



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cedar Creek & Belle Grove
National Historical Park

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National Park Service News Release

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Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park Announces Special “History at Sunset” Programs

MIDDLETOWN, VA ----- Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park is pleased to announce a series of special “History at Sunset” programs. These ranger-conducted presentations cover a variety of subjects and provide visitors an opportunity to see sites not normally open, or widely accessible, to the general public. “The history of the Shenandoah Valley is rich and fascinating,” according to Chief Ranger Eric Campbell, “These programs offer an opportunity to learn some of its many stories and visit sites that are normally not open.” Explore and learn about some of the “hidden gems” of the park and the Shenandoah Valley. Each program is free and lasts between 90 minutes to two hours.

June 19, 7:00 p.m.

A Tale of Two Cemeteries: Winchester’s Mount Hebron and National Cemeteries

Following the Civil War, efforts were undertaken to provide a “final resting place” for the thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers, who lay in temporary graves on the numerous battlefields of the northern Shenandoah Valley. This movement led directly to the creation of the “Stonewall” Cemetery, located in the Mount Hebron Cemetery and, across the street, the Winchester National Cemetery. Join Park Ranger Jeff Driscoll as he examines the story of both cemeteries and many of the men now buried there. Meet at the public parking area on West Street, located behind Mount Hebron Cemetery. (West Street can be accessed from either Woodstock Lane or National Avenue).

July 10, 7:00 p.m.

Not Just Black and White: Exploring the Complexities of Emancipation in the Post-war Shenandoah Valley

"The unending tragedy of Reconstruction is the utter inability of the American mind to grasp its real significance, its national and world-wide implications...." This program will begin to explore how Reconstruction affected both black and white civilians of the Shenandoah Valley; focusing on the daily struggles of everyday life to the political impacts for all in this region. This program will take place at the Thorndale Farm, an example of a typical small family farm that dotted the Valley landscape. Join Ranger Shannon Moeck for this stationary program at 652 N. Buckton Road, Middletown, VA. Visitors are encouraged to bring a lawn chair.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA.

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

July 24, 7:00 p.m.

Looking Beyond the Big House: The Belle Grove Plantation Complex

Belle Grove Plantation was a prominent landscape of the northern Shenandoah Valley. Numerous mills dotted the fertile flood plains of Cedar Creek. Slaves worked the massive fields harvesting wheat and other crops. Join Ranger Kyle Rothemich as he takes visitors "behind the big house" and explores the complexities of the Belle Grove Plantation environment. Meet Ranger Kyle at Belle Grove Plantation Manor House (336 Belle Grove Road, Middletown, VA). Moderate hiking will be required.

August 14, 7:00 p.m.

"We shall have graveyards at every door..." Middletown in the Midst of War

Throughout the Civil War Middletown constantly found itself in the middle of numerous military actions and campaigns. Join Ranger Chris Nelson as she explores how the town's civilians lived through those difficult times and how the war impacted their lives. Meet at the intersection of Main Street and First Street, Middletown.

August 21, 7:00 p.m.

Recalled to Life: Star Fort in War and Peace

One of the principal Civil War fortifications constructed to protect Winchester was Star Fort, named for its seven-pointed design. Used by both sides throughout the war, the fort was heavily involved in both the Battle of Second Winchester (June 1863) and the Battle of Third Winchester (September 1864). This special program, led by Ranger Jeff Driscoll, will give an in-depth tour of the construction and history of Star Fort, from the Civil War to its recent preservation. Meet at Star Fort (Fortress Drive and US 522, Winchester, VA).

September 18, 5:00 p.m.

"You can trust the bearer..." Thomas Laws and the Battle of Third Winchester

So wrote Major-General Philip H. Sheridan in a note to Ms. Rebecca Wright, a Quaker school teacher who lived in Winchester, Virginia, but who also happened to be friendly to the Union. And the bearer? A free black man by the name of Tom Laws. Join Park Ranger Jeff Driscoll as he examines the life of Tom Laws, how he risked everything to help the Union cause, and how his efforts led to Sheridan's decision to attack Early at Winchester on September 19, 1864." Meet at Chet Hobert Park (225 Al Smith Circle, Berryville, VA).

September 25, 5:00 p.m.

"...we went sweeping down their works like a western cyclone..." The Battle of Fisher's Hill

Following his defeat at Third Winchester on September 19, 1864, Lt. Gen. Jubal Early ordered his Army of the Valley to fall back to Fisher's Hill, south of Strasburg. Known as the "Gibraltar of the Valley," Early felt the hill "was the only position...where a defensive line could be taken..." Three days later, on September 22nd, Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan and his Army of the Shenandoah struck again. Join Ranger Jeff Driscoll as he examines this critical action in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Meet at Ramseur's Hill (1864 Battlefield Road, Fisher's Hill, VA). The tour will consist of both moderate walking and a car-caravan tour to various sites across the battlefield.

October 9, 4:00 p.m.

"Every opening disclosed moving masses of bluecoats...covering the hill slopes...with apparently countless squadrons" The Battle of Tom's Brook 151st Anniversary Tour Ranger Join Ranger Eric Campbell on a car-caravan tour that will examine the clash between Union and Confederate cavalry forces, which resulted a lop-sided victory for Union troopers and became known as the "Woodstock Races." Meet at the Shenandoah County Park (380 Park Lane, Maurertown, VA)

October 16, 4:00 p.m.

"...the destruction of Sheridan's army was inevitable." The Confederate Advance on Cedar Creek

The Confederate attack at Cedar Creek was one of the riskiest and most audacious assaults attempted during the entire Civil War. Although outnumbered 2.5 to 1, Lt. Gen. Jubal Early split his Army of the Valley into three columns and ordered an all-night march in order to place his troops for a pre-dawn assault on October 19th. Follow Ranger Shannon Moeck for a car-caravan tour which details Early's bold plan and then follows in the footsteps of the Confederate approach march. Meet at the Fisher's Hill Battlefield (Ramseur's Hill, 1864 Battlefield Road, Fisher's Hill, VA).

For more information, check the park website (www.nps.gov/cebe) or call (540) 869-3051.

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About Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park: Cedar Creek and Belle Grove commemorates a nationally significant Civil War landscape and antebellum plantation by sharing the story of Shenandoah Valley history from early settlement through the Civil War and beyond. The park is embedded within the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, a National Heritage Area.

Created on December 19, 2002, the park encompasses approximately 3,700 acres across three counties and includes the key partner sites of Belle Grove Plantation (owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and managed by Belle Grove, Inc.), Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation lands and Headquarters, Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation lands, and a developing Shenandoah County Park. The partner sites continue to be owned and operated independently.