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Magazine of the

Jefferson County Historical Society

Volume XVIII

December 1952

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Magazine of the

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Volume XVIII December 1952

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JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized May 21, 1927

OFFICERS

President—Mrs. Robert Browse, Charles Town, W. Va.

Vice-President—A. D. Kenamond, Shepherdstown, W. Va.

Recording Secretary—Thornton T. Perry, Jr., Charles Town, W. Va.

Corresponding Secretary—Ella May Turner, Shepherdstown, W. Va.

Treasurer—Anne S. (Mrs. Clarence) Hobart, Charles Town, W. Va.

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Directors—Sallie Lee Powell, Shepherdstown; Susan Gregg Gibson, Charles Town; J. Burns Huyett, Charles Town; Anne Lloyd Baylor, Charles Town; Margaret P. Chew, Charles Town; Thomas R. Moore, Charles Town.

ADDRESSES

Delivered before the Society since December 1, 1951

May 21 at Charles Town—William L. Wilson, the Scholar in Politics, by Dr. Festus P. Summers.

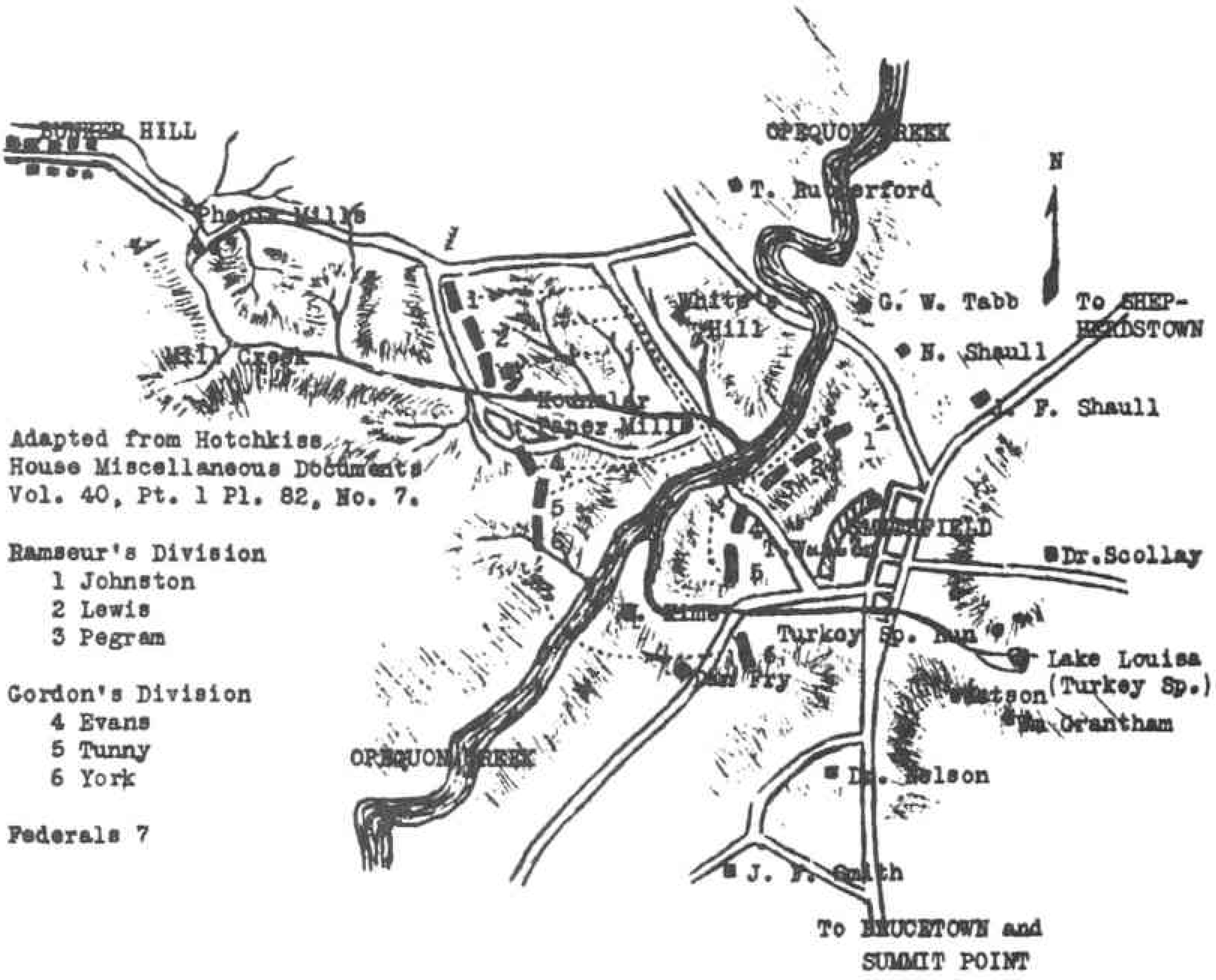
November 26 at Charles Town—The Reverend Abner C. Hopkins, D. D., by J. Burns Huyett; Postmasters and Post Offices in Charles Town, by Thornton T. Perry, Jr.

Price of the Magazine—The latest issue, 75 cents a copy; other issues, $1.00 a copy. Copies of the 1937, 1938, 1940, 1942, 1943, and 1944 issues are no longer available.

"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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ENGAGEMENT AT OPEQUON BRIDGE AND SMITHFIELD, VA.
MONDAY, AUG. 29, 1864.



THE BATTLE OF SMITHFIELD

(A chapter from "The Story of Smithfield" by Robert L. Bates, which he says is not designed as the story of a great battle, but only typical of the warfare in Jefferson County.)

It would be a difficult task for a writer adequately to describe the maneuvers of contending forces prior to a battle. The whole matter is in a state of flux; Not only from hour to hour, but from minute to minute. During the early part of August, 1864, General Philip Sheridan was in the vicinity of Halltown in Jefferson County. General Jubal A. Early left the vicinity of Shepherdstown and moved across the Opequon Creek towards Bunker Hill. Southern troops were also coming in from beyond Winchester. Headquarters were established near Bunker Hill which was the focus of this concentration. Skirmishing was taking place over a wide terrain.

