



**SHENANDOAH  
VALLEY  
BATTLEFIELDS**  
NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Shenandoah Valley  
Battlefields Foundation

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The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is the managing entity of the federally designated Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District.

KEVEN M. WALKER  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friend of American History:

I need your help to complete and open a new visitor center in Winchester – a major step in our campaign to make America’s future brighter by fostering greater understanding of its past.

With your help, we’ve been able to save thousands of acres of battlefield in the Shenandoah Valley. We’ve preserved ground that witnessed remarkable heroism, self-sacrifice, and the timeless American ideals of honor, duty, and devotion. This is why you and I save battlefields. They are unmatched in their ability to touch the heart and mind; they are the best classrooms our country has to offer.

But we aren’t just working to preserve these battlefields. We are engaged in an audacious effort to open as much of these lands to the public as we possibly can, creating full service battlefield parks throughout the National Historic District. That’s why I’m writing to you today.

During the Civil War, Winchester changed hands more than any other town in America; for the people who lived there, strife and stress were constant. Six major battles, from First Kernstown to Third Winchester, raged through and around their town... and the thunderous sounds of the guns, the piercing cries of battle, and the anguished screams of men and horses rent the air of this once peaceful community. The final battle, Third Winchester, was the largest and costliest ever fought in the Shenandoah Valley. It covered 30 square miles, witnessed the largest cavalry charge ever mounted in the Western Hemisphere; and ended with fighting spilling through the city’s streets in stunning scenes of chaos and confusion.

Today, well over 600 acres of the Third Winchester battlefield have been preserved and opened to the public, with miles of walking trails, 19th century fencing, cannon, monuments, and historic markers. Now, we are on the cusp of opening a new Visitor Center that will orient, guide, and educate visitors to this battlefield and the other battlefields throughout the Winchester area. The **Winchester Battlefields Visitor Center** is scheduled to open in time to commemorate the 155th Anniversary of the 1864 Valley Campaign later this year... but we need your help to make that happen. We need you and our other friends across the country to come together to raise the last funds needed to complete the project.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY BATTLEFIELDS FOUNDATION  
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This Visitor Center will include an outdoor visitor's plaza that, through signage and unmanned exhibits, will provide year-round, 365-day interpretation to visitors from around the world. The staffed Visitor Center building will feature exhibit rooms, an orientation film, an electric map, handouts, guides, and more – all designed to provide an overview of Winchester's Civil War history and to encourage visitors to explore battlefields and partner sites throughout the area.

Importantly, this project will utilize already-existing post-war structures – and will not harm the historic integrity of any undisturbed battlefield ground.

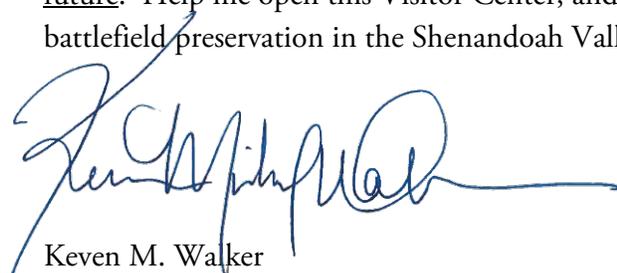
This is an extraordinarily important project, unlike anything we have tackled before. It is so important that some of our most dedicated inner-circle supporters have already invested hundreds of thousands of dollars toward seeing it come to fruition. Leading the way have been the Wilkins Family and the James R. Wilkins Charitable Trust and Rex and Helen Ritchie. Not only have these two families been helping to save battlefield land; they have contributed \$220,000 to this project alone. In addition, other major gifts have been made, including \$50,000 from the Beirne-Carter Foundation and a major gift from the estate of Mr. Carrington Williams.

But even with this remarkable outpouring of generosity from our friends and partners, there is still much more to be done. In order to open this new Visitor Center and provide the visitor experience that we envision, a minimum of \$270,000 must be raised to complete this first phase of the project. And we need your help to do it.

We will never forget and never fail in our commitment to saving as much of the Valley's battlefield land as possible, and our ambition and tenacity about that work will never flag. But with each passing year, it becomes more and more evident that we must open these lands to the public and encourage visitation. We must do what we can to foster relevance connections between the battlefields and the generations to come. We must connect new people to these landscapes and inspire them with the meaning that these places hold.

Opening this visitor center will give us a powerful tool to accomplish those goals, and to engage thousands of visitors with the remarkable story of these battlefields.

You have already done so much to help save our past. Now I'm asking you to help me change our future. Help me open this Visitor Center, and help me write a new chapter in the history of battlefield preservation in the Shenandoah Valley.



Keven M. Walker  
Chief Executive Officer