel in 1927 documents those longstanding patterns present at a time when active agriculture was ending and when the Watt parcel became subdivided from adjacent farmland in support of public visitation (Please refer to Figure 1.42). Without aiming for perfect depiction of either 1862 or 1864 conditions, park leadership and resource managers may consider careful long-term program of vegetation management to pare back 20th century woodland encroachment upon formerly open fields to improve the representation of battlefield conditions. Doing so would help to expose undulations in topography that are subtle and easily overlooked, but which were so important to the outcome of the battle. Pursuit of this work, a little at a time and spanning several years, would help to minimize ground disturbance.

Active Forest Management

Surviving soldier's descriptions of the Gaines' Mill battlefield landscape suggest that there were two areas where the woodland along Boatswain Creek was thinned by Union soldiers to make the landscape on the opposite bank of the creek visible as through and screen of standing trees. One of these locations is to the north, within the corridor of the Watt House Road. The second of these is to the west-northwest, a corridor between the point of beginning of the Texas Brigade breakthrough and a compass bearing roughly oriented toward the former Dr. Gaines' Powhite property. At these two locations, the park leadership and resource managers may consider a program of careful forest mid-story thinning, combined with careful pruning of the lower limbs of tall trees (Please refer to Figure 1.54). Such a project would help to interpret the scope of the battlefield for those visitors without the physical ability or the free time required to walk the trail network embracing bounds of the National Park Service owned Gaines Mill battlefield property. This work, if done carefully, would be non-ground disturbing, avoiding impacts to potential archeological resources.

Install Orchard Exhibit Plantings

Both family and soldier descriptions of the landscape document the presence of at least one, but probably two orchards on the park's original Watt House parcel. There is photographic evidence that one of these orchards was replaced within the route of the Texas Brigade breakthrough in the early 20th century during the ownership of the private Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation (Please refer to Figure 1.41). Another orchard, west of the Watt House Road was remembered by a Watt granddaughter. Confusion over the number of orchards may stem from the fact that at the time of the battle, the Watt House Road did not exist in its cur-

rent form which today divides the Watt parcel between east and west. Without aiming to perfectly restore pre-battle conditions, park leadership, resource managers and interpretive staff may consider a project to install between three and seven trees at each location to serve as a tangible visual reference to the former orchards that were used as cover and concealment by both Union and Confederate soldiers. Given the role of this planting as an interpretive exhibit, a limited orchard tree planting may be comprised of semi-dwarf and disease resistant varieties of the native crab apple (*Malus angustifolia*). Specimens of the native crab apple are recommended to serve the interpretive purpose of marking the general locations of the orchards as an important battlefield feature when seen from a distance, without misrepresenting the precise species, or cultivar of fruit grown on the eve of the 1862 battle. The nursery stock should be of small bare-root specimens to minimize ground disturbance. Additionally, the small trees may be installed on a broad yet low mound of clean topsoil to further minimize ground disturbance. This mound-planting technique has been successfully implemented in 2024 at Martin van Buren National Historic Site in the “Restore Historic Martin Van Buren Orchard” project (PEPC 97908). The young trees will require protection within wire fencing to guard them from deer-browse until the trees are well established.

Revise Watt House Farmyard Shade Trees

Comparing existing conditions with plan drawings prepared for the Watt House farmyard in the early 1960s indicates that almost all the trees growing at that time inside the fenced farmyard enclosure have since died and have been removed (Please refer to Figure 1.59). In December of 1960, there were several very large trees present within the fenced yard, including black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) that had been remarked upon as once embowering the pre-Civil War home by a Watt granddaughter (eTIC 367-3032). These include four locust trees present in 1960, one of which was recorded as being twenty-eight inches in diameter at breast height. There are three southern catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*) recorded on the drawing, one of which is recorded as being forty-three inches in diameter at breast height. It cannot be known with certainty that the largest of the trees recorded in 1960 were present during the 1862 battle, and it is unlikely that documentary or archeological evidence will come to light accurately diagramming the layout of shade trees in the farmyard during the spring of 1862. However, both locust and catalpa are known to extend suckering roots when the main tree stem is failing or damaged as a means of self-preservation and renewal. In time, these suckering roots grow to become trees in their own right. Because of this biological process, it is likely that the trees shown in the 1960 drawing were the progeny of older trees present during the 19th century that became damaged and stressed by cannon fire, or otherwise cut down by soldiers to fashion hasty defenses. Without requiring speculation as to where the trees were growing on

the eve of the battle, replanting shade trees in the locations indicated in the 1960 drawing will have the effect of rehabilitating the former character of the landscape both before the battle and after a few years after conclusion of the Civil War, when enough time had elapsed for the landscape to recover. Any trees planted in the Watt House farmyard should be of the smallest nursery stock available, requiring a smaller planting hole, and thus less ground disturbance.

Similarly, the 1960s drawing (eTIC 367-3032) also indicates the presence of Virginia redcedar trees (*Juniperus virginiana*) oriented in a straight east-west alignment. These evergreen trees are not seen in the very early c. 1904 photograph of the Watt farmyard, however the young trees are shown in photographs made in the early 1930s. Judging by the photographic evidence, the mature cedar trees surviving on the north side of the Watt farmyard appeared post 1904, during a time when the property was a diminished tenant farm. The growth and maturation of cedar trees in Virginia's agricultural fields is generally associated with woodland succession that accompanies the abandonment of active cultivation. Nevertheless, these non-historic trees are themselves helpful in documenting the former layout of the farmyard fence. It is well understood that the seeds of the Virginia redcedar are naturally distributed and deposited in the landscape following passage through the intestinal tracts of birds.⁶ Given that all five of the trees documented in the 1960 drawing are shown in a perfect line, it is likely that birds, resting on the rails of a former farmyard fence, bear a causal relationship to the presence of this line of evergreen trees. With the understanding that the cedar trees were not present until after 1904, park leadership, resource managers and interpretive staff may consider a project to remove them. Doing so will better expose the Watt house to view during the entrance and approach of visitors along Watt House Road and will greatly help to recover the former domestic character of the Watt house farmyard. It is interesting to consider that a lifecycle relationship of cedar-apple rust (*Gymnosporangium juniper-verginianae* Schwein) was discovered in the 1880s. Cedar trees were then found to serve as the alternate host to the fungi, forming orange horny galls, the spores of which spread to nearby apple trees. Tree removals, such as that recommended here, providing that the plants are cut flush with the ground, will not cause ground disturbance.

Ornamental Plantings

Mary Jane Haw, the granddaughter of Sarah Watt, remembered other plants beyond the orchard and the trees shading the house. She provided an account of a hedge of shrubs composed of Althea, or "Rose-of-Sharon" (*Hibiscus syriacus*) lining a portion of the farmyard fence. She also remembered Scotch or "Burnet" rose (*Rosa spinosissima*), growing within the farmyard. If park leadership, resource managers, and interpretive staff judge that a more earnest rendering of the domestic landscape is desirable for the Watt house farmyard, then a project may

be developed for a limited or trial reintroduction of these plants. If desired, these plantings would be appropriate for installation within the inside corners of the farmyard fence. Planting of these shrubs would be ground disturbing, however this disturbance may be minimized by installing these plantings within raised beds.

Additional Investigations

There are practical limits to the Gaines' Mill documentary record. Multiple episodes of research undertaken during National Park Service stewardship of the battlefield have gathered and have examined maps, photographs, sketches, engravings and narrative accounts. New documentary records may come to light, however the most promising source of additional information lay in the archeological record. New and improving geophysical sensing technologies may be deployed on site to learn more about the pre-battle and post-battle landscape. Research questions include verifying accurate locations of outbuildings, fencelines, farm roads and artillery batteries. Geophysics, including terrestrial LiDAR, ground penetrating radar, soil resistivity and metal detection techniques may also be directed at discovery of unmarked burials. These include the Watt/Kidd cemetery that is thought to be located several hundred yards southeast of the Watt house on the Adams tract, and cemeteries or burial sites attributable to the enslaved labor force supporting the operation of local farms.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Land and Community Associates (LCA), "Gaines' Mill Cultural Landscape Report and Archeological Survey" (National Park Service, 2000), 2.
- 2 National Register of Historic Places (NR) Registration Form, "Richmond National Battlefield Park (RICH)," *National Park Service*, 2016, Sec. 9:144.
- 3 The recently added North Anna Unit was not part of the study, nor did the AOA cover the recently acquired Wright tract at Cold Harbor.
- 4 Christopher J. Shephard, David W. Lewes, Elizabeth E. Bell, and Charles M. Downing, "Archaeological Overview and Assessment, Richmond National Battlefield, Virginia (National Park Service, 2019), 1.
- 5 Enabling legislation, March 2, 1936, Chapter 113, HR 1415.
- 6 <https://www.fs.usda.gov/database/feis/plants/tree/junvir/all.html#:~:text=Seed%20dispersal%3A%20Eastern%20redcedar%20seed,80%2C94%2C120%5D>, accessed 6/12/2024.

SITE HISTORY

The Battle of Gaines' Mill was fought across a landscape of small farms, fields, woodlands, and swampy water courses in the farmland northeast of Richmond, Virginia. In retreat, Union troops established a defensive position on a level plateau and the sloped embankments south of Boatswain Creek, land that was part of the Watt family farm. The farm consisted of a dwelling house that stood amidst an array of outbuildings. The Confederate Army assailed this line from the north and northwest, charging across the open fields of the neighboring Parsons farm and the plantation of Dr. William F. Gaines, known as "Powhite." These farms represented the spectrum of antebellum Virginia's agricultural prosperity, built on enslaved labor and generational wealth. These properties came to illustrate the fragility of that prosperity in response to both to the emancipation of enslaved laborers, and warfare's most destructive effects.

When the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia launched its attack against entrenched Union forces on June 27, 1862, the ensuing battle tore left a wake of ruin. Fighting swept through the area again two years later as the two armies maneuvered towards the final engagements of the war. Sarah Watt never returned to her farm after evacuating shortly before the battle in 1862, and after she died the following year, her heirs leased the property to others. Throughout the region, economic recovery was slow, and the area never regained its former prosperity. Agriculture persisted into the twentieth century, even as residential development encroached from the Richmond suburbs. Preservation and commemoration efforts in the early twentieth century protected sixty acres of the Watt farm, leading to its ultimate inclusion in Richmond National Battlefield Park. Today, about 590 acres of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield are preserved as part of the park, including the core of the Watt farm and portions of neighboring Powhite and the Parsons farm.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT: PRE-1861

Human occupation of the coastal regions of Virginia is believed to date to the end of the Pleistocene epoch between 14,000 and 12,000 years ago. As rising temperatures and the retreat of the Laurentide ice sheet made the mid-Atlantic coast more habitable, Paleoindians began using the resources of coastal lands. Mobile popula-



Figure 1.1. Detail from “Virginia,” a map by John Smith and William Hole, London, 1624. This image shows the approximate locations of Native American villages. The future location of Richmond is indicated by “The Fales.” The approximate location of Gaines’ Mill Battlefield is indicated with a red asterisk, (Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/99446115>).

tions established transient base camps near rivers and estuaries, where food was plentiful, or near areas that contained stone suitable for making projectile points and other tools. Seasonal camps extended their range into the interior, where they hunted large game, gathered food and medicinal plants, and procured stone and minerals.¹ Populations during the early periods of occupation likely fluctuated, with extended periods of very low population. Total population at the end of the Paleoindian period may have been as low as a few hundred individuals throughout what is now known as the State of Virginia.²

As temperatures continued to warm and sea levels rose, native peoples migrated inland along major river corridors into areas associated with the topographic fall line, an area of swift currents or “falls” in rivers, separating the Tidewater and Piedmont regions of Virginia. The annual cycle of movement for these early inhabitants would have occurred over a vast region. Utilizing base camps located near sources of stone during a portion of the year, smaller groups of families would have dispersed to satellite camps to procure seasonal resources located within upland terraces and resource-rich wetlands.³

Beginning around 3,200 years ago, the development of clay pottery and a greater reliance on cultivated crops such as beans, corn, and squash supported increasingly fixed settlement and the nucleation of societies. Populations during this time began to coalesce into stable villages located near rivers and floodplains having



Figure 1.2. Detail of, "A map of the country between Albemarle sound and Lake Erie..." published by John Stockdale, London, 1787. Image shows the approximate location of Gaines' Mill Battlefield indicated with a red asterisk relative to local plantations and towns, (Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/74691933>).

fertile soil, favorable terrain, and access to game, where communities would clear woodlands to cultivate crops. These settlements were supplemented by dispersed camps that continued to hunt and gather distant resources.⁴

EARLY CONTACT AND EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

Local native tribes present at the arrival of European settlers were predominantly represented by Algonquian speaking groups located throughout the Maryland and Virginia Tidewater as far south as Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds in eastern North Carolina and as far north as the Potomac River. The Piedmont and Appalachian regions beyond the fall line were home to unrelated Siouan speaking Indians. Archeological evidence of Algonquin people in the Virginia coastal plain date to as early as 200 AD. By 1600 AD, it is estimated that around 13,000 Algonquin-speaking Powhatans lived in 6,500 square miles of Tidewater Virginia, while another 15,000 Siouan-speaking Monacans and Manahoacs lived in the upland Piedmont (Figure 1.1).⁵

While both the Spanish and English had attempted and failed to colonize the Chesapeake region during the late 16th century, well documented interaction between English settlers and indigenous peoples began in 1607 with the English settlement at Jamestown. Initial interactions between the two groups primarily consisted of trade in inexpensive manufactured products for food.⁶ As the popula-

tion of settlers grew, tensions increased. A difficult relationship was made worse by a severe drought that limited supplies of food and water for the Virginia Indians and colonists alike, resulting in violence. Inland migration of the colonists began in the late 1620s as settlers established farms, and eventually settlements, further upstream along both the James and York Rivers. Although Williamsburg remained the most significant population center through the end of the seventeenth century, smaller settlements were found throughout the colonial Tidewater region.⁷

Key to the tenuous economic success of the settlement at Jamestown was the development of a marketable tobacco variety by John Rolfe in 1612. This product met with high demand in both England and mainland Europe, providing for economically viable trade and generating renewed interest in the prospects of the Virginia colony. As demand for tobacco increased, greater numbers of settlers voyaged to the New World seeking economic success. Many were the second and third sons of English landowners without hope of inheriting property; many were transported under the headright system as indentured servants to clear the land and cultivate tobacco.⁸ Landowners in the mid-Atlantic region remained dependent primarily on white indentured servitude throughout much of the seventeenth century, with immigration levels remaining relatively high.⁹ This began to change starting about 1619 when the first West Africans began arriving in the young colony.

Amidst the ongoing English Civil War, with the economics supporting contracted servitude on the wane, by 1650 as many as three hundred Africans are estimated to have been present in Virginia.¹⁰ Enslavement followed as indentured, or contracted, servitude became an increasingly unreliable source of labor. Ensnaring both Native Americans and Africans, legislative support for slavery began in 1661. By 1670 Africans comprised five percent of the colony's population.¹¹ Yet this was also a time when the colony's laboring classes, both enslaved and free, became provoked by unanswered Native American raids and rose to challenge the authority of their capitalist leaders. Led by Nathaniel Bacon in 1676, the brief uprising was put down by Crown forces loyal to Governor William Berkeley.¹² Responding to the insurrection, Berkeley and the colonial legislature conspired to prevent future troubles, devising and enforcing legal differences between the free and enslaved laborers who had been allies under Bacon.¹³

Indentured servant immigration levels continued to diminish through the end of the seventeenth century as tobacco prices fell and planters became unable to entice servants with promises of future personal freedom and economic success. The increasing number of landowners throughout the colonies, paired with increasing acreages planted to tobacco in compensation for lower prices, created a scarcity of labor. This unmet demand for labor further accelerated Virginia's turn toward a slavery economy.¹⁴

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the depressed tobacco prices required land-

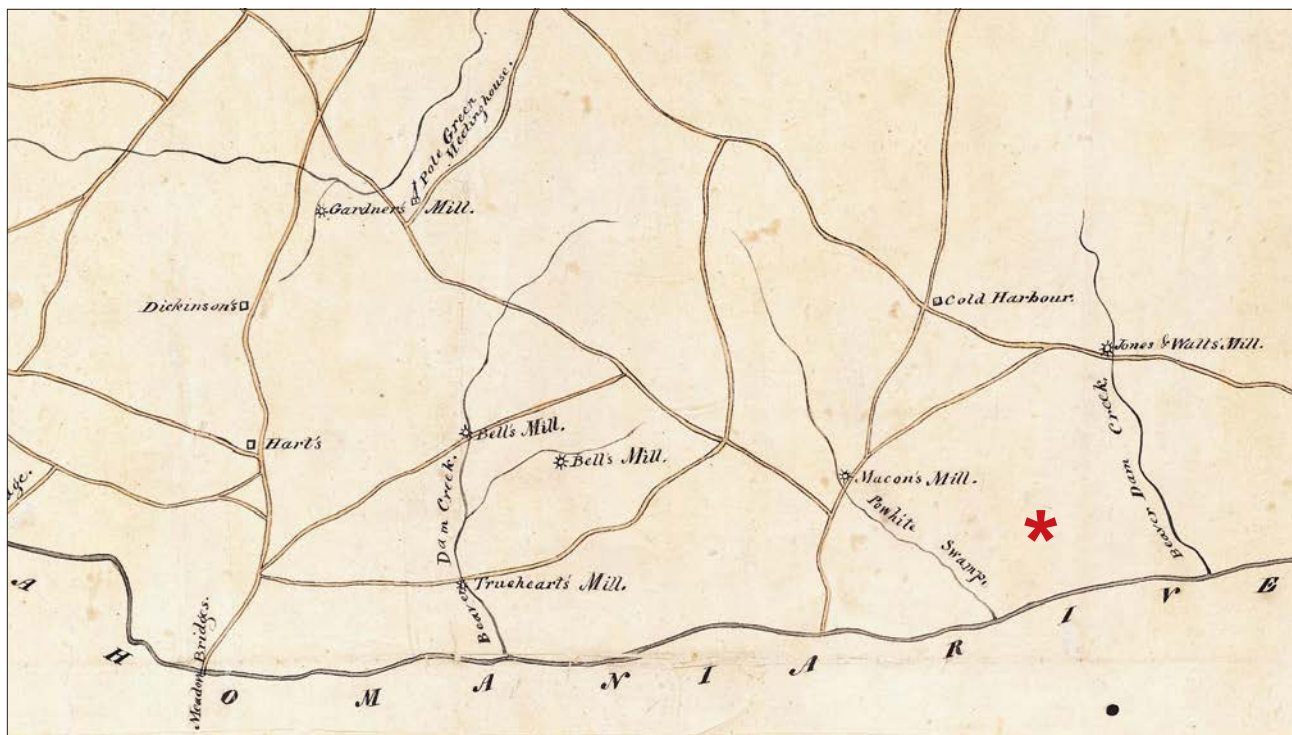


Figure 1.3. Detail of a map of Hanover County by John Wood, 1820, showing roads, waterways, and mills. The approximate location of Gaines' Mill Battlefield is indicated with a red asterisk. The location of Gaines' Mill on Powhite Creek is indicated as Macon's Mill. The indication for Jones and Watts' Mill on what is labeled Beaver Dam Creek appears to be on what is today Elder Creek and Barker Mill Pond east of the Watt house (Library of Virginia digital collections).

owners to produce ever increasing quantities in order to turn a profit. Intensive cultivation rapidly depleted soils, driving planters to seek out yet more land. But as the eighteenth century progressed and settlement in the area increased, land also became scarce. Growers increasingly experimented with crop rotation and soil amendments to rehabilitate depleted soils, allowing fields to go fallow until soil fertility could recover.¹⁵ Despite these practices, continued pressure for fresh land, combined with an increasing population and a greater number of freedmen, provoked the westward expansion of the colonial frontier. Following major waterways such as the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac rivers, colonists slowly pushed into the interior of Virginia's Tidewater region (Figure 1.2).¹⁶

Hanover County was established in 1720 from the western portion of New Kent County in response to the increased population in the area.¹⁷ The eastern portion of the county was on the edge of this frontier throughout the seventeenth early eighteenth century. Hanover town, originally known as Page's Warehouse, was established in 1676 on the Pamunkey River as the first major colonial settlement within present county lines.

EARLY FEDERAL AND ANTEBELLUM VIRGINIA

By the time of the American Revolution, the banks of the James River were well settled with broad plantations, and stately houses overlooking the wide river channel serving as the main commercial artery. Areas further from the river developed later, as families that had been in Virginia for generations divided their once large grants into smaller parcels for their children and grandchildren. New immigrants

Figure 1.4. A post-war c. 1865 watercolor sketch of the ruins of Gaines' Mill, Robert Knox Sneden Scrapbook, Plate 163, "Ruins of Gaines Mill," (Virginia Museum of History & Culture).



Figure 1.5. Cold Harbor, Virginia, Ruins of Gaines' Mill, April 1865, John Reekie photographer, stereograph showing the ruins of Gaines' Mill, (Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018666195>)



encountered a patchwork of smaller farms and plantations and little unclaimed land. Most of the upland farms would have likely comprised a few hundred acres each of cultivated fields and woodlands, growing a mix of tobacco, grains and subsistence crops, supported by the labor of enslaved workers. Much of the upland areas distant from navigable rivers would have remained unsettled forest and wetland, an inhospitable tangle of vegetation served by narrow, unreliable roads.

Meanwhile, Richmond, located at the falls of the James River had grown to become a major center of industry and commerce. Products from the region's farms were processed either on-site or at local mills before being transported to Richmond for export. The city's importance as a shipping hub, along with the development of a more complete road system, meant that farms no longer required direct

access to the riverfront to market their produce, spurring increased settlement and cultivation of outlying lands through the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Hamlets developed at crossroad communities where artisans plied their wares and services. Examples include Mechanicsville and Haw's Shop in Hanover County, as well as New Market in Henrico County.

Hanover County Mills

The numerous small tributaries of the Chickahominy and Pamunkey Rivers provided sufficient hydropower to operate grist mills, sawmills, and other small industries. The personal tax records of Hanover County documented fifteen mills operating in the eastern half of the county in 1814. With mills dotting the countryside, there was easy access for local farmers to grind their corn and wheat without having to carry the bulky grain over rough roads for long distances. An 1820 survey of Hanover County produced by John Wood identifies numerous mills along these waterways, including Macon's Mill on Powhite Creek where Gaines' Mill would later be found, and Jones and Watts' Mill, which appears near the Elder Swamp where Barker's Mill would later be identified on maps of the period (Figure 1.3).

Gaines' Mill was constructed on a dam impounding the waters of Powhite Creek into a small mill pond. Originally established by William or Thomas Macon in the eighteenth century, the mill was no longer operational by the time it was acquired by Dr. William F. Gaines in the 1830s.¹⁹ Gaines either repaired or rebuilt the mill, and by the middle of the nineteenth century it was a prominent enough landmark to lend its name to the battle that would take place in the surrounding countryside. A local distinction existed between flour mills for grinding wheat, and grist mills for grinding corn. Gaines' Mill was a grist mill.²⁰ In the harder clay of the upper half of the county (northwest of Hanover Courthouse), wheat, and to a lesser degree, tobacco remained the predominant crops. The lower half of the county, where the Gaines' Mill Park was located, the lighter, sandy soils were better suited to farming corn, oats, and vegetables.²¹

An 1865 drawing of the "Ruins of Gaines' Mill" shows the brick foundation of the mill, and what appears to be a brick chimney behind it (Figure 1.4). The covered, wood structure attached to the brick mill seen in photographs taken after this year is not seen here. The main large waterwheel is shown still attached to the brick mill, as is a smaller wheel next to it. There are four wood-clad, gabled structures standing nearby the mill, and the surrounding land appears to be grassy with small, rolling hills and scattered trees. The drawing is captioned: "At the time of the battle, this was a 5-story brick grist mill. It was not injured in the fight, but it was burnt by Genl. Sheridan's Cavalry in May 1864, as also the Large Dwelling and loghouse[s]." This may be in reference to the structures shown behind the mill. The mill ruins were also captured in a photograph in the late nineteenth

century (Figure 1.5).

According to Hanover County directories from 1835 to 1850, grain production predominated during this period. In 1850, Hanover's farms produced 377,616 bushels of corn, 157,388 bushels of wheat, 94,186 bushels of oats, and 73,319 pounds of butter, but only 404,550 pounds of tobacco. Processing of the grain was accomplished by twenty-four flour and grist mills in the county. During this period, the enslaved comprised well over half of the county's population—8,393 out of the total 15,153 in 1850.²²

Throughout Virginia in the late eighteenth century, improved turnpikes were becoming widespread, with both counties and private companies authorized to collect tolls to fund road maintenance. Many of the rural roadways connecting eastern Hanover County with Richmond were remade as turnpikes, the improved toll roads extending beyond Richmond for nearly ten miles. Despite the improvements, the roads were neither paved nor corduroyed, making them as difficult to navigate during inclement weather as the rolling roads that preceded them.²³

GAINES' MILL BATTLEFIELD FARMS

The Watt Family & Springfield Plantation

The larger property encompassing the original tract of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield Park was known as the Springfield Plantation during the early nineteenth century. The earliest owner identified for the farm was Pitman Kidd, who possessed a combined 871 acres by 1805. Kidd was born in 1755 and married Mary Austin presumably by 1784, when their daughter Sarah was born. The Kidd household lived adjacent to Springfield, possibly on the land where the Watt/Kidd family cemetery is located, about 400 yards southeast of the current Watt house. In 1802, Sarah Kidd married Hugh Watt, a Scots Irish immigrant who had come to Richmond in 1790 from County Antrim in Northern Ireland. By 1809, Sarah Watt



Figure 1.6. Image of the Powwhite house, pictured here in the 1930s. (Library of Virginia, Virginia Historical Inventory Photographs, Works Progress Administration).

inherited approximately 300 acres of the Springfield Plantation, and by the middle of the nineteenth century, the farm's acreage had grown to 529 acres.²⁴ Between 1835 and 1836, the appraisal for buildings on their farm rose abruptly from \$150 to \$928.90, likely in response to the construction of the Watt house.²⁵

Hugh Watt apparently died around 1850, as his name was absent from that year's tax records for joint ownership in the Springfield farm. Sarah Watt was reported on the 1860 census as a seventy-five-year-old farmer and the sole owner of real estate valued at \$10,540. Her personal estate was estimated at \$20,763, including the monetary value of twenty-eight enslaved workers inventoried amongst her possessions. Sarah had become weak and unwilling to leave her home by the 1862 battle at Gaines' Mill but was convinced by her son John Haw to move shortly before the fighting commenced. She died at Oak Grove a few months later.²⁶

The 1860 United States census agricultural schedule indicated that Springfield's 529 acres were almost evenly divided between "improved" (250 acres) and "unimproved" (279 acres) land. This difference roughly translating to wooded, versus cleared or open. Like most nearby farms, the Watt farm produced corn, oats, wheat, and sweet potatoes on its "improved" cultivated acreage. In 1860, the plantation produced 1,000 bushels of "Indian Corn," 300 bushels of oats, 179 bushels of wheat, and 700 bushels of sweet potatoes. Other crops cultivated that year included twenty bushels of Irish potatoes, ten bushels of peas and beans, and \$400 worth of "market garden" produce. Peach and apple orchards were present on the farm, though orchard produce wasn't sold and was consumed internally instead.²⁷

The livestock on the Springfield farm was valued at \$800 on the 1860 U.S. census. Large animals on the plantation included two horses, three mules, seventeen swine, five working oxen, six milk cows, and eight other cattle. During 1860, the dairy cows supplied milk used to produce 100 pounds of butter. The livestock slaughter on the farm, likely the hogs, was valued at \$80 for the year. In addition to the large animals, a variety of domesticated fowl, such as chickens and possibly turkeys, ducks, geese, and pigeons, were also kept.²⁸ Each of these uses would have required an independent outbuilding.

The Gaines Family & Powhite Plantation

Just west of Springfield lay the sprawling plantation of Dr. William F. Gaines, known as "Powhite." The origins of Powhite date to the eighteenth century, when it was then part of the larger Fairfield plantation, owned first by William Macon and then by his son Thomas Macon. The main plantation house was built during this period on an elevated bluff overlooking the Chickahominy River (Figure 1.6). In 1799, Thomas and Sarah Macon sold Powhite, including the house and 866 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres, to James Govan.²⁹

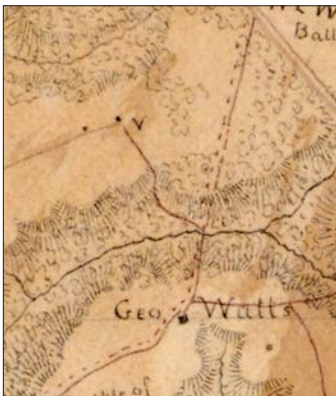
When James Govan died in 1831, he left Powhite to his son Edward Govan.

Edward apparently did not survive his father long, because in 1840, Dr. Gaines purchased the property from Edward Govan's estate. About that time, a newspaper advertisement offered 1,158 acres in three parcels. The first was the eastern side of Powhite, comprising 362 acres and containing a grist mill and sawmill "all now out of order." This parcel likely consisted of the land between Powhite Creek and Boatswain Creek extending north up to the mill dam, later the site of Gaines' Mill. The second parcel was a 130-acre parcel referred to as Blyths, a parcel featuring a framed dwelling house with three rooms, a smoke house, and a log kitchen. The third was a 666-acre parcel comprising the core of the Powhite estate and containing a "large and commodious dwelling house, extensive barns and all other outhouses, a spacious garden with orchards and select fruit."³⁰

Dr. Gaines lived at Powhite with his wife Jane Elizabeth (née Spindle) and two daughters, Sally Garlick Gaines (b. 1832) and Fanny W. Gaines (b. 1836). Prior to the war, his daughters married prominent and wealthy Virginians and began families of their own. In 1855, Sally married a distant cousin, also named William Gaines, who owned the adjacent "Fairfield" plantation. Fanny married Seaton G. Tinsley in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War.

Even among the prosperous planters of Hanover County, Dr. Gaines was noted for his wealth and influence. A correspondent who spent time at Powhite prior to the historic battle described Dr. Gaines as "a rich, aristocratic, indolent old Virginian, whose stables, summer houses, orchards, and Negro quarters were the finest in their district."³¹ By the time of the war, Powhite was described as containing a large dwelling house with seven hundred acres of cultivated farmland, two productive gardens, a large meadow, and two orchards of peaches and apples. The agricultural operation was supported by several valuable pieces of farm equipment, including a wheat fan, corn sheller, straw cutters, reapers, a woodpecker saw-mill, wheat drums, wagons, carts, and wheels. In census records, Powhite was valued at \$30,000 in 1850 and over \$120,000 in 1860, several times the value of neighboring farms.

Figure 1.7. 1864 Confederate map, "The Battle Fields of Hanover County" by Capt. A.H. Campbell (detail) showing the Parsons farm property north of the Watt farm, marked with a "V," indicating it was vacant at the time. (University of North Carolina Libraries, Digital Collections Repository - Part of Jeremy Francis Gilmer Papers).



Parsons Farm

The land north of Boatswain Creek, directly opposite the Watt farm, was owned by Reynolds Parsons.³² The farm and its structures must have been unremarkable, for although Nathaniel Michler's 1865 map of the area depicts at least one building with the label "Parson," few other Civil War-period maps indicate Parsons as a property owner among the other local family farms. In 1862, the fields were fallow and the property apparently vacant, and no descriptions of the area by battle participants recalled buildings or residents on that land (Figure 1.7).

Reynolds Parsons, also known as Reynolds Philips, appears in county census records as a neighbor of the Watts from 1840 to 1860. Prior to this, the property

was owned by Thomas Parsons, likely Reynolds' father, who was enumerated in the decennial census by 1810. In 1860, Reynolds and his wife Coley were counted as raising a family of six children aged two to seventeen and had lost at least two children in the 1850s to illness. Their farm was small compared to their neighbors, having only 50 of 107 acres in cultivation and a valuation of less than one tenth that of Springfield's value in 1850. Produce that year was a mere 150 bushels of corn, and livestock consisted of two horses and ten swine. This discrepancy only grew over the next decade, when Springfield's valuation grew to \$31,000, while that of the adjacent Parsons farm was only \$750.³³

African American Plantation Life

The operation of the farms and plantations of Virginia was made possible with the extensive use of enslaved labor. Farms of even moderate size typically relied on a small number of slaves for agricultural and domestic work, while the larger plantations enslaved many. These unfortunate people were the source and substance of the region's wealth, both in terms of facilitating agricultural production and in their monetary value as human property.

The United States census began recording "Slave Schedules" in 1850, and recounted the enslaved again in 1860, although, the information recorded was limited to the individual's age, gender, color, slaveholder's name, and any "impairments." In 1850, Sarah Watt had twenty enslaved people at Springfield, twelve males and eight females.³⁴ The oldest male was thirty-nine and the oldest female was forty-seven, and the youngest boy and girl were six years old. Seven of the Watt's enumerated slaves were twelve years old or younger. At Powhite, Dr. Gaines enslaved forty-eight people, and twenty-two more lived northwest of Powhite at the Fairfield plantation, owned by Dr. Gaines' son-in-law William Gaines (Figure 1.8). Reynolds Parson, one of the poorer farmers in the area, is recorded in the 1850 as owning one sixteen-year-old male slave, living on the farm.

As the prosperity of the region grew through the 1850s, so did the enslaved populations. There were twenty-eight slaves recorded as owned by Sarah Watt at the Springfield Plantation during the 1860 census, an increase of eight over the preceding decade. The eldest was a forty-nine-year-old male while the youngest was a one-month-old infant male. Dr. William F. Gaines was recorded as owning sixty-eight people at Powhite, housed within twelve slave dwellings in 1860. Fairfield housed an additional fourteen enslaved people within seven dwellings.

Additional information about those born into enslavement at the Springfield and Powhite plantations is found in the Virginia Slave Birth Index (recorded 1853–1866). Names were sometimes indicated, and many of the births were recorded by gender only. Birthdates are commonly notes with only the month, and sometimes only the year, indicated.³⁵

Figure 1.8. An African-American family sitting in front of what was probably their home, located on William Gaines' Fairfield Plantation, ca. June 1862. (G. H. Houghton, Library of Congress, <https://lcn.loc.gov/96511694>).



Recorded under Sarah Watt:

- Matilda, October 3, 1853
- Louisa, February 1855
- Bosha, April 1855
- Sally, September 1855
- Christiana, May 1856
- Unnamed female, 1857
- Two unnamed males, 1858
- Unnamed male, 1859
- Unnamed female, 1860
- Unnamed male, 1860

Recorded under George Watt (Sarah and Hugh Watt's youngest son, who inherited Springfield after his mother's death in 1862):

- Ida, January 15, 1861 (in Richmond, mother's name recorded as "Amanda")

Recorded under Dr. Wm. F. Gaines (Powwhite):

- Unnamed female, 1855
- Two unnamed males, 1855
- Two unnamed females, 1858
- John, March 23, 1858 (in Rockingham)
- Unnamed female, 1860
- Two unnamed males, 1860
- Unnamed female, 1861
- Henry, October 12, 1864 (in Rockingham)

Recorded under William Gaines (Fairfield):

- Two unnamed females, 1865
- Unnamed males, 1865

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

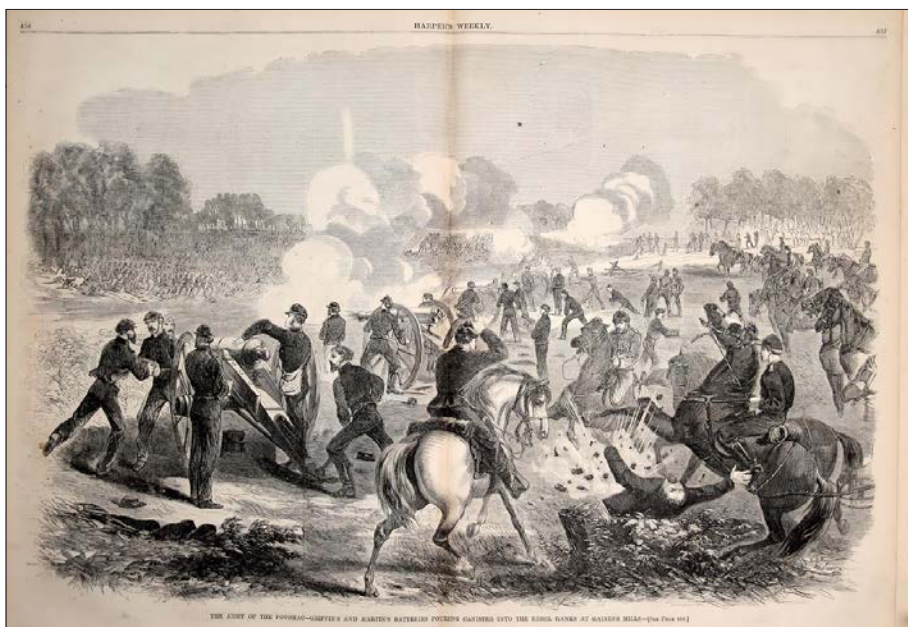
Springfield

The Watt house sat within an upland field stretching across a level plateau. Steep slopes along the northwest side of the plateau descended to Boatswain Creek and along the south and southwest side toward the Chickahominy River. Broad, cleared fields surrounded the Watt house and its plateau, extending southward and eastward, while the creek bottom and steep slopes lining both sides of Boatswain Creek were forested with a band of trees that narrowed in width as it extended northeast to southwest.³⁶

An illustration made during or shortly after the 1862 battle and published in *Harper's Weekly* depicts an open landscape dotted with a few buildings and clumps of trees, with the edges of woodland shown located several hundred yards in the distance (Figure 1.9). The *Richmond Dispatch's* correspondent, monitoring episodes of the Battle of Gaines' Mill from Dr. William F. Gaines' house approximately one mile west, composed an able word-picture of the landscape. He wrote that the "deep creek" [Boatswain Creek] was "faced by a timber-covered hill fronting all the table land," and that "beyond this timber-covered hill, the country is again open, and a perfect plateau, a farm-house and outhouses [Springfield] occupying the center."³⁷ Recollections from participants in the battle concurred that a narrow strip of woods ran down both sides of the steep-sided ravine formed by Boatswain Creek. They also noted that the wooded area was wider at its northeastern end near the Watt house than at its southern end where it terminated near the south edge of the property's plateau.³⁸

At the time of the late June 1862 battle, A. J. Warner (10th Pennsylvania Reserves) observed that "Gains Run or Creek [Boatswain Creek] is a small stream which had

Figure 1.9. "Griffin's and Martin's Battery pouring canister into rebel ranks at Gaines's Mill," this illustration suggests the general character of the battlefield landscape (*Harper's Weekly*, July 19, 1862).



worn for itself a deep channel, and has rather rough wood slopes on both sides, except near the Chickahominy where the ground is lower and cleared." The width of this wooded strip ranged from approximately 400 yards at its northeastern end adjacent to the Watt house to 100-150 yards at its southern terminus. Union and Confederate accounts agree that except for two locations, the mostly oak woods were dense and clogged with undergrowth along the steep marshy banks of Boatswain Creek. Accounts repeatedly refer to the "dense forest," "dense timber," "thick woods," "dense woods" and "thick" and "right smart" undergrowth stretching along the stream's "swampy" and "boggy" margins.³⁹

The Watt house was a conspicuous landmark, at the center of the open field near the plateau's high point. The dwelling, built circa 1835, was nearly square in plan, and one-and-a-half-stories tall, with two chimneys at the east gable. A cluster of supporting buildings was arrayed about the house, including a two-room cabin housing enslaved domestic workers directly east. Other outbuildings would have included a smokehouse, well house, dairy, stable, barns, sheds, and one or more poultry houses. Outbuildings directly related to domestic uses were arranged in a tight cluster convenient to the house. The space between these structures would have formed the farm "yard" of compacted soil, where enslaved workers performed a large portion of their daily tasks. This domestic curtilage would have been enclosed with paling fences and shaded by large trees.

