



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

### Group looks to honor Female Civil War soldiers with monument

BY ONOFRIO CASTIGLIA, THE WINCHESTER STAR, June 2, 2015  
STEPHENSON — When considering the millions of men who fought in the American Civil War, one local group highlights the fact that some of them were not men at all—but women, in disguise.

Recently, Steve Killings, board president of the Academy for Veteran Education and Training—an educational nonprofit group located at Historic Jordan Springs—said that the organization is trying to erect a monument to honor the more than 500 women who posed as men so they could fight.

According to the Civil War Trust, more than 3 million soldiers fought in the war.

Killings said that there is no memorial anywhere dedicated to the little-known group of women who fought as valiantly as their male counterparts, and not as nurses or seamstresses, but as combat soldiers.

"There have been 513 positively identified women who fought in the war," Killings said. "It's a field that's not very well documented because women had to hide their identities."

According to Killings, Tonie Wallace and Greig Aitken—the owners of Historic Jordan Springs—are donating a portion of their land to the public trust for construction of the monument.

He said that Jordan Springs is an ideal spot, as it is close to battlefield sites in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia and a scenic drive from Washington.

"This area is Civil War history-central," Killings said. "It really is a perfect place for [the monument]."

Apart from being one of a kind, Killings said the monument—titled Glory Honor's Stone—will also stand out in that it will house a data depository where academics and historians can preserve collections of related documents and artifacts.

An online funding campaign has been launched in support of the monument. The fundraising is being done through [razoo.com](http://razoo.com)—a crowdfunding website—and the goal to be reached is \$75,000 in three months.

Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught, founder of the female veterans memorial in Arlington, was also present at the meeting, Killings said.

He said the monument will be accessible to the public and is meant to be a Virginia State Park, though he believes there is the potential for it to be a national monument.

### Stolen Civil War flag headed back to Louisiana Confederate museum

RICHMOND, Va., AP, June 14, 2015  
A stolen Civil War battle flag recovered by the FBI is heading back home to Louisiana's Civil War Museum in New Orleans. FBI agents from the Richmond division recovered the stolen 14th Louisiana Infantry Regiment Confederate Battle Flag in late September.

Officials say the flag was stolen in the 1980s by a former volunteer at the Confederate Memorial Hall Museum in New Orleans. An investigation found that a collector purchased the item in 2004 without knowledge of it being stolen and voluntarily turned the item over to the FBI.

It was presented to board members from the Confederate Memorial Hall

in Louisiana at a ceremony Wednesday at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond.

The museum released this statement: Like many members of the original 14th Louisiana Regiment who were taken prisoner during the war and later released, their flag, a prisoner of a 20-year-old theft, is being returned home to New Orleans thanks to the efforts of the FBI.



This stolen 14th Louisiana Infantry Regiment Confederate Battle Flag was recovered by the Richmond Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The flag, which was stolen in the 1980s by a former volunteer at the Confederate Memorial Hall Museum of New Orleans, will be turned over to the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Va. which will return it to the New Orleans museum. AP  
*Photo/FBI*

The flag was stolen in the mid 1980s by a former museum volunteer (now deceased) and efforts made by the museum for its return were unsuccessful until last week when the FBI's National Art Crime Team received a tip that the item may have been at a home in Caroline County, Va. The flag was in the possession of a collector who purchased the flag in 2004 without knowing that it was stolen. He cooperated with the FBI and immediately turned over the flag. The 14th Louisiana flag was carried by a regiment largely composed of Polish immigrants from New Orleans and led by Gen. Valery Sulakowski.



---

## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

The flag was issued to the unit in the spring of 1862. It is known as a first bunting flag of the Army of Northern Virginia pattern. This was the first "battle flag" carried by the regiment. It saw action at the Battle of Gaines Mill on June 27, 1862, near Richmond. Two color bearers were killed while carrying it and the entire Color Guard became casualties of that battle.

