

OUR CAMP JOURNAL

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"We are but few in number but formidable." -Pvt. James Shelton, 7th Md. Co. B

April 2026

Pvt. George Parks, Company "I", 7th Maryland

By Jeff Joyce

On May 24, 1861, Federal troops occupied Alexandria, Virginia. The day before Virginia voters had ratified the decision of a state convention to join the Confederacy. During the course of the Civil War Alexandria became a major Federal supply depot and center for treating wounded and sick soldiers, with over 30 military hospitals consisting of 6,500 beds. Churches, homes, the city's largest hotel and other buildings were taken over as hospitals. In addition, hospital complexes extending over city blocks were built.

With the large number of deaths during the Civil War the War Department decided to create national cemeteries and the first 14 cemeteries were established in July 1862, including Soldiers Cemetery in Alexandria near today's Old Town. By 1864 the cemetery was nearly filled to capacity, leading to the establishment of Arlington National Cemetery.

Several 7th Marylanders were treated at Alexandria hospitals during the Civil War and four are buried in Alexandria National Cemetery, including Private George Parks of Company I.

George was born in 1825 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Little is known of his life until he enlisted in Company I of the 7th Maryland on August 23, 1862, in Hagerstown. At the time George was a laborer and 5' 8" tall with grey eyes and black hair.



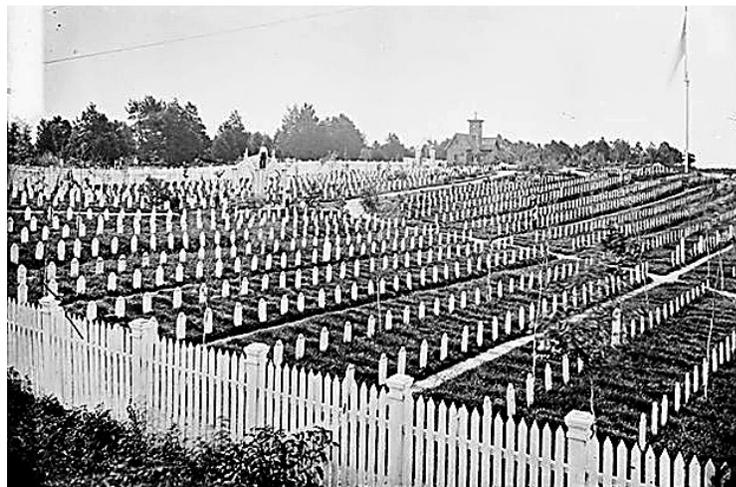
There's no evidence he was married.

Over the next year George served faithfully with the 7th Maryland. In

April 1863 while the 7th Maryland was camped on Bolivar Heights overlooking Harpers Ferry he was reported sick before being assigned as an ambulance driver. He had returned to duty with Company I by July 1863. Now assigned to the 1st Corps of the Army of the Potomac, the 7th Maryland pursued Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia as it retreated into Virginia after the Battle of Gettysburg. By September 1863 the 7th Maryland was camped in Culpeper County near the Rapidan River.

George became sick again and was transferred to Alexandria, where he was treated at the Wolfe Street General Hospital. The hospital had been the private residence of attorney Francis L. Smith, who fled to Richmond with his family following the Federal occupation of Alexandria. The house was first used by Brigadier General John P. Slough,

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Above, the grave marker for Pvt. George Parks at Alexandria National Cemetery.

Left, the Alexandria National Cemetery in the 1860s.

Upcoming Campaigns

APRIL

April 11-12: Skirmish of Campbell's Run & Spring Muster – Olde Fort Site, 7120 Brooklyn Rd, Ft. Loudon, PA 17224 (Lincoln Way West, Route 30. [\(Individual Event\)](#))

MAY

May 25: Memorial Day Gettysburg Parade, in Gettysburg, PA. 1:00 PM form up Lefever St at School. [\(Individual event\)](#)

JULY

July 3-5: 163rd Gettysburg, Daniel Lady farm, Gettysburg, PA Visit: www.GBPA.org to register online. **FVB Commanded Event** [\(Individual Event\)](#)

July 17-19: Funkstown, MD <http://www.funkstown.com/special-events/day-in-the-park/> ***(FVB Event) (7th MD COMPANY Event)**

AUGUST

August 29-30: Carroll County Farm Museum- Col. Monzi; Commanding [\(Individual Event\)](#)



In Memoriam

Charles "Hutch" Hutchinson

November 30, 1962 — March 16, 2026
Boonsboro, MD

Charles "Hutch" Hutchinson, 64, of Boonsboro, Maryland, was called home to be with the Lord March 16, 2026, entering eternal rest surrounded by God's grace and promise. His life was a testimony of faith, love, and devotion to his family, friends, and to God.