The Watt farm was accessed by an entrance road entering the property from the east, from the main highway leading south from New Cold Harbor (Figure 1.10). This farm road wound onto the plateau and past an orchard before looping around the south side of the house. From there, the primary farm road continued westward toward the western end of the plateau before descending the slope

Figure 1.10. Detail: "Country Adjacent to Richmond and Lines of Defensive Works Around the City," Army of the Potomac Engineers, 1864, annotated by the authors (in green) to highlight the primary circulation to and around the Springfield Plantation (National Archives II, RG77 Map G151, No. 1).



toward the Chickahominy River. A secondary farm road branched off just west of the house and ran north toward Boatswain Creek.

Agricultural buildings were located some distance from the house (Figure 1.11). About 180 yards east of the house was a cluster of three large structures, likely barns, sheds, and/or stables. Another stable was located north of the house near the edge of the open area. Approximately 250 yards north of the house were two cabins, each housing approximately ten to twelve enslaved agricultural workers. The cabins were probably sited on the either side of the secondary farm road that branched off the primary farm road.⁴⁰

Powwhite

The core of the Powwhite plantation was located on the west side of Powwhite Creek, beyond the current park boundary, but its fields at that time extended across the creek to include the park area that lies between Powwhite and Boatswain Creeks.

The Powwhite plantation house was of an older style, having been constructed during the eighteenth century. By contemporary accounts, the dwelling was a large and fine home. It was surrounded by a correspondingly large fenced yard with three gates, and flower and vegetable gardens. A cluster of structures, likely enslaved workers' residences, was located on the slope to the south of the house, and a line of barns and other agricultural buildings extended along the farm road southeast of the house. The plantation featured a large number of outbuildings to

Figure 1.11. Detail: "Map of the Battle-Fields of the Topotomy, Bethesda Church, and Cold Harbor," (P.S. Michie, July 1865). This post-war manuscript map annotated by the authors (in blue) indicates conjectural attributions of outbuildings suggested in a 2000 archeological survey of the property. (National Archives II, RG77, Map Z-412h; Battlefields and Campaign Areas, 146 items).



support its operation, including barns and sheds, carriage houses, a grain house, smoke house, dairy, and tobacco house. Cultivated fields of wheat, corn, oats, and clover spread broadly over the lowland area between the house and the river, and cultivated fields likely extended northward from the house as well.

Primary access to Powhite was provided by two roads, both branching off of New Bridge Road, which crossed the Chickahominy River before heading southwest to Richmond. One road left New Bridge Road just north of the bridge and crossed Powhite's lower agricultural fields before climbing the slope to approach the house from the southwest. The second road approached the house from the northwest, passing through the plantation from west to east and crossing into the fields on the east side of Powhite Creek. Wartime maps show two roads extending southward from Powhite toward bridges crossing the Chickahominy River. One road, shown on maps from 1862 and 1865, began near the core of the plantation, descending the slope along the west side of Powhite Creek to a bridge labeled Lower Trestle Bridge on period maps. The second, shown only on Michler's 1865 map, follows the slope between Powhite Creek and Boatswain Creek to Duane's Bridge. It is likely that one or both of these roads were constructed by the Union Army during the war, yet these roads may have followed pre-existing routes.

The land between Powhite and Boatswain Creeks, presently park property, was a broad, level, treeless field, with steep slopes descending to both watercourses. The creek beds were swampy and at least partially wooded. There is no indication of structures on the Powhite acreage between the two creeks, nor of any specifically mentioned crops. At the time of the battle, this land may have been used as pastureland for grazing cattle, as a hayfield to produce fodder, or perhaps lay fallow, at rest following a previous harvest.

Parsons Farm

North of Springfield, the Parsons farm contained at least a small dwelling and one or more minor outbuildings, as well as an orchard, yet the scale of the Parsons farm was small, descriptions of the structures do not survive. The roughly fifty acres of open fields owned by Parsons was contiguous with the fields of Powhite to the southwest. Generally, the Parsons land was consistent with the patterns found at Springfield and Powhite, with the level land and upper slopes of the creek open, and woods and wetlands lining the creek.

Access to the Parsons farm was via a farm road running south from New Cold Harbor. By the war's end, this road extended through the farm and across Boatswain Creek to the Watt property, it is not clear whether this was the case in 1862. There does not appear at the time to have been a road traveling out of the southwest side of the Parsons farm to access the Powhite fields.



Cultural Landscape Report

Richmond National
Battlefield Park
Mechanicsville, Virginia

Gaines' Mill Battlefield
1862 Period Plan



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

1. Library of Congress, Gilmer, Confederate Army Department of Northern Virginia, Chief Engineer's Office, Map of Hanover County, 1864
2. United States Geological Survey LiDAR, 2014
3. Gaines' Mill Cultural Landscape Report and Archeological Survey, 2000
4. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts

DRAWN BY

Kelsey Little and John Hammond, ArcGIS Pro 3.2, 2024

LEGEND

	Study Boundary		Road
	Open Ground		Military Road
	Wetland		Stream/Creek
	Agricultural Field		Bridge
	Woods		Fence
	Building		Orchard Tree
	River		

NOTES

1. Projection: NAD 1983 (2011) UTM Zone 18N
2. Contour Interval = 5'
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location
4. The pattern of roadways seen in this map are interpreted from the Map of Hanover County, VA, Confederate Army, Department of Northern Virginia, Chief Engineer's Office, Gilmer
5. The pattern of hydrography seen in this map are interpreted from a combination of current topography and the historic map listed in the sources
6. Last exported: 11/13/2024 3:16 PM

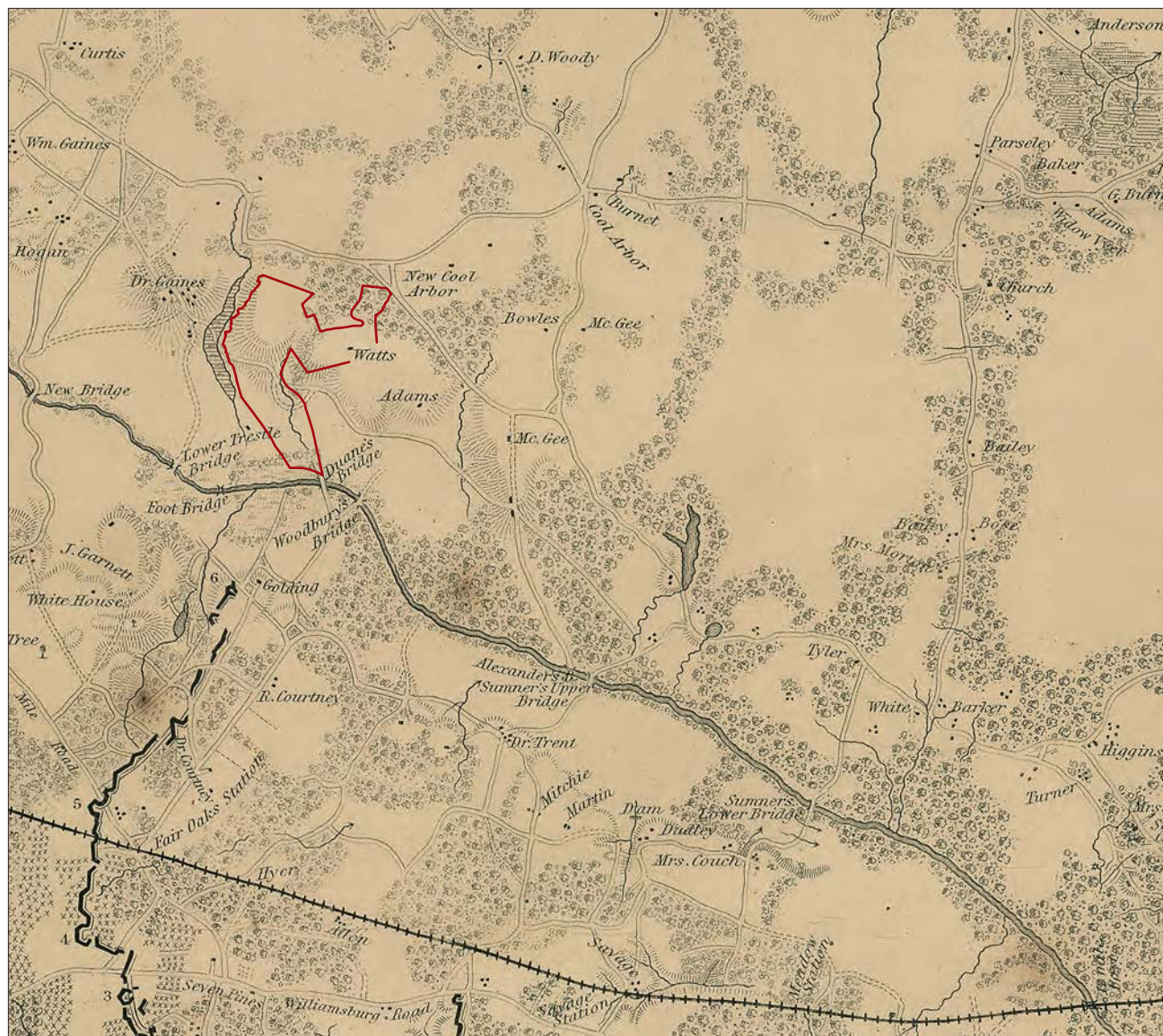


THE CIVIL WAR: 1861-1865

On June 27, 1862, the Watt's Springfield Plantation became the scene of the fiercest and most decisive fighting of the Battle of Gaines' Mill (Figure 1.12). This was the third day of the Seven Days' battles in which Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia ended the Union's spring 1862 Peninsular offensive, ultimately driving Major General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac from the threshold to Richmond, all the way to Harrison's Landing on the James River, fifteen miles southeast of the city.⁴¹

Figure 1.12. Detail of Brig. Gen. A.A. Humphreys' map, "White House to Harrison's Landing," (1862) showing the location of bridges across the Chickahominy River. The approximate current boundary of the battlefield is indicated in red, (Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/2006626049>).

Although the Battle of Gaines' Mill ultimately involved nearly 100,000 soldiers fighting across a two-mile front, the battle shared little in common with the design of most of the Civil War's other major engagements. The fluidity of preceding events prevented prolonged calculation. Instinct and improvisation played a greater role. The battle's ragged evolution did not diminish the role of the landscape on the course of the action. Once the combat began, the terrain dictated



much of what transpired. Irregular ground cover, topographic anomalies, fields of fire and corridors of observation all helped to shape the outcome of the battle, just as the landscapes have done in warfare throughout time.

PRELIMINARIES

In his spring 1862 campaign to either capture the Confederate capital at Richmond or destroy its defending army, General George B. McClellan arranged his Army of the Potomac astride the swampy Chickahominy River east of Richmond. The layout of Union forces resembled an upside down and backward letter “L.” The shorter leg, north of the river, extended from the village of Mechanicsville southeastward for more than four miles. The Fifth Corps, commanded by Gen. Fitz John Porter, bore responsibility for all that ground. The army’s other four corps constituted the longer leg of the “L” south of the river.

By about June 24, military intelligence suggested that Confederate Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s army approached Richmond from the northwest. Those 20,000 Confederate soldiers could not be prevented from sweeping above and around the Union Fifth Corps and threatening the entire army’s supply route—the Richmond & York River Railroad. Those tracks ran eastward behind Porter’s line to the supply depot at White House Landing on the Pamunkey River, near where the Pamunkey and the Mattaponi River join to form the York River. Concerned, McClellan ordered army’s chief engineer, Gen. John G. Barnard, to investigate possible fallback positions for the Fifth Corps. Complying with those orders, Barnard an expert in the design of defensive works and former Superintendent of West Point, scouted the site of the future battle not long before June 27, 1862. Barnard identified the area behind Boatswain Creek as a promising location.⁴²

Jackson’s army arrived and formed up near Mechanicsville on June 26. Its arrival above the headwaters of Beaver Dam Creek made Porter’s position untenable and mandated an overnight retreat. Porter and Barnard together rode through the night to the new position beyond Boatswains Creek with the 27,000 men of Porter’s command following along multiple roads overnight. Barnard had chosen the site not just for its defensive assets, but also because its location could overlook and guard some of the key bridges crossing the river, thereby ensuring a viable route of further retreat.

In the four weeks spanning the end of May through the last week of June, army engineers had built approximately a dozen military bridges across the Chickahominy. The key bridges in the vicinity of the Gaines’ Mill battlefield, from west to east, were Duane’s Bridge, the Woodbury-Alexander Bridge, Sumner’s Upper Bridge (more frequently called Grapevine Bridge), and Sumner’s Lower Bridge, although the last named actually was a bit downriver from the actual scene of the battle. Most of those bridges capitalized on the presence of existing roads, but

the army-built spans were necessary to accommodate heavy traffic. Union engineers also constructed lengthy elevated corduroy approaches to most of the new bridges, in order to cope with the extensive wetlands on both sides of the Chickahominy. The bridges served at least two critical purposes: they reduced the peril of an army divided by the obstacle of a swampy river, and the bridges improved the army's logistical efficiency by providing a helpful redundancy in roads and bridges delivering supplies and evacuating casualties.⁴³

Porter's soldiers greeted the unexpected retreat with surprise and sorrow. They had made no preparations for it, and in order to prevent stockpiled supplies from falling into Confederate hands, most units spent the predawn hours of June 27 burning everything they owned; millions of dollars' worth of government property. Bonfires and pillars of smoke marked the route of withdrawal, a heartening sight to Confederates who awoke around Mechanicsville and prepared to follow.

Porter's corps featured three infantry divisions. General George Sykes commanded a division of U.S. Regulars—men who belonged to the army regardless of war or peace—although one brigade of volunteers operated in tandem with the Regulars. General George A. McCall led the Pennsylvania Reserves division, a force composed exclusively of men belonging to Keystone State regiments. General George W. Morell led the other division. Those units straggled toward Barnard's pre-selected position at different rates across a scattered network of roads. McCall's men, the last to arrive, reached the soon-to-be battlefield well after sunrise.

Confederate army commander Gen. Robert E. Lee pursued Porter. He hoped both to threaten the Union supply line and to push the suddenly vulnerable Union troops hard against the Chickahominy River, perhaps winning a decisive battle while ruining McClellan's logistical infrastructure. Lee assigned the 60,000 men of his force four different roads to follow. Those columns all marched eastward. The roads they followed offered no special concealment, but they allowed Lee to disperse his large force over parallel avenues of approach, increasing the rate of travel. Lee probably suspected that he would find Porter behind Powhite Creek, a substantial stream three miles east of Mechanicsville. It ran southward into the Chickahominy and seemed—on a map at least—like a sound defensive position.⁴⁴

Lee's men endured various misadventures as they made their way, especially the column supervised by Stonewall Jackson. Jackson followed an incorrect road, doubled up on itself, and lost valuable time. The divisions of Gen. James Longstreet and Gen. A.P. Hill pursued more closely, encountering tempting pyramids of burning Union supplies. More significantly, Longstreet and Hill's soldiers also faced moderate resistance from a rearguard thrown across the roads to slow them down. Porter had assigned two Union batteries of mobile horse artillery to that task. They deployed, fired a few rounds, hitched up, fell back a few hundred yards, and repeated the process. Their work proved to be an effective delaying tactic.⁴⁵

In the meantime, Porter's infantry investigated their new position and began work on improvements capitalizing on the local landscape's defensive value while mitigating its vulnerabilities. Initially Morell's three-brigade division stood on the left of the Fifth Corps and Sykes's three brigades manned the right. McCall's three Pennsylvania brigades remained in reserve. Porter had no explicit instructions from General McClellan, other than to defend his ground.

THE BATTLEFIELD BEFORE THE BATTLE

Boatswain Creek deeply inscribed the front of General Fitz-John Porter's line. It flowed east to west and, opposite the Federal right and center, the creek divided into two separate upland branches. Those arms met within a thick woods northeast of the Watt house, near the current easternmost National Park Service boundary line. On the eve of the battle, the creek flowed out of those woods into a more lightly wooded area, nearly open ground. Thence the creek became shrouded among trees and shrubs growing on its steep banks, flowing westward

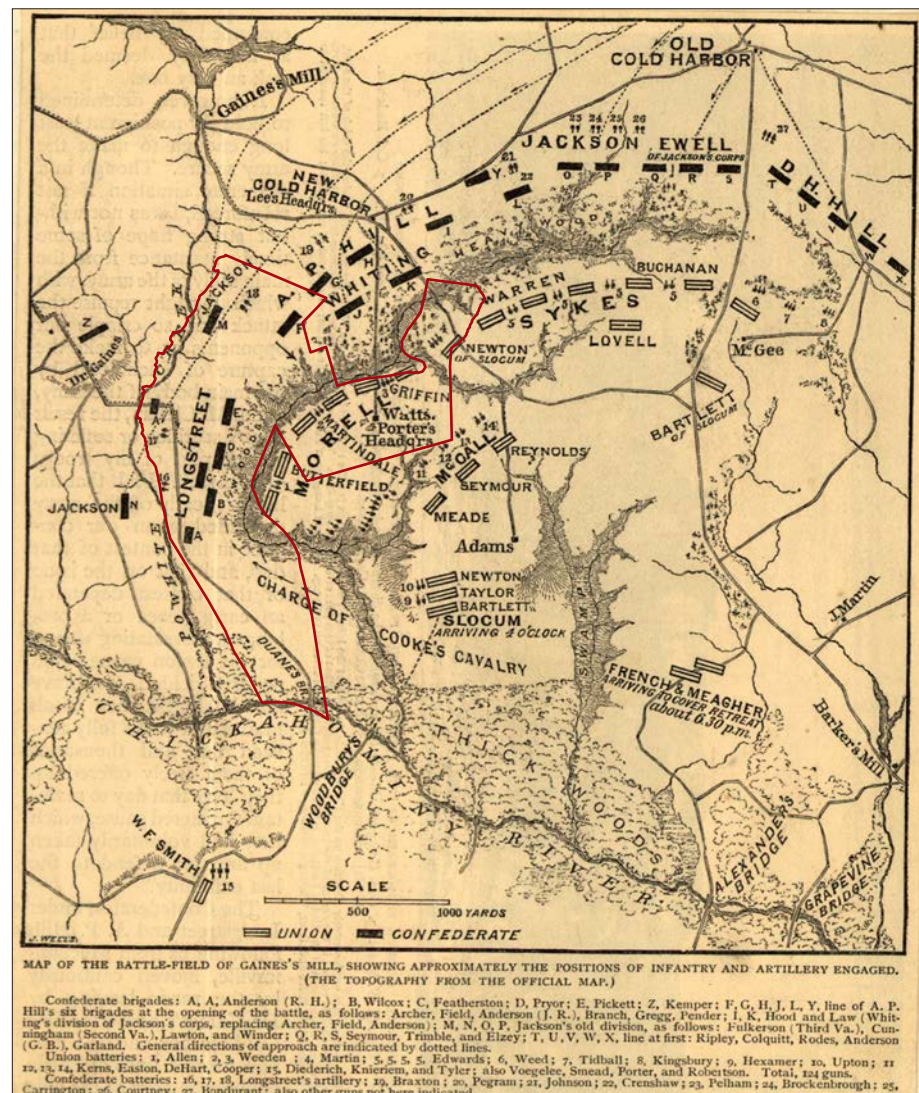


Figure 1.13. "Map of the battlefield of Gaines's Mill, showing approximately the positions of infantry and artillery engaged." From "Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine," v. 30, June 1885. The approximate current boundary of the battlefield is outlined in red. (Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/99439166>).

in nearly a straight line, before sweeping southward and meandering downhill toward the marshy ground at the margins of the Chickahominy River (Figure 1.13).

The left of the Fifth Corps (Gen. Daniel Butterfield's brigade) nestled into that creek bend, the watercourse serving Butterfield's men as a welcome obstacle to the opposing Confederate forces. Along its course, Boatswain Creek flowed within a belt of woodland of varying width and density. South of Butterfield, opposite most of Morell's division, open ground extended all the way to the creek's embankments on the north side. It was an attractive defensive position as Federal defenders occupied elevated locations protected by some tree cover, while vulnerable attackers had to approach by moving downhill, crossing exposed farmland.

The left and center of Morell's division (mostly Gen. John H. Martindale's brigade), filled those woods in a classic demonstration of "defense in depth." The soldiers wrote about the open woods there, free of undergrowth, with large oak trees dominating the landscape. Before the battle started, most of Butterfield's and Martindale's regiments felled a substantial number of trees to assemble log barricades, creating a still greater sense of openness in that portion of the creek-side woodlot. The Union forces piled the cut logs approximately chest high, fashioning for themselves breastworks without soil. In some places the Union soldiers arranged bales of hay, fence rails, and even their own knapsacks to protect themselves. The individual regiments arranged themselves in a layered defense. The front regiment of a brigade stood far down slope, near the creek, but not low enough to limit lines of sight. Another regiment occupied a barricade near the military crest, higher up the hill, but still in within the belt of woods lining the south bank of the creek. A third regiment located themselves out in the open to the south, beyond the woods, within the open farm fields surrounding the Watt house. The steepness of the slope bordering Boatswain Creek allowed all lines to fire simultaneously, creating a depth of defense while emphasizing concealment *and* creating ideal fields of fire. Scattered cannon placed at a distance will atop the plateau added yet another layer to this sturdy arrangement.⁴⁶

Immediately northeast of the Watt house, where the woodland enclosed the two upland branches of Boatswain Creek, the forest cover became very dense, covering perhaps as many as forty contiguous acres. Only the western third of this woodland was located within the present-day National Park Service boundary. The Union soldiers deployed in these eastern woods could not arrange the same depth of defenses as the soldiers defending to the west. Here, the large forty-acre woodland at their front rendered poor sight lines. Gen. Charles Griffin's brigade began the battle here, its regiments arrayed in traditional lines of battle at the irregular crest of the slope south of the creek.

At least two significant farm roads subdivided the hilltop near the Watt house. One road ran southwest from the house, roughly parallel to the course of Boatswain Creek. Small stretches of its sunken roadbed remain visible today. That lane



Figure 1.14. Alternate manuscript version of Humphrey's 1862 map (detail) showing the forested areas and terrain around the Watt farm. The approximate current boundary of the battlefield is outlined in red (National Archives II, RG77, Map G443, vol. 13, number 3).

disappeared down the plateau and ultimately extending beyond current National Park Service boundaries. The road eventually crossed Boatswain Creek in the waterway's north/south segment, thence through the Powhite plantation, and at ultimately intersecting the major New Bridge Road, approximately one mile west of the Watt house. That road continued across the Chickahominy River and ultimately led to Richmond. The Watts undoubtedly used that series of byways prior to the war to travel to and from Richmond, perhaps carrying produce and goods to market.

The second road ran northeast from the Watt house yard. Its precise alignment is uncertain, at least where it traversed current National Park Service land holdings. Its roadbed remains visible in the thick woods northeast of the Watt house, but beyond National Park Service boundary lines. This route ended at the larger McGhee House Road, which ran from New Cold Harbor Tavern through the center of the battlefield before veering east to intercept the Dispatch Station Road well to

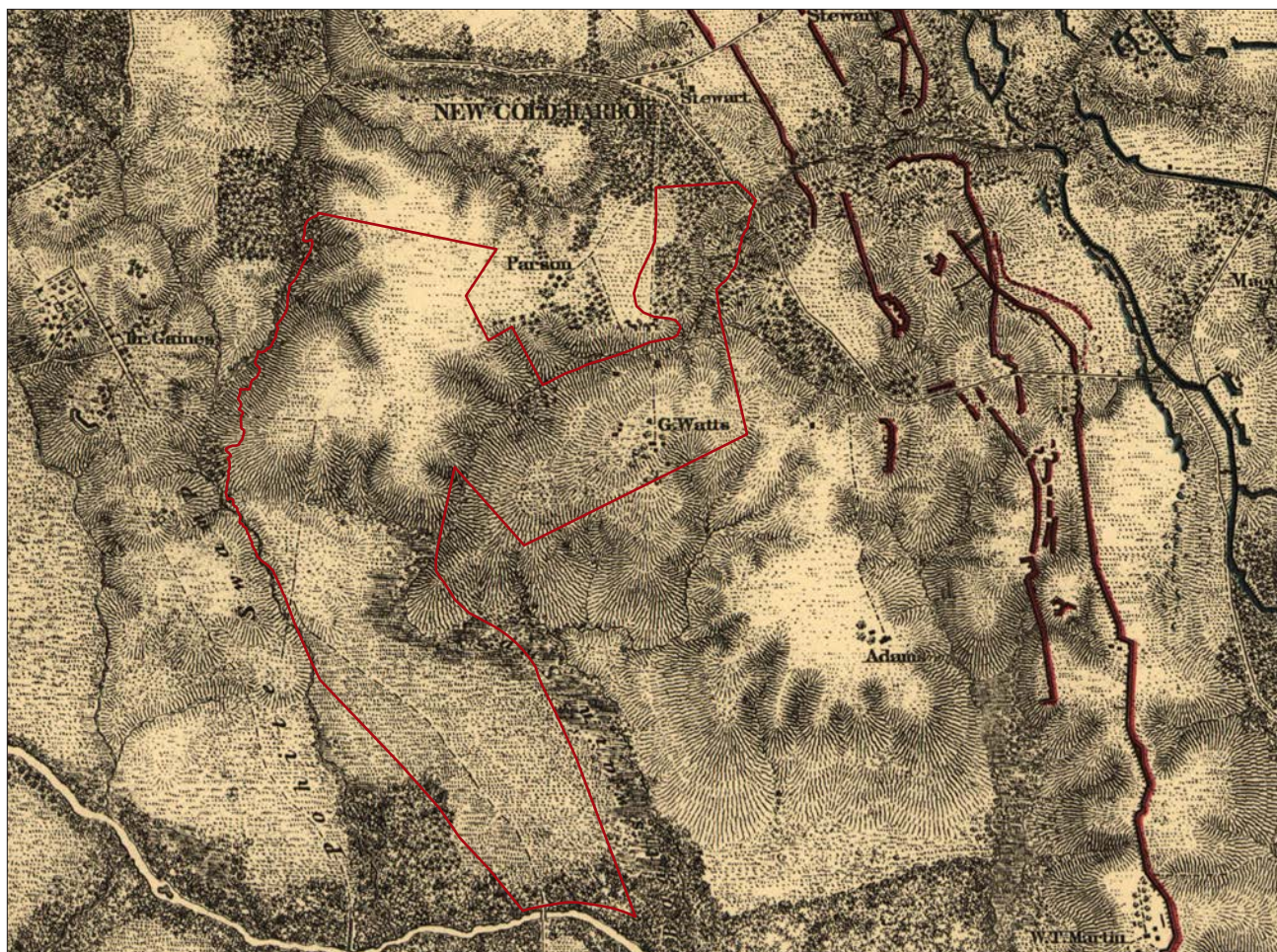


Figure 1.15. Detail of an 1867 map by Gen. N. Michler and Bvt. Lieut. P.S. Michie showing the terrain and roads around the Watt farm. The dark red and blue lines on the map indicate Confederate and Union (resp.) entrenchments primarily constructed during the 1865 Battle of Cold Harbor. The approximate current boundary of the battlefield is indicated in lighter red. (Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/99439155>).

the east. Nearly all of the McGhee House Road (now disused) survives today as a trace; only a small stretch of it occupies park property, or possibly even astride the actual boundary, at the northeastern-most edge of the park's land holdings.

Fewer roads existed on the Confederate side of the creek. A straight lane ran from New Cold Harbor due south to the Watt house, an antecedent of the current Watt House Road (Route 718). Accounts differ regarding the age of the road. Circumstantial evidence suggests that perhaps it had not been created by 1862; the Watts, after all, could reach New Cold Harbor via gentler grades on their own lane which ran to the McGhee House Road. The north/south road north of Boatswains Creek certainly existed by 1864, when the route appears on engineering maps. One unsubstantiated theory postulates that the road dates from June 1864, when Confederate engineers may have built it to facilitate lateral movement for troops marching through the vicinity just behind the front lines during the Battle of Cold Harbor.

One road north of the creek and northwest of the Watt house bore travelers across Powhite Creek from the west-northwest. That farm lane ascended the hill between Powhite Creek and Boatswain Creek, and thus onto present-day National Park Service property (Figure 1.14). During the pre-battle operations of June 1862, Union engineers had prepared a military road branching off that unnamed farm

lane. It ran southwest, across the flat ground, ending at a military crossing on the Chickahominy River known as Duane's Bridge.

Nearly due north of the Watt house, and north of the creek, a small farm stood astride the path of the eventual Confederate attack (Figure 1.15). This farm belonged to Reynolds Parsons, and the farmhouse and attendant property must have been very inconspicuous, as descriptions of the property by soldiers participating in the battle have yet to be discovered. Mr. Parsons' field had fallen fallow in June 1862. Today that ground remains privately owned, but is bordered on the east, south, and west by the National Park Service property

Lieutenant Colonel James C. Rice of the 44th New York drew the assignment of demolishing various bridges along those roads in front of the Union position. He and a crew of "pioneers" destroyed small spans at the road crossings, probably including a few military footbridges that crossed unnamed wet-weather swales, further delaying Confederate advance.⁴⁷

THE BATTLE OF GAINES' MILL

The opening shots whistled back and forth across Powhite Creek at the actual site of Gaines' Mill, north of the park. Union skirmishers there bought time for the main line to improve its defenses. Eventually the Confederate divisions of Longstreet and A.P. Hill formed up to face the main Union line. Longstreet sent forward loose skirmish formations to clear the elevated ground between the two creeks. They soon discovered the primary Union line behind Boatswain Creek and determined to halt and await developments rather than push ahead against an obviously powerful position. They also discovered that Longstreet's entire attack route, across the hill between the two creeks, fell within range of heavy Union artillery positioned all the way across the Chickahominy, on the Gouldin Farm. Those huge rifled guns could fire uninhibited, dropping shells onto the narrow open farm field Longstreet's men had to cross. The immense power of the Union enfilading fire immobilized Longstreet's men in the shelter of the Powhite Creek valley for most of the battle.

General Lee established his Confederate command post at the New Cold Harbor intersection, where the Cold Harbor Road (modern Route 156) and the McGhee House Road connected. Before reaching that intersection, events had forced Lee to revise his plan for the day. He probably had expected the main Union line of resistance, when he found it, to make use of the north/south valley of Powhite Creek, near Gaines' Mill itself. That inapt prediction can be traced to inept maps; the one available to Lee that morning apparently gave no indication of Boatswain Creek.⁴⁸

Once his columns passed Powhite Creek with little resistance, Lee had to reorient

himself and revise his plans. Although Porter's line lay very near, stretching nearly two miles, Lee and his deputies could see none of it. The band of woods that skirted Boatswain Creek for its entire length prevented Lee from recognizing the details of what he faced, and for most of the afternoon he could not understand the scope of his Porter's deployment. Inadequate lines of sight not only affected the Lee's choices, they also perplexed the division commanders assigned the task of evaluating the Federal position and attacking it.

By mid-afternoon Stonewall Jackson's Valley Army, increased by the addition of Gen. D.H. Hill's division, had reached Old Cold Harbor, a crossroads 1 ½ miles northeast of the Watt house. Jackson operated under stale orders and still expected the Federals to be driven from west to east, into his lap, and thus he oriented his men to face west. This error only became apparent later in the day.

Across the Chickahominy, Gen. McClellan hesitated, considering tactics for the pending battle. He already had decided to remove his entire army to the south bank of the Chickahominy River that night in preparation for a move further south to the James River. This meant McClellan would abandon his logistical base at White House Landing on the Pamunkey River. He probably did not tell Porter, though, and as the Fifth Corps prepared for battle its men had no understanding that they were about to engage in a fight they could not win; a fight that employed them as little more than an rear-guard obstruction in the path of Lee's army. McClellan had no desire to sacrifice that command, but did not reinforce it either, knowing that every soldier he sent across the river would retreat back to the southside that same evening.

The Battle Opens

Once A.P. Hill's division (six brigades numbering approximately 14,000 men) concentrated around New Cold Harbor, Lee threw half of these soldier forward into the woods to locate the Federal position and to drive the Union solders into the river. The first heavy action began east of the present National Park Service boundary line, along the margins of the McGhee House Road. Confederate brigades commanded by Gen. Maxcy Gregg, Gen. Lawrence O. Branch, and Gen. W. Dorsey Pender marched ahead and the battle erupted with unexpected violence. Those three brigades lost more than 1,000 men killed and wounded in a futile effort to push the divisions of Morell and Sykes off their positions. To the west, Longstreet's division continued to take cover in the valley of Powhite Creek, awaiting the moment when their charge—certain to be costly—could be synchronized as part of a larger effort (Figure 1.16).

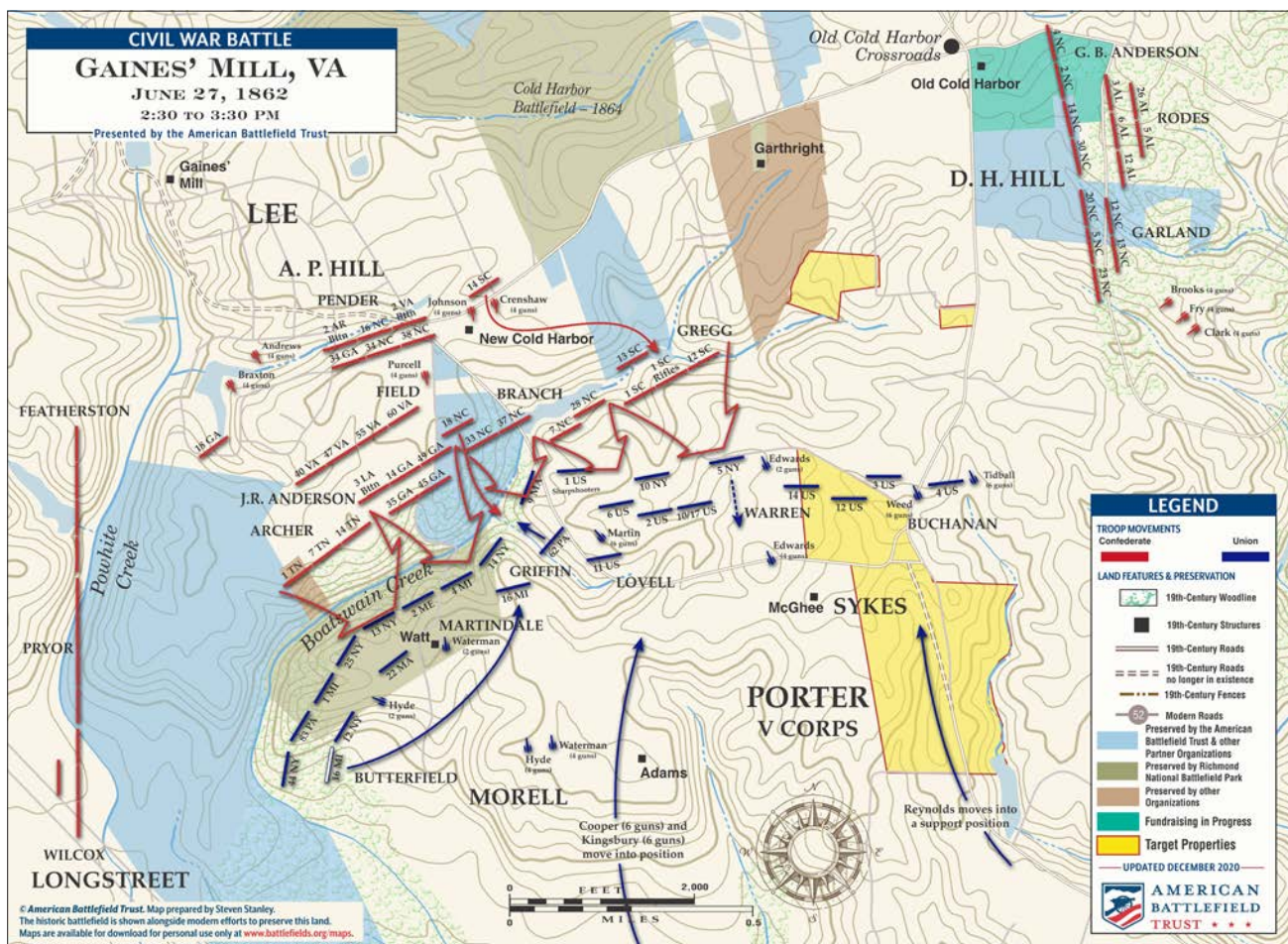
To the south and southwest of New Cold Harbor, the western half of A.P. Hill's division made the first assault against the Watt house woods. The brigades of Gen. James J. Archer, Gen. Joseph R. Anderson, and Gen. Charles W. Field attacked one

after the other, through the Parsons farm fields north of Boatwain Creek. The Confederate soldiers discovered the configuration of Morell's line in the woods south of the creek at great cost, and without any tangible gain. General Martindale's brigade used their artillery and rifles to drive the Confederate attackers off the open slope, littering the hillside with casualties. A few Tennesseans and Alabamians nearly reached the creek, but none successfully crossed it. Two regiments lost their battle flags in the episode, the Federal small arms fire delivered from behind the barricades being so great that even the downed flags could not be recovered.

As the battle unfolded, Lee communicated the current circumstances to Stonewall Jackson, summoning some of Jackson's troops to turn and support Hill. Jackson reoriented his command at Old Cold Harbor to face south and sent the division of Gen. Richard S. Ewell to New Cold Harbor as requested. When those men arrived after a cross-country march, Lee and Hill directed them forward into the woods northeast of the Watt house.

Ewell led his men forward, but the combination of dense woodlands and disorganized and retreating Confederates from Hill's division thwarted the attack. Neither the Union or Confederate soldiers could observe their respective enemy on that portion of the battlefield. Fields of fire measured in feet instead of yards,

Figure 1.16. Diagram showing the position and movement of Confederate and Union forces during the early afternoon of the Battle of Gaines' Mill. (American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/>).



and the vegetation gave no advantage to either side. The woodland obstructed the attackers and ruined efforts at concentration, but it also diminished defensive power. Ewell's division split into fragments. Parts of his command surged across Boatswain Creek. The westernmost of his units crossed about where the two upland arms of the creek unite—and thus onto current park property—only to wilt in the face of heavy downhill fire stopping them at the foot of the slope. Major Chatham R. Wheat of the “Louisiana Tigers,” an internationally known soldier of fortune, died there. He probably was the most famous man in either army killed at Gaines’ Mill. Some of Ewell’s regiments held on tenaciously, and for the first time the attackers possessed a strong position in the woods northeast of Mrs. Watt’s home.

In the meantime, Porter directed his last reserves into the firing line. The three brigades of Gen. George A. McCall’s all-Pennsylvania division joined the fight at different locations along the line. They mostly found action beyond present National Park Service boundaries, in the center of the battlefield, where their comrades seemed to hold the most tenuous grip. Morell’s men, in the Watt woods, received no reinforcement owing to the relative ease with which they had repulsed A.P. Hill’s prior attacks. McCall’s employment meant that Porter had no infantry in reserve at all, and at least three hours of daylight—possibly four—remained.