The flag remained in service until the color bearer, Frederick Sontag, was captured with the flag at Gettysburg. Rather than surrender the flag, Sontag concealed it under his clothing. Sontag kept his secret until he was released from prison and he returned to the regiment with the flag. In the meantime, the regiment, thinking its flag has been captured, acquired a new one. The old flag was placed in storage where it remained until the final surrender at Appomattox. The flag was given to a young lady for safe-keeping. She kept the flag until January, 1889, when she returned it to the former commanding officer of the 14th Louisiana, Col. David Zable, who presented the flag to the Army of Northern Virginia Association, a veterans organization located in New Orleans. It was then donated to Memorial Hall.

The flag draped the coffin of Jefferson Davis and was said to be the last Confederate flag he ever touched.

At least 11 men were either killed or wounded while carrying the flag. A post-war memoir stated that no man who ever carried it in battle escaped unhurt.

### Friends Group Managing Former Wilderness Walmart Acreage

By Scott C. Boyd, June 2015 Civil War News

ORANGE COUNTY, Va. – The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) selected the Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FOWB) to manage the 48 acres of Wilderness battlefield land donated to the Commonwealth of Virginia by Walmart in 2013.

The land donation followed the 2011 conclusion of a lawsuit filed in 2009 by nine historic preservation groups, including the FOWB, to block construction of a Walmart Supercenter, nicknamed the "Wilderness Walmart" (see Feb/March 2011 CWN).

Walmart instead chose to build the supercenter several miles away from the battlefield. The store opened in July 2013.

A two-year agreement signed by DHR and FOWB earlier this year makes the friends group the "eyes and ears on the ground," according to DHR Director Julie Langan.

"When Walmart gifted the property to us, we were not as experienced in managing property, especially from a distance," Langan said. Her department's headquarters is in Richmond, some 70 miles away.

"This is the only piece of battlefield property that we own," Langan said. The department owns one other property, a historic farm in Clarke County.

A different state agency operates numerous commonwealth-owned parks and battlefields, the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The FOWB is an "enthusiastic and capable group of volunteers,"

according to Langan. "We've partnered with them on other things in the last year or two, and have found them to be very capable, professional, and easy to work with. We've been impressed with the work they've done with the National Park Service (NPS)."

FOWB's responsibilities include securing the property to discourage illegal hunting and dumping of trash, removing the trash that has been accumulating there for some 20 years, and replacing the "no trespassing" signs that have been vandalized.

FOWB President Mark Leach said the group has cabled-off the two entrances to the property. New "no trespassing" signs that now include the FOWB logo have been placed.

Any trespassing will be reported to the Orange County Sheriff, Leach said.

On the annual national Park Day, sponsored by the Civil War Trust, FOWB was able to enlist the help of local Boy Scouts to remove six or seven truckloads of trash from the 48 acres.

"Batteries, tires, mattresses, construction debris – for people who are lazy and contractors who don't want to pay the disposal fee, it's easier to dump things on park land or vacant lots," Leach noted.

The tract is in the Wilderness Battlefield study area, as defined by the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission that Congress established in 1991.

The Battle of the Wilderness, fought May 5-7, 1864, marked the first time Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee met Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in battle. Fought to a draw, it was the beginning of the Overland Campaign where Grant kept pushing towards



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Richmond, leading to eventual victory at Appomattox.

Historian James M. McPherson described the site FOWB is helping protect as "the nerve center of the Union Army during the Battle of the Wilderness" in a summary of testimony he prepared for the case should it have gone to trial.

McPherson noted "thousands of wounded and dying soldiers occupied the then open fields that included the Walmart site, which is where many of the Union Army hospital tents were located during that battle."

### **Drought exposes Civil War soldier's grave in California lake**

By Kerry Klein, San Jose Mercury News (Tribune News Service), June 15, 2015

BRADLEY, Calif. (Tribune News Service) — Joseph Botts Jr. stepped out of his pickup truck into a scrubby, sunbaked field of salt grass and mustard weed and bent over a granite slab bearing a worn inscription: "Corp'l John McBride."

