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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 Fellow Preservationist,

You and I have the amazing opportunity to forever protect and open to the public over 145 acres in the center of the Cross Keys Battlefield, creating – for the first time – the real possibility of a battlefield park experience at this hallowed site! And all we need is \$47,000.

With your help, we can purchase 95 acres of core battlefield previously unprotected, and pay for the cost of transferring an adjoining 50 acres into the ownership of the Battlefields Foundation. Combined, this is 145 acres that you and I can open to the public, interpret for generations – and protect forever.

All of this comes on the heels of the huge preservation success that you were able to secure earlier this year at Cross Keys – with the preservation of the 173-acre Smith Farm. Mr. Smith’s generous gift and your commitment made that possible and now we can keep up the attack!

We have a chance to make a huge difference at Cross Keys. **This is a moment in our preservation partnership that you and I will remember for a long, long time.** We’ll be able to say that the summer of 2020 is when we preserved much of the center of the Cross Keys Battlefield and began opening this stunning landscape as a battlefield park. But before I get into all of that, let me tell you a little more about these properties – why they are so important, and the amazing deals we’ve been able to make to get this done.

I’ve included a map with this letter; if you take a look you’ll see just how core to the battlefield these parcels truly are. During the Battle of Cross Keys (fought on June 8, 1862), it was on this land that Gen. Isaac Trimble moved his troops forward into a hidden ambush, and where his men repulsed the attacking Federals at point-blank range in what would later be called “the slaughter of the 8th New York” – the pivotal action during the battle.

As you read through the historic sketch I’ve enclosed **you will see just how crucial this ground was on June 8, 1862 – and just how critical it is to protect and interpret it today.**

SHENANDOAH VALLEY BATTLEFIELDS FOUNDATION
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So let's talk about how we get this done.

How are we protecting and taking ownership of these 145 acres? How did this great moment in preservation come about? Well, it's a combination of two opportunities that have come together at the same time.

First, we have worked closely through the years with the Lee-Jackson Educational Foundation, whose founder purchased **the two-parcel, 95-acre Lee-Jackson property** over 50 years ago. These folks have supported our preservation efforts in major ways for many years. This particular property has been held by them for over half a century, but has never been put under preservation easement or protective deed restrictions of any kind. **It is only the care and preservation ethic of the Lee-Jackson Foundation that has protected this land.** They have long believed that preserving battlefields is one of the best ways to tell our nation's history. Now, the Lee-Jackson Foundation is willing to sell their property to us and has offered it at a cost far below the appraised value. We have a narrow window of time that the Lee-Jackson Foundation has allowed for us to acquire this property, which is valued at \$670,000. The only way this deal is possible is because of their willingness to work with us on the final price. We have applied for federal and state funding to support the purchase, and they have agreed to donate in land value whatever we are unable to raise! This is an absolutely amazing deal for us and really shows the character and commitment of the Lee-Jackson Foundation's Board of Trustees. But to pay for the due diligence costs and get this purchase off the ground we must raise \$39,000. If we can raise that initial amount the rest of this deal will fall into place and **we can protect these 95 acres forever.**

Now, let's talk about **the other 50 acres** that are part of this 145-acre acquisition: **the Widow Pence Farm.** Dr. and Mrs. Irvin and Nancy Hess have long been the owners of the historic farm and worked with the Civil War Trust to put the property under easement. This was the first project the Civil War Trust (now the American Battlefield Trust) ever completed. The Hesses reconstructed a barn on the site; lovingly restored the historic house; and have been gracious hosts to hundreds of people who have used the location for events or who have been lucky enough to be welcomed as overnight guests in the Widow Pence house. This property has remained private, however, and not regularly opened to the general public.

Now the Hesses have donated this entire property to the Battlefields Foundation – to you and me – so that we can make it the center of a future battlefield experience that will open these lands to the public year round. That's right – you read that correctly... **the Hesses have donated this entire property to us!** It has cost us just about \$8,000 to transfer this property to the Battlefields Foundation. For only \$8,000 the Widow Pence Farm is ours forever – ours to open for generations to enjoy and experience. The generosity of the Hesses is almost unparalleled; I really can't thank them enough. They have already done so much for battlefield preservation; they are

personal friends and true friends of this organization. (In fact, Dr. Hess was the first ever Chairman Emeritus named by our Board of Trustees, and Nancy is a former board member.)

I couldn't be more excited about the opportunities that this creates to interpret the Cross Keys Battlefield. What is just as exciting is that **these two land transactions will bring us closer to uniting all of the previously preserved lands at Cross Keys, and greatly facilitate a future battlefield-wide trail system.**

All we need to raise to bring all 145 acres into the fold and have them available forever to inspire and educate is \$47,000. With just \$47,000 we can add 145 acres valued at more than \$1.2 million dollars to the list of battlefields that you protect – that you interpret – that you have passed on to future generations.

I appeal to you for help a lot, and as I sat down to write this letter I was casting about for something that would make this request as compelling as it deserves to be. I thought of our friend and loyal supporter, Bill Trimble, great-great grandson of General Isaac Trimble, and I called to ask him for a quote that we could add to this letter – something that would move you and impress you. When I called, I had the most enjoyable conversation. Bill is a terrific storyteller who has lived a life full of great moments to recount, and we talked about his ancestor and the war and this land at Cross Keys. But when I asked him if he would provide the quote, he said there is nothing that he could say – that the actions of General Trimble and his men speak for themselves. Bill is 100% behind this project and has committed to doing his part to help out, but he's right – there is nothing that any of us can do or say that compares to what the men did on these fields in June of 1862. **What is left to us is to make sure that their sacrifice is never forgotten.**

With your help, we can seize this moment – and win a landmark preservation victory. **Please do all that you can to help us raise the \$47,000 we need to complete this incredible project.** I wouldn't ask if it wasn't important.

All the best,



Keven M. Walker