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Magazine of the

Jefferson County Historical Society

Volume XLVIII
December 1982

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Magazine of the

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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"No man is fit to be entrusted with the control of the present who is ignorant of the past, and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great."

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JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized May 21, 1927
Post Office Box 485
Charles Town, West Virginia 25414

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Emeritus Officers—Frank Buckles, John Y. McDonald, Admiral T. M. Stokes, Miss Juliana Taylor.

Membership—Open to all who have an interest in the history of Jefferson County, Annual dues of $5.00 should be paid to the Tresurer after the beginning of the fiscal year on January 1.

Publications and Prices—One copy of the Magazine is mailed to each person holding a paid membership. Until the publication of next year's Magazine, members may purchase additional copies for $4.00 each; order these from William H. Wilson, Box 716, Charles Town. Original volumes or facsimile reproductions are available to all persons at $5.00 per Magazine; quantity discounts are allowed. Mr. Wilson also has available copies of *Prominent Men of Shepherdstown* for $7.50 each, mailed, *Old Norborne Parish (1744-1816)* for $5.00 each, mailed and *The Washington Homes of Jefferson County* for $2.00 each, mailed.





Clockwise beginning with the seated members on the left. R.D. Allen, J.S Blackburn, N.H. Willis, A.P. Thomson, W.N. McDonald.

The Valley Chess Club

In August of 1888, five Civil War veterans who lived in the Jefferson and Clarke County area organized a chess club. They were R.O. Allen, J.S. Blackburn, W.N. McDonald, Dr. A.P. Thomson and N.H. Willis. They established a fixed schedule of two contests a year. One of these was held in August in the home of one of the local members. August is a lax month for farmers which was the occupation of three of the players. The other took place during the Christmas season in Alexandria where Mr. Blackburn ran a boys' school. One of Dr. Thomson's daughters, Mrs. J.C. Breckinridge, well remembers the yearly boarding of the train by three of the members at Summit Point. This carried them as far as Washington.

A silver cup was ordered from Samuel Kirk in Baltimore to be held by the winner until the next contest. The bowl of the cup was octagonal in shape providing eight flat surfaces for engravings. On one side there appears the club's name with the words "To the Victor;" and on the third the names of the five members. The remaining sides list in order each winner with the date.

With the finish of the 17th game, all spaces were filled. The cup was returned to the silversmith who replaced the original pedestal with an octagonal base, so providing eight more spaces for the names of winners. The cup now measured five inches in height.

By the time the lower spaces were filled in 1912, two of the members had died, Captain McDonald in 1898 and R.O. Allen in 1911. With the death of N.H. Willis in 1914, only two members remained to carry on, Dr. A.P. Thomson and R.O. Allen. The latter's death in 1918, after Dr. Thomson's victory in the final contest, left the cup at Hawthorne where it is a treasured possession of Dr. Thomson's daughters, Mrs. Dorothy Breckinridge and Miss Imogene Thomson.

(It should be mentioned that the filling in of all the spaces in 1912 did not prevent the engraver from finding odd spaces for the names of subsequent winners with the dates.)

The Cup Inscriptions

The Upper Facets

N.H. Willis	August 1888
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1888
J.S. Blackburn	August 1889
N.H. Willis	Xmas 1889
J.S. Blackburn	August 1890

N.H. Willis	Xmas 1890
N.H. Willis	August 1891
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1891
A.P. Thomson	August 1892
N.H. Willis	Xmas 1892
R.O. Allen	August 1893
N.H. Willis	Xmas 1893
R.O. Allen	August 1894
W.N. McDonald	Xmas 1894
R.O. Allen	August 1895
J.S. Blackburn	Xmas 1895
R.O. Allen	August 1896

The Lower Facets

J.S. Blackburn	Xmas 1896
R.O. Allen	August 1897
J.S. Blackburn	Xmas 1897
N.H. Willis	August 1898
N.H. Willis	Xmas 1898
J.S. Blackburn	August 1899
J.S. Blackburn	Xmas 1899
J.S. Blackburn	August 1900
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1900
J.S. Blackburn	August 1901
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1901
J.S. Blackburn	August 1902
R.O. Allen	Xmas 1902
J.S. Blackburn	August 1903
J.S. Blackburn	Xmas 1903
N.H. Willis	August 1904
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1904
J.S. Blackburn	August 1905
J.S. Blackburn	Xmas 1905
J.S. Blackburn	August 1906
R.O. Allen	Xmas 1906
A.P. Thomson	August 1907
J.S. Blackburn	Xmas 1907
N.H. Willis	August 1908
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1908
A.P. Thomson	August 1909
N.H. Willis	August 1910
R.O. Allen	August 1912

The Rim Above the Base

N.H. Willis	August 1913
A.P. Thomson	August 1914
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1914
R.O. Allen	August 1915
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1915

Scattered Spaces

R.O. Allen	August 1916
A.P. Thomson	Xmas 1916
A.P. Thomson	August 1917
R.O. Allen	Xmas 1917
A.P. Thomson	August 1918

Robert Owen Allen
1833-1918

It has not been ascertained where Mr. Allen was born. The most prominent Allen home is Clifton, located to the right of Route 340 beyond the Clarke County line.

Mr. Allen's grandson, Howard C. Allen, operates The Allen Studio in Middleburg, Virginia. He writes that his grandfather was one of three brothers all of whom served in the Clarke Cavalry during the Civil War. He was severely wounded twice and was the only one of the three to survive the war.

In 1871 Mr. Allen bought Westwood which is south of Summit Point near the Clarke County line. It was here that a number of the Club's August contests would have taken place.

John Sinclair Blackburn
1838-1911

Mr. Blackburn was a son of Dr. Richard Scott Blackburn whose home, Spring Grove, was located on present Route 340 just short of the Clarke County line.

