Historical Society of Western Virginia

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Historical Society of Western Virginia

Amor montium nos movet

(For the love of mountains inspires us)

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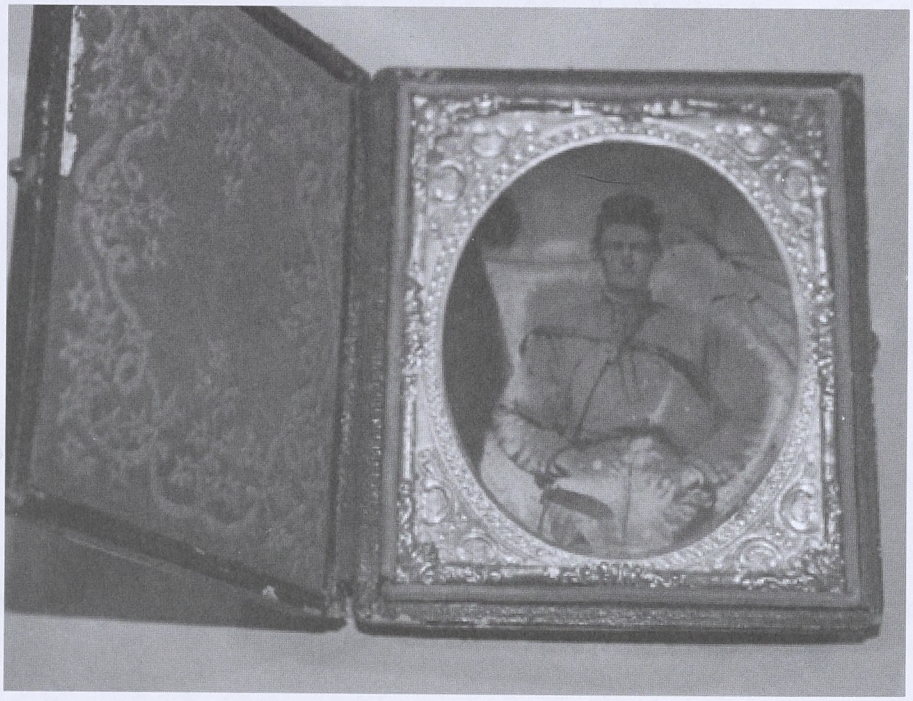
Table of Contents

continued on next page

On the cover: An advance of the Army of the Potomac, sketched by Alfred R. Waud.

Contents, cont'd



This daguerreotype of Pvt. William R. Bryant is in the History Museum's collections. Bryant, who came from the Big Lick area, enlisted in Company I, 28th Virginia Infantry, serving under Col. William Watts. He lost his right leg in battle at Petersburg in April 1865.

Director's Message

Society plans two Civil War exhibits

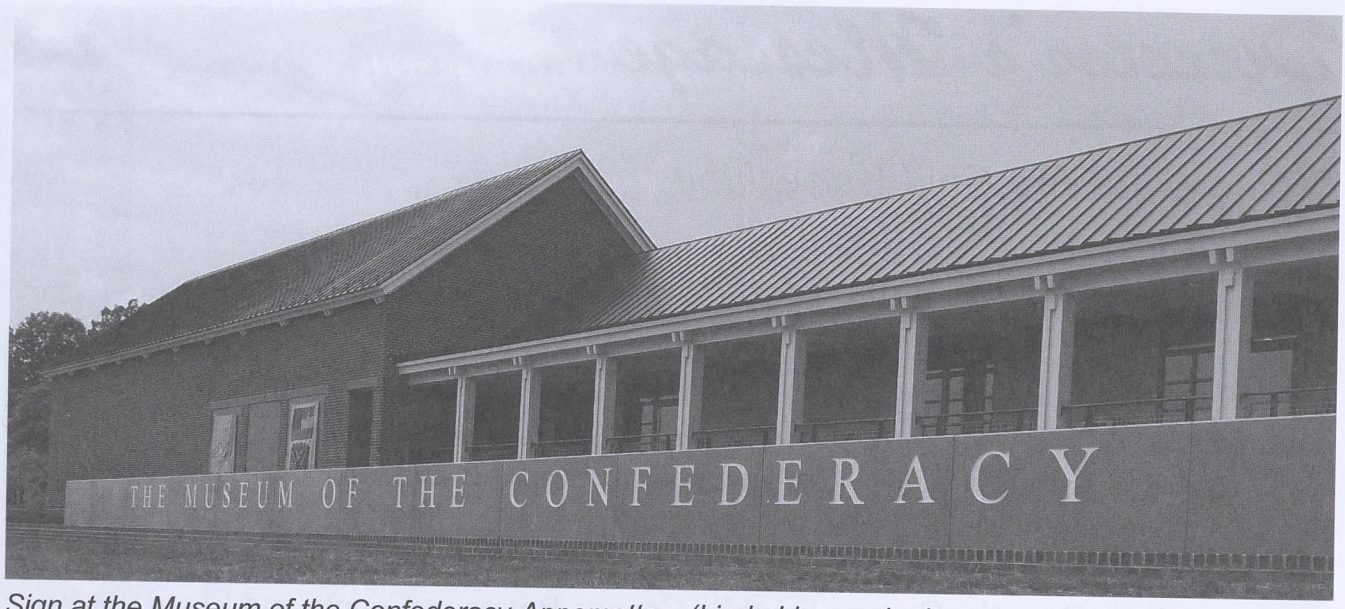
2012 marks the second year of the five-year commemoration of the 150th Anniversary (Sesquicentennial) of the American Civil War in Virginia. What is the Sesquicentennial? The General Assembly created a special commission to honor and commemorate this important anniversary. The goals of the commission are to create a traveling exhibition ("An American Turning Point"), host signature conferences and educational programs, encourage battlefield preservation, and work with municipalities to coordinate statewide commemoration efforts. The Historical Society is chairing a regional committee including groups from Roanoke County, Franklin County, Botetourt County and Floyd County to create interesting events and market those events throughout this five-year anniversary.

Due to renovations at the History Museum, the signature project for us in 2012 is this special-edition Civil War Journal. Inside you'll discover some classic articles alongside new research. 2013 will be a big year for events in Roanoke with multiple Civil War themed events and two important exhibitions at the History Museum and the O. Winston Link Museum. "An American Turning Point," curated by the Virginia Historical Society, will open at the History Museum in June. This amazing exhibition tells the story of the battlefront and the home front during this tumultuous period in Virginia. "State of the Union" by Gregg Segal will also open in June, at the O. Winston Link Museum. This photography exhibition highlights the importance of Civil War battlefield preservation by contrasting historic sites with commercial development.

An integral part of our outreach includes technology and last year we launched a new website for the History Museum: www.vahistorymuseum.org. This year we are launching a new website for the Historical Society — www.westernvahistory.org — and many of our publications are now available for purchase online. We have joined the social networking culture and are now on Facebook. And of course, we are still working tirelessly on the Virtual Collections project.

We are looking forward to seeing you in May when the History Museum once again opens its doors in the spectacularly refurbished Center in the Square — do drop in!

Jeanne M. Bollendorf
Executive Director



Sign at the Museum of the Confederacy-Appomattox. (Linda Lipscomb photo courtesy of the museum)

The New Day at Appomattox

by Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson Jr.

Probably no name in all of Civil War history is more familiar than Appomattox. Here it all ended; here it all began.

Here, on Palm Sunday, 1865, two gentlemen basically declared: "In the name of God, this is enough." America's bloodiest war came to an end. Simultaneously, at Appomattox the union of states at last became reality. Modern America — the nation in which we live — came to pass. Thus, Appomattox is more a birthplace than a cemetery.

We meet together today for several reasons. First, of course, is to unveil a monument to a legacy bequeathed to us on these grounds by men of another age. We gather here as well to dedicate a memorial to those who gave of themselves for the simple aim of making freedom and union one and the same. Most obviously have we come here to open a museum that for ages will remind not merely us, but the world, that patriotism is an inherited necessity in any country.

The fighting on these grounds in the spring of 1865 was minimal, but the feelings are timeless. Virginia was one vast graveyard as the two opposing armies converged on the courthouse. Union

Dr. James I. "Bud" Robertson Jr., a leading Civil War author/teacher, gave these remarks at the dedication of the Museum of the Confederacy-Appomattox on March 31, 2012. They are used with permission of the Museum of the Confederacy Magazine and the author. Robertson, author of two dozen books on the Civil War, is Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Virginia Tech.

forces were swirling around Robert E. Lee's ever-weakening columns. On April 7, Chaplain Hallock Armstrong of the 50th Pennsylvania wrote his wife: "We are picking up Rebs every hour. They are thicker than squirrels in the woods and make as little resistance.... They are dirty, crestfallen, haggard, and nearly starved. Our boys ... are very kind to them.... They have few garments to throw away. Their destitution is pitiful. Many are bare footed."

A Confederate across the way recalled of the same period: "During the last days of the retreat, attack came from every quarter, and the days and nights alike were spent in marching and fighting. There was not opportunity for sleep, and of food there was none. Suspense, despair, exposure, famine and want of sleep caused men whose weak bodies could not sustain their dauntless souls to lie down on the roadside to await the coming of death" from exhaustion.

After the surrender, Lt. David Champion of the 14th Georgia stated: "To some it was a sad occasion and to others a joyous one. Some [soldiers] wept like children, some cursed, and some were joyful that the inevitable had at last occurred. After the surrender of our guns, the Yankees came over to our camps, mixing and talking freely with us.... Not at any time after that ... did I hear a single discourteous remark made to a Confederate."

So it ended; so it began. The Civil War produced the nation we know and love. Of course, the healing process would take time. Yet it was a healing process, not an ongoing bitterness that saps the very life out of a struggling country. Much of the brotherhood you and I have came from the soldiers who shared that war and, in doing so, came to realize that underneath the strong passions of the time, they were all Americans.

Johnny Rebs never apologized for what they had done, and Billy Yanks never asked them to do so. The unity of North and South today, after a war that consumed as many as three-quarters of a million people, borders on a miracle. It has never occurred before, and not likely ever to happen again.

That is why Appomattox, and this museum, looms large in the Republic's conscience. Today a nationwide spotlight gleams on this section of Virginia and the historic jewel that is being unveiled. We welcome this exhibition hall and what assets it brings to the central piedmont. A number of facts underscore its importance, as well as the inescapable value of the time it honors.

Virginia was the principal battlefield of the Civil War. The Confederacy existed only as long as the state lived. Some 2,100 engagements took place inside Virginia's borders. It lost a third of its territory at the start. The remainder suffered more man-made destruction than has befallen any other sector of the Western Hemisphere. One-fifth of all Confederate soldiers were Virginians. More than 30,000 sons of the Old Dominion perished in that four-year struggle.

Asking Virginians to forget those tragic facts is a request that lies between imbecility and insanity. The past is the past. It is what we do with the past that matters. Several choices are possible.

The first is to try and forget history. Yet turning one's back on the past is suicidal. A good history student knows that any nation which forgets where it has been has no idea where it is going. The 3,000-year chronicle of man is firm on that principle.

Secondly, one can choose to interpret the past according to individual feelings. Take the War of 1812, as an example. The Americans think they won it. The Canadians know they won it. The British never heard of it.

Similarly, from the Civil War came an end to slavery. From that war came the Emancipation Proclamation. We are talking about the same thing, but from two different directions.

A more popular mishandling of history is to twist the facts to suit the present. Its followers pursue a number of avenues: once-popular "political correctness" or the use of "faction" — a new word meaning a work that is partly fact, partly fiction, with only the author knowing one from the other in the text. Such approaches are history's greatest dangers. You cannot change the unchangeable. Distorting the past dishonors everyone involved.

Gens. Lee and Grant at the surrender. (Allen Austin photo courtesy of the museum)

Too many folks look at the past through the lenses of the present and, blessed by 150 years of 20/20 hindsight, have the answer to all problems. That is dishonest behavior. Common sense should tell us all that if a real United States had existed in 1860, civil war would not have come. The all-powerful, all-inclusive federal government that now watches over every action except the inertia of its own Congress was a creation of that war, not a factor when it began.

The final alternative on what to do with the past is to remember it, to recognize both its warts and its beauty spots, and to use history for what it has always been: the greatest teacher we will ever have. Harry Truman, who stands among the five greatest of American presidents, put it succinctly: "The greatest news we can receive is the history we do not know."

Tourism remains one of Virginia's principal industries. Why should it not be so? We have more history than any other state. The first representative government met at Jamestown a year before the Massachusetts settlers had even spotted land.

Central Virginia has long stood in the shadows of Civil War history. No string of major engagements is here to attract notice. No interstate highway courses across Virginia's belly and encourages sightseeing. Only a sprinkling of Civil War sites has existed to draw tourists from afar.

That is no longer the case, thanks to what is happening here today. For decades the Museum of the Confederacy has evolved into one of the nation's leading Civil War depositories. The volume and depth of its memorabilia is unmatched in Southern history. Yet the White House of the Confederacy and its attendant archives in downtown Richmond dwelled for years in what might be called "respectful obscurity."

Fifty years ago, such a building as you see before you was not even a dream. A young graduate student visiting the museum went to the entrance of the White House, which stood alone at the end of Clay Street. In a cubby hole just to the left of the front door reigned Miss India Thomas, a charming,

ageless matron who presided over a home in which the floor of every room sagged from encased relics and bric-a-brac that would have made a flea-market manager salivate. A dozen items were jammed in space where one would have been comfortable.

The researcher in those days went to the White House basement. There, in semi-darkness, were crowded shelves of books, boxes stacked in the floor, card files of every size lined against the wall, and unlabeled folders lying atop everything. There another spinster, Miss Eleanor Brockenbrough, oversaw the treasures. She did so with the vigilance of Catherine the Great. If Miss Eleanor liked you, hours could be spent digesting incredibly rich collections. If Miss Eleanor did not like you... well seeing the catacomb was an unforgettable experience.

What a shame those two devoted servants and treasured friends cannot be here today to witness a beautiful dividend from their years of devoted service. We owe them much. We give them our collective thanks.

Today — and for generations to come — what you see here is a collective effort by thousands of people contributing in scores of different ways. To name them all is impossible, for this was truly teamwork on a gigantic scale. Even those in the principal roles are too many to mention. Yet Waite Rawls (president of the Museum of the Confederacy) must be recognized. He has given unwavering leadership to the Museum of the Confederacy in often tumultuous times. Every American of every age owes him a debt of gratitude. And this building would not be here in Appomattox without the strong and steady support of the William E. Jamerson family. They have been the Rock of Gibraltar from beginning to end. To them, who have been genuine friends for many years, I express publicly my heartfelt humility that they wished to name part of the facilities for my family. It is an honor I will forever cherish.

In its 122-year history, the Museum of the Confederacy has been established as the primary depository for Confederate memorabilia ranging from uniforms and flags to belt buckles and camp equipment. It also has a research library and photographic file that no serious student of Southern history can overlook. As from the beginning, the museum's holdings far exceed its physical capacity for displaying them all.

Now the museum opens its first extension. It is a state-of-the-art structure with over 300 artifacts (some never before seen by the public), as well as audio-visual mechanics, classroom, temporary exhibits, gift shop and a security system of equal quality with the contents it guards.

This is a major addition to the present and future in central Virginia. It makes history easier for even the slowest learner. Reading about the past, of course, is educational; watching things on a television screen can occasionally have worthiness. But when one can see history in a glass case, hear words of emotion emanate from relics of yesteryear, or perhaps touch the past on an exhibit table, all of one's senses become involved in an unforgettable way. We can verily relive the Civil War and its lessons because a museum like this brings it so meaningfully alive.

A half-century ago, Arkansas Sen. William Fulbright visited the Mother State and commented: "The air in Virginia is charged with reminders that the earth does not belong to the living alone; and the past does not come into being and then say farewell forever." Virginians, the senator added with a twinge of envy, possess "a mystic sense of a continuing contract between generations."

Here stands such a contract. Visit it often. Absorb its teachings. A survivor of the Civil War observed just before his death: "I do not despair of the future. The march of Providence is so slow, and our desires so impatient … The life of humanity is so long, and that of the individual so brief, that we often see only the ebb of the advancing wave, and are thus discouraged." We must not be, he added. "It is history that teaches us to hope."

The speaker was Robert E. Lee.

Welcome to the Museum of the Confederacy at Appomattox.

Rare Lee letter tells of 'thinning ranks'

Editor's Note: The text of this 1863 letter from Gen. Robert E. Lee to his brother, Carter Lee of Powhatan County, is published here for the first time. The letter is used with the permission of the late Sen. William B. Hopkins of Roanoke, a great-grandson of Carter Lee. The original letter is in the possession of another Lee descendant who lives in Florida.

Camp Hood, 24 May 1863

My dear brother Carter,

I have but a few moments in which to express my thanks for your kind letter of the 21st. I unite with you in mourning at the death of Gen. Jackson. Any victory would be dear to us at such a price. Still I am grateful to Almighty God for having given us such a man whose example is left us and whose spirit I trust will be diffused over the whole Confederacy and will raise in the army many to supply his place. Who can fill it, I do not know. But he is at rest enjoying the reward of duty well done. We have still to struggle on, our labour rendered more severe, more onerous by his departure. I very much regret that the quiet of your neighborhood should have been disturbed by the footsteps of the enemy. He has forever become so numerous in comparison with ourselves that he seems able to go anywhere. In the last battle he exceeded us more than three to one. An excess of over one hundred thousand men is fearful odds. Can not our good citizens get back to us our stragglers and dastards. Our noble wounded return as soon as they can crawl. Some on one leg and some with one arm. But they come to do what they can. Our ranks are constantly thinning by battle and disease and we get no recruits. You can judge therefore of the prospect of disposing of Hooker's army as you propose. I am rejoiced to hear that you are all so well and that you bear your privations so bravely. I am sorry that my little nephew had to dispense with his peas and strawberries on his birthday. They will be made up to him I hope. But if he meets with no greater disappointments he will do well. Tell all the boys to get their hoes and go to the cornfields — Labour is the thing to make soldiers. They then will be able to do their share when they become men. Miss Mildred must not go in the cornfield. She must go in the garden and live with the violets, the lilies and the roses. Give much love to Sis Suzy — tell her that she must give me her pious prayers and the prayers of her household. But for a merciful God we could do nothing. He is our only assurance of victory. Think of the hosts against us — their numerous appointments and vast equipment in every conceivable way. But for his being on our side, we must have failed in every battle. But as long as he is for us I fear no odds against us.

Truly your brother,
R.E. Lee

C. C. Lee Esqs.

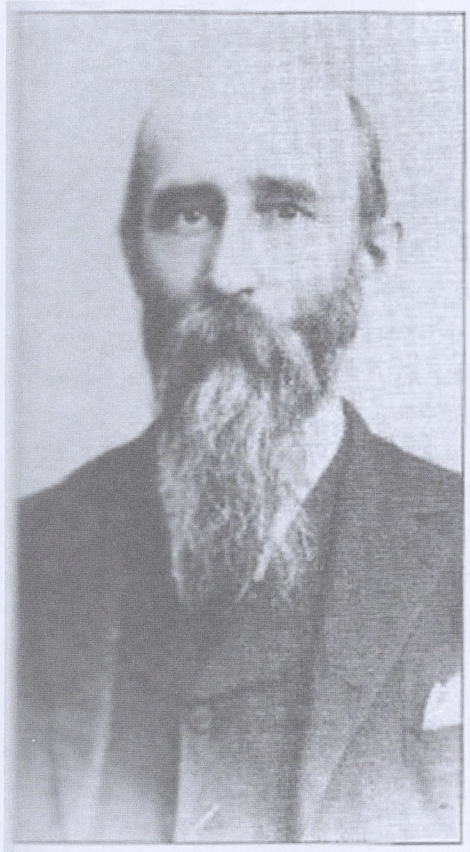
ROBERT E. LEE.

George S. Bernard on the causes of the Civil War

by John Selby

George S. Bernard was an amateur historian. He was also a well-regarded lawyer in Petersburg, a former politician, a newspaper editor, a four-year veteran of the Civil War, the son of a respected judge, a book editor and a popular speaker on Civil War topics, especially to his beloved group of Confederate veterans, the A.P. Hill Camp of Petersburg.

Born in Petersburg in 1837, Bernard had been educated in local schools, then sent off to the University of Virginia, where he earned a bachelor's degree and a law degree in the 1850s. He had briefly practiced law in his hometown before the war began, but when it did, he promptly joined up, serving four years in the 12th Virginia Volunteer Infantry company. A reliable and dutiful soldier, Bernard never rose above the rank of sergeant, though with his education, sociability, intelligence and strong character he must have been asked to consider promotion on several occasions. He always insisted that others were better suited to command than he.



George S. Bernard

When the war ended he returned to a devastated community, where his prospects had declined since the war. He taught and worked at the Petersburg Express to make ends meet, but eventually his law practice revived to the point where it could sustain him. He would practice law in Petersburg for the next 47 years, still going to work at age 76 when he died in 1912. For most of that time he was a lead counsel for the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company. He served one term in the House of Delegates, and two terms as commonwealth's attorney for Petersburg. Like a small number of Confederate veterans in Virginia, Bernard followed the political path of his former commander, William Mahone, moving from Conservative to Readjuster to Republican between 1868 and 1888. His special cause became civil service reform, and he published a number of articles on that topic in the 1880s. By 1888, however, his interest in politics had waned and his new interest in the war had blossomed. *[1]*

John Selby is the John R. Turbyfill Professor of History at Roanoke College, the author of "Virginians at War: The Civil War Experiences of Seven Young Confederates" and one of three editors of "Civil War Talks: Further Reminiscences of George Bernard & His Fellow Virginians."

Bernard was a founding member of the A.P. Hill Camp of Confederate veterans formed in Petersburg in December 1887. Turning his considerable energies away from politics and towards the study of the war, Bernard gave numerous addresses to the members over the next 25 years, organized and managed the camp library, helped arrange for speakers to visit and newspapers to cover their talks, assisted in reunions of Union and Confederate soldiers and pulled together a number of speeches, letters and reports into a well-received book published locally in 1892, "War Talks of Confederate Veterans" (still a useful source for students of the war, especially those studying the Battle of the Crater). He continued to collect speeches and correspondence on the war, going so far as to prepare a draft copy of another book of reminiscences that was never published (until 2012). He also used his wartime diary as the framework for a narrative history of the war (from his perspective), which also was unpublished (until 2012). *[2]* By the late 1890s he was a sought-after speaker on the war, traveling regionally to listen to battle stories and give talks on the war.

In an age when there were no professional historians, only writers on history, Bernard slowly carved out a local reputation as an authority on the Civil War. While he gave numerous addresses on battles, campaigns, personalities and incidents in the war, in 1906 and 1907 he took a break from analyzing the soldiers' war to examining a more controversial issue, the causes of the war. In two long addresses before his camp, one in December, the other in March, he walked his listeners through a detailed history of slavery, sectional differences and the role of various events in the coming of the war.

Like any good historian, he announced his thesis straight away, not saving it for the conclusion in the breathless style of a mystery. In the second sentence he spoke on the evening of Friday, December 7, 1906, he told his audience, "That slavery was the paramount or leading cause of difference between the people of the two sections of the Union that culminated in the clash of arms during that period of four years cannot be doubted." *[3]* He then proceeded to give his listeners a history of slavery from ancient times to the present, using an article from American Cyclopedia (1879 edition) as one of his main sources. He concentrated on the 19th century, of course, discussing the various views of the slave trade, Supreme Court decisions, and the British role in the slave trade and its abolition.

On Tuesday, December 11, the newspaper printed the remaining 27 paragraphs of his speech. Here he made some arguments that must have pleased his audience. He posited that Virginia "and other states" would have followed the lead of Pennsylvania, New York, Rhode Island and New Jersey in providing for gradual emancipation of slaves, except that the "invention in 1793 of Eli Whitney's cotton gin made slavery very profitable in the Southern States and this fact was a most potential factor in checking the growing anti-slavery sentiment of the country." He then noted that a bill to emancipate slave children was introduced into the Virginia House of Delegates in 1832 (never passed), and provided a long quotation from Del. John Brown who argued that Virginia's efforts to restrict slavery in colonial times were thwarted by the crown, and that in total, slavery was "forced upon us by a train of events that could not be controlled." *[4]*

Bernard continued with this line of reasoning by quoting from Virginia Sen. R.M.T. Hunter's speech to the Breckinridge Democratic State convention in 1860. Hunter said, "When I first entered the Federal councils, which was at the commencement of Mr. Van Buren's administration ... the Southern men themselves, with but few exceptions, admitted slavery to be a moral evil, and palliated and excused it upon the plea of necessity." Just 20 years later, though, white Southerners argued that "it is best for both that the inferior should be subject to the superior." *[5]* What had happened? Bernard devoted the rest of his address to answering that question.

In the next section of his speech, Bernard carefully covered the Missouri Compromise of 1820, showing how it seemed to satisfy the politicians on both sides. Using sources such as James G. Blaine's "Twenty Years in Congress," Thomas Hart Benton's "Thirty Years View" and J.L.M. Curry's "The South," Bernard had prominent politicians explain how and why the Missouri Compromise worked. *[6]*

What Bernard strove to do would be completely familiar to modern historians. He set out his argument, gave a brief chronology of what had happened, then used the works of others to provide both expert and contemporary views on his subject. Even his topic, the role of slavery in the coming of the war, was not that unusual in the South of his era. What was unusual was the emphasis he placed on the importance of slavery as a cause of the war. In his award-winning book, "Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory," Yale historian David Blight argues that "no argument in the Lost Cause formula became more an article of faith than the disclaimer against slavery as the cause of the war." *[7]* For Bernard, this was simply not true. Not only had the South embraced slavery (though fighting it, to a certain degree, up to the late 1830s), but slavery was the "paramount ... cause of difference between the people of the two sections" that ultimately led to war. Still, the morality and constitutionality of slavery would be equally important issues to Bernard, and how he approached those could either reassure or unsettle his audience.

Bernard delivered the second half of his long address to the camp on Friday, March 1, 1907. That evening he methodically described a well-known series of events that were linked in the history of sectional disagreement: William Lloyd Garrison's founding of the Liberator, the rise of the abolitionists, the Nat Turner rebellion, the Wilmot proviso, the Compromise of 1850, the publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the impact of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, the formation of the Republican Party, the danger inherent in Hinton Rowan Helper's "Impending Crisis," the effect of John Brown's raid on Southern fears, secession and the final straw, Lincoln's call for states to provide troops to put down the rebellion. For this long section he used some new sources: D.H. Montgomery's "American History," Percy Greg's "History of the United States," John William Jones's "A School History of the United States," James Schouler's "History of the United States" (found in the World's Best Histories series), and Edward Pollard's "Southern History of the War." *[8]*

Each book, with the exception of Montgomery's, had a pro-Southern bias, so if his listeners were familiar with the authors, they would be reassured. Montgomery, however, was a different story. For example, in describing the alleged connection between Garrison's Liberator and the Nat Turner rebellion in Virginia, he wrote that "many Southern people believed that Mr. Garrison's object was

> It is safe to say that there was not a man in the country, from Washington to Hamilton on the one side to George Clinton and George Mason on the other, who recognized the new system as anything but an experiment entered into by the States, and from which each and every State had the right peaceably to withdraw — a right which was likely to be exercised.

to stir up the negroes to rise and murder their masters. There was not a grain of truth in the belief, but it spread at the South and powerfully increased the excitement." *[9]* Bernard did not challenge this assertion of Montgomery's; instead, he cited it, then moved on to the next topic, the influence of Garrison in the North. After that, he discussed the "gag rule" in Congress, the handling of abolitionist literature in the mail, and the lack of enforcement of the fugitive slave clause in the Constitution. He finished this section of his discussion with a lengthy quotation from Henry Cabot Lodge, senator from Massachusetts, who wrote in his biography of Daniel Webster, "It is safe to say that there was not a man in the country, from Washington to Hamilton on the one side to George Clinton and George Mason on the other, who recognized the new system as anything but an experiment entered into by the States, and from which each and every State had the right peaceably to withdraw — a right which was likely to be exercised." *[10]*

Bernard had used Lodge's judgment to foreshadow the last section of his long speech, the section that would ultimately reassure his audience. With such a lengthy address to publish, the newspaper again split the speech into two, the last half being published on Tuesday, March 26, 1907. Quoting at length from the two Congressmen, Blaine and Benton, Bernard charted the history of the Wilmot proviso and the Compromise of 1850. Of the latter, Bernard asserted that "the equilibrium in the Senate, was lost by the admission of California, never afterwards to be restored, the free states now numbering sixteen and the slave states fifteen. The South was the loser in the compromise as in that of 1820." *[11]*

Bernard then discussed the disunion convention of 1850 (it failed), Calhoun's "guaranteed equilibrium" solution, and the impact of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1852). He wrote, "[it] was read by hundreds of thousands who got their ideas of southern slavery from its exaggerated and altogether unfair presentation of the subject. Probably no work of fiction ever exerted so great an influence upon public opinion." *[12]* This argument fell in line with what other Southerners were arguing at the time, though Bernard never delved into the daily life of slaves, as some of his contemporaries did.

The true turning point for Bernard was the platform of the new Republican Party in the presidential election of 1856. It specifically stated that "the Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign power of the territories of the United States for their government, and that in the exercise of this power it is both the right and the duty of Congress to prohibit in the territories the twin relics of barbarism — Polygamy and Slavery." As interpreted by Southern states, it became a "fixed belief that if the new party should elect its nominees, the slaveholding states owed it to themselves in that event to protect their interests by withdrawing from the Union." He then cited four politicians, Rep. Keitt and Sen. Butler of South Carolina, Gov. Wise of Virginia and Sen. Iverson of Georgia, who said the same thing, in a more colorful way (Keitt: "if Fremont is elected, ADHERENCE TO THE UNION IS TREASON TO LIBERTY"). *[13]*

Now the stage had been set for the final act. Though the Republicans lost the election of 1856, the battle lines had been drawn. Bernard wrote of the "failure" of the non-intervention principle in the territories (commonly called "popular sovereignty" today), the rising anger in the North over the Dred Scott decision of 1857, and that the "utterances" of the "great leaders of the Republican Party left no room for doubt as [to] the hostile purposes of this party." More fuel was added when 68 Republican congressmen endorsed Hinton Helper's book in 1859, which recommended that slaveholders be made ineligible for office and business with them be severed. With the John Brown raid coming that same year, even though it was the work of "a few abolition fanatics," it "moved the whole South as nothing before had done." Bernard wrote that "in the North there was widespread approval of what John Brown had done" (citing no author or evidence for this assertion, which has not been borne out by modern studies). *[14]*

Then came the election of 1860, and the victory of Lincoln and the Republican Party. But how to explain the reluctance of Virginia to secede with its Southern sisters? "Whilst the right to dissolve the Union was not questioned, its expediency was, and accordingly those who favored secession upon the contingency of the Republican success constituted but a small minority." As proof of this argument, Virginia sent a delegation to Washington in February to "save the Union," but "her efforts were futile." (Bernard also noted that a convention assembled in February was "largely Union in sentiment," although he did not mention that this very convention voted to stay in the Union.) *[15]* So what was the tipping point? Not the firing on Fort Sumter, but Lincoln's subsequent characterization of that act as "rebellious," and his call for the states to provide 75,000 volunteers to suppress this insurrection.

This was too much for Virginia. Bernard wrote, "The people were indignant. Although they were devotedly attached to the Union the very suggestion that the action of their Southern sisters was an unlawful combination, a rebellion, and they were called upon to aid in suppressing it, was offensive to them, believing, as they always had done, that there could be no lawful coercion of a sovereign state." Drawing on one of the first of hundreds of books to articulate this point, Edward Pollard's "Southern History of the War," Bernard quoted Pollard, "The Virginia resolutions of '98 and '99 had for 60 years constituted the textbook of the State rights politicians of the South. The doctrine of state sovereignty was therein vindicated and maintained, and the right and duty of States, suffering grievances from unjust and unconstitutional Federal legislation, to judge of the wrongs, as well as of the mode and measure of redress, were made clear." Proof of this sentiment came from the strong response of Virginia against President Jackson's throttling of nullification in 1832, when a "majority" of the legislature "indicated their recognition of the right of a State to secede from the Union," according to Pollard. *[16]*

So why did Virginia vote to secede on April 17, 1861? Bernard wrote, "it was the assertion of the rights of the States that was the principle involved in the great struggle, rights which, to judge by their public speeches and the platforms of their political parties, those who came into power on the 4th of March, 1861, would not have respected." So while "slavery ... was the disturbing element that precipitated secession and the war that followed," Virginia had left the Union because it *could* and felt it *should. [17]*

After two lengthy speeches, involving dozens of long quotations, intricate constitutional arguments, and literally hours of political history, Bernard had both departed from the orthodoxy of his day, and yet finished the speech on the premise that almost all white Southerners in the early 20th century could agree on: by straying from the constitutional agreements on slavery, the North had pushed its anti-slavery agenda on the South, and when Southern states tried to leave in peace, the North would not let it. It was an argument made by John Calhoun in the 1840s, by Jefferson Davis in 1861, and by hundreds of other Southern spokesmen before and after the war.

By challenging some of the cherished beliefs of his time, Bernard was going out on a limb, potentially risking the loss of some of his diligently accumulated audience. By placing slavery as the main cause of the war his voice became practically Northern at the time, though a couple well-known politicians of the day, John W. Daniel of Virginia and John H. Reagan of Texas, also called slavery the "prime cause of the conflict," according to historian Gaines Foster. *[18]* At the same time, he held the same view of the impact of the prewar events as his fellow Southern writers, and his careful use of a number of pro-Southern "experts" bolstered his defense of the South. His conclusion, that the North pushed the South to the edge, and that the South had the right to secede, did not differ from the dominant argument of his fellow Confederate veterans and their children, and ultimately would have reassured his audience that he had not become too radical. Indeed, his camp members elected him commander in 1909, and asked him to deliver the main address at the 1911 unveiling of a tablet made to

honor the Confederate soldiers who had died at the Battle of the Crater. George S. Bernard, reformer and intellectual, could argue that slavery was the main cause of the Civil War. But George S. Bernard, proud son of Petersburg, respected Confederate veteran, and leader of the veterans who resided in Petersburg, could go no further than that in challenging some of the beliefs of his fellow Southerners. As he told his audience at the beautiful Blandford Church that warm August day, the reason thousands died was that they "fought and died in defense of their rights, their homes, and their firesides." *[19]*

NOTES

1. Biographical details culled from a more detailed picture portrayed in Hampton Newsome, John Horn, and John G. Selby, eds, "Civil War Talks: Further Reminiscence of George S. Bernard and His Fellow Veterans," (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2012), xix – xxv.
2. Original papers for the second book are now housed in the History Museum of Western Virginia in Roanoke, Virginia. The Museum also digitized the entire Bernard collection.
3. Petersburg Daily Index-Appeal, December 9, 1906, p. 1. Half of Bernard's first speech was published in the Sunday edition of the newspaper; the other half appeared in the Tuesday edition.
4. Petersburg Daily Index-Appeal, December 11, 1906.
5. Ibid.
6. Bernard quoted extensively from the memoirs of two well-known 19th century politicians, the Democrat Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri and the Republican James G. Blaine of Maine. Their works were: "James G. Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress," (1884 and 1886), and Thomas Hart Benton, "Thirty Years View," (1854 and 1856). Curry wrote several works on the South, though none was specifically titled The South (though that is the title Bernard used). Most likely he refers to "Legal Justification of the South in Secession," (1899).
7. David W. Blight, "Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory" (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 282.
8. Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1852); Hinton Rowan Helper, "The Impending Crisis of the South" (1857); David H. Montgomery, "The Student's American History" (1899); Percy Greg, "History of the United States" (1887 and 1892); J. William Jones, "School History of the United States" (1896); James Schouler, "History of the United States" (1904); Edward Pollard, "Southern History of the War" (1863 - 1867, published in four volumes). Montgomery wrote four textbooks on American history, each having American History as part of its title. Without possession of each book, it is hard to say which of the four Bernard cited. Given that each was a textbook for school children, it is assumed that the information in each was largely the same. J. William Jones is more widely known as one of the first Lee biographers, and the author of the famous work on revivalism in Army of Northern Virginia, "Christ in the Camp" (1886).
9. Petersburg Daily-Index Appeal, March 24, 1907.
10. Ibid. Lodge's biography of Webster was entitled "Daniel Webster" (1883).
11. Petersburg Daily-Index Appeal, March 26, 1907.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Gaines M. Foster, "Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913," (New York and Oxford: Oxford University press, 1987), 119.
19. Petersburg Daily-Index Appeal, August 1, 1911.

An 'army of many colors' trains near Salem in 1863

by Nelson Harris

In the first wintry weeks of 1863, hundreds of men encamped just two miles outside Salem in an event unnoted by local historians. Most were green, young enlistees from counties in present-day West Virginia, while a few were battle-hardened veterans of the Civil War's first full year. Gathering on the Zirkle farmstead two miles west of Salem, they were without uniforms, standard arms and horses but unyielding in zeal and spirit to enter the war in readiness. *[i]*

For the first several weeks in January and February, these men drilled, trained, outfitted and organized into two regiments — the 16th and 17th Virginia Cavalries. While most of Salem's sons had already enlisted in various regiments months earlier and were long travelled, the Salem community provided the needed hospitality and send-off for these sons of other communities, the names of which many in Salem had probably never heard. They were from places called Sissonville, Millpoint, Gross Lick and Gauley Bridge, small towns tucked in the mountain valleys of Wood, Monroe and Mercer counties of what became West Virginia on June 20, 1863. In early January, these farmers, blacksmiths, merchants and millwrights congregated on the outskirts of Salem to be mustered into service as Confederate cavalry.

