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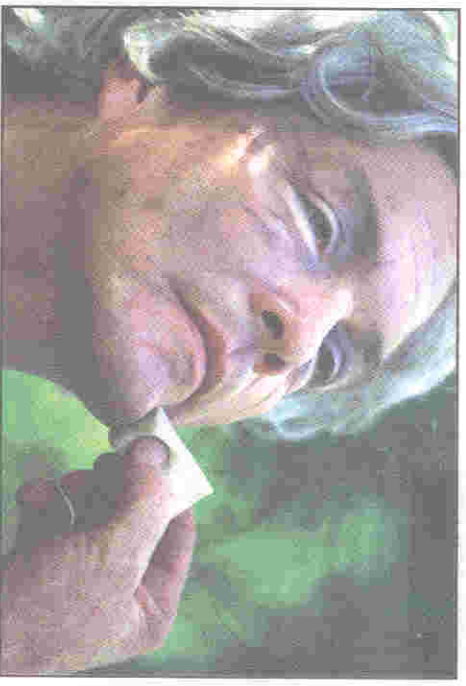
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LIGHTS!
CAMERAS!
PLAY
DEAD!



GETTING INTO CHARACTER:

Above, Kent Courtney prepares to play the role of John Watts Kearny, son of Maj. Gen. Philip Kearny, who was killed during the Battle of Chantilly. Times Staff Photo/Brian Price

CASUALTY OF WAR:

Left, a re-enactor lies dead in a cornfield during filming of a docudrama on Fairfax County's only Civil War battle. This and other scenes were shot at Frying Pan Park. Photo courtesy of Charles Mauro



ACTION: Earlier this month, Ox Hill Battlefield Park was the scene of the filming of a dedication ceremony as part of a docudrama on the Battle of Chantilly.

Times Staff Photo/Brian Price



Ox Hill battle brought to life

Local historian working on film of Battle of Chantilly

BY JENNIFER COOPER
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When local historian Charles "Chuck" Mauro began digging for details about the Battle of Chantilly, he had no idea his work would produce a book let alone a film.

Mauro, a Herndon resident, said his interest was sparked because the battle, called the Battle of Ox Hill by the Confederacy, was the closest to his home. It also happens to be the only Civil War battle fought on Fairfax County soil.

He began by looking at maps, and, before he knew it, his work blossomed. In 2002, Mauro's book "The Battle of Chantilly (Ox Hill): A Monumental Storm" was published by the Fairfax County History Commission.

Soon after, he was asked to work on a documentary, and within months he completed the screenplay. Filming began in September of this year.

In his film, which he calls a docudrama, Mauro begins with two Union veterans returning to the site in 1883.

It then flashes back to the battle—fought on Sept. 1, 1862, during a thunderstorm as the Union army was making its retreat to Washington, D.C., after its defeat at the Battle of Second Manassas. The film ends with the 1915 dedication ceremony of the battlefield.

Earlier this month the dedication ceremony was filmed at the battlefield, and, in September, another portion, showing casualties, was filmed at Frying Pan Park in Herndon.

However, the vast majority of the shots will need to wait until next fall. It is anticipated that the docudrama will be released shortly thereafter, sometime in early 2005.

Mauro is working on the hourlong film with camera-

men Bert Morgan and Scott Moir and the Fairfax County History Commission. It will air on public access Channel 10.

Although a small portion of the film will be shot on the actual battlefield, since it is surrounded by development, most of the docudrama will be shot at Frying Pan Park.

It has everything they need, Mauro said, a cornfield, an open field and a wooded area. When filming resumes, Mauro said, it will be in full view of the public.

While Mauro said he is hoping to educate people about the little-known battle, his film also focuses on the two Union generals killed in the battle, Philip Kearny and Isaac Stevens.

Stevens was killed when, during the battle, he picked up a flag carried by a fallen soldier and personally led the charge only to be shot in the head. Kearny was fatally injured by Confederate soldiers whom, in the pouring rain, he at first mistook for Stevens' troops.

Both men are considered to be interesting characters. Stevens, standing only 5 feet 2 inches, had been the first governor of the territory of Washington and served as its delegate in Congress.

Kearny was a man who could have easily sat in a mansion enjoying the good life—his family was among the founders of the New York Stock Exchange. Instead, he spent his career in the military to the detriment of his personal family life.

As he has worked on the project, Mauro said he is constantly learning new information about the battle from reenactors.

One little known fact, he said, is that officers on both sides of the war were often friends.

Kearny and Stevens had fought alongside Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. And, when Jackson learned Kearny was killed, he remarked:

"My God, boys, you know who you have killed? You have shot the most gallant officer in the United States Army. This is Phil Kearny who lost his arm in the Mexican War."

To show this friendship among the officers, Mauro plans to include a scene showing Lee writing letters to Kearny's widow as he sends the fallen general's body home through the lines.

"Most people have no idea of history—that something from the Civil War happened here," he said of the area surrounding the battlefield.

The film is being underwritten by Fairfax dentist Mark Turmmarello, who has given \$5,000; the history commission, which has given \$1,000; and Fair Oaks Mall, which has donated \$1,000. More donors are still needed to cover the \$5,000 needed to complete the film. Its total cost should be \$12,000.

Mauro will also be in the Virginia Room of the Fairfax Regional Library on Chain Bridge Road on Dec. 7 from 2 to 4 p.m. for an authors' night.

For more information, call 703-378-9743 or visit www.blmproductions.com/chantilly.html.



Times Staff Photo/Brian Price

SHARING IDEAS: Charles Mauro, author of the "Battle of Chantilly (Ox Hill)," directs cast members during filming of a docudrama that is based on his book. The Battle of Chantilly was fought Sept. 1, 1862, following the Battle of Second Manassas, in an effort to cut off the Union retreat. It is regarded as a strategic victory for the Confederates. **See story on the documentary on Page A10.**

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PREPARING FOR BATTLE: Confederate re-enactors line up along a cornfield at Frying Pan Park during the filming of a docudrama on the Battle of Chantilly.

Photo courtesy of Charles Mauro