In Vol. XLIV (1978) of this magazine, there is an account of Mr. Blackburn's unsuccessful attempt to establish a boys' boarding school at Claymont Court, immediately after the Civil War. His sister, Catherine, was the wife of Bushrod C. Washington who then owned Claymont.

In the Civil War, Mr. Blackburn fought with the Clarke Cavalry and was promoted to a lieutenancy in the Ordnance Department. He did succeed in establishing a boys' school in Alexandria and it was here that The Chess Club held its Christmas season contests.

In the photograph, his collar at first glance appears to be that of a clergyman. Close inspection shows that there is an opening in its front.

William Naylor McDonald
1834-1898

Mr. McDonald was born in Romney, Virginia. He was a precocious student as his diary reveals. At the age of seventeen he writes that his ambition is to open a boys' school. Entering the University of Virginia in 1852, he emerged with a Master of Arts Degree in 1857.

Until the outbreak of the Civil War he taught in a Louisville, Kentucky boys' school where he was made principal after his first year. During the war he served in the Laurel Brigade as an ordnance officer. This unit performed commando type operations such as the blowing up of bridges. He was the author of *The History of the Laurel Brigade.*

After the war he established at Cool Spring in Clarke County a school for Confederate veterans whose education had been interrupted by the war. In 1869 he was again in Louisville as principal of The Male High School.

In 1872 he achieved his early ambition. With his brother Alan, he established the Louisville Rugby School. It was highly successful, preparing students specifically for leading eastern universities.

His final move in 1887 was to establish in Berryville the Shenandoah University School. He had disliked city living and chose a country environment. One of his students, a Princeton graduate, was Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War under Woodrow Wilson.

His principal biographer, Mrs. William Naylor McDonald, stresses that Mr. McDonald was especially concerned, during the disarray following the Civil War, that southerners seek higher education.

Augustus Pembroke Thomson
1847-1920

Dr. Thomson was born at Hawthorne near Summit Point. He was the youngest member of the Chess Club. In 1862 he was sent to the Virginia Military Institute, Virginia's "West Point of the South." On May 15, 1864, he took part in "one of the most remarkable events of the Civil War."

The defenders of the southern end of the Shenandoah Valley were hard pressed for reserves to stop a steady Northern advance. The V.M.I. cadets were reluctantly summoned. Their successful charge up a hill to capture a Northern battery climaxed a day in which the Northern advance was halted for some months. They numbered 295 cadets ranging in age from 14 to 20 years. Eight were killed and 48 wounded, one mortally.

In 1887, Dr. Thomson graduated with honors from the University of Maryland Medical School. Deciding that rather than practice medicine, he would take over the running of the Hawthorne farm; he eventually became the pioneer orchardist in this area.

Nathaniel Hite Willis
1842-1914

Mr. Willis, the only son of Thomas Hite Willis, was born at Rock Hall which stood to the left of Route 13 as it nears Summit Point. He served in the Clarke Cavalry and was severely wounded in the Battle of Trevillian Station. That he was awarded the Southern Cross of Honor for exceptional valor remained unknown to his friends until after his death when this symbol was carved on his tombstone.

His home at Rock Hall burned in 1906. He abandoned farming and built the house at 500 South Mildred Street in Charles Town. One of his daughters, Miss Patty Willis, was a well-known artist.

His son, Thomas H. Willis, in 1937 bought the Belvedere farm near Charles Town as a vacation home. Today it is the home of one of his grandchildren.

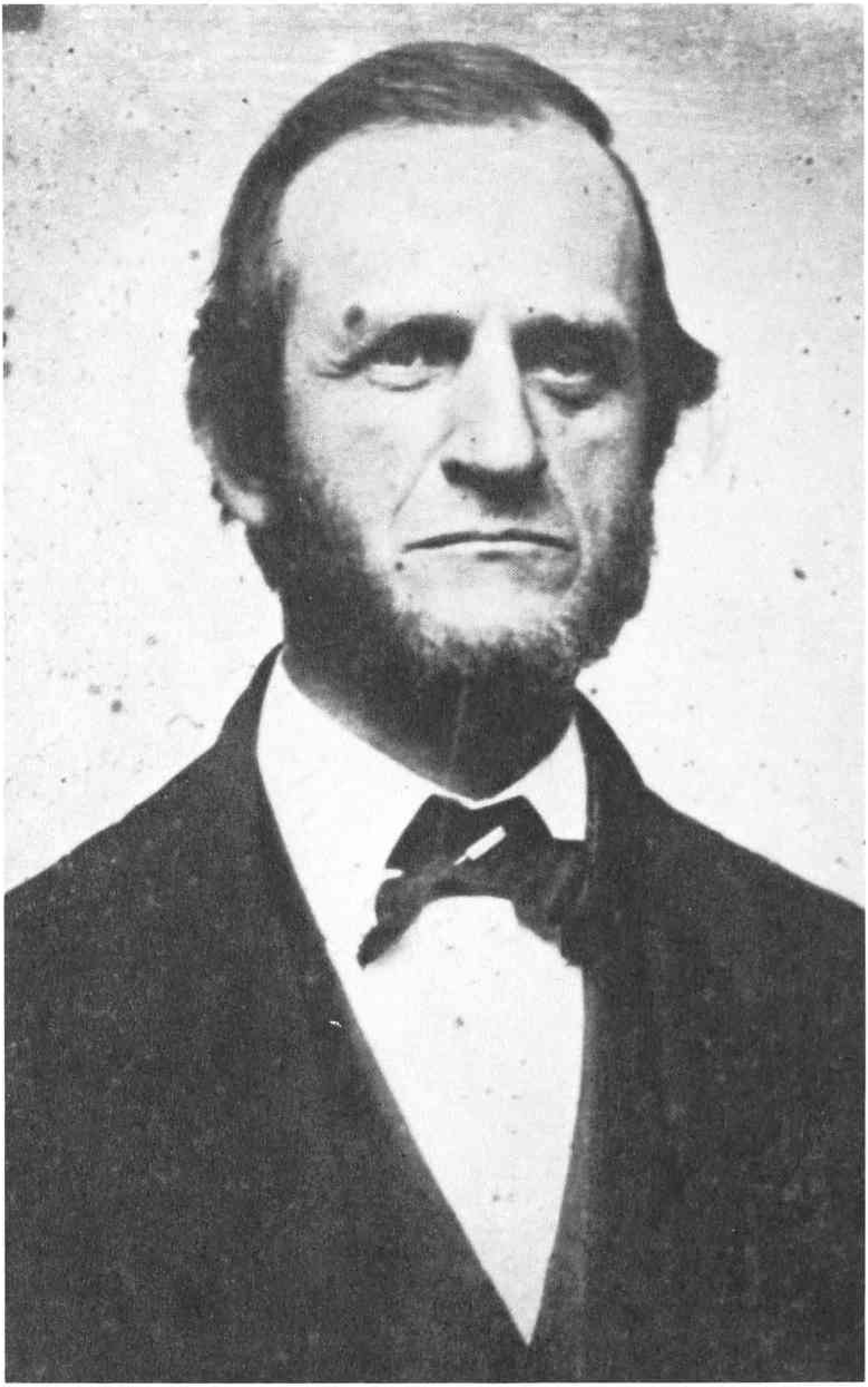
John A. Washington, M.D.