He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Cindy Hutchinson; his son Seth Hutchinson and his daughter Brandi Hutchinson; three granddaughters; and one great-grandchild.

Hutch was warmly embraced by Cindy's family, who loved him as one of their own. He had a special place in his heart for his nieces and nephews, always cheering them on and celebrating milestones. He took joy in officiating three of their weddings in recent years, cross stitching them personalized stockings and personalized blankets for the youngest. "Hutch" was one of the original members of the 7th Maryland Regiment Infantry, U.S., a Civil War reenactment unit.

He was a member of the 1980 class of Boonsboro High School and

served in the United States Air Force from 1980 to 1983.

Family will receive friends and family on Friday, March 20, 2026, at the Bast - Stauffer Funeral Home, 7606 Old National Pike, Boonsboro, MD from 6-8 pm.

Funeral services for Charles were held at 11 am, Saturday, March 21, 2026, at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 64 South Main Street, Boonsboro, with Pastor Karl Muhlbach officiating. Burial followed at Boonsboro Cemetery. The family encourages honoring his memory through prayer, service, and faith in God's promises. In lieu of flowers, monetary donations may be made to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Charles's family and loved ones find comfort in believing he is now with those who passed before him and at peace in his Savior's presence. Those who knew him were blessed by his gentle spirit, steady wisdom, and unwavering belief in God's plan.

James Longstreet's Unfiltered Opinions about Battles and Generals in 1862

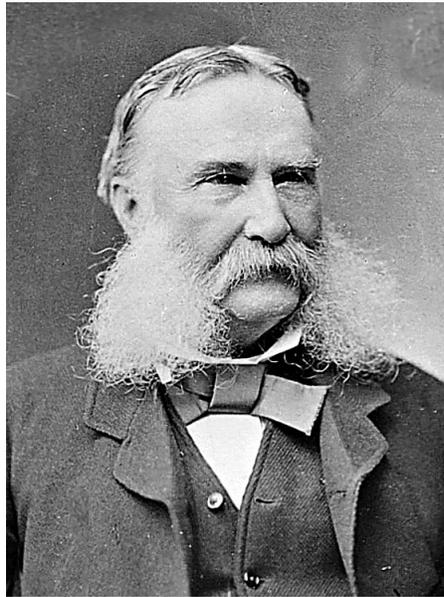
by Kevin Pawlak ,
Emerging Civil War Perspectives

James Longstreet was a prolific chronicler of his experience in the American Civil War. He wrote on the topic extensively, from articles in *Century Magazine* to his own well-known memoir, *From Manassas to Appomattox*. Thus, many of Longstreet's postwar thoughts on the events he participated in and the soldiers he led and fought alongside are well-known.

During my research, I stumbled upon an article from the *Washington Post* in 1893. Newspaper correspondent Leslie J. Perry accompanied Longstreet and other Civil War veterans to the Antietam battlefield, where the old soldiers traveled "to definitely settle the positions of some of the general's troops during the battle of September 17, 1862." Perry claimed Longstreet's mind was still strong in his 73rd year, but his right arm hung limply and useless from the general's shoulder due to his wound at the Battle of the Wilderness and he had to use a "speaking tube" to hear the conversations around him.

Perry had the privilege to hear Longstreet talk "unreservedly" about many topics related to the war. Perry recognized the value of Longstreet's words and thankfully for posterity, wrote them down. Fortunately, too, Longstreet did not mind them being printed.

The article is quite long, and Perry queried Longstreet's opinion on topics ranging from battles to leaders to the Confederate prosecution of the war. Since most of my interest is in 1862, I have edited out sections not relevant to that topic. Below are the excerpts of Perry's conversation with Longstreet related to Antietam, Robert E. Lee, George B. McClellan, Jefferson Davis, Second Manassas, "Stonewall" Jackson, and more.



A postwar view of James Longstreet.
(Library of Congress)

Note: I have used ellipses to indicate where I skipped transcribing sections of the article to keep the post relevant to 1862 topics.

THREE SHOTS AT ANTIETAM.

In riding to and fro over the Antietam field Gen. Longstreet's memory was refreshed by the scene of the great battle. When the spot where the Union general, Israel B. Richardson, was mortally wounded was pointed out to him the Confederate veteran casually remarked: "There were for our side three lucky shots fired on this field. I mean the ones that eliminated Hooker, Mansfield, and Richardson. They were the aggressive fighting generals on the Federal side, who menaced us. After the last of the three fell there was practically an end of serious offensive operations for the day on that side."