More Troops Arrive

General Porter realized that his 27,000-man force stood in peril. Porter faced both too many Confederate soldiers, and too much remaining daylight. Monitoring the unfolding battle from across the Chickahominy River, General McClellan asked Porter for a status report including an assessment of how he might help. Porter requested more soldiers. McClellan had anticipated this and had already decided that he would use Gen. Henry W. Slocum’s division of the Sixth Corps. That force numbered perhaps 8,000 infantrymen spread across three brigades. McClellan issued the order and Slocum’s men marched rapidly north to the Woodbury-Alexander Bridge, crossing in late-afternoon. Upon Slocum’s arrival, Porter personally directed each of the three brigades to different points, dividing the command-and-control of the division, but also making maximum use of its component parts to buttress weak points along the line. All three brigades saw very heavy action east of present-day National Park Service boundaries (Figure 1.17).

Confederate General Robert E. Lee made corresponding adjustments. He delegated management of his left to Stonewall Jackson, to such an extent that Lee did not visit that portion of the battlefield on the 27th. Instead, Lee concentrated his attention on massing troops to drive a wedge through the Federal center. He summoned the division of Gen. William H.C. Whiting, belonging to Jackson’s wing of the army, to reinforce Hill and Ewell. Whiting’s two brigades reached New Cold Harbor at about 5:30 p.m. and swept forward. Part of Gen. John B.

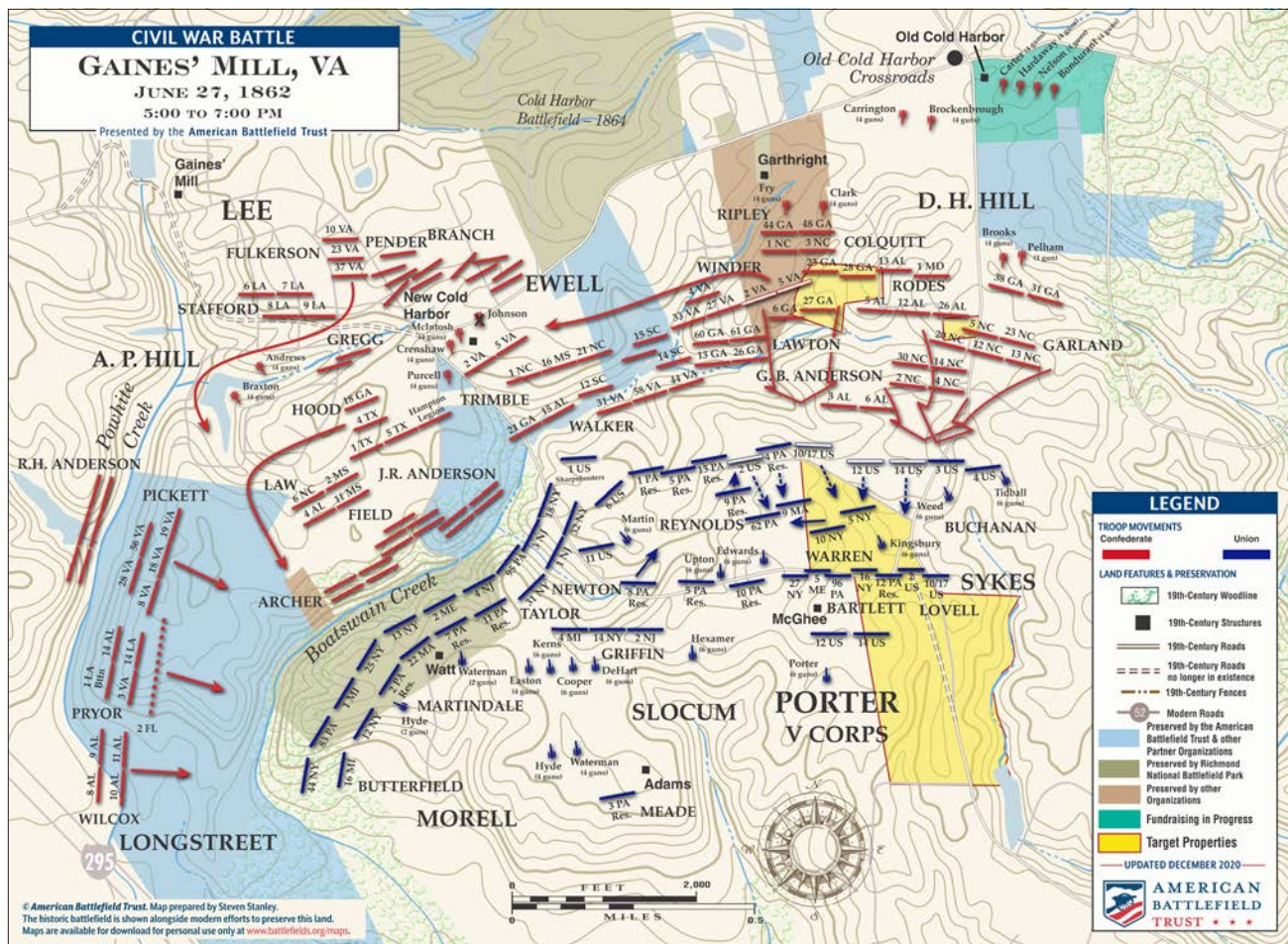


Figure 1.17. Diagram showing the position and movement of Confederate and Union forces during the early evening of the Battle of Gaines' Mill. (American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/>).

Hood's so-called "Texas Brigade" (which actually included some Georgians and South Carolinians) moved southeastward into the thick woods near the junction of Boatswain Creek's two upland branches. Colonel Evander M. Law's brigade attacked due south, down the axis of the present-day Watt House Road. Colonel Law kept his force of Confederate soldiers in the open fields north of Mrs. Watt's; about half of Law's command thus charged across park property.

Law's approach from the north gave the Federals positioned in the creekside woodland another opportunity to prey upon exposed Confederates moving across open slopes north of Boatswain Creek. Capitalizing on the terrain and the open fields of fire, the Union soldiers decisively stopped Law's men and pinned them down in the field. The contemporary monument to the 11th Mississippi Infantry, placed adjacent to the park on land owned by the American Battlefield Trust, roughly marks the location of this episode. Hood had kept two-fifths of his brigade in reserve, those regiments observing Law's repulse. They prepared to launch a separate attack of their own minutes later, an event that would initiate the most desperate episode of fighting within current National Park Service boundaries.

Within the defile of Powhite Creek, Gen. Longstreet's division finally stirred. All

of its subsequent movements took place on park property. For reasons that are not well understood, the Virginia brigade of Gen. George E. Pickett attacked first, alone, and beyond of support of any other effort. Pickett's men had been sheltering under the cover of the creek banks that currently falls within the boundaries of the "Hanover Farms" subdivision, bordering National Park Service lands. Even there, distant Federal artillery from beyond the Chickahominy dropped shells among the sheltering men. The five Virginia regiments finally formed up and charged due south across the treeless cropland, aiming for Mrs. Watt's woodlot. They reached an unwooded portion of the north bank of Boatswain Creek, virtually at gunpoint to Morell's infantry on the south bank. There they stalled. General Pickett falling badly wounded; his next-in-command was shot off his horse. Regimental flags and the soldiers bearing them fell to the ground.

At that decisive moment, General Hood invested his two remaining regiments of Confederate soldiers in the faltering attack. Witness to the defeat of Law's brigade and to the crushing blows laid on Pickett's men, Hood sent the 4th Texas and the 18th Georgia, on a sprint toward Boatswain Creek. Approximately 1,000 of Hood's remaining soldiers were ordered forward and directed to not stop advancing and to hold their fire until reaching the creek. Hood planned to use momentum and self-discipline to achieve his goal.⁴⁹

After a short exhortation, Hood led the soldiers across the open field. Barely 100 yards north of the creek, the flat farm field reached a crest marking the edge of the Boatswain Creek valley. The attackers swept down that slope—open all the way to the stream—discovering that the terrain worked to their advantage the farther they advanced. Almost counterintuitively, the closer the Confederates got to their enemy, the safer they became. The terraced defensive system that had made Morell's position so powerful only worked at a distance, when all the parallel lines could fire at once, including the cannon atop the plateau near the Watt house. As Hood's men descended the creek valley, they became invisible to all but the very front line of Morell's division. Each forward step toward the creek improved their situation. Not only could they deal with only one Union line at a time, but once the front line dissolved, the second and third Union lines had no clear fields of fire. Their own comrades, flying up the wooded slope with screaming Texans at their heels, obscured the view.

Terrain had been key in the arrangement of the Federal defenses. Woodland cover and topography had dictated the alignment, and up until this point the infantrymen of Morell's division had enjoyed the benefits of a strong a position. Yet when Hood's soldiers successfully reached Boatswain Creek, the advantages afforded the defenders by the slope abruptly became a critical component in their defeat. The sudden vacuum in Morell's line relieved the pressure on Pickett's Virginians, immediately to the west of Hood, and this allowed Pickett's soldiers to resume the fight. The gap in the Federal left only grew larger as more Confederate soldiers

poured through the gap in the Union line and swarmed up the hill toward the Watt house.

Lee recognized the opportunity and at about 7:00 p.m. instructed A.P. Hill “to advance my whole line and to communicate this order as far as I could to all commanders of troops.” By then only one hour of daylight remained. Lee’s order made available more than 50,000 men for a concentrated attack against approximately 30,000 defenders. In the twilight, fighting raged across the two-mile long battle front.⁵⁰

Fighting Around the Watt House

Three more of James Longstreet’s brigades moved toward the Watt Hill, aiming for the gap made by Pickett’s breakthrough. Daniel Butterfield’s Union brigade found itself cut off on the far left of the Union line, just northwest of the Watt house. From there the four isolated Union regiments fought against Longstreet’s men primarily with rifle fire. As the Confederates reached Boatswain Creek, Butterfield’s men edged out of the woods and to temporary safety, leaving the woodlot undefended. The Confederate soldiers surged out of the woods into the immediate vicinity of the Watt house, meeting and overcoming Union resistance, including the enormous 22nd Massachusetts, which made a stand beside the house. Hand-to-hand fighting flared surrounding the house as the cannon crews of the Fifth Massachusetts Battery fought to save their pieces from capture (Figure 1.18).

Two final events closed out the battle within current National Park Service boundaries. Once in possession of the plateau around the Watt house, Longstreet’s, Whiting’s, and Hill’s men found themselves threatened by fire from fourteen Union cannon assembled on a ridge 700 yards to the southeast, near the Adams House. That location is just beyond National Park Service boundaries, separated from the Watt house by a deep, dry ravine that is currently overgrown with vegetation, but that in 1862 lay exposed. The cannon-lined ridge at the Adams House proved to be yet another example of terrain featuring both good lines of sight and expansive fields of fire. Faced with accumulating casualties, Confederate leaders gathered the survivors of the first charge and launched a new effort, diagonally from the Watt house toward the line of cannon. The ensuing collision took place just beyond present day National Park Service boundaries. The Confederate charge on the Adams house resulted in the capture of nine Union cannon.

To the west of the Watt House, on the western National Park Service boundary, two of Butterfield’s regiments made a stand against two South Carolina regiments of Col. Micah Jenkins’s brigade. It had become so late in the day, and had become so dark that neither party could be certain of the other’s identity. A short parley took place beneath a flag of truce, and after mutual (and belated) recognition, the two sides fired at each other at nearly point-blank range. Confederate fire ruined

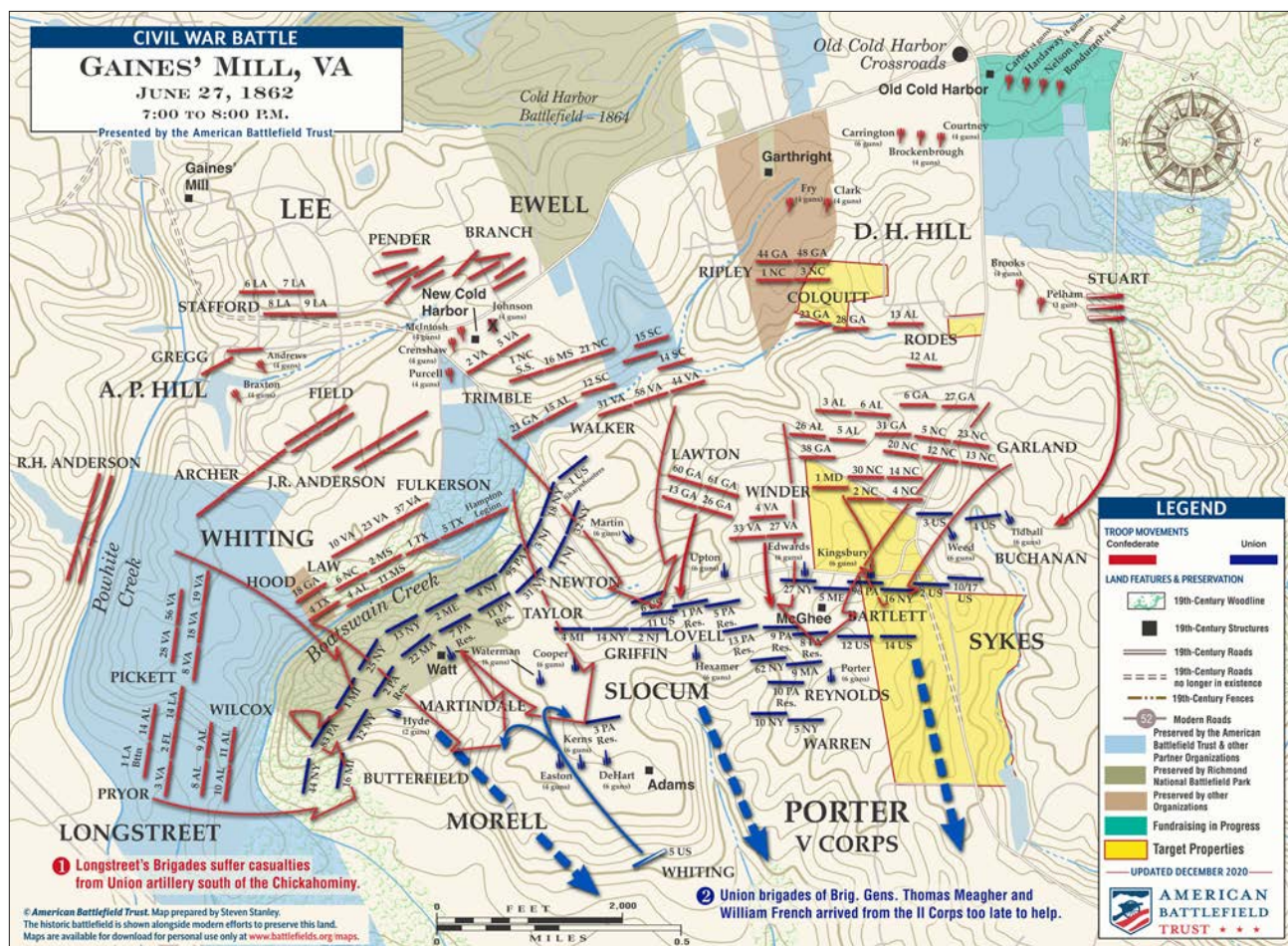


Figure 1.18. Diagram showing the position and movement of Confederate and Union forces during the late evening of the Battle of Gaines' Mill. (American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/>).

the 16th Michigan, which lost its flag in that brief firefight. Only the presence of a modest slope, from the Confederate position downward toward Butterfield's men, saved the Federals from greater loss. They retreated in the dark across Boatswain Creek and into the military road that led down the open field toward Duane's Bridge on the Chickahominy River. There Butterfield's Union soldiers found the span destroyed and swam or waded across in darkness.

The balance of the survivors of Fitz John Porter's Fifth Corps made their way southeastward to the only remaining bridges crossing the river. Most crossed that night, or early the next morning, at the Woodbury-Alexander span. Workers destroyed it once the last men had crossed. The Confederates made no immediate effort at pursuing Porter, or at further harassing McClellan's army. Lee did send troops on June 28 to cut the railroad east of the battlefield, in the process learning that McClellan already had abandoned that supply line. From June 29 to July 2, Lee instituted a more vigorous pursuit, which produced three more large battles to conclude the Seven Days Campaign.

The burden of burying the dead fell to the Confederate infantry. Primary source material documents the process. Federal officers who had died within the Watt house or near it received separate burials in the yard. Many Confederates killed

in the same area found interment in the family orchards. Yet most of the dead were consigned to mass graves, or at least in group graves. The Northern dead often went into long trenches, the corpses unidentified and the graves unmarked. Confederate dead typically ended up buried in clusters, often interred together by regiment. Several such group graves remained evident north of Boatswain Creek when curious visitors toured the site later in the summer of 1862.

The United States Quartermaster's Department sent work crews to the battlefield in 1866. They disinterred the Union dead and reburied them in the newly built Cold Harbor National Cemetery. They overlooked many battlefield graves—the passage of four years likely having made the discernment of burials difficult. There is no evidence that anyone ever systematically removed the Southern dead, and most of these are understood to have remained on the Watt house plateau and north of Boatswain Creek in very significant numbers. Buried dead are believed to remain within present day National Park Service boundary lines.

The Union Fifth Corps began the battle with several natural advantages. Porter improved upon these with barricades while making maximum and clever use of the slopes and fields of fire. His eventual defeat probably had more to do with the numerical advantage of his foe, and to the desperate efforts of soldiers in Lee's army, than it did with misuse or under-appreciation of the landscape by the Federals. For the Confederates, the poor lines of observation available to them across the two-mile battlefield were a clear disadvantage. The ribbon of woodland growing along Boatswain Creek had so effectively concealed the Union line that only one hour of daylight remained when Lee finally understood the dimensions of Porter's position. The Confederate forces had few other landscape advantages that helped them to their victory, other than the very specific situation connected to Hood's breakthrough toward the battle's conclusion.

The casualty figures for Gaines' Mill illustrate, by inference, the effect of the landscape on the battle. Combined losses surpassed 15,000 men killed, wounded, and captured. At least 9,000 of these were Confederate soldiers. Of the Federal casualties, more than 2,000 were captured, most of these apprehended at the close of the battle when darkness and confusion were greatest. The actual ratio of men shot exceeded two to one, Confederate to Union, and approached three to one, a statistic mostly attributable to the Union army's superior use of topography, ground cover, fields of fire, and natural obstacles.

THE USE OF MILITARY AIR BALLOONS AT GAINES' MILL

During the Civil War, the United States Army began developing a program to use gas-filled balloons to aid the war effort. The Federal Balloon Corps, a civilian operation established in 1861 and led by the self-styled "aeronaut" Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, proposed to use large silk balloons filled with hydrogen gas to observe Con-

federate operations behind the front lines. The balloons were constructed of silk supported by rope netting, with a small basket, sufficient to carry one man aloft, suspended underneath. Two large generators of Professor Lowe's design utilized sulfuric acid and iron filings to produce hydrogen gas to lift the balloons.

In May 1862, Professor Lowe and his balloon corps transported three balloons, *Constitution*, *Washington*, and the larger *Intrepid*, and two generators up the Pamunkey River to White House Landing, and then across the peninsula to the Chickahominy River. He established a camp in Mechanicsville, and another at Dr. Gaines plantation, less than a mile from the Watt house. For weeks preceding the Battle of Gaines' Mill, this area lay within the lines of the Union 5th Corps. From these camps, Professor Lowe launched observation balloons with great frequency in the days preceding the start of the Seven Days Campaign (Figures 1.19 and 1.20). At only seven and a half miles from the capitol building in downtown Richmond, Lowe had no trouble observing Confederate positions and movements outside the city. He was able to observe the Confederate Army converging on McClellan's forces prior to the consequential Battle of Seven Pines, although his information was not conveyed to McClellan effectively. From his star-spangled basket suspended beneath *Intrepid*, Lowe was able to watch forces array themselves in advance of the ensuing battle.

Less than a month later, Longstreet's division, on the way to the Battle of Gaines' Mill, marched through Dr. Gaines' yard and deployed artillery around the house, while the infantry pushed ahead into Powhite Creek valley for shelter. As they arrived, Longstreet's men discovered the site of Professor Lowe's balloon camp. The debris even included some abandoned material connected with the hydrogen gas that Lowe had used to inflate his craft.⁵¹

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

Springfield

The fighting at the Gaines' Mill battlefield bore significant impact to Springfield's landscape. The woods north of the Watt house were thinned by Federal soldiers to open or improve avenues of fire for Union artillery and infantry, trees were cut to hastily fashion breastworks and abatis, and vegetation was widely damaged or destroyed by artillery and rifle fire. The Watt farm's broad cleared fields were gouged by cannon balls and trampled by tens of thousands of troops and their horses and heavy guns. Mary Jane Haw recalled that when she returned to Springfield for her final visit two months after the battle in 1862, her grandmother's plantation was "a scene of desolation" punctuated by the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers (Figure 1.21).⁵²

Figure 1.19. Photograph showing "Professor Lowe inflating Balloon 'Intrepid' to reconnoiter Battle of Fair Oaks," May, 1862. (Matthew Brady and Alexander Gardner, Library of Congress, <https://lcn.loc.gov/2015649857>).

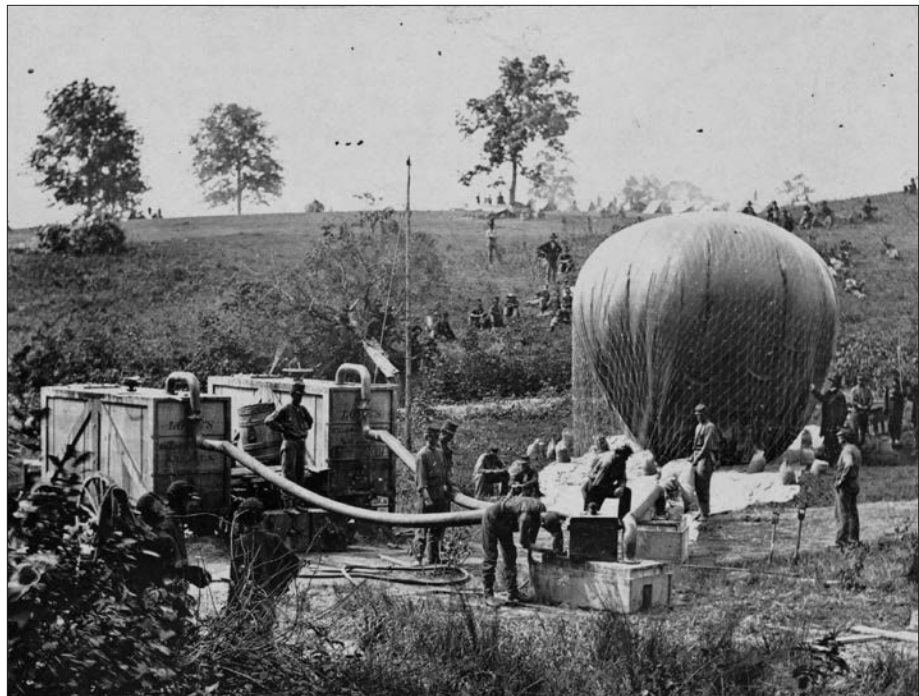


Figure 1.20. "Prof. Lowe reconnoitering at Battle of Fair Oaks and telegraphing to McClellan's headquarters," from the plantation of Dr. Gaines in May 1862. (Matthew Brady, Library of Congress, <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021646695>).



Numerous Union participants in the battle recalled cutting trees as part of their efforts to improve their defensive position. Brigadier General Martindale reported that in his brigade's sector of the Union line, he ordered his troops to "trim up the woods, so as to get a clear sight of the enemy as they approached." Martindale's division commander, Brigadier General George W. Morell, wrote that "a few trees were felled along a small portion of our front and slight barriers erected by means of rails and knapsacks." Tree-felling was apparently more prevalent than Morell realized, because Union participants in the battle remembered cutting trees at several locations along the entire length of his line. On Morell's extreme left, just south of the site's southwestern boundary, Alexander Apted of the 16th Michigan

recollected that his regiment's breastworks included "a few trees felled." In Martindale's center, an unidentified member of the 13th New York and Major William S. Tilton of the 22nd Massachusetts respectively wrote that their regiments "felled the trees" in the Boatswain Creek ravine and "strengthened our position by felling great pines and constructing of them and smaller trees a barricade." On Martindale's right, Marshall W. Chapin of the 4th Michigan stated that his unit "built a breast work" that contained "logs." Battle damage to the Watt plantation's woods, although less frequently mentioned by combatants than tree trimming and felling, was also extensive in some locations. Thomas S. Verdery of the 21st Georgia wrote that there was a "perfect storm of musket balls and shell" in his regiment's sector of the battlefield. He described the "pretty thick woods" in this location near the site's northeastern boundary as "literally cut down."⁵³

The broad cleared fields upon the crest of the Watt plateau were also damaged during the fighting. Mary Jane Haw vividly wrote that "where there had been green fields of waving corn and dun meadows dotted with haystacks, was a wide expanse of weeds dotted with patches of yellow clay." She wrote that there was a "sickening odor" that "pervaded the air." At the time of her visit, there had to be hundreds, if not thousands, of shallow graves of Union and Confederate troops on the property who were killed in battle or who had died of their wounds shortly thereafter. An unidentified Confederate soldier in the 28th Virginia stated that the bodies of Union soldiers were "piled in some places," and that the soldiers "buried some and put seven on one pile and covered them up," to keep them from smelling where they lay. Elsewhere, burials were individual but equally hasty. William White of the 18th Georgia wrote that a "narrow hole is dug, the soldier is rolled in his blanket and placed therein, a small portion of dirt is thrown upon him, and he is left to moulder away. No stone is reared to mark his resting place or tell how he fought, bled, and died."⁵⁴



Figure 1.21. Photograph attributed to John Reekie, showing unburied dead on the Gaines' Mill Battlefield in April 1865 (Library of Congress, <https://lcn.loc.gov/2011649976>).

Haw recalled that during her September 1862 visit that such graves were found “everywhere” as “we wandered over the fields” Many “open” Confederate graves from which the dead had been removed “were not more than two feet deep; and upon the corpses of the enemy they had simply thrown up mounds of earth.” From “some of these, the rain had washed away much of the earth, disclosing skulls and hands upon which the skin had dried away like a shriveled glove.” Into others, “wild animals had burrowed, scattering the bones around.” Even her grandmother’s lawn had become a cemetery. There were graves “in the corners of the yard,” a “long trench” bordering it, and “in the garden was another trench said to contain forty dead.”⁵⁵

As serious as this immediate battle damage to the Watt plantation’s woods and fields may have been, the Gaines’ Mill fighting apparently did not produce long-term changes in the overall pattern of cleared and forested areas in the sixty acres of Springfield included in the site’s current boundaries. Comparison of June 1862 Union topographical engineers’ maps of the area with postwar federal survey maps of the vicinity completed in 1865 shows that general patterns of field and forest remained the same throughout the war. In the 1865 maps, as in the 1862 maps, the Watt house stands upon an open plateau with the tree line of the woodland bordering Boatswain Creek and its ravine located approximately 200-300 yards to the north and northwest.⁵⁶

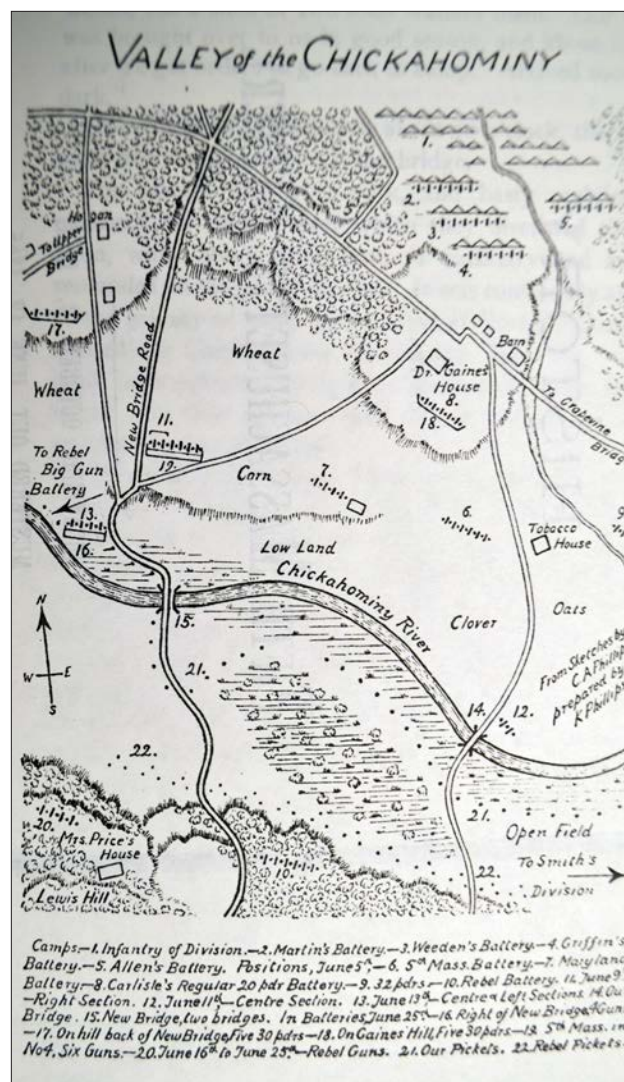
Powwhite

In the weeks leading up to the battle, the Union Army occupied Powwhite, as well as other local plantations. (Figure 1.22). During this time, Dr. Gaines remained at home with his family, including his wife Jane, daughter Fannie, and infant granddaughter Hattie. As many as eighty-six enslaved people also lived on the property at the time. The Gaines family was allowed to live in the house while the army camped on the plantation’s fields and occupied the outbuildings. According to Fannie, the army treated the family well during the occupation, and guards were posted at the gates of the yard to protect the family and their possessions.⁵⁷ Soldiers even paid the family for vegetables, milk, and flowers. But despite the officers’ deference to the family and their home, the lengthy occupation had significant impact on the landscape. Thousands of troops camped on the plantation for six weeks, damaging the fields, trampling crops, dismantling fences for firewood, and utilizing whatever resources were not carefully guarded at the house. Outbuildings, including the stables, grain houses, and carriage houses, were used as hospitals, their contents turned out into the yards.⁵⁸ Several gun batteries were installed to shell Confederate positions on the other side of the Chickahominy, and at least one earthen lunette was constructed south of the house. The house and property were in turn subjected to shelling from Confederate artillery. Owing to the time year, it is likely that the occupation and subsequent battle disrupted or destroyed most, if not all, of the farm’s yearly production.

George Watt testified that he visited Powhite after the battle and found the plantation “almost a ruin.” Dr. Gaines and his wife returned shortly after the battle and remained for about a year, but by the summer of 1863, they had moved to Richmond.⁵⁹ Dr. Gaines then advertised the farm for rent, saying “The land is good, and is well adapted to raising vegetables and grain. There is a small Dwelling and some out-houses on the place. It is within eight miles of Richmond, and is in the midst of the watermelon and potato region.”⁶⁰ In a request for pardon after the war, Dr. Gaines stated, “My loss in 1862 was assessed at over Seventy two thousand Dollars, and I have been subject to repeated losses ever since from both armies and have found it difficult to support my family.” Losses included destruction of the mill infrastructure, including a sawmill house, mill dam and flood gates at \$326.00, machinery for flour, saw, and corn mills at \$234.17, and the bridge at the mill \$50.00.

The area of the Gaines’ plantation east of Powhite Creek, within the current National Park Service boundary, was then open fields, with wooded and wet areas found lining the creek beds. As the Confederates advanced over this ground, the

Figure 1.22. Map of Dr. Gaines’ Powhite plantation during Union occupation in the weeks prior to the Battle of Gaines’ Mill. The depicted area is located just west of the current park boundary. (from *History of the Fifth Massachusetts Battery*, 1902).



Federals poured artillery and rifle fire into their ranks. Any field crops growing at the time would have been destroyed, and the soil pocked with craters. Damage would have been superficial and temporary, however, and within a few seasons would have largely been reversed.

Parsons Farm

There is little record of the damage to the Parsons farm, but impacts would have been like those found on the Watt farm. Structures would have likely been damaged or destroyed by artillery, and the fields marked with small craters. The wooded areas along Boatswain Creek along the southern boundary line were thinned by Union troops prior to the battle and damaged by projectiles during the battle. Account have yet to be discovered indicating the location of the Parsons family during the battle or if they returned afterwards, but it is probable that the farm was never restored to productive use prior to its 1868 sale to George Watt and others.



Cultural Landscape Report

Richmond National Battlefield Park Mechanicsville, Virginia

Gaines' Mill Battlefield 1865 Period Plan



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

1. Library of Congress, Michler and Michie, Richmond 1862-1865 Map
2. United States Geological Survey LiDAR, 2014
3. Gaines' Mill Cultural Landscape Report and Archeological Survey, 2000
4. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts

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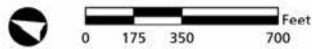
Kelsey Little and John Hammond, ArcGIS Pro 3.2, 2024

LEGEND

	Study Boundary		River
	Open Ground		Road
	Wetland		Stream/Creek
	Agricultural Field		Bridge
	Woods		Fence
	Building		Orchard Tree
	Ruin		

NOTES

1. Projection: NAD 1983 (2011) UTM Zone 18N
2. Contour Interval = 5'
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location
4. The pattern of roadways seen in this map are interpreted from the Richmond 1862-1865 Map, Michler and Michie
5. The pattern of hydrography seen in this map are interpreted from a combination of current topography and the historic map listed in the sources
6. Last exported: 11/13/2024 3:22 PM



RECONSTRUCTION AND COMMEMORATION: 1865–1932

The fighting upon agricultural properties like Springfield and Powhite, combined with the social changes brought about by the war itself and the end of slavery, caused a fundamental shift in the operation of local farms. During the intervening years between the battles of 1862 and the fighting that took place over the same land in 1864, little productive farming is likely to have occurred, where fields and farming infrastructure were so heavily damaged and the markets so fundamentally disrupted. Between 1862 and 1865, it would not have been unusual to encounter unburied or partially buried bodies throughout this bleak landscape. After the war, there was little money or other resources to repair the damage and resume agricultural production. As the losing side, Southerners had to declare loyalty to the federal government before receiving any monetary compensation for damage and lost property. And with the end of slavery, labor suddenly became expensive with freedmen now entitled to compensation for their labor. Plantation owners like the Watts and Gaineses, who had enjoyed relative wealth before the war, found themselves struggling financially and in the decades that followed, and many declined into real poverty. Meanwhile, those formerly enslaved became free, but without land and assets to earn a living. Many of these African Americans settled on or near the same farms where they had been formerly enslaved, subsisting as sharecroppers, tenant farmers or wage laborers.

SPRINGFIELD

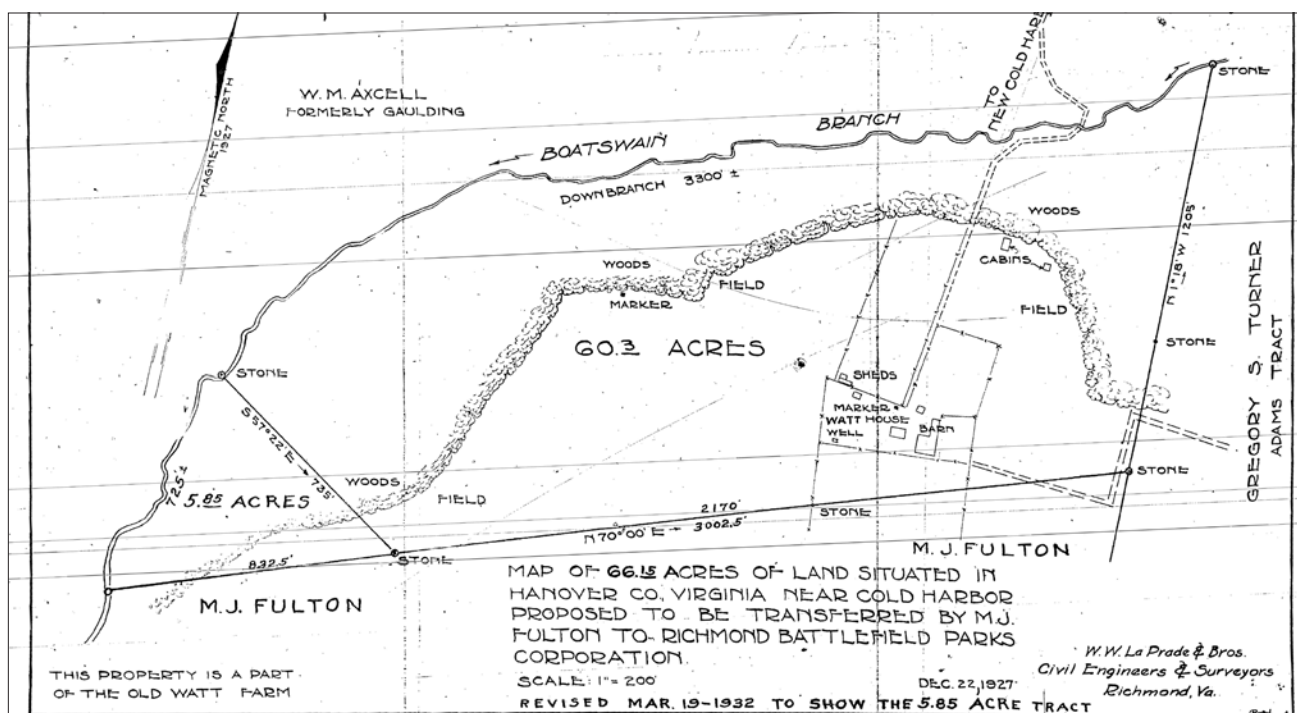
When Sarah Watt died in 1863, her son George inherited 360 acres of Springfield, including the family home. Only one year prior to this, on July 17, 1862 George advertised in the Richmond newspaper cattle and farm equipment for sale ‘... because of the breaking up of my mother’s estate by the Friday’s battle on Boatswain Swamp, near Gaines’ Mill in Hanover County.’⁶¹ It does not appear that George Watt ever returned to Springfield to manage the plantation, and for approximately the next seventy years, he and several successive owners operated the property as a tenant farm. Born in 1815, George Watt served as an apprentice to his brother-in-law, John Haw, after whom the community and Civil War battle Haw’s Shop are named. Haw’s businesses included house construction, blacksmithing, manufacture of various machines, and a foundry. By age twenty-five, Watt was manufacturing plows in Alabama and in 1842 received his first of more than twenty patents for inventions and improvements to agricultural implements. He returned to Virginia in 1846 and established a business in Richmond manufacturing and selling agricultural tools and equipment. He continued to live in Richmond after the war.