Benjamin Smith White
September 28, 1842, Charles Town—May 3, 1863, Battle of Chancellorsville.



Fredericka Macky White
April 4, 1816—April 9, 1891



Nathan Smith White
November 16, 1817—November 4, 1888

Fredericka White's Testament of Faith

Benjamin Smith White, only son of Nathan Smith White and Fredericka Macky White, was killed at the battle of Chancellorsville. He was born in Charles Town on the 28th of September 1842. His father, N.S. White, was born 6 November 1817, near Poolesville, Montgomery County, Maryland. After undergraduate work at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), he studied law at Yale College in Connecticut and was admitted to practice in the courts of Frederick County, Virginia. (He was a second cousin of Maj. Elizah Viers White, C.S.A.).[1] On November 11, 1841, he was married to Fredericka Macky of Winchester, Va. She was a daughter of Rebecca Holmes McGuire and John Macky, a lieutenant in the War of 1812, who died in 1825, leaving three small daughters, of whom Fredericka was the eldest. (Her mother was an aunt of Dr. Hunter Holmes McGuire, Medical Director of the 2nd Corps, Army of Northern Va., C.S.A.)[2]

Soon after their marriage, the Whites moved to Charles Town, the county seat of Jefferson County, where they lived the rest of their lives. They had two children, Benjamin, and his younger sister, Rebecca Holmes White.

At Harpers Ferry, on April 26, 1861, young Ben White, a student, age 19, was enrolled in Botts Greys by their captain, Lawson Botts. The term of enlistment was for "the war."[3]

Botts was born in Fredericksburg, Va., July 25, 1825, a son of Gen. Thomas H. Botts and Anne Carter Willis. Because of his father's ill health, he left V.M.I. just before graduating in 1844. After studying law, he moved to Charles Town about 1846, and married Sarah Elizabeth Bibb Ranson in 1851.[4]

For a time in the 1850's, he was a law partner of N.S. White. He was also one of the attorneys appointed to defend John Brown at his trial in Jefferson County Circuit Court in October 1859, but was subsequently dismissed by the defendant. Also in 1859, a local militia company, Botts Greys, was formed under the command of Botts.

1. White Family Bible, Md. Hist. Soc.; Zion Church Records, Charles Town; Peterkin, *History & Record of Protestant Episcopal Church in W. Va.*, 1902. p. 309; MS Genealogy of Descendants of Benjamin & Elizabeth Smith White of Md.
2. Fred. Co., Va. Marriage Register No. 1, p. 188A; Nat'l Archives, John Macky, SC73503, War 1812; Stanard, Wm. G., compiler, *The McGuire Family in Virginia.* (Richmond, 1926) pp. 33, 51, 52.
3. Confederate Archives, Chap. 10, File No. 8, p. 268.
4. *Spirit of Jefferson-Advocate*, 19 March 1981.

The company was attached to the 55th Regt. Va. Militia (Jefferson County) until 18 April 1861, when the 2nd Regt. Va. Volunteers was called into service by Governor Letcher. It was ordered to assemble at Charles Town, from where it marched to seize the armory at Harpers Ferry. On July 1, 1861, the 2nd Va. was accepted into Confederate States service with ten companies, A to K. Botts Greys become Company G.[5]

"Col. Jackson was assigned to the command of the 1st Brigade, composed of the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 27th and 33rd Regiments of Infantry, and the Rockbridge Battery. It received its baptism of fire at the first battle of Manassas where it lost heavily—Company G of the 2nd coming in for its full share with a loss of 13 wounded, 3 of the number mortally.... In that battle the company was commanded by Edwin Moore who had succeeded Capt. Botts as Captain, when the latter was made a Major of the Regiment. The subsequent history of the company is identified with that of the Army of Northern Virginia in all of those battles it participated (in) up to the surrender at Appomattox Court House. As a matter of fact but few of the old company were left when the surrender took place."[6]

Lawson Botts was a full colonel of the 2nd Va. Regiment by the time he was mortally wounded at the 2nd battle of Manassas and died some days later on Sept. 11, 1862. N.S. White was the attorney who filed his claim with the Confederate States Auditor on the 28th of November, 1862.[7]