The Confederates crossed the Opequon Creek in force on the afternoon of August 21, 1864. The Southern cavalry made an assault upon a body of Northern cavalry, the object being to get between the detachment and its main army. When General Sheridan noted what was taking place, he ordered Wilson, his cavalry commander, to fall back towards Berryville and to join General Wesley Merritt. General Wright who commanded the 6th Corps, of federal troops, upon hearing that the Confederates had crossed the Opequon, ordered his men to hold themselves in a state of readiness for immediate action. But before his orders could be carried out, firing was heard in the direction of Middleway. The Confederates were coming up from the direction of the Opequon and were pushing in the pickets of the Federals. General Ricketts was ordered to throw the 3rd Division into action in order to stop the Southerners' attack. Reinforcements from other Federal detachments began to arrive. An engagement was sharply fought near Cameron Depot (later known as Aldridge Station). General Sheridan was reluctant to commit battle as the strength of the Southern forces was not known to him. He at length ordered his whole force to fall

back towards Halltown. The Confederates followed the retreating Federals to Welch's Spring some two miles to the west of Charles Town. Union losses were reported at 260 killed and wounded. Confederate losses were not disclosed. The Union Army, Cyclopedia of Battles (p. 597), describes the engagement as the Battle of Middleway. It might well be known as the Battle of Cameron Depot, a place on the Valley Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, some three miles to the east of Middleway. At Welch's Spring the tide of battle turned. The Confederates now retired towards Opequon Creek.

For the greater part of the week following the Middleway engagement, there were numerous clashes between pickets, cavalry detachments and roving commands. On August 27th, General Sheridan reported that he had taken some prisoners and that the Confederates were retreating towards Middleway.

General Early, of the Confederate forces, was concentrating his strength on the west side of the Opequon. On August 25th, he had sent General Fitzhugh Lee, in command of a cavalry detachment, to Williamsport, Md., but General Lee had gotten so far as Leetown when he encountered Tolbert's cavalry and was compelled to retire towards Winchester. General Anderson was now in front of General Sheridan (Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, p. 505). But skirmishing continued. It would be futile to attempt to describe the various minor engagements that took place at this time—the days immediately preceding the 29th of August.

The savagery with which some of this skirmishing was done may be best told in the words of Colonel Harry Gilmor who commanded a cavalry detachment made up mostly of Marylanders in sympathy with the Southern cause (Four Years in the Saddle, Gilmor, p. 239). Colonel Gilmor had been campaigning in the South Branch Valley near Moorefield. Having met with reverses he crossed the mountains and arrived near Smithfield where he found the cavalry divisions of General Lomax and General Fitzhugh Lee already in position to the east and west of the

town. General Lomax directed Colonel Gilmor to move in the direction of Leetown and there relieve the pressure then being exerted on Colonel Johnson's brigade. Gilmor was given two battalions and was furthermore instructed to charge the Federals and drive them beyond Leetown. In the language of Gilmor:

> Well, I moved through Smithfield, and took the road to Leetown, and had not gone more than a mile and a half when I came upon Col. Evans in a wood, skirmishing in quite a lively way, his being the only regiment then on picket. He told me he did not think there was more than a regiment in our front. I told him that General Lomax wished him to re-establish his picket at Leetown, and, if he would form all his men on the left of the road, I would deploy some skirmishers on the right and advance on the enemy.

Colonel Gilmor vividly described the encounter.

> He (Colonel Gilmor's brother) had hardly deployed and commenced firing when the enemy made a dash at Evans, and ran his men pellmell out of the woods, scattering them in every direction. We opened with pistols from the road and checked them, but at this moment I saw a column, four abreast, coming down the turnpike at a charge. A sergeant was far ahead of them all; as he came out of the wood he was knocked out of the saddle by half a dozen balls.

Colonel Gilmor described a hand to hand encounter in which he participated at this time. His command had been practically surrounded by opposing cavalrymen. Both sides were cutting and slashing in a three mile running melee.

> I looked back and saw an officer making for me pistol in hand, shot after shot from it coming rapidly. I had not a load in mine, and expected every minute to get a ball in my back. I knew he was closing up, and, while looking over my shoulder, I saw him in the act of leaning over to put his pistol against my body. I leaned over all I could, hoping to receive only a glancing shot. I felt him push his muzzle against my side, and seemed to feel the bullet crashing through my frame.

Colonel Gilmor then related how he heard the click of the hammer and he knew that the pistol of the Federal officer, like his own, had no load in it. Then a saber duel ensued between the two men, and in Gilmor's words:

> The blow was a heavy one, and would have cleft his head open to the throat had it struck fair; as it was, the concussion must have

killed him but for the thick felt army hat. The man rolled from his horse, but was on his feet in an instant. At the same moment I saw someone lean over on his horse and shoot him through the head.

The Opequon Creek had been the scene of many engagements throughout the period of the war. Some were major battles; many, perhaps most, were unrecorded.

General Merritt was in command of the detachment that was coming up from Leetown, and was driving back the Confederates. It was his men that caused so much trouble for Lee, Evans and Gilmor. The Confederate cavalrymen had retreated back through Smithfield and across the Opequon bridge by way of the Smithfield-Bunker Hill road.

The Opequon Creek is a small stream of varying width averaging about thirty feet at the place of the battle. Its banks, at some places, are precipitous and its bed is of uneven depth. There are few places, however, where a horse could not wade from one side to the other.

On August 28th, General Merritt crossed the Opequon, drove the Confederates towards Bunker Hill and returned to Smithfield where he camped for the night. The Union soldiers then set fire to some dwellings in the town—to intimidate or to banter the Confederates across the creek. The homes of Mrs. Ariana Hughes, Mrs. Ruth Ringer, Miss Mary Moore and Dr. William O. Macoughtry were burned to the ground. Dr. Macoughtry was a strong partisan of the South, his son, James, having been seriously wounded at the second Battle of Manassas in the service of the Confederacy.

The Confederates across the creek saw the sky illuminated. Their indignation arose as they surmised what was happening. On the 29th, General Ramseur, with his command, recrossed the stream and, in a hand to hand fight, drove back a body of Federal cavalry. The Federals then took possessnon of the hill top a few hundred yards west of the town, where sections of Williston's battery were planted on each side of the road. A Pennsylvania detachment dismounted and made a barricade of fence rails