Among the groups of Confederates arriving at Salem was the 107-member "French's Battalion" named after the leader, Col. William Henderson French. Col. French, a former delegate in the Virginia legislature, was nearly 50 years old at the start of the war. His battalion had already tasted battle, having existed for six months. There was the "Harrison Cavalry" composed of men from Harrison County, who had organized at a Methodist Church at Jesse's Run and had been raiding Union territory in Ohio. One-hundred-thirteen men calling themselves the "Night Hawk Rangers" also arrived, proudly carrying a silk flag made by certain ladies in Greenbrier County. Embroidered on the silk were the words "Liberty or Death." Home guard units from the newly formed, Union-affiliated state of West Virginia arrived sympathetic to the Southern campaign. Independent cavalries and other bands of men converged to be enlisted and officially mustered. All total, the men numbered nearly 1,600.

Pvt. Addison Smith later recalled the day he and his unit marched into Salem: "The appearance we made marching along the streets of the city was very imposing and grand, for we were like an army of many colors: some armed with shot guns, some with long muskets, besides other guns of all descriptions and kinds, with no uniforms, but all had on just what we left home with. I had a homespun jacket. Had snuffle bits for our horses and we nearly all had citizen saddles, and all the time we thought we were making a grand display ... our intentions were good and beneath all our bad uniforms beat as true a hearts as ever went to war." *[ii]*

Given the amount of men and supplies having now arrived outside Salem, the first order of busi-

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ness was to set up camp to house and feed what for all intents and purposes amounted to a small town. Under the able command of Col. William French, Camp Zirkle was established. Col. French, however, was housed in more comfortable environs. He, his wife and their children occupied five rooms at a hotel in Salem.

Pvt. James Hodam, writing in a personal journal in 1901, described the camp and its activities:

> Camp Zirkle was constructed on strictly military principles. A guard of eighteen men was detailed every day for camp duty being two hours on and four hours off. There were six posts one on each side of the camp, one at the quartermaster's department and one at the commissary department. The different companies were quartered in cabins and tents, fitted so as to be comfortable, and built facing along each companies [sic] street, or parade ground.
>
> We were generally kept busy at something through the day. The roll was called at six o'clock, guard mounting at seven o'clock and sick call at eight. From nine till noon was drilling and maneuvering by battallion. In afternoon, dinner and two hours company drill and sabere [sic] exercises.
>
> When not on duty, our time was occupied as we pleased. Some read, some wrote letters, sang, slept, and many played cards.
>
> At six o'clock again roll call and at nine tapps [sic] all lights were out and all good soldiers were supposed to be in bed. We only drew rations for two meals a day, so if we had nothing left from dinner we had no supper. Our rations consisted for each man sick or well one pound of flour or corn meal, one pound of beef or a third of a pound of bacon and a little salt, rice, sugar, and tobacco was issued occasionally. Sassafras tea took the place of coffee which we never seen except when captured it from the enemy.
>
> Camp Zirkle was laid out in a square and the huts and tents of our regiment including officers quarters, a church, guard house, commissary and quartermaster building made quite a village. *(see drawing on page 21)*

With camp now established, Col. French's next major obligation was to have the men officially mustered into service. On January 15, the 16th Virginia Cavalry was officially recognized by Richmond, but Col. French was encountering bureaucratic problems with muster rolls submitted for the 17th Virginia Cavalry. Thanks to Col. French's intervention, the 17th was officially mustered into Confederate service on January 28.

In the midst of awaiting official recognition, the men of Camp Zirkle were called upon to protect the Washington Salt Works in Smyth County. The men were hurried into boxcars at Salem and transported via the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad into southwestern Virginia. Arriving at the salt works, the men found the Federals had not yet arrived. Remaining in Smyth County several days and seeing no sign of Union troops, the Camp Zirkle contingent returned by rail to Salem. In camp for only two weeks, the men of the newly mustered 16th and 17th Virginia Cavalries were again called into deep southwestern Virginia. This time, Federal troops were threatening Bristol. Travelling by rail, the Camp Zirkle troops arrived, camped unmolested for five days in freezing February weather and returned to Salem.

The return trip to Salem was rather eventful. The train derailed. James Hodam wrote: "When we were a short distance from Salem and about midnight while we were asleep and probably the engineer also, the General (Hodam's nickname for the train engine) someway got off the track and ran into a ditch and laid over on his side. Seven cars left the track. Some went into the ditch but did not turn over. No soldiers were hurt, except bruises but the engineer and one of the firemen were killed."

The camp was not unlike any other military camp in that the men were plagued often with bad

food, disease, cold and fatigue. A hint of Camp Zirkle's difficulties was communicated in a letter of February 20 that Lt. Joseph A. Wilson of the 14th Virginia Cavalry wrote to Henry H. Hamilton in Augusta County. "Hen we have had a large time here lately about rotten beef. The Old General has two men appointed to inspect every piece of beef.... The health of the company is very good now and I believe the small pox has vanished away not to return again at least I hope so." *[iii]*

In the spring, tensions began to mount between the soldiers and the townsfolk of Salem. After all, the men in camp easily outnumbered those living in Salem, and as the men remained in camp there was a continuing need for the resources of Salem. One such occasion was the visit a Confederate officer and surgeon made to Roanoke College. The incident was recalled by the college's president, Dr. David Bittle. According to Bittle, they were looking for accommodations for a new hospital. Some men at Camp Zirkle were sick, and some had already died. With the advice of a trusted college trustee, John McCauley, Bittle took the train to Richmond. Soliciting the assistance of southwest Virginia's Confederate Congressman Waller Staples, Bittle was able to contact the surgeon-general of the Confederate army about the matter of retaining the campus of Roanoke College for solely academic pursuits. According to Bittle, the surgeon-general replied: "By no means would I permit a college to be broken up for such a purpose. If we succeed in establishing the Confederacy, we want intelligent men to control it, and if there is any locality in which a college can exist in these times, it must be protected."

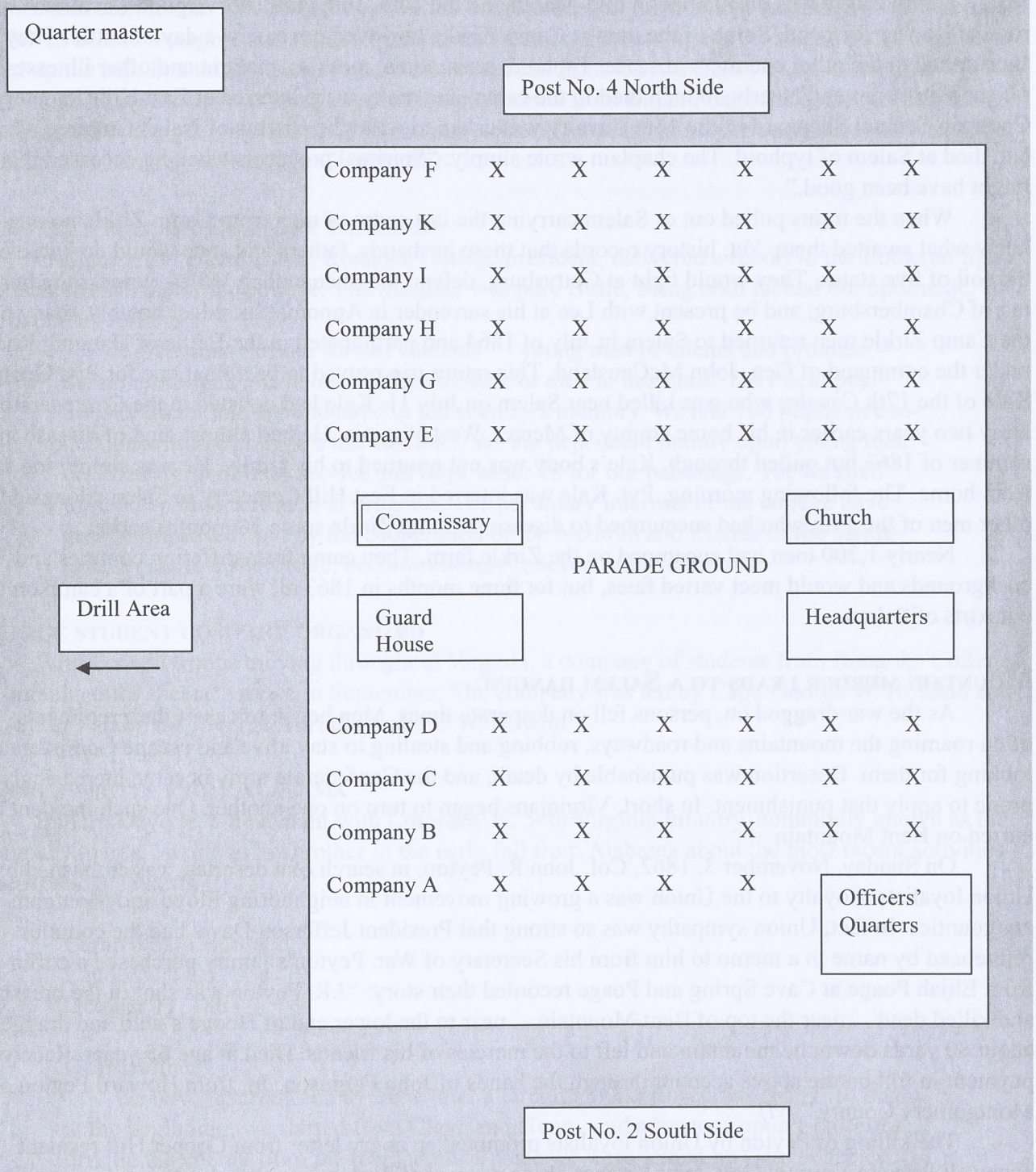
Ironically, as Bittle was engaging the Confederacy's surgeon-general on the matter, Confederate soldiers were being quartered in the college's buildings. Professor William Yonce, who had just concluded the funeral service for a former student killed in the war, rushed back to the campus and indeed found the college occupied. Doors had been broken open with the butts of guns. Furthermore, they had burned the students' wood, broken locks, ransacked some rooms, and carried off the students' bed clothing. Through the formidable efforts of Yonce, the soldiers managed to lodge only for a night. Bittle was rather gracious in his recollection, claiming, "It seems that the officer, under whose order this was done, had received an incorrect report of the feelings of the Faculty in reference to having the college used as a hospital." In retrospect, the damage done to the treasury of the college far surpassed any physical damage the buildings may have sustained. Yonce, also the college treasurer, had to provide nearly 100 students with wood, locks and bed clothing, all of which emptied the treasury. *[iv]*

The men of Camp Zirkle remained in the Salem vicinity only a few more weeks until they were ordered to move up the Shenandoah Valley. Before heading north, Pvt. Charles Kelly penned a one-page letter to his brother, John, on March 13. He wryly stated his post address as "Camp Comfort near Salem." Kelly wrote about his pay and the movements of some of the men. The weather was "verry cold" and snow "shoe mouth deep" had fallen in the southwestern part of the state. With those necessary facts reported, Kelly concluded, "nothing more at present."

On March 17, John Snider of the 14th Virginia wrote his sister, Kittie, in Augusta County. Regarding Camp Zirkle, Snider reported:

> We have had some very rough wether, last sabeth night was very rough, I never heard heavier thunder nor seen sharper thunder in my life. It rained very hard til midnight and then got very cold. I was corpel of the guard that night. They is still some snow here yet. The roads is awful bad. We are getting along very well. We have good quarters and plenty to eat now. It was for one weak that we did not get no meet only what we bought. Our mess bought one side of bacon and it cost us four dollars and thirty cts apiece. It was seventy five cts a pound. We have the half of it yet and the side that Jacob Anderson brought with him. We are getting plenty of beef a gain. It is dried beef ... it is about right to make good stake ... We get plenty sugar and rice but we don't use the rice. I wish I had the chance to send it home ... You had better come out to our singing some night and you will hear something that

CAMP ZIRKLE LAYOUT



> is worth listening at ... We have preaching every sabeth in camp. I think our chaplin is a fine man. His name is Crook ... I would very much like to send my old boots and shirt home. Tell mother I would like for her to make me a saddle blanket if she can ... I remain your brother till death so good by to all and may God bless and watch over you all is my sincier prayer. *[v]*

Camp Zirkle was dismantled in mid-March and the 14th, 16th and 17th Virginia Cavalries rode off to war for good. Some of the men at Camp Zirkle, however, never saw a day of battle. They succumbed to the other enemy — disease. Typhoid, pneumonia, measles, malaria and other illnesses plagued the regiment. Nearly 50 men died in the camp, and many were interred at East Hill Cemetery. Chaplain Samuel Sheppard of the 16th Cavalry was asked to write the parents of Isaiah Crabtree who had died at Salem of typhoid. The chaplain wrote simply: "Spiritual prospects when he deceased this life might have been good."

When the trains pulled out of Salem carrying the last cadre of men from Camp Zirkle no one knew what awaited them. Yet, history records that these husbands, fathers and sons would do battle on the soil of five states. They would fight at Gettysburg, defend the Shenandoah Valley, witness the burning of Chambersburg, and be present with Lee at his surrender in Appomattox. Most notably, many of the Camp Zirkle men returned to Salem in July of 1864 and participated in the Battle of Hanging Rock under the command of Gen. John McCausland. This return trip proved to be a final one for Pvt. George Kale of the 17th Cavalry who was killed near Salem on July 11. Kale had enlisted in the Confederate army two years earlier in his home county of Mercer, West Virginia. He had almost died of disease in the summer of 1863 but pulled through. Kale's body was not returned to his family. He was simply too far from home. The following morning, Pvt. Kale was interred in East Hill Cemetery in Salem alongside the other men of the 17th who had succumbed to disease at Camp Zirkle some 16 months earlier.

Nearly 1,200 men had encamped on the Zirkle farm. They came from differing counties and backgrounds and would meet varied fates, but for three months in 1863 all were a part of a camp on the outskirts of Salem.

Mountain murder leads to a Salem hanging

As the war dragged on, persons fell on desperate times. Men began to desert their regiments, often roaming the mountains and roadways, robbing and stealing to stay alive and escape Confederates looking for them. Desertion was punishable by death, and the Confederate army became increasingly prone to apply that punishment. In short, Virginians began to turn on one another. One such incident occurred on Bent Mountain.

On Sunday, November 3, 1862, Col. John R. Peyton, in search of a deserter, was ambushed by Union loyalists. Loyalty to the Union was a growing movement in neighboring Floyd and Montgomery counties. In fact, Union sympathy was so strong that President Jefferson Davis had the counties referenced by name in a memo to him from his Secretary of War. Peyton's family purchased a coffin from Elijah Poage at Cave Spring and Poage recorded their story: "J.R. Peyton was shot in the breast and killed dead ... near the top of Bent Mountain ... near to the lower end of Hodge's field and dragged about 80 yards down the mountain and left to the mercies of his friends. Died at age 65 years. Received payment in full on the above account through the hands of John Ferguson, Jr., from Howard Peyton of Montgomery County." *[vi]*

The killing of Peyton by Union loyalists prompted an angry letter from Copper Hill resident Tazewell Price to Virginia Gov. John Letcher. Price wrote that Peyton was shot dead from his horse in the middle of the day and further claimed that the home of a witness to the ambush had been torched presumably by the same band of men that had killed Peyton. Price begged Letcher for protection of the

citizenry by a "force sufficient to scour the mountain" in order to put a stop to "robbery, theft and attempts to murder various citizens." Price further asserted the home guard was not sufficient to search out and arrest the "traitors" and thus Floyd County citizens were "alarmed to such an extent that they don't believe their lives are safe." *[vii]*

Tried for the crime of killing Peyton was James Edward Stover. Stover was convicted by a Salem jury on June 17, 1863, with a sentence of death by hanging. Two months later, on August 14, Stover's sentence was carried out. "Main Street east of the courthouse was lined with a somber crowd of people who fell in behind a wagon, surrounded by 12 armed guards and bearing Stover seated on his coffin, as it moved up the hill. In a thick grove of trees across the road from today's Oakey Field, Stover died." *[viii]*

On the day Stover was hung, Lewis Stover obtained from Elijah Poage the coffin needed for burial just as Peyton's family had done 10 months earlier. The death of Stover outside Salem was to be the last public hanging in Roanoke County. *[ix]*

War takes toll on Roanoke College

In August, Dr. David Bittle, Roanoke College president, delivered a report to the Lutheran Synod as to the current state of the college. The message was pure Bittle, being both factual but optimistic. It read in part as follows:

> A great many of our former students — young men of talents and promise — are no more. They have been killed in battle or died in hospitals. They held positions of honor and are endeared in the country's memory. We had 100 pupils in connection with the college's last session... We are dependent mainly upon young men disabled from military service and boys under 18 for our patronage. Yet we shall try to keep the institution in progress. The pecuniary interests of the college have greatly improved, and by the cooperation of the brethren and friends of the institution, it can, in a short time, become entirely relieved of its liabilities.

College student company organized

With Federal troops moving throughout Virginia, a company of students from Roanoke College was organized for special service in September. The company was led by Capt. George W. Holland and Lts. Arthur Parkhouse, George A. Halbert and C.W. Nowlin.

Deyerle writes from Alabama

Ballard Deyerle, a lieutenant with Company K, 54th Virginia Infantry, commonly known as the "Roanoke Guards," wrote to his brother in the early fall from Alabama about the most recent activities of the Roanoke Guards.

> Camp Near Courtland
> Lauderdale Co., Ala.
> October 11, 1863
>
> Dear Brother,
>
> We have just returned to Dixie after a circuit around Rosecrans' army. To begin at the beginning, we started from Cleveland, Tenn., and advanced upon Charleston, driving the enemy from the town. At that place we were joined by Gen. Wheeler with four divisions of cavalry, twelve thousand men with artillery. We then moved northward, and crossed the Tennessee River near the mouth of the Hiwassa River.

From there we moved toward McMinnville, and on the round we captured a train of 500 wagons and 1000 prisoners. We surprised the Yankees at McMinnville, and after a sharp little engagement, captured the town and garrison, consisting of 500 men. At that place I supplied myself with a pair of blue pants, a pair of boots, a very fine pair of patent leather gaiters, a hat, and a beautiful sword; also a Yankee canteen filled with fine brandy. We then marched to Murfreesboro and commanded the town to surrender; but the Yankee commandant told Gen. Wheeler to come and take it. He (Gen. Wheeler) thinking "discretion the better part of valor," concluded he would not; therefore he contented himself with tearing up the railroad to Fosterville. We then moved to Shelbyville, ran the Yankees out, and destroyed about $500.00 worth of property. On the road from Shelbyville to Pulaski the Yankees, about 1500 strong, attacked our rear, and stampeded Scott's Brigade. They (Scott's men) came rushing through our ranks, scattering everything right and left. We wheeled our cannon around in the road, and as the enemy came within 180 yards, we fired two loads of cannister into their ranks, and checked them until our Brigade could form. The enemy then ran up seven pieces of artillery, and opened one of the most terrible fires upon our two little popguns that I ever heard. They were firing only two hundred yards, with shells and cannister. This unequal contest was kept up about fifteen minutes; when we fell back about a quarter of a mile. Here the Yankees again charged, but were held in check by our popguns, until the Yankees brought up their cannon; then the fight was kept up for eleven miles; when at Farmington we came up with the main body of Gen. Wheeler's forces; where we succeeded in checking the enemy for the day. Our division lost 600 men in the fight, over one-third of the number from Hodge's Brigade. We lost only one man wounded and a horse killed from the Battery; but I cannot say how it happened, for it was the hottest place that I was ever in, or ever want to be again. We had U.S. regulars to fight, and you may know what it was. They annoyed our rear from Pulaski to Tennessee River, but made no direct attack; and we crossed over without molestation. They are now on the opposite side of the river with 3,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry, with 18 pieces of artillery, but I think will hardly dare to cross. The pickets kept up a continued fire across the river. I think I can appreciate the name of this state; for we did not rest for more than three hours at a time from the time we left Georgia until we came here. This is a beautiful country, but we are about to starve. I have not had anything to eat for 48 hours, but when I do get something I will make it bounce.

The Yankees are a very provident people, and supply our Rebel cavalry with good clothing, if it was only the right color. I lost all my clothing and need money. Dr. Wade is going home, and if you can find him send $150.00 by him. I despair of ever hearing from home. My last letter home was August 9th. Excuse this letter. I slept on my arm about a week ago, and the back of my hand is completely paralyzed. I am afraid it will be permanent.

Enclosed you will find a Catholic badge which was taken from the neck of a dead Yankee at McMinnville. Bob Logan sends respects.

Your devoted brother,
Ballard P. Deyerle *[x]*

Escaped Union prisoners plan attack on Salem

The Civil War, as with all major experiences, is full of plans never carried forward. One such example involves a number of Union soldiers held as prisoners in Danville, who being starved with little hope of exchange, sought to break out and make a raid upon Salem. The story is told by Cpl. J.F. Hill of the 89th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, a captive of the battle of Chickamauga. Originally taken to Richmond, Hill and other prisoners were transferred to a Confederate "tobacco prison" in Danville in mid-November.

On the morning of November 14, Hill and others began discussing a breakout scheme. According to Hill, the plan involved "bursting open all three of our prison doors, overpowering the guards, capturing the towns, destroy the railroad bridges across Dan River, cut the telegraph ... and speed for the mountains." Hill believed the plan achievable given there were over 1,000 Union prisoners being guarded by about 100 Confederate guards. Should the escape succeed, the plan broadened to divide the Union prisoners into three groups, each with an assigned task of disrupting the Danville community, and with a final detail of arming 75 to 100 men. The armed men "were to start off to the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad to cut the telegraph and destroy the track by burning some bridges at or near Salem, in Roanoke County." Hill estimated the men could reach Salem in 12 hours.

That night Hill and others began approaching their fellow prisoners about the escape. After talking with several hundred, only 60 agreed to participate. Undeterred, the escape was put into motion albeit much diminished in its goals and plans as originally conceived. "After dark," Hill wrote, "we went to work and cut a hole through the fence ... It was not work of more than a half an hour, and all was ready; but we waited so as let the people in town settle down. About half after seven o'clock they commenced going out in small squads of three and four men." Thirty minutes later Hill, accompanied by Sgt. Solomon Stookey and Cpl. Henry Thompson, both of the 89th Ohio, slipped unnoticed through the hole.

In a pouring rain, Hill, Stookey and Thompson made for the banks of the Dan River. Stopping briefly to eat from a persimmon tree, the three moved in a northwesterly direction. Four miles ouside of Danville, the trio collapsed exhausted. After a few hours rest, they managed to cross the Dan River at dawn, using an abandoned canoe. Not wanting to travel in daylight, they again rested in cold, damp woods. By the morning of November 16, Hill recalled, "We had lost all energy to push forward." Starved, cold and fatigued, the three moved on and were fortunate to come upon the cabin of a Mrs. Corban. Explaining their situation, the woman invited the men in to eat and by fireside they feasted on stewed chicken, butter, cabbage, cornbread and coffee. Corban, a Union sympathizer, led the three into the woods where two more Union soldiers were hiding. Luck was indeed gracing Hill and his men.

The group of five were provided directions to another Union sympathizer, a Mr. Yates. Moving north, the men came upon Yates' home and were well received. As they were eating under Yates' roof, three more men approached. To Hill's surprise, the three were a part of the contingent that had escaped the same night as he from the Danville prison. Yates was able to update Hill on the success of the breakout, saying that 60 had managed to get out but six were recently captured. Warning the men of pursuing Confederates, Yates shuffled Hill, Stookey and Thompson into nearby woods for the day. Giving them one last meal, the men moved on along a trail of known Union sympathizers who would give them shelter and food. On November 18, they enjoyed the hospitality of a widow, Mrs. Smith; on the 19th it was a farmer named Carder; and by nightfall of the 19th, a Mrs. Reynolds took them in.

By Friday, November 20, the trio, guided by Hill, found themselves 15 miles outside of Rocky Mount in Franklin County. On Saturday, the men crested a mountain and viewed Salem. Warned that the area was "watched day and night to catch Rebel deserters," Hill's group eased through the wooded valley. According to Hill not only was the vicinity of Salem well watched, it was also "one of the hottest nests of secession in the whole valley."

On Sunday, November 21, Hill and his men spent the day in the woods outside Salem. Hill's

diary described the scene. "As soon as it was light enough we fell back about half a mile and found a house in which we had a very welcome breakfast sat before us, by a good old Quakeress, who appeared as if she could not do enough for us. After eating and thanking the good woman, we made for the top of Salem mountain, which we reached after a two hour's walk ... We slept some through the day but always kept one out on guard while the other two would sleep. From our refuge we could see around for miles. It was a beautiful sight; we could see directly down into the rebel town of Salem, and could see the people promenading the streets. Little dreamt they that they were watched by Yankees; but as for us, we felt secure, for I felt Providence had a hand in our escape."

One can only imagine the totality of Hill's thoughts as he viewed Salem from a distant knoll. Just a few days earlier Hill had envisioned a 100-man militia bearing down upon the town, destroying railroad track and igniting bridges. On that Sunday afternoon as Hill took in the beauty of the scenic mountains and ridges and watched the bustling along Salem's streets, he was in the company of only two men.

Before sundown, Hill, Stookey and Thompson resumed their trek north, and again Hill recorded their movements through the Roanoke Valley. "Our course led about ten miles up the (Catawba) valley. This was also very fertile; and in traveling along the road we had to pass near some very fine houses. All these we endeavored to avoid by taking across some fields. And as a general thing we never went near a house, but what a dozen dogs would come baying out after us, and they would keep up their yelping as far as we could hear ... That night a man chased us for nearly two miles with his dogs. We would have stood and given battle, but we did not want to leave any tracks behind. We crossed another small mountain known as the Catawba, and came into Craig Valley."

In Craig County, Hill's group linked up with Confederate deserters, ate at the home of a Mrs. Brillhart, journeyed through Sinking Creek valley, crossed the mountains, and traveled via Johnson's Valley. By midnight of November 26, Hill, Stookey and Thompson were in the Greenbrier Valley of West Virginia. After four more days of travel, Hill and his friends reached Union forces at Charleston and gained passes through Union lines. All told the "great escape" took 16 days, covered 250 miles, and involved being sheltered at 22 houses of Union sympathizers. Hill's victory, however, came not as he had originally intended — a raid into Salem — but in simply surviving to tell the tale. *[xi]*

Craig County wedding interrupted by advancing Federals

While Salem and Roanoke County had benefited greatly from the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, the railroad also made the county a target for Federal forces. It was serving as a vital communication and supply link between the eastern and western theaters of war for the Confederates. Union Brig. Gen. William W. Averell had amassed an army 2,500 strong composed of West Virginians, Ohioans and Pennsylvanians. In the late fall of 1863, Averell began a 200-mile trek over the mountains and valleys of West Virginia to move on Salem with a mission to destroy as much track as possible of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. Averell had managed to move out of West Virginia and into Virginia, unmolested by Confederate forces. In fact, the Confederate military leaders operating in western Virginia at that time quickly realized they could not stop Averell from reaching Salem, so they opted to cut off his retreat. This decision left the unsuspecting Salem defenseless.

In Averell's approach to Salem there was an incident the night before his advance upon Salem that is worth noting. It is particularly poignant for its rendering of the human drama and sadness so much a part of the Civil War. The story was poetically told by Quartermaster E.F. Seaman of the 2nd West Virginia Infantry many years after the war.

> In our march over the mountains between Sweet Springs and New Castle I was in the advance guard. It was one of the darkest nights I ever saw. Almost the only light we could see was the sparks made by our horses' feet striking the rocks. When near the top of a mountain we suddenly saw a light in a window a very short

distance ahead and soon afterward heard the sound of music and the shuffling of feet in the dance. One of our scouts, who was dressed in the Confederate uniform, came galloping back and said, 'Boys, there's some fun ahead. The rebs are having a big dance in that cabin. The other scouts and myself went in and had a good time shaking the foot with those pretty girls. They are daises I tell you.' Waiting a few moments till all the command came up, we quietly advanced, and soon had the house completely surrounded. I was in command of the squad, and soon as we were sure of everything I went forward to the door and ordered the crowd to surrender. You never saw a company more completely thunderstruck. About twenty Johnnies, as soon as they could collect their wits, were compelled to release their fair partners and yield themselves up to less agreeable company.

'Fall in line' was the command to the prisoners. All obeyed except one tall, finely formed young man, who stood unmoved, with his hand resting lightly on the shoulder of a chubby maiden in white. The young thing clung closer to him with modest trustfulness, betraying no sign of fear for the sudden and rude disturbance of her joy. She was by far the calmer of the two and was acting like a little heroine. The small left hand crept a little closer about his neck, and she said with a pleading sorrowfulness that thrilled my whole being: 'We have just been married, sir, and you are not going to take George away from me now, are you?'

Trained by the discipline of war, I was compelled to subdue what I felt and try to make the best of the situation. I told her as gently as I could that war was a sad thing and that as soldiers there was nothing left for us but to do our duty, but as men we deeply sympathized with her. I assured her that her young husband, as our prisoner, should be treated with every kindness and that, doubtless, within a few months he would be exchanged and be with her again. As the young man pressed his fair-haired bride to his bosom that new love which, in its sweetness and its purity is the same as it has always been since time began, became too strong to be longer confined. It welled up from a full heart, and, bursting its bounds, gave vent in a torrent of convulsive sobs. A silence had fallen upon us all, and I saw many of the weather-stained men draw their sleeves quickly across their faces. Somehow I felt like it would be inhuman to speak a word. In a few moments she gained some command over herself and, unloosing her arms, raised her tear-stained face to his. He clasped her suddenly and kissed her three times passionately. 'Good-bye, George, good-bye,' she said. 'God bless you.' Her eyes followed him to the door as we moved out. Poor thing. That was her last sight of him on the earth. He was accidentally drowned while crossing Jackson river.

In the summer of 1884, I went to Sweet Springs and while there got a buggy and drove over that mountain. By making inquiries I was able to find out that the bride of 20 years ago was still living, and after some search, discovered her and had the pleasure of a short conversation with her. She never suspected, of course, that I knew her story for 20 years had changed me as you may imagine too much to make any recognition possible. She had remained true to her first love and refused all offers of a second marriage. Representing myself as a stranger, from common topics I led the talk as easily as I could back to the war. She conversed very pleasantly till that subject was mentioned, when her manner became more quiet, and her gaze drifted from near objects to the long, blue horizon down the mountain, as if strained to see something lost. I soon left and have never seen her since. *[xii]*

Averell invades Salem

On the 15th of December, Averell's troops were at New Castle in neighboring Craig County. Exhausted, hungry and cold, the command pressed forward, being led on to Salem by a Union sympathizer, Fincastle resident William Paxton, who had agreed to help Averell. At dawn, a scouting party sent out by Averell, composed of men from Company B of the 2nd West Virginia, reported a brief skirmish with some men from Salem, about four miles outside the town. The engagement involved Sgt. Oliver Bower of the 2nd West Virginia who, upon encountering four men from Salem, convinced them he was a part of a nearby Confederate force. As the conversation lengthened, other men with Bower arrived, and the Federal sergeant drew his pistol and demanded the surrender of the four citizens of Roanoke County. Reportedly, shots were quickly fired and a brief melee ensued. When all was settled, Bower and his men were unharmed, but the four from Salem had been overtaken. One was dead, one was wounded, and the other two surrendered. *[xiii]*

Lying dead on the road from Salem to New Castle was Thomas Chapman, a 26-year-old graduate of Roanoke College and the son of Henry and Nancy Chapman. He owned a small hotel in Salem. Two differing stories arose as to the cause of the skirmish and Chapman's death. An article in the Lynchburg Daily Virginian reported, "On Tuesday night (December 15th), several of the citizens went out as scouts, one of them, Mr. Thomas Chapman, was ordered to surrender and not dismounting as quickly as they wished, was shot dead on the spot." Averell, however, claimed that Chapman declined to surrender and was, therefore, killed. *[xiv]* Whatever the truth of the matter, the skirmish awakened Salem to the approaching Federals.

Union Brig. Gen. William W. Averell

Sgt. Bower and his men took their three captives back to Averell, and the captives told Averell that Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry division was moving down from Charlottesville to intercept him. Averell, deciding to believe the information, moved quickly. He sent ahead scouts, armed with repeating rifles and mounted upon fleet horses. "About four miles from Salem, Averell made his final lunge. With 350 men and a pair of three-inch guns, he sped forward and at 10 a.m. they dashed into Salem." *[xv]* Averell and his men would spend the next six hours looting and burning Salem and destroying track of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad.

Prior to their arrival, however, the quartermaster at Salem tried to save the army supplies at his commissary. The quartermaster, Maj. J.C. Green, had received a midnight telegram from Dublin warning him of the Federals' position. Unfortunately for Green, the supplies were scattered in warehouses, stores, mills and stables all over town and the depot was nearly a mile outside of town. The Lynchburg Virginian stated, "Immediately all hands went to work, and by daylight all of the stores were at the depot, awaiting the train to take them to Lynchburg." By dawn of the 16th, Averell was advancing and Salem residents scrambled to prepare themselves, thronging the streets and crying, "the Yankees are coming!" *[xvi]*

At the appearance of the Federals, panic ensued. The first stop for Averell's men was the post office, where they broke open the door and cut the telegraph wire and then proceeded to the rail depot, now piled high with supplies for a train that never arrived. The Lynchburg Virginian reported the scene:

> Sure enough, two of [Averell's] advance guard came charging up the main street, and the main body following soon after, four abreast and pistols in hand,

cocked, ready to fire. Everyone in the street took to their heels, and wagons, horses, and every living thing joined in the general stampede, except the ladies, whose curiosity exceeded their fear, and a few gentlemen who were in their houses.

The depot was crowded with ladies and gentlemen and a number of students who were waiting for the usual train to leave for their homes. [Averell] then set fire to the government building, containing a large quantity of corn, bacon and other stores — also breaking open all of the trunks at the depot house, destroying the contents, and setting fire to the buildings at the depot and tearing up track for two miles or more.

Then forming themselves in three lines of battle, they placed their batteries on the brow of the hill commanding the railroad, and awaited the approach of the train. As soon as its smoke became visible, they fired three rounds on it, and the train backed up immediately without any injury to it.

Proceeding to Pitzer and Martin's Mill (located across from the depot on the bank of the river) they burned it to the ground, destroying an immense quantity of flour and wheat, only allowing the miller to remove three or four barrels. They also burned several bridges on the railway; Mr. Snyder's barn, containing tallow and oil in large quantities; Chapman's barn, used as a government stable; and destroyed all grain in the other stable occupied by the government, and would have burned that, but for the interposition of Mr. Thomas Hough, a citizen of the place.

They opened many stores, and destroyed and carried away all of the goods in them. They entered the bank, but as all the money had been removed, they contented themselves with strewing the paper about, and even took the bed clothes of one of the officers of the bank, who slept there; they then went to the jail, released all the prisoners and among the number, two of their own men, who had been captured by the enrolling officer the night before.

They took all of the citizens as prisoner whom they found running, and also Capt. Poiteaux, Assistant Quartermaster of this place. Several of our soldiers, home on furlough, were also taken in attempting to make their escape. They took all of the government horses, and also many belonging to citizens and farmers, and burned the wagons to which they were attached. Many servants, both male and female, went with them, and a white man by the name of Heams and his wife, also.

They staid in the village until about five o'clock in the afternoon, when they heard that Fitzhugh Lee and Imboden were in persuit of them, so they immediately left, taking with them all the prisoners they had captured. They camped about six miles from here that night, and as it rained in torrents all night, they found the waters high and the roads difficult to travel, so they released all the prisoners except those belonging to the army ... Before they left their campground on Thursday morning, they shot about fifty horses ... *[xvii]*

By that Wednesday afternoon, Salem was torched. As one historian described it, "the whole was a mass of roaring flames, with dense, black smoke billowing up, filling the sky and covering the town with a thick, dark canopy." *[xviii]* Capt. Jacob Rife, riding with Averell, wrote that the citizens of Salem "gave us a wide berth," and then tongue-in-cheek observed, "I do not remember that one came out to welcome us, and I am sure no banquet was spread for our hungry command." *[xix]*

A member of the 5th West Virginia described the Salem raid succinctly: "We entered Salem about noon and immediately began the work of destruction. The column moved to the right and left,

burning the mills, depot, railroad bridges, tracks and culverts for several miles each way. A general stampede was in progress among the citizens and such confederate soldiers as were there." *[xx]*

"The only happy faces we saw," said Capt. Rife, "were the blacks who were permitted to carry away food from the burning buildings, and who were exulting at the great reduction in the cost of flour. It was very dear in the morning but cheap now." The arrival of Federal forces provided an opportunity for some nearby slaves to gain freedom. Reportedly, about 25 slaves attached themselves to the Union command. *[xxi]*

Averell's men had accomplished their mission in destroying adequate amounts of track of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. Not being thwarted by the strength of the track, Union soldiers built several bonfires, heating the track, and then bending it around trees and telegraph poles.