After the war, beginning in 1868, George added to his holdings, acquiring more than sixty-five acres of the adjacent Parsons farm, as well as two acres from Joseph Adams and his wife, and more than forty acres from George P. Haw. He made

some material improvements, as indicated by the construction of a building in 1874 with an assessed value of \$50 on the Parsons farm property. This building was likely a practical structure, not a dwelling. By comparison, the Watt house was assessed at \$600 at this time, and \$1,000 a decade later.⁶²

George Watt evidently died in 1885, as the property thereafter is referred to as his estate. George's heirs continued to operate Springfield as a tenant farm into the twentieth century. In February of 1902, George Watt (Jr.) deeded 65¼ acres of the former Parsons farm to Cleora Martin, divesting himself of this parcel out of assembled land holdings of approximately 465 acres. No building was assessed on the parcel conveyed from George Watt Jr. to Cleora Martin. In November of 1906, George Watt et. al. sold the remainder of the Watt Farm to Archer A. McGhee and his wife, Sarah.⁶³ The farm was no longer referred to as "Springfield" following this deed. Four years later, McGhee sold the 399¼ acre "Watt Farm" tract to Dr. Frederick E. White, who sold it seven years later to Minitree J. Fulton and his wife in February of 1917.⁶⁴ The Fulton's subdivided and sold a 60.30-acre parcel in 1928, containing the former Watt dwelling house, farmyard and center point of the desperate battle, to the recently established Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation (Figure 1.23). In the 1928 conveyance, the Fulton's reserved a legal right-of-way for ingress and egress through the 60.3-acre parcel, providing access to the balance of the Fulton's remaining lands that lay to the south. The subdivision of this parcel, separating it from the larger farm, superimposed a new 2,170-foot-long boundary line immediately south of the former Watt house. This abstract legal boundary line was soon made tangible with the installation of a fence, and following the fence, young trees began growing along it that would in time block the expansive southern views of the Chickahominy floodplain and the path of the

Figure 1.23. "Map of 66.15 Acres of Land Situated in Hanover County near Cold Harbor," survey by W.W. Laprade & Bros., Dec. 1927. This drawing provides reliable documentation locating farm buildings, roads and the treeline during the early 20th century (RICH Archives).



1862 Union retreat.

The Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation, organized in 1927 with the purpose of purchasing and preserving Civil War forts and battlefields in the Richmond area, erected markers at key locations on the 60.3-acre former Watt property, including the Watt house and the presumed location where Hood's attack broke through the Union line. The corporation had ambitious preservation plans calling for conversion of the Watt house to a museum where a map of the battlefield would be displayed, yet these plans were never realized. In 1930 the corporation's combined preserved battlefield sites were added to Richmond's May "Garden Week" itinerary. To make the sites ready for inspection, the private corporation solicited "... funds for this financing from every loyal Virginian and Southerner."⁶⁵ The corporation conveyed the site and chain of other Richmond battlefield properties to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1932, making Richmond Battlefield State Park the first state park in Virginia.⁶⁶

POWHITE

It is unclear if Dr. Gaines returned to spend much time at Powhite between the end of the Civil War and his death in 1876, but by the 1870s, he appears to have begun divesting himself of land.⁶⁷ A newspaper notice of July 3, 1868 invites the public to a Fourth of July Festival at Pohite, the proceeds to benefit the restoration of Beulah Church, which had burned in 1864.⁶⁸ In 1871, Gaines placed 320 acres into a trust for his daughter. This land, spanning the upland between Powhite and Boatswain Creeks, would eventually become part of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield Unit of Richmond National Battlefield Park.⁶⁹

Fannie held this land for fifteen years but does not appear to have developed or utilized it beyond farming. In 1895, she sold the property to E.C. Gaulding, who established a dwelling and farm on the property and lived on the 320-acre parcel for thirty years.⁷⁰ This marks the first time the property was developed as an independent self-sustaining farm, rather than as an acreage of the Powhite plantation. The occupation and use of this property by the Gaulding's required an access road that did not approach from the west through Powhite itself. The new road instead intersected with the Watt House Road, passing through the Parsons farm property and accessing Gaulding's farm from the northeast.

In 1925, Gaulding sold the farm to William Axsell, who operated a dairy there for the next two decades.⁷¹ A description of the farm included in an auction notice after Axsell died described a "comfortable 9-room dwelling" and a "60-cow dairy barn with large tile silo, milk cooler house, 270-foot deep well, electric power and lights, large horse barn, implement sheds, gasoline pumps, storage tanks, etc." The farm acreage was said to have been in high state of cultivation of both rolling and flat low land (Figures 1.24 and 1.25).⁷²

Figure 1.24. (Below) Newspaper advertisement for William Axsell's dairy farm, for sale in the late 1940s following his death. (RICH Archives).

Figure 1.25. (Right) 20th-century photograph of the Axsell farm land. (RICH Archives).



Auction Sale
of the
AXSELL DAIRY FARM

We offer for sale at public auction on the premises this fine dairy farm of 245 acres.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29th, 3 P. M.



COMFORTABLE, 9-ROOM DWELLING
In excellent condition, with bath and running water and electric lights. 2 tenant houses, chicken houses and other necessary outbuildings.



60-COW DAIRY BARN
with large tile silo, cooler house, 270-foot well, electric power and lights, large horse barn, implement sheds, gasoline pumps, storage tanks, etc. Acreage is in high state of cultivation of both rolling and flat low land.

IMMEDIATE POSSESSION OF PROPERTY
This was the home of the late William Axsell and is offered for sale to close the estate. Sale is subject to confirmation, which will be made on the premises after the sale.

12 Miles from Richmond, out Route 360 to Mechanicsville, turn right on Route 156 and follow Sale Signs.
H. CARTER REDD,
ANDREW J. ELLIS, Attorneys of Owners
TERMS: W. HUGH OWNBY, Auctioneer

PARSONS FARM

In 1868, George Watt purchased 65 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of land from "Philips and others." Later, when George Watt Jr. sold the property, the deed excluded the right-of-way for the Watt House Road as well as a one-eighth-acre "Parsons or Philips" graveyard.⁷³ In the following years, George Watt leased his assembled parcels to various tenants, managing the property from Richmond. It is unknown how he utilized or deployed the sixty-five-acre Parsons land, other than as an extension of the main farm south of Boatswain Creek. Aside from a small utility structure erected in 1874, there is no record of a dwelling or other significant development on the former Parsons land through the end of the 19th century.

In 1902, George Watt Jr., his siblings, and their spouses sold the 65 $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre Parsons tract to Cleora Martin. This parcel was added to 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres that Martin had purchased previously from Annie E. Coleman in 1901, creating a 103 $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre parcel and reassembling what had once been the core of the Parsons farm. The 103 $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre parcel would remain intact through several owners for more than fifty years. In the decade after Ms. Martin acquired her land, a farmstead was established consisting of a dwelling house, smoke house, hog house, barn, and well, as depicted on a 1912 survey. A second dwelling with a well was located at the very north end of the property near where the Watt House Road meets Cold Harbor Road (Route 156). There is no indication on the survey where the small Parsons/Philips graveyard was located.

In 1912 Cleora Martin sold her 103 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres to the Rappahannock Land and Development Corporation, which presumably purchased the land to facilitate the operation of the Richmond & Rappahannock River Railway (Figure 1.26).⁷⁴ The

development company may have intended to develop the land as a tourist attraction related to the battlefield or were perhaps speculating in future residential development alongside the railroad line. Whatever their intentions, no development was undertaken beyond the construction and short-lived railroad itself. After the railroad failed, the Rappahannock Land and Development Corp. disposed of the property, selling the full parcel, minus the railroad right-of-way, to R.T. Carleton in 1922, who sold it two years later to Irving L. Gaulding.⁷⁵

In the early twentieth century, the Richmond & Rappahannock River Railway (R&R) constructed a sixteen-mile light railroad running from the eastern edge of Richmond out toward the York River. The railroad traversed the Gaines' Mill Battlefield site, following the north bank of Boatswain Creek.

After commencement of railroad operations in 1914, the company promoted its service in a brochure (Figures 1.27 through 1.29). A small map illustration showed

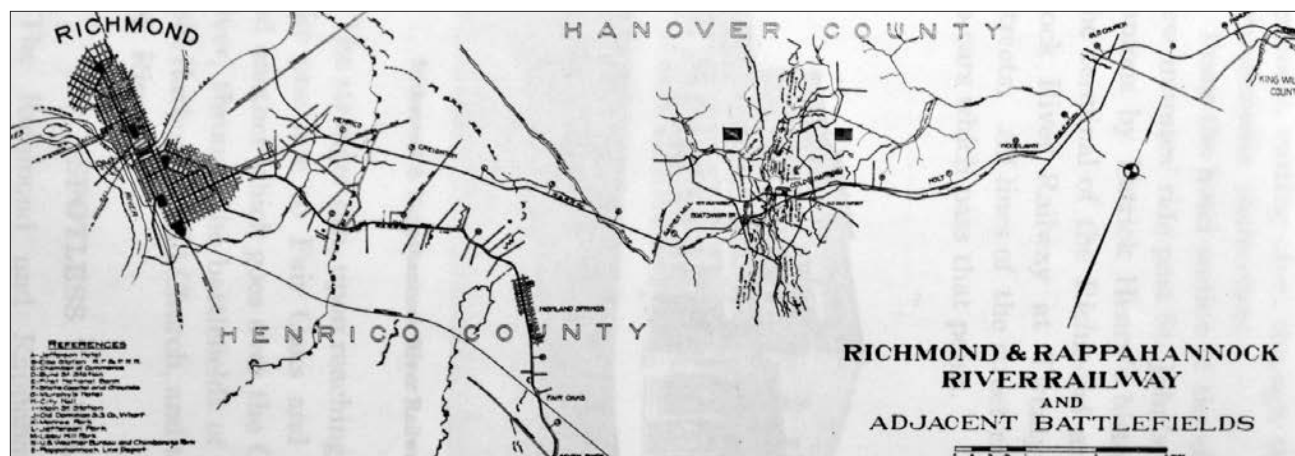


Figure 1.27. (Above) A map illustrating the R&R routes from the Richmond terminal on P. Street to the battlefields in the Henrico and Hanover areas, ca. 1915.

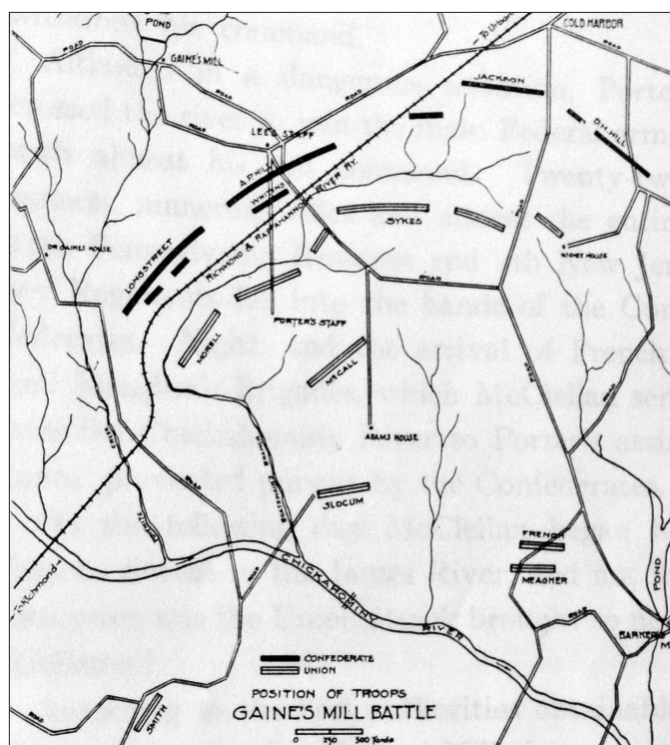


Figure 1.29. (Right) Map of the Richmond & Rappahannock River Railway track that traveled through the Gaines' Mill Unit, 1915.

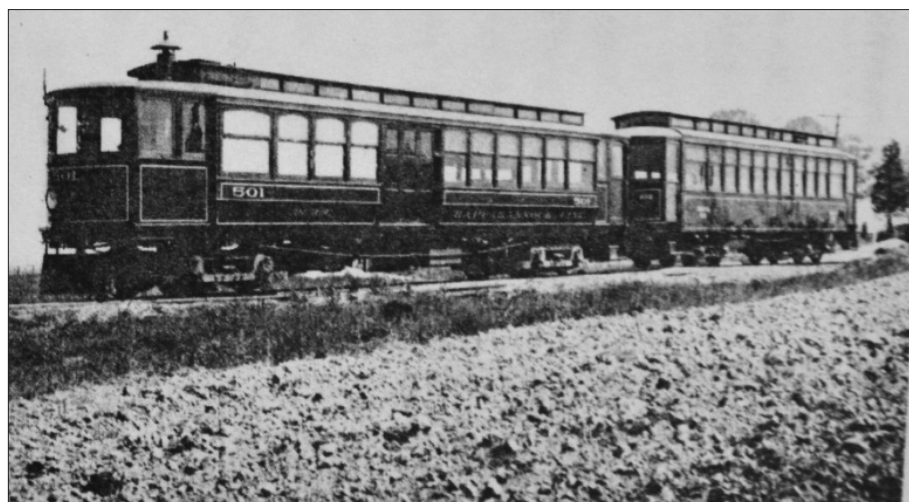
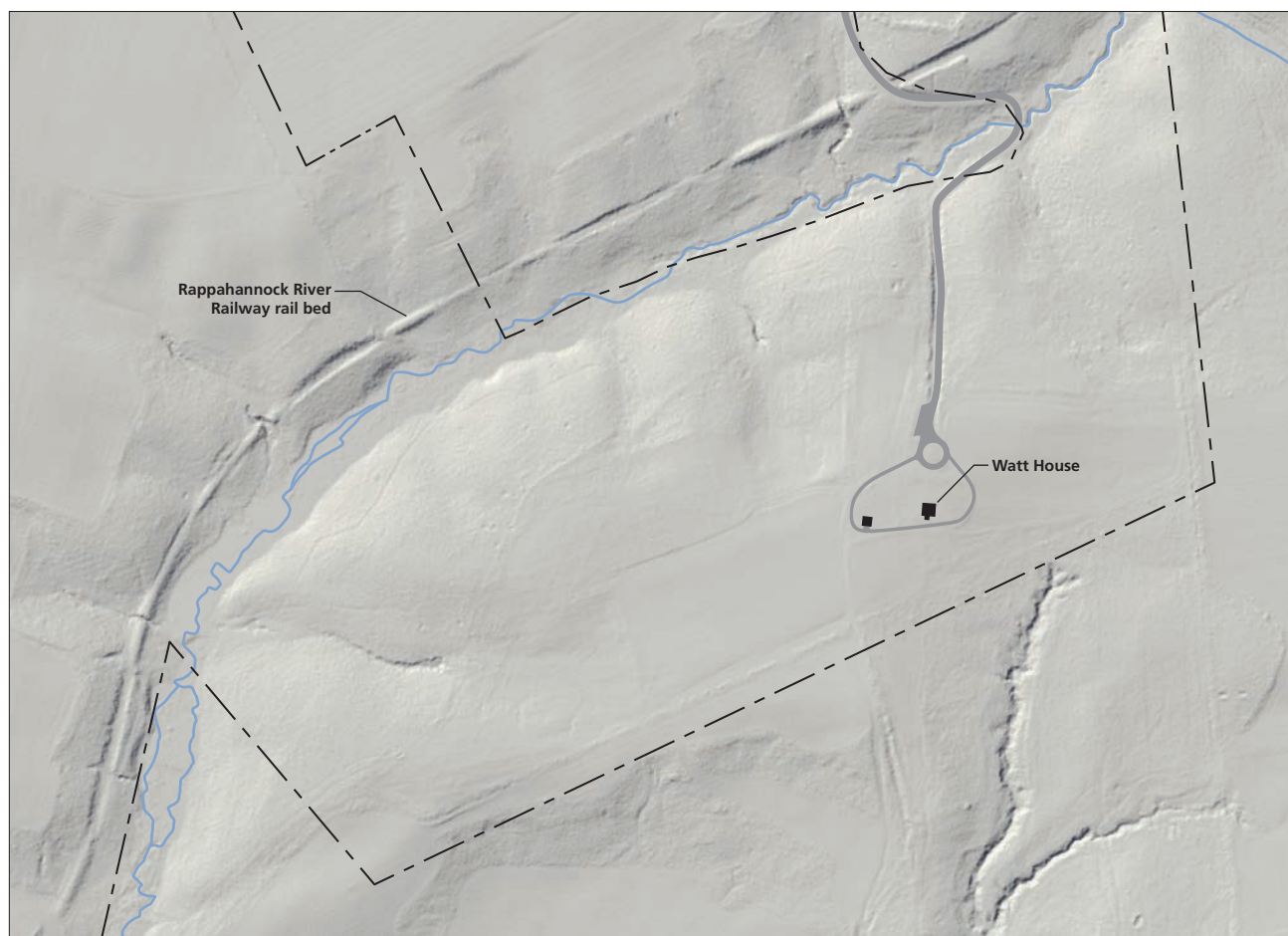


Figure 1.28. (Right) Richmond & Rappahannock River Railway train cars, ca. 1915.

the initial alignment extending from the Richmond terminal on P Street. From there, the line ran east-northeast out of the city to the Pamunkey River, with additional track to be added later connecting as far as the Rappahannock River. Access to Civil War battlefield sites was one of the primary attractions mentioned in the brochure, and a promotional map was provided to riders showing the orientation of the battlefield and the locations of the opposing forces. The stations of Gaines' Mill and Boatswain Branch may have been located on the battlefield property, although no surface evidence of these railroad features remains visible (Figure 1.30).⁷⁶

The railroad was not able to fulfill its vision, suffering from inadequate investment and low rider and freight volumes. The venture had the misfortune of poor timing. The startup of the company roughly coincided with the successful production and mass marketing of the Ford Model T (1908-1927); an inexpensive personal automobile that would lead to demand for improved rural roads throughout Virginia and the nation. Thus, the planned extension of the rail line from the Pamunkey River to the Rappahannock never materialized, leaving only sixteen of the planned twenty-seven miles complete. In 1917, after less than five years, the railroad folded, and while the tracks were later removed, the engineered embankment for the rail bed along Boatswain Creek remains present today.

Figure 1.30. Hill shade model based on LiDAR elevation data showing the Richmond and Rappahannock River Railway rail bed running along Boatswain Creek (OCLP).



FREEMAN MARKERS

Prominent southern Civil War historian, journalist, and Robert E. Lee and George Washington biographer Douglass Southall Freeman (1886-1953) and architectural engineer J. Ambler Johnston (1885-1974) together frequented Richmond area battlefields and fortifications in the early twentieth century (Figure 1.31). Both men were sons of Confederate veterans and over time worked to persuade the Richmond Rotary Club to adopt a plan to identify and mark important local Civil War sites. Freeman, Johnston and others formed the Battlefield Markers Association in 1921 to “identify points of interest on various battle fields of Virginia and to place thereon suitable markers.” The association raised \$10,000 and placed fifty-nine markers. Each marker consists of a cast iron plate set with bas-relief text on a concrete capstone atop a base made of mortared granite blocks. Considering the composition of brief texts spanning the collection of fifty-nine tablets, both in editorial choices highlighting Confederate victories, stylistic emphasis and phrasing suggest an oblique bias toward the Confederate point of view. The Richmond Stove Works donated the cast iron plate, the Economy Concrete Company donated the capstones, and the Boscobel Quarries donated the granite blocks.⁷⁷ One of Freeman’s waypoints was the Gaines’ Mill battlefield for the Labor Day 1921 tour of the Richmond battlefields. Freeman gave lectures on Civil War events that occurred in the Richmond area for a group of Rotary Club members and veterans from the Confederate Soldiers’ Home in Richmond.⁷⁸ In 1925, two markers were placed at the Gaines’ Mill Battlefield (Figure 1.32). Freeman Marker #7 “The Watt House,” was placed at the north side of the Watt house, at that time still held in private ownership, commemorating the house and battlefield generally. Freeman Marker #8, “Whiting’s Advance,” placed well northwest of the Watt house near the edge of the forested Boatswain Creek ravine, marked the approximate location where the Union line was breached by Confederate troops during the battle.

Figure 1.31. Douglas Southall Freeman (standing in front of the map) lecturing near the Watt House at Gaines’ Mill, 1921.

The effort by the Battlefield Markers Association was followed by a program of the Commonwealth of Virginia to place roadside historical markers to commemorate



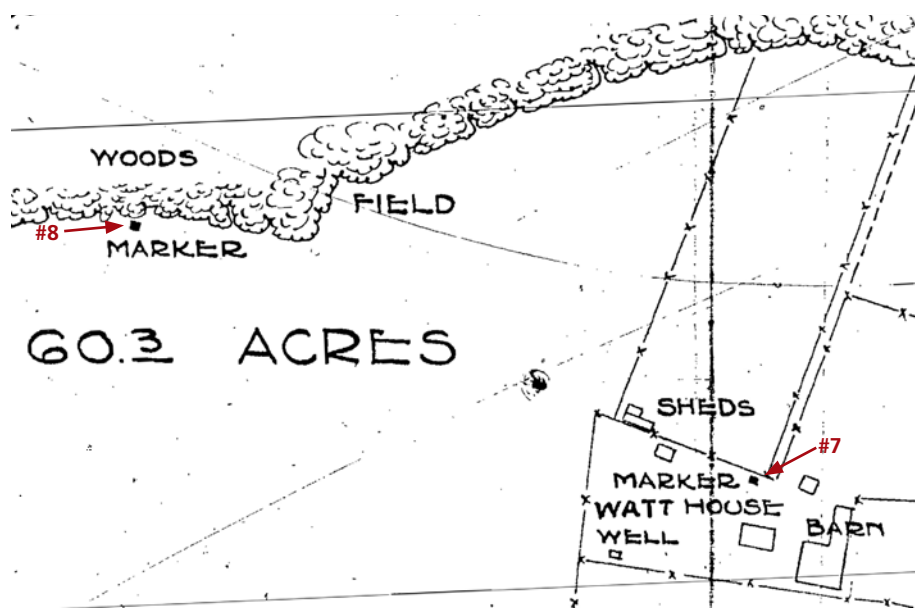


Figure 1.32. Detail from the 1927 Laprade survey of the Watt property showing the location of two Freeman Markers (indicated in red).

historic locations statewide. Several of these state markers were installed along U.S. Route 1 in 1927, and by 1930, the program had grown to include 691 markers placed throughout Virginia. Initially administered by the Conservation and Economic Development Commission, the program was focused on military events and colonial sites. In 1932, the commission placed marker PA-25 in the lawn at the north side of the Watt house to commemorate the Battle of Gaines' Mill.

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

During the early twentieth century, the Watt farm property was documented in several photographs showing the configuration and condition of the house, as well as some details of the farmyard and outlying landscape. In the photographs, taken c. 1904, 1920, and the early 1930s, the house appears to be in poor condition, with weathered, unpainted siding and peeling paint on the brick foundation. Two of the three first-floor doors have no steps providing access, indicating that these doorways were long unused. Only the door on the south façade appears to have been used regularly. A covered porch formerly on the south façade in 1904 is shown missing its roof by 1920, replaced with a simple wood deck extending the length of the house. Outbuildings visible in the photos also appear to be old and careworn, with evidence of piecemeal repairs.

The earliest photo, believed to have been taken in 1904, shows the immediate vicinity of the house and its north and east elevations (Figure 1.33). The house appears to have retained its basic nineteenth-century configuration. The farmyard is shown separated from a harvested field of corn by a post and rail fence that is four rails high in some places and three rails high in others. None of the tall hardwood trees visible in the photograph appear to be thriving. It is possible that some of these trees may have survived the battle and suffered damage owing to the heavy

Figure 1.33. Photograph of the Watt house ca. late 1904 looking southwest, showing the east facade of the house, as well as the barn structure depicted on the 1937 survey drawing to the east or northeast of the house. (RICH Archives. Original: "Richmond in By-Gone Days," accessed from the Library of Virginia).



bombardment of 1862. These trees appear to be primarily black locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and may indicate the locations of the locust trees that once “embowered the house” as remembered by Mary Jane Haw in her eyewitness account. However not all the trees seen in the c. 1904 photograph appear to be of sufficient size to date from the time of the battle. Other vegetation is also seen in the c. 1904 photograph. A vine is shown growing on the fence, a cedar tree is located immediately south of the house, and several fruit trees, probably apple or peach, are located south of the house.⁷⁹

By 1920, during the ownership of the Fulton’s, the former Watt farmyard appears better kept, and largely cleared of vegetation, with a few larger trees around the house. A large tree that appears to be a catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*) is seen east of the house and the locusts present in the 1904 photograph appear to have been removed, as does the rail fence. There is a dense tree line in the background of the photograph. There appears to be a raised wood platform under a tree in the yard to the right of the house. A wooden outbuilding stands in the yard northwest of the house.

The house and yard appear largely unchanged ten years later in a series of photos taken in 1930 and 1931 during the ownership of the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation. In one photograph, one of the Freeman Markers, installed in 1925, is visible placed upon its stone base in the yard north of the house, and a large outbuilding with wood siding directly east of the house is visible in another (Figures 1.34 through 1.36). The one-story, gable roofed outbuilding appears to have at least two shed-roofed additions—one to the west and the other to the north. The roof material is patchwork and difficult to assess.⁸⁰ Mature trees are seen growing in the front yard and in the background.

Photographs taken in 1931 shows the character of the Watt house yard and surrounding landscape (Figures 1.37 through 1.40). These photos show mature trees

close to the house in an enclosed yard otherwise well covered in turf. Beyond the farmyard, the landscape is divided by extensive post-and-wire fencing into what are likely pasture enclosures or crop or hay fields. Scrubby emergent vegetation is seen growing along some of the fence lines, and the tree line is visible beyond the fields in the background.

An oblique aerial photograph believed to have been taken in the late-1930s following the Virginia state acquisition of the former Watt property, clearly shows a struggling young orchard (Figure 1.41). Judging by the size of the individual tree specimens and the incomplete quality of the tree rows, this orchard was likely planted prior to 1932, during the tenure of the private Richmond Battlefield Parks

Figure 1.34. Watt House east and north elevations, ca. 1930, looking southwest. Note evidence of the south facing porch platform to the left, spanning the width of the building (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.35. Watt House south and east elevations, with former south-facing porch, ca. 1930, looking northwest. Freeman marker #7 is seen to the right (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.36. Watt House south and east elevations, with former south-facing porch, ca. 1930, looking northwest. Freeman marker #7 is seen to the right (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.37. Watt House west elevation and front yard, ca. 1931, looking east. Note the outbuildings on the lower left portion of the photograph (RICH Archives).



Corporation, perhaps to accompany the placement of Freeman Marker #8 “Whiting’s Advance” installed on site interpreting the Confederate breakthrough. The location for the orchard seen in the photograph is generally consistent with both Union and Confederate eyewitness accounts analyzed and presented by Clifford R. Dickenson in his 1990 “Historical Landscape Study: Terrain of Gaines’ Mill Battlefield.” The sources cited by Dickenson were widely known, as the orchard was remarked upon in multiple eyewitness accounts and these accounts were certainly available for the examination of the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation. It is not known if the trees shown in the late-1930s aerial photograph are apple or peach trees.

From 1927–1932, Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation began to acquire tracts in the Richmond area associated with the Civil War. In 1932, the Virginia Conservation Commission acquired the former Watt property from the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation. Together with other battlefield parcels, the Gaines’ Mill property became part of Virginia’s first state park.



Figure 1.38. Watt House yard, ca. 1931, looking north (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.39. Watt House yard, ca. 1931, looking northeast, showing wire fencing (RICH Archives).

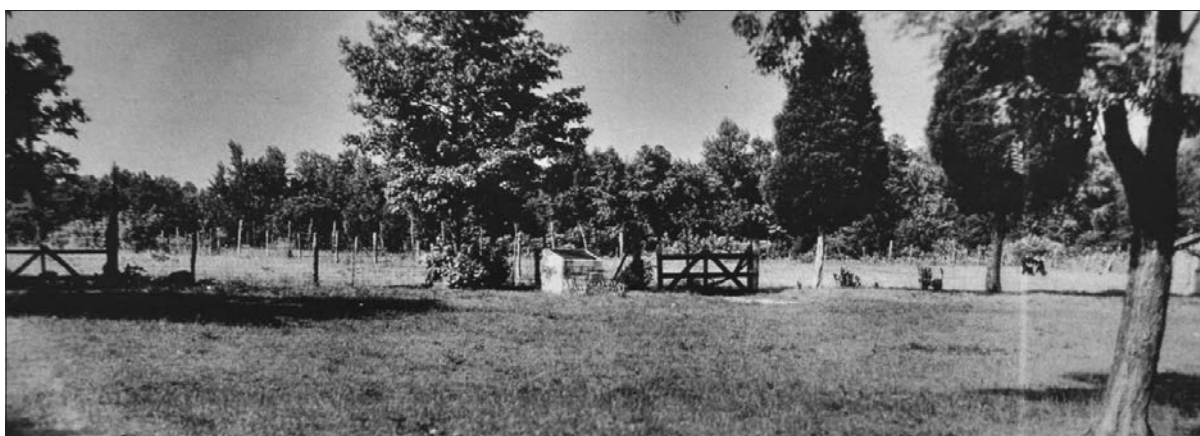


Figure 1.40. Watt House yard, ca. 1931, looking northeast. Note the location of the Freeman marker at the center of the image. Also note the relatively small size of the Virginia redcedar (RICH Archives).

By this time, the woodland on the northern half of the property had encroached closer to the Watt house than woodland extents during the Civil War, although the grass-covered fields to the east and west remained open and clear of trees and shrubs. Some fields on the property continued to be cultivated by tenants, who likely grew crops typical of the Springfield-era, such as corn or potatoes. Extensive post-and-wire fencing with sets of wooden gates were constructed to enclose the farmyard surrounding the Watt house, as well as the eastern yard, and worn earthen foot paths connected the yards and structures throughout the property. The Richmond & Rappahannock River Railway had ceased operation in 1917, but the engineered railbed built north of Boatswain Creek remained visible.

The Watt Farm entrance road, built c. 1864, continued to serve as the primary access road to the property, but the subordinate network of secondary farm roads was no longer visible by 1932. The road connecting the Watt and Adams properties was still in use, although it ended once it reached just south of the Watt house instead of continuing west through the tract. Most of the antebellum period structures were no longer present on the property by 1932, except for the Watt house, the yard well, and the field cabins to the northeast. Newer structures included a large barn immediately east of the Watt house, several small sheds placed around the front yard of the house, and two Freeman markers. The Watt house remained relatively unchanged, except for the house's roof and dormers, which had been covered with hexagon-shaped wooden shingles.

Through most of the twentieth century, Civil War commemoration efforts were focused on the Watt farm property, while the properties west and north of Boatswain Creek remained actively used for agriculture. By the 1930s, the large parcel that had once been part of Dr. Gaines' Powhite became home to the Axsell dairy farm. A farmstead was located roughly in the center of the property, containing a two-story house and a large dairy barn with a silo, along with other agricultural outbuildings. The property remained wooded along portions of its boundaries, particularly within the creek bottoms of Powhite and Boatswain Creeks, but the Axsell acreage was otherwise free of trees, with over two hundred acres under cultivation for corn and small grains, hay, or pasture. The primary farm road entered the Axsell property in the northeast corner and traveled west before taking a right-angle turn to the left and extending along the centerline of the open fields. South of the Axsell farmstead, the farm lane continued, providing access to the southern fields that lay close by the river. Another road extended westward from the farmstead, crossing Powhite Creek and into the former Powhite estate that once belonged to Dr. Gaines. This road segment was a remnant of the Civil-War-period route connecting Dr. Gaines' plantation with his eastern fields.

North of the Watt property, the former Parsons farm was then owned by Irving L. Gaulding, the son of E.C. Gaulding (Figure 1.42). Landscape conditions at the time are well documented in aerial photos from the late 1930s, but the resolution



Figure 1.41. Oblique aerial photograph c. late 1930s. This image documents the presence of an orchard highlighted by the authors within a dashed circle. Judging by the size of the trees and tree mortality as evidenced by the incomplete rows, this orchard planting occurred well before the 1932 acquisition of the property by the Commonwealth of Virginia (US Army Air Corps, RICH Archives).



Figure 1.42. Oblique aerial photograph c. late 1930s. This photograph documents longstanding patterns of field and forest on present both sides of Boatswain Creek during the early 20th century (US Army Air Corps, RICH Archives).

of the photos makes it difficult to discern specific details. It appears that there was a residence and barn in the same location that such structures were indicated on the 1912 survey of the property. It is likely that Mr. Gaulding's house was the same dwelling previously occupied by Cleora Martin, constructed around the turn of the twentieth century. Other aspects of the landscape, including field and forest patterns and general circulation, also appear to be largely unchanged from the 1912 survey.



Cultural Landscape Report

Richmond National
Battlefield Park
Mechanicsville, Virginia

Gaines' Mill Battlefield
1932 Period Plan



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

- 1. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Aerial Photograph, 1936
- 2. United States Geological Survey LiDAR, 2014
- 3. Gaines' Mill Cultural Landscape Report and Archeological Survey, 2000
- 4. Oblique Aerial Photo, Army Air Corps, 1930
- 5. Property Survey, WW La Prade & Brothers Civil Engineers and Surveyors, 1927
- 6. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts

DRAWN BY

Kelsey Little and John Hammond, ArcGIS Pro 3.2, 2024

LEGEND

	CLI Boundary		Road
	Open Ground		Stream/Creek
	Agricultural Field		Railroad
	Wetland		Fence
	Woods		Marker
	Building		Orchard Tree
	River		

NOTES

- 1. Projection: NAD 1983 (2011) UTM Zone 18N
- 2. Contour Interval = 5'
- 3. All features shown in approximate scale and location
- 4. The pattern of roadways seen in this map are interpreted from the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Aerial Photograph, 1936
- 5. The pattern of hydrography seen in this map are interpreted from a combination of current topography and aerial imagery listed in the sources
- 6. Last exported: 11/13/2024 3:21 PM



RICHMONT NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK: 1932–PRESENT

Between 1932 and 1944, the former Watt house tract became part of the multi-site Richmond State Battlefield Park. Following Franklin Delano Roosevelt's election and 1933 inauguration as the 37th President of the United States, resources of new federal Depression-era relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) became directed at the development and improvement of state park facilities nationwide. On September 29th of 1934, the *Richmond News Leader* reported that National Park Service Director Arno B. Cammerer, and Associate Director Conrad Wirth would join state conservation commissioner William Carson the following day at Fort Harrison to observe the anniversary of the two-day battle for Fort Harrison, but to also celebrate the successful effect of fourteen months of work by the CCC program upon the Richmond Battlefield Park. The newspaper went on to report that among the honored guests in attendance would be Captain John Cunningham, the "only surviving officer of the Confederate artillery which took part in the conflict at Fort Gilmer nearby."⁸¹ During the local operations of the CCC program the state began to transition the former Watt property from a neglected tenant farm to a historic site. Doing so involved making significant repairs to the historic dwelling, as well as pursuing the general clean-up of the farmyard and fields. Deteriorated and unrepairable outbuildings were removed, broken fencing was repaired and accumulated debris were removed. Notable removals included the dilapidated large shed or barn structure that had formerly lain directly east of the house. It is unknown whether any Civil War-era structures were removed in the process.

Comparison of photographs taken in 1931 and 1934 reveal several alterations and repairs made to the house during the first years of state ownership. The uncovered porch on the south side of the house extending the length of the façade became replaced with a smaller porch and stairs providing access to the south facing door. A similar small porch or stoop was constructed at the north door, marking the first time in many years that the door was accessible. Other evident changes include the addition of shutters to the first and second story windows, new screen doors on the north and probably the south doors, and new gutters at the eaves. The brick foundation and window trim appear to have been repainted, and there may have been repairs made to the house's siding (Figures 1.43 through 1.45).

During the mid-1930s when the National Park Service was busy with its role providing technical support to the Civilian Conservation Corps at work on the Virginia State Richmond Battlefield Park, the Federal Surplus Relief Administration made available \$25 million in funding for the federal acquisition of underutilized or unproductive land. Under the rubric of land-use economics, this program initially hoped to combat Depression-era poverty by paying landowners to leave damaged or infertile "submarginal" lands that could not support subsistence agriculture. Twenty percent of these funds, \$5 million, however were set

aside for acquisition of lands for recreational use. Associate Director Wirth, the National Park Service administrator of the agency's participation in the CCC program soon found himself with the additional responsibility of developing a new National Park Service program for acquiring submarginal land appropriate for park development. By early 1935 Wirth and his team had drafted plans for "submarginal" land acquisitions proposed as additions to the state-led Richmond Battlefield Park.⁸² Only a year later, on March 2, 1936, an act of Congress, fully supported locally by the Virginia House of Delegates, authorized the establishment of Richmond National Battlefield Park. Additional master planning for the future national battlefield park began soon thereafter.

With the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), operating under the technical guidance of the National Park Service, a program of local Emergency Conservation Work" (ECW) was programmed in support of the Virginia's Richmond Battlefield Park, including the state-owned Gaines' Mill Battlefield site. These projects included improvements to Watt House Road and construction of a new bridle trail intended as part of a larger bridle trail system connecting Gaines' Mill to Cold Harbor and other battlefield sites. A drawing entitled "Richmond Battlefield Park Horse Trails for Proposed and Immediate Construction – Cold Harbor Battlefield" was developed by the Branch of Plans and Designs Office of the National Park Service and approved in 1937 (Figures 1.46 through 1.48). This drawing shows the route of bridle trails intended to provide linkage for sites associated with the Civil War campaigns of 1862 and 1864. The legend delineates routes for immediate construction and for proposed future development. The Gaines' Mill portion is shown as proposed for immediate construction. The plan appears as a broadly elliptical loop roughly following the boundaries of the Gaines' Mill property. A notation on the plan legend, "where the trail crosses a line of earthworks, use has been made of an existing break in them," indicates a concern for protecting the site's earthworks.⁸³

An excerpt from the 1939 Richmond National Battlefield Park Master Plan documented the completion of the trail, noting, "A system of bridle trails has been built which circles the Watt house and the Cold Harbor tracts. One of the park's neighbors has opened a riding stable and horsemen are now frequently seen riding through the park." The riding stable was delineated on an earlier 1937 plan approximately one-half mile west of Cold Harbor (approximately one mile from Gaines' Mill) and was identified as the "starting point of trails."⁸⁴

As National Park Service planning proceeded, tangible establishment of the Richmond National Battlefield Park would take time, requiring the legal transfer of existing state lands into federal ownership. As storm clouds of war gathered in Europe in 1939 and following the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, there became less focus on developing new parks as young men left the agency for military service and the administration of the national parks departed



Figure 1.43. The Watt House west and south elevations, 1934 (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.44. Watt House east elevation, 1936 (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.45. Watt House and Gaines' Mill state historical marker, 1941 (RICH Archives).

Washington, D.C. for Chicago, Illinois. Owing to these events and inescapable wartime priorities, the deed conveying the 60.3-acre former Watt property to the United States of America, along with three other parcels was not signed by the Virginia Conservation Commission until December 6, 1943, seven years following authorization. These deeds were accepted by the federal government on July 14, 1944 as Allied forces then battled Germany for control of Normandy in western France. The persistent austerity of wartime budgets, continuing through the early 1950s given the implementation of the Marshall Plan to rebuild war torn Europe, and the onset of a new war on the Korean peninsula between 1950 and 1953 meant that funds would remain scarce for national park development until the late 1950s.

