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BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CREATION OF FRIENDS OF RAYMOND

Doug Cubbison of White Star Consulting was commissioned by Mississippi Department of Archives and History to prepare a Preservation and Interpretation Plan for the Raymond, Mississippi Battlefield. The final draft of this study, "A Question of Right of Way" was submitted on November 17, 1997.

In the executive summary of "A Question of Right of Way", Doug states:

However, potential commercial and industrial development along the Highway 18 corridor poses an immediate and serious threat to the battlefield. Core battlefield land, advertised for its frontage and electrical and water connections, is for sale as this plan is being prepared. The opportunity to preserve and interpret the Raymond battlefield exists now, but this opportunity will be a brief and fleeting one. Immediate action is needed to save this hallowed ground and its potential economic and educational benefit for the Raymond community.

(NOTE: The FOR Board finalized the purchase of the above mentioned 40 acres in November 1998.)

Doug goes on to say in the introduction:

The Civil War Sites Advisory Commission listed Raymond as a Priority I battlefield, a battlefield with a critical need for coordinated nationwide action by the year 2000. Within Priority I, Raymond was listed as a Class B battlefield, having fair integrity, facing high threats, and with none of the core areas protected. The Commission's study identified Raymond as one of the fifty most significant, and most endangered, Civil War battlefields in the United States.

...Finally, in March, 1997 a group called Friends of the Vicksburg Campaign and Historic Trail was established especially for the purpose of promoting the preservation and development of sites associated with the Vicksburg Campaign. The Friends of the Vicksburg Campaign has been formed as a non-profit organization, and is intended to serve as the private-sector leadership for the preservation and interpretation of the Vicksburg Campaign.

...Preliminary field work was performed at the Raymond battlefield and at the Raymond community between May 4-9, 1997. Additional field work was conducted in conjunction with the first public meeting on June 15-17, 1997. The initial public meeting was held at the Eagle Ridge Lodge, Raymond, June 16. The purpose of this first public meeting was to introduce the objectives of the plan to the citizens of the Raymond community and to solicit their suggestions and recommendations for the plan. A second public meeting was held on August 7,

1997. At the second public meeting the plan was introduced to the community, and public comments on the plan have been incorporated into the final plan.

On December 2, 1997 I invited Doug to speak to the Raymond Board of Aldermen concerning his preservation plan for the Raymond battlefield.

The Mayor pointed out that the potential economic growth from historical tourism is a market on which she would like to see Raymond capitalize. Mr. Cubbison pointed out potential economic benefits to Raymond from Heritage Tourism. For example, he estimated direct expenditures per travel party per day visit at \$41.00 per travel party...\$112.50 per travel party per overnight stay. Port Gibson had 3,600 travel parties during 1995. Vicksburg has 1,000,000 visitors per year. The economic potential for Raymond is apparent from these figures.

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In the fall of 1997 I called Dick in reference to the 40 acres. I said that if we were going to commit to saving the property, we had to act immediately. He agreed completely and he and I named the original “cast of characters” to begin discussing the purchase of the property.

We met several times at City Hall in my office starting in the fall of 1997. Michael Beard of Archives and History attended these meetings and was instrumental in guiding us in our actions to

1. acquire the 40 acres
2. organize a “friends” group

TIMELINE of first meetings which were held in my office at City Hall:

Jan 12, 1998. Present: Dick Kilby, Isla Tullos, David McCain, Charles Davis, Matt Rankin, John Barber, and Michael Beard.

Jan. 26, 1998: Present: Dick, David, Matt, Isla, John Barber
Began proceedings to file for incorporation as a 501-c-3 and for a tax ID.

March 23, 1998: Present: Charles, Michael Beard, John Barber, Dick Kilby, Isla Tullos.
Dick reported that we had a verbal promise from Bob Crechale to sell 40 acres to us; 40 acres at \$4000.00 per acre.
Consensus of the group was that our Friends group try to acquire property...not city or county government.

March 18, 1998: General Meeting: (I think this must have been in the City Board Room.)

March 30, 1998: Present: Michael Beard, John Fike, Charles Davis, Dick Kilby, David McCain, Lyn Riedel, John Barber, Isla Tullos.

John Fike had papers ready to file for non-profit, tax exempt status.
John donated the cost of filing.

April 13, 1998: Present: Dick, David, Isla, Michael Beard...first time we “visualized” Friends of Raymond as “FOR”

April 21, 1998: Present: Isla, Michael Beard, John, Charles, David, John Fike. At this meeting, IOT reported that Jim Drake had taken 10 copies of White Star’s plan to his Vicksburg office and bound for us. He (Jim Drake) suggested finding “20 fat cats” to purchase an acre of battlefield each. He is in for 1/40th. Roger Hansen was asked to join our interim board.

(National Reenactment, May 1998. Note, Friends of Raymond was formed **before** the reenactment.)

May 27, 1998: Present: Isla, Michael, David, Dick, John, Charles. IOT nominated David McCain Interim President of FOR and Dick Kilby, secretary/treasurer. Charles Davis seconded. David assumed leadership of meeting. IOT volunteered to continue to take notes.

July 8, 1998: Present David, Dick, John, Isla, Michael Beard.
Absent: John, Charles, Matt, Roger Hansen

July 29, 1998: Present: David, Dick, Charles, John Fike, John Barber, Michael Beard, Isla Tullos.

Bylaws of FOR were unanimously approved as corrected.

David reported that we needed to fill our slate of officers for 501-c-3 purposes.

Michael reported that Donna Dye had expressed great interest in FOR but declined our invitation to serve as a Board member.

Charles Davis was nominated 2nd V.P. by Dick Kilby and seconded by IOT.

It was suggested that Becky Drake and David Barton be asked to be on our Board. Sonny McDonald, Dr. Muse, and Donna Dye would be invited to be ExOfficio members. Roger Hansen was invited to be exofficio because of his inability to attend regular meetings.

August 26, 1998: Present David, Dick, David Barton, John Barber, Charles, Isla, Aline Maldonado

October 16, 1998: talked to Michael Beard about writing an ABPP grant.

November 5, 1998: Meeting at M and P Board Room: Present, Dick, David, Charles, John Barber, Becky Drake, Isla Tullos.
Special guest, Elliot Gruber, Civil War Trust
David reported that by authority of a telephone poll of Board on Oct. 28, a purchase agreement with Bob Crechale was signed on October 30, 1998.
Total loan: \$156,000.00 at 7.71% for 10 years.
\$15,680.00 principal plus interest = \$27,835.52 due Nov. 1, 1999.

Ribbon Cutting planned for November 28, 1998 on the site. Public was invited. Parker Hills was invited to give the keynote address.!

December 4, 1998: Michael, Charles, David, Isla, regarding FOR grant.

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