The damage to buildings was enormous, but perhaps most discouraging was the looting and burning of the supplies so thoroughly and hurriedly amassed by Maj. Green and Salem citizens during the night. According to a report filed by Averell, the stores found by him at the depot and destroyed or carried off were as follows: 2,000 barrels of flour, 10,000 bushels of wheat, 100,000 bushels of shelled corn, 50,000 bushels of oats, 2,000 barrels of meat, several cords of leather, 1,000 sacks of salt, 31 boxes of clothing, 20 bales of cotton, a large amount of harnesses, shoes, saddles, equipment, tools, oil, tar and various other stores and 100 wagons. Averell also reported destroying some 16 miles of railroad track. *[xxii]*

Confederate reports of losses were smaller than that stated by Averell. The discrepancy could be that Averell included in his totals the loss of private property in addition to the government supplies found at the depot, or Averell could simply have been a braggart. In any case, Capt. James Wade, assistant commissary of subsistence at Salem, reported the loss of the following supplies: 50,000 pounds of salted pork, 143 barrels of flour, 150 bushels of wheat, 130 bushels of corn, 2,400 pounds of rice, 1,900 pounds of sugar, 225 pounds of candles, 70 pounds of soap, 21 barrels of lard, 1,350 empty sacks and an undetermined number of empty flour barrels. *[xxiii]* Wade calculated the loss to total $107,537.57.

Fortunately for the citizens of Salem, Averell had commanded his troops to leave untouched personal property insomuch as they were not storing government supplies. Consequently, no private homes were burned or looted, though a significant number of municipal structures were. Additionally, several stores along Main Street in Salem were looted and the bank was vandalized. In addition to rail track, Federal soldiers also destroyed two prominent bridges: one spanned 75 feet across the Roanoke River at Mason's Creek and the other was nearly 150 feet long, near Joseph Deyerle's farm. *[xxiv]*

While Salem was being raided, there were reports of Union sympathy witnessed by Averell's men. Some years after the war, Capt. Rife recalled a young woman stopping one of his artillerists on the road just outside of Salem and asking if the Union flag might be unfurled for her. Thinking she might insult the flag, the young soldier hesitated, then granted her request. The young man told Rife, "I can never forget her look as she eagerly and passionately folded it to her bosom as a mother would her long-lost child," and with tear-filled eyes gave thanks for being allowed to see the banner for the first time "in years." *[xxv]*

Further, a newspaper in Wheeling, West Virginia, reported a few months after the raid that an elderly lady in Salem also paid honor to the Union banner. "When they took the old flag down from the university," she is claimed to have stated (apparently referring to Roanoke College's removal of the Union flag during secession), "I can't describe the distress that I felt; and I felt much worse when they put the new flag in its place; but now that you have come, the old flag looks as bright and beautiful as ever." *[xxvi]* How true or correct these stories were, no one knows, but the historical record does demonstrate there were numerous acts of Union sympathy within the county during the war. It should also be noted that Averell's main guide in and out of Salem was a man named Hall, a Confederate deserter who, prior to the war, drove the stage coach between Salem and Sweet Springs.

The dynamics of the Salem raid were impacted by miscalculations on both sides. The Chapman scouting party, the first to encounter Averell, tried to convince Averell that Lee was in pursuit out of Charlottesville. Averell believed the story and hastened his entrance into Salem. One can only wonder if the ruse had not been tried, Averell may have camped longer, delayed his Salem raid, and thus unwittingly allowed the train from Lynchburg to arrive and carry away the supplies at the depot. On Averell's side was the failure to capture or at least disable the train as it approached the depot. This apparently was due in part to a young, anxious cadet, Lt. John Meigs, who had been ordered by Averell to find a good position from which one of the 3-inch guns could fire directly into the train as it arrived. The gun, under Cpl. A.G. Osborne, was set up just in time, but Meigs ordered it fired too soon.

Osborne later gave an account of the incident. "I put in a percussion shell as soon as I heard the train coming and had made up my mind to disable the engine, if possible, and was waiting until I could get a good view when Lt. Meigs rushed up and asked me why I did not fire. I told him I was waiting for a better view so that I could put a shell into the machinery or boiler of the engine so as to disable it; but he ordered me to fire, when I could not see anything but about two feet of the top of the smokestack. Of course I had to obey orders, and the result was no damage to anything but the smokestack." *[xxvii]*

The train slowed, while Osborne reloaded, but was past them when they were ready. Nonetheless, Osborne ordered a shell fired into one of the cars, where it blew out the opposite side. The engine then immediately put its wheels in reverse, as Osborne's crew prepared for one more shot. Osborne fired and missed, and the train rounded a curve and disappeared.

By mid-afternoon Averell's forces had left Salem and were moving back into Craig County. A West Virginia soldier described the afternoon's events. "When the work of destruction was complete, the command prepared to retrace their steps ... returning through the North Mountain on the New Castle road. Not knowing the perils of the homeward march, we camped at Mason's Creek, about six miles from Salem. It rained and snowed incessantly during the night, but the weary and overworked soldiers slept soundly until 5 o'clock the next morning, when the bugle called them from their slumber to renew the march. The Fourteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry led the advance. Craig's Creek was reached about noon." *[xxviii]*

The early morning bugle call by Averell to advance his men may have been due to intelligence provided by a resident of Craig County. While camped along Mason's Creek, a scouting party was dispatched at 3 a.m. to ride to New Castle to see the local doctor, a Union sympathizer, and obtain information relative to Confederate movements. The physician encouraged the Federal scouts to move out of the county as quickly as possible, as some Confederate soldiers had arrived in New Castle that same night.

Before Averell's men left their encampment at Mason's Creek, on the farm of Mrs. Smith, the general had to deal with certain prisoners captured in Salem the day before. During the course of the Salem raid, Averell's men had netted about 40 citizens trying to escape, including some Roanoke College students. The students were part of a home guard unit who had been allowed to remain at the college in exchange for pledging to defend the community against any aggression by the enemy. Averell gathered his prisoners before him, and an 1875 issue of the Roanoke Collegian tells the rest of the story:

"Averell had the students gathered before him and then asked each one where he was from. All answered with some trepidation. 'Now boys,' says he, 'tell me candidly what do you think of the Confederacy?' The boys by this time feeling a little more patriotic, when they saw General Averell was not angry with them, answered promptly, 'We think it is doing very well.' 'O now, boys, you know it is most played out,' he continued. 'You all go to your books and study your best.' And then he gave the command, 'Let all these boys off.'" The students and citizens were promptly released and began their walk back to Salem. Two "captives" chose not to go, a Mr. and Mrs. Hearns, who were Union sympathizers. *[xxix]*

One final note on the Salem raid is the casualty count. Almost all historians have reported that

there was only a single casualty during Averell's movements in and around Salem and that being Thomas Chapman, the man shot off his horse in the encounter with Averell's scouts. However, the correspondent for The Richmond Examiner noted one other casualty — the killing of a slave. "The enemy carried along with them all the able-bodied negroes they came upon, but did not come across many, as they fled to the mountains on their approach. At Salem they killed one negro because he would not receive a carbine, mount a horse and follow them. They armed and mounted all they took and employed them in guarding prisoners and as guides." Thus, two, not one, citizens lost their lives in Averell's Salem raid. *[xxx]*

"I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE HEARD..."

News of the Salem raid by Averell swept through western Virginia. The fact that Averell had been able to cross into Virginia, destroy railroad track, burn much of Salem and never be significantly engaged by Confederate forces, shattered the security felt by many citizens in the Roanoke and New River valleys. Such sentiment was expressed by Mollie Black of Blacksburg in a letter to her husband, Dr. Harvey Black, dated December 18:

> My dear husband,
>
> I suppose you have heard of the raid into Salem. There has been the greatest excitement here for two days. Last night we all slept in our clothes, expecting the Yankees in every moment. I think the hard rain Providence sent kept them back as the creek was so much swollen they could not cross. The last news is they have crossed Craigs Creek.
>
> I hope Imboden may bag them, or Gen. Echols. He is at Sweet Springs. Col. McCauslin is at Fort Harris on the Gap Mountain; the latter might have caught them if he had gone up Sinking Creek last night, but he had been on the march for two days and his men were broken down. I have a poor opinion of all this Western army.
>
> We hear various estimates of the damage done in Salem, but all exaggerated very much. I expect it will be a month before the (train) cars run ... If the cowardly Yankees get away safely, we may expect them back at any time. The children were very much frightened ... *[xxxi]*

ROANOKE COLLEGE CORRECTS THE RECORD

On December 23, The Richmond Examiner carried a small but significant note of news, entitled "Roanoke College Ransacked." The article, referring to the Salem raid, was based upon reports of Roanoke College students who had arrived in Richmond on the 22nd and began spreading reports about the Yankees. "They (the students) came to replenish their wardrobe of winter clothing, the Yankees, on the occasion of their late raid there, having despoiled them of everything like an overcoat or comfortable outside garment. They ransacked the college building ...," trumpeted the Examiner. The college students perhaps exaggerated the story in effort to gain sympathy and to impress, but Roanoke College officials were not amused. In an effort to squash any further rumors about damage to the college, William McCauley, a trustee, immediately wired a response to the Examiner that appeared in the next day's issue.

> There is an article in your last issue, under the heading 'Roanoke College Ransacked,' which, unless corrected in some of its particulars, may prove detrimental to the interests of said college. It represents the Yankees, in their raid upon Salem, as having ransacked the college building, and as having broken open and rifled the trunks of a number of the students. Not to palliate the conduct of the Yankees, but to give a correct statement of the matter, which is due the interests of the college, I shall

say that they did not enter the college building, nor molest, in the least, anything on the premises. Upon being informed by Dr. Bittle, the President, who was present, of the character of the building, no effort was made to enter it, or disturb anything pertaining to it.

Before any intimation had been received of the approach of the enemy, permission had been granted several of the students to leave their homes on the morning of the raid. Hoping that they would get off on the morning train, before the arrival of the Yankees, they had their trunks sent to the depot, as the sequel proved, only to be pillaged and destroyed, for no train made its appearance, and the Yankees came down on our quiet little village 'like a wolf on the fold' and devoted to destruction everything found in the vicinity of the depot. The property of the students, which had been left in the college, remained in perfect security.

The statement in regard to the capture of several students is true, but in some particulars requires modification. Six were captured, and, in connection with a number of the citizens, were marched from town about seven miles to the first camping place of the enemy and held in custody until the following morning, when they were released and permitted to trudge their way back again to the town.

As far as I observed, for it was my fate, no special indignity was offered to the students beyond the 'durance vi'e' to which they were subjected and the 'no rations' on which they were compelled to subsist. These six would doubtless have not been arrested had they not been discovered in the act of making their escape from town. Those who remained in the college building, or in the town, were unmolested.

Everything in and around the college building remains in status quo, and the exercises of the institution will be resumed after the usual interval for the holidays on the 1st of January. *[xxxii]*

McCauley's letter was indeed important. Roanoke College was entrusted with care of young students, functioning more as a preparatory school than a college, given those over 18 were all in military service. Thus any story real or perceived that portrayed the college as damaged or unsafe would raise the anxiety levels of parents and contributors to the severe detriment of the college.

Salem raid leads to criticism of military

The fallout of the Salem raid was not pleasant for the Confederate military. The Richmond Examiner, in a report shortly after the raid, questioned Averell's ability to move unhampered from West Virginia into Roanoke County. "It is a little singular that, with all the warnings the Government has had, from the repeated demonstrations of Averell and other Yankee commanders that he should have been permitted to march from Beverly to Salem, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, without material interruption. From the day he left Beverly until he reached Salem abundance of time was given for a sufficient force to have been gathered to resist his advance. If we had an energetic commander in that department he would never been allowed to defeat General Echols at Greenbrier bridge." *[xxxiii]*

The Richmond Sentinel in its edition of December 28 placed the blame for Averell's move upon Salem on the home guard. The home guard, a unit of townspeople, "had been directed to barricade the road by which the enemy were advancing, which might have been done so effectually in the mountain passes and gorges, even a few miles from the town as to have delayed them for hours," lamented the Richmond correspondent. Instead, the home guard "proved a disgraceful failure." There had been no blockading, nor scouting, and "the enemy permitted to dash in without notice or the slightest impediment and capture the place with all the stock and supplies." *[xxxiv]*

Confederate forces find abandoned slaves, one frozen

Confederate forces under the command of Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, in pursuit of Averell's men, reported finding many of the slaves who had left Salem with the Union forces abandoned. Hungry, tired, cold and exhausted, most of the slaves were returned to the town. A newspaper reporter described the situation following a visit to Salem several days after the Averell raid. "A number of negroes and horses, stolen from this place, have been recovered and have already been returned here under guard. The negroes seem but too happy to have been captured, say the experiment is entirely satisfactory, and, if they can be forgiven, it shall never be repeated. They say that several of their number were shot for expressing their desire and determination of turning back. One of their comrades was given a quart of whiskey and made drunk and abandoned. He was found dead on the road from the effects of the liquor and the cold." *[xxxv]*

Northern press trumpets Averell's raid

While Confederate officials sought to downplay the success of Averell, noting that most of the destruction would be repaired within a few weeks, The New York Times gave Averell front page coverage. "Brilliant Exploits of Gen. Averell" read the headline in the December 24 edition. Underneath were teasing statements declaring, "The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad Destroyed," "Great Destruction of Rebel Stores," and "Extraordinary Labors of the Troops." What followed was not a news report but a verbatim reprint of Gen. Averell's report to Maj. Gen. Halleck.

On December 25, The Times again gave Averell front-page play under the banner "Rebel Accounts of Averell's Great Raid." The paper simply reprinted in part mail received from the Richmond, Virginia, newspapers recounting the movements of the Federal forces.

The Northern news journal, Harper's Weekly, made the Averell raid its cover story for the January 16, 1864, edition. A sketch on the front depicted Averell's men returning from the raid in a driving rain while crossing a swollen creek. In brief but triumphant text, the Weekly reported that the raid upon the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad "is one of the most hazardous, important, and successful raids since the commencement of the war."

All of this publicity led to an inflated reputation for Averell. The stealth and victory of his Salem raid was a boost to Averell's military stature. One of many examples was the opinion offered by Moses Hall, a lieutenant colonel of the West Virginia volunteers, who heard from Confederate deserters and refugees coming into West Virginia that "General Averell is a terror to them; more so than Stonewall Jackson was to us. A rumor of his approach is equal to death to them." *[xxxvi]* West Virginia newspapers began referring to Averell as "that dashing and gallant officer."

As for Gen. Averell himself, the Salem raid was an example of "a novel expeditionary force" at its best. In his memoirs, many years after the war, Averell recollected the Salem raid and its "stupendous effects" — penetrating enemy territory, destroying a section and several bridges of the railroad, disrupting the winter supply line of Gen. James Longstreet, and drawing away the enemy in an endeavor to pursue him and his men. *[xxxvii]*

NOTES

i. This section comes largely from research the author did that appeared later as an article, "Rebel Soldiers Trained Here," Historic Salem, the Salem Historical Society, Fall 2001, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 1, 10-11.
ii. Harris, Nelson. The 17th Virginia Cavalry. Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1994.
iii. "Joseph Alfred Wilson to H.H. Hamilton, February 20, 1863." Virginia Center for Digital History, The University of Virginia. Valley of the Shadow Project. 1997.

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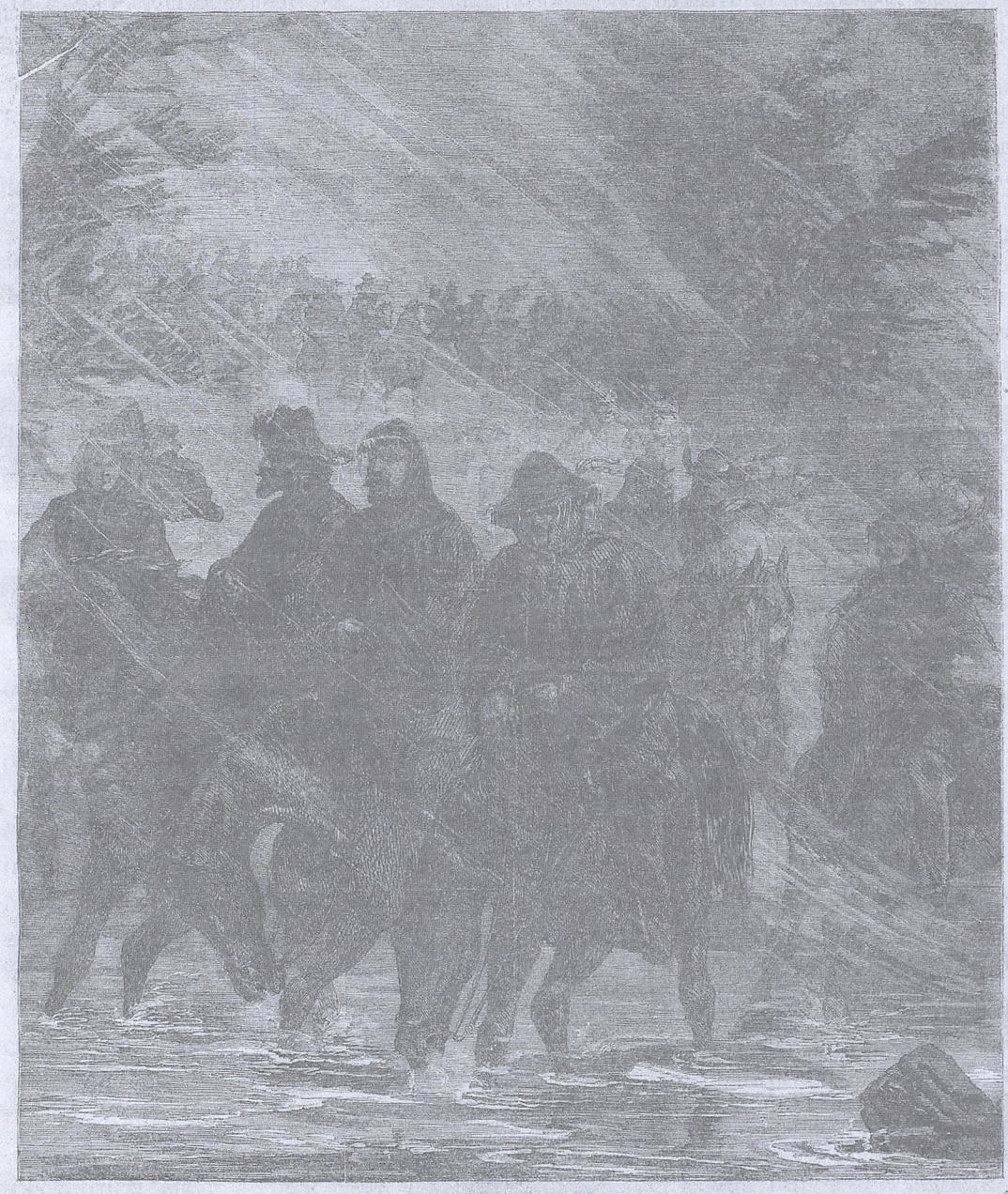

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xix. Collins, p. 56.
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xxi. Collins, p. 61.
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xxiv. Collins, pp. 62-63.
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Hollins Institute prepares for 'a new civilization' in 1864

by Nelson Harris

Professor Edward Joynes, of William and Mary College in Williamsburg, had been temporarily fulfilling teaching duties at Hollins Institute. Impressed by the fortitude and dedication of the Institute's efforts, especially during the war, Joynes sought to propel the Institute forward through articulating the need to prepare young Southern ladies for the vocation of teaching. On August 20, Joynes composed a lengthy epistle to board of trustees chairman George Tayloe, in a step to solicit support. Joynes' letter was awash in Southern loyalism and a naïve optimism. His correspondence read, in part, as follows:

> We stand indeed on a new threshold of a new civilization ... A little while hence, and, God helping, they will stand erect, a bruised and shattered remnant, it is true, but yet a people and a nation, clothed with a blood-bought independence and endowed with the rights and responsibility of liberty and self-government. Through the sacrifices and the victories, the agonies and the glories, the trials and the triumphs of this great war, they will have won for themselves a place and a name among the nations of the earth and laid the foundations of their own national character; and beneath the inspirations of this great struggle — under the influence of its discipline and sufferings — by the light of its prolonged teachings, they will begin to make their own career, and to work out their own civilization and destiny in the world ... It is already manifest. The war itself, in a word, will be the basis upon which the distinctive civilization of this people will be founded hereafter ... Its experiences, recollections, and traditions; the impulses, the energies, the passions and aspirations it has called into being will be impressed with controlling force upon every mind, and will inspire the thoughts and sentiments, the literature and ambition of the present and future generations with ever increasing influence. An immense impulse will have been given to the intellectual as well as physical energies of the people.
>
> In turn like these the people and State shall appreciate the importance of education ... To our cost have we realized to what extent, under the name of equality and liberty, the Delilah of this false Union had already shorn us of our strength. Not only had it well-nigh robbed us of all the elements of political, industrial, and commercial independence, until it deemed us powerless in its grasp; but with a still more subtle invasion, our artful 'brethren' of the North had sapped the foundations of our education and our literature by the emissaries of their schools, and the publication of their press, and had these influences not been happily arrested, they would in the end have undermined our opinions, our politics, our institutions themselves, rendering their dominion complete, and revolution for us impossible. *[i]*

In this spirited fervor, Joynes asked the trustees to consider establishing a new department for the sole purpose of educating Southern ladies to teach in homes and schools for the purpose of elevating,

preserving and advancing the ideals of this "new civilization," the American South.

Two days later, on August 22, the trustees met and Joynes' letter was shared and positively embraced. The trustees voted to "cordially approve the views and recommendations" outlined in Joynes' document. To move the matter forward, the trustees decided upon a six-person committee (three trustees and three faculty) to develop specific steps the Institute should take to achieve the goal of training young women to be teachers. This committee provided a report on September 5, and suggested a number of steps. Among the recommendations were to create an endowment for scholarships, students must be Virginians, after graduation all such teachers must agree to serve three of their first five professional years teaching in Confederate states, and the new department would be named "The Normal Department of Hollins Institute." Thus, the new program was launched.

Enthusiasm for the endeavor ran high, so much that Joynes' epistle, the trustees' resolution of support, and a letter from Superintendent Charles Lewis Cocke all appeared in the opening pages of the Institute's 1864 catalogue. Cocke declared in the "Announcement" section of the catalogue:

> If we would maintain and perpetuate those lovely characteristics which distinguish Southern society and Southern homes from all others on earth; if we would not allow the stranger and foreigner to supplant us in our birth-right and introduce customs and innovations which we neither love nor admire, then we must provide the home circle, the neighborhood school, and those too of higher grade, with teachers possessed, not merely of intellect and learning but of those lovely domestic and social virtues which have ever adorned the ladies of the South. How many young ladies of our State — young ladies of high social position and noble qualities of mind and of heart — robbed by a vindictive and unscrupulous enemy of all external means of support, would most cheerfully and gladly avail themselves of the privileges here proposed, and by their efforts an influence in after years, transmit to coming generations the principles of social life, the civilization and the refinements, which their fathers, their brothers and their friends have so heroically fallen to defend and preserve? *[ii]*

Within just a few years, nearly half of Hollins' young ladies would be enrolled in the "Normal Department."

NOTES

i. Catalogue of Hollins Institute, 1864 Session (Hollins University Archives, Document J-1).

ii. Ibid.

Slaves mustered as soldiers in 1865

by Nelson Harris

With Confederate forces dwindling in number due to desertion, illness and the general toll of four years of war, the Commonwealth of Virginia put out a call for slaveholders to relinquish their slaves for service in the Confederate military. In mid-March, several large slave owners in Roanoke County responded.

The Richmond Dispatch recorded the actions of certain men of Roanoke County. "Liberal Gift of Colored Troops" was the headline, with the newspaper reporting the following: "The liberal action of a meeting of farmers in Roanoke County, Virginia, in offering to emancipate such of their slaves as will volunteer in the army, has been mentioned. We append the form of the pledge and the names of the signers."

According to The Dispatch, the pledge was as follows: "We whose names are hereunto subscribed mutually pledge ourselves to emancipate such of our negro men, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, as will volunteer as soldiers in the Confederate service, promising them that they shall be permitted to return to their homes, and that proper provision will be made for them and their families when the war is over."

The Richmond newspaper listed the names of those from Roanoke County who had signed the pledge and committed slaves to the Confederate army. These men were B. Pitzer, John Smith, G.W. Shanks, T.B. Evans, J.W. Johnston, J.C. Deyerle, C.W. Burwell, G.M. Pitzer, F.J. Chapman, J.K. Pitzer, David S. Read, G.B. Board, J.M. Trout, A.J. Deyerle, Hirman Hansbrough, H.A. Edmundson, James Wade, R.B. Moorman, S.G. Wood, William W. Uttz, Giles Barnette, A.E. Huff and A.R. McCorkle. *[i]*

Bittle, books and the fall of Richmond

Dr. David Bittle, Roanoke College president, who had struggled to keep the college afloat financially and classes open during the war, now needed books. Over the past several months, Bittle had managed to save nearly $1,000 in Confederate currency to pay some debts incurred by his institution. Unfortunately, the creditors had balked at accepting Confederate money, correctly perceiving that the demise of the Confederacy was imminent. Bittle, however, believed the money was certainly valued in Richmond, so he made plans to travel to Richmond by train and buy books for the college's library.

On the morning of April 5, Bittle rose early, dressed and walked to the Salem depot. Approaching the telegraph office, Col. Charlton Morgan of that office informed Bittle that Richmond had fallen. Bittle later recalled, "I came to the depot, satchel in hand, on my way to buy books in Richmond for the College library, when I heard news of the fall of Richmond. This money perished on my hands."

The surrender of Salem

Learning of the fall of Richmond, leading residents of Salem planned to surrender their town to the next advancing Federal force. This decision was most likely in response to a desire to protect Salem from looting and burning by Federal troops than a strong conviction to return to the Union.

The opportunity for surrender arrived quickly. The 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry, under the command of Maj. William Wagner, had been operating east of Christiansburg during early April. Needing to move further east, the 15th Pennsylvania arrived in Jacksonville, Floyd County, on April 4. The community surrendered, being represented by a local attorney and physician. The 15th paused briefly

outside Jacksonville and prepared for a raid. By 5:30 a.m., however, the 15th was en route toward Bent Mountain. Marching in a pouring rain and for nearly 20 hours, they finally encamped atop Bent Mountain in the early hours of Tuesday, April 5. By noon, Company B under Capt. George W. Hildebrand was headed down the mountain and into the Back Creek section of Roanoke County. By 2 p.m., Company B was on the outskirts of Salem. *[ii]*

Knowing of Company B's advance, three of Salem's citizens prepared to surrender the town. Dr. David Bittle, president of Roanoke College, the Rev. Samuel Register of the Methodist Church and Dr. John Alexander, physician, would present the surrender. Affixing a small white flag made from a pocket handkerchief atop a 10-foot pole, the three men in the company of 40 others left Salem along the western pike for the train depot. As Dr. Bittle recorded later, "It was a solemn time for Salem and Roanoke County." The college had been deserted the day before when Capt. W.G. Holland had taken the college students by train to Lynchburg for potential Confederate military action. Thus, only women and small children, perched on porches, witnessed the occasion. Bittle wrote, "All things were as silent and awful as when the stars fell in 1832." *[iii]*

As the men walked through Salem, the silence was broken by the youthful enthusiasm of the young boys following behind Bittle, Register and Alexander. "The Yankees! The Yankees!" the boys were reported as shouting and soon they had run ahead of the distinguished trio. They had walked not a hundred yards until they met up with Capt. Hildebrand and Company B. As Bittle recalled the scene, Rev. Register was elected to speak, Alexander held the flag, and the Roanoke College president stood nearby. After a brief ceremony, Salem had officially surrendered. Hildebrand is reported to have responded graciously. "Gentlemen, your town and college shall be protected. No one shall be molested either in person or property." To enforce his promise, Hildebrand ordered Pvt. David Clark, a student at Jefferson College in Ohio, to escort Bittle back to the college.

On the return through Salem, Bittle walked and Clark rode on his horse. Noting some onlookers, Bittle tried to make light of the occasion. "See ladies, I have taken one prisoner." Reportedly, the ladies did not laugh.

One can only wonder as to how Federal troops viewed these formal acts of surrender by towns along their march. George Neil, who was with the 15th Pennsylvanians when Liberty (Bedford) surrendered in an identical manner to Salem, stated, "This was a fashionable and proper manner of surrendering cities several centuries ago, but these formalities just now do not make any particular impression on us except the humorous side of them ... the ostentatious display of a white flag by the town officials made no difference to us, while it probably made them feel the importance of their civic position." *[iv]*

Capt. Hildebrand and other officers ate supper and spent the night at the Salem Hotel, while the remainder of the 15th Pennsylvania spent the night on the outskirts of Salem and rode off promptly the next morning, where later that day they would receive a flag of truce from the town of Liberty in Bedford County. One observer at the officers' dinner at the Salem Hotel stated that they met Dr. George Terrill, a well-known county physician and justice of the peace. Why Dr. Terrill met with the Union officers, or what conversation occurred, history does not record. Just as Hildebrand had promised, the Pennsylvanians left the town of Salem untouched. *[v]*

Before leaving the Roanoke Valley, however, the Pennsylvanians, numbering about 230 men, did take an opportunity to destroy some railroad track. The event was recalled by George Neil, of Company D, who wrote:

> Passing through Salem and nearing Big Lick we learned that a trainload of provisions was about leaving that point for the rebel army and we tried to capture it, but the clatter of our horses' hoofs as we charged through the town gave a warning to the train crew and they started too soon for us to intercept them. Horseflesh cannot equal the steam engine for strength and endurance and, while we had some

> hope at first, the train gradually pulled away and escaped. It was some consolation to burn the railroad bridge over the Roanoke River and to feel that our enemy would not use that track for some time to come. To make up for our loss we captured a small station at Coners Springs, an express car filled with tobacco and provisions, and, after taking as much as we needed, gave the balance to the negroes, who were always our friends and naturally gravitated to us, then burned the car. *[vi]*

One other member of the 15th Pennsylvania provided some additional detail in his recollections of his company's visit to Roanoke County. "After dinner (on April 5) we started to join the column; found that it had fed and marching on had captured a wagon train of 8 wagons laden with hay. I stopped with my Company to burn it. Overtook the column again at Big Lick Bridge at 9 P.M. Major Wagner burned the bridge. Then moved on." *[vii]*

In summarizing the 15th Pennsylvania's activities in the Roanoke Valley of April 4 and 5, Maj. William Wagner submitted the following detailed report to his commanding officer, Lt. Col. Charles Betts:

> I moved with my command from your camp near Jacksonville (Floyd), Va., at 6 o'clock p.m., to operate on the Virginia & East Tennessee Railroad, east of Salem; marched across Bent Mountain over a most wretched road and reached Salem at 2 o'clock p.m., of the 5th. The place had been evacuated by the enemy six hours and all public stores removed; moving on toward Big Lick, I found a destroyed six of the enemy's wagons, loaded with forage, which they had abandoned on the road; passed Big Lick Station, from which a train hurriedly took its departure but five minutes previous, carrying away all the public stores; reached the railroad bridge across Tinker's Creek at 7 o'clock p.m., fired the structure and immediately moved on down the road to Buford's Station (Montvale), at which place I went into camp at 3 o'clock a.m. of the 6th. All the government stores at Bonsack's Station, which I had passed, had been moved the previous evening. *[viii]*

Salem raided by Michigan Cavalry

Just a few days after the 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry left, a company of Federal troops with the 10th Michigan Cavalry came into the Roanoke Valley. This cavalry had been operating in tandem with the Pennsylvanians for several months. On April 5, the day Salem surrendered, the Michigan Cavalry had been at Christiansburg, where they destroyed an estimated 100 miles of track of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. They were attached to a force under the command of Gen. George Stoneman, who had orders to destroy railroads and military supplies of the enemy along his line of march. The Michigan cavalry were now en route to North Carolina, when they rode into Salem on April 10. According to the official report of the 10th Michigan, they destroyed six railroad bridges in and around Salem. Upon leaving Salem, the Michigan Cavalry headed toward High Point and Salisbury, North Carolina. *[ix]*

Unlike the Pennsylvanians, the Michigan troops were not as kind in leaving personal belongings unmolested. As one Roanoke College professor remembered, "Yankees from a Michigan company arrived, robbed and plundered everything of value." According to the professor's recollections, two officers with the 10th Michigan ate supper with the college's president, Dr. David Bittle. Bittle always used hospitality and any other means to protect his campus. The story goes that as the Michigan officers and Bittle ate dinner, a private holding the officers' horses asked one of Bittle's servants if there was any gold or silver in the house. Reportedly, the servant replied that Bittle "was a preacher and therefore had none." *[x]*

Roanoke College boys come home

Professor George Holland of Roanoke College had on April 2 led his company of college students to Lynchburg. Going by rail, their intended purpose was to link up with the Confederate army near Appomattox. As with earlier outings, the college unit did not see battle as Gen. Lee surrendered prior to their arrival. Consequently, Holland proceeded to lead his students back to Salem. The return trip, however, was long remembered by one soldier involved because of a singular event:

> At Beaufort's, on the east of the mountain, these irrepressible young soldiers found two large dirt cars standing on the (rail) track. The proposition to push these heavy cars up to the top of the mountain and ride down on the other side met with instant approval. Well do I remember my feelings, as we prepared to get into these cars, for the uncertain ride down the steep grade. It was night and dark. Whether the enemy had been before us and destroyed the track, whether there were any obstructions on the track was unknown, and by those boys unthought of. Discipline was gone; orders were useless; only one was given and that was that their Captain (Holland) should say who should go in the first car. There were no brakes to the cars. The students were divided into two equal parties; into the first were put those who were either better prepared to die, or who could best be spared by their parents and friends; and into the second the rest, who were ordered to remain on the top of the mountain until they felt sure the first car had safely made, what their Captain believed, was a dangerous descent. Getting into the foremost car, the order was given to let go; down we went with increasing velocity, the other car coming closely behind ours. Wild, hilarious boys those were, and utterly regardless of the danger that their Captain felt was imminent and real. But the cars kept the track and the ride was completed without accident. *[xi]*

The return of the Roanoke College students back to Salem was, after the midnight rail ride, uneventful. For them and the rest of Virginia, the war was over.

Hotchkiss finds Salem key to transportation

Maj. Jedediah Hotchkiss, famous map-maker in the Confederate Engineer Corps, knew and took advantage of Salem as a transportation hub during the last days of the war as did many Confederates. Hotchkiss possessed critical maps used by Gens. Jubal Early and Lee as they navigated the railroads, valleys and towns of southwestern Virginia. Knowing Salem was relatively safe compared to surrounding locations, Hotchkiss sought safety there.

"On March 22, I took my maps, etc, which I had shipped from Waynesborough to Richmond on the train that escaped March 2, via Petersburg, to Lynchburg, so as to get back in the Valley by way of Salem. General Early left Lynchburg for Abingdon to look after affairs in Southwestern Virginia. On March 23, I went to Salem and secured transportation, by wagon, and took my maps to Lexington and continued to Staunton ...," reported Hotchkiss. His maps and his efforts to protect them would be valuable for only a few short weeks. With Lee's surrender, Hotchkiss now sought to preserve his maps for posterity, and again Salem was key. "The Army having thus surrendered or disbanded, in company with some other officers, I went back to Salem, whither I had again sent my maps. Having secured wagon transportation for these I took them to Lexington by April 16, where I left them concealed and then took my way homeward to Churchville, which I reached on April 18." To finish the story of Hotchkiss's maps, the Confederate engineer sent them to Early, who had headed to Mexico, addressing them to Early's Mexican alias, "John Anderson." Early commenced to write his war memoirs in Cuba and Canada using Hotchkiss's maps. *[xii]*

Post-war life

With the Civil War officially over, the residents of Roanoke County faced many challenges as they tried to resume the business and routines that had governed their daily affairs prior to the War. Some had fared well and the transition was made almost seamless. Others, however, were not as fortunate.

Q.M. Ward of Big Lick wrote his business partner, Oscar Weisiger, on several occasions during the spring. The war had taken its toll on his mercantile business. In a letter to Weisiger on May 16, Ward shared his belief that they had "fallen to rise no more." Weisiger responded in a letter dated May 29 wherein he outlined a course of action for him and Ward. "In relation to our Northern indebtedness I think it can be settled for 20 or 25% and I would very much like to see you and have a talk with you on this subject. I think if we can raise 10 or 12,000 dollars, we can pay our whole debt and the sooner some arrangement is made the better." Weisiger based his calculations upon reports from other merchants in Richmond who had recently returned from the North. Too poor to travel, Weisiger nonetheless tried to encourage Ward through correspondence. "I do not know what your views of business are for the future, whether you will embark in the mercantile business again or not, but as for myself I must get to doing something ... I feel like going to work with renewed effort and regain what is lost." According to the letter, Ward and Weisiger were indebted to several northern creditors including O.R. Tweedy & Company of New York and W. Lovejoy & Company of Boston. *[xiii]*

NOTES

i. The Richmond Dispatch, March 27, 1865.
ii. Information about the movements of Company B comes from portions of a diary of Captain Will Colton of the 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry that were printed in Suzanne Colton Wilson's book, "Column South," published in 1960, pp. 280-282.
iii. Actually the year was 1833 when a magnificent meteor shower occurred across the continental United States. The event was so startling that many later confessed they thought the world was coming to an end.
iv. Neil, p. 530.
v. The Roanoke Collegian. September 1875, Vol. II, No. I, p. 2.
vi. Neil, George. "With the First Battalion to Lynchburg." "History of the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry." Charles Kirk, editor. Philadelphia: Society of the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, 1906. Pp. 529-530.
vii. Column South, p. 281.
viii. History of the Fifteenth Pennsylvania, p. 696.
ix. Wilson, Goodridge. "Yankee Cavalry Raided Southwest in War's Closing Days." Roanoke Times, April 9, 1961. Thomas Van Horne. "Life of Major General George H. Thomas." Privately published, 1882. P. 392. Chris Hartley. "War's Last Cavalry Raid." "America's Civil War." May 1998. Throwbridge. "History of the 10th Michigan Cavalry."
x. The Roanoke Collegian. September 1875, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 2.
xi. Memorial Book to Rev. George W. Holland. Newberry, SC: Newberry College, 1895. P. 65.
xii. Jedediah Hotchkiss Papers, Library of Congress (Also reprinted in Supplement to Official Records, Volume 7, pp. 742-744).
xiii. Oscar F. Weisiger Letter, May 29, 1865 (Manuscript #00285). Archives, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia; www.vmi.edu/archives/manuscripts/ms0285.html.