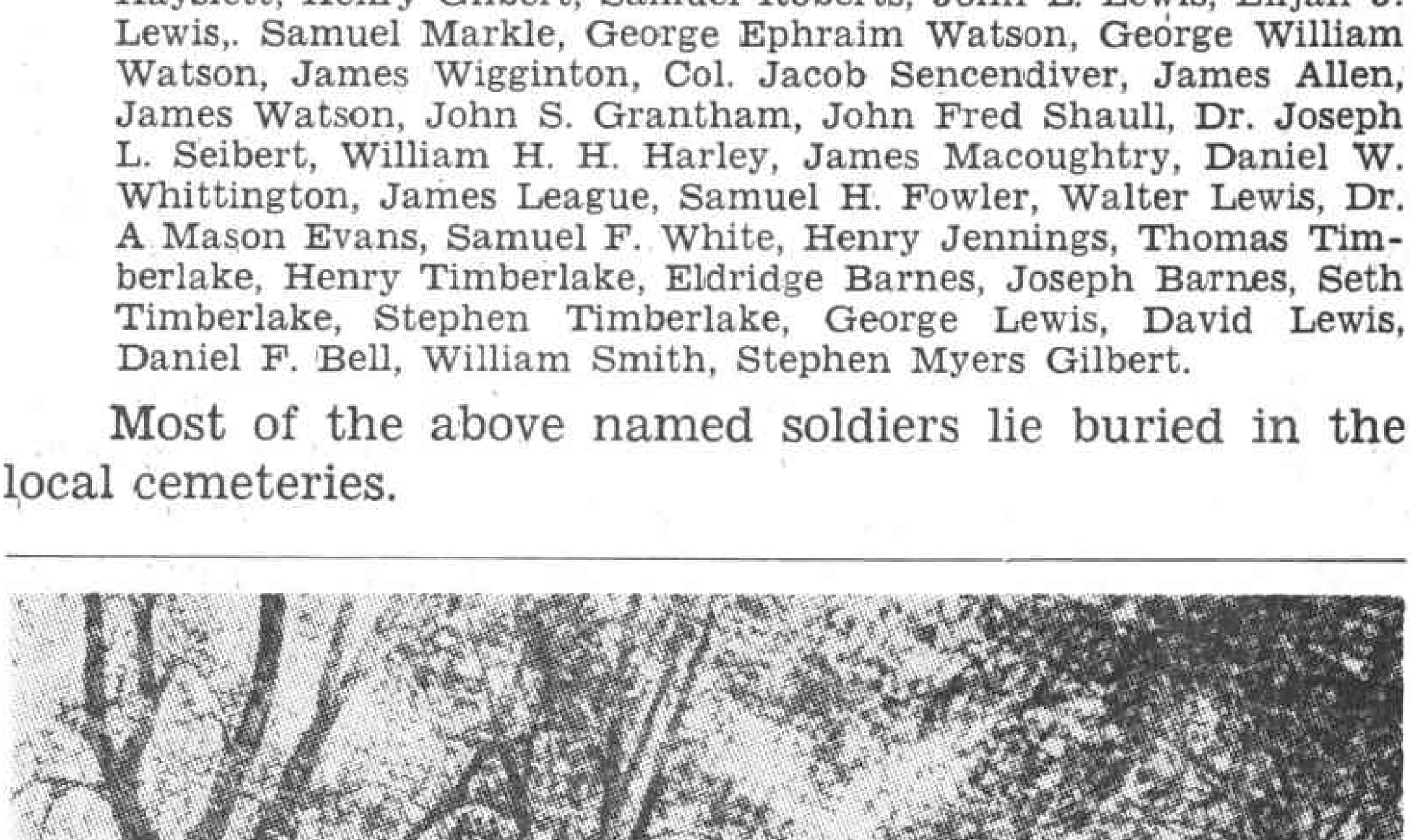
at this point. A second detachment consisting mostly of New York Dragoons also dismounted and took positions along this ridge looking westward towards the Opequon. At 11:30 A. M., the Confederates opened fire with artillery. An hour later a strong body of infantry crossed the stream —one part crossing at or near the bridge and the other part above the bridge. The design was to attack Merritt on both flanks simultaneously. The Union forces gave way, but fighting ensued through the town and for some three miles down the Smithfield-Charles Town road. At this juncture General Rickett's division of the 6th Corps came to Merritt's aid. Here the Confederates gave up the attack and retired across the Opequon. The Confederates killed were mostly North Carolinians. They are buried in the Masonic Cemetery immediately behind the Masonic Hall. In this particular engagement the Union losses were placed at thirty-five killed and wounded; the Confederate losses, at ten killed and seventy-five wounded. This, however, did not take into account the casualties that resulted during the days of skirmishing that preceded the battle.

Mills had been burned in the vicinity of Middleway, and private dwellings in the town, in like manner had been destroyed in these four years of warfare. Farm lands and farm buildings had become dilapidated. The country had fared worse than the town. Fences had been thrown into disrepair, livestock had been commandeered by the opposing armies and food supplies had become depleted to the bare necessities of life. Parched grain, particularly corn, had been substituted for coffee. Sugar was a luxury that few could afford. Butter, eggs and like provisions, whenever they could be had, were bought at exorbitant prices. Shinplasters, a form of local script, had been used, but this, like other Confederate money proved to be valueless. The citizens at length lost their understanding of monetary values and resorted to an ancient form of dealing—barter and trade. However, the citizen who presumed to profiteer was remembered for decades after the war and opprobrium was heaped upon his memory.

The community of Middleway gave her young men to the Confederacy. A number were killed in action. Many more were wounded. No attempt was made, in compiling the list, to ascertain the commands to which they belonged. The old 55th Regiment, in which the people of Middleway had taken so much pride in former years, ceased to exist as a military organization, other commands having replaced it. The following names represent the soldiers of Middleway and vicinity who saw active services in the cause of the Confederacy:

Thomas Watson, Joseph D. Fry, John B. Farnsworth, J. Bart Watson, Henry Smith, Joseph D. Zombro, Thomas B. Zombro, J. W. Zombro, Thomas Myers, Stephen Myers, James Coyle, Richard Timberlake, J. L. Timberlake, Benjamin Whittington, J. W. Roberts, Joseph Minghini, Capt. Samuel Engle, George Engle, William Hayslett, Henry Gilbert, Samuel Roberts, John L. Lewis, Elijah J. Lewis,. Samuel Markle, George Ephraim Watson, George William Watson, James Wigginton, Col. Jacob Sencendiver, James Allen, James Watson, John S. Grantham, John Fred Shaull, Dr. Joseph L. Seibert, William H. H. Harley, James Macoughtry, Daniel W. Whittington, James League, Samuel H. Fowler, Walter Lewis, Dr. A Mason Evans, Samuel F. White, Henry Jennings, Thomas Timberlake, Henry Timberlake, Eldridge Barnes, Joseph Barnes, Seth Timberlake, Stephen Timberlake, George Lewis, David Lewis, Daniel F. Bell, William Smith, Stephen Myers Gilbert.

Most of the above named soldiers lie buried in the local cemeteries.



ROSEBRAKE

ROSE BRAKE 0R POPLAR GROVE

A word picture out of a little girl's memory of six years, beginning in 1859, spent at "Poplar Grove" on the south border of Shepherdstown along the Kearneysville Pike may still be used to describe the setting of the historic old home now called "Rose Brake."

"From the first day of taking possession of our house and the beginning of building the addition, we children had a beautiful time, first exploring and then appropriating in childhood's own happy fashion, the fields with their rock brakes, springs and marshes full of all manner of wild treasures, the farmyard like a little village with its numerous buildings, the charming orchard, the dear old garden full of every sort of old-fashioned herb and flower, and last but by no means least, the grove of magnificent oaks and tulip poplars from which the place had been named. The land rolled away westward from the house most picturesquely, gray limestone rocks cropped out here and there, gray stone walls surrounded it and the great forest trees studded the grassy slopes and crowned the hilltops with grandeur."