MISSION 66

Richmond National Battlefield Park was authorized by Congress in 1936 and in 1943, the Commonwealth of Virginia transferred the Watt property to the United States Department of Interior for development and interpretation by the National Park Service.⁸⁵ Property improvements undertaken following the transfer were consistent with the overall planning concepts initiated by the state during the 1930s. In the 1950s, the National Park Service undertook several restoration and visitor facility projects intending to improve the site entrance and the landscape immediately adjacent to the Watt house. This work were funded through the National Park Service MISSION 66 program, a service-wide program of investment in infrastructure intending to update services, improve conditions, preserve historic resources, and enhance visitor experience in national park in time to mark the observance of the service's fifty-year anniversary in 1966. The National Park Service MISSION 66 program also coincided with the centennial observance of the Civil War, a timeframe when increased visitation was anticipated for Civil War parks. Although

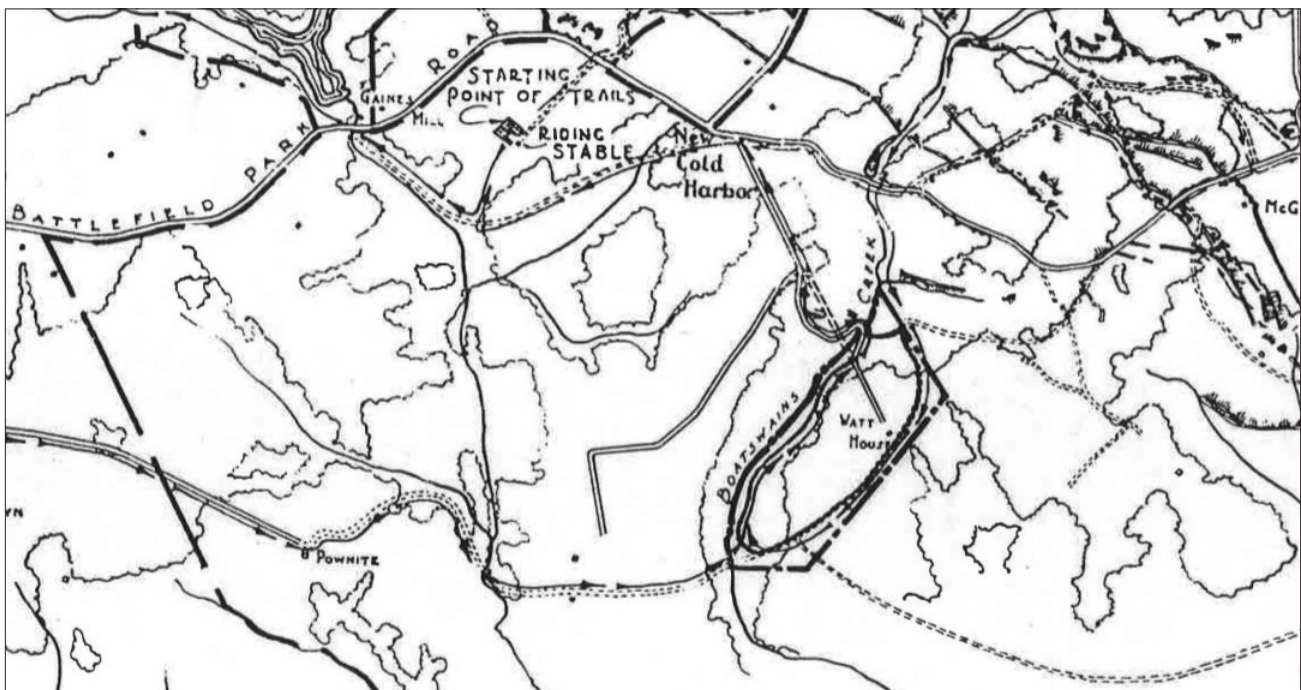
Figure 1.46. (Below Left) CCC crew constructing a bridle trail south of Boatswain Creek at Gaines' Mill Battlefield, 1937 (RICH Archives).

Figure 1.47. (Below right) CCC crew working on the Watt House Road, 1937 (RICH Archives).

Figure 1.48. (Bottom) Detail from "Horse Trails for Proposed and Immediate Construction — Cold Harbor Battlefield, Richmond National Battlefield Park," 1937 (RICH Archives, RICH_367_2070).

the improvements at many parks included visitor centers, shelters, and comfort stations, efforts at Gaines' Mill Battlefield during this period concentrated on rehabilitation of the Watt house, enhancing the park entrance experience, and improving the landscape setting.

In November of 1956, John T. Willett prepared a *Survey Report for the Restoration and Rehabilitation of Historic Structures* for the Watt house. The findings and recommendations of the report were used by park staff to develop plans for preservation treatment of the Watt house as part of the MISSION 66 program. Willett's report followed an exhaustive research effort. The report recorded the methodology and resources used; a historic narrative of the Gaines' Mill site focusing primarily on the architectural data of the Watt house as it existed in 1862; a photolog of the house's exterior and interior existing conditions at the time of the survey; pre-restoration measured drawings of the structure; a tentative list of recommended projects for the Watt house; and a detailed statement of how use



of the building as a employee residence would shape plans for electrical wiring, plumbing, heating, and visitor facilities (Figures 1.49 and 1.50).

The bulk of Willett's research and findings were centered on restoring the exterior of the Watt house to its Civil War appearance.⁸⁶ The interior of the building was to house a park ranger/historian, with the building exterior serving as an battle-field landmark, an outdoor exhibit marking the center of the Union line in 1862. Willett found that the Watt house interior and exterior had remained essentially unchanged since 1862. The only exceptions were the three entrances, which were recommended to be restored. The primary rehabilitation work would involve correcting structural deficiencies of the house, which the report described as "terribly weak and deteriorated." All usable woodwork and hardware were recommended to be salvaged, and where replacements were necessary, they should follow the existing pattern used in the building.⁸⁷ Beyond the building, the 1956 Willet report goes into considerable detail regarding the location of the orchard or orchards remembered both by Mary Jane Haw and in soldier's accounts of the battle.

The tentative list of projects that seemed necessary in making the structure sound and appropriate for employee housing were as follows:

1. Point up brick and repair foundation walls.
2. Repoint chimneys, restore chimney, and install flue lining for furnace.
3. The roof repair will require additional study and perhaps minor alterations.
4. Replace and/or repair: exterior sash, doors, framing, etc.; and interior doors and framing.
5. Painting of the exterior and interior.
6. New entrance steps and platforms.
7. Grading, seeding, and planting.
8. Replace: laths and plaster (interior); the basement flooring; and all necessary hardware.
9. Repair and refinish wood floors, install additional supports, linoleum (kitchen and bath).
10. Install: a new electric system and fixtures; plumbing and fixtures; kitchen equipment; insulation; electric service and connection; a water system—well, pump, pressure tank, and connections; and a septic tank and tile drainage field.⁸⁸

Photographs from the 1950s document the exterior restoration work performed on the Watt house during this time. The house's clapboards were painted white, perhaps for the first time, as previous historic images appear to show the siding unpainted. The flaking paint on the brick foundation was removed and the bricks were left unpainted. The two entrance stairways and porches on the north and south side of the house were replaced, with the new ones featuring smaller landings, and a new set of steps were added to the door on the east façade. One image shows work underway on the foundation, possibly the installation of a waterproof barrier to help seal the basement from water infiltration. By the end of the 1950s,

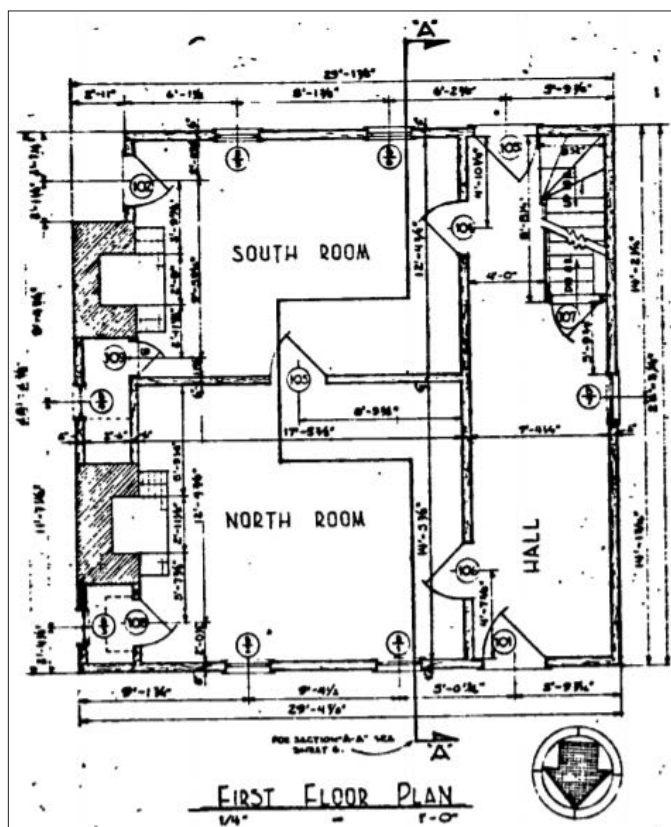
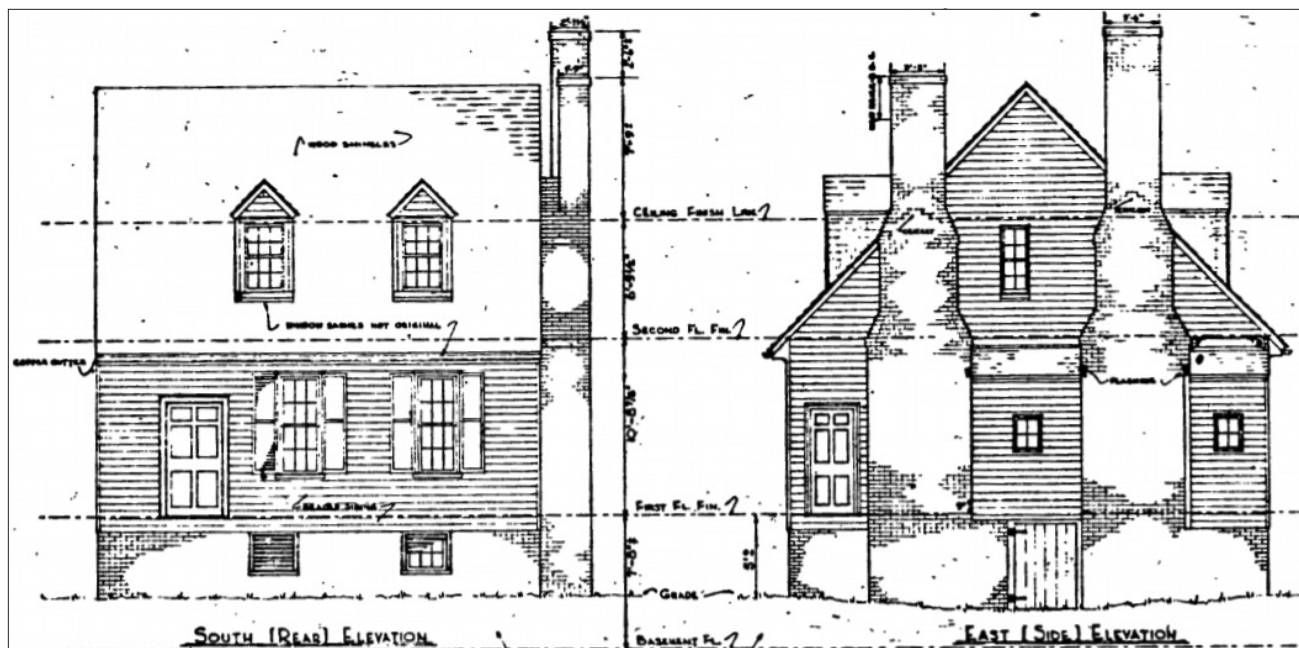


Figure 1.49. (Top) Watt house south and east elevations, ca. 1956 (HABS/HAER VA-477, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/va0502/>).

Figure 1.50. (Above) Watt house first floor plan, ca. 1956. (HABS/HAER VA-477, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/va0502/>).

the house shows indications of serving as park housing (Figures 1.51 through 1.54).

Park Planning and Development

Beginning in the late 1950s, the National Park Service began to develop plans for providing utilities, parking, and landscape improvements at the Watt house. A planning drawing from 1957 indicates a straightforward entry approach using the existing entry road with an elongated elliptical loop around the house. It also shows the road to the south and indicates the proposed well site that was developed as shown. The sewer line, septic tank, and drain field are shown south of the house in their present locations (Figure 1.55). It also calls for a “future historic shed” to be located over the well, but it appears that the well house was never built. This drawing, however, does not indicate an arrival area or landscaped treatment north of the Watt house.⁸⁹

A *Development Plan* in 1958 made for this same area of the Watt house landscape fell into two main categories: one addressing the vegetation of the site and the other addressing the development of the site to serve the needs of visitors. The parking area was proposed for a location immediately south of its current location and was to consist of six diagonally arranged spaces

(Figure 1.56). The adjacent edge of the east field was identified as stabilized turf to accommodate overflow and bus parking. Although this arrangement may have existed for a time, it is shown currently fenced and only available for parking during special events when a portion of the fence is removed. The 1958 plan called for the construction of a trail leading to interpretive markers as well as the development of the Watt house interpretive wayside and other signage and markers to be located at the road near the Watt house, rather than at the parking lot. The plan proposed the construction of a “garage, shop, equipment and well building (on the site of the old out-building)” east of the house. The proposed structure is shown in approximately the same location as the large dilapidated outbuilding shown in Figures 1.30 and 1.31. The plan does not mention demolition because the former structure here had already have been removed.⁹⁰

Vegetative issues addressed in the plan included planting crops in a section of the west fields, although this area has remained wooded, and the planting of trees in many locations throughout the site. A planting strip was proposed for the site west of the current parking. This small area was to include a total of four peach and apple trees. The area farther west and north adjacent to the wooded area was to be planted in “crops.” Individual trees are indicated on the landscaped island north of the house and in an area west of the house and identified as either proposed or existing. At the time of the 1997 archeological survey of Gaines’ Mill, existing trees included the eastern red cedars north of the house; an eastern red cedar southwest of the house, the black walnut and northern catalpa northwest of the house, the red mulberry almost directly west of the house, and the white oak diagonally opposite the southwest corner of the house. The trees proposed on this 1958 drawing were never planted (Figures 1.57 and 1.58).⁹¹

Features implemented from the 1961 drawing *Roads, Walks, and Parking Area* included the entry circle, or terminal driveway loop, the interpretive plaza, relocation of the Freeman marker from the house yard to the plaza, and the diagonal parking (Figure 1.59). Actual construction differentiated from the plan in some areas—the garage, to house park maintenance equipment, was built west and not east of the house as called for in all of the early plans. In addition, the drawing includes a brick walk to the house from the interpretive zone north of the house but a handwritten notation bears the comment that “Brick walk to house is not historically appropriate and is an invitation to the visitor to demand entrance to the house.” The note also recommends to “Leave lawn as it is at present.” The drawing also includes a grape arbor north and east of the house to be used as a visual “screen.” The first indications of the existing driveway loop north of the Watt house and the brick pavers for the interpretive area north and northwest of the Watt house are found in the 1961 drawing.⁹²

The beginnings of the new circulation was developed during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The front porch steps on the house’s north elevation can be seen



Figure 1.51. (Above right) Watt house north elevation, June 1958 (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.52. (Right) Watt house, October 1959 (RICH Archives).

Figure 1.53. (Below right) Watt house, 1958 (RICH Archives).

Figure 1.54. (Below) South facade of Watt house foundation undergoing waterproofing treatment, April 1958. Note the open distant view to the west, across the Boatswain Creek drainage (RICH Archives).



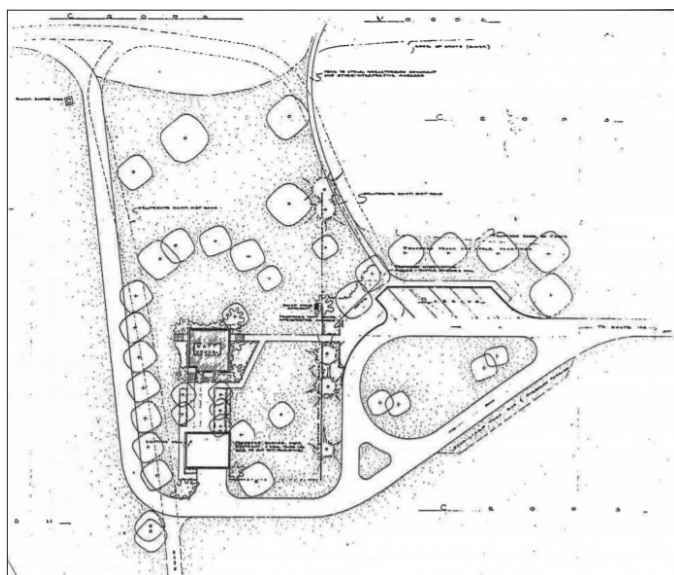
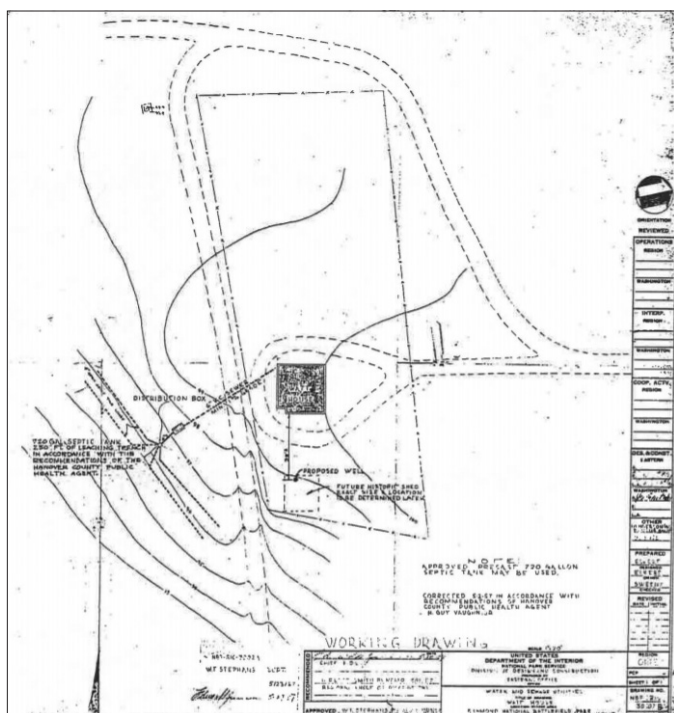


Figure 1.55. (Top) Working drawing showing plans for the water and septic system at the Watt house, 1957. Drawing shows layout of existing roads and fences (RICH Archives, RICH_367_3002B).

Figure 1.56. (Bottom) Development plan for the Watt house, 1958. This drawing shows a proposed garage on the location of an earlier outbuilding. Proposed plantings include peach and apple trees immediately west of the proposed diagonal parking (RICH Archives, RICH_367_2022).

at the edge of the photograph. The new circular entrance road that attaches to the larger loop that surrounds the entire Watt house is smooth and unpaved—instead it remains as exposed earth. In the center of the road, there is a patch of tall cattails and wildflowers. The yard closer to the house features mowed grass. Wire fencing with metal posts can be seen throughout the background. Large trees are scattered in the front yard and along the circular entrance road, with a thick tree line in the background beyond the open fields. There is a sign with an unknown purpose placed along the path that leads to the house. A photograph from July 1963 shows the Watt House Road entrance circle again, and it is now covered with loose gravel. The land surrounding the road has been mowed down to short grass. There are some wayside signs beyond the road, but their purpose is unknown. Dense trees outline the road in the background.

Modern Structures at Gaines' Mill Battlefield

A modern garage was built on the Gaines' Mill site in 1963 to be used by park staff to conceal private automobiles and park maintenance equipment (Figure 1.60). The structure faces south and is located west of the Watt house, within the yard enclosed by the larger Watt House Road loop. The outbuilding was designed to be visually compatible with the newly restored Watt house, so the structures share many major features (Figures 1.61 and 1.62). The garage is a one-story frame building that has a wood-shingled end-gable roof, clapboarded elevations, and is seated on a brick foundation with a poured concrete floor. The south elevation features a pair of overhead garage doors constructed of diagonal boards on the first story and a single diagonal board door centered on the second story. A vertical board entrance is located on the western side of the north elevation. Four small, rectangular louvered openings line the east and west side elevations; two identical openings are also located on the rear (north) wall.

Several additional structures intended for modern use were added to the site in the 1970s, though the Watt house had no major alterations made during this time, apart from the installation of two window unit air-conditioners to the rear elevation. A few photographs taken in 1977 show the state of the vegetation growing around the structure. Well-kept hedges and a few small trees were planted in the front yard and along the structure's foundation. Apart from the garage, the other major modern structure built on the site was a combined barn, stable, and corral, built at the edge of the existing eastern woods near the park property line. A doghouse and woodshed were built west of the Watt house in the farmyard. These modern outbuildings were used by National Park Service staff residing in the Watt house who kept a dog and horse on site. Although the structures were rural in character and compatible in scale and function, they were not historic reconstructions, nor were they intended to be used for interpretation.⁹³ The barn and garage

Figure 1.57. Watt house front yard, looking south, barley is seen in the foreground under cultivation, June 1958 (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.58. Watt house entrance road circle, looking north west, July 1963 (RICH Archives).



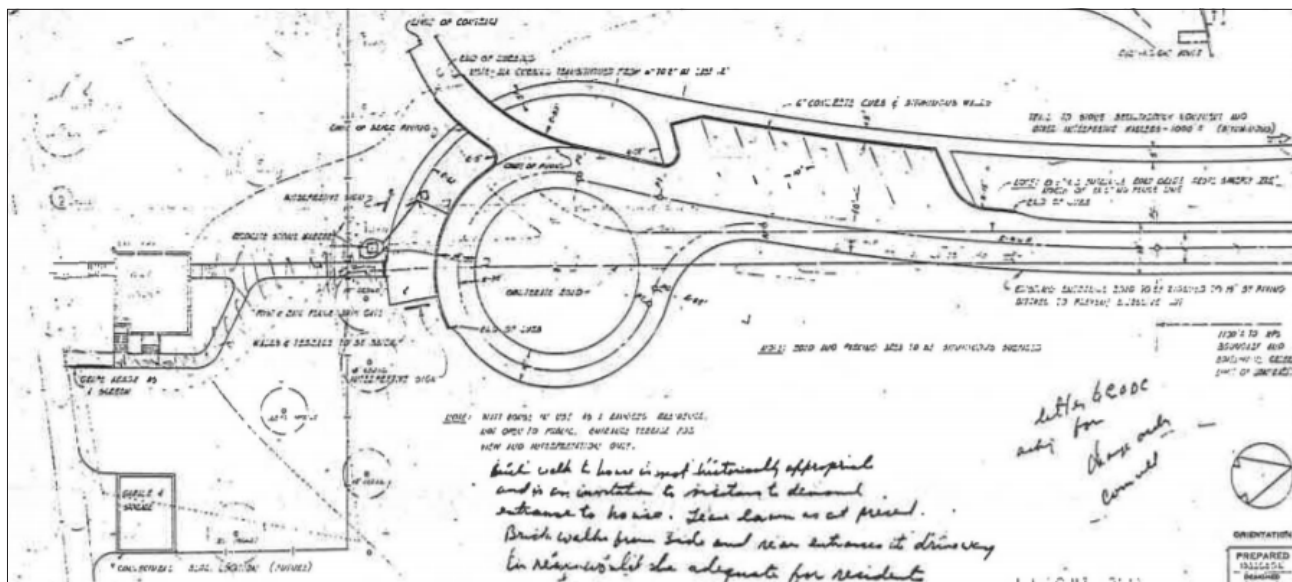


Figure 1.59. Proposed roads, walks and parking area, Watt house, 1961. Also showing existing layout of fences and locations and species of existing trees (RICH Archives, RICH_367_3032).

were present during the 1997 archeological survey of the site, but the garage remained as the only modern structure left standing by July of 2020.

The barn's design was compatible with the architectural character of the restored historic Watt house and the modern garage building housing park maintenance equipment (Figures 1.63 and 1.64). The frame barn structure was one-story, clad with weatherboard, and featured a front gabled roof finished with concrete shingles. Openings on the front elevation included a centered pair of barn doors, a hay door under the gable, a single wood door on the left end of the elevation, and a half door on the right end. The roof features an overhang with exposed rafters on the side elevations. Attached to the right elevation is a small stable covered with a shed roof that extends from the barn. The front of the stable is enclosed by a metal tube gate. The rear and side yards surrounding the barn/stable are bordered by a post and rail fence corral. A worn earth path or road is visible leading up to the barn's central paired doors on the front elevation. The doghouse and woodshed structures were of very similar design and scale (Figures 1.65 and 1.66). Both structures followed the established architectural themes of the site—small gable roof structures finished with cedar or asphalt shingles and clad in vinyl siding that mimics the appearance of wood clapboard. The woodshed remained exposed on some of its sides, while the doghouse was full enclosed and featured a pair of doors centered on its front. The barn, doghouse, and woodshed were later removed.

BATTLEFIELD EXPANSION

Beginning with its inclusion as part of the Richmond Battlefield State Park, the sixty-acre Watt property stood as the representative portion of the much larger



Figure 1.60. New garage outbuilding at Gaines' Mill Battlefield Park, 1977. Note the post and rail fence that surrounds the northern border of the Watt house front yard (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.61. Watt house east elevations, 1977 (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.62. Watt house west and south elevations, 1977. Note the barn to the northeast in the lower right corner of the photo (RICH Archives).

Gaines' Mill battlefield area for more than sixty years, publicly preserved and interpreted, while large areas of the historic battlefield remained in private ownership. To the west, the large property that was once part of the Powhite plantation had remained largely intact since it was subdivided from the Gaines' estate late in the nineteenth century. Following William Axsell's death in 1946, the dairy farm, then comprising 314.52 acres, was sold to Harry W. Selden, and subsequently to J. Louis Reynolds nine years later.⁹⁴ Reynolds, and afterward his son Glenn P. Reynolds, retained the property until 1996, when it was sold to R. Wayne and Sandra W. McDougle. Details of the land use during that time, such whether the subsequent owners continued the dairy operation following Axsell's death are not clear, yet the land clearly remained in active agricultural use.

The total area of the battlefield available for preservation was reduced during the 1970s when Virginia and the federal government worked in partnership to construct Interstate 295, a circumferential bypass highway around Richmond that had been in planning since the early 1960s (Figure 1.67). The high-speed multi-lane highway was designed to run along the Chickahominy river floodplain across the southwest corner of the battlefield landscape. The 1986 deed transferring the property from J. Louis Reynolds' estate to his son excluded 53.78 acres of the total 314 acres for the highway, citing a condemnation and conveyance date of 1976. A later deed from 1996 conveying the property from Reynolds to the McDougle's indicates four separate parcels reserved for the highway, totaling 74.05 acres. Today, the highway's right-of-way extends for about three thousand feet along the southwest edge of the National Park Service managed property at a width of five hundred feet, making a total of about thirty-five acres.

Figure 1.63. Barn, stable, and corral at the Gaines' Mill Battlefield Park, 1977 (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.64. Barn, stable, and corral at the Gaines' Mill Battlefield Park, 1977 (RICH Archives).



Throughout this time, the former railroad right-of-way remained a separate parcel, comprising 7.75 acres gently bending its way through the property following a broad S-curve. Following the early 20th century failure of the railroad, its property was foreclosed on and the right-of-way for the entire line was purchased by Joseph E. Willard in 1923. In 1955, portions of the right-of-way, including the strip traversing the former Powhite land, were purchased by George K. Roper. Roper, and after his death, his wife Marilyn, owned the right-of-way through 1996, when it was purchased and owned briefly by the Woodberry Forest School of Madison County, Virginia. The following year, the right-of-way was purchased by Wayne and Sandra McDougle, reuniting the slender parcel with the larger property under one ownership, with a total area of about 285 acres.

Figure 1.65. Small utility building made to look like a doghouse in the Watt house yard, 1977 (RICH Archives).



Figure 1.66. Woodshed in the Watt house yard, 1977 (RICH Archives).

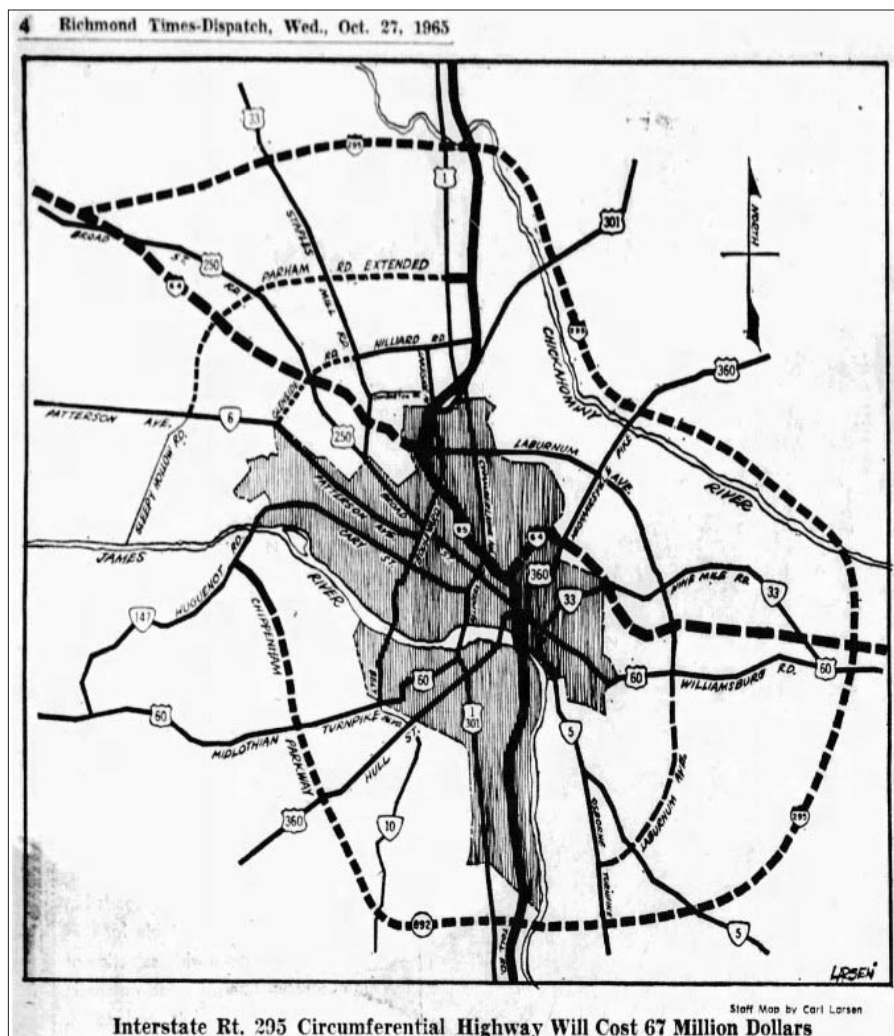


North of the Watt property, beyond Boatswain creek, the former Parsons farm began to be subdivided in the middle of the twentieth century. In 1947, the property was purchased by Howard and Thoris Stark, who held the property intact for eight years. In 1955, the Starks sold one of the original two parcels, the 37.5 acres of land on the east side of Watt House Road, to Lewis Gentry, and the following year, they sold the western parcel, then comprising 76.2 acres, to Fredrick McGhee. Between the timing of these two sales, in January of 1956, the Starks purchased at least the western portion of the former railroad right-of-way from George Roper,

making that parcel whole again. By that time, however, they no longer owned the eastern parcel, so it is unclear how and when the right-of-way that ran east of Watt House Road was subsumed into the surrounding property. Subsequent land transactions mention the former railroad right-of-way as a landmark, but don't appear to exclude it from the parcels (Figure 1.68).

Lewis Gentry built a dwelling on his property (east of Watt House Road) in 1955, and in 1963 he sold the house and 3.5 acres of land around it to Walter and Rebecca Roberts, who sold it again in 1963 to Hans Brinker. In 1964, Gentry sold the balance of his property to Frederick and Jacqueline McGee and T. Ellis and Lois Kirby, who began to divide and sell it the following year.⁹⁵ In 1965 they sold a 3.6-acre parcel along Boatswain Creek to Robert and Deanna Davis and a 7.8-acre parcel just north of that to Bruce Randolph. The smaller lot was purchased by Edward and Dorothy Mae Stephens in 1966 and then in 1980 by Edmund and Linda Goggin, who built a small house and garage on the property. Finally, in 1970, McGhee and the other owners sold an 11.25-acre lot to Frederick and Rosemary Ryan, who built a home there the following year. The remainder of the 37.5-acres, today outside of the park boundary, was also divided and developed with dwellings by this time.

Figure 1.67. Having been planned since the early 1960s, following initiation of the National Capital Beltway (I495) to the north, Richmond's I295 "beltway" was constructed in stages during the 1970s. Extending the north arrow of this drawing downward to meet the dashed line will intersect with the Gaines' Mill battlefield (Richmond Times Dispatch, 10/17/1965).



The 76.2-acre parcel north of Boatswains creek on the west side of Watt House Road remained relatively intact, except for a square 1.8-acre lot and house located near the center of the property, and a 3.6-acre lot in the southwest corner of the property along Boatswain Creek. The latter was sold in 1960 to Willie and Bonnie Boyette, who built a home there.

Following the January 2000 completion of the “Gaines’ Mill Cultural Landscape Report and Archeological Survey,” the park began pursuing some of that document’s landscape treatment recommendations (Figure 1.69). In 2006, the park undertook tree clearing on ten acres of the Watt House plateau to better represent historic field patterns (see PEPC #14732). In 2010 the park understood additional tree clearing, thinning understory trees and clearing vines and lower branches of large trees within a narrow-forested corridor to provide views across the Boatswain Creek drainage (see PEPC #32370). Throughout the 2010s, long-term goals of preserving a greater extent of the Gaines’ Mill battlefield began to materialize. Six purchases, five of these being smaller tracts within the former Parsons farmland were acquired through a series of purchases by partner organizations and subsequently transferred to federal ownership for inclusion in the park:

- In 2011, tract 01-149 north of Boatswains creek was purchased from the Boyette family by the Richmond Battlefield Association.⁹⁶ The 3.21-acre parcel was later transferred to the Department of the Interior in 2016 with no structures present on the land.⁹⁷
- In 2012, the Civil War Preservation Trust purchased tract 01-125 (NPS tract designation) from the Goggin family.⁹⁸ The 1.81-acre plot, located at the northeast corner of the Watt tract, was transferred to the Department of the Interior the following year.⁹⁹ The property contained three structures at the time, a house and two garages.
- In 2014, the landscape preserved as part of the Gaines’ Mill Battlefield park unit significantly increased following the acquisition of the large Powhite property on the west side of Boatswain Creek. Acquired in three parcels (tracts 01B-100 north of the old railroad right-of-way, 01B-101 south of the right-of-way, and 01B-103, the right-of-way itself) from Wayne and Sandra McDougale, preserving 285 additional acres of the battlefield landscape.
- In 2016, tract 01-290 was purchased from the Ryan family by the Civil War Preservation Trust and was transferred to the Department of the Interior the same year.¹⁰⁰ A 2017 USGS map show the 10.94-acre tract containing two structures, including a ranch-style dwelling built in 1971 that remains on the property today.
- In 2016, The Civil War Preservation Trust purchased tract 01-291 from the Adams family and the 3.57-acre property was transferred to the Department of the Interior the same year.¹⁰¹ The 2017 USGS map of the site indicates two structures on the tract.
- In 2016, Tract 01-292 was purchased by the Civil War Preservation Trust from the Randolph family.¹⁰² The 8.44-acre plot was transferred to the ownership of the Department of the Interior the following year and con-

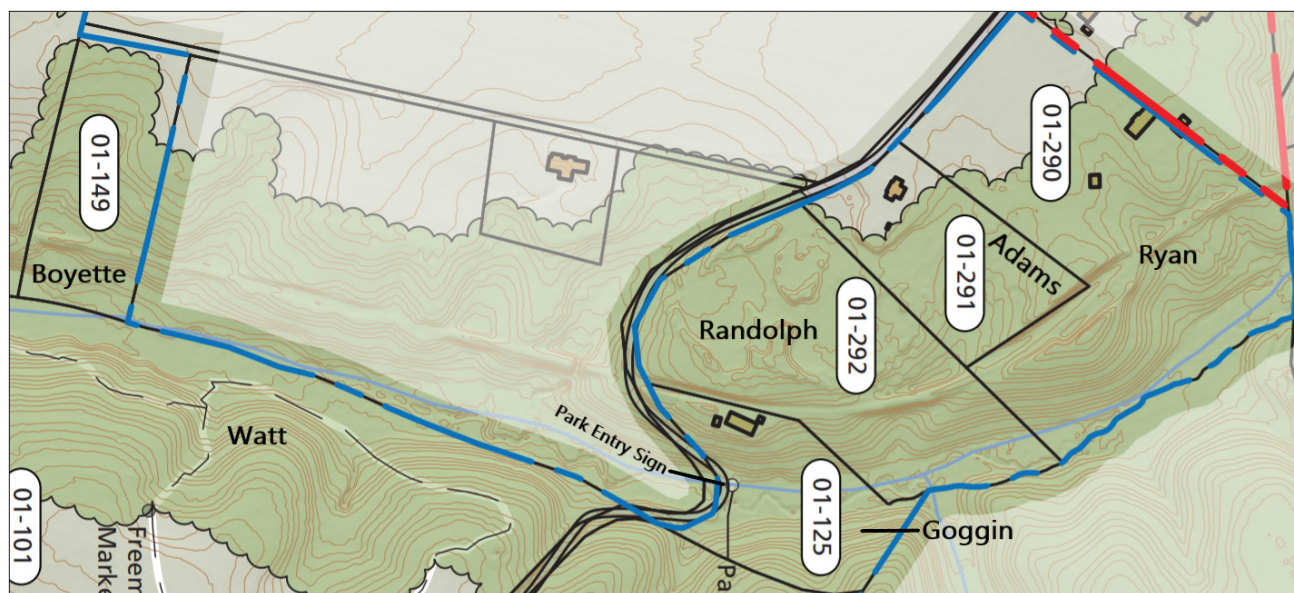


Figure 1.68. 2017 National Park Service parcel map, overlain with topographic lines. The former railbed marking the abandoned railroad right of way is reflected in segments of shared boundaries of the Goggin/Randolph and Adams/Ryan properties (OCLP).

tained no structures.¹⁰³

Interpretive trail system

Two main interpretative trails have existed on the Watt tract since the 1990s. The Federal Defense Trail is half a mile long and situated in the middle of the original park tract (Figure 1.70). The trail starts at the Watt house parking lot and heads north into the woods. At the edge of the woods is a “Battle of Gaines’ Mill” wayside. The trail turns when it reaches Boatswain Creek and continues west along it. Along the curve is the “Powerful Position” wayside. The trail intersects with the Wilcox Trail, where the visitor can choose to continue west onto the new trail, or to turn south and head back out of the woods. At the tree line, Freeman Marker #8, the “Hood’s Attack” wayside, a bench, and a directional sign for the parking lot are along the trail. The trail continues south and turns east to connect with the Watt House Road loop in front of the Watt house.

The Wilcox Trail is half a mile and located on the western half of the Watt tract (Figure 1.71). This trail is named for General Cadmus M. Wilcox of Alabama, who is memorialized along with the soldiers under his command on a granite tablet placed near where they broke through Federal lines. The granite memorial was placed during the autumn of 1999. The Wilcox trail begins where it intersects with the northern leg of the Federal Defense Trail. From this starting point, the trail continues southwest along the Boatswain Creek and shortly thereafter passes the “Confederate Grand Assault” wayside. The visitor is presented with the option to cross Boatswain Creek and tour the new Confederate Attack Trail. If the visitor chooses to continue on the Wilcox Trail, they will walk along the creek in the woods until reaching the granite Wilcox Brigade Monument. Here, the trail turns southeast and leads out of the woods. After passing through the tree line, the trail continues east, flanked on both sides by split-rail worm fencing, until it connects

with the Watt House Road loop in front of the Watt house (Figure 1.72). There is a small break in the worm fencing between the two trails—where two cannons have been placed to the south and the “Final Stand” wayside to the north.