Women at war

by Elizabeth R. Varon

What do women have to do with the origins of the Civil War? Growing up in Virginia in the 1970s, I often heard this answer: nothing.

Much has changed since then. A new generation of scholars has rediscovered the Civil War as a drama in which women, and gender tensions, figure prominently. Thanks to new research into diaries, letters, newspapers and state and local records, we now know that women were on the front lines of the

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literary and rhetorical war over slavery long before the shooting war began. They were integral to the slave resistance and flight that destabilized the border between North and South. And they were recruited by both secessionists and Unionists to join a partisan army, with each side claiming that the "ladies," with their reputation for moral purity, had chosen it over its rivals. So what do women have to do with the origins of the war? The answer is: everything.

Some of the women most involved in these political developments are well known to scholars and the general public. But countless others are still obscure. For example, we all know about Harriet Beecher Stowe's contribution, with her best-selling 1852 novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," to the antislavery cause. But how many Americans know that Stowe's book escalated a long-standing literary war over slavery? "Uncle Tom's Cabin" not only inflamed the proslavery press in the North, but it also prompted a concerted response from white Southern women writers like Mary Eastman and Louisa McCord, who countered Stowe with their own rose-colored fantasies about the purported gentility and harmony of plantation life. Works like Eastman's "Aunt Phillis's Cabin: or Southern Life As It Is," published the same year as Stowe's book, were widely hailed in the proslavery press, and are the literary antecedents to that most enduring volley in the ongoing literary war over slavery, Margaret Mitchell's 1936 revival of the plantation-fiction genre, "Gone with the Wind."

We all know the name of Harriet Tubman, and recognize her role in leading the Underground Railroad in the 1850s. She was a remarkable, heroic individual. But she was not alone; new work in the historical record permits us to recover the names and stories of scores of female fugitives from slavery and of female Underground Railroad operatives, white and black, Northern and Southern, who fought their own campaign along the border of the free and slave states.

Their stories may be forgotten today, but they were national news back then. When the slave Jane Johnson was rescued from her master (a prominent Southern politician) by the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia in 1855, her case became a national *cause celebre*. To the antislavery press, she represented the slave's natural yearning for freedom and the courage and dignity of enslaved women. To the proslavery press, she represented the faithlessness of Northerners, who, in defiance of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, refused to act as slave catchers.

Moreover, gender tensions over competing definitions of family and womanly comportment worked to escalate the sectional conflict. Attacks on the manhood and womanhood of one's political opponents — the charge that they were not "true" men and women — were a staple of antebellum politics, and such attacks, which became more pointed in the 1850s, greatly eroded the trust between the North and South. Indeed, by the eve of war, many Northerners and Southerners had come to believe that the gender conventions of the two regions were antagonistic and incompatible.

Defenders of slavery and "Southern rights" charged that Northern society, with its bent for social reform, was fundamentally hostile to the hierarchical, patriarchal social order of the slave South. As the proslavery Richmond Enquirer put it in 1856, in a typical accusation, antislavery Northerners who supported the new Republican party threatened all of the pillars of traditional society: they were "at war with religion, female virtue, private property and distinctions of race."

Gender politics made it into Congress as well. In 1856, Preston Brooks, a representative from South Carolina, savagely beat Sen. Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate with a cane after Sumner

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Opposite: A 19th century steel engraving depicts Barbara Frietchie's defiance of Rebel troops as she waved the Union flag when Stonewall Jackson and his men were passing through Frederick, Maryland. This print was published in 1878 in the book "Our Country, Vol. III." (Source: iStockPhoto; photo by M. Poe)

insulted the "honor" of the South with a speech on slavery in Kansas. On its face, this seems the perfect illustration of the maxim that politics was a man's world. But when put in its context, the incident illustrates how gender aspersions and images of women were central to the slavery debates. Sumner's speech had dubbed the forcible incursions by Southern settlers in the West, and their bid to establish a proslavery regime, as the "rape of a virgin territory." Such sexualized imagery fueled the abolitionist critique of Southern men as rapacious and uncivilized, and of Southern society as saturated by violence against women. The "bully Brooks," the Northern press charged, had "disgraced the name of man"; "there is no chivalry in a brute," as a Boston newspaper put it, succinctly.

Proslavery forces who rallied around Brooks, by contrast, claimed that Sumner's defenseless capitulation to Brooks's blows proved that Northern men were weak and submissive, slave-like in their subservience. This fueled the proslavery critique of the North as a world turned upside down, in which "strong-minded" abolitionist women and radical free blacks had raised the specter of social equality and effected the erosion of the patriarchal family and of male authority.

Even as they imputed gender transgressions to their opponents, antebellum politicians routinely called on women to join the ranks of political parties and movements. Of course, women could not yet vote; nonetheless, elite and middle-class women — to whom Victorian culture ascribed a penchant for piety and virtue — had a distinct role to play in electoral politics, both in influencing and mobilizing male voters and in lending an aura of moral sanctity to political causes.

It is no wonder then that during the secession crisis, champions of Union and of Southern nationalism alike claimed the "ladies" were on their side. During the election campaign of 1860 and the subsequent secession convention debates in the South, women attended speeches, rallies and processions; contributed their own polemics to the partisan press; and, fortunately for historians, left a treasure trove of firsthand accounts of the deepening crisis. These accounts — letters, diaries, memoirs, poems and stories — furnish moving and astute analyses of the agonies of secession.

Such sources are the most powerful argument for recognizing the centrality of women to the story of the war's causes. For example, there is no more chilling account of how it felt to be a Southern Unionist in the midst of secession fever than that of Elizabeth Van Lew of Richmond, Virginia. Van Lew was a native-born white Southerner, but one who harbored a loathing for slavery and a belief that her state, as the mother of the Union, should represent moderation and compromise. As she watched a secessionist procession snake through the streets of Richmond in the wake of Virginia's vote to join the Confederacy, she knew the time for compromise had passed. "Such a sight!" Van Lew wrote. "The multitude, the mob, the whooping, the tin-pan music, and the fierceness of a surging, swelling revolution. This I witnessed. I thought of France and as the procession passed, I fell upon my knees under the angry heavens, clasped my hands and prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"

For Van Lew, secession was a kind of collective madness that had descended on the South. She chose to stay in Richmond during the war, although she could put her political principles on the line as the leading Union spy in the Confederacy. Her Richmond home was the nerve center of an elaborate interracial espionage ring that funneled critical information to Grant's army.

Like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Harriet Tubman, Van Lew was remarkable — but not anomalous. The nation's archives and attics contain the stories of countless other such women, who offer eloquent testimony on the war's causes and meaning.

The challenge that remains for scholars working in this field to popularize the notion, among general readers and some skeptics in the ranks of academic historians, that women and gender were central, not merely tangential, to the story of the sectional alienation and strife. The stakes are high: the better we understand how women figured in antebellum politics, the better we'll understand the war-

time relationship between home front and battlefront and the tangled process by which Americans have defined patriotism and citizenship ever since.

SOURCES

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Women "Firing upon Our Soldiers"

A front-page story in The New York Times told of a cavalry raid on Wytheville on July 26, 1863, designed to destroy the railroad and the telegraph system. The headlines stated: "Our Loss Seventy-eight Killed, Wounded and Missing; The Women Firing upon Our Soldiers." A report from Union Brig. Gen. E.P. Scammon said, "We were fired on from houses, public and private, by the citizens, even by the women." Scammon said the Union men "cut the railroad at Wytheville and destroyed two pieces of artillery."

The 872 Union soldiers were led by Col. John Toland, who was one of the first casualties of the raid. The invading army was confronted by "murderous" fire from the local militia, men too old for service, young boys and some Confederate forces but they were outnumbered. After an hour-long battle, the Union squads set fire to several homes and public buildings. They pillaged the town into the night and then withdrew northward. The Confederate casualties numbered seven killed and 86 old men and boys captured but released the next day.

'I wish this war was over'

Editor's Note: This undated note (below) with no signature was saved with letters written from Mary Susan "Mollie" Trout Terry to her husband, Peyton Terry, while he was stationed with the 28th Virginia Regiment near Richmond during the Civil War. The note was written by one of the Terrys' daughters. It contains background information pertinent to the contents of the letters. Peyton Terry later was a prominent businessman in Big Lick and early Roanoke. The note and the letters are part of a collection from the Goodwin and Terry families that were donated to the History Museum of Western Virginia by Thompson Goodwin, a great-grandson of Peyton and Mary Susan "Mollie" Trout Terry. His generous gift of the letters is gratefully acknowledged. All rights belong to the History Museum of Western Virginia, without restriction.

The note and the following two letters and notes were transcribed by Charlotte Porterfield, a volunteer at the Historical Society's Virtual Museum.

Mary Susan "Mollie" Terry

Peyton Terry

My father went as a volunteer in May, 1861, in the first company to leave our county. He belonged to Co.I. 28" Va. Regiment. Their first officers were Capt. Mat. Deyerle, Maj. William Watts, Lieut. Col Allen, Col. Robert Preston, Phillip St. George Cocke's Brigade, Pickett's Division. My father served without intermission during the entire war esccepting a part of the fight around Richmond when he was away on sick leave. His Regiment was the second to reach Manassas Junction, the "18 & 28" reaching there about the same time. In the fall of '61 Gen. Hunton's Regiment was added, and after Gen. Cocke's death he [Hunton] became Brigade General. After serving to the end of the war he was taken prisoner at Saylor's Creek three days before the surrender, confined at Point Lookout, Md. He was released in alphabetic order and reached home June 20, 1865. He served as ordinance serjeant and was in [blank] Rev. Peter Tinsly was Chaplain of the 28th Va. Regiment

Big Lick, Va. January 11, 1864

My Dear Husband,

Yours of the 9th came to hand today. I have not received your letter by Mr Reed, or the papers either. I do not know if he is at home or not. We are very well, nothing new stirring in the neighborhood that I know of, except marrying. Emmiline Pitzer was married last week to Capt Tompkins, one of Gen Jenkin's staff, and miss Prudence Greenwood was married to Dr. Wingo, and miss Margaret Muse to Mr Wright from Bedford. Sallie Taylor is to be married to morrow. Henry is going to the wedding

The substitute men and the exempts are being examined now, it seems to hurt the feelings of some of them a good deal to have to go in service. Aunt Hannah and Mr Grissom came here last Friday morning and left this morning, they are like all new married people, just as happy as possible, it seems right strange to see her so familiar with a gentleman. Uncle Jacob has been promised to be exempted, if he will finish all the wheat he makes & all his mill furnishes at government price, which he very gladly agreed to do. Pa says there is no fight in Jacob but Davy will make a good soldier, aunt Hannah says she does not believe he would fight if he was in the army.

I wrote to you about Aggy's hire, she is hired to Sam Parish in Salem for 90 dollars. Lee had a letter from his wife last week she said her Mrs thought that one reason why he was not permitted to visit her was on account of the expensiveness of the trip and that she would help to pay expenses. I got along very well with Sarah and Lacy, for them to be of the material they are. I am glad that I didn't get Lacy hired out. I have had a great deal of company in the last three weeks and it would be right inconvenient to have only one servant. Ma made me a present of a nice mousseline [mousseline, a fabric] dress to day, a good deal nicer than the one I bought from Brown* and it didn't cost so much. Capt Gish sent Henry an extension of his furlough for ten days longer, for the purpose of recruiting his company, with the substitute men. Lily and Aly talk about you very often, Aly says the next time she goes to Grand Ma's she is going to look in Dr. Mitchel's saddlebags and get her one little brother out. Mitchel is boarding at Pa's now.

Husband, I joined the church yesterday, O how I wished that you were there by my side, that we could attempt to lead a new life together, a purer life, but one in which I feel that new beginners have a great deal to encounter, from the effects of old habits and temper, my dear husband how much I wish that I could see you and converse with you. I have so much that I feel that I could say to you.

As ever your own loving wife
Mollie

** Note: Brown was likely the Brown house/store, which was moved from a location on East Main Street in Salem to Longwood Park and is now the home of the Salem Museum.*

Big Lick, April 9th 1864

My Dear Husband,

I would have written to you sooner, but thought it best to wait until I heard from you, which I did today. We are very well the children are improving some in manners since you left, I have had to keep them in the house mostly since you left, on account of the weather and they made enough noise to distract one, it is a considerable relief when they go to bed. Haven't we had nice weather since you left, I am afraid I shall lose my seeds that are in the ground. The excitement about taxes has pretty well worn off, Mr Ferguson's speculation tax was eight thousand eight hundred. He had to borrow a good deal of money but was fortunate enough to get it without paying a premium on it. Dr. Mitchel's taxes altogether were eighteen hundred dollars, five hundred of it was on his practice. I haven't heard from uncle Airheart's. I don't know what Mr Crawford has to do about going to the army, but suppose he either has to go or hasn't heard from his papers, he told them at Mrs Pettyjohn's last Thursday night that he wanted all the young people to come to his house to a potatoe roasting before he had to go to the army. I went to hear the Dunkards preach the sunday after you left and to Pine Grove yesterday. Dr Bittle is to preach at the Cave next Friday. Sarah Childress and I were going to Salem today, if it hadn't rained, I can get a firstrate sifter for $15. I want to get soleatther [sole leather] for our shoes, I am going as soon as I can. I sold your striped pants for $18, this morning I am going to see how little money I can do with this summer, and get along cleverly.

Uncle Deyerle sent me two barrels of flour last Saturday, I will try to make them do until the new comes in, he sent Ma a bag of rye and told her to divide it between us, I don't think there is more than a bushel of it altogether, I haven't sent for mine yet, it has been so rainy today. My little pigs are doing very well, I put them in the carriage house the day after you left, they were about to drown in the pen, they are running in the yard now, have taken up with the hogs and don't try to go out of the yard. I should not have thought of running for a lieutenancy in Co E, as long as I had an honorable post without danger and all the advantages your's has. If you run, I hope you may be beaten, John Persinger is at home we had a letter from Henry today, he is very well, I haven't heard a word from uncle Jacob or Davy since you left, don't know what they are doing but suppose they are at home or I would have heard of it. I heard from Mrs Preston last week she was worse, than when we were there, Mollie sent me word she was coming up soon, Sallie Taliaferro came up & staid all day, the day after you left, & Mary and George Kagy on Sunday night and Mrs Grosvenor Monday night, and since then I have been right lonesome. I do wish this war was over and we could live together in peace once more, the children said I must write you a letter for them, I will write it another time Lily says tell you she can say her prayers by herself now and knows all her letters but four. Alice can say three lines of her prayer and all the letters in Christian Observer. I can get them to study much better in bad weather, when they can't get out to play. Mrs Raines has a boy a week old & it has set Alice almost crazy for a little brudder [brother] both kissed me for you tonight, good night my own dear husband.

From your wife
Mollie

Research on some of the people named in these letters resulted in this information:

Dr. David F. Bittle co-founded the Virginia Institute as a Lutheran Preparatory School for boys in Augusta County in 1842. In 1847, the school moved to Salem and in 1853 it was chartered as Roanoke College. Bittle, Roanoke College's first president, led the school through the lean years of the Civil War. Under his administration the number of students at the school increased from 38 to 171 and the faculty increased from four to seven. Three buildings — Main, Miller and Trout halls — were constructed. A fourth building, Bittle Memorial Hall, was planned. Dr. Bittle died suddenly in 1876.

The Pettyjohns are mentioned in the 1870 Federal Census:
Mary Pettyjohn, 33, whose profession was keeping house
Archer Pettyjohn (husband) — merchant
Children: Betty, Amanda, Mary A (all attending school)
Also in the household were Henry and Harriet Toliver, servants (Black)

The Airharts are mentioned in the 1870 Federal Census:
Mary C. Airhard, 27 — keeping house
John W. Airhard, 30 (husband) — farmer
Children: Fanny, Andrew, Ann (all at home)
Martha Jordan, domestic servant

Samuel Ferguson
Melinda Hayes Ferguson (wife)
Child: Eliza Jane Ferguson

Stephen Peyton Terry and Mary Susan "Mollie" Trout were married in 1857. Lila May Elizabeth Terry was born in January 1859. Alice Peyton Terry was born in September 1860. Peyton Terry enlisted in the Confederate army in May 1861. After the war, the couple had three more children: Martha Leftwich Terry, born 1867; Anne, born 1870; and Lucinda, born 1873. The two eldest children, born before the war, are mentioned often in Mollie's letters to her husband.

'To the fatal field of Appomattox' A history of the Salem Flying Artillery

by John Long

Roanoke County sent into the fray of the Civil War more than a thousand men, most serving in units of the 28th, 42nd and 54th Virginia Infantry Companies. Boys barely old enough to shave and men who were already grandfathers shouldered arms and local men fought in virtually every major engagement of the war. But no unit of local boys could claim as colorful a history as the Salem Flying Artillery (SFA). The record of the SFA spans the history of the war itself, from the prewar crisis to the bitter end at Appomattox, where the SFA played a surprisingly active role.

The unit was organized January 1860 in Salem by Abraham Hupp, a local tinsmith and civic leader, in response to the growing sectional conflict that seemed certain to lead to war. Hupp first drilled his unit on the Roanoke County Courthouse green the following December.

As evidenced by the name he chose, Hupp intended his men to comprise a light artillery unit. Light (or flying) artilleries were intended to be rapidly mobile and quickly respond to changing battlefield conditions, at least more quickly than the units with the heavier guns. Such a battery came, by 1862, to be composed of four to six guns, with the lower number being most common. The organization of such a unit would include one captain (Hupp, initially), one 1st lieutenant, two 2nd lieutenants, several non-commissioned officers and up to 125 privates. In addition, a light artillery would require 50 to 60 or more horses. As the war progressed, mustering a full complement of men and animals would prove increasingly difficult, as would the problem of feeding both. *[i]*

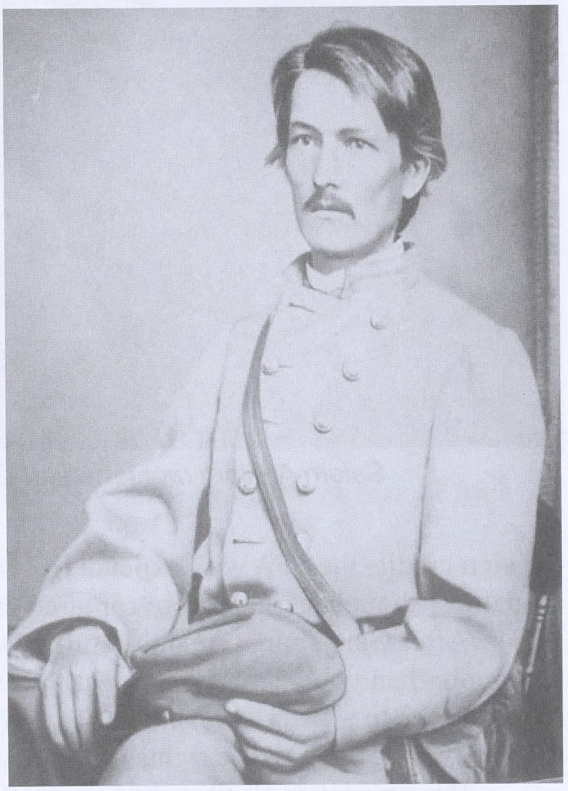
Abraham Hupp

Such hardship was still in the future, however, when the boys of the SFA were mustered into the Confederate army on May 14, 1861. Hupp's men proudly marched out of town, with orders to proceed to a training camp near Lynchburg. Albin Magee, a small boy in 1861,

John Long, executive director of Salem Historical Society, also teaches history at Roanoke College and writes a column for the Roanoke Times.

later wrote, "Well do I remember the Cival War when the Salem Artilary marched out ... it was a notable day, and my father (Peter Magee) was one of them. [In] red shirts, grey caps and pants they went out with a smile and proud step; but they returned with a limp and down in spirits, ragged and dirty with no clothes worthy of mention. They had served for a cause they did not understand, but they did it bravely." *[ii]*

Peter Magee, an Irish Catholic harness maker from Salem who was nearly 40, was only one soldier who made the SFA a surprisingly diverse unit. One man was born in Prussia, at least two others in England, and a Jewish soldier named Henry Gintzenberger was also in the ranks. *[iii]* Perhaps most surprisingly, an African American drummer named Jacob Jones seems to have enlisted, at least for a few months. By the end of 1861 he had been released from duty, presumably due to his race. *[iv]* Interestingly, the Richmond Dispatch later noted the presence in the ranks of an unnamed "veteran of 1812," who would have been in his late 60s at the youngest. *[v]*



Charles Beale Griffin

Despite Hupp's intentions for his company, the SFA did not begin the war as an artillery unit, flying or otherwise. Instead, Hupp's men found themselves folded into the 9th Virginia Infantry upon their arrival at Lynchburg. Hupp took the unusual step of writing to Gen. Robert E. Lee himself to complain about the situation; the next day he sent a telegram, which would arrive more quickly, asking Lee to disregard the letter and forgive such a breach of military etiquette — captains don't tell generals how to run a war.

Not until the war was more than a year old did the SFA earn at least part of its name. Transferred to the Norfolk area, the unit was stationed at Craney's Island as a coastal battery — perhaps better than infantry, but still a far cry from a "flying" artillery. *[vi]* In the spring of '62, when Norfolk was evacuated, Hupp's men were transferred to Richmond and in the major reorganization of the Confederate army of that year, became part of the 1st Regiment, Virginia Artillery. *[vii]* While an improvement in title, by July Hupp's Battery still had only two 12-pound boat howitzers — with no ammunition. *[viii]*

So obviously under-equipped, during McClelland's Peninsula Campaign the SFA could only remain in reserve near Richmond, seeing no action — no doubt to the disappointment of the boys and the relief of their mothers. Only later, in September's campaign into Maryland, did the SFA "see the elephant" of battle for the first time near Williamsport.

In ensuing months, the SFA would again be engaged in the significant battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, but their losses were comparatively slight. Indeed, like most Civil War units on both sides, the SFA suffered more from the raging microbes of disease than the flying bullets of battle.

One casualty of disease was Capt. Abraham Hupp himself. Ailing for some time, he took an extended leave of absence and returned to Salem, where he died in September 1863 of cancer. In his absence, Lt. Charles Beale Griffin took over acting command of the SFA, and was promoted to captain upon Hupp's death. Henceforth, the unit often appears in official records as Griffin's Battery.

At the crucial battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, many men from the Roanoke Valley would be engaged — members of the 28th Virginia Infantry would be in the thick of Pickett's Charge. However, the SFA played a comparatively minor role. On July 2, the SFA was held in reserve and saw no action, but the next day two of the battery's four guns were brought forward and fired on enemy positions. On the 4th, the guns of the SFA were in position but happened not to be engaged. By the end of July 4, it was clear that Lee's forces had been defeated, and they began their bitter withdrawal. It was this retreat that proved more costly to the SFA than the battle, as cavalry raids by the men of Gen. George A. Custer harassed the Confederates. The SFA and their companion batteries suffered the loss of much of their supplies and baggage, meaning painful shortages were on the horizon. *[ix]*

Salem Artillery monument at Gettysburg.

An oft-overlooked marker exists at the Gettysburg battlefield commemorating the role of the SFA. Tucked in an obscure corner, bent and rusted, the marker recounts a brief history of the unit's role. Still calling the unit Hupp's Battery although Griffin was actually in command, the sign credits the SFA with expending 154 rounds of ammunition at Gettysburg but suffering no casualties (though six men were captured during the retreat).

After Gettysburg, the unit returned to Virginia and winter camp. No doubt many of the men, who more than two years ago thought they were enlisting for a few short months of glory, longed to return home. In a letter to his father, Pvt. William Edward Brown confessed that he was "for anything to stop the war with all the rights of the South on a sound footing." *[x]*

Brown's letter also touched on another developing crisis of the Confederacy: desertion. A constant problem for the Confederate army, desertion worsened as the tide of the war turned against the south. For the SFA, it seemed to be a relatively rare occurrence — but not unknown:

> Last Saturday on the march to Moreton's Ford ... Thompson and Key deserted. Captain Griffin had been expecting something of this sort and rode along the battery several times to see if they were with us; the last time he did this he discovered their absence and immediately sent two mounted men after them but they could not find them. Monday a letter was received from Mrs. Key, which was read by the officers. She seemed entirely ignorant of the affair and spoke of the difficulty of getting wood for the winter. Tuesday Mrs. Thompson's letter was received saying: She had sold all her property, had the money and was ready to start whenever he said the word. Some persons thought that Key had persuaded Thompson to desert, but it would appear from this that it was the opposite. I do not think they will be caught, but if they are they will stand a good chance of being shot as they deserted in face of a fight. *[xi]*

Records of the SFA indeed indicate that George Thompson and Daniel Key (or Kay) "deserted to the enemy" on September 22, 1863, but their fate remains unknown. *[xii]* Nathaniel Burwell Johnston, a recent enlistee in the SFA, recalls in a postwar memoir that during the following winter the entire command was "ordered to witness the execution, by shooting, of a man convicted of desertion. Not a very pleasant experience, but a necessity of military life." *[xiii]* Whether that deserter was either Thompson or Key, or even a member of the SFA at all, is impossible to say.

The winter of 1863-64 was relatively quiet for the SFA, taking part in only minor actions. They would experience more intense combat in May of 1864 at Spotsylvania Courthouse and Cold Harbor; however the SFA missed the Battle of the Wilderness due to lack of horses.

The rest of 1864 and first part of 1865 would be spent in the line in defense of Petersburg and Richmond. The most significant action the SFA faced in this was the Battle of Chaffin's Farm in late September 1864. Union forces, now under Grant's command, made a concerted effort to break the Confederate lines on the James River near Forts Harrison and Gilmore. Thousands of Union men surprised the unsuspecting Rebels, overrunning Harrison and pushing the lines back significantly. Briefly it appeared that the long-standing Union goal of taking the Confederate capitol was at hand. However, Rebel artillery batteries, including the SFA, were rushed into position to rebuff the attack. In fierce fighting the rest of the day, Griffin's Battery and others from the 1st Virginia Artillery rained unrelenting fire on the attackers, eventually forcing them to retire.

"On the 29th of September, 1864, a force of 2500 Confederates resisted and held at bay 18,000 Federals," boasted Nathaniel Johnston, "to which achievement there are not many parallels in warfare." The SFA gave journeyman service that day, firing over 1,000 rounds, having three of their four guns disabled, but losing only one man killed. Four of the unit's horses were also lost — precious commodities which would be increasingly difficult to replace. *[xiv]*

The rest of the winter and the spring of 1865 found the SFA in the defense line east of Richmond, seeing only minor engagements.

It was likely during this time period that an incident occurred involving Peter Magee, as recorded many years later by his son, local historian Albin Magee. His father was on guard duty along a road leading out of Richmond with orders to allow no one to pass without the proper password. An approaching party turned out to be President Jefferson Davis and his staff. Magee demanded the password, which Davis did not have and insisted he did not need. "The gun went to Father's shoulder and he said 'if you advance, I fire.' The president look[ed] at him and said 'I will have you court-martialed for this!'" and returned to Richmond. Magee concludes, "Now who do you think acted the soldier, the President or Father? Military men would condemn the President and if told Gen. Lee [he] would have praised the soldier." *[xv]*

These quiet months came to an end on April 2, 1865, when Grant finally broke the Confederate lines around Petersburg. Richmond could not hold long, and Lee ordered the evacuation of the capitol. After the evacuation of Richmond, Griffin's Battery followed their beloved Gen. Lee westward, hoping to link up with Johnston's army in North Carolina and continue the fight. Hopelessly outnumbered, outgunned, undersupplied and continually harassed by Grant's forces, the Army of Northern Virginia trudged forward.

The difficult retreat from Richmond must have been particularly arduous for the SFA. Virtually without rations, the men must have stumbled along the long march in a daze. Nathaniel Burwell Johnston's memoir relates that the few horses they had left, just as fatigued as the men, were not up to pulling the battery's guns over roads reduced to quagmires. *[xvi]* Indeed, two guns seemed to have been abandoned during the long retreat, though later retrieved before falling into enemy hands. *[xvii]* Despite these challenges, continue they did, and they arrived at Appomattox prepared to carry on the fight.

Harper's Weekly sketch of Gen. Lee's army firing its last gun at Appomattox.

It was in the war's last chapter, at Appomattox, that the SFA played its most celebrated — and debated — role. Near the courthouse, the SFA was stationed on the lawn of the Peers House, the far left of the Confederate lines, attempting to hold the Union lines at bay. Most likely unbeknownst to Griffin's men, Gens. Lee and Grant were meeting just a few hundred yards up the road at the McLean House to discuss the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia.

The situation at Appomattox was chaotic to say the least, and a clear picture of what happened on that eventful day will never be satisfactorily reconstructed. Nevertheless, an intriguing claim to fame of the SFA has been preserved: according to the men's memories and at least some contemporary sources, they fired the last artillery shot of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

Nathaniel Johnston's memoir recounts that the SFA on Sunday, April 9, 1865, had opened fire on enemy positions a thousand yards away, rapidly expending the last of their depleted stock of ammunition. In the midst of the firing he heard the Union forces erupt in cheers, which he at first thought presaged a charge. Instead, it was soon announced that Lee had surrendered and all batteries were to cease fire. Being the last battery on the left of the line, they had received the cease-fire order last. Johnston records that Gen. John B. Gordon stated in the farewell address to his men that Griffin's Battery had fired "the last guns from the Army of Northern Virginia that day." *[xviii]*

Another tradition, preserved on a state historical marker outside of East Hill Cemetery in

Salem, records that Gun No. 3 of the SFA had loaded their piece and were prepared to fire when word of the surrender was passed down. Presumably because it was unsafe to leave the gun loaded, they elected to fire one last shot at their former enemy. *[xix]*

It should be noted that other units made similar claims after the war, and it can never be proven beyond a doubt which claim is accurate. However, the SFA could proudly point to contemporaneous sources to bolster their assertion. In addition to Gordon's quote above, Gen. D.H. Hill published an article in 1869 in a magazine titled "The Land We Love." In it he wrote:

> On the ever memorable 9th of April, 1865, the Salem Flying Artillery (Company A), commanded by Capt. Charles Beale Griffin, was placed in position on the extreme left ... an order from General Gordon was given to cease firing ... the whole army had surrendered. The hoarse sound of the cannon had died away in every part of the line except this, the extreme left, which was soon silenced, and with it the last gun of the Army of Northern Virginia. *[xx]*

In November 1865, Harper's Weekly printed an account of the action from the Union perspective. Col. Jenyns Battersby of the 1st New York Cavalry clearly stated that the last shot originated from the yard of "Mr. Pears House." Although he does not identify the unit involved, this was the position of the SFA. An accomplished artist, Battersby also published several sketches from Appomattox, including one of the last shot fired from the easily recognizable Peers House. *[xxi]*

While none of this proves beyond dispute that Griffin's men fired that notable last shot, it does lend credence to their claim — with the proviso that the unarguable facts will never be known.

After four years of brave service and incredible hardship, the men of the SFA were civilians again. Fortunately for them, their trek home was a relatively short one, compared to the veterans of out-of-state units. Returning to Salem, the boys who were now men did their best to pick up the pieces of their lives. And they did, with many SFA veterans becoming leaders of the Salem community. Lt. Henry Blair became a respected judge. Samuel Nowlin served as Salem's mayor. Simon Carson Wells became a legendary professor at Roanoke College. Samuel Griffin, though with the SFA for only a short time, became a respected attorney. Two veterans served as sheriffs of Roanoke County: John Evans and George Zirkle. Capt. Charles Griffin became a prominent physician. William Edward Brown became a successful Salem merchant; his brother George a Presbyterian minister. Nathaniel Johnston established a successful cotton and oil business in Richmond.

Like thousands of men across the reunited nation, the men of the Salem Flying Artillery had had their experience of war. Peace was now their mission — a mission to put the past behind and resolutely press forward into an uncertain future, resolving their old animosities without forgetting the valor of their service and those who did not return. That they accomplished this new mission is the true legacy of the SFA, and of their comrades in arms on both sides of the battlefield.

NOTES

i. Richard Nicholas and Joseph Servis: "Powhatan, Salem and Courtney Henrico Artillery," (Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, 1997), 1-2.

ii. Handwritten family history by Albin Magee, in collection of Salem Museum (n.d.).

iii. Ibid, 214-225.

iv. Ervin L. Jordan: "Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia," (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 219. Jones' service record indicates he was from Salem and enlisted with the 9th Virginia Infantry, of which the SFA was a part at the time.

v. Nicholas and Servis, 16. Though no record exists to help identify this veteran of the War of 1812, a good candidate

might be James C. Huff, the jailer of Roanoke County, whose son Albert was in the SFA. If it were Huff, it's interesting to note that he spent much of the War of 1812 on Craney Island, defending Norfolk from the British; the same island his son would soon be protecting from Union incursion.

vi. In fact, the SFA would never truly be a "flying" artillery, which would have required all of its personnel to be mounted.

vii. This unit was later re-designated 1st Battalion, Virginia Artillery, a more accurate label for its size. It was often also termed Brown's and then Hardaway's Battalion after the two commanding officers.

viii. Nicholas and Servis, 17.

ix. Ibid, 50-54.

x. William Edward Brown to Joshua Brown, Salem, VA, Sept. 25, 1863. Original letter in collection of the Salem Museum.

xi. Ibid.

xii. Nicholas and Servis, 220, 224. Interestingly, both men were gardeners by profession, perhaps explaining their connection. Thompson was born in England, and possibly had little attachment to the southern cause.

xiii. Nathaniel Burwell Johnston, "Civil War Reminiscences of Nathaniel Burwell Johnston" (typescript copy by J. Ambler Johnston in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA), 5. Johnston was a relative of Confederate generals Joseph Johnston and Robert E. Lee. Lee's mother's sister was Johnston's grandmother.

xiv. Nicholas and Servis, 84. The soldier killed was a Pvt. Jones from Alabama. Not long before, the survivors of the decimated Jeff Davis Artillery of Alabama had been folded into Griffin's Battery.

xv. Handwritten family history by Albin Magee, in collection of Salem Museum (n.d.).

xvi. Johnston, "Civil War Reminiscences," 9.

xvii. Nicholas and Servis, 90.

xviii. Johnston, "Civil War Reminiscences," 10.

xix. The roadside marker commemorates Sgt. James Walton of Salem, who is credited with having fired "ONE of the last shots" at Appomattox, as the sergeant of Gun No. 3. Nathaniel Johnston also served at that artillery piece. The source of this tradition — that Walton fired the gun after surrender merely to clear it — is difficult to ascertain. Most records, including Johnston's memoir, simply state that Griffin's Battery continued firing until ordered to stop. However, the detail of firing a last shot to clear the gun is certainly plausible.

It has also been occasionally stated that the SFA also fired the first shots of the war at the battle of Bethel in 1861. This is a misconception. By Appomattox, the SFA was in the 1st Battalion, Virginia Artillery, with the Richmond Howitzers, who were at Bethel and arguably did initiate the conflict with an artillery barrage. However, the SFA was not part of that unit at the time and was not at that opening battle. So the 1st Battalion could claim to have fired the first AND last artillery of the war, but the SFA could not.

xx. Quoted in William McCauley, "History of Roanoke County, Salem, Roanoke City, Virginia, and Representative Citizens, 1734-1900," (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1902), 87. The quote which titles this article is also from Hill's magazine and is quoted by McCauley.

xxi. Harper's Weekly, vol. IX, no. 462, Nov. 4, 1865. Battersby's sketch seems to have been reversed in the printing process; otherwise he portrayed the SFA firing in the wrong direction. Battersby also includes the detail that he retrieved from the yard of the Peers House the ramrod used by the last gun. Postwar documents also indicate that Charles Griffin kept as a souvenir the sight of Gun Number 3, while James Walton kept the friction primer. The whereabouts of such relics today is unknown, but the fact that they were collected gives evidence that the men of the SFA — and even the opponent across the line — believed at the time that they had witnessed history.

A 'demonstration' at Hanging Rock

by Clive Rice

After the failure of Union Gen. David Hunter to take Lynchburg on June 17-18, 1864, he retreated through Liberty (present Bedford) toward Salem on the Lynchburg-Salem Turnpike. At Buford's Gap, the cavalry of Union Brig. Gen. William Averell withstood a rear guard attack, while Union Brig. Gen. Alfred Duffie received orders to destroy the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad and anything of use to the Confederates in the direction of Salem.