This is the memory Mary Bedinger Mitchell had of the place thirty years later, and Mrs. Mitchell's gift of poetic expression in describing it evidences the close kinship of sister to the nature poet, Danske Bedinger Dandridge. Their daughters, Miss Nina Mitchell and Miss Serena Dandridge, heirs to the property, and both talented artists, live at "Rose Brake" now and are famous for their gracious hospitality and for interesting guests assembled from all over the world.

"Rose Brake" or "Poplar Grove" has been in possession of the Bedinger family for the past ninety-three years, though there was a period following the War Between the States when it was not occupied by any Bedinger. From 1873 to 1877 Col. Alexander R. Boteler, former member of Congress, and his family lived here. Then Danske Bedinger Dandridge and her husband, Stephen Dandridge, came back from "The Bower" in

Berkeley county to her old home at "The Grove," which she rechristened "Rose Brake."

Here, in the grove of ancient trees, and among rare specimens she gathered from far places, Danske Dandridge wrote the lyrical nature poetry that brought her fame. "Historic Shepherdstown" is best known among her several volumes on local history.

It was on July 13, 1859 that the place came into possession of the Bedinger family. The purchase was made, on the advice of the Lees of "Bedford," by Caroline Lawrence Bedinger. Her husband, Henry Bedinger, had died of typhoid pneumonia late in the fall of 1858, only a few months after his return from Copenhagen, where he had served as Minister to Denmark, having been first appointed Charge d'Affaires to Denmark by President Pierce in 1853. Caroline Lawrence and Henry Bedinger had met in Washington in 1845, when he and her father, John W. Lawrence, of Flushing, L. I., served together in Congress.

Left a widow, Mrs. Bedinger desired a place where her three children would be taught the meaning of home in the early years that would shape and mould their lives. These children were then approximately nine, six and four years of age. Mary, who became Mrs. Mitchell, was born at "Bedford" on August 3, 1850; Henry, who later entered the ministry, was born at "Willow Bank," the beautiful home of the Lawrences on Long Island, on July 21, 1853; and Caroline Dane, who was never known by any name other than Danske (the little Dane), was born in Copenhagen on November 19, 1854.

"The Grove," then a tract of fifty-two acres, was bought for $5,000 from G. Ernst, trustee for Margaret VanDoren, John Reynolds and Kate, his wife. It had been transferred on April 11, 1854 from H. V. S. Blackford, who bought it on January 1, 1850 from Elizabeth Ranson, into whose hands it had passed on June 28, 1833 in the division of the land of Daniel Morgan, son of Abel Morgan and grandson of Richard Morgan. "Rosebrake"

or "Poplar Grove," owned by the Bedinger family for the past ninety-three years, had earlier belonged to the Morgan family for some ninety-six years.

The mansion on this estate has had three stages of growth. The white lath and plaster kitchen wing of the present house is believed to be at least a part of the original building erected in the pioneer days of Richard Morgan. This is the part whch Mrs. Bedinger referred to as the "back-building" when she bought the place.

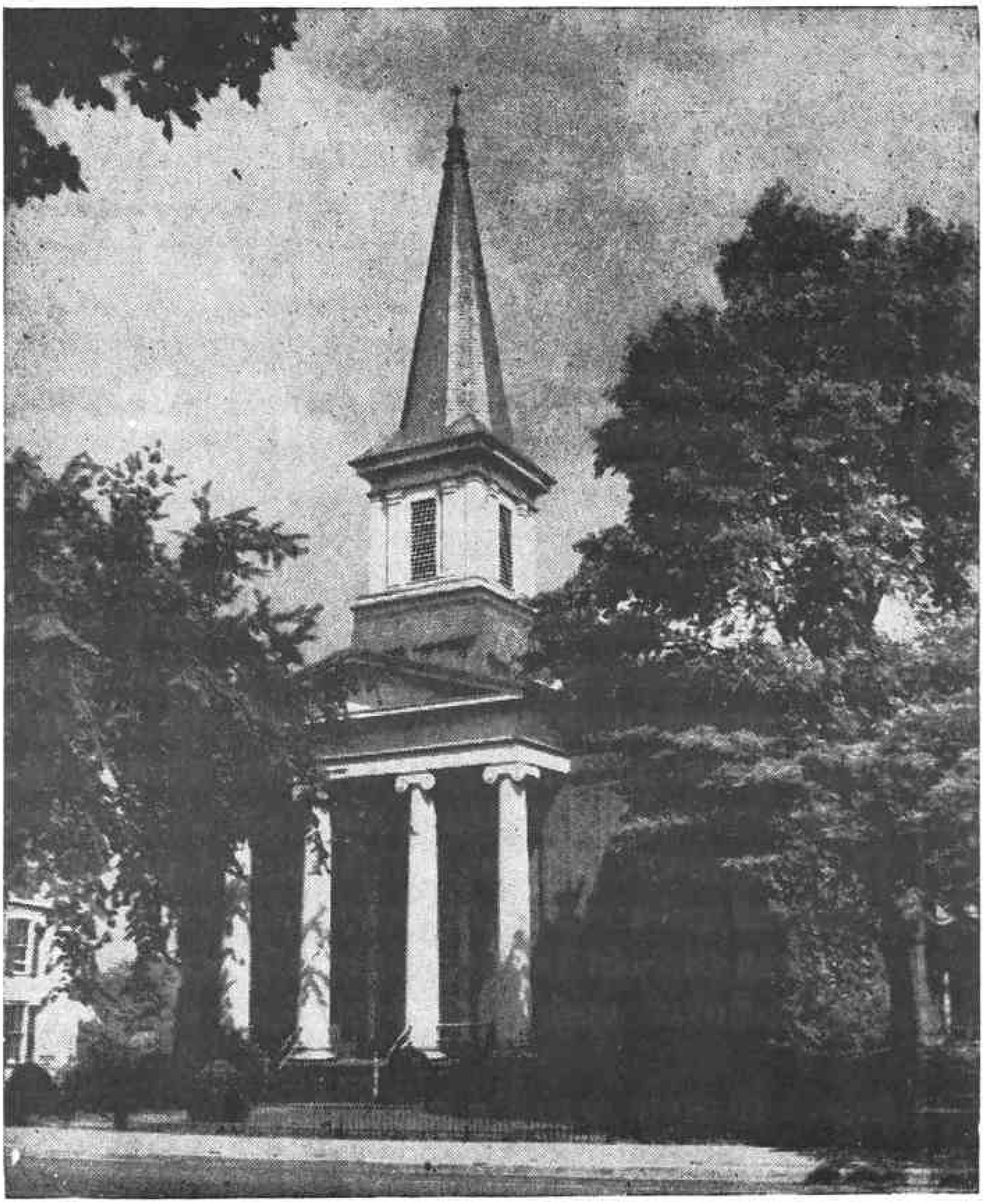
This "back-building" was a less pretentious home than that desired by Daniel Morgan, who owned and occupied the place for about thirty years prior to 1833. According to the Harpers Ferry Press, June 12, 1825, Daniel Morgan "gave an elegant dinner" on the fiftieth anniversary of the Bee Line March, which occasion was doubtless well served by the more commodious "Great House" addition to the "back-building." This addition had four rooms, built of brick painted cream color, with a fireplace in each end, and two cellars and an attic. It faced, and still faces, northeast. In this home Daniel Morgan and his wife, Mary Lourie, enjoyed gracious living, and beside it they planted the wistaria which is marvelously beautiful today. In the grove not far from this house there is a rock on which the initials M. M. and a pansy are carved. It is believed the carving was done by Mary Lourie during her happy years as Mary Morgan.

