

## **RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEWLY ACQUIRED RAYMOND BATTLEFIELD**

Friends of Raymond is proud to announce the acquisition of an additional 66.62 acres of core Raymond battlefield. The grand finale of the 2009 Pilgrimage, *A Place Called Raymond*, will be a ceremony and ribbon cutting to officially recognize the preservation of the land where the hottest of the fighting occurred in the Battle of Raymond, May 12, 1863. It was here on this land that the dead of both Union and Confederate forces were quickly buried. Soon after the war ended, the Union dead were disinterred and removed to the Vicksburg National Cemetery. Parker Hills, former president of FOR says it has “been presumed that all of the Confederates were later exhumed from their anonymous battlefield graves by the citizens of Raymond and taken to the Raymond City Cemetery. But who can say how many buried soldiers went undiscovered and still lie in those fields?”

In 2005 and 2006 the Civil War Preservation Trust listed the Raymond battlefield on its “Top Ten Most Endangered List”. Through the successful preservation partnership of Friends of Raymond (FOR), the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), a national organization dedicated to saving Civil War Battlefields, and the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), the land was transferred from “private ownership and endangered status” to “saved and preserved in perpetuity status”.

The purchase of the property brings with it a preservation easement for even more additional acreage of battlefield. Artillery Ridge, a strip of land south of the Raymond Military Park, is on property owned and farmed by The Gaddis Farms. Hills relates that “it was on this slight elevation that the 22 cannons of Union General James B. McPherson’s XVII Corps were amassed to oppose Confederate General John Gregg’s paltry three cannon on a hillside 7/10 of a mile to the north. The Gaddis Farms has always been friendly to historic preservation and has awarded Friends of Raymond a preservation easement for Artillery Ridge and for additional land to allow the Friends of Raymond walking trail to be extended south to Artillery Ridge. Hills continues that it was on this land “that General John “Black Jack” Logan with ‘the shriek of an eagle’ rallied his Ohioans during the initial attack by Colonel Hiram Granbury’s Texans. It was on this land that Colonel Calvin Walker’s Tennesseans charged across Fourteenmile Creek only to be decimated by flanking fire from Colonel Ed McCook’s boys from Illinois. It was on this ground that Northern Irishmen from St. Louis fought Southern Irishmen from Tennessee.” Ted Kendall, president of The Gaddis Farms, was quoted in an article by Parker Hills that “The Raymond Walking and Interpretive Trail has proven to be a real asset to the community, and it is only right that it be extended to include Artillery Ridge.”

The ribbon cutting ceremony will begin at 2:30 o’clock in the afternoon, Saturday, October 10, 2009. The location is south of Raymond and south of the State Historic Marker located at Fourteen Mile Creek and Highway 18. The keynote speaker for the dedication will be Parker Hills, Brigadier General (ret.). Hills has conducted scores of

military staff rides and dozens of civilian tours of battlefields, and is a regular speaker at Civil War Round Tables and battlefield preservation groups.

Following the ribbon cutting, Friends of Raymond will host a reception at The Porter House located at 233 North Oak Street in Raymond. The Porter House (Circa 1830, 1850) is the home of Bob and Jeannie Chunn. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was the recipient of the 2006 Mississippi Heritage Trust Award of Excellence for Restoration. Anyone interested in becoming a member of Friends of Raymond and helping preserve and interpret the Raymond Battlefield is invited to attend.