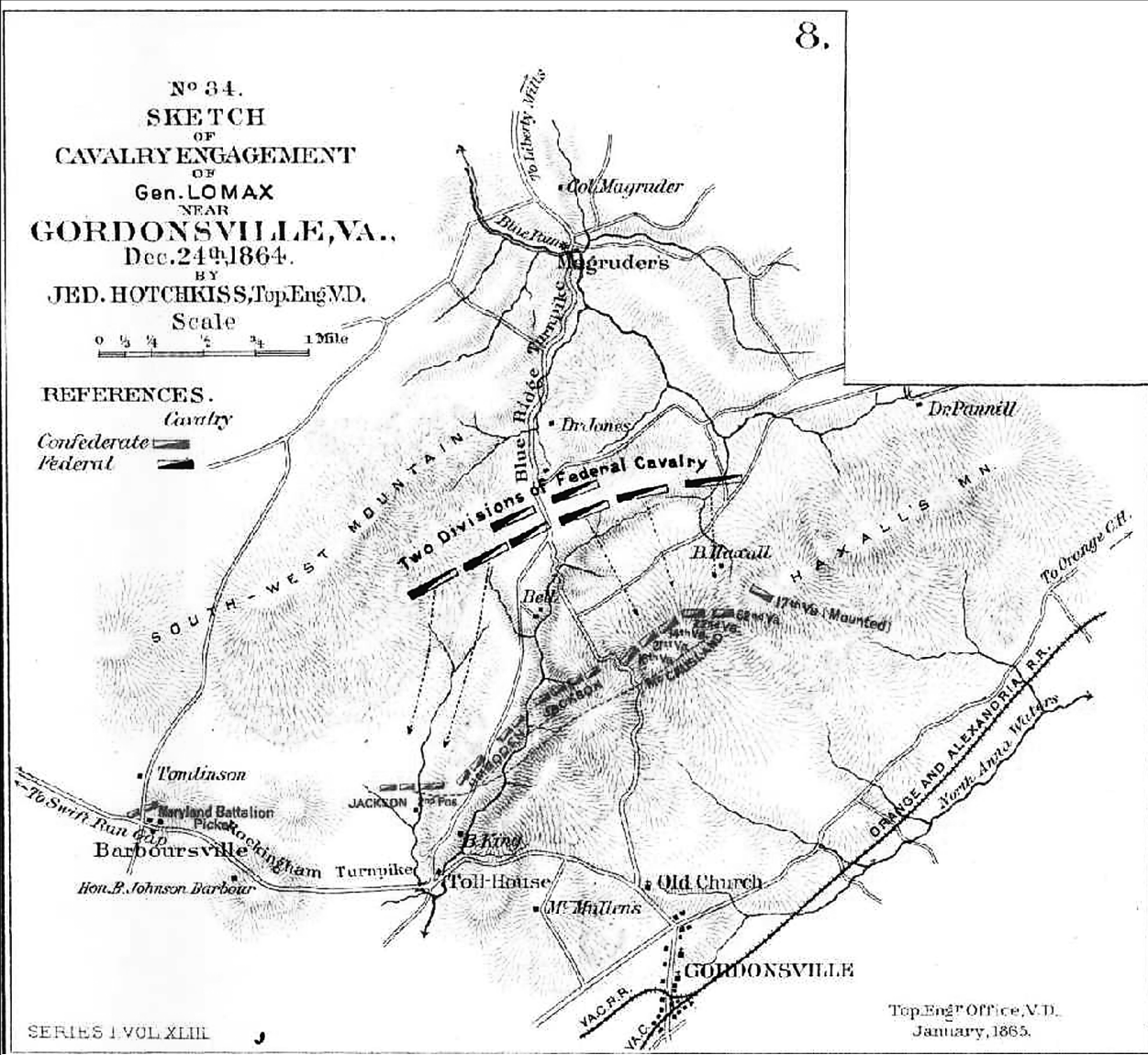


Garden tour homes feature Civil War connections



The 2013 Historic Garden Tour in Orange April 20 features private estates rich in Civil War history along the Blue Ridge Turnpike (today's Rt. 231) including the dramatic Dec. 23, 1864 cavalry battle at Bell's (today's Cameron) Mountain Pass involving 10,000 men.

Frascati, Annandale, Rocklands all saw action

The 2013 Historic Garden Tour in Orange April 20 features private estates rich in Civil War history along the Blue Ridge Turnpike (today's Rt. 231) including the dramatic Dec. 23, 1864 cavalry battle at Bell's (today's Cameron) Mountain Pass involving 10,000 men. As one of the only two major roadways connecting the valley of Virginia with the Confederate transportation/supply/medical center at Gordonsville, the turnpike witnessed extensive military activity of all types throughout the course of the war. Frank Walker, noted local historian, has compiled a Civil War history of the properties on this year's tour sponsored by the Dolley Madison Garden Club.