The retired park ranger has known about the Civil War veteran's gravesite for most of his life. But for much of the past half-century, McBride's remains and the tiny ghost town where he met his fate lay at the bottom of a reservoir, submerged due to a thirsty state's need to corral every drop that flows through its parched ravines.

Now California's historic drought has shrunk Monterey County's Lake San Antonio to a fraction of its former size, exposing McBride's headstone to sunlight for the first time in decades. The re-emergence of the 128-year-old gravesite has inspired Botts, one of the few locals who even remember it exists, to ensure the veteran's burial place and his memory are preserved.

"He was probably an unemployed soldier looking for a quiet way of life in a peaceful valley," Botts said recently while showing off the site.

Shortly before Botts retired from the park service in April, a camper found McBride's headstone in the desiccated lake bed and delivered it to park headquarters. Botts brought it back to McBride's gravesite, which he'd remembered from his childhood, and fastened the headstone to it with a metal bracket.

"It was for the honor of who's resting there," Botts said. "You don't screw around with something like that."

An Irish immigrant, McBride survived the Civil War only to be killed two decades later in an argument on a California ranch. His grave and a few building foundations are all that remain of Pleyto, a rural town that was flooded in 1965 to create the reservoir.

The town, sometimes spelled "Pleito" or "Plato," was settled in 1868 as a stagecoach stop between Gilroy and Los Angeles. In its heyday in the 1890s, it boasted no more than a few dozen inhabitants, with a single store, hotel, post office and blacksmith shop.

With little commerce besides ranching and farming, the post office closed in 1925, and the town's residents gradually packed up and left.

"It's just one of those ephemeral places in the West," said Ann Beckett, a local historian and co-author of the book "Images of America: San Antonio Valley." "Making your living there was so grim that the town just went away."

But McBride's remains never left. Born in Ireland around 1825, he lived in St. Louis before joining the Union Army in Illinois at the age of 36, according to Civil War records

maintained by the Illinois state archives. He served from 1861 until 1864 and fought in a number of major campaigns, including the 1864 Battle of Nashville. Then, he disappeared from history until 1887 — the year of his death.

At that time, according to handwritten court records from that era, McBride — who also went by either John "Marigan" or John "Madigan," depending on whom you asked — was working as a ranch hand for the developer who settled Pleyto.

He was herding cattle on horseback one March evening when he got into an argument with a neighboring rancher named Henry Godfrey. During the confrontation, McBride reached behind his horse's saddle — and Godfrey, fearing he was going for a weapon, fired his shotgun at McBride's chest.

"McBride fell off his horse and said, 'I'm killed,' " reported one witness.

Authorities never determined if McBride was armed. But Godfrey claimed self-defense and eventually was acquitted of murder charges, according to the records of his trial.

"It's a tragic story," said James Perry, a Monterey County historian who unearthed Godfrey's 65-page trial record in county archives after being asked about the mystery of John McBride.

Still, much about McBride's life has been lost to the ages. He was discharged from the Union Army at a lower rank — private — than corporal. But Gwen Podeschi with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Illinois said this wasn't necessarily a sign of demotion.

"Quite often, these men decide they just don't want to serve as a corporal anymore," she said.

She also said it was common for veterans to turn west after the war.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Why some said they knew him by other names is a mystery. Perry said it could be a hint of trouble in his past, though he noted it wasn't uncommon in the 19th century for men to go by different names.



Cattle rancher Joseph Botts Jr. at the burial site of Civil War veteran Cpl. John McBride on the dry lake bed of Lake San Antonio in California's southern Monterey County on May 27, 2015.

VERN FISHER, MONTEREY COUNTY HERALD/TNS

McBride was buried in a knoll by himself, a short distance away from where a handful of townspeople and other Civil War veterans had been buried in the old town cemetery. In the early 1960s, local officials relocated the cemetery to higher ground before filling what would become the Lake San Antonio reservoir in 1965. But McBride remained.

"They couldn't make contact with any of the relatives," said Botts, who grew up on an 8,000-acre ranch adjacent to the burial ground. "So they thought they'd just leave him."

