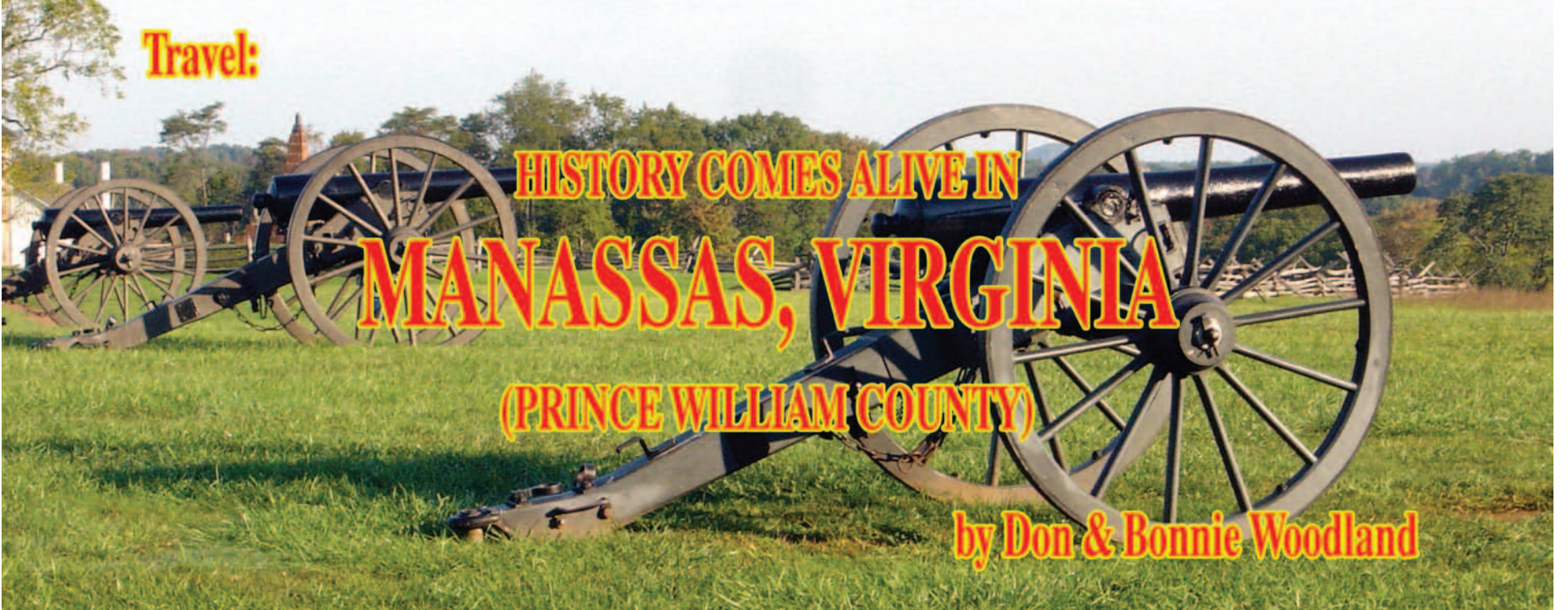


Travel:

HISTORY COMES ALIVE IN MANASSAS, VIRGINIA (PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY)

by Don & Bonnie Woodland



Cannons at the 5,000-acre Manassas National Battlefield Park



The Stonewall Jackson Monument at the Manassas National Battlefield Park

Many visiting the vicinity of our nation's capitol, instead of staying in DC, chose to stay in Prince William County (PWC), Virginia. The County makes a great vacation hub as it is only 25 minutes southwest of the nation's Capitol. You save significantly by staying at one of the 40 hotels in the county. And you don't even have to drive into Washington, DC. Mass transit is available into the Capitol. Trains leave from Woodbridge or Manassas.

Prince William County is also in proximity to: Maryland, Shenandoah Valley, Williamsburg, Luray Caverns, Mt. Vernon and Old Town Alexandria. Plus, if you're a Civil War buff, there are a dozen heritage sites and museums, including the Manassas National Battlefield Park. In fact, three out of every five Civil War battles were fought in Virginia.