The First Brigade came to be known as the "Stonewall Brigade" and was considered the most famous organization in the Confederate Army. Its men were justly proud of their unit. They had a saying that "Jackson always marched at dawn, except when he started the night before...."[8] One of the men is quoted as saying, "I wish those Yankees were in hell," replied the other, "I don't, for if they were, Old Jack would be within half a mile of them with the Stonewall Brigade in front."[9]

Company G of the 2nd Virginia took part in the maneuvering which led up to the battle of Chancellorsville, when Jackson's Second Corps

5. Wallace, L.A., Jr. Comp., *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, 1861-1865.* Va. Civil War Commission. (Richmond, 1964). pp. 106-107.
6. *Military Operations in Jefferson County, Va. (and W.Va.), 1861-1865.* Pub. by Authority of Jefferson County Camp, U.C.V., 1911. Reprint 1960. p.4.
7. Confederate Archives, Chap. 1, File No. 92, pp. 202, 276. Krick, R.K., *Lee's Colonels; A Biographical Register of Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia.* (Dayton, Ohio, 1979). p. 54.
8. Henderson, G.F.R., Lt. Col., *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War,* (Longmans: Green & Co., 1906). 2 vols. Vol. 1, p. 183. Vol. 2, p. 76.
9. Cooke, J.E., *Stonewall Jackson and the Old Stonewall Brigade.* Ed. by R.B. Harwell. (Charlottesville, 1954). p. 24.

surprised and routed Howard's Eleventh Corps of the Union Army at suppertime on the 2nd of May, 1863. Henry Kyd Douglas, in his *I Rode with Stonewall,* said that "the Stonewall Brigade was not engaged. It was enjoying the novel sensation of watching a running fight without taking part in it. But it moved on in line toward the enemy, when uncovered by Jackson's advance, so as to unite with the division. . . ."

The next morning, Sunday May the 3rd, fighting resumed and the Stonewall Brigade "became hotly engaged," according to Douglas. "So far as our brigade was involved, it seemed to me I never saw a hotter one. While we were lying behind some logs hastily thrown together, just before the final charge on the Chancellor House, General Stuart came down the line. . . . When the charge was made it seemed to be a whirlwind, but Hooker's center was broken. The fight of the day was over for us. Our brigade suffered greatly, losing about 600 killed and wounded—which was a heavy percent—but the proportion of killed was unusually small."[10]

Sergeant Benjamin Smith White was among that small proportion.

In an effort to assuage her grief, Fredericka used to shut herself in her room on the anniversaries of the death and birth of her son to write in a tiny diary (now coverless). Some passages tell the sad story.

The diary begins:

> 'Oh how easy it is to convince the judgement to silence the mind; But the heart the unmanageable heart feels on as before. Our arguments go not down to that deep seat of emotion.
>
> There is still the void, the tumult, the ache, the longing[.] Only God can reason with the heart. At no bidding but his, will it ever be still and satisfied.'
>
> June 17th 1863
>
> This day our dear Soldiers have returned after an absence of seven or eight months. Some are absent and my dear precious Son one of the missing. My heart is bleeding at every pore.
>
> Lord have mercy upon me I am oppressed undertake for me Thou hast promised to be with us in all our afflictions and to hear us when we call up thee, enable me to call upon thee in faith. May I be still and know that thou art God. I am a great sinner, but thou art a great Saviour. God grant that this great affliction may be sanctified to me and may have the effect that thou in thy mercy hast intended. But I feel utterly helpless and undone. But I trust that it is my desire to lie passive in thy hands and to say from my heart they will be done.
>
> 'God nothing does nor suffers to be done, but we ourselves would do, if we could see the end of all. He does as well as He.'

10. Douglas, H.K., *I Rode With Stonewall,* (Chapel Hill, N.C., c. 1940), pp. 16-17, 221, 225.

Enable me not only to submit but acquiese in thy righteous judgments and will in all things. God grant that I may by the eye of faith look beyond this world of sorrow forget the creature[?] and look to the Creation.

May I not think of my darling Son as in the cold grave but in the bosom of his precious Saviour as not lost, but gone before and grant that I may live in such a way as to be able to meet him in glory.

O Lord give me true repentance for all the errors of my life and particularly for that which was in all probability the occasion of this great affliction.

I have conversed with some of the Soldiers today about my darling Son, and after suffering great grief and agony feel greatly comforted and supported and much more resigned. God grant that this state of feeling may continue and grant that I may feel and know that in mercy thou hast afflicted me and grant that this affliction may be sanctified to me.

They have given me every assurance that my child was a true Christian, died so calmly so peacefully[.] Why should I murmur or repine, He has gone where there is no more sin neither sorrow or crying neither shall there be any more pain. Blissfull [illegible], God grant that I may have grace and strength given me to live in such a way that I may be able to spend an unending eternity with him.

'Oh for faith amid frowning providences to say' I know that thy judgements are right and relying in the dark to exclaim though he slay me yet will trust in him.

All things work together for good to them that love God. May I feel this in my aching sorrowful heart.

'Oh may I consider by whose stroke my bereavement has been effected, It is the Lord' and shall he not do what seemeth him good.' Are not his designs will, and shall I oppose them; Are they not kind and shall I murmur against them?

Who can tell what good may be intended by the stroke that has filled me with heaviness[.] Who can estimate the evils that may have been arrested the pains that may have been spared, the temptations that may have been escaped.

God grant that such consideration.

I find this address of Gen. Jackson in a note book of my dear Son. He was a member of his Jacksons Brigade for more than two years[.]

Camp near Centreville, Nov 1862

Gen. Jackson has been ordered to Winchester to assume command of the forces in the Valley.