In the early 1960s, Botts' school bus would rumble along the dirt road past old Pleyto and across the San Antonio River, now the middle of the lake. When the river flooded, postal workers would transport mail over the water in a hand-cranked cable car.

But Botts' earliest memories of Pleyto are of nothing but old foundations and a bridge. It was a ghost town long before engineers laid the foundation of the San Antonio Dam.

Park ranger Jon Anthony estimates it'll take 20 to 25 more feet of water to submerge McBride's gravesite once more — one rainier-than-average year.

Botts said that wouldn't trouble him.

"If he's remembered," Botts said, "it doesn't make any difference where he is."

### **"There Is Something Else There" - Lincoln at the Soldier's Home**

By Erin Carlson Mast, June 2015 Civil War News

Throughout the 20th century, nearly every site related to President Abraham Lincoln's life and presidency was saved or recreated, and interpreted to the public. In addition, a host of statues and memorials were erected across the country and around the world to serve as purpose-built places of interpretation and reflection.

That so many sites interpret Lincoln's life and leadership is unsurprising, considering he is routinely ranked in national and global surveys as one of the most influential historical figures of all time.

Yet, President Lincoln's Cottage, the place where he lived for a quarter of his presidency, where he made crucial decisions about the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War — the very issues that gave his presidency lasting impact — languished in obscurity for over half a century.

This was not due to a lack of appreciation for the powerful history of what happened there. Indeed, the occupants, employees and residents of the Soldiers' Home (today known as the Armed Forces Retirement Home [AFRH]), knew and demonstrated deep appreciation for the site's Lincoln history.

The lack of preservation and public accessibility to the Cottage reflected that it was not a priority, nor the expertise, of AFRH, which exists to serve the veterans who call this place home.

The Cottage was built in the District of Columbia in 1842, for banker George Washington Riggs. In 1851, the Federal Government purchased the Riggs' estate, with the express purpose of establishing the first U.S. home for retired and disabled soldiers.

The first president invited to live on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home was Lincoln's predecessor, James Buchanan, and President Lincoln visited the property three days after his inauguration. The Home invited the Lincolns to reside in a house on the grounds during the hot season, between June and November, which they anticipated doing each year, but were only able to do in 1862, 1863, and 1864.

After Lincoln, Presidents Rutherford B. Hayes and Chester A. Arthur also took up residence at the Cottage during their terms. Yet, the site is most associated with Lincoln because he spent the most time here and accomplished the most in residence, notably developing the Emancipation Proclamation his first summer there.

After serving as a presidential retreat, the Cottage was put to many uses, including dormitory and office space, from the late 19th century through the 20th century. Despite serving various purposes, the significance of the Cottage was never completely forgotten.

Since the late 19th century, the Cottage's connection to Lincoln's presidency and his development of the Emancipation Proclamation appeared in various publications from time to time. Alternative uses of the



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Cottage limited interpretation and preservation, but may have prevented a worse fate.

The house retained a level of authenticity distinctive in the world of Lincoln, where many sites feature recreated spaces or purpose-built museums and sculpture. In 1973, the Cottage and three other pre-Civil War structures were declared a National Historic Landmark, though no substantial impact to preservation nor interpretation of the property occurred.

The fate of the Cottage changed in 1999, when the National Trust for Historic Preservation entered into a cooperative agreement with the Armed Forces Retirement Home. The following year, President Bill Clinton declared the Cottage a National Monument, jump starting efforts to raise both awareness and funds about the restoration efforts underway.

In 2008, following a \$15 million, eight-year capital project by the National Trust, President Lincoln's Cottage opened to the public for the first time in history.

Despite being federal property and bearing both National Historic Landmark and National Monument designations, President Lincoln's Cottage is a private non-profit operation. The public-private arrangement makes the Cottage unique not only among Lincoln sites, the vast majority of which are run by state or federal government agencies, but unique among National Monuments; .

President Lincoln's Cottage is the only National Monument in the country that receives no federal operating support. Our support comes predominantly from individuals who recognize the resources required

for exemplary preservation and programming.