The new National Museum of

the Marine Corps is an attraction that has drawn over a million visitors in its first two years open—making it a major D.C.-area visitor attraction.

The **National Museum of the Marine Corps** is a 135-acre site located near Quantico, Va. The building itself is spectacular—a combination of stainless steel, gleaming



The Manassas Farmer Market is a 23-year Saturday tradition.



The colossal atrium inside the National Museum of the Marine Corps

aluminum and glass, which is shaped as an abstract of the iconic Flag monument of Mt. Surabachi. The Museum's central

mast reaches up 210 feet, surrounded by a cone of glass. Opened in November of 2006, the 118,000 square foot museum

celebrates the 233 years of the Corps. Space inside is much larger than it looks from the outside. The building was

designed by Fentress Bradburn Architects. And the exhibits were designed by Christopher Chadbourne and Associates.

Free, docent-led tours are at 10am, noon and 2pm, with no reservations required. Admission and parking is free.

The museum isn't just a collection of tanks, planes and guns. It goes to great lengths to communicate the spirit and attitude that is common to those in the corps, and of which they are very proud. Of great interest also is the informative exhibit about Iwo Jima.

Plan to have lunch on their second floor mess hall. There is also a tavern adjacent to the mess hall that serves lunch. (www.usmcmuseum.org)

The **Manassas National Battlefield Park** offers interpretive exhibits and daily guided tours of the 5,000-acre battlefield complex. You'll learn how in July, 1861 volunteers fought the first major land bat-



The exterior of the National Museum of the Marine Corps



Stirring the caramel corn at the Manassas 26th Annual Fall Jubilee

tle of the war. Confident their foes would turn and run, neither side anticipated the death that would ensue. A year after the first battle of Bull Run (aka: Manassas), both sides met again on the same battle-



Wine tastings at Manassas' Opera House Gourmet

field, where the Confederates won a solid victory, bringing them to their height of power. Stonewall Jackson got his nickname at Bull Run. (www.nps.gov/mana/)

At the **Manassas Museum**, you'll learn how the former railroad community was forever changed by battle and war. There's also much history on Northern Virginia. (www.visitmanassas.org)

The Rippon Lodge, located in Woodbridge, Va. was built in 1725 by architect Richard Blackburn, who also designed the original home at Mount Vernon. Perhaps the oldest house in Prince William, Rippon Lodge is located along the historic Potomac Path, originally an Indian trail that became one of the major transportation routes linking northern and southern colonies. It was purchased by PWC two years ago and restored. The estate, originally 2000 acres, is now 46 acres, and has been a working farm growing tobacco, then wheat, up until the 1940's. Rippon Lodge is about 0.8 miles north of the intersection of U.S. Rt. 1 and Rt. 642/Hoadley Road in Woodbridge, Virginia.

If you like the outdoors, PWC is known as the "outdoors capitol of the Capitol region." There are national, state and local parks, sanctuaries and wetlands--as well as boating, fishing, hunting, bicycling, birding, hiking and camping. If you're into the latter two items, don't miss **Prince William Forest Park**, a sprawling 15,000-acre Piedmont forest. It is the largest protected natural area in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region. Activities include 37 miles of hiking trails, 21 miles of bicycle-accessible roads and trails, family, group and backcountry camping, as well as rustic-cabin camping. These rustic beauties are inexpensive and date from the 1930's. There's also a full-service, concessionaire-operated RV campground, picnicing in picnic areas or the picnic pavilion, wildlife watching, and a few winter activities like cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. (<http://tinyurl.com/48gazd>)

For golfers, PWC is home of the Presidents Cup, and also twelve daily-fee, championship courses. The **Harbor Station Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course** is newly open on PWC's Cherry Hill Peninsula on the shores of



The Bull Run Monument was built in 1865 by active Union soldiers.

the Potomac River, Powell's Creek and Quantico Creek. The rolling greens at **Stonewall Golf Club**--on the banks of Lake Manassas--is described as one of the "Best Places to Play" by Golf Digest, recognized by GolfWeek as one of America's "Best Public Access Courses"



Rippon Lodge was built in 1747; it is the oldest house in Prince William County.