At the time of the Civil War, Frascati was owned and occupied by Col. (militia) James Magruder, a local builder and President of the Blue Ridge Turnpike company. The Turnpike (today's Route 231) skirts the front yard of the mansion. In late July 1862 when General "Stonewall" Jackson was detached from the Army of Northern Virginia and sent to oppose Union General John Pope, General R.S. Ewell's division camped for a time along the turnpike, with at least part of his command calling its camp "Camp Frascati." One year later on Sept. 22, 1863, Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart and his command became desperately engaged with Union cavalry at Jack's Shop (today's Rochelle). Jack's Shop is on the Turnpike approximately five miles north of Frascati. During the

fighting, Lt. John H Magruder, son of Frascati's owner, was mortally wounded. He was taken to his parents' home, Frascati, where according to some sources he died in his mother's arms. Frascati's front yard also witnessed early skirmishes in the running battle between Union and Confederate cavalry as the Union forces moved towards Gordonsville along the Turnpike that reached its dramatic conclusion in the Battle of Bell's Mountain Pass at Rocklands.

The Battle of Bell's Mountain Pass took place at what is now Rocklands where the Confederates entrenched to buy time for infantry reinforcements to arrive from Richmond to protect the vital rail connection at Gordonsville between the Valley of Virginia (aka the Shenandoah Valley) and Richmond. The Confederate final line along Bell's (Cameron) mountain was just a few hundred yards south of the present mansion. When the Union cavalry then deployed to attack, Rocklands found itself

between the Union cavalry and the entrenched Confederate defenders. The mansion at Rocklands has been renovated since the time of the Civil War, but the landscape remains in testament to lives of the 7,500 cavalry troops plus 3,000 infantry reinforcements present on the day of the battle. This is the first time Rocklands has been open for Historic Garden Week.

When the Union cavalry began its maneuver to flank the Confederates out of their Bell's Mountain defenses, Annandale was directly in its path. The intervention of Confederate cavalry kept the mansion from being in the crossfire, but its occupants were caught up in the events of the Battle of Bell's Mountain Pass. The Samuel P. Moore Receiving Hospital at Gordonsville was frequently swamped with patients, and because of Annandale's comparatively quiet location on a major road near Gordonsville overflow patients were brought there and the mansion was used as a hospital. Historic Garden

Week, "Somerset: Where Tradition Meets Today", is Saturday April 20, 2013. Tickets are available on line at <http://www.vagardenweek.org/> or through local merchants. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 the day of the event and may be purchased at any of the locations on the tour.

CHRISTMAS WEEK 1864 - DISPATCHES

Dec. 22nd, 1864 3pm

GEN. R.E. LEE

The enemy are in twelve miles of Gordonsville. It is said they number 6,000 (cavalry)... We are fighting them now near Jack's Shop. Our main force is at Liberty Mills, seven miles from Gordonsville, where we have an entrenched position. If they do not divide their forces we will be able to resist them. Our forces...only number 1,300.

J.A. SEDDON, Secretary of War

Dec. 23rd, 1864

MAJ. GEN. PHILIP SHERIDAN, Commander, Union's Valley Army

...at daylight the enemy was again engaged and all their artillery-two pieces-taken from them and drive to within two miles and a half of Gordonsville to the top of the gap in Southwest Mountain (sic Bell's Mountain/Cameron Mountain). Here the pass was narrow and the enemy were strongly posted behind raised and earth breast-works, where few men could hold three times their number in check. I attacked the position with nearly half of my force, but could not carry it, and I immediately started a column to flank them on the left by crossing the mountain several miles to the north. While waiting to hear from this column, which had got well on its way, the cars were heard about ten o'clock to arrive at Gordonsville, and about an hour after infantry was seen to file into the breastworks and relieve the cavalry. After becoming fully satisfied of the presence of infantry, I concluded it was useless to make a further attempt to break the Central railroad.

A.T.A TORBERT, BREVET Major-General, Chief of Cavalry, Commanding

Dec 24, 1864

HON. JAMES A. SEDDON, Secretary of War

General Fitz Lee reports that the force which attacked Lomax yesterday consisted of two divisions of the enemy's cavalry, under General Torbert. Lomax was posted across the Madison turnpike about two miles and a half from Gordonsville. The enemy was handsomely repulsed and retired about 3 p.m., just as re-enforcements were getting into position, leaving some of his dead on the field. He traveled too rapidly last night to engage his rear, having passed Jack's Shop, twelve miles from Gordonsville, one hour after dark. Thirty-two prisoners, captured at Liberty Mills on the 22nd, being unable to keep up on their retreat, were liberated. Lomax's loss slight.

R.E. LEE, Headquarters, Army of Northern Virginia

Ticket information

Advance tickets (\$25) may be purchased at the following locations until 3:30 p.m. Friday, April 19: Elmwood at Sparks, 672-0060; The Arts Center In Orange, 672-7311; Laurie Holladay Interiors, 832-0552; Colonial Florist, 832-3611.

Visit www.vagardenweek.org for Internet ticket sales. Day of tour ticket sales (\$30) are available at each location on the tour. No single site admissions. Children 6-12 half price; children 5 and under free of charge.

Proceeds go to the Garden Club of Virginia for use in restoring historic gardens throughout Virginia.



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