And we strive to live up to those expectations as evidenced by consistent recognition in media, including a recent article listing the site as one of five underrated, must-see destinations around the world, and recent national awards from the American Alliance of Museums and the American Association for State and Local History.

We made preservation, restoration and interpretation decisions about President Lincoln's Cottage at a time when it was widely understood that the traditional historic house tour was in decline.

This set the stage for us to do things differently. From the start, we sought to provide a transformative experience for the public and offer new perspectives – both literally and figuratively.

One cannot understand Lincoln's presidency, including the decisions he made, without appreciating his time at the Soldiers' Home.

Indeed, Lincoln's time there bookends his presidency — he first rode out a few days after his inauguration and he last rode out the day before his assassination.

While in residence at Soldiers' Home, Lincoln commuted regularly to the White House. Research shows Lincoln's commute put him in direct contact with diverse perspectives, whether caravans of wounded soldiers who shared their experiences in battle or formerly enslaved men, women, and children living in "Contraband Camps."

At the Cottage, you one can appreciate its proximity to the US Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, the predecessor of Arlington, where graves multiplied

in plain view of the Lincolns' summer home.

Establishing place and time is crucial for visitors to understand the influences on President Lincoln and the situations he had to navigate. But rather than merely represent a bygone era, the Cottage experience adds context to the struggle humanity has long faced to achieve liberty, justice, and equality.

Whereas spaces filled with furnishings create a connection with peoples' own daily living, spaces filled with ideas cause people to reflect on their own views, politics, ideas, and decisions. This emphasis on ideas permeates all aspects of the site's operation, from educational programs to the museum store.

The result is that President Lincoln's Cottage is a starting point for discourse on ideas that transcend time, can and have prompted real action to improve conditions today, and give the visitor experience lasting relevance.

Examples of this include our award-winning tour platform, our Students Opposing Slavery International Summit, our Lincoln Ideas Forum, and our forthcoming exhibit on Lincoln and Immigration.

We call President Lincoln's Cottage a home for brave ideas not only because of what Lincoln accomplished within these walls and on these grounds, but because of the conversations that happen here year-round.

In an essay about Lincoln's daily commute from the Soldiers' Home to the White House, poet Walt Whitman observed, "I see very plainly Abraham Lincoln's dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes, always to me with a deep latent sadness in the expression."



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Whitman concluded that, "none of the artists or pictures has caught the deep, though subtle and indirect, expression of this man's face. There is something else there."

One hundred fifty years later, we recognize that there is still something else there. Lincoln may have died long ago, but the spirit of his ideas lives on at the Cottage.

For information about the Cottage call (202)829-0436 or [visitlincolncottage.org](http://visitlincolncottage.org)

### Nuns of the Battlefield monument, erected in 1924.

BY Thomas Meagher, American Civil War, June 3, 2015

The inscriptions read: "To the memory and in honor of the various orders of sisters who gave their services as nurses on the battlefields and in hospitals during the Civil War. They comforted the dying, nursed the wounded, carried hope to the imprisoned, gave in His name a drink of water to the thirsty." The monument is located at the intersection of Rhode Island Ave NW, M St & Connecticut Ave NW in Washington, D.C.



Among the ways in which nuns served in the Civil War, in June of 1862 several sisters were asked to serve as nurses aboard the USS Red Rover, the first Navy hospital ship that went up and down the

Mississippi River carrying the sick and wounded of both the North and the South to the various military hospitals. In so doing they became what U.S. naval history today hails as the pioneers or forerunners of the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps. They also were the Navy's first paid women employees, with historical records showing that Sisters Callista, M. Veronica (Scholl), CSC, and M. Adela (Moran), CSC, earned two dollars a day.

### America still has a problem with unexploded Civil War bombs

By Kevin Knodel, The Week, June 16, 2015

On April 22, members of the U.S. Army's 707th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company left their base on a mission to detonate a very unusual object.

Construction crews had discovered an Absterdam Type 2/3 Projectile in Ilwaco, Washington. This type of explosive artillery shell dates to around the time of the American Civil War.