This afternoon ordered his Brigade to be assembled in front of Head Quarters of the 2^{d} Regiment Va Vol and delivered to his men the following address. His manner was natural earnest and impressive he seemed deeply affected in saying farewell to those whom he had so gallently led to victory. He spoke as follows.

Officers and Men of the 1st Brigade,

I appear before you today to bid you farewell. You must not expect a speech from me but only a heart felt farewell. You are those who were first organized under me at Harpers Ferry, and have been with me ever since.

You have undergone without a murmur the fatigue the bivouac, and the tented field, and on the plains of Manassa covered yourselves with imperishable glory.

This Brigade on that memorable day decided the contest and gave victory to our arms and history will so record it. You were the 1st Brigade of the army of the Shenandough[.] You are the 1st Brigade of the second Corps and the first in the hearts of your Generals.

To the world you have shown yourselves not only able to protect and defend your homes and firesides, but willing also to respect and protect private property of individuals.

They have both gone where they will learn war no more. My dear Son was killed on Sunday May the 3^{d} 1863 at the battle of Chancellorsville[.] Gen Jackson died the next Sunday May the 10th from his wounds received on Saturday night May the 2^{d} 1863.

'I can say in the language of another This Trial of mine is cutting, sore for flesh and blood to bear. It is hard to breathe through a broken heart, Thy will be done. But neverless at thy word I will say thy will be done, Even so Father'

'The world in times of great afflications is often unwilling to make allowances for the sacredness of grief. He who wept at the grave[?] of Bethany puts no such unkind arrest on the outflowings of sorrow.

'He wept with those that wept[.] He has told us to go and do likewise.'

It is striking to notice the cases of death, and bereavement which during our Saviours ministry on earth called forth the exalted sympathies of His human nature, an only Son, an only Daughter, an only Brother.

O thou Lord of all, teach me while I mourn over my distress in bereavement to bow with submission to that hand which has deposed me of my only Son, one of my greatest earthly comforts. Thou hast a right to dispose of as seemth good to thee; nor can any stay thy hand, or say unto thee, What doest thou? Silence the murmurings of my rebellious heart. Enable me to say with thy servant of old, 'the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Loosen my attachment to earthly comforts which are only lent to me to be recalled whensoever it seemeth best to thy godly wisdom and though I am bereft of one whom I so dearly loved yet may I find in thee who art the eternal Spring and Fountain of all good infinitely more than all earthly friends and comforts can supply.

To me the pall the bier the sod To thee the palm of victory given; Enough my heart Thank God Thank God That thou hast been a Year in Heaven

September 28th 1863

A day long to be remembered The birth day of my dear and only Son Benjamin S. White who was killed at the battle of Chancellorsville May 3^{d} 1863 If his life had been spared he would have been twenty one this day.

With what anxiety and pleasure have I looked forward to this twenty first birth day of my only son. But my heavenly Father has seen fit to take him to himself where he shall learn war no more. But when he shall be forever with the Lord[.] I trust he has found the joys of Heaven, and is one

of the angel band Safe in his happy home and is waiting to welcome us who are still walking this valley of tears. He is by guardian angels led, safe from temptation safe from sins polution.

'He lives whom we call dead, May we all prepare to meet him in judgement where we can spend a happy eternity with our dear and only Son.

Glorious thought a birth day in heaven.

'Oh to be then, Where never tears of sorrow shall dim the eye, no aching pain, nor care shall ever cloud our morrow

. . . . . .

September 28th 1864

Another birth day of my dear and only Son. Another year in Heaven, free from all the turmoil and strife of this cruel dreadful war in which he lost his precious life and in which he took such an active part.

Died at his post in defence of his country. My heart still bleeds for the dear one and I must again offer up the [page ends]

May 3d 1865

Two years this day since my dear and only Son was killed in the battle of Chancellorsville. He lost his life in our great struggle for Independence.

In which we have been unsuccessful.

When I heard Gen Lee had surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia, and when I remembered the thousands of the very best men and youth of the South who had lost their lives in this cruel war and among the number my precious and only son I felt completly overwhelmed and felt like exclaiming. Hath God forgotten to be gracious, hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies. But I have prayed for grace and strength to say thy will be done and to be able to say with Job, Though he slay me yet will I trust in him.

God grant that this great affliction maybe sanctified to me, and may I commit my all to him who doeth all things well.

September 28th 1865

Another birth day of my dear and only son.

Would have been twenty three this day if he had lived[.] I feel my great loss more and more. The first thought that came into my mind this morning was, The birth day of my darling Ben I wept freely and felt relieved. Prayed to God to enable me to bear this great affliction, and to be resigned to his righteous will in all things.

May 3d 1866

Three years this day since my Only son was slain in battle[.] His precious remains only reached here the first day of this month. It has been the desire of my heart and my earnest prayer ever since the day of his death that this might be accomplished, and when I heard that it had reached here, it was a melancholy pleasure, and opened afresh the fountain of my grief, but it was such a gratification, and I felt so grateful, that my first impulse was to

retire and to pour out my heart in humble gratitude and praise to God for all his mercies to me a poor unworthy sinner.

How comforting to think that the providence of God is as surely over those who fall, as over those who are preserved.

The twenty fourth Birth day of my only Son

September 28th 1866

A day long and ever to be remembered The birth day of my first Child and only Son. The day I became a Mother Little did I think that day when I gave birth to this dear Son that he would be slain in battle.

But our Heavenly Father knows best, and doeth all things well. He only seeth the end from the beginning. It is earnest prayer that I may have grace given me to feel, and say from the *heart*, Thy will be done, and: Oh' enable me to live in such a way that I may never be afraid to die. That living or dying I may be thine.