The newest park trail, called the Confederate Attack Trail, was developed in collaboration with the Northeast Region’s Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. The 1.5-mile trail, with its eight interpretive “tour stops,” begins on the northwestern border of the Watt tract, crosses a simple puncheon footbridge built by Scout Troup 534 and local volunteers in 2017 (PEPC 70600) onto the Boyette tract (01-149), continuing onto the McDougle tract (01B-100) (Figure 1.73 and 1.74). The beginning of the trail is marked by a sign pointing in the direction of the foot bridge, labeled “Texas Monument, 0.15 miles.” On the sign is a clear plastic container holding pamphlets for a self-guided tour of the trail. The “tour stops” along the foot trail have no physical interpretative wayside signage and visitors are encouraged to read about the stops within the tour pamphlet. The trail stops at the western boundary of the park for the view across Powhite Creek near the former Dr. Gaines’ residence before continuing northeast along the tree line and looping back to where the beginning at Boatswain Creek.

Early in 2018, a U-shaped gravel pull-through and parking lot was constructed in the front yard of the Ryan tract. Between the pull-through and Watt House Road, the park installed two new wayside exhibits—one to face west, the other south. They are low-profile, and roughly forty by twenty-four inches. For the waysides, a couple of shovel test pits were first excavated. The parking lot installation will serve the public through the foreseeable future. The impermanent nature of the pull-through does reflect a long-term goal of putting in a more sustainable and substantial parking lot somewhere nearby, with greater interpretive infrastructure. The temporary pull-through was intended as a stop-gap measure to provide visitor access and interpretation opportunity to this piece of the battlefield while plans for a more permanent parking solution are being developed. Future plans could include the retention of this parking lot with additional amenities in another location.¹⁰⁴

Proposed Project Work for the Newly Acquired Tracts at Gaines’ Mill

The Gaines’ Mill park unit has only acquired much of its acreage during the twenty-first century. A number of modern houses and outbuildings existed on the tracts north of the Watt property and along Watt House Road. Beginning in 2017, NPS staff at Gaines’ Mill proposed projects to remove all of the non-historic buildings across the battlefield in accordance with cultural resource protection goals, including restricting ground disturbance to the footprint of the buildings being removed, removal of all debris, and naturalizing and revegetating building sites.¹⁰⁵

Figure 1.69. Aerial photograph of the original 60 acre Watt parcel of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield, ca. 2006. This image is overlain with GIS data indicating proposed ten acres of woodland clearing to help reestablish historic field patterns. This clearing project was subsequently completed. (RICH, Resource Management Division).

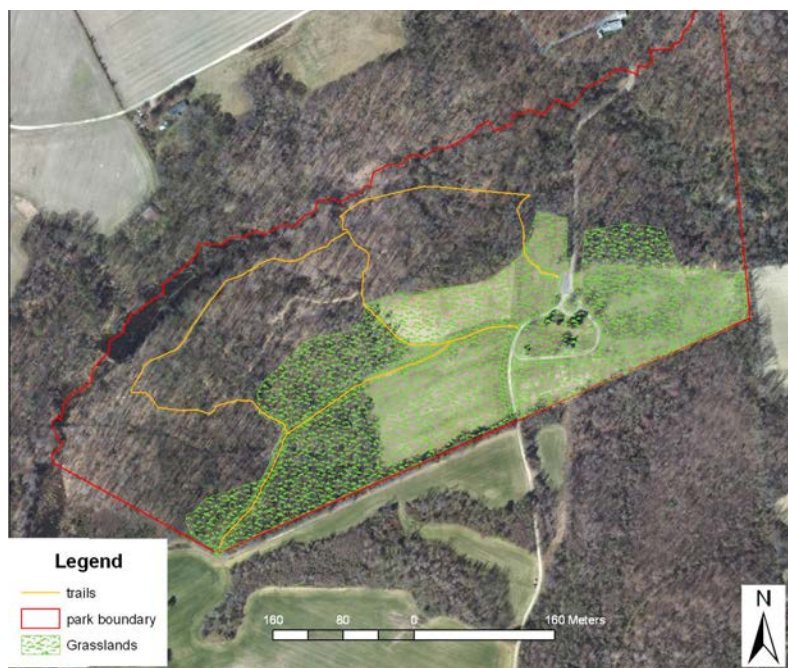


Figure 1.70. National Park Service parcel map, overlain with topographic lines. The former railbed marking the abandoned railroad right of way is reflected in segments of shared boundaries of the Goggin/Randolph and Adams/Ryan properties (OCLP).

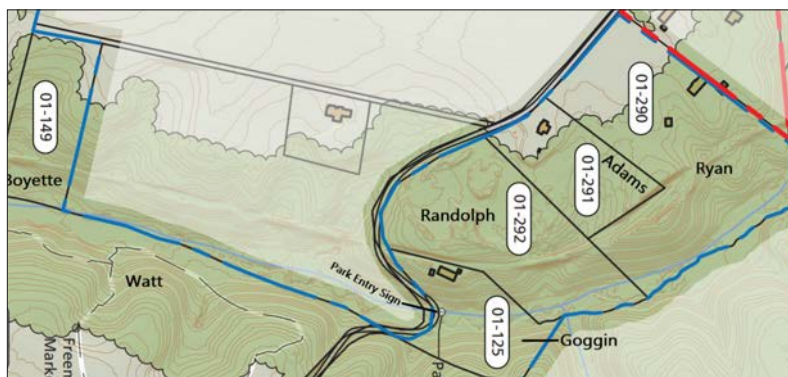


Figure 1.71. 2017 Aerial photograph of the western side of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield, ca. 2011. Existing "Wilcox Trail" (orange), existing interpretive markers (yellow), and locations of new waysides (red) are overlaid (OCLP).



Figure 1.72. A recently installed freestanding interpretive wayside exhibit along a trail on the Gaines' Mill Battlefield, June 2011 (OCLP).



Figure 1.73. Wood footbridge built in 2017 crossing Boatswain Creek and connecting the original Watt tract with the Boyette tract, July 2020 (OCLP).



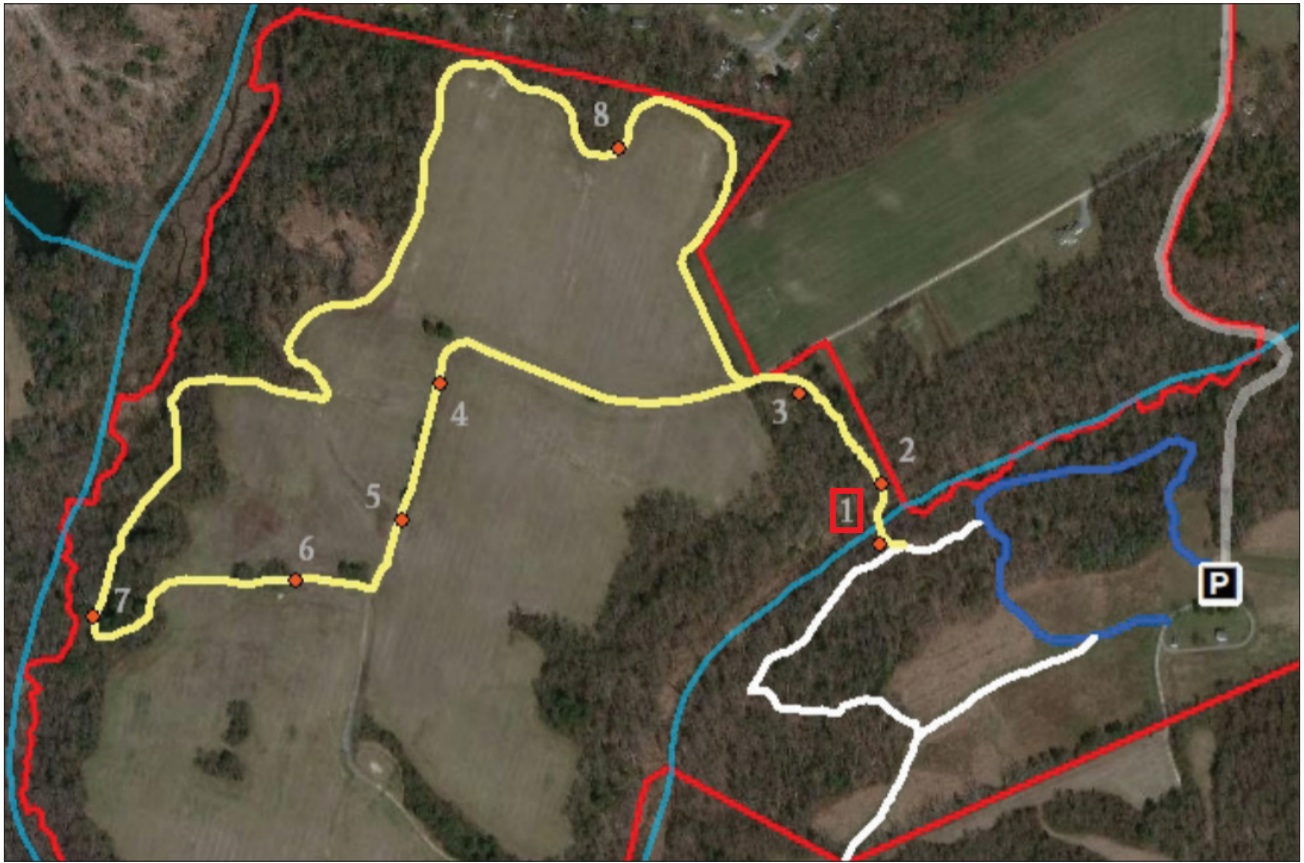


Figure 1.74. Aerial photograph of Gaines' Mill Battlefield Park, ca. 2017. The park boundary (red), interpretative trails (yellow, white, and blue), and trail stops on the McDougle tract (01B-100) (numbered red dots) have been overlaid. The footbridge installed in 2017 connecting the tracts across Boatswain Creek is located at stop #1 (center, boxed in red). The trail stops on the Confederate Attack Trail (yellow) are meant for self-guided tours taken using a pamphlet, which also included this map, but no physical interpretative aides have yet been installed at the stops (RICH park GIS data).

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EXISTING CONDITIONS

For all but the most knowledgeable Civil War historian, it is difficult to parse the separate boundaries of the Cold Harbor and the Gaines' Mill Battlefields, as the 1862 Battle of Gaines' Mill, and the 1864 Battle of Cold Harbor occupy much of the same terrain. During 1862, Confederate troop movements occurred to the north in the vicinity of Cold Harbor; during the 1864 fighting, some of the battlefield action occurred surrounding the ruins of the old Gaines' Mill. The National Park Service Lands Program has arranged the two battlefield units on a two-page land "Segment Map." This map documents the Cold Harbor Unit (1864); (Segment 01-A) to the north; and the Gaines' Mill Unit (1862); (Segment 01-B) to the

Figure 2.1. NPS LandsNET. Richmond National Battlefield Park Segment Map 01-A. Cold Harbor Unit, showing land status north of a match line with Segment 01-B below (NPS Lands Resources Program Center).

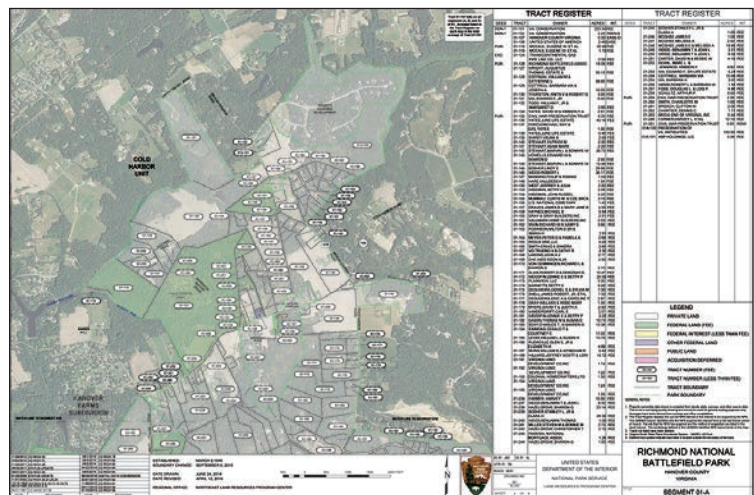
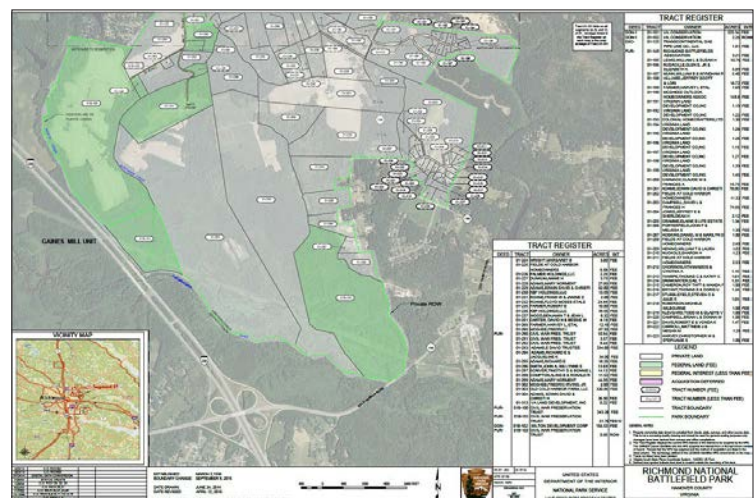


Figure 2.2. NPS LandsNET. Richmond National Battlefield Park Segment Map 01-B. Cold Harbor Unit, showing land status (Gaines Mill battlefield) south of a match line with Segment 01-A above (NPS Lands Resources Program Center).



south. A cartographic “match-line” appears on both maps so that the two pages might be assembled into a single map (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

The geographic limits of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield are most generally and broadly understood as the landscape to the southeast of Mechanicsville, Virginia enclosed to the southwest by the marshy Chickahominy River corridor and Interstate 295 (Virginia), and to the east by the meandering alignment of State Route 156 (Figure 2.3). Within this broadly defined area, the Lands Program Segment Maps identifies the expanded September 2015 authorized boundaries guiding potential future lands acquisitions for the Gaines' Mill unit as enclosing 75 separate tracts comprising a total of 2,177 acres. Of these, there are eight of the seventy-five tracts in which the National Park Service possesses a legal interest. These

Figure 2.3. Authorized boundary, Gaines Mill Unit, Richmond National Battlefield Park. Within this boundary, the National Park Service, is authorized to accept or otherwise acquire land or interests in land for the purpose of battlefield preservation (OCLP, 2024).



eight National Park Service owned tracts together preserve 590.18 acres, including the original 60.3-acre former Watt Farm property first acquired by the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation in 1927.

Visitors travelling in automobiles approach the Gaines' Mill Battlefield via State Route 156, which in the vicinity of the battlefield is known as “Cold Harbor Road.” Watt House Road, leading to the battlefield, intersects with the Cold

Figure 2.4. 11th Mississippi Confederate Monument on west side of Watt House Road, outside of National Park Service boundaries (OCLP, 2023).



Figure 2.5. Farm road leading west from Watt House Road into the McDougle tract, on the north side of Boatswain Creek, OCLP, 2023).



Harbor Road at an acute right-angle turn at a point west of the Cold Harbor National Cemetery. From its intersection with Cold Harbor Road, Watt House Road continues south in nearly a straight line past the 11th Mississippi Confederate monument (outside of NPS boundaries) installed on the east side of the rural two-lane roadway (Figure 2.4). A small accompanying visitor parking lot, constructed on the site of a former 20th century suburban dwelling serves those visitors wishing to explore this portion of the battlefield. Watt House road continues past other small rural holding toward a small bridge crossing over Boatswain's Creek. Prior to descending into the Boatswain's Creek drainage, a driveway intersects at right angles with the Watt House Road and leads west in a straight line through an open field terminating at a locked gate (Figure 2.5). Returning to Watt House Road and continuing its route southward, Watt House Road make a hairpin turn in its

Figure 2.6. Terminus of Watt House Road (OCLP, 2020).



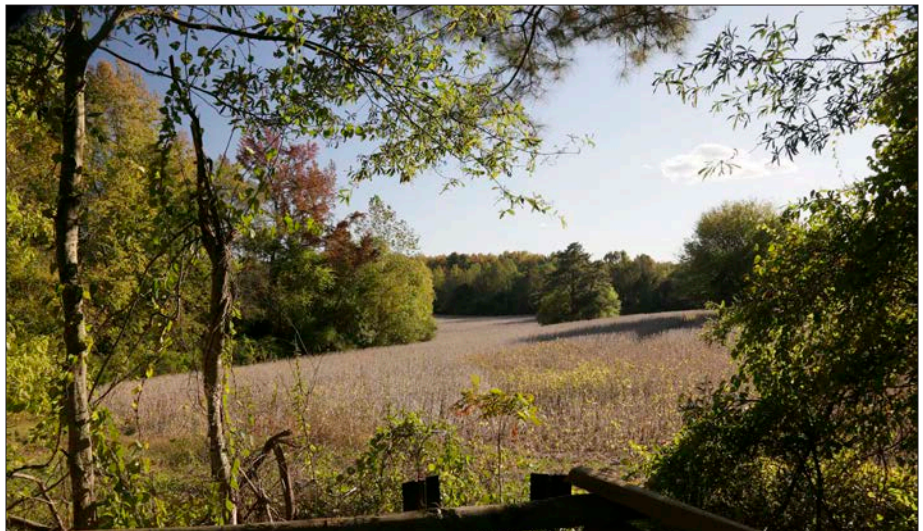
Figure 2.7. Terminus of Watt House Road, driveway loop, looking west (OCLP, 2020).



Figure 2.8. Historic farmland surrounding the Watt House on the south side of Boatswain Creek. The location of Union forces on June 27, 1862. Looking east toward the Watt farmstead (OCLP, 2023).



Figure 2.9. Historic farmland surrounding the Watt House on the south side of Boatswain Creek. The location of Union forces on June 27, 1862. Looking beyond NPS boundary at the extreme west of the Watt house plateau (OCLP, 2023).



crossing of Boatswain's Creek, climbing out of the heavily wooded stream valley to approach the historic Watt House, once the center of the Union line in 1862. Watt House Road terminates immediately north of the Watt House in a driveway loop and parking area constructed by the National Park Service to accommodate public visitation to the historic battlefield (Figures 2.6 and 2.7). Evergreen Virginia Redcedar trees (*Juniperus virginiana*) planted at the northern side of the dwelling effectively block views to the historic house for those visitors arriving via Watt House Road.

The house, together with its collection of non-historic ancillary buildings, including reproduction fencing and cannon carriages, are all found within a large upland clearing surrounded by second-growth woodland (Figures 2.8 and 2.9). The land immediately surrounding the Watt House has not been farmed for approximately one hundred years. Native grasses thrive as the dominant ground cover within the open, cleared area. The woodland edges feature shrubs vines and other understory species creating a dense wall of vegetation that is difficult for pedestrians to penetrate. Virginia "snake-rail" or "worm" fencing made of split wooden rails has been placed within this clearing to evoke 19th century rural conditions commonly present both before and after the battles of 1862 and 1864.

The historic Watt House and its associated landscape occupies the northwestern part of the topographic summit of a broad dissected plateau gently descending southward, draining into the freshwater wetlands at the northern margins of the Chickahominy River. This plateau, formerly open ground and key terrain during the historic Civil War battles, has become predominately wooded with the passage of time. However isolated agricultural clearings survive, scattered upon privately held parcels within the larger authorized boundary. The unpretentious Watt House dwelling is one and a half stories and is of frame construction with weather boarding sheathing (Figure 2.10). The roof, originally shingled, features two ridge dormers. There are two brick chimneys with pent closets constructed into the

Figure 2.10. The Watt House, south and west facing facades (OCLP, 2023).



Figure 2.11. The Watt House, north and west facing facades (OCLP, 2023).



east gable end of the building. The brick walls of the basement extend four feet above the level of the adjacent ground (Figure 2.11).

To the north and west, beyond the wooded slopes descending to Boatswain's creek, lies the lands recently acquired through the work of both the Richmond Battlefield Association and the Civil War Trust. In 2011 the Richmond Battlefield Association acquired a small three-acre suburban property on the north side of Boatswain's Creek, removed the 20th century dwelling there and later authorized the placement of a monument to General John B. Hood's "Texas Brigade" of Confederate soldiers who attacked the Union forces from this approximate location. In 2012 the Civil War Trust acquired the 285-acre McDougle tract north of Boatswain's Creek and later in 2014 transferred this agricultural property to the National Park Service to preserve a larger portion of the historic battlefield.

The National Park Service has constructed a trail and pedestrian bridge over Boatswain's Creek to provide visitor access to this newly preserved battlefield acreage. The "Confederate Attack Trail" originating at the clearing surrounding the

Figure 2.12. The woodlands lining both sides of Boatswain Creek (OCLP, 2020).



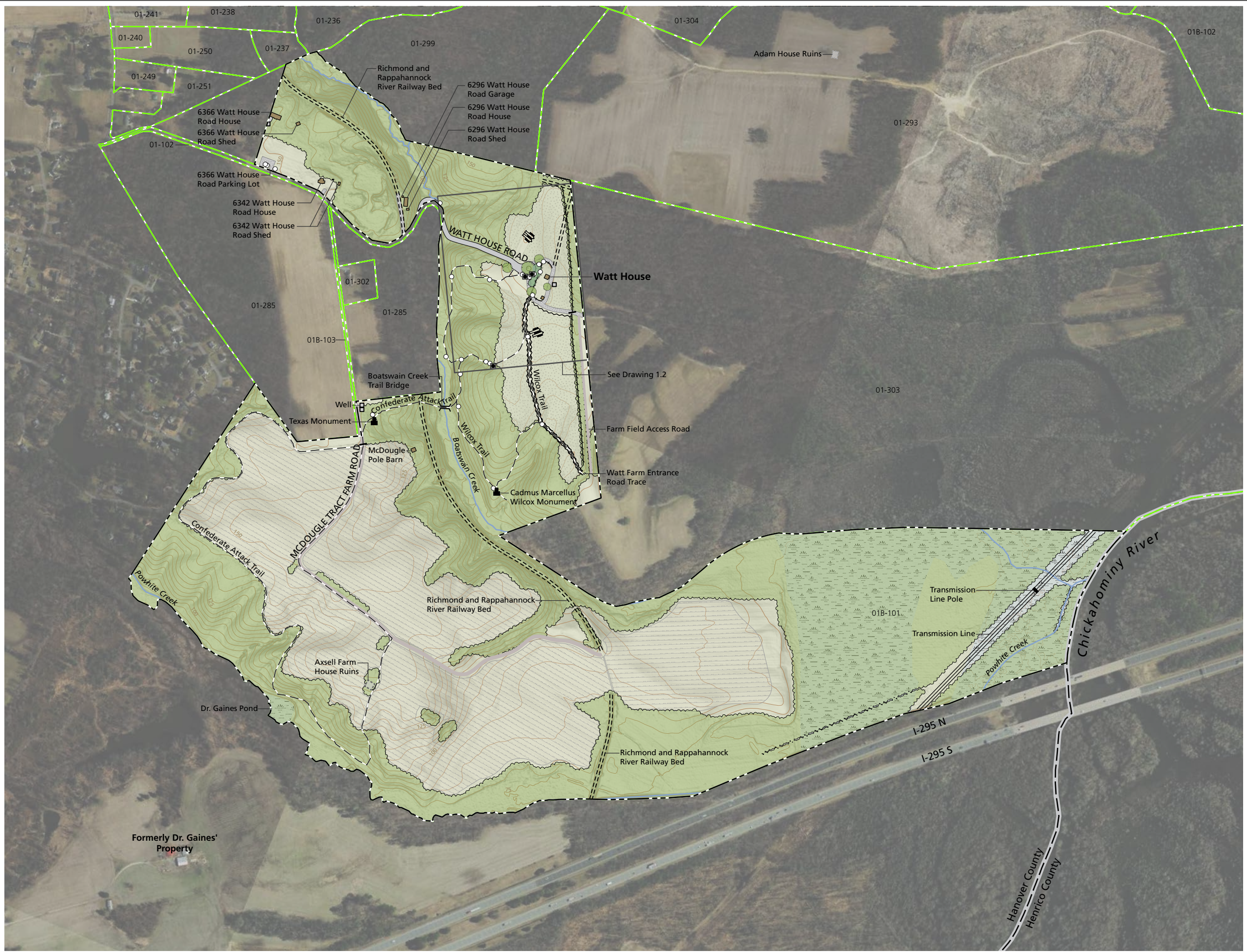
Figure 2.13. The footbridge crossing Boatswain Creek, constructed in 2017 (OCLP, 2020).



Figure 2.14. The Texas Brigade Monument, located on the northern side of Boatswain Creek (OCLP, 2023).



Watt House and descending into the Boatswain's Creek drainage is shaded with mature oak and poplar trees that were not present during the battle (Figures 2.12 and 2.13). Crossing the footbridge over the stream, visitors soon find themselves upon the level trackbed of the former Richmond & Rappahannock River Railway that once paralleled the creek during its brief operations in the early 20th century. Climbing the wooded slope on the northern side of Boatswain's Creek, visitors are led to the "Texas Brigade" monument installed in 2012, which is accompanied by a small parking area and the remnant shrubbery surviving from the razed 20th century dwelling (Figure 2.14).



Cultural Landscape Report

Richmond National
Battlefield Park
Mechanicsville, Virginia

Gaines' Mill Battlefield
2024 Existing Conditions



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

1. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS)
2. United States Geological Survey LiDAR, 2014
3. Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) Orthoimagery, 2021
4. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts
5. Field Review, July 2020

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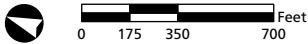
Kelsey Little, ArcGIS Pro 3.2, 2023

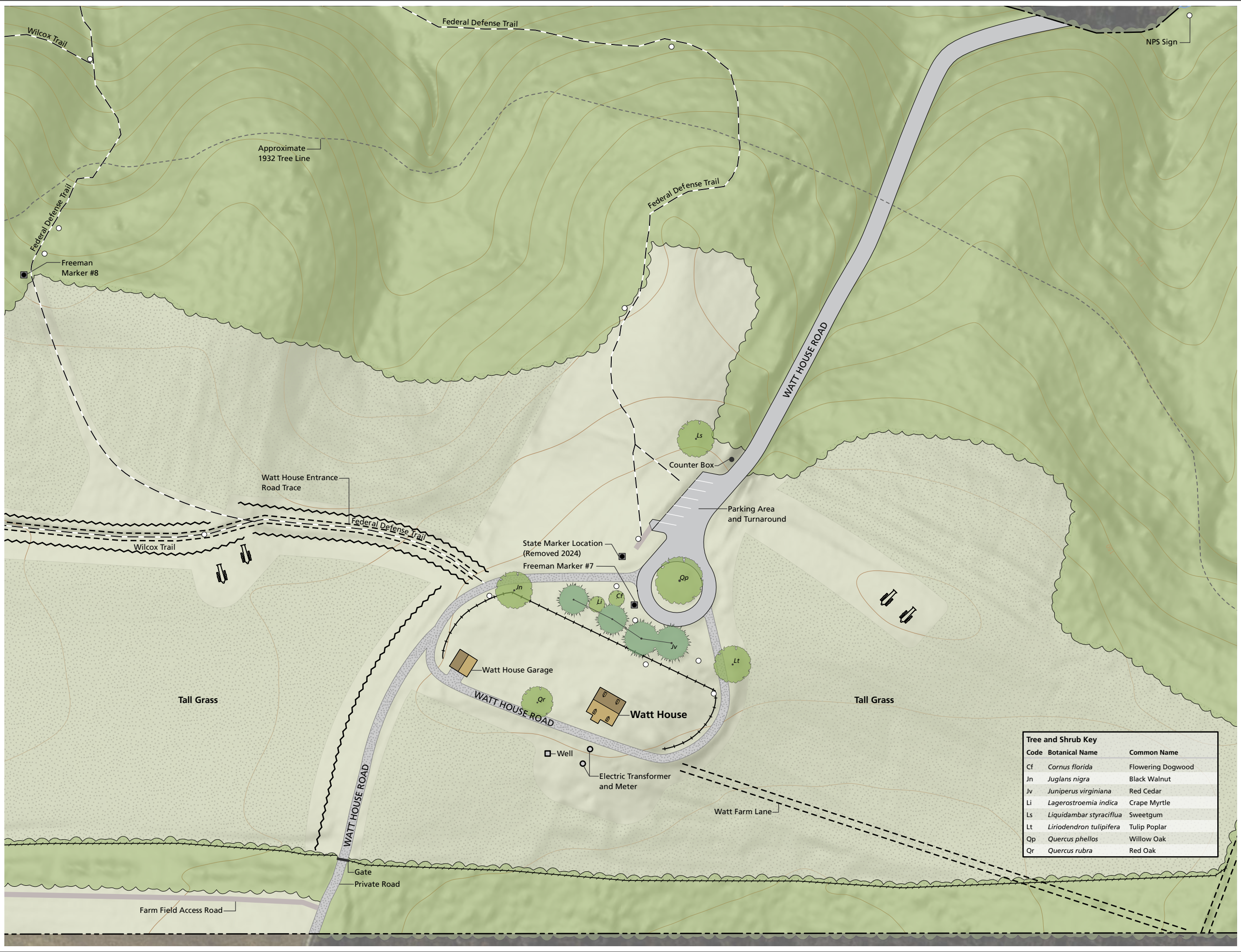
LEGEND

	CLI Boundary/ Fee Boundary		Gravel Road
	Legislative Boundary		Road Trace/ Railroad Trace
	NPS Tract Boundary		Creek
	Virginia County Boundary		Trail
	Turf		Worm Fence
	Woods		Post and Rail Fence
	Wetlands		Barbed Wire Fence
	Agricultural Land Use		Wayside/Sign
	Managed Meadow/ Tall Grass		Monument
	Building		Marker
	Building Ruin		Cannon
	Paved Road		Bridge
	Unpaved Road		Deciduous Tree
			Evergreen Tree

NOTES

1. Projection: NAD 83 (2011) UTM Zone 18N
2. Contour Interval = 5'
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location
4. NPS fee boundary excludes the Watt House Road driveway and includes tract 01B-101
5. Last exported: 10/1/2024 11:05 AM





Cultural Landscape Report

Richmond National Battlefield Park
Mechanicsville, Virginia

Watt House Area
2024 Existing Conditions



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

1. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS)
2. United States Geological Survey LiDAR, 2014
3. Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN) Orthoimagery, 2021
4. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts
5. Field Review, July 2020

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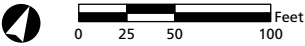
Kelsey Little, ArcGIS Pro 3.2, 2023

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| | CLI Boundary/
Fee Boundary | | Trail |
| | Turf | | Barbed Wire Fence |
| | Woods | | Worm Fence
Post and Rail Fence |
| | Managed
Meadow/
Tall Grass | | Wayside/Sign |
| | Building | | Marker |
| | Paved Road | | Cannon |
| | Unpaved Road | | Deciduous Tree |
| | Gravel Road | | Evergreen Tree |
| | Road Trace | | |

NOTES

1. Projection: NAD 83 (2011) UTM Zone 18N
2. Contour Interval = 5'
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location
4. NPS fee boundary excludes the Watt House Road driveway
5. Last exported: 10/1/2024 11:13 AM



ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The following chapter summarizes the historical significance of Gaines' Mill Battlefield and provides an evaluation of landscape characteristics and features that contribute to the historic character of the property. The analysis and evaluation within this chapter is based on criteria developed by the National Register of Historic Places program, a nationwide listing of properties significant to our nation's history and prehistory. The evaluation format is derived from the National Park Service's *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (1998).

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS AND SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The National Park Service evaluates the historical significance of properties through a process of identification and evaluation defined by the National Register of Historic Places program. According to the National Register, historic significance may be present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property can be found to have a significance on a national, state, or local level, and must meet one or more of the following criteria in order to be considered eligible for the National Register:

- A. The property is associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history;
- B. The property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. The property has yielded, or may yield, information important to the study of history or prehistory.¹

EXISTING NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION

Gaines' Mill Battlefield is a contributing site of the Richmond National Battlefield Park (NBP), which comprises eleven discontinuous administrative units encompassing fifteen sites and a total of approximately 4,088 acres in and around the cities of Richmond and Mechanicsville, Virginia, and within Henrico, Hanover, and Chesterfield Counties. Authorized on March 2, 1936 "for the purpose of protecting, managing, and interpreting the resources associated with the Civil War battles in and around the City of Richmond, Virginia,"² the park was formally established on July 14, 1944. The park was administratively listed without documentation in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The significance of Gaines' Mill Battlefield and its associated landscape characteristics and features was documented in the National Register of Historic Places update for Richmond National Battlefield Park, completed in 2016. According to the documentation, the district is primarily significant as the site of major Civil War battlefields and related properties associated with the Union's attempts to take the Confederate capital city of Richmond during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, the Overland Campaign of 1864, and the Richmond-Petersburg Campaign of 1864–1865. Significance for the 2879.42-acre federally owned historic district was identified under criteria A, B, C, and D at the national level in the areas of Military, Ethnic Heritage-Black, Conservation, Other (Commemoration), Science, Engineering, Architecture, Archeology-Historic (Non-Aboriginal), and Archeology-Prehistoric. Robert E. Lee, George B. McClellan, and Ulysses S. Grant were identified as significant persons, and the district's contributing commemorative monuments were evaluated as meeting Criteria Consideration F (Commemorative Properties) because they possess significance engendered from their age, design, and symbolic values. The period of significance for the district was listed as c.1720–1944, beginning with the construction of the Garthright House and ending when the NPS officially accepted management of Richmond NBP. The period of significance was listed as 1680–1865 for historic archeology and 8000 BCE–1600 CE for prehistoric archeology.³

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Gaines' Mill Battlefield is nationally significant under Criterion A in the area of Military History as the site of the June 27, 1862 Battle of Gaines' Mill, part of the Seven Days' Battles in which Confederate General Robert E. Lee turned the Union Army of the Potomac, led by General George B. McClellan, away from Richmond and pushed it back to the James River. The site is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Commemoration for its association with the Civil War battlefield memorialization and preservation movement, which led to the establishment of Richmond National Battlefield Park in 1936. Gaines' Mill Battlefield

is significant under Criterion D in the areas of Historic (Non-Aboriginal) and Prehistoric Archeology for both above-ground and subsurface resources that have the potential to yield information about the battle, as well as the antebellum and pre-contact use of the area.

The overall period of significance for Gaines' Mill Battlefield is lengthy, extending from 1830 to 1944. For architecture, the period of significance is tied to the construction dates of the Watt House, c. 1830-1832. The period of significance for site's military associations extends from 1862, the year of the Battle of Gaines' Mill, to the end of the Civil War in 1865. For commemoration, the period extends from 1915 with construction of the Richmond and Rappahannock River Railway, as a battlefield tourist conveyance; to include 1925 with the establishment of the Battlefield Markers Association; embracing the 1930's, when the Virginia Conservation and Development Commission erected marker PA-25, and the federal government funded conservation and commemorative works at the Gaines Mill site with the assistance of the Civilian Conservation Corps program; the period of commemorative significance effectively concluding in 1944 with the transfer of the Watt property to the National Park Service.

CRITERION A: MILITARY HISTORY

In the spring of 1862, Gen. George B. McClellan moved the Union Army of the Potomac to Fort Monroe at the tip of the Virginia Peninsula, planning to move from there to Richmond, capture the Confederate capital, and end the war. During the month of May, McClellan moved steadily up the peninsula to the very outskirts of Richmond, before being stopped at the Battle of Seven Pines (or Fair Oaks) on May 31. During the fighting at Seven Pines, Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was wounded, and his command of the Army of Northern Virginia was taken over by Gen. Robert E. Lee.

After the Battle of Seven Pines, fighting paused for several weeks. Lee ordered his troops back to their pre-battle lines and the Federals reoccupied their previous positions. While McClellan was making preparations to lay siege to Richmond, using the captured portion of the Richmond and York River Railroad to bring his big guns closer to the city, Lee improved his defensive position and began planning to take the offensive. Lee was convinced that a siege of the Confederate capital would be disastrous if the superior Federal manpower and armament were allowed to entrench around the city. To prevent this, Lee carried out a series of attacks on the Union army that would collectively be known as the Seven Days' Battles.

The week of fighting was initiated on June 25, when McClellan attempted to improve his position for an attack on the Old Tavern crossroads, moving to take the wooded area known as Oak Grove and putting his forces in position to attack the crossroads from the south. They were met by three brigades of Confederate defenders under Maj. Gen. Benjamin Huger's command. The two sides fought to

a stalemate, with neither side gaining any advantage. Meanwhile, Lee moved four divisions against McClellan's right flank, consisting of Brig. Gen. Fitz John Porter's Fifth Corps, which occupied defensive works behind Beaver Dam Creek on the north side of the Chickahominy River. Determined attacks by Maj. Gen. A.P. Hill backed by Maj. Gens. Longstreet and D.H. Hill were driven back with heavy casualties, but the show of force unnerved McClellan. Fearing that his supply lines would be cut off, he ordered that his supply base be moved from White House Landing on the York River to Harrison's Landing on the James River. McClellan pulled his right flank back that night into a stronger defensive position behind Boatswain Creek.

The following day at Gaines' Mill, Lee pressed McClellan again, launching 57,000 men against the Union forces in the largest Confederate assault of the war to date. The focus of the attack was again the Union right flank, isolated from the rest of the force north of the Chickahominy River. Throughout the day, the Confederates mounted disjointed attacks, first with the division of Maj. Gen. A.P. Hill, then Maj. Gen. Richard S. Ewell. Initially, the strong Union position and lack of coordination of the Confederate attacks allowed the Federal army to withstand the assault, but as afternoon turned to evening, the Confederates began to make progress. At about 7:00 p.m., when Jackson's divisions finally joined the fight, the Union line collapsed and fell back across the Chickahominy River, burning the bridges behind them.

The day's casualties exceeded any battle of the Civil War to that point except Shiloh. Porter lost a total of 6,837 men (894 killed, 3,114 wounded, and 2,829 captured). Among the latter number were two entire regiments that had been surrounded as the Union line collapsed. Confederate casualties were worse (1,483 killed, 6,402 wounded, and 108 missing or captured), but they controlled the field as the remainder of Porter's men crossed the Chickahominy. That night, McClellan called a meeting of his general staff and told them directly of his plans for moving the army to the James River.⁴

Lee pursued McClellan as he moved south toward Harrison's Landing, harassing the rear of the retreating column at Savage's Station and White Oak Swamp. The Union Army made two final stands at Glendale crossroads and at Malvern Hill, successfully weathering the concerted Confederate attacks and securing a safe retreat to the James River.

CRITERION A: COMMEMORATION

As part of Richmond National Battlefield Park, Gaines' Mill Battlefield is significant at the national level in the area of Commemoration for its associations with the Civil War battlefield memorialization and preservation movement. The Civil War battlefield sites surrounding Richmond did not benefit initially from federal battlefield preservation efforts in the 1890s that resulted in the creation of the

country's first four national military parks, all at Civil War sites, under the management of the War Department. Over the next few decades, numerous individuals and groups petitioned Congress for additional parks and memorials at other deserving American battlefields. As a private enterprise, the Richmond and Rappahannock Railway, a small interurban trolley line, was established in 1915 to convey tourists to visit local battlefields on the 50th anniversary of the end of the Civil War. In the 1920s, Richmond journalist and historian Douglas Southall Freeman led a group of like-minded residents in forming the Battlefield Markers Association, raising funds for the identification and placement of over sixty commemorative markers at various battlefield sites in and around the city. The collection of "Freeman Markers"—thirteen of which are located within Richmond NBP—is the earliest known series of non-governmental historical markers in the country.

