

**Bull Run Civil War Round Table (BRCWRT) Preservation Corner**  
**March 24, 2024**



Greetings BRCWRT Members and Friends - This edition of *Preservation Corner* provides information on recent updates to the preservation and interpretation of Farr's Cross Roads Historic Site, located on George Mason University's Fairfax Campus, and the Historic Site tour/class conducted on March 20, 2024, for George Mason University (GMU) students enrolled in the University's Civil War and Reconstruction (Hist 373) course. (Photos by author unless otherwise noted)



*Access Trail Entrance, Farr's Cross Roads Historic Site*

During the past year, BRCWRT and GMU have enhanced the Farr's Cross Roads Historic Site by adding a Corduroy Road overlook and interpretive marker, and updating the Access Trail and Redoubt interpretive markers. The new Corduroy Road overlook, adjacent to the Redoubt and overlooking "Farr's Cross Roads" and the site of the 2014 and 2015 corduroy road discoveries, was established and cleared by GMU's Grounds Department in March 2023. Through 2023 BRCWRT's Blake Myers and Jim Lewis worked with GMU's Graphic Designer John Forgy to design and develop an interpretive marker for the Corduroy Road overlook, and to revise and update the interpretive markers at the Access Trail entrance and at the Redoubt. The interpretive marker panels were completed in January 2024 and installed during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of March.

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The Access Trail interpretive marker has been updated to reflect the Corduroy Road Overlook on the site map (front panel) and to depict an earthwork constructed by Federal forces in 1863 approximately 1.5 miles west of Farr's Cross Roads along New Braddock Road (back panel). Until early 2024 a 50-ft remnant of that earthwork remained but has since been obliterated by on-going ground clearance for a development project.



Access Trail Interpretive Marker (front panel)



Access Trail Interpretive Marker (back panel)

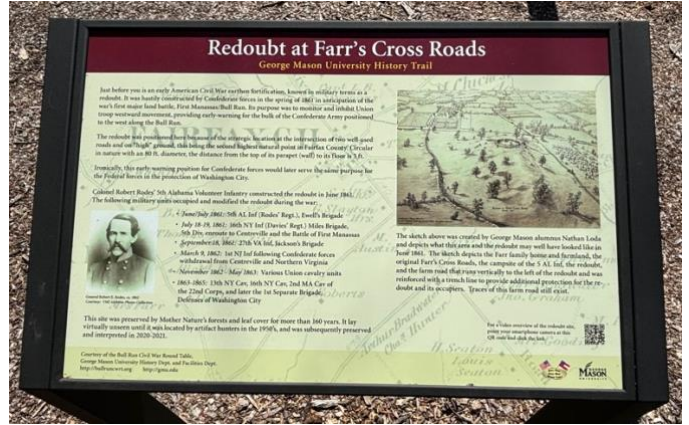
The Redoubt interpretive marker has been updated to include the Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads sketch created by GMU alumnus Nathan Loda, depicting what the Redoubt and the area surrounding Farr's Cross Roads may well have looked like in June of 1861. The QR code on the marker provides a link to the *Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads* video - a video created by BRCWRT and the Green Machine, and directed and produced by Green Machine media director, Joshua Cruse.

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The Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads



Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads Interpretive Marker

The newly installed Corduroy Road interpretive marker highlights the history of 'road corduroying' and of the corduroy road constructed in 1862 on the Road to the Courthouse from Fairfax Court House to Fairfax Station and on to Wolf Run Shoals. It also includes information on the discoveries of sections of the corduroy road logs in 2014 and 2015, and of the dendrochronology assessment of the 2014 logs done in 2016. The QR code on the marker provides a link to a short slide show and photographs of the dendrochronology assessment.



