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BEHIND THE LINES

Not long ago they met in a restaurant in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Representatives of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, the Chantilly Battlefield Association, members of Civil War Round Tables, university professors, professional historians, concerned citizens.

They talked about what is happening to the Winchester and Cedar Creek battlefields in western Virginia, where land developers are buying historic ground that has remained in private hands since the Civil War. They discussed what had happened at Chantilly, Virginia, where developers paved over a battle ground. And they voiced their worries over what will become of historic properties that dot the landscape from northern Virginia to the Pennsylvania state line. What is to be done, they asked.

For a year, large numbers of people interested in historic preservation have been pointing at real estate developers and local planning commissions and crying out that these groups are systematically carving up our country's heritage and putting it on the auction block. For months this magazine has fielded inquiries from outraged readers demanding that someone take action. And now enough time has passed.

There has been a call for action and the crowd that gathered in Fredericksburg is ready to provide it. They've formed an organization to tackle this problem, calling themselves the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites. The initials in the organization's name don't form a cute acronym. That is probably just as well. What they're fighting for isn't cute.

The men and women of the APCWS have declared that it is their objective to search out Civil

War historic sites threatened by commercial or community development. Taking their cue from established organizations such as the Nature Conservancy, they intend to use their membership and friends of their organization to pinpoint trouble spots, raise funds for the purchase of endangered properties, and work with local planning boards to insure the historical integrity of these sites through use of zoning laws.

The people of the APCWS know their Civil War history. And, by stating their aim of purchasing lands before developers do and reworking zoning ordinances before commercial interests become involved, they prove themselves to be good students. They have picked up something from their reading and have stolen the offensive from their opponents. They are taking the war to the enemy.

To do this job, to organize the defense of historic sites that are valuable to all Americans, the APCWS will need its own "soldiers," volunteers willing to give their time and their resources. *Civil War Times Illustrated* is signing on, giving all its support to this good fight. The magazine's staff expects you will want to do the same.

In the next issue of *CWTI* look for more information on the APCWS. We will be providing you with an opportunity to do your part. And we'll be taking away a reason for readers to say, "Why doesn't somebody do something?"

This is your chance. Do something.

John E. Stanchak

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EDITOR