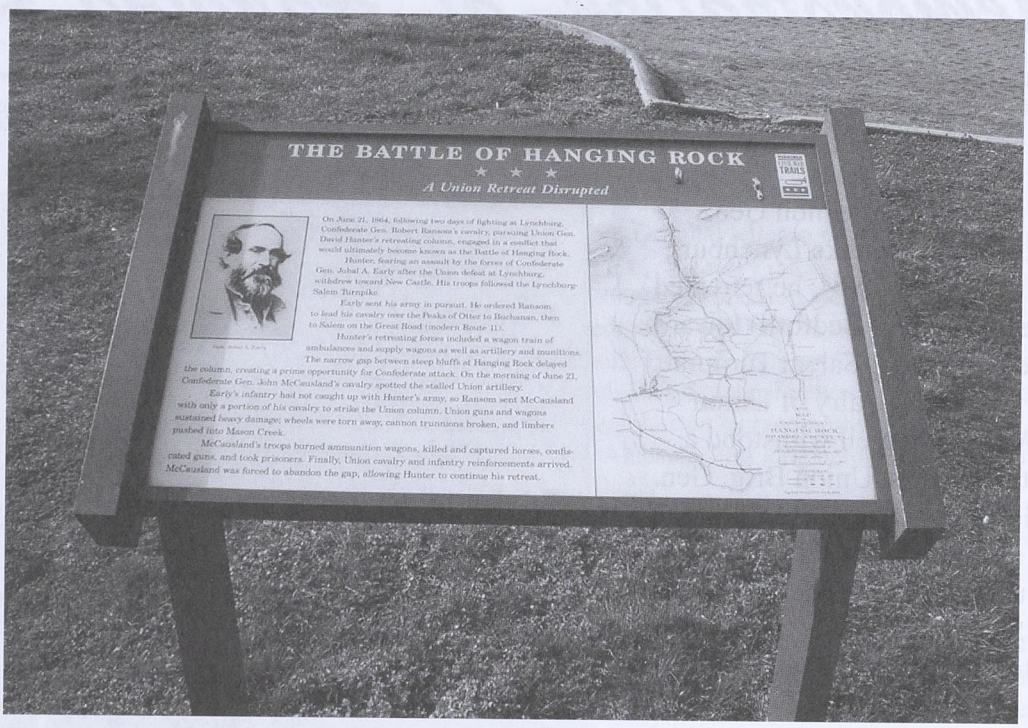
At Bonsack, they burned the woolen mill of Jacob Bonsack, cut telegraph lines, burned the depot and searched houses for food. Federal soldiers moved on to Big Lick and ransacked 30 houses and outbuildings. According to Mary Trout Terry's account, they pressed Clack Campbell for beef and Isham Ferguson, owner of the only tobacco factory, poured out his two remaining barrels of brandy rather than see it fall into enemy hands.

Duffie's forces reached Salem at 2 a.m. on June 21 and burned the depot. Duffie's troops were ordered to head the army's wagon train and secure the way up Catawba Mountain. Ambulances, equipment, supply wagons, artillery and munitions wagons left Salem, along Mason's Creek toward the gap at Hanging Rock where the Confederates managed one last lick.

About 9 a.m., Gen. Hunter reported, "the enemy made a demonstration against our rear guard." Confederate Brig. Gen. John McCausland's cavalry, riding

Statue of a Confederate soldier at the Hanging Rock monument off Route 311 near Salem is inscribed "In honor of George Morgan Jones, Citizen, Soldier, Philanthropist."

Clive Rice is a leader in the Roanoke Civil War Roundtable and an authority on the war.



A plaque marking the Hanging Rock battlefield site bears a photo of Gen. Jubal Early.

along Green Ridge toward the foot of Fort Lewis Mountain, had only a brief time to inflict damage as the rest of Hunter's army was close behind.

William Starke of the 34th Massachusetts Brigade left a report, saying that while his forces were advancing, McCausland's cavalry suddenly dashed upon the wagon train and artillery. "Wheels were knocked off guns and wagons, trunions broken, limbers tipped over and pushed over the bank into Mason's Creek," Starke said. Horses ran off or were killed or taken captive with the prisoners. Caissons and munition wagons were set afire, causing explosions and death.

Union artillery men tried to defend their pieces and were shot down for their efforts. Gen. Hunter wrote in his report, "While attention was directed to the rear of the column, a detachment of the enemy's cavalry fell upon the artillery en route — They were presently driven off by our cavalry." The cavalry came from the 2nd Division under Union Brig. Gen. William Averell, who forced Gen. McCausland to leave Hanging Rock.

Federal troops occupied the gap at Hanging Rock throughout the day and held back any threat from Confederate cavalry, thus enabling the rest of Hunter's columns to complete their escape into West Virginia. The havoc at Hanging Rock had netted the Confederates 10 pieces of artillery, horses, prisoners and plunder.

The Official Virginia Civil War Battlefield Guide said, "The engagement at Hanging Rock cost the Federals about a hundred prisoners, while the Confederates suffered few if any casualties."

The Battle of Cloyd's Mountain: A railroad, salt works and lead mine

by Jessee Ring

In the spring of 1864, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant wanted to launch attacks on "all fronts" of the Confederacy. One such front, albeit a more minor one, was in Southwest Virginia.

The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad (V&T) went from Lynchburg, Virginia, to Bristol, Virginia/Tennessee. Along the way, it served a salt mine in Saltville, Virginia, and a lead mine near Wytheville, Virginia.

Both of these commodities, salt and lead, were vital to the Confederacy's war effort. Salt was needed to preserve food for the soldiers, and the Saltville mine was one of only two in the entire Confederacy. Lead from the Wytheville mine was vital to the Tredegar Iron Works foundry in Richmond that produced cannons, ammunitions and related items. The V&T also had important use for Confederate troop movements.

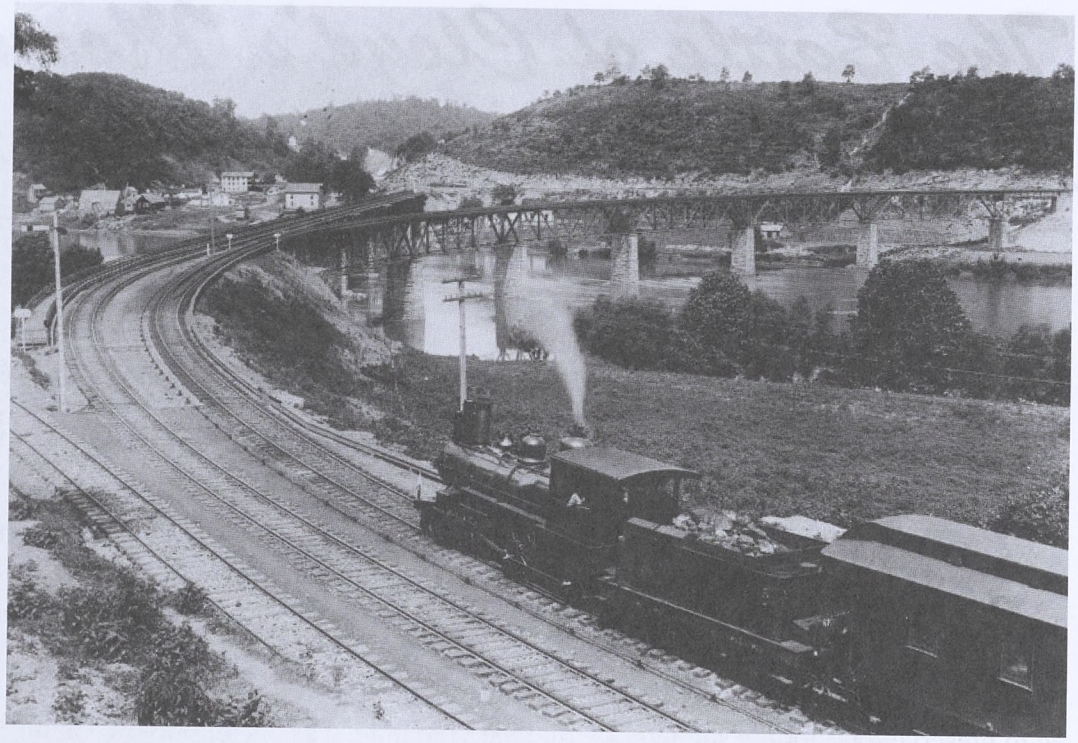
The V&T crossed the New River at Radford, Virginia, as the Norfolk Southern Railway does today. There was, and still is, a long bridge (780 feet) spanning the river between Fairlawn (on the Dublin side) and Central Depot (now Radford). The New River is wide at that point, over 200 yards, but not very deep. The railroad bridge design made use of tall stone and concrete piers on which rested a wooden trestle superstructure.

Picture A *(page 62)* shows the "newer" bridge in 1886, only 22 years after the events reviewed herein. Picture B *(page 63)* shows the same location today, the old stone piers still being in place, but not used, like some ghosts from the past. The modern bridge alongside the old piers is in use now, showing that this very old railroad route has persisted.

This long railroad bridge was the weak point in the supply link that brought these essential salt and lead commodities to the Confederacy. If the link was to be broken by the Federals, this bridge would be the place to do it.

Railroad tracks could be torn up, but they were relatively easy to replace. In order for this method of cutting the railroad (tearing up tracks) to be effective, tracks over an extended distance would have to be pulled up, which would take a long time and expose the raiders to potential enemy attacks all along the way that would be difficult to defend against. But the bridge presented an opportunity. If a properly equipped raiding party could get to it, it could be quickly destroyed, and the raiders would then move on. The great advantage of this plan is that building a new bridge on a scale of this one would be difficult and time consuming and maybe even impossible for the Confederates at this point in the war. Thus, the bridge became the target of the Federals.

Jessee Ring, a Giles County native, is a retired corporate executive, vineyard owner, newspaper columnist and political/social commentator who lives in Pulaski County. He has a special interest in Civil War history.



Picture A: An 1886 photo shows a steam locomotive approaching the New River bridge at Radford.

The main players

The Federal army conducting the raid into Southwest Virginia was commanded by Gen. George Crook (September 8, 1828 – March 21, 1890). Crook was born on a farm near Dayton, Ohio. He attended West Point, graduating in 1852 near the bottom of his class. The military was his one and only career. Initially, from 1852 to 1861, he served in California. When the Civil War broke out, Crook accepted a commission as colonel of Ohio's 36th Regiment and led it on duty in western Virginia. Promotion to the rank of brigadier general came on September 7, 1862. Crook served in the Maryland Campaign and saw action at South Mountain and Antietam.

The Confederate army that met the Federals at the foot of Cloyd's Mountain was under the command of Gen. Albert G. Jenkins.

Albert Galatin Jenkins was born on Nov. 10, 1830, to a wealthy plantation owner in what was then Virginia but is now West Virginia. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he established a practice in Charleston, then-Virginia. In addition to his law practice, Jenkins became active in politics and was elected to Congress twice. With the outbreak of the war, Jenkins resigned from Congress and raised a company of mounted rangers that became the 8th Virginia Cavalry in the Confederate army. He served at Gettysburg where he was wounded. After recovering, Jenkins raised a large cavalry force for service in western Virginia which led to his appointment as Commander of the Department of Western Virginia with headquarters at Dublin. Gen. Jenkins was mortally wounded in the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain.

After Gen. Jenkins was wounded during the battle, command of the Confederate army devolved to Col. John McCausland.

John McCausland was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on Sept. 13, 1863, the son of Irish immigrants. Orphaned at a young age, he went to live with relatives in western Virginia (now West Virginia). McCausland graduated from Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and the University of Virginia, becoming an assistant professor at VMI. After the start of the war, he was commissioned as a colonel and placed in command of the 36th Virginia Infantry. McCausland served under Gen. John B. Floyd and Gen. Albert Sydney Johnston. He fought at Fort Donelson but escaped before the Confederates surrendered. After Cloyd's Moun-

Picture B: Piers from the 19th century railroad bridge over the New River at Radford.

tain, he was promoted to brigadier general, served in the Shenandoah Valley under Gen. Jubal Early, and then joined the Army of Northern Virginia under Gen. Robert E. Lee. McCausland was present at Appomattox, but again escaped before the surrender, although he disbanded his unit shortly thereafter.

Crook's orders

Gen. Grant met with Crook personally to explain what was to be done about the Virginia and Tennessee railroad bridge near Dublin, and what Crook was to do thereafter.

Crook was given orders by Grant to take his force of about 6,500 troops and associated artillery and supply wagons from near Charleston, West Virginia, on a raid into southwest Virginia targeting the V&T railroad bridge over the New River at Radford. His mission was to destroy the bridge.

Simultaneously, Union Gen. Franz Sigel was to enter the Shenandoah Valley from the north, take Staunton, and go on south to Lynchburg.

After destroying the bridge, Crook was to march east to Lynchburg and join up with Sigel. There they were to set up a permanent base of operations, in Lee's rear, which would be extremely valuable to Grant.

The route of the Federal army to the V&T bridge over New River

Gen. Crook left the Kanawha River above Charleston on May 2, 1864. His route to Dublin and the V&T railroad bridge over the New River was by way of Fayetteville, Raleigh Court House, Princeton, Rocky Gap, Poplar Hill-Shannon's Bridge, and then over Cloyd's Mountain to Back Creek where he engaged the Confederates. After the battle, Crook went on to Dublin and the banks of the New River at the bridge.

The Confederate army waiting at Back Creek

In response to Union Gen. Sigel's movements toward the Shenandoah Valley, the Confederates moved 4,000 troops from Southwest Virginia north to the Shenandoah Valley. That left only about 4,600

Battlefield today showing Back Creek and the hill behind it where Union troops met the Confederates.

Confederate troops for the entire Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia.

After Crook's movement south through West Virginia became apparent, Jenkins started assembling an army to stop him. A Confederate brigade that had been placed at Princeton was ordered to Dublin to be sent north by train. Jenkins stopped this, after the men had already gotten on the train, and sent them toward Cloyd's Mountain. Jenkins did likewise with some artillery that had also been ordered to be put on the train for the Shenandoah Valley. Jenkins then assembled what other troops were available locally, and he called out the home guard.

All in all, Jenkins was able to pull together 2,400 troops and 10 pieces of artillery.

The battle

The battle took place on the morning of May 9, 1864, on ground on both sides of where Route 100 currently crosses Back Creek at the eastern base of Cloyd's Mountain about four miles west of Dublin. As stated previously, Gen. George Crook was in command of the Union Army. Future president Col. Rutherford B. Hayes served under Crook in this campaign, and future president Lt. William McKinley was also in this army.

The Confederates were led by Gen. Albert Jenkins, with Col. McCausland being second in command.

The main action lasted for about an hour and a half; the fighting was fierce and at times hand-to-hand. Union Gen. Crook personally led his troops on the field of battle, as did Confederate Gen. Jenkins.

The Confederates had put up fortification on the east side of Back Creek. This meant that the Federals would have to advance over an open field 300 yards wide after coming through the gap in Cloyd's Mountain, cross Back Creek (which Hayes described as a "ditch"), and then move uphill in order to get to the Confederates.

Crook knew the Confederates expected him to attack their center that faced Cloyd's Mountain, along the Pulaski-Giles Turnpike (now Route 100). This was where the Confederates had put up some breastworks made of fence rails and had their artillery in place. Crook decided to do the unexpected. He

sent some troops on a flanking movement around to his left (the Confederate right) with orders to attack and charge once in place. He put his remaining forces in place in the center, under the command of Col. Hayes, with orders to charge as soon as they heard gunfire from the flanking movement. This meant that the first attack on the Confederates would come on their right flank followed by an attack on the center and left. It was a good plan.

Once the attack on the Confederate right commenced, Crook and Hayes and the rest of the Union troops charged across the field toward the Confederate center and left, as planned, in the face of artillery fire. Then they crossed Back Creek and made their way up a wooded hill to the Confederate breastworks. Here the fighting was the most intense, and at one point, by some accounts, it appeared that the Confederates might prevail. But the combination of a flanking attack on the Confederate right closely followed with a bigger attack on the center, along with superior numbers, sealed the outcome; the Confederates were routed.

Gen. Jenkins was severely wounded during the battle. He put Col. McCausland in command and was taken to a field hospital that had been set up at the Guthrie house where his arm was amputated. He died a few days later.

One of the Confederate soldiers in the battle, Henry C. Carpenter, wrote a letter to his sister describing his eyewitness experiences that day:

> Camp Near new river Bridge
> May 20th 1864
>
> My Dear Sister I will embrace the present opportunity to write you a few lines as I expect you would like to hear from us Bro John Ed and my self are all well I have much nuse to write you but have not time to write much know we had the hardest fight last Monday our Reg ever was in we fought them at the foot of Cloyds Mountain our Reg Composed our right wing they massed five Reg against us they Charged our regment with three reg and held two back in reserve we repulsed them three times the third time we repulsed them we Charged them and drove them back to their reserve and when their reserve come we had to fall back our loss was 180 the yankeys loss was 400 killed and wonded the 45th loss was very heavy as they dun the most of the fighting the yankeys Completely ruined the Country as they went there is a great many killed that you are acquainted with but I have not time to mention them know the nuse from the East is good this morning Breckinridge has whipted Segle at Stanton Buregard has whipted Burnsides at Peters Burg and Lee is still whipping Grant at Richmond Lees official report says he has killed and wonded one hundred thousand since the fight Commenced well I will Close give my love to all the family from your affectionate Brother
> HC Carpenter

Another letter from a participant in the battle was from a captain in this same 45th Virginia Infantry Regiment, James S. Peery of Tazewell. He wrote to this fiancé, Miss Maria Witten:

> I suppose you have written to me long since, but your letter did not come to hand, on account of the Yankees. No doubt you have heard of our late defeat near Dublin which I am sorry to say was a very bad one. Our regiment left Saltville last Sunday week about dark for Dublin about 7 o'clock on the morning, marched out to the battlefield near Mr. Cloyd's about four miles from Dublin, and placed in line of battle. We had not remained long until we saw the Yankee bayonets glittering on the top of Cloyd's mountain.
>
> We soon made us a kind of fortification out of some rails, which gave us a little

protection. We remained in this position I suppose about an hour when they engaged our whole line with an overwhelming force. We fought them until they came up in 20 yards of our line. Finding we could not stand, [we] retreated back to a little hill, where we remained but a short time. From there a great many of our men scattered in every direction. After we were completely routed they charged upon us with their cavalry but fortunately about 500 of Gen. Morgan's men came to our assistance from Saltville. They placed themselves in ambush and repulsed their cavalry with great slaughter, but as soon as their infantry came up our men were compelled to fall back.

On the other side, Col. Hayes recorded the battle this way in his diary:

May 8. Sunday --- Rocky Gap to Poplar Hill (Sharmon's). twenty-four miles. ---- Ten from Giles; ten and one-half from Dublin. Rebels probably ahead of us getting ready.

May 9. --- Battle of Cloyd's Mountain, or as the Rebs call it "Cloyd Farm." Lasted one hour and a half. The Twenty-third and Twenty-sixth, under the immediate direction of General Crook, charged across a meadow three hundred yards wide, sprang into a ditch and up a steep wooded hill to Rebel breastworks, carried them quickly but with heavy loss. Captain Hunter killed. Lieutenant Seaman ditto. Abbott's left arm shattered. Rice a flesh wound. Eighteen killed outright; about one hundred wounded --- many mortally. This in [the] Twenty-third. [The] Thirty-sixth less, as the Twenty-third led the column.

The Confederates retreated to Dublin, took what supplies they could from the ample stores there, crossed the New River using the railroad bridge for the troops and the bridge upstream at Ingles Farm for the cavalry and artillery. All of this took until midnight. They then burned the bridge at Ingles Farm (to keep the Federals from getting to their rear) and took up positions with their artillery on the east side of New River at the railroad bridge near Central Depot (now Radford), knowing the Federals would be there the next day on the other side (the Dublin side) to try to destroy the bridge.

Hayes had very little to say about the Federals' movement from the battlefield to Dublin: "May 9. – continued - Entered Dublin Depot, ten and a half miles, about 6:30 p.m. A fine victory. Took some prisoners, about three hundred, [and] five pieces of artillery, many stores, etc., etc. A fine country; plenty of forage. My loss, two hundred and fifty [men]."

On Tuesday morning, May 10, the Federals showed up and there was an artillery duel that had little effect on either side. The Confederates contested the Federals for about two hours via sharpshooters and the artillery, but then ran out of ammunition and retreated to Christiansburg.

The Federals set the wooden superstructure of the bridge on fire and it burned completely in what was apparently a spectacular sight.

However, the Federals failed to bring explosives with them, so they were unable to do anything to the tall stone bridge piers. The piers remained standing and unharmed, even though the wooden part of the bridge was completely destroyed. Federal troops stood on a bluff beside the river to observe the spectacle, cheering and making merry the whole while.

The total casualties, not counting prisoners of war, were 688 Federals out of about 6,500 and 538 Confederates out of about 2,400. That comes out to an 11 percent loss for the Federals and 22 percent for the Confederates.

The Federals leave

After completing the destruction of the railroad bridge, Gen. Crook had instructions to march east

Route of old road followed by Union troops from Rocky Gap to Poplar Hill (7.3 miles north of Poplar Hill on Route 42).

and join forces with Maj. Gen. Franz Sigel who was to be driving south through the Shenandoah to take Staunton and Lynchburg. But Crook decided not to do that. He was deep in enemy territory and seems to have become concerned about being attacked by a large Confederate force after the Battle of the Wilderness, which left Lee's army intact and in place northeast of Charlottesville. Crook had also not heard anything about Sigel's progress in the Shenandoah Valley, so Crook wasn't sure that Sigel was actually there. Crook decided to go back into the safety of West Virginia, apparently to wait for further orders.

On the afternoon and night of May10, after burning the bridge superstructure and with the Confederate defenses no longer a threat (having retreated to Christiansburg), Crook crossed the New River at Pepper's Ferry by fording and ferrying, heading toward Blacksburg and Salt Pond Mountain (Mountain Lake is on top of this mountain). He chose this more difficult marching route, rather than simply going back over Cloyd's Mountain to Poplar Hill and on through the easy route to "the narrows" of New River at the present town of Narrows in Giles County. Then he could have just followed the river north from there all the way back to Charleston, an easy march. He didn't take this easy marching route no doubt because his army would be extremely vulnerable as it went through the narrows.

At the narrows, two steep mountains on either side of New River come right down to the banks of the river in an ancient geological formation. Getting any army through this would require the soldiers to march virtually in single file, making them easy prey to an opposing force that could easily hide in the woods on the sides of the mountains.

So Crook chose to go over Salt Pond Mountain instead. It was a good decision, as there were 800 (some reports say 1,500) Confederates under the command of Col. William L. "Mudwall" Jackson waiting at Narrows.

On Wednesday, May 11, the Federals reached Blacksburg, going through what Hayes called "a finely cultivated country" on the way from New River.

The Confederates were unable to do anything of significance against the Federals as they returned to West Virginia. Col. Jackson got word of Crook's route and moved his troops from Narrows to Newport (also in Giles County). Jackson attacked the Federals there, but Hayes dismissed them as "a poor force that lit out rapidly."

On Thursday, the Federals were crossing Salt Pond Mountain. The march over this mountain was

described by all as horrible — constant heavy rain and deep mud. Hayes recorded it in his diary as one of the worst of his experience. The soldiers slept on soaked, muddy ground without blankets.

The Federals crossed Peters Mountain and were in Monroe County, West Virginia, on Friday, May 13. By May 19, they were back behind their own lines at Meadow Bluff in Greenbrier County, West Virginia.

Christopher Cleburn

Capt. Christopher S. Cleburn, brother of Confederate Maj. Gen. Patrick R. Cleburn, was part of the Kentucky cavalry forces that arrived, very late, from Saltville as the Confederates were retreating. These forces performed a rear guard action for the retreating Confederates that allowed McCausland to get his remaining men, artillery and some supplies across the New River before the Federals could arrive in Dublin. Cleburn participated in a counter-attack on the pursuing Federals during this rear guard action and was fatally wounded. He requested that he be buried where he fell rather than being sent back to Kentucky. His grave is located at Cleburn Wayside alongside Route 100 between Back Creek and Dublin.

Presbyterian minister

Rev. William P. Hickman was the pastor of Dublin or Belspring Presbyterian Church (reports differ) during the course of the events described in this article. On Sunday, May 8, 1864, while Gen. Jenkins was frantically assembling as many troops as he could, including the home guard, word of the Federal army's approach reached various towns and farms near Dublin. Rev. Hickman exhorted men in his congregation to join the effort, and he himself left the pulpit to offer his services. Rev. Hickman joined the ranks of the regular army and fought in the battle where he was seriously wounded. After the battle, Union soldiers were transporting Federal and Confederate wounded alike to the field hospitals. They came across Rev. Hickman, but he was dressed in civilian clothes, not in a military uniform, so he was regarded as a "bushwhacker," an illegal soldier, that is, and they let him lie. He lay on the field until the next morning when members of his congregation came and moved him to a neighbor's house where he later died.

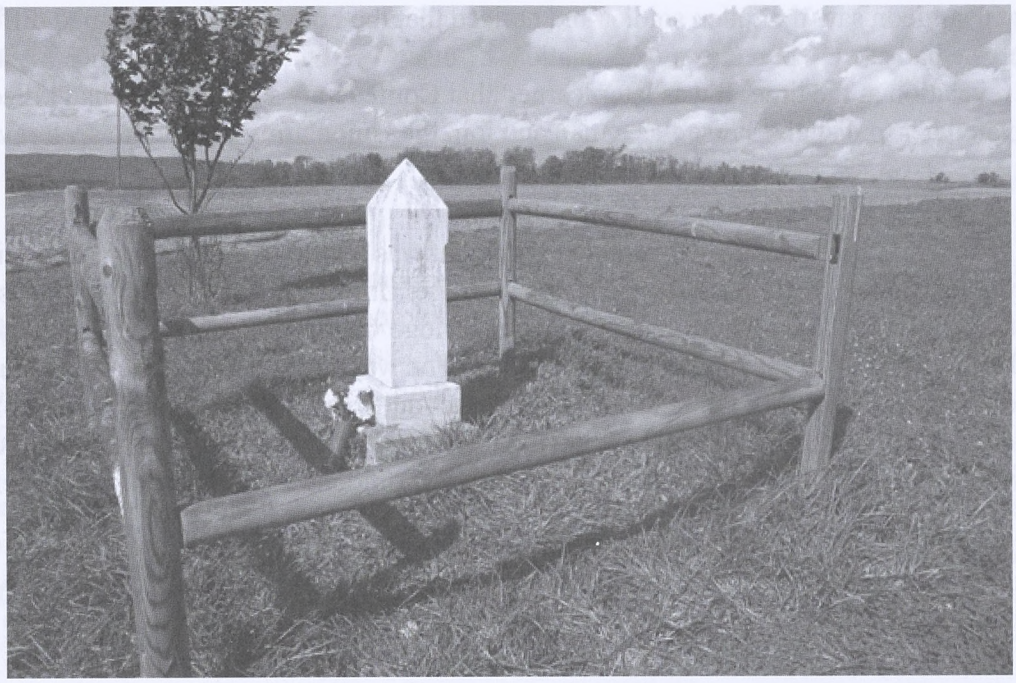
Rutherford B. Hayes

Rutherford Birchard Hayes was a moderately successful lawyer in Cincinnati, Ohio, before the war. He joined the Union cause when the members of his social club formed a military company. The Ohio governor appointed him a major and regimental judge-advocate. Hayes took part in some 50 engagements during the war, was wounded several times, and ultimately became a major general of volunteers. He was elected to Congress while still on active duty in the army in the field, serving from 1865 to 1867. Hayes was then elected governor of Ohio three times. In 1876, he was the Republican nominee for president. He emerged the winner in a highly contested election that was finally decided by a commission set up by Congress to review disputed election results in several states. Hayes served one term as president before retiring to philanthropic work.

Henry C. Carpenter

Henry Carpenter, from the White Gate area of Giles County, enlisted in the 45th Virginia Infantry Regiment (Company H) on April 4, 1862. He was a volunteer. Two of his brothers also served in the 45th. Pvt. Henry Carpenter saw action in various battles and skirmishes in Southwest Virginia, southern West Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley, Lynchburg, and with Confederate Gen. Jubal Early's attempted attack on Washington in June of 1864 (which was shortly after Cloyd's Mountain).

Pvt. Carpenter wrote a series of letters to his sister, Elizabeth, whom he called Liz or Liza, during his service in the Confederate army. The letters are unedited, unfiltered, and uncensored in any way, in con-



Cloyd's Mountain gravesite of Capt. Christopher Cleburn.

trast with many letters from soldiers to home in later wars. Through these letters, we see the Civil War as it was experienced first-hand by an ordinary Confederate foot soldier, along with his thoughts and feelings on the events of the war, the army's leaders, and the family back home. The letter he wrote telling about his participation in the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain is covered previously in this article.

Pvt. Carpenter's last letter, dated July 19, 1864, from Berryville, Virginia, is of a notably different tone than the previous ones. Those former letters to sister Liza, despite various hardships and setbacks that Henry had endured, were consistently upbeat and optimistic. They showed a strong sense of duty and resolve. This last letter shows battle fatigue and extreme weariness; Carpenter seems to question his ability to go on. The letter also has a sense of fatalism in it as Carpenter thanks God for sparing his life thus far. By this time, both of Henry Carpenter's brothers had been captured and were in a Yankee prison somewhere. In his last letter, Henry actually suggested that he might be better off if he was with them, a startling sentiment.

Pvt. Henry C. Carpenter, 45th Virginia Infantry, CSA, died while still in active military service on October 6, 1864, at Woodstock, Virginia. His beloved sister Liza received a very poignant letter from a family friend, also in the Confederate army and who was apparently with Henry when he died, informing her of her brother's death. Although the specific events leading up to Henry's death are not recounted in the letter, it does say that he was delirious prior to passing away. The letter also says that a lock of her brother's hair and his Testament will be sent to "Miss Lizzie."

Henry C. Carpenter was a distant relative of the writer of this article.

Unknown female soldier

On May 10 as the Federals were getting into position at the west end (Dublin side) of the bridge and the artillery duel was in progress, Col. Hayes told some of his men to take cover in some depressions in the ground. Hayes previously had his cavalry dismount so they wouldn't be easy targets for the Confederate sharpshooters. Hayes himself, though, was still in the saddle. When he told them to take cover, all complied except for one, who had a bit of a verbal exchange with Hayes. This particular soldier wanted Hayes to dismount and take cover also, as he had told the rest of them to do. Before the issue could be resolved, an exploding Confederate artillery shell killed the soldier.

The regimental surgeon saw the fallen soldier and noticed that the body somehow seemed different from all the others he had seen. Upon closer examination, he discovered that the dead soldier was a woman, a shocking revelation at the time. It was later learned that Confederate sympathizers had killed her parents, which motivated her to disguise herself as a man and join the Union army in order to seek revenge.

Assessment

Gen. Crook soundly defeated a hastily assembled army that was a little more than a third the size of his while he was on the way to his main target, the railroad bridge. Crook's primary goal was to destroy the railroad bridge; that was the whole point of the raid. But the bridge was not destroyed, at least not completely. Crook destroyed some of the bridge, but not all of it. The wooden superstructure was reduced to ashes, but the most important part, the stone piers, was left intact due to poor planning on the part of the Federals, who, as indicated previously, neglected to bring explosives with them. There was nothing they could do to take down the tall stone and concrete piers, so these key components of the bridge were left standing.

After the Federals had gone back into West Virginia, the bridge superstructure was rebuilt in a matter of weeks. The railroad was back in operation by early June. It remained in operation until April 6, 1865, three days before Lee surrendered, when Union troops disabled a number of the bridge trusses.

Epilogue

The Battle of Cloyd's Mountain was one small conflict on one afternoon in a war that went on for four years — over 1,200 casualties on one afternoon in a four-year war. This particular battle is now largely forgotten. The battlefield is all private property today, consisting of houses and farms. There are few physical reminders of the conflict that occurred here; one could drive right through the battlefield and never know it, except for the state historical markers and the lonely gravesite of Capt. Christopher Cleburn.

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Saltville during the Civil War

by Roger Allison, Jim Glanville and Harry Haynes

No issue of the Historical Society of Western Virginia Journal devoted to the 150th anniversary of the Civil War would be complete without a discussion of the role of Saltville during that conflict and the production of dry salt by the method of boiling down the brine that was pumped from the town's wells. The brine wells of Saltville were the source of two-thirds of the salt consumed by the Confederate States of America during the War.

Ella Lonn's 80-year-old book, "Salt as a Factor in the Confederacy," *[1]* opens with the striking, but perhaps apocryphal, account of a former Confederate officer speaking after the war in the northern salt-producing center of Syracuse, New York, and saying, " ... you northerners whipped us southerners ... because you had salt." That same theme has been taken up in the very recent book "Starving the South: How the North won the Civil War" by Andrew Smith, *[2]* in which he writes of a southern "Salt Famine."

At the time of the Civil War, Southerners annually consumed about 450 million pounds (9 million bushels) of salt, more than any other nation in the world. Salt's single most important use was to preserve meat and fish; in a time of pre-refrigeration, salt was invaluable as a preservative. Salt use peaked annually in the fall when animals were slaughtered in preparation for the coming winter. Livestock, such as cattle, mules, horses and pigs, also needed salt, and it was required for tanning leather and other commercial purposes.

The Northern blockade of the Confederacy initiated in 1861 by Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott's "Anaconda Plan" largely eliminated southern salt-making by solar evaporation along its Atlantic and Gulf coasts and in the lower Mississippi River. This action left the Confederacy increasingly reliant on inland salt sources. *[3]* The important Kanawha salt works were lost to the Confederacy after the September 1861 Battle of Carnifex Ferry near present day Summersville, West Virginia, and the salt works at Goose Creek in Clay County in eastern Kentucky were destroyed in October 1862.

In March of 1862, with the war almost a year old, the adjutant and inspector general of Alabama wrote to the Confederacy's quartermaster-general: "The salt question is hourly increasing in magnitude and importance. The people of the Confederate States require full 6,000,000 bushels at the lowest calculation ... [s]alt is in very great demand here, and every artifice and fraud is resorted to by speculators both in this State and Georgia." *[4]* The shortage of salt was a direct result of the Union blockade of the Confederacy which was described by an aide in a memorandum early in the second year of the war to President Jefferson Davis:

> The policy of the Northern leaders in the war for the subjugation of the Southern people has been to take our chief sea-coast cities, so as to cut off all supplies from foreign countries, get possession of the border States of Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee, which are the great grain-growing States, properly belonging to the

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Figure 1. The modern town of Saltville viewed from the overlook on Route 107, the Chilhowie to Saltville Road (also called the R.B. Worthy Boulevard). The well-fields area is the open region in the lower left of the image. The present-day Saltville business district is at the right. The location of the overlook is shown on the map in Figure 9; at the left-hand edge of the map the direction of view is approximately due west. (Picture: Jim Glanville, December 2006)

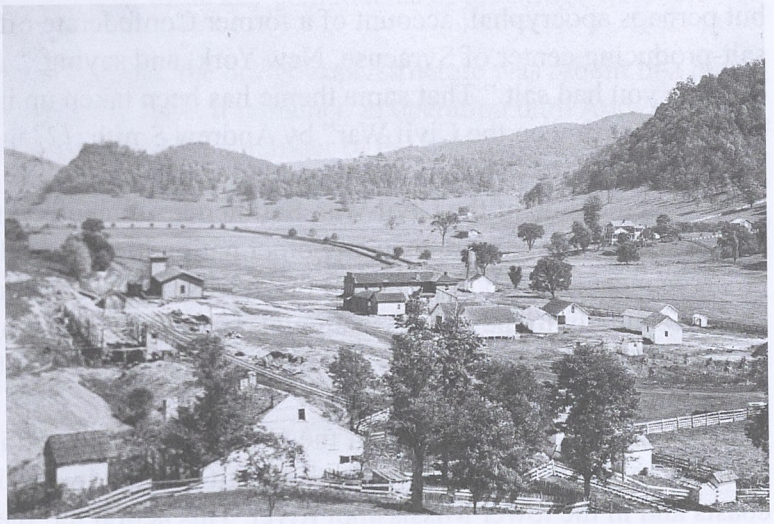


Figure 2. No Civil War era photographs of Saltville are known to exist. This image from 1893 was taken about 1 mile west of the present downtown area looking to the northeast. It shows the soon-to-be-developed Saltville well-fields and the railroad line running from the lower right corner of the picture to the middle of its left edge, where the partly demolished Tennessee furnace can be seen. The overlook (from where the picture in Figure 1 was taken) was built 71 years later (in 1964) on the side of the hill in the far distance. (Picture 212-8, Phillips-Perry Collection; courtesy the Museum of the Middle Appalachians)

Confederacy; cut the railway connections between Virginia and the cotton States, and cut the cotton region in two divisions by getting full possession of the Mississippi river; by getting possession of the sea-coast cities on the one side and the principal grain-growing region on the other; by separating the cotton region of the Confederacy from Virginia and cutting it into two separate divisions; by commanding completely the Mississippi River, they expected to starve the people into subjection, or crush out one division after another by the great advantage they would possess in concentrating heavy forces upon any given section or division. The lull brought upon the people of the Confederate States by their great success during the first six months of the contest has enabled their persevering enemy to half succeed in their well-laid schemes for the complete subjugation of the Southern people. The late victories of the Confederate forces, and the repulses which the Northern troops have met with lately, have stirred up the Northern Government and people to such exertions as will in their opinion complete our subjugation at no distant day. The object of first magnitude, under existing circumstances, upon our part, is to get possession of Western Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. *[5]*

Late in the war, after three years of more-or-less undisturbed operations at Saltville, northern forces finally attacked the town and on their second try in December 1864 significantly damaged the salt works. Views of Saltville as it looks today and as it looked in 1893 are shown in Figures 1 and 2.
A principal cause of the salt shortage in the Confederacy, and hence of the effectiveness of the blockade, was that the southern states had in the pre-war years developed a strong dependence on imported salt. This dependence had been noted and described in an 1860 book by the French geologist Raymond Thomassy. In a chapter titled "The Question of Indigenous Salt, and the Importance of this Commodity to the US," Thomassy observed rather flamboyantly: "To captivate a child a taste of sugar suffices: well, imported salt seems similarly to captivate the Unites States, particularly the southern states." To back up this contention with statistics he noted that southerners imported over 3 million bushels of salt in sacks from Liverpool (made in the nearby county of Cheshire by boiling brine), along with a quarter-million bushels of sea salt from the Caribbean, into the Port of New Orleans during the 12-month period from July 1855 to June 1856. However, the large amount of importation from Liverpool was not due to any particular southern taste for Cheshire salt, it merely reflected the rather mundane commercial reality that otherwise empty, returning cotton-carrying vessels could be sent back to America using salt as ballast and thus with cost-free transportation. *[6]*

Salt-making by brine boiling

The process used to make salt at Saltville was to boil its brine with the heat from wood fires. Brine is sodium chloride (NaCl) dissolved in water — an aqueous solution of common salt. In Saltville, wells dug in suitable places (such as on the well-fields) fill naturally with strong, high purity brine. When this brine is heated, its water — but not its salt — boils away, and solid, crystalline salt precipitates from the liquid as seen in Figure 3.