The third stage of growth was after 1859 when the large red brick "wing" containing six rooms was added by Mrs. Bedingtr. It is said that her building plans were only partially carried out in this wing, now the main part of the house and facing northwest toward the beautiful grove that gave the place its original name.

THE REVEREND ABNER C. HOPKINS, D. D.

Dr. Hopkins was born in Powhatan County, Virginia, on October 24, 1835. He was graduated from Hampden Sydney College in 1855 and spent two years teaching. He then took a full course in Union Theological Seminary, and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1860. He was installed as minister of the Martinsburg Presbyterian Church that same year.

In 1862 hostile troops captured Martinsburg, his congregation was scattered, and he was compelled to leave. This young preacher immediately enlisted in the



CHARLES TOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Confederate Army as chaplain, serving under General Jackson and later with General Gordon, and was with

The Reverend
Abner C. Hopkins, D. D.



General Lee at the time of the surrender at Appomattox.

It was the writer's privilege to have known many Confederate soldiers, many of whom had been in several engagements with Chaplain Hopkins. They would tell of his cool bravery in time of battle, of his indifference to danger in the rescue of the wounded, and his unremitting attention to both temporal and spiriual wants of the soldiers. The cheerfulness with which he shared in all of their hardships, privations and peril endeared him to them and won for him their admiration and love.

One of these soldiers told me that this chaplain had been known to grab a gun from a fallen comrade and rush forward with his comrades to win a victory. He related an instance when the boys in gray were being beaten back, that Chaplain Hopkins waved his old army hat and asked the boys to follow him, thus turning a rout into victory.

As long as he lived he always had a warm spot in his heart for Confederate soldiers. He helped many a soldier to regain confidence in himself and start life anew after the war. One of his daughters once said it was hard for

her father to believe that a Confederate soldier could do any wrong.

After the war this young ex-army chaplain preached in Willis Church in W. Hanover for a few months. While there, he was called to the Charles Town Presbyterian Church, where he was installed as its pastor on December 9, 1866. Here he spent the balance of his life as pastor of this church for forty-five years. Shortly after coming to Charles Town he received his doctor's degree from Hampden Sydney College.

Dr. Hopkins had more human qualities than any preacher I have ever known. I have seen him smoke a good cigar and heard him discuss business affairs with the best businessmen in our town. His judgment was respected in church circles. Once when Presbytery was meeting in Berkeley Springs, the Doctor was detained at home by pastoral duties, and he could not get to the meeting until the second day. An important matter had come up before the Presbytery the first day, but all agreed to lay the matter on the table until the next day in order to have his judgement on the subject.

Before the days of prohibtion, Charles Town had about a dozen saloons. The question was put before the County Court whether or not to renew the licenses of these saloons for the ensuing year. The Court set aside a certain day to hear arguments by proponents of both sides of the matter. The courthouse was filled to overflowing with representative citizens of the county. The liquor people employed the best legal talent available to present their side of the case. Those opposing the saloons presented a petition signed by many hundreds of names, and had Dr. Hopkins to present their side of the case. He outlined before the Court many reasons why the saloons should be closed and ended his argument by telling the Court that nothing good could be said about the liquor business, and that no saloons should exist in our town. The Court refused to grant the liquor licenses, and from that day to this there never has been a saloon in Charles Town. After the meeting one of the

saloon men said, "We were doing all right until Dr. Hopkins spoke—he ruined us. People will believe anything he tells them."

Arthur Hawkes, a noted lecturer and author, who was a former native of Charles Town, once wrote an article on the city of his birth. He called it "Homeville", and he described Dr. Hopkins as "The Bishop of Homeville". I quote one paragraph from this article:

> "If you are sick or in trouble, or if Death comes a-knocking at your door, it doesn't make any difference what church you are a member of, you send for the Bishop and he comes. And if you are away outside—not belonging to any church—why his hand is ready to clasp yours and his eye fills with the dew of pity as he helps you. "But if you are a fraud or hyprocrite or an unrepentant wrongdoer, you had better keep away from the Bishop.
> "He is an ideal gentleman.
> "He is as gentle as a woman and as manly as a man."

Dr. Hopkins was everybody's preacher. He shared the pleasures and sorrows of nearly every family in the community. He attended their weddings and was the first to visit them in time of trouble. One day a man asked the Doctor if he would preach his funeral when he died. The Doctor replied that it would give him a great deal of pleasure to preach his funeral. A little later when he realized what he had said and how it sounded, he was very much embarrassed.

Dr. Hopkins was a very industrious man. He had an amteur workshop in the basement of the Manse. He was a very fine craftsman. One time he built a sleigh, and because he thought it a little too small for him, he gave it to Dr. Mason, who lived across the street from him, and made another sleigh that suited him better. When he hitched his driving horse, Coyle (named after Mr. John Coyle, who gave him the horse) to that sleigh, it was as fine an outfit as ever traveled down the pike.

He was a good businessman. He knew how to make a little money go a long ways. He never received a large salary, but he and Mrs. Hopkins raised and educated four fine sons and three nice daughters. Toward the latter end of his ministry, he had a contractor build for him one of the nicest houses in Charles Town, and he lived in this home the last few years of his life. After his death two of his daughters continued to live here.

In 1861 he was married to Miss Anne Pleasants Atkinson, daughter of Reverend William Atkinson, of Winchester. They celebrated their Golden Wedding on May 16, 1911, just a few months before the death of Dr. Hopkins. Mrs. Hopkins died the following year. They were survived by six of their seven children.

He received the highest honors within the gift of his Church. During his ministry he served as Moderator of the Winchester Presbytery, of the Synod of Virginia and the General Assembly, and he was a trustee of the Union Theological Seminary.