The Freeman Markers typically consist of a cast iron inscription tablet set at an angle on a concrete capstone with a granite base. The cast iron tablets have raised lettering describing the portion of the battle commemorated and a unique identifying number at the lower left corner. Two of these Freeman Markers, #7 and #8, are currently located within the boundary of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield cultural landscape.

Following the success of the Freeman Markers, the Virginia Conservation and Economic Development Commission began erecting roadside signs in 1927 to commemorate events of the Civil War. These markers consist of a cast iron sign mounted vertically on metal signposts and painted silver with raised black lettering. The commission placed marker number PA-25 near the Watt house in 1932 to commemorate the Battle of Gaines' Mill.

The district's contributing commemorative monuments meet Criteria Consideration F because they possess significance engendered from their age, design, and symbolic values.

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE

The Watt House (LCS No. 001232, contributing building) at Gaines' Mill, constructed 1830–1832, is the only surviving building related to the former Watt farm, once known as Springfield Plantation. The three-bay side-hall dwelling is representative of a two-thirds Georgian-style house, featuring a characteristic raised brick basement and decorative exterior end wall chimneys with a small chimney pent, common to the region. The two-thirds Georgian is a variation on the typical Georgian house, with the omission of the outer bay resulting in a side passage rather than the traditional central hallway. This building type was popular in the urban parts of Richmond, being well suited to the constraints of a growing city. The National Park Service restored the house in 1956 and rehabilitated it in 1987. For many years the building was used to house park staff (Glassie 1975:91; McAlester 2014:161).

CRITERION C: ENGINEERING

Although they are modest compared with primary defensive earthworks found elsewhere in Richmond National Battlefield Park, the rifle pits, trenches and breastworks surviving on the Gaines Mill Battlefield are representative of minor defensive features of a once extensive system. The preserved remains of a multi-layered system of fortifications are nationally significant under Criterion C in the area of Engineering. The sophisticated systems of trenches and forts constructed by the Confederate and Union armies represent the state to which field fortification engineering advanced during the Civil War and are generally regarded as the forerunners of the static trench warfare methods used in Europe in World War I. In addition to the permanent fortifications, numerous examples of temporary field fortifications, such as the humble rifle pits and trenches at Gaines Mill, are widely located elsewhere on the battlefield units within the district.

CRITERION D: ARCHEOLOGY

Archeological investigations at Gaines' Mill Battlefield have yielded, and may be expected to continue to yield, important information about the use and features of the property present during the period of significance. To date, only the Malvern Hill, Glendale, and Gaines' Mill units have undergone systematic, unit-wide archeological review or survey. The identified archeological resources and surviving above-ground elements of the military landscape at Gaines' Mill illustrate the organization, operation, and experiences of the Union and Confederate armies that can be extrapolated to archeologically unexplored portions of the district.

EVALUATION OF LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. In order for a property to retain its integrity, it must possess the essential characteristics and features that characterized it during the historic period. The National Register program identifies seven aspects of integrity, including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain integrity, a property must possess the aspects that best convey its physical appearance during its period of significance as well as its historical associations.

The character of the area at the time of the battle was rural and agricultural, with wide open fields interrupted by bands of forest, disperse clusters of houses and outbuildings scattered throughout the open areas, and long lines of fences dividing the fields. Today, the landscape continues to exhibit a rural character, with few visual intrusions of modern development. Although the amount of open land is reduced from historic conditions, the overall relationships of the extant landscape characteristics and features successfully convey important battle events and other historical associations.

The landscape retains the integrity aspects of location and association as the site of the primary fighting and most decisive events of the Battle of Gaines' Mill. The land now encompassed by the park represented the heart of the Union defense, and was the site of the initial breach of the Federal line by the Confederates. The Watt house also served as Gen. Porter's headquarters and as a field hospital. The spatial relationships between the house, the level plateau, the Boatswain Creek ravine, and the field and forest cover help visitors understand these events and place them spatially within the landscape.

The aspects of design, workmanship, and materials are carried primarily by the Watt house, which remains substantially unchanged from the historic period. Although the house has been updated and modified since the battle to accommodate its residents, modifications were relatively minor, with no additions to the structure. The primary changes to the house since the historic period include its white paint (likely unpainted at the time of the battle), the loss of its front (south) porch, which extended across the southern façade of the house until the early twentieth century, and the switching of the practical front of the house from the south to the north.

The landscape's setting and feeling remain rural, but much of its historic agricultural character has been lost, despite continuing agricultural use of some of the fields on the property and many of the surrounding properties. At the time of the battle, agricultural use involved a significant number of structures and features in the landscape, including barns, shed, and other outbuildings, wagons and other farming equipment, fences, orchards, a variety of crop fields, and animals. This would have given the landscape a relatively busy feeling, both visually and in terms of farming activity. Today, agricultural use is managed off-site, and no equipment or other infrastructure is stored within the landscape. This imparts a generally empty and quiet character most of the time.

Integrity is further diminished by the loss of character-defining vegetation, including orchards and domestic ornamental vegetation around the house. In addition to large shade trees, the house yard featured flowers, shrubs, hedges, and likely a kitchen garden. Today the house is surrounded by turf grass and a small number of large shade and smaller ornamental trees, but is otherwise free of domestic vegetation.

ANALYSIS OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES

Landscape characteristics are the broad patterns, systems, and feature categories that compose the landscape and determine how people interact with it. The analysis of landscape characteristics and features serves to identify the components

Figure 3.1. Image showing the character of Boatswain Creek (OCLP).



of the landscape that define the historic character and contribute to the historic significance of the property. The analysis entails comparing existing conditions to what was present during the historic period and making an evaluation of whether the landscape characteristic contributes to the landscape's historic character.

The landscape characteristics evaluated for Gaines' Mill include natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, circulation, buildings and structures, vegetation, small-scale features, views and vistas, and archeological sites. For each characteristic, the analysis is organized and presented in the following manner:

Historic Conditions, a brief discussion of the history and evolution of the landscape characteristics as it relates to the period of significance;

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions, an overview of changes that have occurred since the end of the period of significance; and

Evaluation, a determination of whether the landscape characteristic contributes to the historic character of the landscape.

NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FEATURES

Natural systems and features are the natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of the landscape.

Historic Conditions

Gaines' Mill Battlefield is located within the coastal plain below Virginia's fall line. Rivers in the coastal plain move slowly through flat floodplains, characterized by meandering channels and swampy bottomlands. These bottomlands are surrounded by mostly level upland plateaus, which are cut with steeply sloped

drainage ravines. Prior to European settlement, these uplands and river bottoms were wooded with mature mix of hardwoods and pine, with wetland vegetation in the stream drainages. Native American populations managed these forests with fire or tree and brush clearing to facilitate travel, improve game habitat, and make it easier to hunt and grow food. Forests in the region contained abundant game, including deer, hares, rabbits, squirrels, and wild fowl, and the James River, as well as the larger streams, were important sources for fish and shellfish.

Following European settlement, the forest was gradually cleared to support increasing demand for agricultural land. Timber was used for building material and for fuel, and may have been an early export crop to England or to the rapidly developing plantation economy of the Caribbean. As the land was divided and sold to other farmers, the clearing would have accelerated across the uplands, with steep or wet areas, unsuitable for agriculture, remaining forested.

The Battle of Gaines' Mill was fought across an area of level upland plateaus divided by the Boatswain Creek drainage and bordered on the south and west by the floodplain of the Chickahominy River. The house and primary fields of the Watt farm were located on a plateau on the south side of Boatswain Creek, with level land extending roughly 1,000 feet east to west and 200 to 300 feet north to south. More level land was located southeast of the Watt farm on the property of the Adams farm, and on the north side of Boatswain Creek on the Parsons and Gaines properties. The majority of the area of these plateaus had been cleared for crops and pastures, providing ample room for the two armies to maneuver, but exposing the Confederates to fire from Union artillery and infantry as they crossed the fields toward the creek.

Boatswain Creek defined the line of battle between the Federals and the Confederates. It flowed from the northeast in two branches that joined just northeast of the Watt house to form a single channel, which then flowed southwest along the north side of the Watt house plateau. West of the Watt house, the stream made a left-hand bend before entering the swampy Chickahominy River plain. Along the length of Boatswain Creek's channel, the gradient was nearly flat, so that the creek meandered slowly, and the land along its banks was boggy. Beyond the flat area along the channel, the banks climbed steeply, rising fifty feet or more from the creek to the plateau above. Union infantries were deployed in parallel rows along the south bank of the creek, positioning themselves in such a way along the slope so that each line could fire over the line of soldiers in front.

The banks and the flat stream channel were wooded, and in many places choked with dense underbrush. The densest woods and underbrush were northeast of the Watt house, between the two creek branches. Just west of the junction of the creek branches, the woods thinned, creating a small gap in the trees, accommodating a stream crossing between the Watt and Parsons properties. From there westward, the trees continued within the stream valley nearly uninterrupted to the far western end of the plateau. There, the wooded band within the creek valley became more open in character, with less underbrush than that found on its eastern reaches.

Post Historic and Existing Conditions

Following the battle and for the remainder of the war, the Watt farm likely remained abandoned and uncultivated. Fields went fallow and began to fill with weeds and brush. Signs from the fighting, including damaged and felled trees, craters from shells, and rifle pits and other earthworks, were discernible in the forest for decades. As agriculture resumed following the war, fields were reclaimed for crops, but overall cultivated area declined over the years. By the late twentieth century, open land around the Watt house had diminished to three open fields on the north, east, and west respectively, an area totaling about fifteen acres.

Beyond these changes, the natural systems and features of Gaines' Mill Battlefield remained largely unchanged during the post-historic period. Currently, Boatswain Creek, with its flat swampy bottom, meandering channel, steep banks, wetland vegetation, remains a critical geographic feature, an important historic obstacle defining the battlefield and helping to convey the significant events of the battle. The creek channel geomorphology, vegetation, and overall character remain similar to conditions at the time of the battle. While the forested area along the creek is deeper and denser today than it was in 1862, particularly west of the channel confluence at the Watt House Road bridge, it continues to define the battlefield that once separated Union and Confederate forces.

Evaluation

The natural systems and features of Gaines' Mill Battlefield, including Boatswain Creek, the ravine through which it flows, the level Watt house plateau, and forest and wetland vegetation along the creek course, continue to convey the conditions similar to those at the time of the Battle of Gaines' Mill and their impact on the events and outcomes of the battle.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Spatial organization is the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in the landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces.

Historic Conditions

The spatial organization of the Watt farm at the time of the Battle of Gaines' Mill is believed to have been typical of small to medium sized farms of nineteenth-century Virginia. The farm was anchored by the farmhouse, centrally located on the level plateau, about eight hundred feet south of Boatswain Creek. The house was oriented toward the south, with a long front porch facing out toward lands descending toward the Chickahominy River. Behind and on either side of the Watt house stood domestic and service outbuildings that included a two-room dwelling for enslaved workers, thought to have been located forty feet east of the house, as well as structures like a smokehouse, well house, dairy, stable, barns, and one or more chicken coops. These structures bounded a yard used for much of the domestic work, including food preparation, laundry, and making and repairing household items. Although the yard would have exhibited an overall utilitarian character, it was typically differentiated from the outlying agricultural land by the presence of large shade trees and informal ornamental vegetation.

Several agricultural buildings are assumed to have been located some distance from the house. An archeological assessment of the property prepared in 2000 suggests a barn located about fifty yards southeast of the house, a cluster of three barns or sheds about 185 yards west of the house, and a stable located near the edge of the woods north of the house. Two cabins housing enslaved workers are thought to have been located near the creek ravine north of the house. The agricultural landscape likely contained several other structures that met various needs. These structures were located singularly or in small clusters where they were needed, with no formal organizational order beyond utility.

The farm landscape was partitioned into irregularly shaped fields and pastures delineated by fencing that stretched across the top of the plateau. This open area was bounded along the north by the wooded ravine containing Boatswain Creek, the open fields stretching out to the south and east across broad open fields of adjacent farms.

In the years following the Civil War, the Watt farm continued to operate as a tenant farm until the 1920s. While the house remained largely unchanged during this time, the domestic and agricultural buildings were adapted, replaced, or removed as needed for farm operation. Early twentieth-century photographs show a barn or shed east of the house that may have been adapted from an earlier structure, perhaps this was the two-room enslaved quarters located there in 1862 during the battle. Beyond this, little is known about how long the various outbuildings that were present during the battle remained in the landscape before being removed.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions

By the time the property was rehabilitated for use as a state and then national park, all of the structures were in poor condition. The house was repaired for contin-

Figure 3.2. Continued agricultural use of fields within the McDougle tract north and west of Boatswain Creek (OCLP).



ued use as a dwelling, but all other remaining buildings were removed. With the primary approach at that time coming from the north along Watt House Road, the house was reoriented so that the front faced north toward Boatswain Creek. A driveway loop and parking area was developed north of the house, and a two-car garage was built west of the house near where the well house had been.

Today, the spatial organization of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield landscape is primarily ordered by the house, the two-car garage, and the circulation features. The house and garage are located within a partially fenced yard encircled by a broad service drive loop. A small parking area and driveway loop terminate about eighty-five feet north of the house. The general organization of the battlefield landscape is interpreted by split-rail worm fencing, and two interpretive displays of cannons suggest approximate locations of Union artillery during the battle.

Evaluation

The house remains in its historic location, and its spatial relationships to the natural features of the creek, ravine, and plateau remain intact. These spatial relationships are essential in conveying the historic associations of the farm with

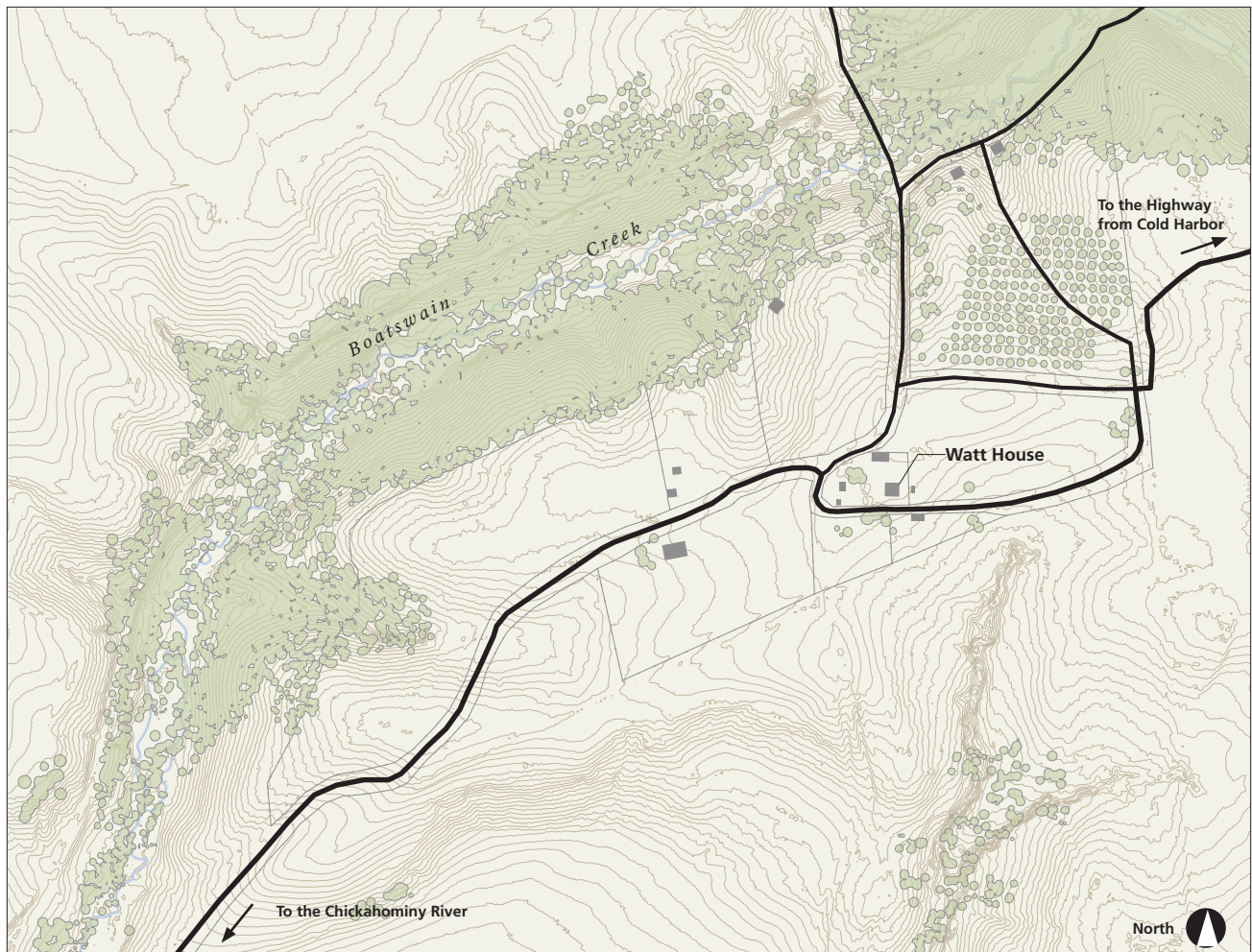


Figure 3.3. Diagram of the Watt property in 1862 highlighting the circulation features (OCLP).

the events of the battle. The landscape as a whole, however, no longer reflects the spatial organization that once characterized its agricultural use during the historic period.

LAND USE

Land use is the principal activities in the landscape that have formed, shaped, or organized the landscape as a result of human interactions.

Historic Conditions

The primary land use over most of the landscape's history has been agricultural, including subsistence and market farming, animal husbandry, and the production and processing of farm products. Agriculture as a primary use likely started early in the nineteenth century and continued until the property was transferred to the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation in 1928. Simultaneous with its agricultural use, the property also served as the home of the Watt family prior to the Civil War, and of a series of tenants between the end of the war and the establishment of the park. Domestic use of the property also included the homes of an unknown

number of enslaved laborers who lived and worked on the property before the battle.

Beginning in the 1920s, the property was used to commemorate the Battle of Gaines' Mill, first with the placement of commemorative markers and then through the site's inclusion in Richmond National Battlefield Park.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions

Following the establishment of the park, the Gaines' Mill Battlefield site was opened to the public and its primary use became the interpretation of the events of the historic battle and its context within the Civil War, as well as interpretation of themes related to nineteenth-century domestic life, nineteenth- and twentieth-century agriculture and homesteading, and Civil War commemoration.

Today, portions of the battlefield site continue to be cultivated with grain crops through leases with local farmers. Other continuing historic uses of the site include commemoration, with the presence of commemorative markers, and domestic, with the use of the Watt house for park housing.

Evaluation

Contributing land uses at Gaines' Mill Battlefield include agriculture, domestic (residence), and commemoration.

CIRCULATION

Circulation includes the spaces, features, and applied finishes that constitute systems of movement in the landscape.

Historic Conditions

The circulation system of the Watt Farm during the historic period is not fully understood. Maps of the time typically did not depict estate drives, farm roads, and minor circulation features in detail. Most of the maps from around the time of the battle show the location of the Watt farm with no indication of access roads connecting it to the main highways. Only the Michler map, made after the end of the Civil War, shows an access road approaching the house from the north, in the vicinity of the current Watt House Road, although there is speculation that this road was either constructed or improved by the Union army in the years between the Battle of Gaines' Mill and the Battle of Cold Harbor two years later.

It is believed that at the time of the battle, the primary access road entered the farm from the east. This road served as the primary link between the Springfield Plantation and the public roads running from New Cold Harbor, southeast to the Chickahominy River. The farm road branched off the public way approximately

Figure 3.4. Image of the farm service drive as it exits the south boundary of the property, showing two-track character (OCLP).



one-half mile southeast of New Cold Harbor, ran parallel to the highway and southwest through a belt of woodland (an extension of the strip of woods bordering Boatswain Creek), and entered an open field approximately one-quarter mile from the Watt house along the former Watt-Adams property line.⁵

After entering the property, contemporary accounts recall the farm road running southwest across the field and past an orchard before bending around the south side of the house. From there, the primary farm road continued westward toward the western end of the plateau before descending the slope toward the Chickahominy River. The primary road then continued its southwesterly course across the Watt plateau before exiting the property boundary and connecting with the Union military road in the Chickahominy River bottom.⁶

Immediately west of the Watt house, a secondary farm road branched off of the primary farm road and ran northeast. This road likely passed between the Watt house on the east and a barn and other outbuildings on the west, and then ran north until it reached Boatswain Creek. At that point, it curved to the northeast and ran parallel to Boatswain Creek until it intersected with the public road running southeast from Cold Harbor.⁷

Surface archeological reconnaissance surveys have identified the remains of two short road traces that branched off from the present-day entry road and ran southeast across the open fields to connect with the farm's primary road leading to the Adams property. Another subordinate route, the path to the Parson's Spring noted by Margaret Haw, may have diverged from the secondary farm road and run northwest through or near a northern "opening" in the woodland lining Boatswain Creek toward the spring. It is possible, however, that these subordinate

roads developed after the battle, as they are not noted in contemporary writings and they do not appear maps before 1865.⁸

Military operations during the Battle of Gaines' Mill had little impact on Springfield's circulation network. The Union and Confederate armies occupied the property for less than forty-eight hours and used existing farm and military roads to maneuver and fight. No combatants' accounts mention construction of new roads or paths during the battle. In June of 1864, however, lengthy military operations and the building of extensive fortifications in the Cold Harbor area may have necessitated some construction, or at least the improvement, of the direct road between New Cold Harbor and the Watt house, now known as Watt House Road.⁹

Post-historic and Existing Conditions

Opening the park to visitation necessitated developing facilities for parking and circulation at the Watt house. Vehicular circulation was developed by the National Park Service in the 1960s include the a terminal driveway loop, the interpretive plaza, and the diagonal parking. Other vehicular circulation consisting of gravel or earthen drives for site access and rights-of-way for adjacent properties were retained.

Currently, the primary entrance to the site is via Watt House Road, which connects from Route 156 and enters the park from the north. Watt House Road follows the historic alignment that dates to at least 1865 and possibly before. At the southern terminus of the road is a terminal driveway loop of approximately eighty feet in diameter. On the west side of the entrance road just before the loop is an angled visitor parking area that can accommodate a half-dozen cars. Watt House Road, the parking area, and the terminal driveway loop are paved with a bituminous chip-seal surface.

A much broader gravel loop drive encircles the Watt house, garage, and yard, connecting at each side to the terminal driveway loop. The gravel loop drive is primarily a single lane, although vegetation growing in the center of the road gives it a rural two-track configuration in places. At the southwest side of the service loop, a two-track drive extends southward and exits the property on its southern border, providing access to adjoining properties. On the north side of Boatswain Creek, a farm drive that originates at the Watt House Road extends for nearly a mile through the McDougle tract (01B-100), providing access to the agricultural fields there.

Pedestrian access is accommodated by a system of interpretive trails extending through the fields and forests of the battlefield. Organized into three connected trails, the system consists of the Federal Defense Trail, a short loop trail that begins and ends near the Watt house, the Wilcox Trail, which extends from the Federal Defense Trail providing access to the south side of the creek ravine, and

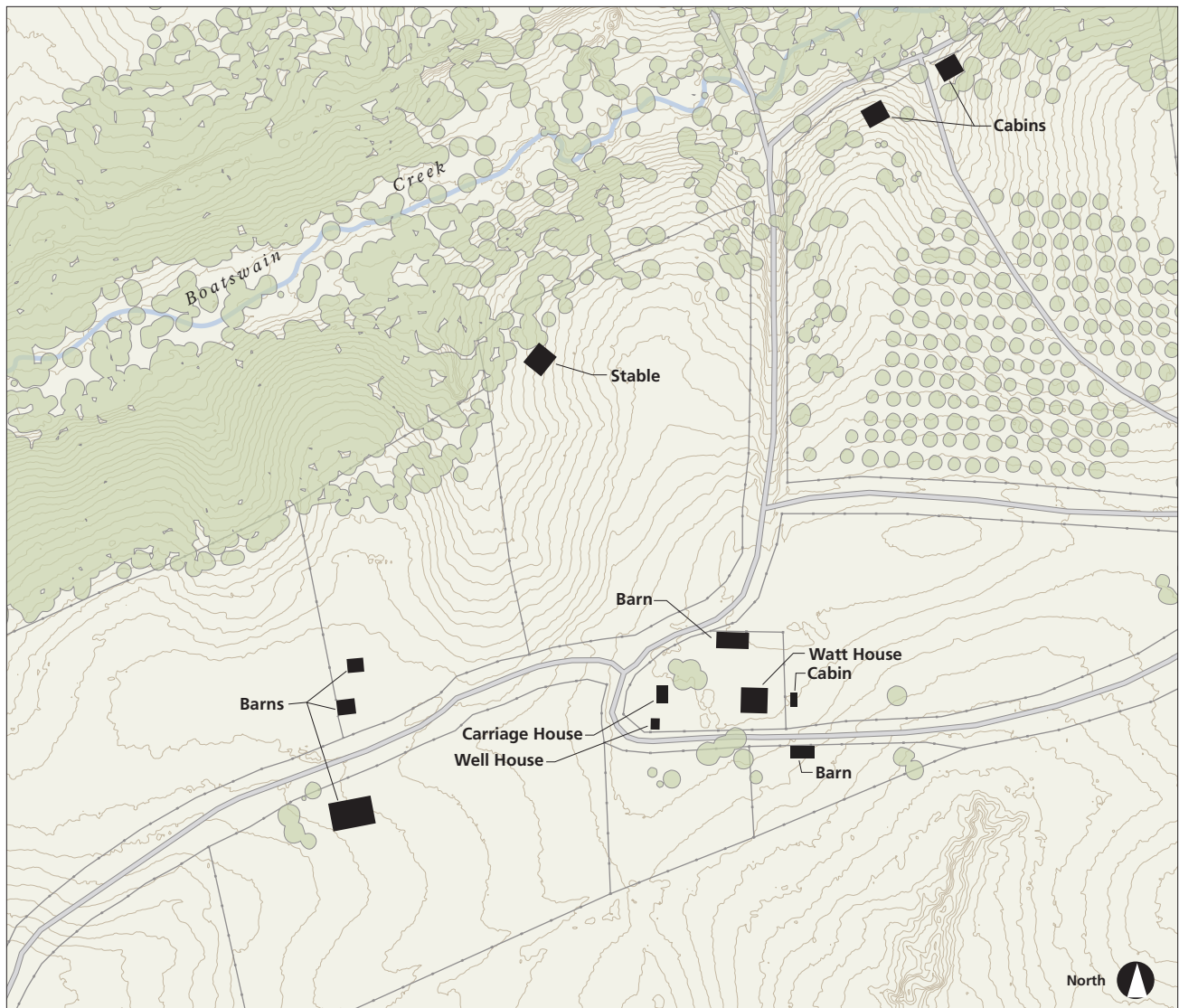


Figure 3.5. Diagram of the Watt property in 1862 highlighting the buildings and structures (OCLP).

the Confederate Attack Trail, a long loop trail the winds through the fields of the McDougle tract that lies to the north and west of Boatswain's Creek.

Evaluation

Although the construction and character of Watt House Road is significantly altered from its historic condition, its alignment and its function as the primary entrance to the property are contributing characteristics. Also contributing are the portions of the gravel service loop that loosely corresponds to historic road alignments.

A number of remnant road traces have been identified within the battlefield park; however, these are fragmentary and not conspicuous in the landscape. Road traces at Gaines' Mill Battlefield should generally be considered contributing archeological resources.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Buildings are the elements primarily built for sheltering any form of human activities, while structures include the functional elements constructed for other purposes.

Historic Conditions

The wood-frame Watt house was built around 1835 by Sarah and Hugh Watt. Margaret J. Haw, the Watts' granddaughter, described the structure as an old square, gray farmhouse standing on the "edge of a plateau, which sloped gently to the valley of the Chickahominy." Margaret grew up visiting her grandparents at Springfield, and she reminisced that nothing about the house ever changed in the years before the Civil War.¹⁰

While the Watt house currently appears to be oriented with its front facing north, in 1862 the house's front elevation was the south side. Margaret Haw remembered that the front of the house overlooked the plateau sloping toward the Chickahominy. This orientation would be consistent with the Tidewater tradition of facing plantation houses toward nearby waterways. A southern orientation of the house is also supported by the historical relationship between the house and its supporting outbuildings, which were arranged to its north and east, and by early twentieth-century photos of the house, which appear to show a front porch extending the length of the southern façade.

The Watt farm was supported by a variety of outbuildings prior to the 1862 battle. Outbuildings directly related to domestic uses were arranged in a tight cluster close to the main house. Domestic structures typical of a farm such as Springfield would have included a smokehouse, well house, dairy, stable, barns, quarters for the enslaved, and one or more chicken coops. This may have also included a detached kitchen, a common practice in southern homesteads at the time that would have helped keep the house cool in the summer and reduced the risk of fire. Margaret Haw mentioned the kitchen at Springfield on more than one occasion, although her quotes are ambiguous as to whether the kitchen was in fact detached or internal to the house. She recalled that an Althea, or "Rose-of-Sharon" hedge (*Hibiscus syriacus*) "screened the kitchen from the backyard," and noted that during the battle, a cannon ball damaged the kitchen chimney. Neither of these quotes, however, preclude the possibility that the kitchen was located in the basement of the house, as was concluded by researchers in the 1950s.¹¹

The 1860 census indicated that Springfield possessed four dwellings for enslaved workers on the property in 1860.¹² The locations of three of these are fairly well understood, and rationalized in a archeological assessment prepared in 2000, but that of the fourth is not known. A two-room cabin located directly east of the Watt house housed enslaved domestic workers such as cooks, laundresses, and house maids. Sarah Goulding, who lived in the Watt house from 1905-1912 and

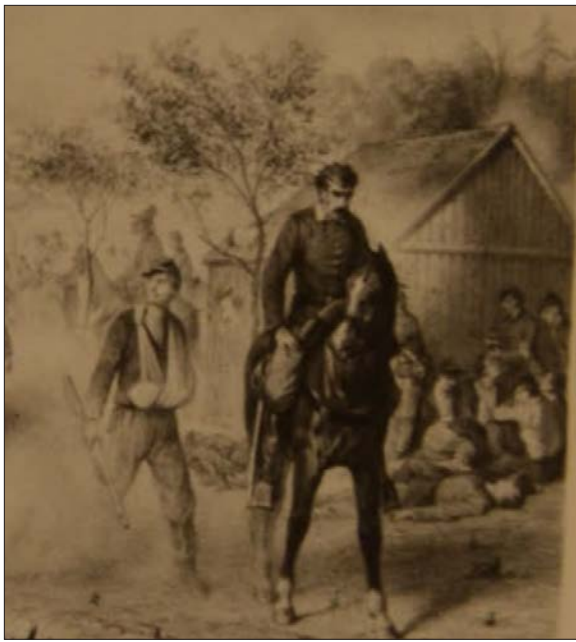


Figure 3.6. A weatherboard-clad structure, possibly a barn associated with the Springfield Plantation, in the background of a sketch done by Prince de Joinville in 1862, (RICH Archives. Original source: "Battle of Gaines Mill," Prince de Joinville, 1862, accessed from John Carter Library at Brown University).

was interviewed in 1956, stated that the domestic quarter was on the "chimney side of the house."¹³ This structure was approximately ten feet by twenty feet and located about forty feet east of the house. This is the same location as a structure present during the early twentieth century, indicated on maps and visible in photographs at the time. It is possible that following the war, the cabin was retained and adapted for other uses.

Cabins for field workers were located in the "lower fields" north of the Watt house's 1862 rear elevation. According to the archeological assessment prepared in 2000, the slave dwellings were probably sited approximately 250 yards north of the house on the south side of the secondary farm road that branched off the primary farm road.¹⁴ There were at least two cabins, each housing approximately ten to twelve enslaved workers. Aaron C. Kepler of the 11th Pennsylvania Reserves

during the 1862 Battle at Gaines' Mill described what may have been one of these dwellings. He wrote that after being wounded, he and a few others from his unit "attempted to seek shelter by crawling into an old log hut nearby, but soon the stone chimney, and, even the top of the house was torn off by cannonballs, and we abandoned it."¹⁵ Two field cabins were depicted on Laprade's map.¹⁶ In addition to the two field cabins, there may have been other structures and landscape features in their vicinity prior to the Civil War, including chicken coops, privies, fences, and gardens.¹⁷

Other structures included a well house west of the Watt house in the side yard. The well house consisted of four posts with a small, shingled roof. This may correspond to a small building shown on P.S. Michie's 1865 manuscript map which

Figure 3.7. "Capt DeHart's Battery," a sketch of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield with structures in the background that possibly correspond to the Watt House and barns associated with the Springfield Plantation (enlarged below) (1862), (RICH Archives. Original source: "Harper's Weekly," 1862, v. 6, p. 452, accessed from the Library of Virginia).



also happened to match a rectangular depression identified by archeologists in 1997. Mrs. Goulding also noted that the “well shed” was “in the same location” as the 1956 well, on the west side of the house as indicated on the twentieth century Laprade map.¹⁸

The farm’s agricultural buildings, including the barns, stables, a hog house and pen, and storage sheds, were situated at a distance from the Watt house, mostly to its sides and rear. Three structures are shown some distance west of the house on maps prepared in 1865. The location of these structures corresponds well with the accounts drawn from soldiers’ journals describing barns in this area. At least one of the barns was most likely of log construction, but because both log and frame outbuildings were described at Springfield, the other two barns could have been built using either construction technique. A member of the 4th Texas identified the possible location of a fourth barn and described its materials. His unit “halted for a few seconds” in “a lane formed by a fence and a barn.” His description of his position possibly places him on the primary farm road running south of the Watt house.¹⁹

A surface reconnaissance survey performed in 1997 discovered what is believed to be the barn’s remains next to the trace of the primary road. It was stated that the barn was clad in weatherboarding, as were the Watt house and other outbuildings in the yard. This barn may also be the weatherboard-clad structure that appears depicted on the right margin of French Prince de Joinville’s painting of “The Battle of Gaines’ Mill.” Moreover, this barn, the barn on Trimble’s map, and the Watt house may be depicted in the background of a sketch titled “Capt. DeHeart’s Battery shelling rebels at Gaines’ Mill.”²⁰



Figure 3.8. Watt house south facade looking north, showing stairs at the south and east entrances (OCLP).

Springfield's stable and possibly an associated barn are thought to have been located approximately two hundred yards northwest of the Watt house. Margaret Haw, the Watts' granddaughter, implied that the stable was situated in the "lower fields." Participants in the battle wrote that a "barn and stable" were located near the "edge of the timber" where they first emerged from the ravine along Boatswain Creek. P.S. Michie's 1865 manuscript map indicated that there was an outbuilding located on this site in a position that corresponds to a depression identified during the 1997 archeological surface reconnaissance of the site.²¹

The field cabins, carriage house, and likely the other buildings were clad in gray unpainted weatherboarding like that on the exterior of the Watt house. Other landscape features located near the house included locust trees, Scotch roses, the Althea hedge and a "garden fence."²²

The volleys of small arms fire and artillery shells during the fierce battle severely damaged many, if not all, of Springfield's buildings, including the Watt house, at least one field cabin and one barn, the plantation kitchen, and the stable. The Watt house, first used as Porter's headquarters and then as a Union field hospital, was ruined. Wounded Union Major William S. Tilton, who presumably was treated at the Watt house, stated that shortly after he left the field, "the house was penetrated many times by shells from our own batteries."²³ Margaret Haw described the house, which she inspected on her final visit to Springfield in September of 1862, as a "tenantless, foul and battered wreck." According to Haw, "The walls and roof were torn by shot and shell, the weather-boarding honey-combed by Minie balls," every "pane of glass shattered," and "from garret to cellar there was scarcely a space of flooring as large as a man's hand that did not bear the dark purple stain of blood."²⁴

Many of the outbuildings, which also had been used to shelter the wounded after the battle, were equally battered. The roof and stone chimney of the field cabin where Aaron Kepler of the 11th Pennsylvania Reserves sought shelter had been "torn off" by artillery fire. The frame barn located southeast of the Watt house and on the primary farm road was riddled by grapeshot fired from Union guns. The kitchen and stable, which were hit by cannon balls early in the battle, probably sustained similar damage. Confederate troops presumably scavenged the remains of some structures for wood for their cooking and campfires. Cumulative damage to some of the outbuildings, such as the field cabin, was probably so severe that these structures were likely razed rather than repaired.²⁵

Post-historic and Existing Conditions

After the establishment of the park, the Watt house was used as employee housing and was renovated and updated for that purpose. In addition to repairs and long-deferred maintenance, the house received updated utilities, heating, and eventually, air conditioning. Today the house remains in use as park housing and is not



Figure 3.9. The Ryan House, looking east, ca. 2010-2020.



Figure 3.12. Adams house front elevation, ca. 2010-2020. On the right bottom edge of the photograph, some of the outbuildings associated with the house can be seen.



Figure 3.10. Detached garage, north of the Ryan house (July 2020).



Figure 3.13. Gazebo west of the Adams house, taken looking east (July 2020).



Figure 3.11. Loafing shed in the wood south of the Ryan house (July 2020).



Figure 3.14. Front elevation of the Goggin house, ca. 2010-2020.

accessible to the visiting public, although it continues to serve as the most durable landmark in the battlefield landscape.

West of the house is a one-story frame garage that was constructed in 1968 for use by the Watt house residents. Designed to be compatible with the historic character of the landscape, although not replicating a specific building, the garage has a wood-shingled end-gable roof, clapboarded elevations, and is seated on a brick foundation with a poured concrete floor. The south elevation features a pair of overhead garage doors constructed of diagonal boards on the first story and a single diagonal board door centered on the second story. A vertical board entrance is located on the western side of the north elevation. Four small, rectangular louvered openings line the east and west side elevations; two identical openings are also located on the rear (north) wall.

All other structures present within sixty-acre Watt tract at the time the park was established were removed. Today, the only buildings and structures within the original boundaries of the park are the Watt house and the 1968 garage.

The residential properties north of Boatswain Creek acquired by the park between 2013 and 2017 contain a number of twentieth-century houses and other structures that were occupied before becoming part of the park. The Ryan tract at 6366 Watt House Road contains a one-story brick ranch-style house, with a small front porch and a two-car garage on the northern end of the structure. A paved asphalt driveway runs along the northern boundary of the tract and ends with a small loop in front of the house. In the yard northeast of the Ryan house is a one-story, one-car garage clad with white vinyl siding, an asphalt-shingled, front-gable roof, and a garage door with a distinctive yellow smiley face painted in the center of it. South of the house, in the woods, is an open loafing shed, constructed with a wood frame and sheathed with sheet metal on the south and part of the east walls as well as the roof.

South of the Ryan house, on the Adams tract, is a cinder block dwelling with white vinyl siding constructed in 1955. To the north of the house is a wood gazebo with a rectangular plan that was built in 1998, and a group of three separate shed buildings are situated in the yard south of the house. The front yard is enclosed with a chain-link fence on its northern border and by white vinyl fencing on the western and southern borders. A metal tube gate is attached to the white fence on the western border.