The soldiers, based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, received a request for assistance from local police. The soldiers moved the shell to a quarry and blew it up.

"It's one of those things that, as long as it's left alone, it's not going to do much," Long Beach police chief Flint Wright told the *Chinook Observer*. "But if it's jostled, it could be quite dangerous."

But what the Hell was a Civil War artillery shell doing in Washington state?

Most likely, it was a leftover from troops stationed at Fort Canby, one of two bases the Union built during the Civil War to defend the mouth of the

Columbia River from a possible, but *highly* unlikely, surprise attack by the Confederacy.

The round sat undisturbed until being discovered more than a century-and-half later. It may sound strange, but this happens more often than you might think.

Capt. Shawn McMickle, the soldiers' company commander, said that he's responded to three Civil War-era explosives since he's served with the Army in the Pacific Northwest.

Typically, construction crews and loggers find the war relics buried in the ground or in the brush. But they can, and do, turn up in more unusual places.

On Jan. 21, members of the Fort Belvoir, Virginia-based 55th EOD Company responded to a call from police and firefighters in Georgetown, Maryland. They'd found a Civil War cannonball in the *chimney* of an 1890s townhouse.

Live bombs from past conflicts can linger for years, often decades. Or in the case of Civil War bombs, well over a century.

Don't let their age fool you, these bombs can still be incredibly dangerous. If you see a rusty cannonball in the woods, it'd be good advice not to touch it. That's a lesson that Civil War relic hunter Sam White and his neighbors learned the hard way.

In February 2008, White worked on restoring a 75-pound naval cannonball in his driveway when it exploded.

The blast killed the 53-year-old Virginian and sent shrapnel through the porch of a neighbor's house a quarter-mile away, 140 years after the Civil War ended.

When White was alive, he'd estimated that he worked on about 1,600 bombs he'd found for museums



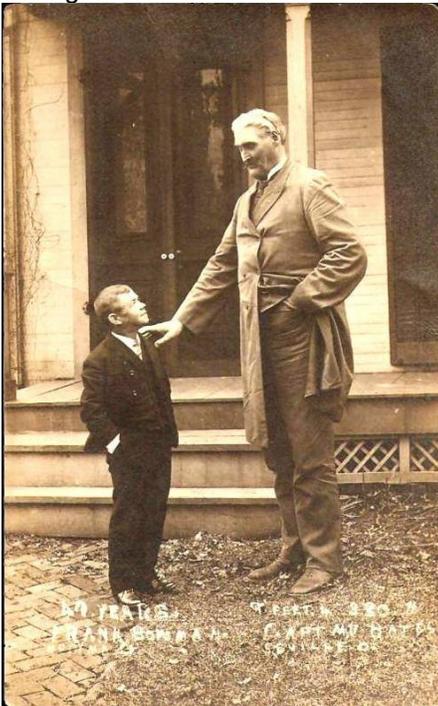
## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

and collectors. When he died, he had 18 other cannonballs lined up in his driveway.

### The Confederate Giant

By Ben Miller, May 31, 2015

The amazing Confederate Giant, Martin Van Buren Bates (November 9, 1837 – January 7, 1919), known as the "Kentucky Giant" among other nicknames, was a Civil War-era American famed for his incredibly large size. Though born an infant of normal size into a family of normal-sized people in Letcher County, Kentucky, he is said to at one time have been 7 feet 11 inches (2.41 m) in height.



Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, he joined the Confederate Army as a private in the Fifth Kentucky Infantry in September 1861, rising to the rank of Captain within short order. His ferocity in battle, aided by his imposing figure, made him legendary, with Union soldiers telling tales of a "Confederate giant who's as big as

five men and fights like fifty". He was severely wounded in a battle around the Cumberland Gap area and also captured, although he later escaped. He returned to Kentucky after the war, but found it embroiled in violent feuding between those who had supported the Union and those who had supported the Confederacy, so he sold his property and left, explaining, "I've seen enough bloodshed; I didn't want any more." He travelled to Cincinnati, and there joined the circus, exhibiting his enormous stature to curious onlookers. While the circus was on tour in Halifax, Canada, 7 foot 5 and a half inches (2.27m) tall Anna Haining Swan happened to visit, and the promoter, envisioning the success a pair of giants would have, hired her immediately. She and Martin soon got to know each other, and were married during an 1871 tour of the circus in Europe. The wedding, at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London, was abuzz with publicity, and thousands of people, drawn both by the uncommonness of the spectacle and the disarming good nature of the pair, tried to attend. Queen Victoria herself gave them two extra-large diamond-studded gold watches as wedding presents.