Dr. Hopkins was beloved by everybody and was held in such high esteem by his fellow citizens that on the day of his funeral, during the funeral hour, all business houses were closed in respect to this great Christian soldier. Reverend F. M. Woods, D. D., of Martinsburg, conducted the funeral services, and he voiced the sentiments of the whole community when he applied the following quotation to Dr. Hopkins, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Israel today; A good man and full of the Holy Ghost."

J. Burns Huyett

November 1, 1952.

POSTMASTERS & POST OFFICES IN CHARLES TOWN, W. VA.

By T. T. Perry, Jr.

The first Postmaster of Charles Town was Mathew Frame, appointed January 30, 1799. (Early records of Mathew Frame also spell his name "Fraume" and Mathew with two "t's".) He had large land holdings in the western section of the town, built himself a large mill on Evitts Run where the water plant is now located. Kept a store in the building opposite Capt. Cherry's Tavern, where Hogan's School was conducted in 1857. The Winchester road passed between these houses and on the North side of the mill. This was the first post office in Charles Town.

The old Cherry Tavern, often called "Old Ordinary" or the "Long Tavern" was built before 1770 and torn down in 1881. It was on the corner of North and West streets, west of Lawrence street.

Mathew Frame was a prosperous merchant. At one time he ran Beeler's Mill, also on Evitts Run. He was a native of Ireland, married here and reared a family. His only son—John James Frame—was thrown from a gig and killed in 1834. The daughters married Fayette Washington, Dr. S. C. Snyder and ..... Beall. His residence was the oldest part of th "Hill Farm" mansion, now owned by Thorton T. Perry Sr. He lived to a good old age.

The first post office was established under the name of Charlestown. However, in various Post Office reports in the early 1800's it was ofen referred to as Charleston, Berkeley County, Va. Many early maps of this section show it as Charleston. At one time, when this was Virginia, we had three Charlestons in the State. Kanawha Court House was outgrown by Charleston and became a part of it. Wellsburg (W. Va.) was also called Charleston. Also, at various times, all three were referred to as Charlestown and appear thus on maps. The Post Office Department officially adopted the name of Charles Town on April 1, 1912.

The following list of Charlestown postmasters was supplied by the First Assistant Postmaster General: All spelling is theirs:

POASTMASTER	DATE APPOINTED
Mathew Frame	January 30, 1799 (Established)
John Humphreys rendered first account	July 1, 1803
Humphrey Keys	July 1, 1803
Humphrey Keys	June 15, 1813
Edward M. Aisquith	December 11, 1846
Jeremiah Harris	February 21, 1849
John P. Brown	April 3, 1849
John Reed	May 6, 1862
Alonzo D. Pratt	May 4, 1865
Benjamin F. Leisenring	October 26, 1865
Miss Maggie W. Johnson	December 4, 1867
Gideon Leisenring	June 19, 1872
B. F. Leisenring	December 13, 1877
George H. Flagg	March 29, 1886
Samuel H. Higginbotham	February 25, 1890
George H. Flagg	April 7, 1894
Louis D. Getzendaner	August 8, 1898
George Porterfield	December 16, 1903
Henry N. Bradley	September 28, 1907

Office changed to Charles Town, April 1, 1912.

S. C. Young	January 10, 1916
Henry C. Getbendaner	March 22, 1924
John W. Irvin ,Acting)	March 31, 1928
John W. Irvin	January 30, 1929
Thomas R. Moore (Acting)	June 1, 1933
Thomas R. Moore	February 20, 1934
Thomas R. Moore, Jr. (Acting)	February 1, 1943
Thomas R. Moore, Jr.	February 16, 1944
Frank L. Ronemus (Acting)	September 1, 1944
Thornton T. Perry, Jr. (Acting)	February 1, 1946
Thornton T. Perry, Jr.	March 28, 1946
(Still serving in 1952)	

Records of the Postal Department indicate the salaries of postmasters of Charlestown from 1846 through 1881 are as follows:

POSTMASTER	DATE APPOINTED	SALARY
Mathew Frame	January 30, 1799	No record
John Humphreys	(rendered 1st acct. July 1, 1803)	No record
Humphrey Keys	July 1, 1803	No record
Edward M. Aisquith	December 11, 1846	$306.03
Jeremiah Harris	February 21, 1849	No record
John P. Brown	April 3, 1849	$99.59
John Reed	May 6, 1862	$136.62
Alonzo D. Pratt	May 4, 1865	No record
Benjamin F. Leisenring	October 26, 1865	$760.00
Maggie W. Johnson	December 4, 1867	$920.00
G. Leisenring	June 19, 1872	$1000.00
B. F. Leisingring	December 13, 1877	$1500.00

Locations of Known Post Office Sites

1. Mathew Frame. Store close to corner of N. West St. and E. North St.
2. John Humphreys. Location not known, possibly store of Kearsley & Humphreys.
3. Humphrey Keys. First block W. Washington St., east end of Rosen's Dep't. Store.
4. Edward M. Aisquith. Across from Jefferson Hotel in the former Aisquith Building where Moffatt's Pharmacy now located. (Aisquith resigned to join the Charles Town Company of 49rs and left for California in search of gold.)
5. Jeremiah Harris. Location unknown. He was a successful farmer.
6. John P. Brown. Middle first block W. Washington St., north side.
7. John Reed. Location not known. Nothing known of him.
8. Alonzo D. Pratt. Nothing known of him.
9. Benjamin F. Leisenring. Small building between Jefferson Hotel & Moose Club.
10. Miss Maggie W. Johnson. Only woman Postmaster of Charles Town. Office where Pitts-Jefferson Theatre located, 2nd block W. Washington St.
11. Gideon Leisenring & B. F. Leisenring. Same location at their Father and Uncle.
12. George H. Flagg. Samuel H. Higginbotham and again George H. Flagg. All had offices in corner of Charles Washington Hall Bldg., corner W. Washington and N. George Sts.
13. Louis D. Getzendanner. Short stay in above location, then Citizens National Bank Building (the present Henesy Bldg.) 3rd Block W. Washington St. Moved to St. Margaret Bldg., N. George St., in 1898.
14. George Porterfield. Henry N. Bradley. S. C. Young. All had offices in the St. Margaret Bldg.
15. S. C. Young. Opened the new and present Post Office Bldg. in 1923.

Charles Town also had a Postmaster General in William L. Wilson. On October 1, 1896, during his administration, Rural Free Delivery was tried out for the first time, carriers leaving Charles Town, Uvilla and Halltown. One carrier, Melvin T. Strider, who carried from Uvilla, is still living, as is C. V. Garney, clerk in the Charles Town office, who helped pack the saddle bags of those who went forth at Charles Town.