The Goggin tract, located at 6296-Watt House Road contains a one-story ranch house built in 1980, featuring an asphalt-shingle side-gable roof, vinyl siding, and a brick foundation. The house features six-over-six double-hung vinyl windows flanked with vinyl shutters. A roof overhang supported by wood posts shelters a narrow brick porch at the main entrance on the south elevation. Corrugated metal roofs protect additional entrances in the west side and rear (north) elevations.



Figure 3.15. Diagram of the Watt property in 1862 providing the general location of orchards remembered in eyewitness accounts (OCLP).

The tract also contains a two-car garage built in 1980 and a one-car garage built in 2007.

Evaluation

The Watt house, the only building on the property dating from the historic period, is a contributing resource. All other buildings and structures are non-contributing.

VEGETATION

Vegetation includes deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, and herbaceous plants, and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced in the landscape.

Historic Conditions

Prior to settlement, the Gaines' Mill Battlefield and its surroundings would have been almost entirely forested with mixed deciduous and coniferous species. Dominant tree species included numerous species of oak, including white (*Quercus alba*), red (*Q. rubra*), black (*Q. nigra*), willow (*Q. phellos*), scarlet (*Q. coccinea*), pin (*Q. palustris*), and blackjack (*Q. marilandica*). Other common trees were the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and

hickory (*Carya* spp.). Red maple (*Acer rubrum*), American holly (*Ilex opaca*), blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), ash (*Fraxinus* spp.), and sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) would have also been significant components of local woodland cover. Conifers were represented by a variety of pine species, including loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) and Virginia pine (*P. virginiana*).

Clearing of these forests began in the seventeenth century as wood was cut for lumber and fuel and the area was converted to the production of tobacco and other crops. Initially, tobacco was the predominant crop grown in Tidewater Virginia. The nutrient-intensive crop quickly depleted soils, however, and after a few growing seasons, new land had to be cleared to maintain production, accelerating the rate of deforestation. Areas depleted by tobacco cultivation were then planted with cereal grains, which required less fertile soil, or were otherwise left fallow and given time to recover. Tobacco cultivation declined through the seventeenth century, replaced by wheat and corn, along with, to a lesser degree, oats, potatoes, peas. By the time of the Civil War, there is little evidence that tobacco was grown in the Gaines' Mill area in significant quantities.

Cleared land on the crest of the Watt house plateau would have been subdivided into individual lots and fields of five to twenty acres in size. Many of the descriptions of the mid-summer battles in Virginia mention shocked wheat stacked for harvest, as well as oats and corn. According to Margaret Haw, at least one of these fields was planted in hay in June 1862. Springfield's 1860 agricultural production statistics and Haw's testimony regarding "green fields of waving corn," however, indicate that many of the remaining fields on the property were planted in "young corn [that] was knee high." Other fields may have been planted in oats, wheat, or sweet potatoes and some could have lain fallow.²⁶

Springfield contained at least one, and perhaps two orchards, containing apple and peach trees. Margaret Haw's memories of her visits to Springfield included driving past the orchard as she entered the farm. Her family lived in Hanover County near Studley, north of Cold Harbor and New Cold Harbor, and almost certainly would have traveled to Springfield via one of these two crossroads. Haw remembered that when visiting her grandmother, her family turned off the "public highway" from New Cold Harbor into "a private road [the plantation's primary farm road], which led through a strip of woods and an open field to the house." As they approached the house, she continued, they "passed the orchard on our right," and the "breeze wafted to us the fragrance of ripe apples and peaches."²⁷

Union and Confederate accounts of the battle also mention an orchard, but in a different place. According to Lieutenant Scott, a Union officer in Battery E of the 5th Massachusetts Light Artillery, his battery initially deployed on "low ground near a peach orchard in rear of the line of battle." From that location they "could

Figure 3.16. The historic Watt house has lost most of the shade trees and other domestic vegetation that defined the landscape both before and after the battle. The former black locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) remembered by a family member are most notably absent (OCLP).



Figure 3.17. Mature, yet non-historic Virginia redcedar trees block the view of the Watt House for visitors arriving via Watt House Road (OCLP).



not see the movement of troops on our right nor the brigades on our left.” He observed that until Gen. John B. Hood’s Texans charged Scott’s position, “the peach orchard seemed to cover us.”²⁸ Confederate General Hood himself reported that after crossing Boatswain Creek and changing fronts to face a Union battery to his left, he “halted in an orchard beyond the works.” The placement of the orchard as remembered by Lieutenant Scott, being opposite the Confederate forces led by

General Hood, suggests that his was a second orchard located to the west of the orchard remembered by Margaret Haw.

A “Historical Landscape Study of the Gaines’ Mill Battlefield” prepared by Clifford R. Dickinson in 1990, and the *Gaines’ Mill Cultural Landscape Report and Archeological Survey* by Land and Community Associates, provide analysis based on these and other historical accounts that support an orchard location northeast of the Watt house.²⁹ These analyses describe an large orchard of one to three acres comprising peach and apple trees, with a narrow farm lane running through it.

A second hypothesis advanced by Land and Community Associates places a second orchard west or southwest of the Watt house about three hundred yards. This hypothesis, is based primarily on battery locations and the events surrounding General Philip St. George Cooke’s Union cavalry charge that attempted to save these batteries from capture. It is

possible that both accounts of orchards on the Watt property are accurate; there may have been two orchards. A 1930s aerial photograph indicated a struggling orchard in this second location. While this photograph was made seventy years after the historic battle and it would have been impossible for orchard trees to have survived the battle, land use patterns can be surprisingly durable. The orchard seen in the 1930s aerial may have been planted in the approximate location of the former location remembered by Lt. Scott.

As Margaret Haw recalled, the fighting destroyed the cultivated fields of hay, corn, and possibly oats, wheat, and sweet potatoes that covered the brow and crest of the Watt house plateau. The scything rifle and artillery fire that shredded the trees and undergrowth in the Boatswain Creek ravine would have also destroyed the orchards, which were located on open and exposed land on top of the plateau. Badly damaged peach and apple trees were standing when Haw returned to visit the plantation after the battle, however, they probably did not survive much longer. The 1865, postwar federal survey maps of area indicate orchards located on Dr. Gaines', and William Gaines' farms, as well as numerous other properties in the vicinity of Springfield, but not on the Watt farm. Springfield's peach and apple orchards could have been destroyed during the lengthy June 1864 Cold Harbor fighting, but it is most likely they were removed prior to that date owing to extensive damage.³⁰

In addition to agricultural vegetation, domestic and ornamental vegetation was common near dwelling houses and farmsteads. Shade trees were typically large native tree species, including oak, sycamore, black locust, chestnut, hickory, and ash. Margaret Haw described the house as "embowered in venerable locusts." The Michler maps of the area indicate trees near farmsteads that may represent shade trees, including allées of trees lining farm roads. These shade trees had the effect of spatially defining the domestic core of a farm and differentiating it from the agricultural land beyond. Although ornamental vegetation was not often documented in the landscape, domestic areas of farms typically contained a variety of ornamental shrubs, flowering trees, flowering perennials, and other vegetation. Margaret Haw mentioned a flowering Althea, or "Rose-of-Sharon" hedge (*Hibiscus syriacus*) and Scotch rose (*Rosa spinosissima*) growing in the house yard.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions

In the years following the Civil War, the cultivated area of the Watt farm slowly diminished and the woodland lining Boatswain Creek encroached on former farmland. Today, forest composition is characterized as "Mesic Mixed Hardwood), with forest species such as white oak, red oak, beech, yellow poplar, black walnut, and American holly, as well as loblolly and Virginia pine. Along Boatswain Creek, the woodlands are characterized by stands of bottomland hardwoods that include yellow poplar, sweet gum, sycamore, red maple, and birch. Forested wetlands,

with tree species such as birch, willow, sweet gum, red maple, and black gum, are also present along the stream corridor. Non-native species are commonly found throughout the woodland areas.

Following the establishment of the battlefield park, agriculture continued within what remained of the open fields. Today, portions of the fields are farmed under leases with local farmers, who are restricted to historically appropriate crops such as corn and wheat. This agricultural land, comprising approximately 120 acres, is primarily on the recently acquired parcels to the north and west of Boatswain Creek. Approximately eighteen acres on the Watt house plateau remains as open fields, ten of these acres having been cleared of trees by the National Park Service in 2006 to better evoke historic field patterns. These open fields on the Watt House plateau contain meadow vegetation, and just under three acres around the historic house and also the visitor parking are lot maintained as mown turf grass.

Through the twentieth century, the house had a number of large shade trees around it. Although photos from the 1920s and 1930s show an almost a complete lack of shrubs, flower gardens, or other ornamental vegetation around the dwelling, it should be remembered that this was a time when the property was occupied by tenant farmers who would not typically invest time or money in non-productive features of a property that they did not own. With the development of park facilities and the use of the house as a park residence, domestic vegetation increased, including the planting of shade and flowering trees, foundation plantings,

Figure 3.18. "Map of 66 Acres of Land Situated in Hanover County near Cold Harbor" (W.W. Laprade & Bros., Dec. 1927) annotated by the authors (in green) to illustrate the well, field cabins, and barn (RICH Archives).



and evergreen hedges. Much of this vegetation has since been removed, and today, vegetation around the house is limited to a few large trees, including a two-trunk willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) in the center of the terminal driveway loop, a pin oak (*Q. palustris*) southwest of the house, and a row of trees along the fence line north of the house that includes a tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* sp.), and four large eastern red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*).

The twentieth-century residences north of Boatswain Creek, including the Adams, Ryan, and Goggins houses, contain a variety of domestic and ornamental vegetation.

Evaluation

No extant vegetation dating from the historic period has been identified at Gaines' Mill Battlefield. Although there are potentially extant historic vegetation located in the wooded areas, such as trees old enough to be witnesses to the battle or remnant fruit trees from historic orchards, these have yet to be identified or cataloged. Aside from its contribution to land use (agriculture) and its association with natural systems and features (wooded areas along Boatswain Creek), the vegetation at Gaines' Mill Battlefield is non-contributing.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

Small-scale features provide detail and diversity for both functional needs and aesthetic concerns in the landscape.

Historic Conditions

The Watt farm landscape would have contained a wide variety of small-scale features, the majority of which related to agricultural and domestic functions. These would generally have been transient and moveable objects that did not persist for long periods. One exception was fencing, which divided and organized both the agricultural and domestic portions of the landscape.

Fences

Many participants in the Battle of Gaines' Mill mentioned encountering rail fences extending along portions of farm roads, enclosing at least one outbuilding, and running across fields. Most of the fencing that snaked across the Watt farm landscape would have been Virginia worm, or zigzag fences. Virginia worm fences consisted of eight-to-ten split rails of oak, pine, or ash approximately ten feet in length, stacked on top of each other in a zigzagging line. While this fence style required large numbers of timber rails, it could be constructed or repositioned quickly and with little skill. More finished fence styles, such as post-and-rail and

Figure 3.19. Freeman Marker #7, commemorating the Watt house and its role in the Battle of Gaines' Mill, located on the north side of the house today (OCLP).



Figure 3.20. Two replica cannons indicate the approximate location of Union artillery during the battle (OCLP).



Figure 3.21. Contemporary split-rail Virginia worm fencing in the field west of the Watt house, looking west (OCLP).



paling garden fences, were likely used more sparingly and were generally found near the principal dwelling.³¹

The locations of most fence lines on the site must be inferred from Union troops' repeated references to using rails taken from fences in the vicinity of their positions to fashion hasty breastwork defenses. These various accounts collectively indicate that rail fences most likely lined a significant distance along both sides of the primary farm road running across the southern portion of the Springfield property. Similarly, fences lined most or all of the of the secondary farm road branching northward from the primary farm road west of the Watt house and curving to the east though the vicinity of the field cabins.

Fences divided some of the fields, enclosing buildings like the barns and barnyards lying to the west of the Watt house and the stable located north of the Watt house and on the edge of the woods. It is also understood that there was a fence surrounding the Watt house garden, and additional fences probably existed around any smaller personal gardens found near the field cabins. These garden fences would likely have been palings set close together and about a foot into the ground to discourage rodents. Other fence lines could have run along the north-south connector road between the primary and secondary Watt farm roads, and additional fencing may have subdivided the plantation's fields into five- to twenty-acre individual parcels. Since the majority of Springfield's fences were worm fences built without posts, they would have left little to no evidence either above or below ground. Archeological evidence of post holes that could reveal the locations of post-and-rail or paling fences in the vicinity of the Watt house may yet be located through subsurface archeological testing and excavation.³²



Figure 3.22. Today, the longest views from the house are toward the west across the Watt house plateau (OCLP).

The fences at Springfield were especially vulnerable during the battle and are not believed to have survived intact. It's likely that the fierce battle and its immediate aftermath destroyed the plantation's entire network of rail fences. Margaret Haw remembered that when she visited the site two months following the battle, "there was not a trace of any enclosures." As Union and Confederate participants in the battle repeatedly recounted, that Springfield's worm fences were torn down and reassembled into breastworks or were otherwise destroyed by rifle and artillery fire. After the battle, Confederate troops almost certainly used the scattered and shattered oak, pine, and ash rails for personal and hospital campfires.³³

Fences were rebuilt as farming on the property resumed following the war, but it is unknown to what extent the new fencing followed previous arrangements. By the twentieth century, fences were constructed of locust posts and manufactured woven and barbed wire products. Photographs from the 1920s and 1930s show wire fencing enclosing fields and paddocks north of the house, but do not suggest that there were picket or other well-made fencing creating domestic enclosure around the house.

Commemorative Markers

In 1925, Freeman Marker #7 (VCRIS 043-5138-0007) and #8 (VCRIS 043-5138-0008) placed at the Gaines' Mill Battlefield.³⁴ Marker #7 is titled "The Watt House, Gaines' Mill Battlefield" and the inscription reads: "Entrenched in three lines on this plateau, the right wing of McClellan's army, withdrawn from Beaver Dam Creek, resisted Confederate attacks on June 27, 1862 until driven back at night-fall by a general assault." Marker #8 is titled "Approximate Line of Whiting's Advance" and the inscription reads: "Near this point, between the brigades of Martindale and Butterfield, Confederate forces first penetrated the main Federal position in the Battle of Gaines' Mill, June 27, 1862. The Fourth Texas Regiment led the charge." Marker #8 featured the typical Freeman Marker design, with a bronze plaque mounted on an inclined concrete pad with a granite-block base. The design of Marker #7 omitted the granite base, possibly due to its close proximity to the house. A map of the property created in 1927 indicates their possible original placements.

In 1932, the Virginia Conservation and Economic Development Commission erected a painted metal marker mounted on a metal pole on the north side of the house.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions

With the conversion of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield from working farm to public park, remaining agricultural and domestic small-scale features were largely removed, although some post-and-wire fencing around the agricultural fields remained for some years. Some small-scale features related to the use of the Watt

House as a park residence, such as a woodshed and utility building, were added during the second half of the twentieth century and later removed. Today, small-scale features in the park include split-rail worm and post-and-rail fencing, two pairs of cannons placed to indicate approximate locations of artillery, a variety of interpretive, informational, and traffic signs and waysides, and various utility structures.

Evaluation

Freeman Marker #7 and #8 remain on site and contribute to the significance of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield. These two markers are inventoried as among the park's CRIS-HS inventory of historic structures. While the fencing and cannons at Gaines' Mill are historically compatible and help interpret the battlefield, they are non-contributing resources. There are no extant contributing small-scale features.

VIEWS AND VISTAS

Views and vistas are the prospects afforded by a range of vision in the landscape, conferred by the composition of other landscape characteristics and associated features.

Historic Conditions

At the time of the battle, the extensive open fields would have offered views in all directions from the Watt house plateau. To the south and southwest, the land was largely clear, providing broad and distant views down the slope toward the Chickahominy River and its floodplain. Views were also open toward the southeast toward the Adams farm, where Porter established artillery batteries to provide cover to the Union infantry arranged along the battle front.

To the north, the formerly thinner band of woodland lining Boatswains Creek afforded views over and through the trees toward the Parsons property on the north side of the creek. This allowed easy observation of the advance of the Confederate forces and lines of fire for both artillery and infantry.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions

The Gaines' Mill landscape overall has become more enclosed by woodland than it was at the time of the battle. Views are limited to the open areas along the top of the plateau. The Chickahominy River floodplain is no longer visible from the house, and the wide belt of woodland lining both sides of Boatswain Creek obscures views to the battlefield areas north of the creek.

Evaluation

Although views from the Watt house and other areas of the plateau are substantially reduced from the time of the battle, extant views provided by the fields around the house are essential to conveying the extents of the battlefield and other important spatial relationships that influenced the battle. These views also contribute to the agricultural character and historic feeling of the landscape.

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

Archeological sites include the location of ruins, traces, or deposited artifacts in the landscape, and are evidenced by the presence of either surface or subsurface features. The location of archeological resources is considered sensitive information and can only be covered generally in the context of this cultural landscape report.

Historic and Existing Conditions

As part of their efforts to strengthen the natural defenses of the Watt house plateau, Union troops built multiple defensive lines within the park's boundaries. The first line of breastworks was located on the slope of the ravine in the narrow strip of woods running along Boatswain Creek. The second line was sited 100-150 yards to the rear of the first and in the open fields along the crest of the plateau. These breastworks were at least "waist high" in some sectors and "protected the men very much." They were comprised of a variety of materials, including fallen timber, felled trees, fence rails, bales of hay, tents and blankets, earth-filled knapsacks, and sometimes earth. Most of the first line of works and possibly portions of the second line was fronted by an abatis, or entanglements, made of tree branches and sharpened stakes.³⁵

The precise positions of the former defensive lines are difficult to locate today. These positions were ephemeral and largely constructed of perishable materials, and most of their remains decayed and left little evidence of their presence above ground. In addition, post-Civil War farming practices are believed to have further destroyed portions of the few earthworks constructed, particularly those that may have been located in the open fields near the crest of the Watt plateau. Confederate forces built additional earthworks in this locale during the June 1864 Cold Harbor operations (see Figure 1.15 in Site History), making surviving works from the 1862 battle harder to discern from the newer works.

The December 1997 surface archeological reconnaissance surveys provisionally identified a number of possible rifle pits and trenches that are probably associated with the Battle of Gaines' Mill. With the exception of two isolated rifle pits located in Boatswain Creek ravine along the site's northwestern boundary, these earthworks are situated approximately 200-300 yards north of the Watt house near the

trace of the Watt plantation's secondary farm road. The 2nd Maine and 4th Michigan regiments constructed breastworks on these wooded sites during the battle, and the linear orientation and shallow depth of several of the works indicate they most likely date from the period of Gaines Mill.³⁶

A systematic ground-surface reconnaissance survey of the sixty-acre original park tract was conducted by the Land and Community Associates (LCA) of Charlottesville, Virginia during the period December 7-18, 1997. The project site included the Watt house and former sites of the outbuildings associated with Springfield Plantation. The primary focus was to locate and verify the location of structures and features depicted on historic maps and noted in historic eyewitness accounts from the period 1850-1870.

In preparation for the reconnaissance, the locations of historic buildings and other features shown on historic nineteenth-century maps were plotted on a USGS topographic map.³⁷ With this map and a series of twentieth-century aerial photographs, the project archeologist conducted a pedestrian survey of the project area. The project archeologist walked parallel transects ten meters apart, inspecting the surfaces visible from the transects. Areas containing historic buildings and features were examined more closely, as were areas of exposed earth along creek banks, overturned tree roots, and paths and roads. The ground surface was bare of snow, although wooded areas had significant fallen leaf cover. The modern turf and field areas were clean of debris.

Evaluation

There are archeological resources, including earthworks and road traces, as well as unidentified resources present, including unmarked graves, that contribute to the significance of the Gaines's Mill battlefield cultural landscape.

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES



Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCO A (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
Natural Systems and Features (Drawing Key: NS)						
NS-1, Watt House Plateau	N/A	N/A	Observation – Union Key Terrain – Both Sides	Contributing	<p>Context: Antebellum and Civil War</p> <p>During the Battle of Gaines' Mill, the Union Army deployed in a defensive line along the northern slopes and across the top of the Watt house plateau. This position provided the Federals with views of the surrounding fields and offered observation of the approaching Confederate forces as well as fields of fire for both artillery and infantry. The Watt house, situated at the highest point of the plateau and within an expansive open field, was a conspicuous landmark in the battlefield and provided a suitable headquarters for the Union command. Today, the terrain of the Watt house plateau remains essentially unchanged from the time of the battle. Encroaching woods from the creek ravine have extended further up the slope of the plateau than it did in 1862, significantly obscuring the visual form of the plateau and blocking views across the ravine toward the fields to the north.</p>	
NS-2, Boatswain Creek and Ravine	N/A	N/A	Obstacle – Confederate Observation – Confederate	Contributing	<p>Context: Civil War</p> <p>Boatswain Creek was the primary defining feature of the Gaines' Mill Battlefield and the tactical basis for the Union defense. The boggy waterway and its steep banks presented a significant obstacle for attacking Confederates and provided superior topographic position for the Federals. The creek's associated ravines and other topographic features offered a variety of natural defensive locations, viewpoints, and sheltered enclosed areas as well as avenues of assault. Today, the Boatswain Creek's alignment, channel geomorphology, and overall character are essentially unchanged from its historic condition. The creek continues to serve as the primary feature conveying the spatial associations of the battlefield and the significance of the battle events.</p>	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

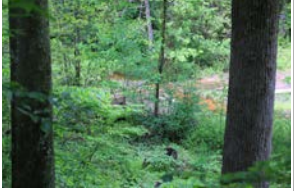


Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCSA (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
NS-3, Wooded Creek Bottom	N/A	N/A	Cover and Concealment – Both Sides	Contributing	<p>Context: Antebellum and Civil War</p> <p>The wooded band that lined the creek ravine bordering the north edge of the Watt house plateau was notable in a largely open landscape, making a conspicuous landmark for the opposing forces. The banks and the flat creek channel were wooded, and in many places choked with dense underbrush. The densest woods and underbrush were northeast of the Watt house, between the two creek branches. Just west of the junction of the creek branches, the woods thinned, creating a small gap in the trees, where a shallow ford or small bridge crossed between the Watt and Parson properties. From there westward, the trees continued nearly uninterrupted along the creek channel to the far western end of the plateau, but the wooded band was more open in character with less underbrush than on its eastern reaches.</p> <p>Today, the band of woods is still present, although it is much wider and denser than at the time of the battle. Despite the changes in the character of the woods, they still represent an important visual feature and help convey the battlefield's historic associations.</p>	
Land Use (Drawing Key: LS)						
LS-1, Agriculture	N/A	N/A	N/A	Contributing	<p>Context: Antebellum and Civil War</p> <p>Agriculture was the primary land use at Gaines' Mill Battlefield throughout the historic period. Today, large portions of the fields on the McDougal tract on the north and west side of Boatswain Creek are cultivated for crops. Continued use of portions of the fields for agriculture strengthens the site's historic associations and contributes to its rural and agricultural character.</p>	
LS-2, Commemorative	N/A	N/A	N/A	Contributing	<p>Context: Commemoration</p> <p>Commemorative use of the site began with the installation of two Freeman Markers in 1925 and the Virginia historical marker in 1932. These markers remain today, joined by two additional commemorative markers installed after the historic period.</p>	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCO A (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
LS-3, Domestic	N/A	N/A	N/A	Contributing	Context: Antebellum and Civil War Simultaneous with its agricultural use, the property also served as the home of the Watt family prior to the Civil War, and of a series of tenants between the end of the war and the establishment of the park. Domestic use of the property also included the homes of a number of enslaved workers who lived and worked on the property before the battle. Domestic use continues today with the use of the Watt house for park housing.	
LS-4, Interpretive	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Interpretive use of Gaines' Mill Battlefield, beyond the installation of commemorative markers, began when the Watt property was transferred to public ownership as a historical park. Today, interpretation is the primary use of the site.	
Circulation (Drawing Key: CR)						
CR-1, Watt House Road	CRIS-HS 006760	15778 /	Obstacle – Confederate Avenue of Approach – Confederate	Contributing	Context: Antebellum and Civil War Watt House Road (SR 718) extends from Cold Harbor Road (SR 156) to the Watt house, continuing through the property to the south as a dead-end access drive for adjoining properties. The alignment of the road dates to around 1864, when it was likely constructed or improved from an earlier route by the Union Army. Today, the road is a one-lane, two-way paved road with no traffic striping.	
CS-2, Service loop drive	N/A	N/A	Avenue of Approach – Confederate	Contributing	Context: Antebellum and Civil War The service loop drive is a one-lane gravel drive that encircles the Watt house, Watt house garage, and yard. Significant portions of the drive, including the entire southern and western sides, are believed to follow historic alignment of the original Watt farm entrance road.	
CS-3, Parking area and terminal driveway loop	N/A	N/A		Non-contributing	The visitor parking area and turn-around circle were constructed in the early 1960s and are non-contributing.	
CS-4, Farm Field Access Road; Watt House Road Trace	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Along the southern property line of the original park tract, there is an impression of an infrequently used access road that starts at Watt House Road and follows the boundary line west.	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES





Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCSA (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
CS-5, McDougal tract farm road	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	On the north side of Boatswain Creek, a farm drive that originates at the Watt House Road extends for nearly a mile through the McDougal tract (01B-100), providing access to the agricultural fields there.	
CS-6, Interpretive trails	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Pedestrian access is accommodated by a system of interpretive trails that extend through the fields and forests of the battlefield. Organized into three connected trails, the system consists of the Federal Defense Trail, a short loop trail that begins and ends near the Watt house, the Wilcox Trail, which extends from the Federal Defense Trail providing access to the south side of the creek ravine, and the Confederate Attack Trail, a long loop trail the winds through the fields of the McDougal tract.	
CS-7, 6366 Watt House Road Parking Lot	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	This leveled parking lot covered with loose gravel is place on the north-western corner of tract 01-290. The lot is outlined on its west boundary by Watt House Road. The parking lot is U-shaped and has two interpretative panels placed around it: “From Stalemate to Breakthrough” parts 1 and 2. The gravel is surrounded by mowed grass and there are drainage ditches along Watt House Road.	
CS-8, Boatswain Creek Trail Bridge	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	A wood plank bridge constructed in 2017 that is flanked by thick vegetation. The bridge crosses Boatswain Creek, connecting the original park tract with recently acquired tract 01-149. The bridge marks the beginning of the Confederate Attack Trail.	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES




Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCO (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
Buildings and Structures (Drawing Key: BS)						
BS-1, Watt House	CRIS-HS 001232	15780 /	Cover – Union Observation	Contributing	<p>Context: Antebellum and Civil War Constructed c. 1835 for Hugh and Sarah Watt; present during the Battle of Gaines' Mill. Used as a Union headquarters, and wounded soldiers were treated in and around the house during and after the battle. The one-story, wood-frame dwelling occupies a grass-covered plateau at the south end of the Watt House Road driveway loop facing north. The 864-sq. ft. house has a raised brick foundation with a side-hall plan and side-gable roof. Two stepped brick end chimneys are attached to the east elevation with a pent closet between the two chimneys and another north of the north chimney. NPS staff has used the building for housing since 1945. The structure was restored in 1956-58 and rehabilitated in 1987. Some of its newer features include open wood stairs that lead to narrow uncovered porches at the north, south, and east entrances. The side entrance adjacent to the south chimney is sheltered by a pent roof and side wall, and a basement door is located beneath the central pent closet.</p>	
BS-2, Watt House Garage	VCRIS 042-0037	15781 /	N/A	Non-contributing	The Watt house garage was constructed ca. 1963 and is located immediately west of the Watt House facing south. The one-story, wood-frame building has a wood-shingled end-gable roof, clapboard walls, and is seated on a brick foundation with a poured concrete floor.	
BS-3, Goggin house (6296 Watt House Road)	VCRIS 043-0033-0088	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	The Goggin house, located on tract 01-125 on the north side of the park, is a one-story ranch house built in 1980. The house has an asphalt-shingled side-gable roof, vinyl siding, and a brick foundation.	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCSA (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
BS-4, Goggin Two-Car Garage	VCRIS 043-0033-0088	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	On tract 01-125, there is a 672-sq. ft. garage that was built in 1980. The structure is located immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the house and at the end of the driveway. The one-story, two-bay, end-gable frame building has an asphalt-shingle roof, vinyl siding, and a poured concrete foundation.	
BS-5, Goggin One-Car Garage	VCRIS 043-0033-0088	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Located on the 01-125 tract is a single-bay, rectangular building set on a concrete foundation and situated directly west of the Goggin house. The garage is 192-sq. ft. and was built in 2007. It has an asphalt-shingled end-gable roof, vinyl siding, an overhead garage door on the north elevation, and a vinyl-clad entrance at the northern end of the east elevation.	Photo next site visit
BS-6, Ryan house (6366 Watt House Road)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	On tract 01-290, a paved asphalt driveway runs along the northern boundary and ends with a small loop in front of a residential structure. The one-story, brick ranch house is situated on the northeastern corner of the tract and has a front porch covered with a front gable roof. A two-car garage makes up the northern end of the structure.	
BS-7, Ryan Garage	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Tract 01-290 contains a detached, one-story, one-car garage with white vinyl siding and a front-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The garage door on the front elevation features a yellow smiley face painted in the center of it.	
BS-8, Ryan Loafing Shed	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Located in the woods and south of the Ryan house on tract 01-290, is a loafing shed. The wood-frame structure has an inclined roof of corrugated metal, two enclosed and two open sides, and a dirt floor.	
BS-9, Adams house (6342 Watt House Road)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	This 1,392-sq. ft., ranch-style residence is placed at the western end of tract 01-291 and next to Watt House Road. The front yard is enclosed with a chain-link fence on its northern border and by white vinyl fencing on the western and southern borders. A metal tube gate is attached to the white fence on the western border. The house sits on a concrete slab foundation, is clad in vinyl siding, and has asphalt roof shingles. The structure is surrounded by obscuring vegetation.	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES





Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCSA (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
BS-10, Adams Gazebo	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Placed just north of the Adams house on tract 01-291 is a wooden gazebo with a rectangular plan that was built in 1998. The gazebo is painted and surrounded by a heavily wooded area.	
BS-11, Adams Sheds (3)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	A group of three sheds in the yard south of the Adams house on tract 01-291. The sheds are obscured by vegetation but appear to be roughly all the same size and light beige color. The eastern shed is of wood and has a front-gable roof with an opening below it. Just south of the first shed is a slightly larger shed with vinyl siding and a gambrel roof with white double-doors on its front elevation. Behind this shed is another made of brick or possibly concrete blocks with a flat roof.	
Vegetation (Drawing Key: VG)						
VG-1, Shade and ornamental trees at the Watt house	N/A	N/A	N/A	Undetermined	Several large shade trees and smaller ornamental trees located near the Watt house. The majority of these plants appeared after the creation of the park. The eastern red cedars north of the house, can be dated to post 1904.	
VG-2, Domestic vegetation at 20th c. residences	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Vegetation around the 20th c. residences on tracts north of the Watt house, including ornamental trees and shrubs, post-date the historic period and are non-contributing.	
Topography (Drawing Key: TP)						
TP-1, East Boundary Ditch	N/A	N/A	Obstacle – Confederate Cover – Confederate	Undetermined	Context: Antebellum A ditch extends along part of the original park tract's east property line, likely developed during the Watt family ownership and prior to 1862. The ditch appears to have been present historically and it is a traditional boundary between Watt and Adams. Post-battle tree growth, including shrubs and vines, is observed along the ditch. The ditch lies within woodland but is evident when viewed along its length.	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES




Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCSA (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
TP-2, Richmond and Rappahannock River Railway bed	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	A earthen railbed constructed along the north bank of Boatswain Creek around 1914 for the Richmond and Rappahannock River Railway. Although the feature dates to the historic period, the railroad was in operation for about three years and was only nominally related to the historic theme of commemoration (through railroad promotional material). When the railroad disbanded in 1917, all other features related to it were removed, leaving only the constructed rail bed. The railway bed is a non-contributing topographic feature.	
TP-3 Confederate Earthworks at Gaines' Mill	ASMIS	N/A	Cover and Concealment	Contributing	A set of three small earthworks run northwest–southeast immediately north of Boatswain Creek and south of the abandoned Richmond and Rappahannock River Railway Bed. (NR 2018, Sec.7: 15)	
TP-4 Civil War Rifle Pits	ASMIS	N/A	Cover and Concealment	Contributing	Union rifle pits in the woods near the Wilcox Monument south of Boatswain Creek. Likely built in June of 1862, the earthworks are approximately 3 feet wide, 4 feet deep, and vary from 6 to 10 feet long. Confederate troops may have later built or altered some of the rifle pits during the 1864 Battle of Cold Harbor. (NR 2018, Sec.7: 15)	
Small-Scale Features (Drawing Key: SSF)						
SSF-1, Freeman Marker #7	CRIS-HS 081623	15791 /	N/A	Contributing	Context: Commemoration Located just north of the Watt House, Freeman Marker #7 deviates from the standard Freeman Marker design, with a concrete base set directly into the ground, instead of on a granite base. The tablet inscription reads: "The Watt House. Gaines' Mill Battlefield. Entrenched in three lines on this plateau, the right wing of McClellan's army, withdrawn from Beaver Dam Creek, resisted Confederate attacks on June 27, 1862 until driven back at nightfall by a general assault."	
SSF-2, Freeman Marker #8	CRIS-HS 081622	15790 /	N/A	Contributing	Context: Commemoration Freeman Marker #8 is located near the edge of the woods on the Federal Defense Trail. The inscription reads: "Approximate line of Whiting's Advance. Near this point, between the brigades of Martindale and Butterfield, Confederate forces first penetrated the main Federal position in the Battle of Gaines' Mill, June 27, 1862. The Fourth Texas Regiment led the charge."	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES



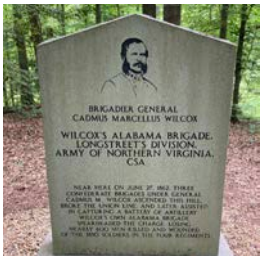








Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCO (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
SSF-3, Commonwealth of Virginia Historical Marker	N/A	N/A	N/A	Contributing	Context: Commemoration Titled “Seven Days Battle, Gaines’ Mill” and dedicated around 1932, the marker consists of a metal pole-mounted plaque, with an embossed inscription reading: “Along the slopes of Boatswain Creek, facing north and west, extends Porter’s position in the afternoon of June 27, 1862. The line was held by Sykes’s Division facing north and Morell’s facing west. Later McCall was thrown in to assist Morell. At dark Lee broke the Union line and Porter retreated across the Chickahominy.” Removed by park, 2024.	
SSF-4, Cannons	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing (compatible)	There is a set of two cannons in the grassy field northeast of the Watt House and another set placed west of the Watt House in the fields where the Federal Defense and Wilcox trails intersect. The cannons on site are symbolic of the 1862 battle action but have no historic associations with the site.	
SSF-5, Wilcox's Brigade Monument	CRIS-HS 654689		N/A	Non-contributing	Installed in 1999 along the Wilcox Spur Trail near Boatswain Creek, the granite slab monument commemorates Brig. Gen. Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox and his Alabama Brigade.	
SSF-6, Texas Monument	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Erected in 2012 on the Confederate Attack Trail, this monument commemorates Brig. Gen. John B. Hood's assault with the 4th Texas and 18th Georgia regiments, which broke the Union line and forced their retreat.	
SSF-7, Post-and-rail fence	N/A	15784 / 1443288	N/A	Non-contributing	A post and rail fence partially encloses the Watt House yard, starting on the west side of the two-car garage, extending along the north side of the yard, and terminating just east of the house. The south side of the yard along the loop service drive is open.	

TABLE 3.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location/Asset records)	KOCSA (Category – Side)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1861–1932)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
SSF-8, Worm Fence	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	The Watt house plateau contains approximately 3,800 feet of split-rail fencing, extending along both sides of the Federal Defense Trail from the west side of the service loop drive to the southwestern end of the open field, as well as along the west side of the service drive from the loop to the southern property boundary.	
SSF-9, Park Boundary Fencing	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Property boundary fencing and gates post-date the historic period and are non-contributing.	
SSF-10, National Park Service signage	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Gaines' Mill Battlefield contains a variety of NPS signs, including interpretive waysides, identity and informational signs, and traffic and road signs. These signs post-date the historic period and are non-contributing.	
SSF-11, Benches	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Benches and other site furnishings that provide amenities for visitors post-date the historic period and are non-contributing.	
SSF-12, Utility features	N/A	N/A	N/A	Non-contributing	Utility features within the landscape include utility poles, electrical meters, electrical transformers, post-historic wells, and HVAC units. These utility features post-date the historic period and are non-contributing.	
Views and Vistas (Drawing Key: VV)						
VV-1, Views within Watt field	N/A	N/A	Observation – Union	Contributing	Context: Antebellum and Civil War Important views from the Watt plateau northward across Boatswain Creek, south and southwestward toward the Chickahominy River, and southeastward toward the fields of the former Adams farm have all been obstructed by encroaching forest on all sides. Extant views within the plateau fields, including views from the Watt house out toward the battlefield, and views of the house from the landscape, remain essential to understanding the geography, terrain, and other associations related to the battle.	

ENDNOTES

- 1 National Park Service, "National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," (1990; revised 1995).
- 2 16 U.S. Code, Sec. 423l.
- 3 National Register of Historic Places (NR) Registration Form, "Richmond National Battlefield Park (RICH)," *National Park Service*, 2016, Sec. 8: 42.
- 4 RICH (NR) Registration Form, Sec. 8: 62-64.
- 5 Land and Community Associates (LCA), "Gaines' Mill Cultural Landscape Report and Archeological Survey" (National Park Service, 2000), 11.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., 14.
- 9 RICH (NR) Registration Form, Sec. 7: 15.
- 10 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 16; Haw, "My Visits to Grandmother," p. 22.
- 11 John T. Willet, "Survey Report for Restoration and Rehabilitation of Historic Structures (Watt House)," *National Park Service*, Nov. 4, 1956, p. 19.
- 12 Sarah Watt, United States Census Slave Schedule (1860), Ancestry.com
- 13 "Interview with Mrs. Sarah Goulding," Jul. 3, 1956, RICH Archives.
- 14 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 19.
- 15 Aaron C. Kepler, *Memoir*, RBNP Unbound Manuscript Collection; Charlottesville LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," p. 20.
- 16 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 18.
- 17 Ibid., 20.
- 18 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 17; Charles Peterson, "Interview with Mrs. Sarah Goulding," Jul. 3, 1956, RICH Archives.
- 19 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 18.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid., 19.
- 22 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 17; Haw, "My Visits to Grandmother," p. 22.
- 23 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," p. 31; Report of Major Tilton, ORA 1, 11, 2, p. 302.
- 24 Haw, "My Visits to Grandmother," p. 22-23; Charlottesville LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," p. 31.
- 25 Aaron C. Kepler, *Memoir*, RBNP Unbound Manuscript Collection; Charlottesville LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," p. 31.
- 26 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 23.
- 27 Ibid., 24.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Clifford R. Dickinson, "Historical Landscape Study: Terrain of Gaines' Mill Battlefield, June 27, 1862" (National Park Service, 1990), p. 13; LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 24.
- 30 Charlottesville LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," p. 32.
- 31 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," 21.
- 32 Ibid., 22.
- 33 Ibid., 32.
- 34 NR Registration Form, "RICH," 7:33.
- 35 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," p. 33.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 LCA, "Gaines' Mill CLR," p. 102; U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, *Seven Pines Quadrangle, Virginia*, 1964, photorevised 1987.

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