In 1857 the Saltville salt works was visited by two writers and a sketch artist from Harper's New Monthly Magazine. The report of that visit and the sketches are available for online viewing. *[7]* That visit has left us with a well-known, wonderful verbal and pictorial record of what Saltville's production facilities looked like only four years before the commencement of the Civil War.

The English traveler Edward King visited Saltville in 1874 accompanied by the sketch artist J. Wells Champney. Champney's sketch of salt making is shown in Figure 4. *[8]* Old salt kettles once used to boil brine are still found in and around Saltville, 150 years after the Civil War. The specimen pictured in Figures 5 and 6 is in the yard of a private home near Saltville. This kettle is noteworthy because it bears its maker's foundry mark and is the only kettle presently known to be so marked.

Figure 7 shows the locations of the salt furnace complexes in Saltville during the Civil War. To meet peak salt demand during the war, some furnaces were also operated 8½ miles from Saltville at Glade Spring where the Saltville rail spur joined the main line of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. The brine for these furnaces was shipped by rail from Saltville. Figure 8 shows the Scott furnace which was located on the site of today's Saltville golf course, not far from downtown.

Annual rates of salt production at Saltville during the 19th century

Many authors have discussed 19th century salt production at Saltville. Aggregating their data allows us to build up a picture of the annual rate of salt production, as summarized in Table 1 *(page 78)*. Among these authors are Charles Lanman *[9]*; Henry Darwin Rogers, a geologist commissioned by the State of Virginia to evaluate the mineral resources of Saltville *[10]*; an anonymous author quoting the Richmond Enquirer *[11]*; the English traveler Edward King, mentioned above *[12]*; the book by the historian of Smyth County, Goodridge Wilson *[13]*; the address by the student of local history, Judge Walter Henderson Robertson *[14]*; a hard-to-find essay written by the Marion, Virginia, native Cecil Greer

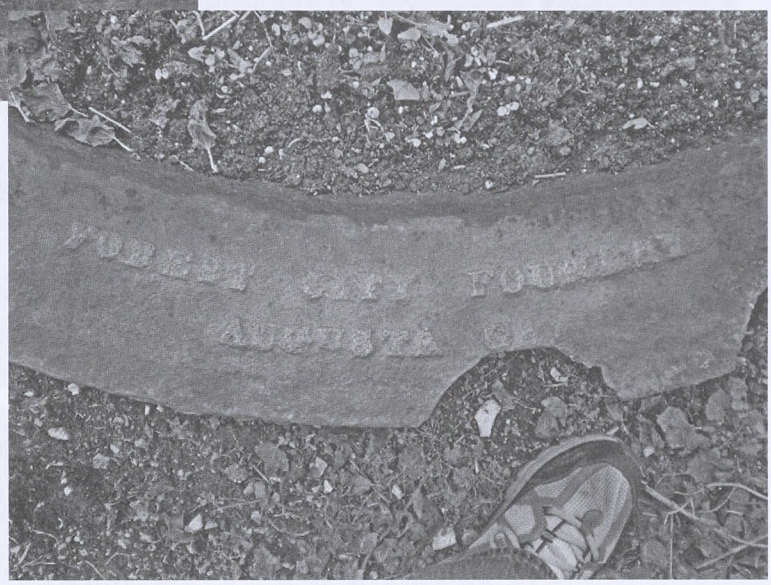
Figure 3. Reenactment of the making of salt from brine in a large metal kettle. A pierced ladle dips the salt crystals that have deposited from the brine as the water has boiled away. (Picture: Jim Glanville, Saltville, September 2004)

Figure 4. Another interior view of the Salt Works is provided by this original sketch by J. Wells Champney. Hot combustion gases from burning wood in the furnace through brick conduits below the iron kettles. Note that the nearer kettles are producing less steam than those in the distance. The furnace gas cooled as it passed forward down the kettle row and so the farthest kettles got the most heat and were the most productive. Open lattice baskets (seen in the foreground) allowed excess brine to drain and be recycled to the kettles. (Taken from page 571 in Edward King's "The Southern States of North America: A Record of Journeys in ….")

while a senior-year undergraduate student at the University of Virginia *[15]*; and, most importantly, a valuable scholarly monograph about Saltville's salt trade written during the 1990s by Will Sarvis *[16]*.

Useful statistics about the amount of salt making at Saltville also come in the form of answers to a list of questions sent in letters written by Alexander McCall and Thomas L. Preston about a dozen years prior to the beginning of the Civil War and transmitted in 1848 to the president of what was then called the Lynchburg and Tennessee railroad. *[17]* By 1848, considerable commercial interest had developed in constructing a railroad to link Lynchburg to Bristol and beyond into Tennessee with one of its uses being to haul salt. As mentioned above, this railroad duly opened and reached Bristol in October 1856. The 8½-mile railroad spur north to Saltville branching from the main line at Glade Spring was completed earlier the same year. *[18]* The railroad went first to Saltville, to generate revenue from hauling salt and plaster, with the construction of the main passenger line to Bristol coming only after the spur was completed. *[19]*

Alexander McCall wrote in his answers that two-thirds of Saltville's annual production of 200,000 bushels of salt was shipped by wagon and the remainder by flat boats to the Tennessee River. He noted that the entire U.S. demand for salt was 2 million bushels, revealing that in 1848 Saltville met just 10 percent of the national requirement. McCall noted the expense involved in hauling wood, and judged that three cords of hard wood would make 100 bushels "in a furnace under good trim." From this information we deduce that roughly 2 pounds of wood were needed to make a pound of salt, or equiva-



Figures 5 and 6. A salt kettle. The foundry mark on the right below reads " Forest City Foundry, Augusta GA." (Pictures: Harry Haynes, near Saltville, October 2012)

lently 2 tons of wood were needed to make a ton of salt (*see Table 1*). Thomas L. Preston estimated that annual salt production was almost twice as great as did McCall, noted that a bushel of salt at Saltville was taken to weigh 50 pounds, and that 4.6 bushels made a 230-pound sack of salt. The discrepant values given by McCall and Preston are unexplained. In Virginia, a barrel of salt was defined by law as 5 bushels.

Table 1 reveals that salt production at Saltville grew steadily through the middle part of the 19th century, reached a mighty climax following an exceedingly rapid, 10-fold increase during the Civil War, and fell back to earlier levels after the war's conclusion. Production of salt for sale as salt ended in 1907 when the Mathieson Alkali Company (which had opened in 1895) switched the brine entirely from salt making to use for the manufacture of chemical substances such as the alkali sodium carbonate.

Daily life in Saltville during the Civil War

From the beginning of the Civil War, in April 1861, it was more than three years until the war actually came to Saltville.

During the early part of the war, the salt-making capacity of the town was increased by the building of more furnaces and the adding of more kettles. After that build-up, Saltville functioned for many months as a busy industrial town, remote from the war, with daily life focusing around the railroad. In 1864, with daily salt production running around 300 tons a day, a daily train (Figure 9) was needed to transport the salt from Saltville. *[22]* Securing adequate railroad transportation, both to bring wood and take out salt, presented complex problems during much of the war, and led to difficult relations between Virginia and the other Confederate states. *[23]*

Salt production was a labor intensive business. Writing in 1875, Edward King said that 2,000 men worked at Saltville during the war. Several hundred horse-drawn wagon teams and much manual labor was needed to handle and bring the tons of wood needed to the furnaces and pack and load the outgoing salt onto railroad cars. Large furnaces with a hundred or more kettles, operating 24 hours a day,

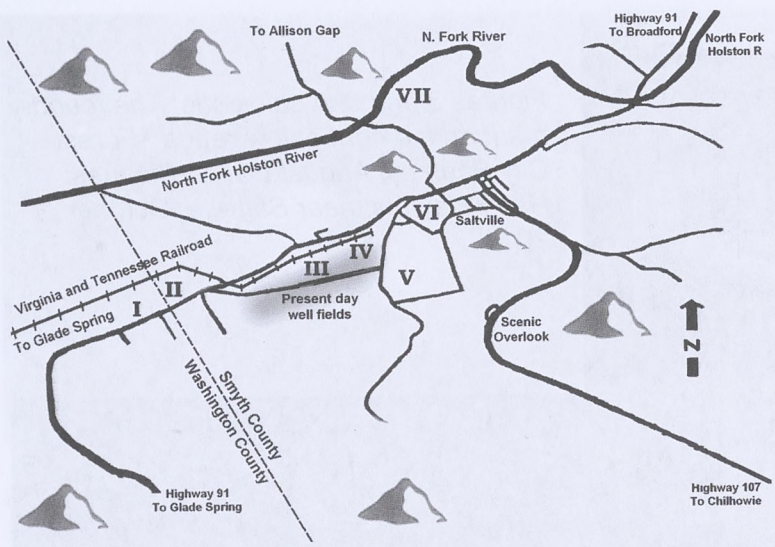


Figure 7. Map showing downtown Saltville and the main locations of the salt furnace complexes during the Civil War. About 60 furnaces were in operation during the war. Salt furnace complexes I, II, III and IV lay close to the railroad line, with complexes III and IV just to the north of the present-day well-fields area. The Scott furnace complex at V was on the present-day golf course. Furnace complex VI was just west of today's downtown area. The river furnaces at location VII, which had been idle prior to the beginning of the war, were brought back into service when the war started.

Figure 8. The Scott Furnace seen in 1893. Furnaces were long, shed-like buildings with a large chimney at one end. This facility fired 440 kettles in two double furnaces and supplied the Confederate States Army with salt. (Phillips-Perry Collection, picture a42, courtesy the Museum of the Middle Appalachians)

would have needed as much as 4 tons of fuel wood every day. Inside the furnace sheds, many workers were needed to move from kettle to kettle, dipping out the salt crystals as they formed during the process of brine evaporation and transferring them to the bushel baskets.

Based on his detailed analysis of post-war legal records, *[24]* co-author Allison concludes that there were at least 37 salt-producing companies operating an estimated 2,800 kettles. The exact number of furnaces operating during the war is impossible to determine — possibly about 60. Allison's investigations also show that some salt pans were operated during the war. Salt pans were gigantic kettles (they could be 6 to 20 feet in size) and were common in Europe. *[25]*

The traveler, librarian and government official Charles Lanman visited Saltville in June 1848 and described the manner in which Saltville brine was obtained. He tells that brine was raised by the power of horses from three artesian wells dug out to a depth of 225 feet and that 25 teams of horses were constantly working to bring wood to the furnace. *[26]* Wooden pipes were used to convey the brine from the wells to the furnaces. At this pre-railroad date, Lanman noted one or two dozen flat boats being filled with salt in readiness for the annual one-way trip down the North Fork of the Holston River to Kingsport when the river rose with its spring freshet, or spring "tide" as it was locally called. A general discussion of the production and transportation of brine has been provided by Zola Deutsch, who worked at Saltville in the 20th century. *[27]*

We have no intimate record of what life was like in Saltville during its time of maximum salt production in 1862-1864. However, we do have both a personal description from Booker T. Washing-

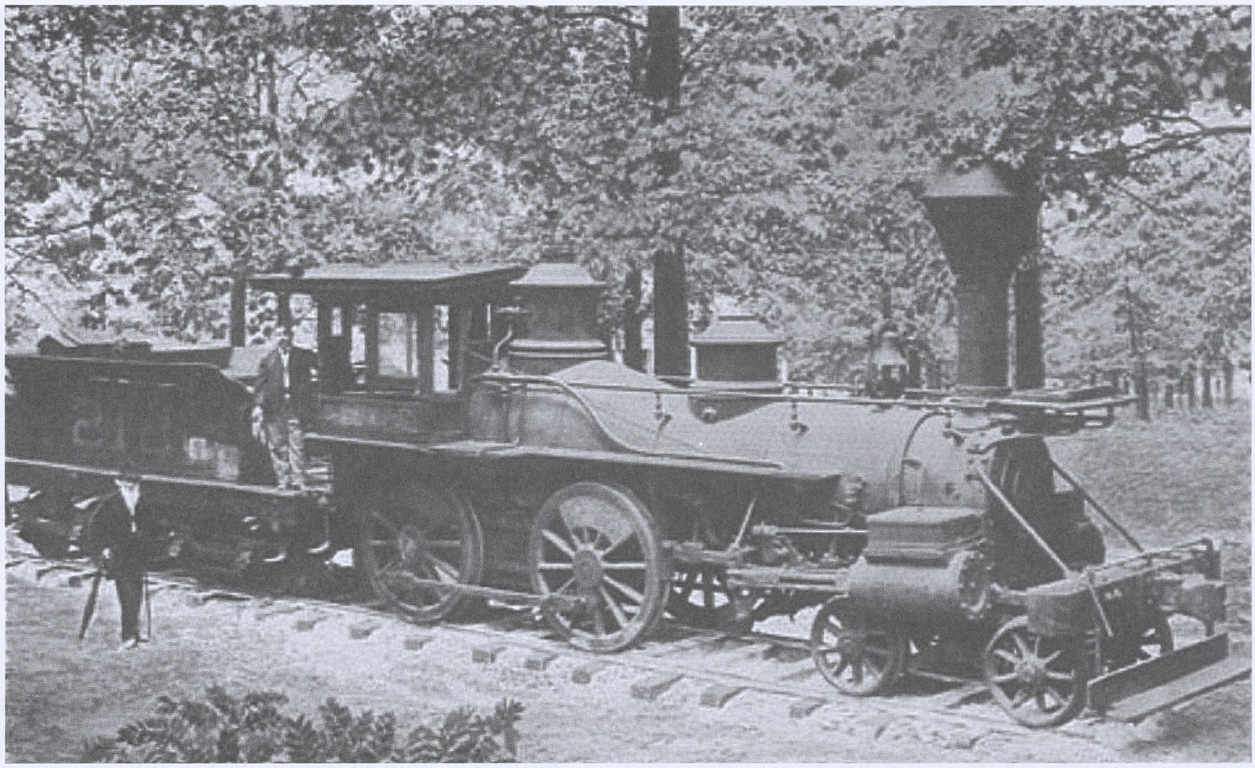


Figure 9. The 4-4-0 wood-burning steam locomotive Texas seen in a park in Atlanta, circa 1910. This locomotive paid many visits to Saltville during the Civil War. She was the principal Confederate locomotive in the "Great Locomotive Chase" of 1862. The Texas chased the General that had been stolen by Union raiders at Kennesaw, Georgia, and driven north by them to within 20 miles of Chattanooga before running out of fuel. This action was memorialized in the 1926 Buster Keaton silent film titled "The General." Later, she carried Georgia wood to Saltville and returned home with salt. Renamed Cincinnati in 1880, she continued in service until 1901. (Picture: Digital Library of Georgia, used with permission) [21]

ton of what daily life was like at the Kanawha County salt works and a scholarly analysis of the use of enslaved labor at those works from historian John Stealey. *[28]* The Kanawha salt works boiled brine using the heat from coal-fired furnaces. They were located on the Kanawha River about five miles south of today's Charleston, West Virginia. Booker T. Washington's stepfather escaped from enslavement in Franklin County, Virginia, during the war and followed Union soldiers to find refuge at the Kanawha salt works. After the war, in 1865, the stepfather called for Booker T. Washington and his mother to join him and they moved to the salt works, where the then 9-year-old Washington worked for a time. In his 1901 autobiography "Up From Slavery" *[29]* Washington described life at the Kanawha salt works as follows:

> Finally we reached our destination — a little town called Malden, which is about five miles from Charleston the present capital of the state. At that time salt-mining was the great industry in that part of West Virginia, and the little town of Malden was right in the midst of the salt furnaces. My stepfather had already secured a job at a salt-furnace, and he had also secured a little cabin for us to live in. Our new house was no better than the one we had left on the old plantation in Virginia. In fact, in one respect it was worse. Notwithstanding the poor condition of our plantation cabin, we were at all times sure of pure air. Our new home was in the midst of a cluster of cabins crowded closely together, and as there were no sanitary

TABLE 1 — Annual Salt Production* at Saltville for Selected Years

Year	Bushels	Tons	Citation: Author, date: page
1830	75,000	2,000	Rogers, 1854: 3.
1848	730,000	18,000	Charles Lanman, 1849: 158.
1848	200,000	5,000	Alexander McCall, 1849: 3.
1848	350,000	9,000	T.L. Preston, 1849: 3.
1854	300,000	7,500	Rogers, 1854: 3.
1858	300,000	7,500	DeBow, 1858, 369.
1864	4,000,000	100,000	King, 1875: 571, Sarvis, 1998: 23.
1867	400,000	10,000	Sarvis, 1998: 23.
1874	110,000	3,000	King, 1875: 571.
1882	440,000	11,000	Ogle, 2009, 24.

Notes to Table 1

*These round number values should be regarded only as approximations.
Note the widely discordant production figures stated for the year 1848.
A bushel is a dry measure measuring about 1¼ cubic feet and weighing 50 pounds.
A sack of salt is approximately 4½ bushels.
A furnace "in good trim" required about 2 tons of wood to make a ton of salt.
Typically, 20-25 gallons of saturated brine would have been needed to make a bushel of salt.
[20]

regulations, the filth about the cabins was often intolerable. Some of our neighbours were coloured people, and some were the poorest and most ignorant and degraded white people. It was a motley mixture. Drinking, gambling, quarrels, fights, and shockingly immoral practices were frequent. All who lived in the little town were in one way or another connected with the salt business. Though I was a mere child, my stepfather put me and my brother at work in one of the furnaces. Often I began work as early as four o'clock in the morning.

The first thing I ever learned in the way of book knowledge was while working in his salt-furnace. Each salt-packer had his barrels marked with a certain number. The number allotted to my stepfather was "18." At the close of the day's work the boss of the packers would come around and put "18" on each of our barrels, and I soon learned to recognize that figure wherever I saw it, and after a while got to the point where I could make that figure, though I knew nothing about any other figures or letters.

Describing the workers at the Kanawha salt works, Stealey writes:

> Saltmakers employed slaves in all phases of the manufacturing process and in all subsidiary activities necessary to support a salt furnace. The heart of the factory was the furnace with the ... brine water pumped by steam engines from nearby wells.... Necessary subsidiary activities for support of the process were maintenance

and general labor, coal-mining (in earlier times, wood-cutting), blacksmithing, coopering (making barrels) and cooking. Most tasks performed by hired and company-owned slaves were routine, but some required a high degree of skill. In one completely integrated salt furnace operation that did not contract for coal and barrel deliveries, 23 to 33 slaves were required. ... In 1854, James Cowey, a manager of two salt furnaces, deposed that of 64 laborers under his control, 58 were slaves. ... Testifying in a deposition in 1853, a veteran salt maker estimated the employment of hands at two salt furnaces: fourteen coal diggers, five wheelers (wheeled coal from interior of mine to mouth), four haulers (hauled coal by team on railroad tramway from mine mouth to furnace), three kettle-tenders, one or two "cat-hole" cleaners (cleaned coal ash repository), six engineers (ran steam engines to pump brine from well and through wooden pipes to evaporation pan), two salt-lifters and wheelers (lifted salt from pan after evaporation and wheeled product to packing shed), seven "jim arounds" and packers ("jim arounds" were general laborers and firemen and packers placed salt into barrels for shipment), two blacksmiths, one "negro man sort of manager," and one cook. To attain optimum production capabilities and return on plant investment, saltmakers ran their furnaces 24 hours per day and, if they chose to incur the risk of arrest and overproduction, seven days per week.

While not being literal descriptions of daily life at Saltville during the Civil War, the preceding quotations from Washington and Stealey are illuminating and suggestive.

There is at present insufficient data to assess what fraction of the wartime work force at Saltville consisted of enslaved workers. Starobin in his analysis of southern industrial slavery does not specifically mention Saltville (though he does show one of the Harper's Magazine sketches made there), and notes that while many southern industries used slaves exclusively, some had racially integrated work forces. *[30]* John Stealey, in his careful study of slavery in the Kanawha salt industry, estimated that of the 1,500 slaves there in 1850 about 1,200 were male and 300 were female and that some of the salt manufacturing facilities were racially integrated.

The impressment of the Salt Works

With salt a scarce commodity, and Saltville being its principal supplier for most of the war, the Virginia governor and the Virginia General Assembly paid close attention to the matters of salt production and transportation. Salt workers were exempted from military service to the Confederacy within a few weeks of the outbreak of war. *[31]* An act regulating "the production, distribution and sale of Salt in this Commonwealth" passed the assembly on October 1, 1862. *[32]*

During the first two years of the war the privately owned salt-making companies performed very badly. The Assembly's Joint Committee on Salt reported late deliveries of an inferior product at a high price: "... throughout the year 1862 and the first half of 1863 — the absolute suffering of man and beast for want of salt — the repeated failures to obtain it from the owners of the salt works under county contracts and contracts by the governor, failures in point of quantity, quality and time of delivery, as well as the inordinate price commanded in the market by a most inferior article..." *[33]*

In spring 1862, Gov. John Letcher received broad authority to regulate Virginia's natural resources, including, of course, salt. A salt shortage that prevented adequate meat preservation in the fall of the year had the potential to cripple the Confederate army. Letcher visited Saltville in August and on his return to Richmond reconvened the assembly which granted him further wide-ranging powers. Now, the governor could legally take any action he deemed necessary to increase salt production and get it deliv-

ered where it was needed. Letcher tried various methods to achieve these ends, but hesitated to go too far, *[34]* despite the fact that some observers were publicly advocating that the state buy the salt works outright. *[35]*

Letcher and Virginia's slowness in taking direct action to secure the Saltville salt supply can be largely attributed to a deep philosophical respect for private property and a concomitant reluctance to condemn private property. The assembly was a conservative body. In the end, however, and with the prodding of a new governor, Virginia finally asserted its right of eminent domain, and justified by reasons of a time of war and Saltville being the site of the state's only available salt wells.

Letcher's successor as governor, William "Extra Billy" Smith, took office in January 1864 and finally convinced the General Assembly to authorize him to impress salt wells, furnaces and other private property. *[36]* The "ACT to authorize the Impressment of certain Salt Wells, Furnaces and other Property" was passed on March 8, 1864, and operations in Saltville were soon taken over by the state-appointed superintendent of salt works. *[37]*

By the summer of 1864 the salt situation had been much improved, "... and now on the other hand find that the people and the markets are so fully supplied with a sound merchantable article, that despite a depreciated currency and fabulous prices for all other articles of human consumption, salt alone is quoted in the price lists as 'dull' and 'flat' and 'cheap,' they will find in this, the highest vindication of their legislative policy and proof that they have been fortunate in the selection of their agents to carry out that policy." *[38]*

The full story of the debates in the assembly in Richmond over the impressment of the salt works lies beyond our scope here. However it is an interesting story and one that has never been told.

Brief military history of Saltville during the Civil War *[39]*

Southwest Virginia remained largely uninvolved militarily in the Civil War until the fourth year of the war. As late as the winter of 1863-64, the presence of Gen. James Longstreet's Confederate Army Corps in upper east Tennessee cast a protective shadow over the salt works. *[40]* William Marvel observed that even in 1864 "... [d]espite the excitement of periodic raids and the shortage or expense of certain necessities, life in the southwestern counties still remained relatively normal for a countryside at war." *[41]* Virginia's railroad network, which was the most extensive in all of the Confederacy, continued operating well in the region, with the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, connecting Knoxville to Lynchburg, remaining unmolested.

The protection from Tennessee held until April 1864, when Longstreet shipped his force north and east along the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad to join Robert E. Lee's force facing the Army of the Potomac. Seeking to offer some continuing protection to the region, President Jefferson Davis appointed the popular battlefield commander John Cabell Breckenridge of Kentucky to command in western Virginia. Southwest Virginia finally became a target in the spring of 1864, when newly promoted overall commander of the Union forces Gen. Ulysses Grant planned offensive action in every theater of war east of the Mississippi River. Gen. George Crook would attack western Virginia from West Virginia, while from Kentucky southwest Virginia would be attacked by troops under the command of Gen. Stephen Burbridge. *[42]*

The Saltville branch of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad had been completed only eight years earlier in 1856. It is possible to speculate that lacking rail transportation for salt, fighting the "Southern Cause" might not even have been possible five to six years before 1861. After three years of relative quiet, *[43]* the first major fighting in southwestern Virginia took place during Union Gen. George Crook's New River Valley Campaign with an action at Cloyd's Mountain in Montgomery County on May 9, 1864. *[44]* On May 10, 1864, a force under Union Gen. William Averell fought Confederates at Cove Mountain in Wythe County on his way to link up with Crook. Averell's force burned the New River

bridge at Radford the following day, but inflicted only moderate damage; it was quickly repaired and back in operation only five weeks later. These actions were only partial fulfillment of Grant's intention to starve the Confederacy of its resources by disabling the railroad in the Valley and Ridge Province by means of the destruction of the New River bridge. The geologist Robert Whisonant has nicely described the fundamental facts of geology and topography that influenced and controlled the military operations in 1864 in southwestern Virginia. *[45]*

The two battles at Saltville occurred later in 1864. In the first Battle of Saltville in October, Union troops led by Brig. Gen. Stephen G. Burbridge undertook a campaign against the salt works from Kentucky in late September. His force was composed of about 5,200 men and included the African American 5th U.S. Colored Cavalry. Burbidge's route to Saltville via the rugged Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River was challenging. Overall organization of the defense of Saltville, in the hands of Gen. John Echols, gathered the forces for the defense of the salt works, while on the ground command in Saltville was held by Gen. Alfred E. Jackson, who it is said was derisively called "Mudwall" by his own men, a sobriquet he apparently earned by his ineptness compared to his more famous cousin, Stonewall Jackson (William Davis, 1971). The battle began at about 11 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, October 2, with command of the 2,500 defenders now in the hands of Confederate Gen. John Williams who had arrived less than two hours earlier with 1,700 of those defenders via the railroad. By making good use of their excellent Enfield rifles, and with the advantage of being on readily defensible terrain, the Confederate forces decisively rebuffed Burbridge's attack. Admitting failure, Burbridge withdrew his forces in the late afternoon. Historians count the first Battle of Saltville as a victory for the South.

The first Battle of Saltville is notorious because of an atrocity, the extent of which has been the subject of a long-running dispute among historians. On the morning of October 3, 1864, witnesses saw Confederate soldiers kill captured Union soldiers who had been left wounded on the battlefield. The dispute has been exacerbated because among the men killed were black Union soldiers of the 5th U.S. Colored Cavalry regiment. A recent, balanced summary of what has come to be called "the Saltville Massacre" was provided by Brian McKnight in 2009 and can be read online. *[46]* Among earlier works that discuss the atrocity are two articles, a book and a useful website. *[47]* Adding to the controversy

Despite the excitement of periodic raids and the shortage or expense of certain necessities, life in the southwestern counties still remained relatively normal for a countryside at war.

are the actions at Saltville of the infamous Confederate guerilla fighter Champ Ferguson *[48]* who was responsible for several of the killings on October 3 and on October 7 for the cold-blooded killing of a wounded Union officer at the hospital at nearby Emory and Henry College.

The second Battle of Saltville occurred in December 1864. Gen. George Stoneman began the campaign from Knoxville on the 10th and assembled a force of 5,500 in upper east Tennessee. Four days later he was in Abingdon and the following day at Glade Spring. Stoneman sent about half his force under the command of Brig. Alvan Gillem up the valley to attack the railroad and its depots before returning to join the attack on the salt works. Gillem fought an engagement at Marion on the 17th and 18th against defenders commanded by John C. Breckenridge who fell back towards Saltville but failed to reach it when they were blocked by Union troops and turned across rugged country in the direction of North Carolina. The second battle for Saltville began on the 20th of December when 500 defenders under Col. Robert Preston faced impossible odds with the approach of two Federal columns, respectively under Burbridge and Gillem, which overwhelmed the town's defenses. Preston evacuated the town late in the day leaving it in Union hands. On the following day, the Union troops burned 300 buildings, took sledge hammers to masonry structures and salt kettles, and filled the salt wells with debris. However, notwithstanding this mayhem, by March 1865 at least some of the salt wells and furnaces were back in operation, as was the railroad. However, Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, rendered moot the operation of the Confederate salt works.

Saltville today

Saltville salt production continues today under very different circumstances from the 19th century. Today, in a collaborative business venture, United Salt Corporation operates a salt-dissolving facility pumping down water underground to depths of as much as 7,000 feet and pumping up the resulting brine. Dry salt for sale is made by evaporating that brine in a modern, chemically engineered evaporation facility. The deep underground cavities formed by salt removal are used by Spectra Energy Corporation to store natural gas. Spectra builds up the gas reserves during the warmer months so as to be able to deliver gas when needed in winter. *[49]*

The rails of the old railroad spur from Glade Spring to Saltville were taken up a few years ago and the rail bed converted to a recreational trail. *[50]*

The past decade has seen a resurgence of interest in Saltville as a battleground. In 2001, the Civil War Preservation Trust (now the Civil War Trust) purchased 107 acres of land at the center of the scene of fighting during the first Battle of Saltville. In 2007 this land was deeded to the Town of Saltville with the easement being granted to the Virginia Outdoors Trust. Professors Cliff Boyd and Robert Whisonant (retired) of Radford University have led preservation-directed projects funded by the American Battlefield Protection Program of the U.S. National Park Service. These efforts have yielded GPS mapping, studies to identify battlefield features, a conservation plan, a noteworthy listing in 2009 in the National Register of Historic Places, and a listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register, also in 2009.

Currently underway is the development of a virtual battlefield tour that will focus on four elements of Saltville's Civil War history: the salt works and the spike in production and infrastructure fueled by the Confederacy's need for salt; the two battles in 1864; the well-preserved fortifications built by Confederate engineers on the prominences surrounding the Saltville valley; and the execution of wounded African-American cavalry troops and other Union soldiers after the first battle of Saltville.

Memories of the Civil War remain vividly alive in Saltville. They have become a valuable tourist attraction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Wythe Grays: Harpers Ferry and beyond

by Mark D. Baldwin, D.O., and Stephen A. Smoot, B.A., M.A., PhD.

In the aftermath of John Brown's failed raid on Harpers Ferry on October 16, 1859, the South, and especially Virginia, saw its worst fears realized: an armed slave revolt led by white abolitionists. Unlike Nat Turner's Rebellion of 1831, this raid was organized and financed by Northern whites with both free blacks and at least one escaped slave taking an active part in the insurrection. Local militia and townspeople held John Brown and his men until a force of Marines led by Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee made an assault on the engine house capturing, wounding and killing many of Brown's men.

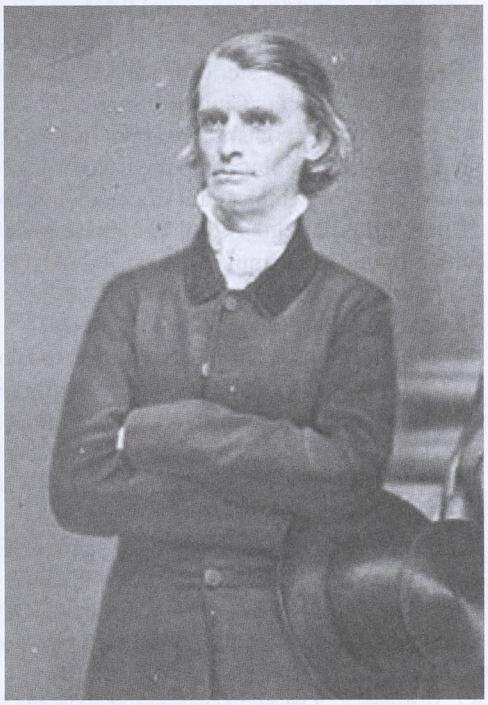

Figure 1. Gov. Henry A. Wise (Library of Congress)

Shortly after order was restored, rumors abounded as to plans for another raid or raids to continue his mission of insurrection, and to free Brown and the surviving prisoners. Drawing on a contemporary analogy, this event had a similar effect in Virginia as did the attacks of 11 September 2001 on America. Virginia Gov. Henry A. Wise (Figure 1) immediately called up the available militias and over the next month new militia units were being formed throughout Virginia. *[1]* One of these units, the Wythe Grays, from Wytheville, Virginia, was formed in November 1859 and saw duty in both Harpers Ferry and Charles Town, Virginia (now West Virginia). This paper examines the formation and history of the Wythe Grays who would later become part of the legendary "Stonewall Brigade."

In response to the crisis, a meeting was held on 22 November 1859 at the courthouse in Wytheville to organize a militia company for the possibility of duty at Harpers Ferry. *[2]* Prior to this there were several militia regiments which were a holdover from the old Beat or Common Militia that dated to the Federal Militia Act of 1792. *[3]* These included the 35th and 36th Regiments, which Maj. Joseph F. Kent (Figure 2) was a member of the 35th. *[4]* William H. Cook Esq. proposed the name "Wythe Rifle Guards" and this name was adapted. *[5]* Maj. Kent was elected as captain, with William Terry 1st lieutenant (Figure 3), and Joseph Hurt as 2nd lieutenant. *[6]*

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The uniform was of the style of other militia units of the day. *[7]* A gray single-breasted frock coat with 13 buttons bearing the seal of Virginia and trousers of either gray or light blue made up the uniform. To this was added a raised collar with gold braid and light blue on the cuffs, designating it an infantry unit. White crossed webbing met in the center with a breast plate and a white web belt for a cartridge box and bayonet completed the uniform (Figure 4). A tall Shako hat of the Mexican war era had a small black plume and the initials "W G" above the visor (Figure 5). *[8]*

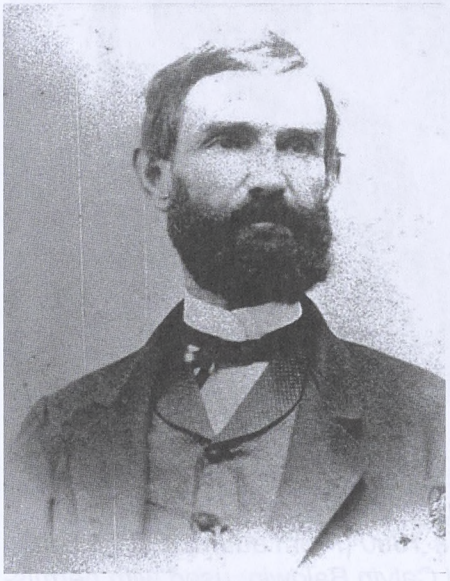


Figure 2. Joseph F. Kent (Courtesy W. Randolph Chitwood Photograph Collection, Kegley Room, Wytheville Community College Library; used with permission)

Shortly after organizing, 58 men would enlist; their ranks would grow to between 71 to 74 men and officers, depending upon the source. *[9]* All ranks of society were represented; at least seven lawyers and several physicians were in the company. *[10]* The youngest member was William Thomas Baldwin (Figure 4) who was less than a month from his 15th birthday. *[11]* Over the next week the new recruits were beginning to learn the rudiments of soldiering and drill. Much of the town's efforts were directed toward getting the men ready for duty. A second company of older men was organized, in case of a local attack, and was named the "Wythe Silver Grays." They would be commanded by Capt. Ben Rush Floyd. *[12]*

Only two men had uniforms and no one had weapons or cartridge boxes. On the day of John Brown's execution, 2 December 1859, the Grays were ordered to duty at Harpers Ferry and Charles Town. *[13]* They wired back to Richmond as to their needs for material and other items for their uniforms. These supplies arrived by train the next evening. For the next several days there was a flurry of sizing and sewing. Local tailors from the dry goods store of William and Robert Gibboney along with many of the women of the town worked many long hours making sure all of the men were uniformed. *[14]*

Figure 3. William Terry (Courtesy Mary B. Kegley Photograph Collection, Kegley Room, Wytheville Community College Library; used with permission)

Although Brown was now dead, four of his co-conspirators were scheduled to hang in the next few weeks. These included Edwin Coppoc and John Cook, both white, along with Shields Green and John Copeland, both black (Figures 6-9). Units were arriving on an almost daily basis to guard the prisoners and to defend the towns in case of another attack.