Prior to the experiment, Captain George H. Flagg, Postmaster, had Mr. Garney solicit signatures of farmers who wished to have their mail carried. One prominent farmer refused, saying: "If I sign, then I wouldn't have an excuse to go to town each day to meet my friends and have a few drinks." However, many signed and now mail is carried to farmers all over America.

The Post Office Department was started September 26, 1789. The Charlestown office was opened ten years later. In the beginning the Post Office Department inherited from the Colonial set-up, 75 post offices and 1,075 miles of post roads. The first annual revenue amounted to $7,526, while the expenditures were $7,578; a deficit from the beginning. There are now approximately 43,000 post offices and the annual revenue of the Charles Town post office is more than five times the annual revenue from the whole country back in 1789. Virginia, which then included what is now West Virginia, had only thirteen post offices in 1789.

In 1795 the Potomac Guardian for July 4, had this to say: "A list of letters remaining at the Post Office at Martinsburg, which, if not taken up before the first of August next, will be sent to the General Post Office as dead letters". Among some of those listed were: "James Brattle, cabinet maker, Miss Fannie Baylor, Wm. Brown, merchant, Charlestown. William Blue "Inn Keeper" near Kerpiyet Furnace. Capt. Thos. Rutherford, junr. Charlestown. Benjamin Reeder, care of Wm. Pile, Key's Ferry, William Wilson, merchant, Gerrardstown. We wonder if they ever received their mail?

Up to the time the Charlestown post office opened, in 1799, citizens in this section had great difficulty receiving their mail. In 1825 under "Post Roads Established by Law" appears: "From Washington City, by Prospect, Lanesville, Leesburg, Waterford, Hillsborough, Charlestown, Shepherdstown, and Martinsburg, to Berkeley Springs." Also: "From Harper's Ferry, by Charlestown, and Battletown, to Winchester."

Charles Town has had only one woman Postmaster, Miss Maggie W. Johnson, 1867-1872. The Virginia Free Press, Dec. 12, 1867, says: "The charge of the Post Office has been transferred from the hands of B. F. Leisenring to those of Miss Maggie W. Johnson of this Town (Charlestown). We have no doubt the duties of the post will be well discharged, and that the appointment will prove to be a

satisfactory one to all of our citizens. Miss Johnson was the successful applicant among a number of competitors, some of whom were highly recommended, and we may presume that the tact she displayed in obtaining the office will be exhibited in performing its labors."

The most famous prisoner Jefferson County has ever had, was John Brown. Few people know that he had been postmaster in Randolph, Penna., for eight years. His accounting with the Post Office Department was considered above reproach at all times.

Prior to the issuance of the first stamps, letters accepted by postmasters for dispatch were marked "Paid" by means of pen and ink or hand stamps of various designs. Such letters usually contained the town post mark and date of mailing. The adoption of adhesive postage stamps in 1847, for use in the prepayment of postage on mail matter, respresented one of the most important single improvements in the history of the Postal Service in America. However, until January 1, 1856, when it was obligatory to use stamps, the above old method and the use of "Postmasters' Provisionals" (special adhesive stamps, put out by postmasters, some now worth up to $25,000 each) were used. Many of the former are to be found in Jefferson County.

During the Civil War years, the post offices overrun by either side were immediately taken possession of by that side. Charles Town and other Jefferson County offices changed hands many times. However, there was a steady flow of letters going back and forth, North and South. In Charles Town it was said that the U. S. Government appointee would work for the North when they were in possession and just as readily, when the Northerners were gone, for the South. They were usually more in sympathy with the South. Few Confederate stamps have ever been found on letters mailed in West Virginia.

The carrying of mail on foot in Charles Town was started during the postmastership of Henry N. Bradley, about 1912. Two carriers were appointed then, when there

was but little mail. Two carriers are all we have now and the mail has increased tremendously and the town is larger too. The local post office in 1952 employs seventeen men.

Author's Note:

Any person knowing of a picture of Miss Maggie W. Johnson or anything pertaining to John Reed and Alonzo D. Pratt, or any further interesting data about the Charles Town postoffice or its postal matters, will please inform Posmaster Thornton T. Perry, Jr.

CAPTAIN SHEPHERD AND GENERAL PINCKNEY IN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS IN 1800

This Magazine has received from Mrs. James B. Kemp, Charles Town, a copy of a letter written by Captain Abraham Shepherd on April 28, 1800, and of the reply made by General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, the two letters showing both gentlemen had a way of expressing themselves in no uncertain terms.

It appears that at this time Captain Shepherd had continuing responsibilities in connection with a canal project, near Harpers Ferry, which began with the organization of the Potomac Navigation Company in 1785 and were not discontinued after the resignation of James Rumsey from the superintendency thereof. Also, that General Pinckney, who had command of a body of United States troops quartered on Camp Hill between Harpers Ferry and Bolivar at that time, had his headquarters and made his home in Shepherdstown for at least four months early in 1800. There has been a little known tradition that he had a room or rooms in the Wynkoop Tavern, which passed into the possession of Rawleigh Morgan during the General's stay there. This property has been owned and occupied for more than two decades by Mrs. George W. Billmyer and is on lower German, or Main, Street in Shepherdstown.

Captain Shepherd's Letter

Shepherds Town April 28th 1800

Sir —

Upon reflection, since I spoke to you respecting furnishing the men to work at the canal, and from the uncertainty when they can be had, and the advanced state of the season, makes it necessary for me to acquire as much certainty as the case will admit.

I have therefore to request you will be pleased to let me know in writing, what may be the probable time I may calculate on being furnished with them.

I am, Sir, with respect

Your most obedt

Abraham Shepherd

Major General Pinckney

General Pinckney's Reply

Head Quarters at Shepherds Town
April 28th 1800

Sir —

The present sickly state of the cantonment has induced me to order the soldiers to encamp on the Hill. As soon as the fatigue attendant on the preparing ground for the purpose is over, and the 10th Regiment arrives and is properly encamped, the fatigue party for the canal shall be furnished. I am surprised at your talking of the advanced season, when it was only last Saturday you applied for the Men. I told you I expected the 10th and 7th Regts. to arrive in the course of this week, and till one of them arrives, and they and the sickly Regiments, which are here, are properly encamped, I now tell you that neither duty nor humanity will suffer me to furnish the men.

With repsect

I am

Your hble Servt

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

Capt. Shepherd

JEFFERSON COUNTIANS IN UNITED STATES CONGRESS . . . Serving Jefferson County's District

JOHN BAKER—Member of Congress 1811-1813.