May 3^{d} 1868 Sunday

Five years this day since My dear Ben my only son was killed in the battle of Chancellorsville.

It was a bright Sabbath morning and although unconcious of what a great affliction had befallen me, I remember while in Church an unaccountable sadness come over me, and I wept freely which in some measure relieved the sadness. I did not hear of the death of my precious Son for two weeks after the battle[.] We knew the battle had been fought, and that we had gained a great victory and that many of our dear ones had fallen. The suspense was heart rending, but my darling had been spared through so many battles, I could not avoid indulging the hope that I would again receive one of his sweet affectionate letters acknowledging the goodness and mercy of his heavenly Father in sparing his life.

But I had received the last of those precious letters, with the exception of an unfinished one found in his knapsack[.] He was always so prompt in writing that several of my friends felt uneasy at my not hearing for such a length of time but our town was occupied and it was very difficult to get letters through at the time that I hoped for the best. But my darling was no more. . . .

The 3^{d} day of May [1869] a day long to be remembered Six years this day since my dear and only son was slain in battle. I have felt sad so sad this day thinking of my darling Ben how precious he was to his Mother, how affectionate and kind.

Lord have mercy upon me thy unworthy servant and enable me to be resigned to thy righteous will in all things.

I find the following pieces in a little Diary kept by my dear Boy while in the Army.

'How pleasant it is when away from home thrown upon own resources as we now are, to remember the friends we have left behind particularly at this hour when the sun is growing fainter, and we know that night will draw them around the family hearth and altar. Weeks seem lengthened into months[,] how often do my thoughts hover around the loved ones at home[,] how bitter would the separation be but for the sweet [alleys] of

memory[.] Home is the sweetest and most fertile Oasis in the great desert of life. Home, thy joys are passing lovely, joys stronger heart can tell.

Trees are now in full foliage[,] the woods are gay with their fresh young leaves, blooms cluster upon the vine and fruit trees, the land is clothed in the varigated hues of Spring time and enlivened by the merry chirping of birds.'

. . . . . .

What a comfortable doctrine it is when we can feel that Nothing can hurt us except and until God permits. We are all immortal till our work is done.

To realize that nothing happens in this world except by the eternal counsels of our Father and according to his eternal plans is one grand secret of living a c[al]m, peaceful, and contented life[.][11]

N.S. White's bereavement is simply stated in one paragraph of his brief will, dated the 23d of May 1870:

" I desire to be buried in a plain, inexpensive and unostentatious manner by the side of my dear son in the Cemetery of the Episcopal Church in this place."[12]

He died in 1888 and his wife, Fredericka, in 1891. Both rest beside their son in Zion Churchyard, Charles Town. They were later joined there by their daughter, her children and some of her grandchildren.

Edited by Frederica H. Trapnell

11. cf. Douglas, pp. 16-17, and Henderson, pp. 166-167.
12. Jefferson County Will Bk. A., p. 386. Proved 10 Nov. 1888.
Note also:
Mag. of Jeff. Co. Hist. Soc. Vol. 38, 1972, p. 39.
Proceedings of Clarke Co. Hist. Assn. Vol. 9, 1949, p. 32.

Simple Inscriptions and Sentiment Tell the Impressive Tale: Letters of General Robert E. Lee to Miss Louisa Fontaine Washington

The sad occasion that initiated this correspondence between General Robert E. Lee and Miss Louisa Fontaine Washington was the death on September 13, 1861, of her father, Lieutenant Colonel John Augustine. Colonel Washington, aid de camp, and assistant adjutant general, shared a tent with Lee on his first Civil War campaign on the western Virginia front at muddy Cheat Mountain in August and September 1861. United States pickets shot and killed Louisa's 40-year-old father while he was reconnoitering the Federal position on Elkwater. Lee and Washington had shared more than a tent; they had family connections and mutual associations that dated from Lee's boyhood in Alexandria.[1]

Colonel Washington's death left his seven children, ranging in ages from three to seventeen, orphans as their mother, Eleanor Love Selden, had died the previous year.[2] After selling Mount Vernon in 1858, John Augustine had moved his young family to Waveland in Fauquier County. At the beginning of the Civil War, he had returned his family to his birthplace, Blakeley, in Jefferson County, which his brother, Richard

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This remarkable set of letters from General Robert E. Lee are among the few that have not been previously accessible to scholars and others who are fascinated by Lee and the Civil War. Only one letter has ever appeared in print. Mr. Roger J. Perry, The Hill, Charles Town, West Virginia, graciously brought the existence of the letters to the attention of the Society and secured the necessary consent of the owners to publish. Mrs. John R. Smucker of Alexandria, Virginia, and Mrs. John Beebe of White Stone, Virginia, have very kindly permitted the appearance of these letters. The manuscripts were among the effects of the late Margaret Preston Chew (February 1, 1883-February 16, 1972), a charter member of this Society and last surviving child of Roger Preston Chew and Louisa Fontaine Washington.

1. Douglas Southall Freeman, *R.E. Lee: A Biography* (4 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), I, 489, 554-569, 639; Boyd B. Stutler, "Death of Col. John Augustine Washington, CSA at Elkwater," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, XXVII (December 1961), 15-19
2. Tombstone, Zion Episcopal Church Yard, Charles Town, W.Va.

Blackburn Washington, owned. His children would remain at Blakeley throughout the war.[3]

Louisa Fontaine Washington, the eldest child who was born at Mount Vernon on February 19, 1844, became the object of Lee's letters because of her nominal headship of her brothers and sisters. In 1871, she would marry Colonel Roger Preston Chew, who had a distinguished Confederate military career and who became a prominent Charles Town civic and business leader. She died on July 1, 1927, and was buried at Zion Episcopal Church, Charles Town.[4]

The initial letter to Miss Washington was the first of many in which General Lee would have to advise the closest relative of a death. In this case, the solemn duty involved more because Washington was a respected intimate.