Martin and his wife returned to Ohio in 1872 and settled down in Seville.

### Josephine Miller remembered

By Greg Ainsworth, June 10, 2015

Josephine Miller was 23 years old and living with her grandparents near Gettysburg in 1863. The Rogers' house sat directly between the armies of Lee and Meade on July 2nd and 3rd, 1863. Heavy fighting took place all around the Rogers' farm on both July 2nd and 3rd. Josephine and her grandfather stayed at the house during the battle. She nursed

wounded soldiers from both sides and continually baked bread for the hungry men. In 1886 the 1st Massachusetts dedicated their monument where they were positioned near the Rogers' house. They had not forgotten the lady who fed them, nursed them, and never left the house even during the cannonade preceding Pickett's Charge. The veterans paid for Josephine's round trip from Ohio to attend the dedication. When it was discovered that the actual stove she used was still in the house, they insisted it be brought out to the monument for a photograph with Josephine, as you see below apparently holding a loaf of bread.



Photo courtesy Greg Ainsworth

### Confederate Cavalry Rounded Up Pennsylvania Blacks, Free or Slave

Civil War Daily Gazette, June 16, 2015

Confederate Cavalry General Albert Jenkins was of good stock. He was born to wealthy parents on a Virginia plantation, attended a private academy, a fine college in Pennsylvania, and Harvard Law School. Prior to the war, he served in the United States Congress. He was no ill-mannered, blood thirsty rouge. By all accounts, he was a southern



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

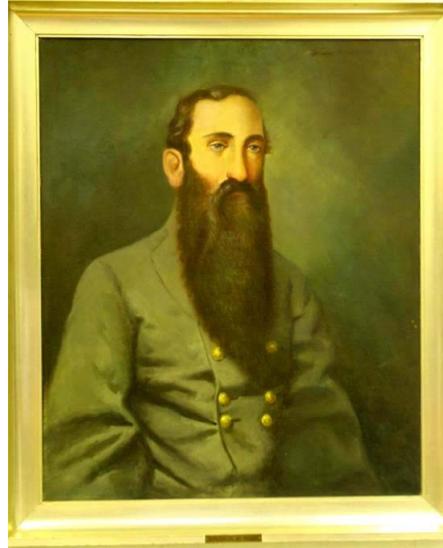
---

gentleman, even when being entertained by the fine citizens of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Jenkins and about 2,000 of his cavaliers had been attached to General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Though not a part of Jeb Stuart's illustrious division, Jenkins' Cavalry was an officially recognized unit – not a loose band of partisan rangers. Still, General Lee didn't quite trust them. They had raised much hell throughout Western Virginia and perhaps their ways were not up to Lee's own standards. Nevertheless, they were brought aboard and given to General Richard Ewell to be used as screens in the march north across the Potomac. Ewell, in turn, gave them to Robert Rodes, a strict disciplinarian, who he believed would keep Jenkins in line.

Rodes had sent Jenkins north as a vanguard, with orders to take Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where they arrived late the previous night. For the couple of days preceding their arrival, bands of black families, both free and slave, passed through town, warning of the invasion. Before the arrival of the Rebels, almost every horse had been sent north, hopefully out of their reach. When Union troops fled through town, it fully convinced them that not only were the Confederates in Pennsylvania, but Chambersburg was their target. The Rebels entered town well after dark, but spent the night a mile or so north. Come dawn, the true occupation began. The Confederates were a mostly well behaved lot. They hardly bothered the farmers, did not tear down fences, and took only a few of the cattle. Most things they took were paid for in Confederate script. Jenkins and his men cleaned out the downtown merchants, who were

hardly amused with being paid in such worthless notes.