The site of the first civilian casualty at Bull Run: the Judith Henry home

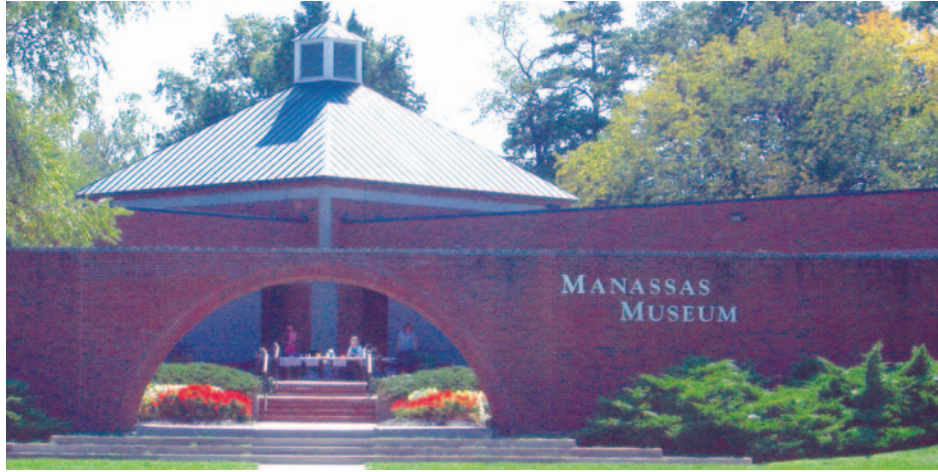
and honored by Golf For Women magazine as one of the “Top 50 Courses for women.” For complete golf listings in the county, go to the website listed below.

Don’t forget to visit **The Winery at LaGrange**, in Haymarket, Va. Housed in a red-bricked, 18th-century manor house, the 20-acre winery offers tours, light food, and tastings of the handcrafted wines created by Chris Pearmund, including: Viognier, Chardonnay, Meritage, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Norton, Claret, Pinot Grigio, Tannat and a Port-



Oak barrels do their job at the Winery at LaGrange, in Haymarket, Va.

style Snort. The grapes used come entirely from Virginia and are juiced and made into wine at the vineyard. The winery opened in September, 2006 and is Prince William County’s only established winery. Their wines are available through the internet and can be shipped.



The Manassas Museum was founded in 1973.

According to winemaker Rob Cox, Virginia is the “best area on the east coast to grow the broadest range of grapes.” The winery’s chardonnay came in first place at this year’s Va. State Fair. (www.wineryatlagrange.com).

Great shopping is found throughout the county. **Potomac Mills Mall** is the most-visited tourist attraction in PWC. Or try downtown Manassas. One of the most interesting shops

there is the **Opera House Gourmet** (www.operahousegourmet.com).

Saturday mornings is the time to take in the **Manassas Farmer’s Market**, a 23-year tradition. Located next to the train depot, the market offers an amazingly colorful variety of fruits and vegetables, breads, organic meat and seafood. (www.historicmanassasinc.org)

In historic **Occoquan**, there are more than 100 specialty shops and restaurants. Occoquan itself stretches four blocks by three blocks deep, with stores offering everything from pottery, home accents, furniture, gifts, antiques and folk art. Several galleries feature works by local artists, and boutiques feature

tor tail and crawfish. The filet mignon is great as well. And there’s live music on the weekends. Also try **Dixie Bones**. The restaurant was originally located on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. and moved to Woodbridge, VA. in 1996. They’re very proud of their real pit barbeque, using hickory wood to smoke the meat; no preservatives are used, and it is not served swimming in sauce. Also, save room for dessert. All their pies are first-rate and homemade. No apple pie out of a can! (www.dixiebones.com, www.okras.com)

There are loads of places to stay in the county. Two favorites are: the **Fairfield Inn and Suites**, in Manassas, which offers complimentary breakfast (www.marriott.com). Also, there’s the Four Points by Sheraton Manassas Battlefield. (www.fourpoints.com)

For more information about Prince William County, call 800-432-1792, or go to www.visitpwc.com.

And thanks for traveling.



Picnicers at the Winery at LaGrange. Behind them, thousands of new planted vines