Camp on Valley River
September 16, 1861

My dear Miss Louisa,

With a heart filled with grief, I have to communicate the saddest tidings you have ever heard.

May 'Our Father, Who is in Heaven' enable you to bear it, for in His inscrubtable Providence, abounding in mercy and omnipotent in power, He has made you fatherless on earth.

Your dear father, in reconnoitering the enemy's position, came into the range of fire of his pickets and was instantly killed. He fell in the cause to which he had devoted all his energies, and in which his noble heart was enlisted. My intimate association with him for some months has more fully disclosed to me his great worth, than double so many years of ordinary intercourse would have been sufficient to reveal. We have shared the same tent, and morning and evening has his earnest devotion to Almighty God elicited my grateful admiration. He is now happy in Heaven, I trust with her he so loved on earth. We ought not to wish him back.

May God, in His mercy, my dear child, sustain you, your sisters and

3. John A. Washington, "Harewood Residents Since Samuel Washington and Notes on Richard B. Washington and the Last Years at Blakeley and Claymont," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society,* XXXVIII (December 1972), 60-1.

4. Millard Kessler Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County* (Boyce, Va.: Carr Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), 408-409; Julia Davis, "Chew's Flying Battery," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society,* XL (December 1974) 13-25; Tombstone, Zion Episcopal Church Yard, Charles Town, W.Va.

brothers under this heavy affliction. My own grief is so great, I will not afflict your further with it.

Faithfully your friend,

R.E. Lee

Miss Louisa Washington[5]

Lee's sad note, informing Miss Washington of her father's death, had been forwarded with a cover letter to Mr. Edward C. Turner which related the circumstances of his compatriot's death and his disposition of the body and effects. Apparently, Turner, at the time or later, gave a copy of the letter to Louisa. Lee's emotion showed in his writing and in his one deletion.

Camp at Valley River
14 Sept. 1861

My Dear Edward,

I have the most melancholy tidings to communicate. Our friend, Col. John A. Washington, yesterday met his death by the fire from the enemy's picket. He accompanied my son, Fitzhugh, on a reconnoitering expedition and I fear was carried too far by his zeal for the cause of the South which he had so much at heart. Before they were aware they were fired upon by a concealed party who fired about 40 shots at four men. He was the only person struck and fell dead from his horse. Three balls went through Fitzhugh's horse. The horse of one of the men was killed. F. mounted Col. W's horse and brought off his sword. The spot where the Col. fell was in range of the enemy's cannon. I recd. his body through the courtesy of the commanding Genl. of the ~~United States~~ troops under a flag of truce this morning, I will forward it to Manassas Junction where I hope you will meet it and have it interred where his family desire.

His death is a grevious affliction to me, but what must it be to his bereaved children and distressed relatives. The Country has met with a great loss in his death. Our enemies have stamped their attack upon our rights with additional infamy by killing the lineal descendant and representative of him who under guidance of Almighty God established them and by his virtues rendered our republic immortal.

I enclose a note for his daughter. May God have mercy on them all.

Truly & affly. yours,

R E Lee

Edwd. C. Turner

5. This letter, with minor variation, had been previously published: *Southern Churchman,* March 14, 1925, as quoted in Freeman, *Lee,* I, 569-70.

P.S. I will write to the Qt. Mstr. at Manassas to which his remains will be consigned to deliver them to your order.

R.E.L.

2nd P.S. I have received his watch, pocket book, and the papers that were on his person—placed them in his valise with his keys. I have also determined to send on his horse and servant and have placed his remains and effects in charge of Lt. Carrington who has promised to make the best disposition of them possible. I cannot attend to them personally being now in pursuit of the enemy.

Lee pens his next letter to Miss Louisa during a very melancholy time in his career. On August 31, 1862, at Second Manassas, he had tripped and severely injured his hands, breaking a bone in one and badly spraining the other, while trying to control his bolting mount, Traveller. He could not dress himself with his left hand, nor sign his name with his right until the second week of October. At the time of writing this letter, Lee had learned of the death on October 20, of his 23-year-old daughter Annie, at Warren White Sulphur Spring, North Carolina.[6]

After the retreat across the Potomac from Antietam Creek, Maryland, Lee supervised the defense of Virginia from his headquarters at Falling Waters, Berkeley County. When a sizeable Union contingent crossed the Potomac at Shepherdstown toward the Confederate front at Smithfield (Middleway), Lee rode to the area to examine the situation.[7] Perhaps his personal grief and current location reminded him of the Washington children and the regard that he had for his family.

Camp on Washingtons run
25 Oct 1862

My dear Miss Lou

I Cannot express how often I think of you & how I wish to See you & your Sisters & brother. My daily hope is that Some favourable Circumstance will occur to bring me near you & that I may have that pleasure; & yet pleasure is so rare a visitant to my Camp, that I am far from felling Sanguine. I have wished to write to you Since my arrival in your neighborhood, but a painful injury recd on the field of Manassa deprived me of the use of both of my hands & though it occurred eight weeks since, I am only now beginning to use my right hand & write with difficulty & pain.