On 8 December, the Grays left home by train for Richmond on the first part of their journey to Harpers Ferry. *[15]* In Richmond they were received by Gov. Wise. First thanking them for their service, he also cautioned them to expect the hardships of a soldier's life. He further assured them that they would be well fed with beef, pork, cabbage and beans. Sgt. William H. Cook replied to the governor for the company. After meeting the governor, they were issued weapons, blankets and overcoats. *[16]* They departed Richmond by boat, sailing past Mount Vernon, Washington, D.C., and finally arriving to a warm reception at Harpers Ferry. *[17]* They were given a tour of the armory where the final assault took place by the Marines. *[18]* Afterwards, they were marched to their quar-

ters at St. John's Episcopal Church that sat on a hill overlooking Harpers Ferry. *[19]* It was about this time the "Wythe Rifle Guards" became the "Wythe Grays." Their commander was Col. Charles Stewart (or Stuart) and under the overall command of Gen. William B. Taliaferro. *[20]*

A detail was sent five miles north of the Potomac into Maryland and quartered in a log schoolhouse. William Baldwin was a part of this group. *[21]* The men were on edge as rumors of planned attacks ran through the camps. A number of the men wrote final letters to their loved ones to be delivered after their death in a pitched battle. Very few expected to see home again. *[22]* The men settled into a routine of drill and guard duty. One night one of the Grays named R.K. Sherer heard a rustling and following orders called "halt" several times. Receiving no answer, he fired at the sound. The noise of the gun awoke his comrades who quickly assembled for battle. It was then discovered that Sherer had fired into a flock of sheep. For this he received considerable ribbing from the men. *[23]*

Figure 4. William Thomas Baldwin, circa 1860 (From author's collection, and Calvin Baldwin; used with permission)

After several days they were reunited with the main body in Harpers Ferry. The following day they were marched 12 miles to Charles Town where they were convinced they would see a fight. When they arrived they were quartered in the Presbyterian Church; however, the rumors continued. *[24]* Their guards were strengthened. One night a man named Charles Neighbors shot a cow, causing much consternation to the men. On another night another member shot a hog, convinced it was a man crawling on his hands and knees. *[25]* Aside from these humorous episodes, the tension remained quite high among all of the men.

Figure 5. Leander Winton Cooper (Courtesy of the Mary B. Kegley Photograph Collection, Kegley Room, Wytheville Community College Library, and Carl Musser; used with permission)

On the evening of 15 December, the day before the execution of Coppoc, Cook, Green and Copeland, the guard was strengthened in anticipation of trouble. Coppoc and Cook managed to free themselves from their manacles and dig through the cell wall in an attempt to escape. Once outside they climbed up the scaffold and jumped over the outer wall (Figure 10). *[26]* A member of Bowen's Clarke Guards was walking his guard post when he heard a sound. Raising his rifle he fired in the direction of the sound, quickly alerting the rest of the guard. *[27]* Coppoc and Cook's very brief freedom ended with their recapture and they were put back into manacles and placed in a different cell. One of the Wythe Grays, named John W. Brown, was brought into the jail about 4:30 a.m. and observed Coppoc and Cook in a bed and Green and Copeland in bed on the floor; all four appeared to be sleeping soundly. *[28]*

Over the night six to eight inches of snow had fallen; cold greeted the troops as they assembled and marched toward their positions around the scaffold. The Wythe Grays were positioned to the left and rear of the structure. *[29]* After several hours' chilly wait in formation, Shields Green and John Copeland, the two black prisoners,

Figure 6. Edwin Coppoc
(Library of Congress)

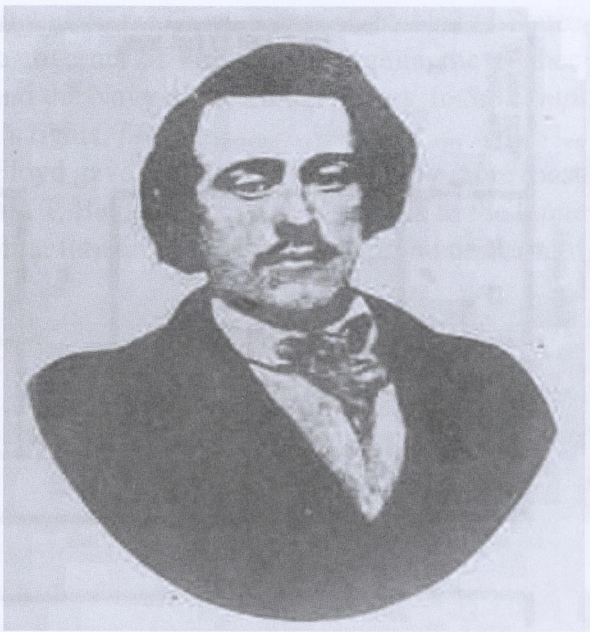


Figure 7. John Cook
(Library of Congress)

Figure 8. Shields Green
(Library of Congress)

Figure 9. John Copeland
(Library of Congress)

came out of the courthouse under guard and climbed up on a wagon and took their seats on their coffins. Under escort they were brought to the base of the scaffold and then ascended it unaided. Reaching the top their arms were pinioned, ankles tied together, and a noose and hoods placed over their heads. *[30]*

Sgt. William H. Cook of the Grays was in charge of the guard that day. He was on the scaffold to make sure everything was running according to plan. What he observed upset him as he had never witnessed a "fellow being die a violent death." Although he was tempted to detail someone else for this duty, Cook stayed at his post because "I thought of our women and children at home, and of what fate

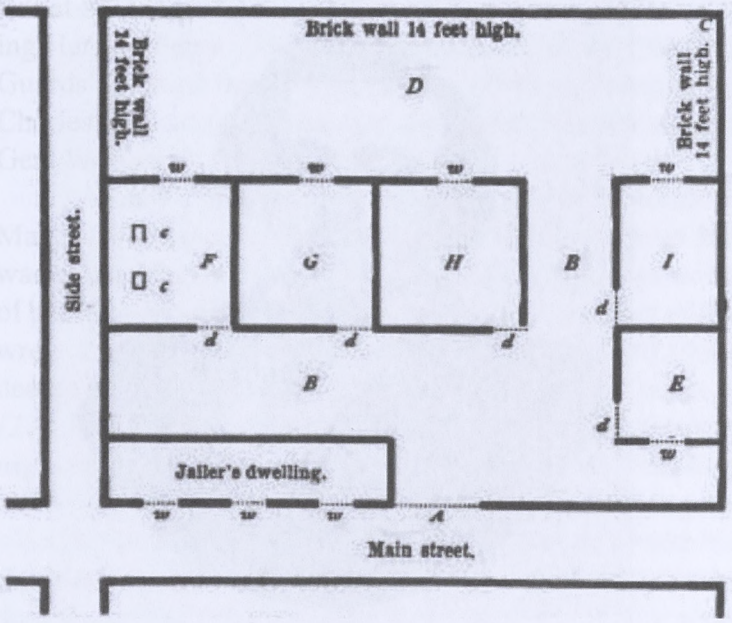


Figure 10. Charles Town Jail; Richard J. Hinton, "John Brown and His Men" (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1894), 342.

A: Main Entrance
B: Space between walls, Avis's house and the jail building
C: Point of wall (upper right) which Cook and Coppoc reached on the night of their attempt to escape
D: Jail yard; cell doors (ddddd)
E: Reception room
F: Cell occupied by Brown and Stevens (with cot outlines), afterwards by the latter and Hazlett
G: Cell of Green and Copeland
H: Cell of Coppoc and Cook
I: Cell first occupied by Albert Hazlett; windows (wwwww)

would have been had these fiends had succeeded in their plans, and I hardened my heart and saw them die the death their own evil deeds had brought upon them." *[31]*

Once everything was in place a signal was given and the sheriff cut the rope holding the platform with an ax and the two dropped with a loud crash. Green appeared to have died instantly, as there was little movement of his body. Copeland struggled for sometime before succumbing. After a period of time their bodies were cut down, examined by physician, then placed in their coffins, and returned to the courthouse. *[32]*

Between noon and 1 p.m. the scene was repeated with Edwin Coppoc and John Cook going to their deaths. Once this was completed, the troops were brought to attention and marched back to their posts. The two other prisoners, Albert Hazlett and Aaron Stevens, would face execution in March 1860. *[33]* Now that the crisis had passed, the units were receiving orders to return home. Several days after the four's execution, the Grays received their orders to return home. *[34]*

Departing Harpers Ferry by boat they spent a day and night in Washington, D.C., where they were reviewed and received at the White House by President James Buchanan and John Floyd, Secretary of War, and fellow Virginian. *[35]* After leaving Washington they travelled to Richmond where they were again received by Gov. Henry A. Wise. The governor thanked them for their "gallant and quick response to his call." After two days in Richmond they finally boarded a train for Wytheville. *[36]*

On the morning of 24 December 1859 the train pulled into the depot from where they departed 16 days before to a warm reception for the returning "heroes." *[37]* Several days before some of the citizens arranged for a dinner to be held in their honor. The proprietor of the Wytheville Hotel offered the use of their hall and would provide the food. A committee was formed to plan the event; it included Capt. Robert Gibboney, William A. Stuart, Col. Robert Sayers Jr., Dr. James Gibboney and S.S. Crockett. *[38]*

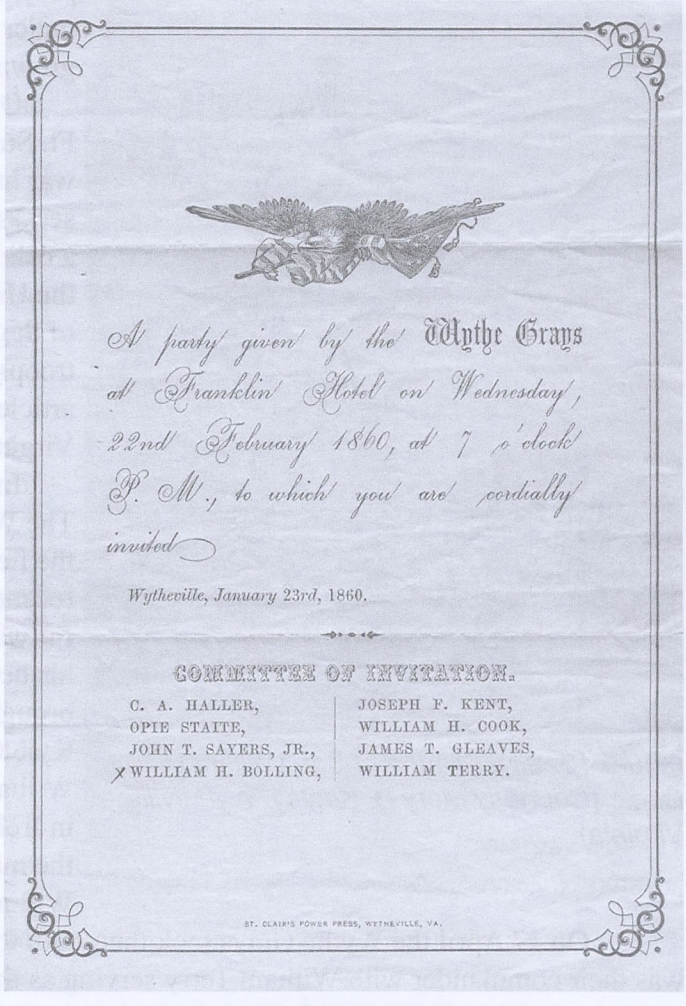
At 8 p.m. the Wythe Grays assembled at the courthouse along with officers of the occasion, invited guests and citizens. The company was assembled and brought to attention then were marched to the Wytheville Hotel. They were dismissed to the dinner that awaited them. No expense was spared as the meal included beef, mutton, pork roast, turkey, chicken, ham, oysters, potatoes in various forms, vegetables, breads, sweets and plenty of libations. *[39]*

A series of toasts were offered to George Washington, to the Constitution of the United States, to the president of the United States and his cabinet, to the governor of Virginia, to Virginia, the mother of all states, to the flag of the United States, to the Army and the Navy of the United States, to *Sic Semper Tyrranis* (the motto of Virginia), to women and women's rights. *[40]*

Once the toasts were finished, Capt. Ben Rush Floyd gave the address followed by more toasts to the returning company. *[41]* Afterward, young William T. Baldwin made his way back to the home of his uncle William Gibboney where he lived. For the first time in days he took his proud uniform off, sleeping soundly for hours.

The Wythe Grays continued to meet and train. On 22 February 1860 a ball was held at the Franklin Hotel for the Grays and their guests (Figure 11). *[42]* 1st Sgt. Charles A. Haller returned home from Richmond about the first part of April with the men's pay for their services from the State of Virginia. Capt. Kent received $85.67, 1st Lt. Terry $73.33, 2nd Lt. Hunt $69.00, 1st Sgt. $61.67, 2nd, 3rd and 4th sergeants $52.57 each, corporals $40.67 each, and privates $34.67. *[43]*

Sgt. William H. Cook, who had been on the scaffold for the execution, was horrified by what he had seen at Charles Town. The scene was "so terrible" it left him haunted by memories "so dark." *[44]* Cook decided that he would not touch any of the money he was paid for his service. With the money he purchased a silver flagon and cups with an inscription of how they were purchased (Figure 12). It is inscribed, "Bought with my pay for services at Charlestown [Charles Town], Virginia, December 1859, William H. Cook, Wythe County, Virginia." *[45]*


A party given by the Wythe Grays at Franklin Hotel on Wednesday, 22nd February 1860, at 7 o'clock P. M., to which you are cordially invited

Wytheville, January 23rd, 1860.

COMMITTEE OF INVITATION.

C. A. HALLER, JOSEPH F. KENT,
OPIE STAITE, WILLIAM H. COOK,
JOHN T. SAYERS, JR., JAMES T. GLEAVES,
✗WILLIAM H. BOLLING, WILLIAM TERRY.

ST. CLAIR'S POWER PRESS, WYTHEVILLE, VA.

Figure 11. An invitation to a party for the Wythe Grays for 22 February 1860. (Edith Bolling Birthplace Foundation, Wytheville, Virginia, courtesy Bev Repass-Hoch)

In the aftermath of John Brown's Raid and execution, the sectional tensions between North and South only worsened. Some members of the United States Congress were armed and threats of violence permeated their halls. *[46]* The Wythe Grays and other units continued to train for a war that appeared to be looming. Local patrols were sent out in case of a surprise invasion. The election of 1860 saw four men vying for the White House and to chart the nation through a perilous period. Republican Abraham Lincoln did not favor abolition, but did support no further expansion of slavery. Democrat Stephen Douglas favored things as they were. John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky and the current vice president felt he best represented the interests of the South, and John Bell hoped to be the compromise candidate. Even before the election, several states threatened to secede if Lincoln was elected.

With Lincoln's election South Carolina made good on its threat, seceding in December 1860. She was followed by Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, North Carolina, Arkan-

sas and Texas over the next few months forming the new Confederate States of America. The border states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland and Delaware were still in doubt as to which direction they would go. Virginia remained divided as to her intentions. From the Shenandoah Valley east, secession was favored while west of the Valley to the Ohio River the sentiment favored staying in the Union.

On 14 January 1861, the Wythe Grays were given permission to use the Chancery Hall in the courthouse for drill and weapons storage. *[47]* The court ordered that $4,000 be allocated for weapons for military use. Joseph Kent, William H. Cook and John C. Graham were appointed to purchase them. *[48]* Bonds to pay for these were issued by the Clerk under seal of the court. The ranks of the Grays were growing. *[49]*

Figure 12. Silver flagon of Sgt. William H. Cook. (Courtesy Mary B. Kegley, Wytheville, Virginia)

On 12 April 1861, the Confederate forces fired on Ft. Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, harbor. The war had begun. Virginia continued to be divided on secession. Several days later President Lincoln issued a call to the remaining states to muster 75,000 men for the Union. *[50]* Gov. John Letcher of Virginia and many of the legislators were offended at being asked to raise troops to attack fellow southerners. They quickly passed articles of secession to be submitted for a popular vote; Virginia would join the Confederacy.

In Wytheville the news electrified the populace. The Wythe Grays were ready on short notice to take the field. William T. Baldwin, now 16 years old, had recently been promoted to corporal. *[51]* As he packed for war, William took a family sword and placed it in his belt, hoping to do its memory honor. The sword was brought from Ireland by his grandmother, Margaret Kyle Gibboney. She had inherited it from her father, Sir William Emmet Kyle, who was knighted for his service in Ireland by King George III. It had been placed over the mantle in the home of her son, William Gibboney. William Baldwin lived with him. *[52]*

On 17 April the Wythe Grays took their oath to Virginia and the Confederacy. *[53]* Capt. Kent was their commander with William Terry serving as the 1st lieutenant. Kent would soon be promoted to major on 11 May 1861. *[54]* Terry would be promoted to captain and assume command of the Grays on 13 May 1861. *[55]* They arrived in Richmond on 25 April to become one of the first Virginia Regiments mustered. *[56]* As 10 companies would arrive, they were designated as a regiment and given their number. The Wythe Grays became Company A of the 4th Virginia Infantry. The Fort Lewis Volunteers from Montgomery County would become Company B; the Pulaski Guards from Pulaski County, Company C; the Smyth Blues from Smyth County, Company D; the Montgomery Highlanders from Montgomery County, Company E; the Grayson Dare Devils from Grayson County, Company F; the Montgomery Fencibles from Montgomery County, Company G; the Rockbridge Grays from Rockbridge County, Company H; the Liberty Hall Volunteers from Rockbridge, Company I; and the Rockbridge Rifles from Rockbridge County. *[57]* The events at Harpers Ferry in 1859 had established some experienced militia units in Virginia and so a large and semi-experienced force was ready early in the war.

While in Richmond they were housed at the Hermitage Training Grounds which had previously been the fairgrounds. *[58]* The men were drilled five to six times a day with a late afternoon parade each

day. Cadets from VMI served as drillmasters. *[59]* Soon the toll of drill and duty took its effects on the men, their equipment and clothing. Their smart uniforms would soon be threadbare. Food consisted of tough beef, hard bread and sometimes bacon. The perceived glory of soldiering was now meeting the hard realities of camp life. However, this was just the beginning of the harsh course they would face over the next four years.

On 10 May they were transferred to Alexandria, Virginia, and then to Harpers Ferry to join other regiments to be part of a new brigade. *[60]* Although they initially left in clean train cars, the last part of the journey by rail was in hog cars. *[61]* They marched the last 18 miles in hot and humid weather. *[62]* At Harpers Ferry they joined other regiments to form the 1st Virginia Brigade, commanded by a former artillery instructor from Virginia Military Institute, Col. Thomas J. Jackson. Besides the 4th, the Brigade consisted of the 2nd Virginia, the 5th Virginia, the 27th Virginia, and later, the 33rd Virginia. Most of the members of the regiments hailed from the Shenandoah Valley. As a professional soldier, Jackson generally looked down on the ill-trained militia units. *[63]* Serving under Jackson gave them a further rigid introduction to military life. On 23 May 1861 Virginians voted on the proposition of secession; it passed by an overwhelming majority. *[64]* In Wythe County, the measure passed by a vote of 1,168 to 1 in favor of secession. *[65]*

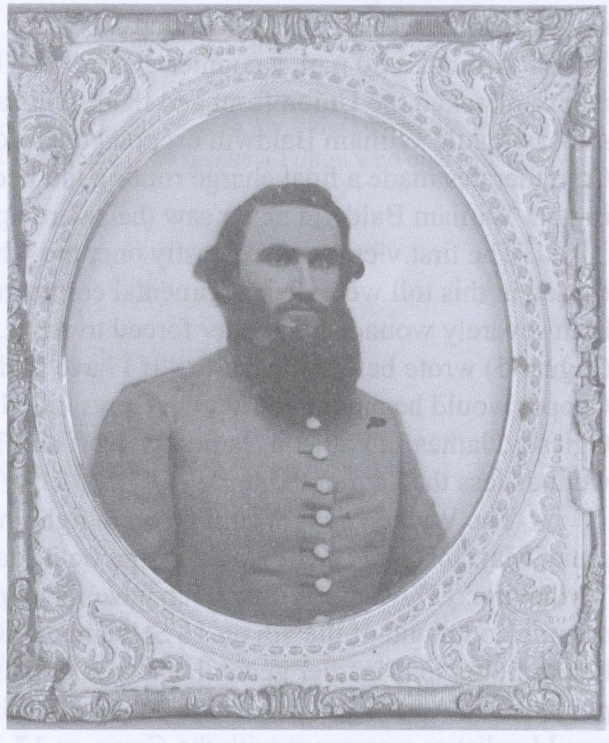


Figure 13. William H. Bolling (Courtesy Bev Repass-Hoch Collection, Wytheville, Virginia)

Hours were spent in drill, battle preparations, maneuvers and inspection all under the watchful eyes of Jackson and his VMI drillmasters. Their schedule consisted of Reveille at 5 a.m.; Squad Drill at 5:30 a.m.; 6 a.m. Sick Call and Breakfast; 7 a.m. First Guard Mount; 7:30 a.m. Guard Mount; 8 a.m. Squad Drill; 10:30 a.m. Camp Drill; 1 p.m. Dinner; 3 p.m. Camp Drill; and at 6 p.m. Dress Parade. *[66]* Food was meager at best; soon shortages of clothing and other items arose. The men had few tents and had to fend for themselves in bad weather. Disease began to be a major enemy. Soon pneumonia, dysentery, typhoid fever, measles and other illnesses took their toll. *[67]*

Col. Jackson realized that Harpers Ferry was almost impossible to hold in case of an attack. He asked Gen. Joseph Johnston for permission to move deeper into Virginia and to a more defensible location. Shortly afterwards, the brigade was moved to near Winchester, Virginia, to continue their training and preparation. On 1 July, the 4th received its official recognition and acceptance into the service of the Confederacy. *[68]* On 15 July, the 1st Brigade received its official recognition by the Confederacy. *[69]* By now Jackson had turned these regiments into a toughened force ready for battle.

Word came to move eastward toward the Blue Ridge Mountains on 18 July. Soon the columns would be on a hot and dusty road with no idea what would come next. The Northern Army had begun to advance south of Washington in an attempt to secure the rail junction at Manassas. Confederate Gen. Joseph Johnston commanded the Valley forces and they made a forced march to aid the small force at Manassas. With little sleep Jackson's regiments boarded trains at Piedmont arriving on the afternoon of 20 July. *[70]*

On the following morning the Brigade formed up at 4:30 a.m. taking their place behind Henry House Hill. The 2nd, 33rd and 5th were in front while the 4th and 27th were in reserve. *[71]* Later in the morning on Mathews Hill, in front of Henry House Hill, the Confederate lines began to collapse with the overwhelming Union attack. Some Confederate units were attired in blue while at least one Union unit wore gray. *[72]* This led to considerable confusions as to who were friends and who were the enemy. The 1st Brigade now took its place with the 4th in the center of Jackson's line. Cpl. William Baldwin drew his family sword in preparation. Facing the Virginians were two batteries of Union cannons of five and six artillery pieces, respectively. A back and forth pitched battle commenced with the guns being captured, freed and recaptured several times. Gen. Bernard Bee, upon seeing the brigade hold its ground remarked famously, "There stands Jackson like a stone wall, rally behind the Virginians." Shortly after saying this, he was mortally wounded.

Around 3:30 p.m. a counter-charge with bayonet, led by the 4th and the 27th and other fresh regiments, attacked the Union front and flank. This attack led to the collapse of the Federal line. During the see-saw battle William Baldwin dropped the sword and had no time to retrieve it. Sensing victory, the Confederates made a final charge routing the Federal forces that soon clogged the roads back to Washington. William Baldwin never saw the sword again. *[73]*

The first victory was a costly one; the 4th Virginia sustained 31 dead and 100 wounded. *[74]* Included in this toll were their regimental commander Col. James F. Preston and Lt. Col. Lewis T. Moore, both severely wounded and later forced to retire. Former medical student Leander Winton Cooper (Figure 5) wrote before the battle, "If I have to die I will try and sell my life as dearly as possible." *[75]* Cooper would be among the Wythe Grays killed at Manassas. Grays also killed included: Nicholas D. Oglesby, James L. Pattison, James M. Neff and Thomas J. Kavenaugh. Samuel Crockett would die of his wounds less than a month later. *[76]*

The Wythe Grays would go on to fight in 53 more engagements for the Army of Northern Virginia. Maj. Joseph F. Kent would resign on 31 January 1862 to take command of the Home Guard in Wytheville. *[77]* Capt. William Terry would be promoted to major on 22 April 1861 and later he would assume command of the 4th on 11 September 1863 with the rank of colonel. On 5 May 1864 he would be promoted to brigadier general and would be the final commander of the Stonewall Brigade up to Appomattox in April 1865. He would survive despite multiple serious wounds. *[78]* Sgt. William H. Cook would enlist as a sergeant with the Grays on 17 April 1861, but would be promoted as a captain in the 51st Virginia 19 July 1861. *[79]*

William T. Baldwin would be promoted to sergeant on 17 April 1862 and was transferred to the 51st Virginia in July 1862. *[80]* He would subsequently become a part of the newly formed 23rd Virginia Battalion. *[81]* In September 1863 he would be promoted to captain only to be captured in November 1863 and taken to Camp Chase, Ohio. *[82]*

While being transferred to Ft. Delaware in March of 1864, Baldwin with two of his compatriots from the Wythe Grays, Edwin C. Haller and Wallace Sehorn (who would join Company A on 11 March 1862), would escape in Gallipolis, Ohio, and eventually make their way back to Virginia in June 1864 to rejoin the army. *[83]* Capt. Baldwin would go on to serve on the staff of Gen. John C. Breckenridge, later on the staff of his cousin, Gen. John McCausland, and helped raise a company of home guard before the war ended. *[84]*

By April 1865 only four men of that company would be present to surrender. *[85]* Losses from deaths in battle, disease, capture, desertions and transfers had left the gallant company barely a hollow shell of itself. From their humble beginnings at Harpers Ferry and Charles Town in 1859, the Wythe Grays would become a legendary unit in the Army of Northern Virginia.

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Confederate, Union sisters deplore war

by Mary B. Kegley

Four McKee sisters, two in Wythe County, and two in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, communicated back and forth with hundreds of letters over an extended period (1836-1880s). During the Civil War they found themselves on opposite sides and living with restrictions and wartime regulations. Letters were intermittent and rarely ever mentioned the war. Philosophy and God's will were the predominant themes early in the war. In the later years the problem was getting mail from North to South or South to North to members of their family.

Jane McKee was married to Gordon Cloyd Kent, a wealthy Wythe County widower, in 1850, and her sister Mary was married in 1854 to Dr. Robert Crockett, a local Wythe County physician, also a widower. *[1]* In each case the sisters had known many of the Kents and Crocketts during their residence in the county seat when they were called upon to look after their invalid unmarried uncle, Adam McKee, beginning in 1836. Following his death in 1842, they remained in the area, having inherited his mercantile establishment on the main street of Wytheville. *[2]*

One of the sisters in Pennsylvania, Eliza McKee, never married but wrote regularly and received letters from Jane and Mary and occasionally visited Wythe County. The fourth sister, Nancy, was married to William Scott and had an extended family often mentioned in the letters and through the consideration and thoughtfulness of her descendants preserved more than 1,000 letters, many of them from Wythe County. *[3]*

Over the years Jane and Mary made arrangements to be accompanied to Pennsylvania to visit family, and to the Hot, Warm and Sulphur springs in Virginia. They traveled by steamboat and stage coach, but always chaperoned or accompanied by other persons, usually male members of the family or community. When the rail line was completed from Lynchburg to Bristol they vacationed in New York City, in Albany, Buffalo and Niagara and also visited such cities as Washington, Pittsburgh, Lynchburg and Richmond. *[4]*

In 1850 before the war began, Gordon Kent had 50 Negro slaves, owned 2,600 acres of the finest land in the county, raised crops and animals and was considered a successful farmer. His land was along Reed Creek, between Max Meadows and Wytheville. *[5]* The slaves were often mentioned in Jane's letters, telling of their progress in housekeeping, or of caring for her young son, Joe. She reported the birth of Noah's child named after his deceased master, Adam McKee, and later reported Noah's death. When they were visiting in Pennsylvania it was advised that they would not discuss slavery as it might upset Gordon Kent. Jane remarked that it was often the master who lost sleep regarding his slaves. *[6]*

As early as April 2, 1861, *[7]* Mary Crockett wrote to her sister Eliza who was visiting their brother, George, in Youngstown, Ohio, making some comments on the subject of politics. She reported "[we are] quite calm here ... Our household is almost unanimous for the Union; the Dr. (Dr. Robert Crockett, her husband) is strong and I do hope the Lord will over rule all for good and above all, that our hands may not be steeped in each other's blood." She added that Virginia's "noblest men are now

Mary B. Kegley of Wytheville, author of more than 50 books, located these letters in Beaver Area Heritage Museum in Beaver, Pa. She is working on a book about the collection.

in Richmond in Convention and some of the grandest efforts are there made to save the Union." Crockett represented Wythe County in the General Assembly in the 1860s. *[8]*

A few days later she wrote again *[9]* to sister Eliza giving additional information. The Doctor's strong Union principles "have made his numerous friends anxious for him to become a candidate" for Congress or the State Legislature. The convention "opposed secession two to one" and she added, "if the administration would just appreciate the effort of Virginia, I think Civil War might be avoided."

She continued her correspondence on May 21, 1861, *[10]* writing this time to her sister Nancy Scott in Beaver, Pennsylvania. She again noted that "in this sector all are for Union." Her husband had "battled for this in all the conventions and he has been sent by his party to most of them and his feelings have been & are still so deeply interested that it causes him many a sleepless hour."

Mary had deep concern for the country exclaiming, "What is to become of our beloved land prosperous and blessed." Again, she called on the Lord to "look upon us and avert the threatened evil." She knew that if engaged in an "evil war" brother and kindred would be "engaged against each other in bloody conflict. There are extremists at the North and in the South."

About the same time Jane Kent also wrote to her sister Nancy Scott, giving an extensive description of slavery on the Kent plantation in Wythe County and her views of slavery in general. *[11]* On this day she was sitting alone with no other white person in the house except her 10-year-old son, Joe. Her husband, Gordon, was in town. The overseer was two or three miles away, and there were "upwards of fifty Negroes on the plantation." Some were about the house, others at their homes and in various places. As for neighbors, none of them lived nearer than a mile and all have about the same number. She and her son often stayed at night "with none but the black ones. Always some of them stay in the house with us & should anything happen Uncle Ned or some of the boys who stay near the house would be the first we would go to. Such a thought or feeling of fear of them has never entered my mind. In no instance have I ever known them to perpetrate of their own accord a wicked or malicious deed. In almost every instance it is at the instigation or through the mediation of some wicked white person."

She went on to explain that they are not "closely confined" and have "free intercourse with each other for miles around and sometimes make visits of hundreds of miles to some of their friends by railroad or other conveyance. They are as a class faithful and true." She mentioned "traveling abolitionists ... inciting them to murder, rob, burn & run away." She classified them as "fanatics who think they are doing God's service by putting a torch to your dwelling or a knife to your throat. This is a shrieking horde that New England is now sending down to invade and murder us."

Among her other remarks, she thought that some of those up North "believe and educate their children to believe that slave holders are monsters and that it is a system of cruelties & oppression from beginning to end. They pick out the worst features of it & instances of the greatest cruelties forgetting the thousands of instances of kindness & affection which are daily manifested in these relationships." She specifically recognized that "in their sickness & affliction we are as one family. We are with them by day & oft-times by night. We afford them all the means in our power to comfort them both temporally and spiritually & often administer to them with our own hands when there is no necessity only that we feel like it & it may be a comfort to them. We are with those who smooth their dying pillow & see their last breath & many many genuine tears of heartfelt sorrow are shed over their graves. Few in such case are so mercenary as merely to regret their pecuniary loss."

Jane also reported that Joseph Kent was at Harpers Ferry, as an officer. And 14 of Gordon's nephews and two of Dr. Robert Crockett's sons were also in the service. There were "something like twenty thousand troops" that had passed along the railroad just a short distance from her home. She knew that these things involved the lives and "happiness of all who are near & dear to me in both sections."

Nannie McKee, age about 10 or 11, had been living with the Crocketts for several years and was going to school in Wytheville. She was a niece of Mary and Jane and the daughter of their brother George and his wife, Mary. She wrote to her parents who lived in Ohio on February 8, 1862, *[12]* telling them she was well and happy and inquiring about her siblings. She enclosed "five cents to pay United States postage." Following the receipt of the letter from her daughter, the mother, Mary, wrote to her sister-in-law Nancy Scott and sent Nannie's letter as an enclosure.

The mother explained that "all letters must come and go unsealed and be read at different points." Nannie's letter was mailed in Wytheville, but after that was at "old Point Comfort, where I suppose it was read and the Confederate stamp taken off and the United States stamp put on." She lamented that Nannie could not come home and how she worried about not hearing from her for such a long time. She was "denied the privilege of either hearing from or writing to her."

On November 24, 1863, *[13]* a letter between sisters of Pennsylvania, Mary and Maria Scott, also explained how communication had continued in spite of wartime regulations. Mary Crockett's letter written in Wytheville to her cousin Samuel Rea in Pittsburgh was actually mailed in Gettysburg and sent through by a Mrs. Roedel, "the minister's wife at Wythe," who was visiting her parents who were very sick. She offered to carry any letter "if she could get it through" and if she could not she promised to "deliver the contents verbally."

The Rev. William Roedel (1829-1865) from Lebanon, Pennsylvania, was ordained in 1850 and served as pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church and as principal of the Wytheville Female College, beginning in 1856. He was highly praised for his many talents but his life ended abruptly when he was accidentally shot by his brother-in-law, David Forney, while on a hunting trip. He was buried at St. John's Cemetery where his stone was erected by Forney. *[14]*

In their sickness & affliction we are as one family. We are with them by day & oft-times by night. We afford them all the means in our power to comfort them both temporally and spiritually & often administer to them with our own hands when there is no necessity only that we feel like it & it may be a comfort to them. We are with those who smooth their dying pillow & see their last breath & many many genuine tears of heartfelt sorrow are shed over their graves. Few in such case are so mercenary as merely to regret their pecuniary loss.

Eliza McKee had visited with Mrs. Roedel and wrote in December 1863 *[15]* to her sister Nancy Scott about her visit when she gave new insight into the feelings of those both North and South. She also added information about the care of prisoners in the aftermath of the Battle of Wytheville which took place in July 1863.

Mrs. Roedel was planning to visit her mother who was ill. Her husband had accompanied her as far as Woodstock, Virginia, and from there came to the lines of the enemy at Martinsburg. There she was met by her brother who brought her the sad news that her mother had "been removed by Death five weeks before." Mrs. Roedel proceeded to Gettysburg to visit with her father.

Eliza also had to report the death of Joseph Crockett, a surgeon and son of Dr. Robert Crockett, of Wytheville, who was killed at Cold Harbor. His body was brought home for burial. She added that Dr. Crockett was a "Union man for a long time and voted against Secession in the Charleston Convention." She thought some of the people "are very uncharitable in not allowing the Southern people to be influenced by the things that surround them just as we are here." She knew this made the two Sections "view things differently."

Two of Eliza's letters had reached Mary Crockett under "a flag of truce" and Mrs. Roedel reported that "she wept for joy to just hear that we were in the land of the living. None but those who feel and love their relatives can realize the sad separation from them."

Mary Crockett had one wounded man carried into their house after the raid on Wytheville and Mrs. Roedel, two. Dr. Crockett dressed their wounds and nursed them for 10 days when they were taken to Richmond. Two of them were from Brownsville, Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Up North they often heard of the cruel treatment of the wounded and sick prisoners and the people believed it.

On March 30, 1864, *[16]* Josephine Roedel, then in Baltimore, wrote to Eliza McKee offering another opportunity to communicate with the Wythe County sisters as she expected to get a pass from the Secretary of War and travel south within a week. She had not heard from anyone at home since December. She closed her letter "Oh that this cruel war was over."

On June 5, 1864, *[17]* Mrs. Roedel was still in Baltimore. Her brother (brother-in-law?) notified Eliza that it was likely that she would remain there until "Grant opens the way for her." She had a pass "but they will not let her through the lines." She had heard from Mr. Roedel several times and he was begging her to come home. The letters also came under a "flag of truce." She was considering going home by way of "New Burn if our boats would take her, but I presume as long as Butler is operating in that direction she will not get down."

Gordon and Jane Kent were mentioned in a Confederate diary on May 12, 1864, a few days after the Battle of the Cove in Wythe County. Col. Alston, 2nd Brigade, under Col. Giltner, proceeded from Wythe to Max Meadows, "traveling on this nice turnpike." The Confederate army established their headquarters in Max Meadows, not far from the Kent home. "The Col., Staff, Couriers, Jenkin's squad under Schoolfield and everybody was invited to a big dinner at Mr. Gordon Kent's." His wife (noted as being from Pennsylvania) "dispensed the magnificent hospitality of the mansion and table. I have not seen such a dinner for many a weary, hungry day." *[18]*

Almost a year later, a nephew, Robert McKee, of Alexandria, Virginia, wrote to Eliza in Beaver, Pennsylvania, on April 27, 1865, *[19]* suggesting that Jane and Mary in Wythe County must have had a hard time as it was reported that "General Stoneman had a battle at Max Meadows." He felt sure Gordon Kent had "his share of destruction." As so often happened, reports were exaggerated and there was no battle at Max Meadows, but in December 1864, on the so-called Stoneman's Raid his men destroyed the depot at Max Meadows and a railroad bridge between Wytheville and Max Meadows. *[20]*

Robert reported that no pass was required to go to Richmond or Petersburg but as late as July 8, 1865, the mail was not yet open to Wytheville, even though the war was over. Eliza McKee reported at this time that she had received a letter from her sister, Mary Crockett, and it was carried by Mr. Roedel.