**General Albert Jenkins**

General Jenkins and his Confederates paid for everything, but three particular items. The first was horses, which he considered contraband of war. When the horses were found to be in short supply, he proceeded to take all of the arms in the town. Any make or model would do. When delivered, he destroyed the worthless and kept the finest.

The third item which Jenkins took while refusing to pay was black people. His men rounded them up like they had wanted to round up horses. Slave, free, man, women, or child, it did not matter. To them, a black person was a slave and nothing more.

Chambersburg, like many larger towns, had a section where many of the black people lived. According to a local paper, Jenkins' men, "went to the part of the town occupied by the colored population, and kidnapped all they could find, from the child in the cradle up to men and women of fifty years of age."

Rachel Cormany, a citizen of Chambersburg remembered that the Rebels "were hunting up the contrabands &c driving them off by droves. O! How it grated on our hearts to have to sit quietly &c look at such brutal deeds—I saw no men among the contrabands — all women & children." Cormany recognized that "some of the colored people who were raised here were taken along." But she could do little apart from watching as the black women and children were "driven like cattle." One woman, she recalled "was pleading wonderfully with her driver for her children – but all the sympathy she received from him was a rough 'March along.'"

In Greencastle, a nearby town captured by Jenkins the previous day, a similar thing was happening. Jenkins ordered at least one citizen to help his men round up local black people. Charles Hartman recalled after the war:

*"One of the exciting features of the day was the scouring of the fields about town and searching of houses for Negroes. These poor creatures, those of them who had not fled upon the approach of the foe, concealed in wheat fields around the town. Cavalrymen rode in search of them and many of them were caught after a desperate chase and being fired at. In some cases, the Negroes were rescued from the guards. Squire Kaufman and Tom Pauling did this, and if they had been caught, the rebels would have killed them."*

"They took up all they could find," wrote Chambersburg resident Jemima Cree, "even little children, whom they had to carry on horseback before them. All who could get there fled to the woods, and many who were wise hid in the houses of their employers."



---

## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Captured slaves (or in this case, captured free citizens of color) had become an issue for the Confederate government. It wasn't, however, because the practice was found deplorable. It so happened that when black people were captured, instead of being returned to their owners, Confederate officers were keeping them, turning them into personal body servants.

A new policy was now in effect (as of January, 1863) that ordered the captured blacks to be sent to a camp and held until they were claimed. It was sort of like an incredibly ghoulish lost and found. Because of this new law, the Confederate officers were unable to profit directly from the capture of blacks. But instead of sending them to the camps, they privately sold the prisoners to whomever might give them money.

But all this would happen in the future. For now, all that Jenkins was concerned with was removing the fifty or so black women and children out of Chambersburg. Before being transported south, they kept them in Greencastle.

When they were brought into the town, they were lightly guarded. Only a chaplain and four soldiers oversaw the wagons. A number of conscientious residents, perhaps even the Lincoln-man who was called an "abolitionist" by Jenkins the previous day, make a charge at the guards. They quickly disarmed them and took them to the jail. All of the black prisoners were freed.

It didn't take long for Jenkins to catch wind of this bit of direct action (though it might have been the following day). He demanded \$50,000 to compensate him for the people he was trying to kidnap, claiming they were his own property. The town council of Greencastle refused to pay

him, and he threatened to burn down the town in retaliation.

Fourteen of the freed blacks approached the town council and offered to give themselves up to Jenkins to spare the town, but the council refused. Jenkins' mind, however, was quickly brought to other fronts on the following day and never came back to Greencastle.

Though this practice wasn't wide spread in the Confederate Army, it was accepted and allowed. More such instances occurred in the days leading up to the coming battle. On July 1st, when General George Pickett's Division was moving through Chambersburg, General Longstreet send him a message telling him that "The captured contrabands had better be brought along with you for further disposition."