Corduroy Road Overlook



Corduroy Road Interpretive Marker

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**BRCWRT Tour/Class for GMU Students, Faculty Members and Staff**

On March 20, 2024, BRCWRT members Brian McEnany, Jim Lewis and Blake Myers conducted a Farr's Cross Roads Historic Site tour/class in support of GMU's Civil War and Reconstruction (Hist 373) course. This tour/class continued an annual event that began in November 2016 but had been paused since 2020 due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and the move to remote class attendance during the pandemic. The return to in-person classes in 2023-24, afforded the opportunity to re-start this annual on-site tour/class. Dr. Brian Platt and Professor Christopher Hamner concurred, actively supporting and promoting the tour/class. Our March 20 tour group included fourteen HIST 373 students, Dr. Platt, Professor Hamner and a member of the University's Development Department, for a total of seventeen participants.



*BMU's Professor Christopher Hamner and Dr. Brian Platt with BRCWRT's Blake Myers, Brian McEnany and Jim Lewis - - A Proven and Productive Team (photo courtesy of Sam Laudenslager)*

The tour began at the Access Trail Entrance (Parking Lot K) with Blake providing an overview of the history of the preservation and interpretation of Farr's Cross Roads Historic Site. Blake's overview highlighted the growth of advocacy within GMU to preserve and interpret the site, and the strong partnership between BRCWRT and GMU that accomplished the site's preservation and interpretation - a project that continues to evolve as we learn more about the history of Farr's Cross Roads and the surrounding area. Jim and Brian then provided an overview of the site's history. Jim discussed the beginnings of Braddock and Ox Roads, the site's affiliation with the Farr family and the origin of *Farr's Cross Roads*, and the establishment of *George Mason College of the University of Virginia*. Brian then discussed the site's Civil War history, including general characteristics of a redoubt, why this redoubt was constructed here, its construction in early June 1861 by the 5<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry Regiment

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commanded by Col Robert Rodes, its use by Confederate forces during the weeks leading up to the Battle of 1<sup>st</sup> Manassas/Bull Run on July 21, 1861, and the use of the redoubt throughout the war by Confederate and Federal forces.



*Blake Myers Presenting the Site's Preservation and Interpretation History  
(photo courtesy of Sam Laudenslager)*



*Jim Lewis & Brian McEnany Presenting the History of Farr's Cross Roads and its Surrounding Area, and the Site's Civil War History*

The tour proceeded to the Redoubt, where Brian discussed the construction and use of Civil War redoubts, the significance of the Redoubt at Farr's Crossroads and its location, and the various units known to have occupied and used the redoubt. Brian also discussed the history of how this redoubt was located and documented, leading to its eventual preservation and interpretation and to *The Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads* video (accessible via the marker's QR code) produced by the Green Machine Media Department.



*Brian McEnany & the Tour Group at The Redoubt at Farr's Cross Roads (photo on right courtesy of Sam Laudenslager)*

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We next moved to the recently established Corduroy Road Overlook where Jim discussed the history of corduroy roads in general and of this specific corduroy road, constructed during the Civil War between Fairfax Courthouse and Fairfax Station and subsequently to Wolf Run Shoals on the Occoquan River. Jim also discussed the corduroy road discoveries along Ox Road near University Mall in March 2014 and in October 2015, and what occurred as a result of each discovery, from indiscriminately piling the corduroy road logs next to the University Mall sign in 2014 to recording, tagging, and replacing each log in 2015.



*Jim Lewis & the Tour Group at the Corduroy Road Overlook (photo on right courtesy of Sam Laudenslager)*

We concluded the tour with a Group Photograph in front of the redoubt, followed by Blake's closing remarks - thanking Dr. Platt, Professor Hamner and the attendees for their time and attendance, requesting they spread the word about this site and its history, and stressing the importance of history education and historical preservation not only for current generations, but for generations that will follow.

***A people without knowledge of their history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.***

***Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it (Winston Churchill, 1914)***

***When asked by a reporter in 1997 why he dared so much about battlefield preservation, noted CW re-enactor and preservationist Brian Pohanka answered, "Some kid a hundred years from now is going to gain an appreciation for the Civil War and want to see these places. He's going to go down there and be standing in a parking lot. I'm fighting for that kid."***

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*The Tour Group - A Terrific Group and Day for Our Tour (photo courtesy of Sam Laudenslager)*

Thank you for your continued interest in, and support of, Civil War historic preservation in general and in BRCWRT's preservation projects, actions, and activities.

Blake Myers, BRCWRT Preservation Chair