[21] The letter came to Eliza by way of Baltimore and Roedel promised to deliver any they might wish to send from Pennsylvania.

This glimpse of politics, religion and home life during the war was openly recorded in these few family letters. The 1860s meant physical separation and great concern about the welfare of each member of the McKee family when mail was restricted and travel limited. Through the kindness of the Roedels, with their Pennsylvania connections, a few letters were passed back and forth between Virginia and Pennsylvania. But as one of them stated, "none but those who feel and love their relatives can realize the sad separation from them."

Jane Kent had specific views regarding slavery with "upwards of fifty" on the premises. She gave an unusual personal account of her feelings. Mary Crockett revealed that her husband was a "Union man." For wealthy women who had traveled extensively before the war, their lives were restricted to home during those years. When the war was over, the McKee women resumed their travels to Pennsylvania and to the springs of Virginia and continued to connect with family members with their many letters.

NOTES

1. Wythe County marriage records show Jane married Gordon Kent on April 9, 1850 and Mary married Robert Crockett on July 10, 1854.
2. For a sketch of Adam McKee, see Mary B. Kegley, "Early Adventurers in the Town of Evansham," (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Books, 1998), 227-232.
3. The Scott Family Collection is held by the Beaver Area Heritage Museum, Beaver, Pennsylvania.
4. Dozens of letters between the parties were written before the war. It is from this group that their extensive travels were documented.
5. On one of her visits to the Kents, Eliza McKee described in detail the plantation and its activities. Letter, April 19, 1853 (#2007.20.85s). For further information about the Kents, see Mary B. Kegley, "Early Adventurers on the Western Waters," Vol. 3, Part 2 (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Books, 1995), 686 - 695.
6. Many of Jane's early letters mention slaves by name.
7. #2007.02.860b.
8. For more information about Dr. Robert Crockett, see Mary B. Kegley, "Early Adventurers in the Town of Evansham," (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Books, 1998), 98-102.
9. Letter #2007.02.86cf.
10. Letter #2007.02.88.ele2.
11. Letter, May 21, 1861 (#3).
12. Letter #5 and #6.
13. Letter #2007.02.88cl.
14. F.B. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley, "St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wythe County, Virginia, Its Pastors and Their Records, 1800-1924," (Wytheville, VA: privately printed, 1961),69-70.
15. Letter #169.
16. Letter #19.
17. Letter #200.
18. William C. Davis and Meredith L. Swentor, eds., "Bluegrass Confederate, The Headquarters Diary of Edward O. Guerrant," (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 437.
19. Letter #2007.02.89bk.
20. Mary B. Kegley, "Wythe County Bicentennial History," (Wytheville, VA: Board of Supervisors, 1989), 200.
21. Letter #2007.02.90a.

Union officer, future president, forced to retreat in Giles

by George A. "Al" McLean

By spring of 1862, Union troops occupied almost all of what is now West Virginia. The Northerners were as far south as Raleigh Courthouse (now Beckley, West Virginia), placing them within striking distance of the vital Virginia and Tennessee Railroad.

Stationed at Raleigh Courthouse was the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry, commanded by future president Rutherford B. Hayes. Among the men of the 23rd was commissary sergeant William B. McKinley. The 23rd Ohio was one of the most remarkable regiments of the war. Although the regiment had an honorable war record, its fame came from the accomplishments of its men after the war. In addition to two future presidents, the regiment would produce six generals, an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, a United States senator, two governors, two lieutenant governors and four congressmen.

In late April, Hayes and his men had marched south to the Flat Top Mountain area. Hayes ordered one company forward to capture Capt. Richard Foley, the leader of a Southern militia group known as the Flat Top Copperheads. The company was ambushed in an area known as Clark's Hollow. Six miles away, Hayes heard the fighting and rushed his regiment to the rescue. The Confederates were dispersed and the aggressive Hayes pursued them to the town of Princeton (now West Virginia). When they arrived at Princeton, the Northerners found the town engulfed in flames. Confederate area commander Col. Walter Jenifer had ordered a general retreat and the town burned.

Soon after arriving in Princeton, Hayes began to receive excellent intelligence from contrabands (escaped slaves) that the retreating Confederates had abandoned an area of Giles County, Virginia, known as the Narrows. There two mountains fall precipitously on both sides of the New River creating a narrow defile and an excellent defensive position.

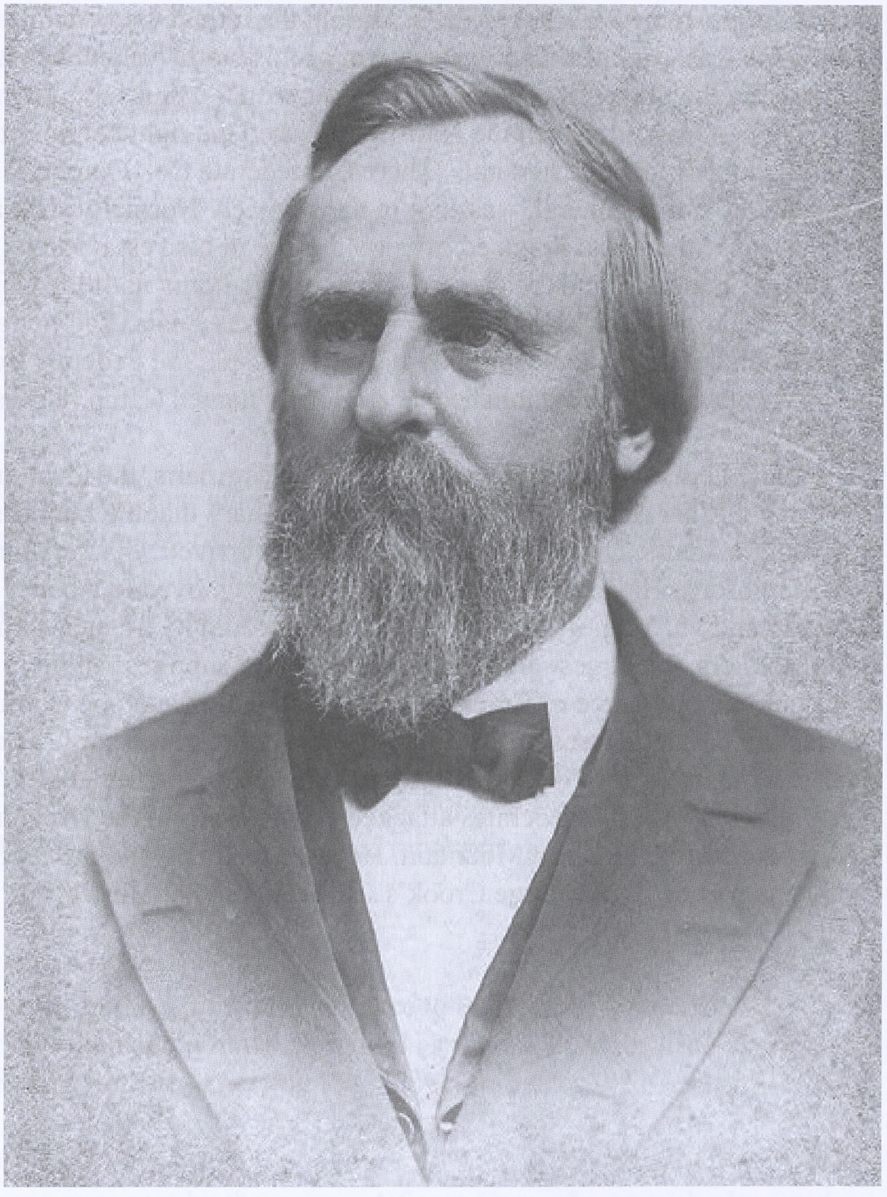
Almost immediately, Hayes began to bombard his commander, Col. Eliakim Scammon, with pleas for permission to move south into Giles County. The fussy Col. Scammon was slow to give Hayes permission to move. Probably without permission, on May 6, Hayes ordered Maj. James Comly to take three companies and a detachment of cavalry into Giles County to capture the Narrows and if possible the county seat of Pearisburg (often called Giles Court House). Comly and his men had marched through the undefended Narrows to Pearisburg and surprised a small number of Confederates who were trying to remove a large amount of supplies stored at the Presbyterian Church that had been left behind by retreating Southerners. The next day Hayes and the rest of the regiment marched to Pearisburg.

The Confederates were well aware that the enemy was now within 20 miles of the railroad. Gen. Henry Heth, commander of the area's Southern forces, was desperately trying to cobble together an army to stop the Federals. After the retreat from Princeton, the 45th Virginia Infantry was located at Shannons about 11 miles south of Pearisburg. Gen. Heth left his headquarters in Lewisburg (now West

George A. "Al" McLean, a board member of the Historical Society of Western Virginia, is the author of "A Skirmish at Pearisburg" and a Giles County native.

Virginia) for Shannons, bringing with him the 22nd Virginia Infantry and three artillery batteries. Heth also gathered another artillery battery, some militiamen and parts of the 36th Virginia Infantry commanded by Gen. John McCausland. There is no accurate figure of the number of Confederates at the battle but it was probably 2,000 men with five artillery pieces.

Hayes and several of his men became enamored with the natural beauty of Giles County. Hayes found "Giles Court House a neat pretty village with a most magnificent surrounding country." He also found the local citizens to be "polite and educated seecesh people." For the Federals occupying Pearisburg the captured commissary supplies were a bonanza, leading one soldier to write that the occupation was "the biggest picnic we have had since enlistment."



Rutherford B. Hayes

The townspeople enjoyed listening to the regimental band and when the band played Dixie the locals would "wave aprons and kerchiefs" out their window. Across from the Presbyterian Church was the elegant brick home of Dr. Harvey Johnston and his nearby medical office. Tradition holds that Hayes set up his headquarters in the doctor's office. The Johnston home and medical office are now part of the Giles County Historical Museum complex.

Hayes soon realized that the Confederates gathering at Shannons far outnumbered the Federals, and had artillery while Hayes had none. Hayes began to send to his commander Col. Scammon desperate requests for reinforcements. When none came, Hayes would write "Shameful! Who is to blame?" What Hayes did not know was Stonewall Jackson had brought his Valley Campaign to western Virginia and on May 8, he defeated Federals at McDowell (present Highland County). The defeat caused a Union panic and Hayes' superiors were ordered to halt all advances. Hayes was left stranded in Giles without reinforcements.

A day later on May 9, Gen. Heth began his attack at 10 o'clock at night. Confederates marched all night until they met Union pickets three miles south of Pearisburg at about 4 o'clock in the morning.

The attack did not begin until after sunrise and by that time the Federals had set up a defensive line on a ridge south of the town. The Confederates opened with their artillery and began a charge screaming the rebel yell.

Hayes only had 600 men and no artillery. Since it was obvious that the Federals would be outflanked, Hayes began a retreat to the Narrows. The Union soldiers and the pursuing Confederates came down Main Street marching through the town on the "double quick." Unable to take the commissary supplies, Federals set fire to the Presbyterian Church. The church and its contents were saved by the local ladies forming a bucket brigade. During the retreat the Federals would form firing lines attempting to slow the Confederates. The reenactment of this battle (scheduled for June 10, 2012) was held along a road used in the retreat.

When Hayes reached the Narrows, he used the tight confines to prevent Confederates from forming a line longer than the Federals. There Confederate Col. George S. Patton, grandfather and namesake of the World War II general, was shot in the stomach. Normally such a wound was fatal, but Patton was saved because the bullet bounced off a gold piece in his vest pocket.

The Federals held the Confederates for two hours until the Confederates carried two mountain howitzers across the river on bateaux — long narrow boats used to transport goods on the river. As soon as the Confederates began firing into the enemy flank, the Federals were again forced to retreat. Heth halted the attack and he established a camp aptly named Camp Success, where Wolf Creek flows into New River.

The Federals retreated to an area known as Adairs, the location of Bell Point, the home of 17-year-old Ellen Adair. She would write in her diary that the Yankees were in her yard and "eating like wolves." At Adairs, Union reinforcements finally arrived. Col. Scammon had convinced his superiors to let him reinforce Hayes. The next day, the Federals moved to a better defensive position located at what is now Glen Lyn, Virginia. Until May 17, there would be frequent skirmishes between the sides. For Union soldiers, the largest problem was the lack of supplies. Soldiers named the camp "Camp Starvation" and "Camp Scarce of Crackers." Only one Union and one Confederate death can be confirmed. The lack of casualties was probably due to the nature of the battle as a rear guard action and that both sides were fighting with out-of-date, short-range smooth-bore guns.

On May 16, Confederates attacked Princeton from the west and the next day all Union forces were withdrawn to Flat Top Mountain. Hayes, McKinley and the 23rd would again travel through Giles County as part of Gen. George Crook's 1864 raid on the railroad.

'Cleaning up' the Confederacy

Editor's Note: Excerpts from Frank Smith Reader's 1864 Civil War diary are used with the permission of Special Collections, Leyburn Library, Washington and Lee University. The diary was given to the library in 1881. Reader, born in 1842 at New Brighton, Pa., was a private in the West Virginia 5th Cavalry Regiment of the Union Army. The complete diary covers the Battle of New Market, Hunter's Raid, the burning of Virginia Military Institute and the march across the mountain toward Lynchburg.

June 1st.

Still in camp. Our scouting parties occasionally bring in some rebels. We are reduced to half rations to day. 1/2 bl. of flour, do. of meat, a very little of coffee, sugar & salt make up our daily food. We had a Sergt. & 12 men capt'd on picket yesterday. Gen'ls. Crook & Averell are to meet us at Stanton. We will have enough force to hold our own then. We are in for it.

June 2d. 59

Marched to Harrisonburg to day thro' dust and rain which rendered marching very uncomfortable. We came across our wounded here, who are in fine spirits and almost shouted with joy to see us. They have been treated well. Our advance had a skirmish with Imboden causing him to beat a hasty retreat. It is said we will have a knock down tomorrow. The guerrillas fired on our train to day. No casualties. We are twenty five miles from Stanton.

June 3d.

Lay in camp. The principal business has been in confiscating tobacco etc. The Rebels are about 8 miles from us in front, and I suppose we will have a fight tomorrow. Everything is in good order for a Va. muss and we'll give Imbdenn a trial of abolition skill. Have some rebel prisoners. News scarce and cant tell what is going on outside of our own little circle. All quiet etc.

June 4.

Marched one mile beyond Port Republic on the road from that place to Stanton, distance, 13 mis. We passed over the old Cross Keys battle ground and it looks as natural as if were at home. Had to pontoon the river. The move rather astonishes all of us, we expecting to go direct to Stanton.

June 5.

Marched 2 miles this morning when we were met by the enemy. A fierce Cavy. charge took place and our boys run them. In a short time the battle opened in earnest we drving for a while until at last victory seemed in their favor by they getting behind breatworks they had built. The Genl. sent a Brig. of Inf. around on their right flank and in short time they had them whipped we capturing 1000 prisoners. Their 59 loss in all was over 2000. Ours is between 5 & 700. We stopped for the night at Piedmont 8 miles from Port Republic. I have never seen such a well conducted fight since I have been in the service.

Several charges were made by the Cav. and Inf. Every time but once they were successful. The General led us around in some very hot places. Maj. Genl. Stahel was slightly. The rebel Brig. Genl. W.E. Jones Comdg this Dept. was killed and fell into our hands. We have captured 50 officers. Several

Colonels and Majors are taken. Their dead are frightfully mangled, some of them being torn all to pieces with shells and their flesh on fire caused from it.

June 6th.
Again took up the line of march and got into Staunton about two oclock amid the waving of flags and the playing of bands. Some union sentiment was manifested and boquets were thrown to us. This is a fine place of it is said, 3000 inhabitants. We are the first yankees ever here and it is almost worth a fellows life to gain such a victory and follow it up as we have. Gen Hunter is adored by his troops now. He showed the finest generalship that ever has been shown in this valley. We have captured 3 cannon 1700 stands of arms and 1100 prisoners. Our loss is from men theirs in killed and wounded. Averell & Crook are near us.

June 7th.
Have been paroling wounded rebel prisoners all day. Three of us paroled about 500. Our force left town to day and we three were left in it. While we were paroling the rebels were in town and it was only by the merest chance that we were not captured. Capt. Bier ADC. and Andy Johnson, clerk and I were the three. I dislike very much this business of paroling. Two of our boys were captured while we were in town. Excepting this we have not been disturbed by rebels since we captured the city. We are having gay times. We will be reinforced by from 10 to 15000 men tomorrow and then we will have a better time. We will make our mark in this country before we leave it.

June 8th 1864.
All quiet. Lay in camp to day. Generals Crook and Averell joined us with their Divisions to day, swelling our force to from 20000 to 25000 men. We will put things thro' now. We are tearing the R.R. in every direction and have it pretty well torn up. Rebels mute.

June 9th.
All quiet. Our boys have been busy all day tearing up the railroad, blowing up tunnels & burning bridges. We are cleaning up the Southern Confederacy as we go along. Private property is respected but public property all goes up. We'll do our share of damage to this bogus affair this campaign. The command is in good order and ready for the march tomorrow.

June 10th.
Marched 18 miles S.W. course to day to Midway passing thro' Greenville 5 miles from Midway. An old lady was giving us some lectures &c. as we passed her house, Our command is marching in four parallel columns, each Div. a different road. It is fine marching, only a little dusty. Find no union people along this route. We have had no interruption yet.

June 11th.
March 18 miles S. by S.W. course to day, to Lexington Va. One mile from town the bridge was burnt over the river and we had a very severe skirmish losing 4 men. At this place is the Va. Mil. Institute which we will burn. Stonewall Jackson was buried here. We got all kinds of trophies in the academy. There are some cannon here used in the revolutionary war.

June 12th.
Lay in camp to day burning up public works &a. We burnt some fine buildings, among others the residence of Gov. Letcher. Stonewall Jackson's remains are in the Cemetery at this place. I got an order to day to report to my Regt. in the rear for the purpose of being mustered out of the service. There are some of the most extensive libraries here that I ever saw. I have procured some very good works. The cadets who attended the Military Academy here lived in style.

June 13th.
Fine day. Genl. Duffie let Cavy. Div. who left us at Staunton joined us to day, having torn up 5 miles of the R.R. between Lynchburg & Charlottesville, captured 70 prisoners, 700 horses and burnt 300 wagons he captured from the Rebels. Genl. Crook with his 2d Inf. Div. captured 5 pieces of Artillery and 5 canal 65 boats to day. Our boys are doing the work up for them. We have destroyed all public property that we can get at. The troops are in excellent condition and anxious to finish the grand work they have commenced. The enemy have got into our rear already and we can't send the train wagons back now, as was intended Averell's 2d Cav. Div has advanced 15 miles on the Buckhannon road. We are taking with us 4 pieces of Artillery trophies from the French; also a bronze statue of Washington.

June 14.
Marched thro a stifling dust to Buchanan 24 miles to day. Nothing new on the route. Passed within three miles of the Natural bridge but couldn't go to see it. I would have liked much to see it. The rebels burnt the bridge across the James at this place which has caused us some inconvenience. The rebels have ceased bothering us and we are having peacable times. Buchanan is a small place and of no account in a military point of view.

June 15th.
Marched S. by S.W. 17 miles to day, camping in the valley at the foot of the Peaks of Otter and near the rail-road. We came over the Blue Ridge and a rougher road could not be imagined. From the side of the mountain one of the most magnificent views is presented to sight that I ever saw. As far as the eye can reach a fine undulating country is seen. The Peaks of Otter is the finest sight for mountain scenery. One of the Peaks is 4260 ft. high and from the top a far more lovely view is seen than from the side of the Mt.

June 16th.
Very hot, dusty etc. Marched thro. Liberty and 5 miles on the road toward Lynchburg, 8 miles for the days march. Our time has been occupied in tearing up the Va. and Tenn. R.R. which passes here. There has been some skirmishing in front to day and tomorrow I think there will be a heavy fight. We are only 20 miles from Lynchburg and it will be a big thing if we can capture the city. We have rained the R.R. for theme.

June 17th.
A wagon train going to the rear to day I saddled up my old Rozinante and am on my way back with them. I fear we may make a sorry trip of it as we only have 1 1/2 Regts. of Militia guarding it. We marched 17 miles to day, 175 to go yet. We are travelling over a new road to any of us. We are the first Yankees that have ever been seen in this part of the country.

June 18th.
Marched 2 miles beyond Fincastle on the Sweet Springs road today, coming 19 miles for the day. Came over Blue Ridge through Buford's Gap, a very rough & bad road. The people all along this route have never seen the Yanks before and some of them are very much frightened.

June 19th.
Marched 14 miles to day camping at Mrs. Scotto one mile from the base of Mountain. The four of us who were sent back from Genl. Hunter's Hd Qrs. with 3 others are acting as scouts. We march about 3 miles in advance of the column, get all the good things to eat and make a few rebels skedaddle occasionally. We scared some citizens half to death to day. We are going very slow and I fear we may get into trouble yet. We all hope for the best though.

June 20.
Marched 18 miles to Sweet Springs over two mountains to day. It was rough enough for any mountain climber. We have routed some Rebels on the way. The Red Sweet Springs is in sight of Camp. They are both beautiful but of not much note at present. We are seeing all the sights this trip that are to be seen in Va. All quiet, the militia sound.

June 21st.
Marched to White Sulphur Springs, 17 miles today. Came over the Alleghanies. Had a great deal of sport in front. It is somewhat dangerous to take the lead 5 & 6 miles, but we have fun. Had a gay time getting our supper this evening. A lot of the Militia were going to whip us out of it but they didn't try it. Our train was fired into this morning, a few horses tumbled over, no one hurt. These 100 days Militia are a great set of lads. I have never seen soldiers yet who are inclined to pilfer as these thieves are. Some of them ought to be shot for it an a warning to the others.

June 22d.
So ends the Raid.

June 23d.
Came out of the Mts. this morning & started to White Sulphur, got part of the way and started up Anthony Creek after our train. Foolishly we marched in the open road and when we got to Alvon we were gobbled up. There are 13 of us together and as we were cut off in every direction we concluded to surrender. We are in the hands of Gentlemen. What will be our fate is now to determine.

June 24.
Were marched under guard to Calihan's Station, 16 miles to day. Our guards seem to fear that the Yankees will pounce on them.

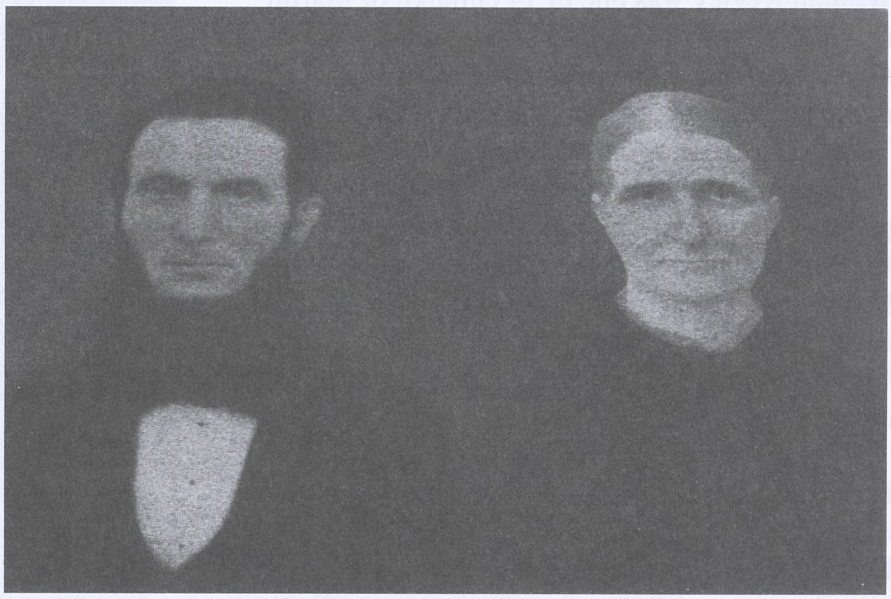
June 25th.
Marched to Covington to day 5 miles where we are in jail. We got 1/4 lb. of bread in one day & I think it short eating. I guess we will have to go South.

Three Wythe County soldiers with different fates

by George Kegley

Three of my great-grandfathers left their Wythe County farms to join the Confederate army in the Civil War — two were captured by Union forces and one came home and the other didn't. The third was wounded in Tennessee, came home and later returned to service.

Both of the captured men left home in October 1864 — just six months before the surrender. On the same day, June 20, 1865, one died in prison and the other was released, more than two months after the end of the war. Both of their homes remain occupied in Wythe County, 150 years after the war.



William and Ally Kegley

William Kegley, 43, was serving in Company K, 15th Virginia Infantry, when he was captured at the Battle of Five Forks, near Petersburg, and taken by boat from City Point (Hopewell today) to a prison at Harts Island, Long Island Sound, N.Y. He died in the prison camp, apparently of an illness, and he was buried at Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn.

John Peter Sharitz, 38, joined Company K, 1st Virginia Infantry, and served at Camp Lee, serving in the defense of Richmond until he was captured at Farmville on April 6, 1865, just three days before the surrender, and held at Point Lookout, Maryland. After he was released on June 20, 1865, he came home, worked as a surveyor and a farmer and as justice of the peace for more than 20 years. He lived in Wythe County until his death at 79.

Rufus Umbarger entered military service soon after his 40th birthday in 1862, serving in the 21st and 25th Cavalry Regiments. He was wounded and declared unfit for duty at Regtown, Tennessee, on October 1, 1863, but his name was back on the roll the next year.

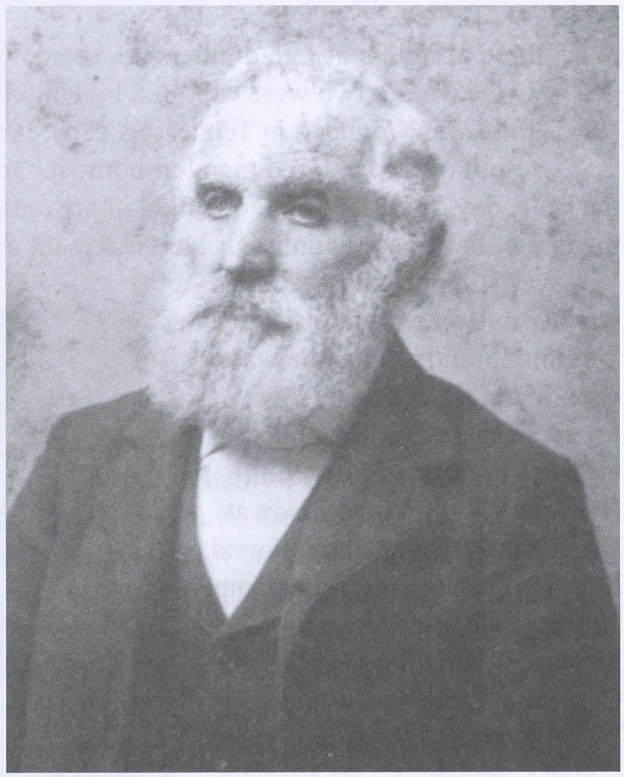
Kegley was called into service despite a petition to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, signed by 24 of his neighbors, who said his work as a blacksmith and his service with his threshing machine was valuable to the community. He lived at the foot of Queen's Knob, a few miles north of Wytheville.

George Kegley, a Wythe County native, is editor of the Journal.

The petition said, "He is the only person in our neighborhood who is possessed of a thrashing machine and we as farmers are deprived of the use of it. By calling him any how, there will not only be without a Smith, but will be put to a great inconvenience in getting our grain ready for market. For these reasons we pray that your Excellency will exempt said Kegley from Military Service under power vested in you by law."

He left a succinct one-sentence description of his fate in a leather-bound journal passed down through his family for a century and a half. Several pages of the journal were cut out, perhaps mailed home. He wrote: "I was takin at five forks and got on the boat at sitey poin then to harts ilent."

Kegley and his wife, Ally, had nine children — three sons and six daughters. In his will, he gave his wife control of the farm until the children came of age. Each child was to have a colt of his own. His oldest son, John George, was killed in the Civil War at the age of 19, on September 3, 1864. When William Kegley left home, one daughter was less than 2 years old and another was born a week before he died. William Kegley was one of 14 children of Martin and Mary Myers Kegley. His son, Stephen Alexander Kegley, was the father of five sons and four daughters, including my father, Estel S. Kegley, Wythe County.



John Peter Sharitz, from "Early Adventurers on the Western Waters," by Mary B. Kegley

His brother, Daniel Kegley, served in the Confederate army and moved to what is now West Virginia, serving as postmaster of Kegley, a village near Princeton, named for him. Two nephews of William Kegley — John J. and Levi Kegley — also were Confederate soldiers. John J. Kegley died in the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain in Pulaski County on May 9, 1864, at age 18.

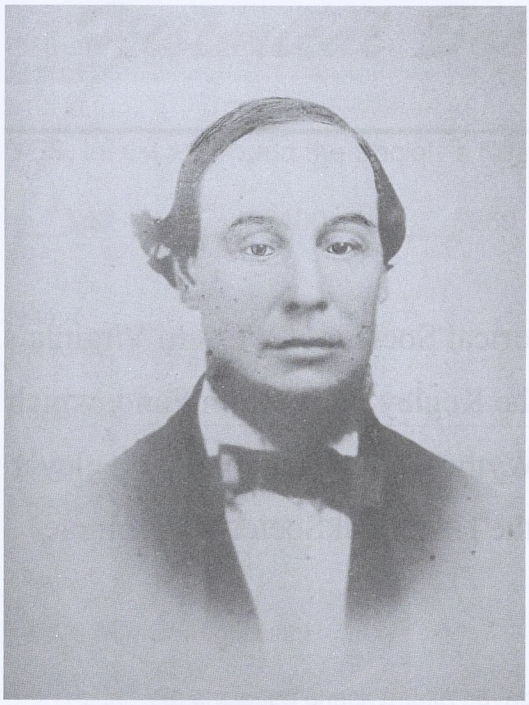
Sharitz was held as prisoner until he was released on June 20, 1865, the same day William Kegley died, according to published reports in Wythe County. He served as a justice when a Wythe County court declined to act on an order from the governor for Home Guards to defend Southwest Virginia against enemy invasion.

While Sharitz was at Point Lookout, his uncle, Gordon Repass, a Wythe County farmer conscripted by the Confederate army in the fall of 1864, also was imprisoned at the same place. While he was there, Repass wrote home, "I am very weak and don't expect to gain much strength with the rations we now draw..I get so hungry some days that I don't know what to do..but my Only hope is to trust in God."

Shortly afterward on May 10, 1865, Sharitz sent this sad note to Anna Sharitz Repass, his father's sister: "My Dear Aunt, It becomes my sad & Painful duty to let you know of the death of Uncle Gordon. He breathed his last on the 3rd of this month at the prison hospital. I was not permitted to visit him though I made frequent applications ... he died of Chronic Diarrhea..Your affectionate nephew, J.P. Sharitz."

During the war, at least 340 Wythe County men served time in federal prisons and 97 of them died there, according to "Wythe County in the Civil War," by Beverly Repass Hoch.

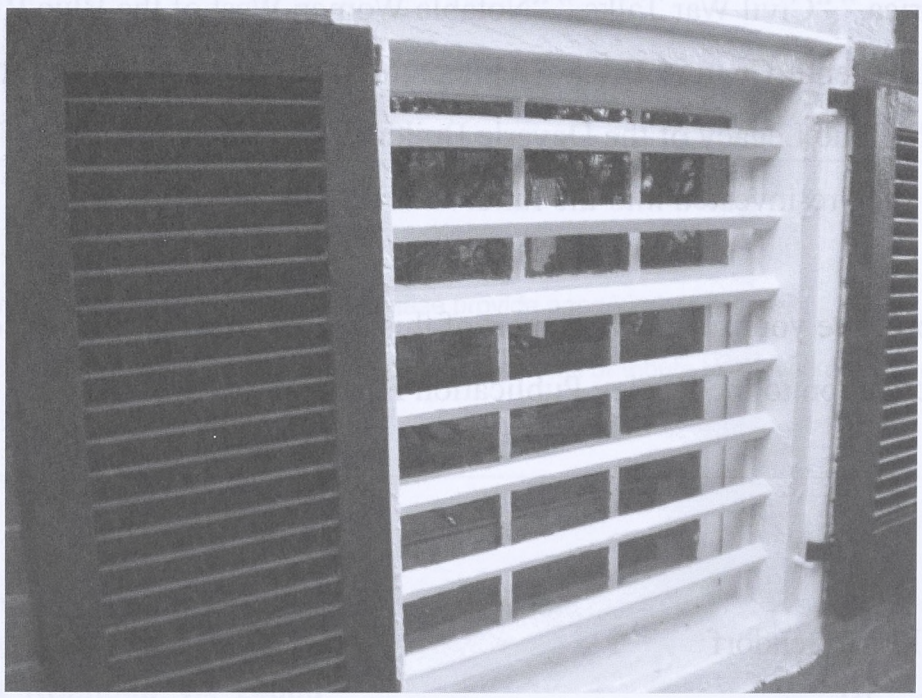
Sharitz married Clementina Hudson and they had three sons and three daughters. He lived on a



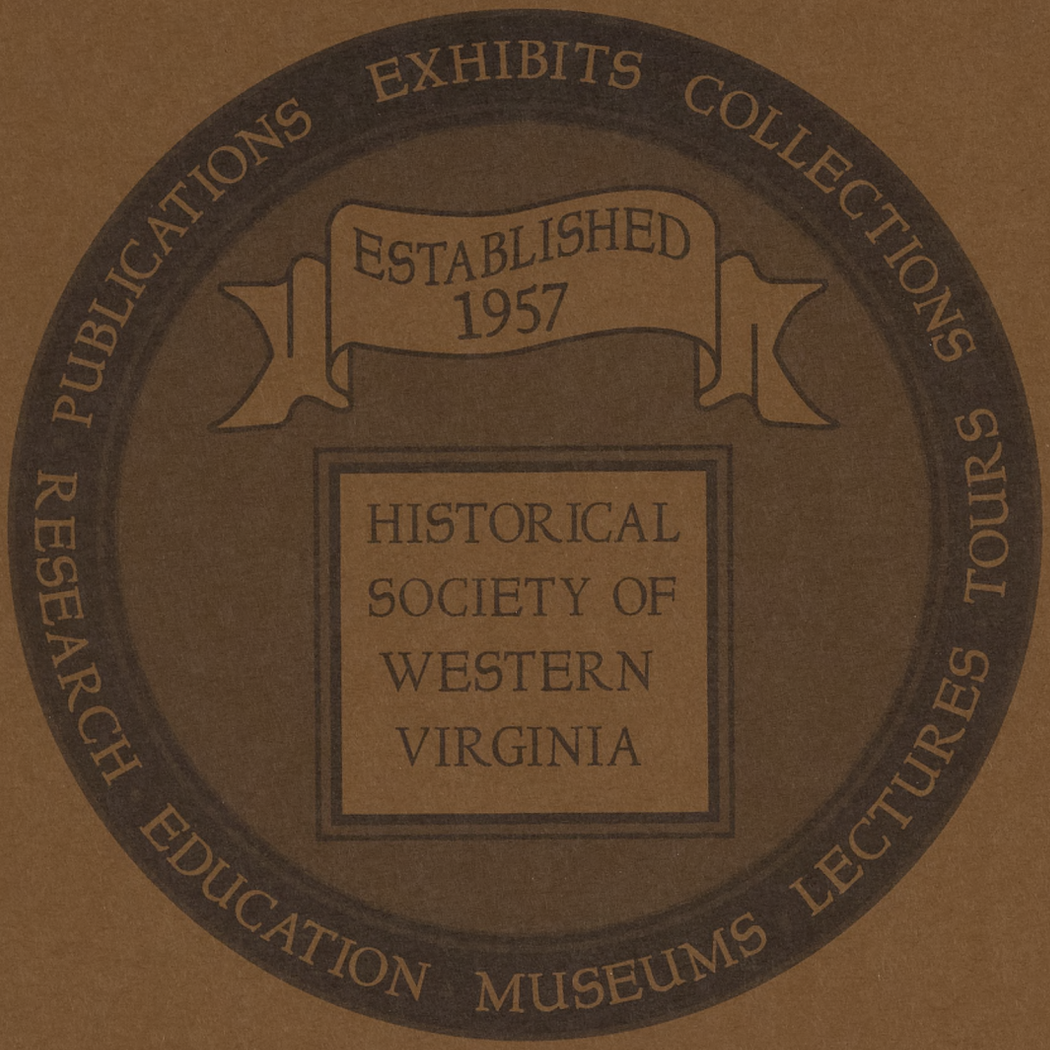
Rufus Umbarger

farm west of Wytheville where two of his great-grandsons live today. His daughter, Alice Virginia, married the Rev. James A. Brown and their daughter, Ruth Ella, was my mother.

Rufus Umbarger, my father's grandfather, was married twice, fathered 13 children, served in the war and died before he was 48. According to a family story, he received a horse from the army as bounty when he was wounded but the animal was stolen while he was on his way home so he had to walk the rest of the way. In his second term of service, he again received a horse and brought it home to work on his 260-acre farm along Reed Creek, near Wytheville. In the late 1990s, Umbarger had an estimated 1,500 descendants.



A REMEMBRANCE OF SLAVERY? This basement window at Monterey, the 1845 home of George and Louise Kegley in northeast Roanoke, is secured by wooden bars which may have been installed more than a century and a half ago to restrain slaves. Tax records show the presence of slaves on that farm before the Civil War.



Kegley
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