6. Freeman, *Lee,* II, 340, 420-21.
7. *Ibid.,* 423-24.

Tell me how you are & where you are & how I Can See you? Custis[8] has left me now & I presume you would not be afraid even to Come to Camp. I will not let any of the young men look at you. Present me very kindly to your Sisters & little brother &

believe me with much affection

Most truly yours

R. E. Lee

Miss Louisa Washington

General Lee responded to Miss Washington's letter about the capture of her cousin, Charles Armistead Alexander, after the retreat from Gettysburg and while he prepared for a threatened attack from General George G. Meade along the Rapidan River between Rapidan Station and Wilderness Church, Virginia.[9]

Rapidan 13 Nov '63

My dear Miss Louisa

I rec[d] last night your letter of the 4th Inst: in reference to your Cousin Charles Alexander.[10] I am very Sorry to hear of his Condition & hope that his release may be effected & his health restored. I have written to Commr. Ould[11] on the Subject. There is no general exchange of prisoners now, but the U.S. authorities have in Some Cases Consented to the exchange of the Sick & wounded. I have requested Mr. Ould to endeavour to effect his exchange in this way. It is all that I can do.

I wish I Could See you again & all your Sisters But I do not Know when I Can have that pleasure. You must remember me very Kindly to them & your brother. It is So uncertain whether this will ever reach you that I may add that I am with great affection most resp[t] yours

R E Lee

Miss Louisa Washington

8. His eldest son, George Washington Custis Lee, born on September 16, 1832.
9. Freeman, *Lee*, III, 188-205.
10. Charles Armistead Alexander, May 12, 1843-March 27, 1864, was the only son of Miss Washington's father's sister, Maria. Tombstone, Zion Episcopal Church Yard, Charles Town, W.Va.; Washington, "Harewood Residents . . .and Notes on Richard B. Washington . . .," 61.
11. Robert Ould (1820-1882), district attorney for the District of Columbia before the war, served as Confederate Assistant Secretary of War and Confederate Commissioner of Exchange (Prisoner). See J.B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary* . . . . (2 vols.; New York: Old Hickory Bookshop, 1935), I, 102, 143; Edward Younger, ed., *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean, Head of the Bureau of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 27.

Although the envelope containing the next letter was postmarked August 31 in Richmond and addressed in care of Dr. Fontaine Lippett, the year of its origin cannot be established. Also, the accompanying letter cannot be located. If the letter were composed in 1865, Lee was in Powhatan County, Virginia, on August 31, 1865, preparing to travel to Lexington to assume the presidency of Washington College.[12]

My dear Louisa,

I have kept the accompy letter for you during the whole war. It is the last that was ever written by your dear father & was sent from the road down Elkwater, a few moments before he met his death.

You know how I have Sorrøwed at his loss, but you cannot Know what great love I feel towards you, your Sisters & brother. I hope Some day to enjoy the pleasure of Seeing you all. Please accept my affectionate regards & believe me most truly yours

R E Lee

Miss Louisa A. Washington

The last two letters were written after General Lee had assumed the presidency of Washington College. One communication is routine, but the other is more significant.

Lexington Va: 1 Janr 1868

My dear Miss Louisa

I enclose you a letter recd this mint. I replied to the writer that I intended to dø So, & was sure that you & your brothers & sisters would be glad to receive the manuscripts mentioned; & gave him your Uncle Richards address—Should he not hear from him, within a reasonable time, it might be well for him to inform Mr. Osborne how he Could transmit him the papers with Safety.

Wishing you & all with you many happy years of usefulness & enjoyment

I am most truly your friend

R E Lee

Miss Louisa A. Washington

12. Freeman, *Lee,* IV, 210-25.

Lexington Va: 11 Dec[r] 1868

My dear Miss Louisa

Your letter by some untoward incident got mislaid the day of arrival & has only Come to light this morg. I hope therefore that you will pardon the delay of my answer.

Simple inscriptions on monuments to the dead harmonize best with my feelings & are more in accordance with my taste: the name, date of birth & death on the front face, & Some Sentiment typical of their lives & characters, on the reverse, tell the impressive tale. In the case of your father, it might not be out of place to add to the inscription on the face, The last proprietor of Mount Vernon of the family of Washington: & Sentiment on the reverse might embody the ancient maxim, which none felt more strongly than himself, It is honourable & glorious to die for our Country. In the present State of affairs it would not be well I think to state more particularly his devotion & sacrifice to his state.

You must Consider what I have written merely as a suggestion, which you must reject or follow as you may think best. In this matter it is proper that your sentiments & feelings should be Consulted rather than those of others, & I prefer that they be strictly Complied with.

I have been obliged to be brief & to write amid many interruptions.

With my kindest regards to your Sisters & Sincere love for yourself I am most truly yours

R E Lee

Miss Louisa F. Washington

The Washington family chose another epitaph for the monument over the remains of Lieutenant Colonel John A. Washington. It was from the second epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Chapter 4, verse 7:

I have fought a good fight,
I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith:[13]

Edited by John E. Stealey, III
Shepherd College

13. Tombstone, Zion Episcopal Church Yard, Charles Town, W.Va.

Summer Picnic

Did you miss the annual summer Society picnic? Chances are you won't next year after hearing what a huge success it was.

The picnic which was planned for the beautiful yard at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Blackwell Davis, South Samuel Street, Charles Town, on August 11, 1982 was moved inside as the weatherman decided at 5:00 p.m. it was time for a bit of precipitation. How gracious and hospitable were the Davis' to let us spread our party, members, friends and food throughout their lovely home.

Well over one hundred folks were on hand to enjoy the fried chicken and delicious casseroles, deviled eggs, salads which required a long sideboard and two small tables to hold them. Then, of course, there was cake, cookies, iced tea and a basket of beautiful cantaloupes.

Capt. John Schley of Shepherdstown served as picnic Chairman. He was assisted by his wife, Jean, Julia Creamer, Frances Hellborn and Florence Moore. Mike Henderson of Shepherdstown entertained with his songs and guitar before the start of the picnic.

If you didn't get notice of this picnic, perhaps you should check your mailing address. You will certainly want to "come along" in 1983.

Mrs. C. William Moore