Represented Berkeley, Hampshire and Jefferson counties as a Federalist. Born in 1769, son of John and Judith Wood Baker. Studied at Liberty Hall Academy, Rockbridge County, Va., 1783 to 1789. Then took up residence in Shepherdstown, the most flourishing town in the lower valley at that time. Married Ann Mark, of Rumsey boat fame. Deputy attorney of Jefferson county in 1801. Credited with building in 1814 what is now the Episcopal Rectory in Shepherdstown. Was one of the counsel for Aaron Burr. Died in 1833.

HENRY BEDINGER—Member of Congress 1845-1849.

Born at Bedford, near Shepherdstown, in 1812, son of Daniel Bedinger, a Revolutionary soldier, and grandson of Robert Rutherford. Opened a law office in Shepherdstown in 1838. First U. S. Minister to Denmark, having first been appointed Charge d'Affaires to Denmark by President Pierce in 1853. Died in 1858 shortly after returning from Denmark.

ALEXANDER R. BOTELER—
Member of Congress 1859-1861.

Born near Shepherdstown in 1815. Descendant of Charles Willson Peale, the famous artist, and himself an artist of unusual ability. Graduated from Princeton in 1835. Twice a Whig Presidential elector before going to Congress. When Virginia seceded from the Union he resigned from Congress and threw his lot with the Confederacy. On personal staff of Generals "Stonewall" Jackson and J. E. B. Stuart. Died in 1892.

EDWARD LUCAS—Member of Congress 1833-1837.

Born at "Elmwood" near Shepherdstown in 1790. A lieutenant in the War of 1812. Superintendent of the Harpers Ferry Armory and Arsenal from 1837 to 1841 and its paymaster from 1847 till his death in 1858.

WILLIAM LUCAS—
Member of Congress 1839-1841 and 1843-1845.

Born at "Cold Spring" near Shepherdstown in 1800. Entered law office of Henry Berry of Shepherdstown. Later attended law school of Judge Henry St. George Tucker, of "Woodbury" near Leetown. Moved to Charles Town for practice of law. Acquired an estate near Halltown which he named "Rion Hall," where he died in 1877.

ROBERT RUTHERFORD—Member of Congress 1793-1797.

Born in Scotland in 1728. Lived on Bullskin Run in Jefferson county, near Charles Town, where his father had bought lands from Lord Fairfax. In 1750 helped George Washington survey lands on the Shenandoah River. Organized the famous "Rutherford Rangers" after the defeat of Braddock in 1755. Died in 1803 and lies buried in an unmarked grave at "Flowing Springs" near Charles Town.

THOMAS SWEARINGEN—Member of Congress 1819-1822.

Born at "Bellevue" near Swearingen's Ferry, or Shepherdstown in 1784, son of Col. Joseph Swearingen and Hannah Rutherford. A member of the Virginia Assembly before being elected to Congress. Died at Shepherdstown in August, 1822 during a bilious fever epidemic which carried off several prominent citizens of the town.

ALEXANDER WHITE—Member of Congress 1789-1793.

Born in 1738 in Frederick county, Va., son of Robert White, a surgeon in the English Navy. Educated at Edinburgh University. Studied law in London. Returned to Virginia in 1765 and practiced law for nearly forty years, being a legal adviser of Lee, Gates, and Stephen. Deputy attorney for Berkeley county in 1772. Trustee of Charles Town in 1786. By virtue of his punctuality he had the distinction of being the first Congressman to be seated from Virginia. Died in 1804.

WILLIAM L. WILSON—Member of Congress 1883-1895.

Born near Middleway in 1843. Educated at Charles Town Academy, Columbia College in Washington, D. C.,

and the University of Virginia. President of West Virginia University 1882. Postmaster General under President Cleveland and in his home county started the first experiment in rural free delivery. President Washington and Lee University from 1897 till his death in 1900.

Serving Other Districts

WILLARD P. HALL—Member of Congress 1847-1853.

Served a district in Missouri. Born at Harpers Ferry in 1820, the son of John P. Hall, inventor of the breech-loading gun, "Halls Carbine." Graduated from Yale in 1839, then studied law. In War with Mexico, and served a brief term as governor of Missouri. Died in 1882.

GEORGE W. JOHNSON—
Member of Congress 1923-1925 and 1933-1943.

In Congress represented the Fourth Congressional District, West Virginia, as a resident of Parkersburg. Born near Charles Town. Educated at West Virginia University. Practiced law at Martinsburg and later at Parkersburg. Returned to Jefferson county after serving in Congress and engaged in orcharding till his death in 1945.

JEREMIAH MORROW—
Member of Congress 1803-1813 and 1840-1843.

Served as the first and only Congressman from Ohio from 1803 to 1813. Born in 1771 near Gettysburg, Pa., where he lived till 1794. Came to Jefferson county and in 1795, settled at Columbia, Ohio. Served his chosen state of Ohio as a member of its constitutional convention, as a U. S. Senator, as Governor for two terms, and was returned to Congress for two terms late in life. Died in 1852.

HENRY ST. GEORGE TUCKER—
Member of Congress 1815-1819.

In Congress represented a Virginia District not embracing Jefferson county. Lived at "Woodbury" near Leetown from 1832 to 1844. A distinguished law professor and judge.

FUNERAL OF WILLIAM L. WILSON, POSTMASTER GENERAL at Charles Town, W. Va. At which President Cleveland attended and W. P. Craighill, Brigadier General, Chief of Engineers, was a pall bearer. Copied from the original letter from General Craighill to Mrs. Hunter Davidson.

October 21, 1900

My dear Daughter Bessie:

The great event of the week has been the funeral of Mr. Wilson. The crowd was very great and the ceremonies most impressive. The prayer of Dr. Hopkins at the grave was very touching and I know the tears fell from Mr. Cleveland's eyes and there were many others like him in that particular. There was a special train from Lexington which reached here at noon. The coffin was placed in the depot and opened so that the people could see his face. There was a stream passing through for an hour. I was one of the pall-bearers. Mr. Cleveland came unexpectedly the night before and remained at the Carter House where he said he was "very comfortable." I went down early next morning and he seemed really glad to see someone he had seen before. He had already had breakfast at Port Gibson's. I was deputed by the Mayor to go driving with him and of course I did most of the talking. We took him to the top of the hill near the toll-gate on the Bloomery pike where he could see the fine view. Then we went out the pike and showed him the old church and Harewood and then brought him in. From the Hotel he came up to my house in the carriage to pick me up and enable me to get my overcoat. I had just had framed a picture of Mr. Wilson, which he took in his hand and gazed at with much interest. He admired our porches. I was invited to lunch with him by Mr. Washington at Mr. Wilson's house, so that I really saw more of him in a social way than I ever had before. He was very pleasant and cordial and shook my hand quite warmly at parting. He

drove to Harpers Ferry as he said he wanted to see the country and there he took the train for his home. I talked to him about Mrs. Cleveland and he seemed much pleased.