I was aware that Gen. Longstreet had originally disagreed with Gen. Lee in the fall of 1862 as to the advisability of making the Harper's Ferry campaign, the preliminary movements of which he proceeded to explain and criticize somewhat. This led naturally

to a discussion of the merits of the two commanders in the operations culminating in the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. One of our party put this question:

"Do you think, general, as has been alleged, that Gen. Lee's low estimate of the Federal commander was the reason for his extraordinary dispositions in the Harper's Ferry campaign?"

LEE AND McCLELLAN.

"Perhaps so. Lee's experience with McClellan on the peninsula certainly must have tended to give him confidence in any collision with that officer. Gen. Lee, as a rule, did not underestimate his opponents, or the fighting qualities of the Federal troops. But after Chancellorsville he came to have unlimited confidence in his own army, and undoubtedly exaggerated its capacity to overcome obstacles, to march, to fight, to bear up under deprivations and exhaustion. It was a dangerous confidence. I think every officer who served under him will unhesitatingly agree with me on this point."

To some further suggestions, Gen. Longstreet replied, "Gen. Lee had a certain respect for Gen. McClellan, who had been his subordinate in the old Engineers. But I judge that this feeling assumed somewhat the shape of patronage, like that of a father toward a son. He never feared any unexpected displays of strategy or aggressiveness on the part of McClellan, and in dealing with him always seemed confident that on the Federal's part there would be no departure from the rules of war as laid down in the books.

"What estimate do you place upon Gen. McClellan, Gen. Longstreet? Was he considered on your side as a man of real capacity?" I asked.

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Longstreet...

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PLANNING FOR DEFEAT.

“At first, we were anxious about him and the great and well-disciplined army he was gathering. But with his first operations toward Manassas and on the Peninsula, his true character became manifest. We learned that McClellan was only dangerous by reason of his superior numbers. Like Gen. Lee, he was greatly learned in the theory and science of war; he knew how to fight a defensive battle fairly well. But in offensive tactics he was timid and vacillating and totally lacking in vigor. In these particulars he was diametrically the opposite of Lee. McClellan instinctively overestimated his enemy and underestimated his own resources to meet that enemy. He was always planning, it seems to me, of the necessities in case of defeat, not with a view to victory.

“McClellan commenced too high up, in fact. He should have begun as the colonel of a regiment. He was undoubtedly something of an organizer and a good drill master. He had a great opportunity here on this Sharpsburg field—no general could ask for a better. Commanding a greatly superior army, opposed to an enemy divided by the Potomac, the Shenandoah, and the Blue Ridge into four weak, isolated parts whose location he absolutely knew from Gen. Lee’s written dispositions, which had accidentally fallen into his hands, McClellan’s failure to not only relieve Harper’s Ferry, but to destroy at least one of the segments of Gen. Lee’s army must be considered about the most disastrous failure of the war on either side.

“Properly Gen. McClellan should have merely threatened D. H. Hill at Turner’s Pass and poured his troops through Crampton’s Gap upon McLaws’ and Anderson’s rear, with the Potomac River and the Harper’s Ferry garrison in their

front. There was no escape for them, and by this movement Harper’s Ferry would have been wrested from our clutch. Instead, McClellan elected to turn northward upon us and fight at Turner’s Pass, where he lost eighteen hours, and then, after another delay of over thirty-six hours, attacked me in a chosen position behind the Antietam. Sharpsburg was the greatest single day’s battle of the war and involved the greatest losses on both sides.

DAVIS’ FEAR IN 1862.

“Strange to relate, President Davis held a high opinion of Gen. McClellan’s military capacity and trembled for the safety of Richmond in the spring of 1862. Personally, I did not have much regard for him in the field. At the very outset I predicted that he would be fully a month getting ready to beat Magruder’s 7,000 men on the Peninsula and proposed that meanwhile we make a flank movement against Washington by crossing the upper Potomac. The suggestion was not well received, and Mr. Davis even seemed to be offended at my cavalier opinion of McClellan.”

THE SECOND MANASSAS FIGHT.

A discussion of Antietam and Gen. McClellan without including Gen. Lee would be like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. In fact, during all this talk Gen. Lee was naturally a central object of interest. I finally propounded this question to the general:

“Gen. Longstreet, which do you consider Gen Lee’s best battle?”

“Well,” responded the general, reflectively, “perhaps the second battle of Manassas was, all things considered, the best tactical battle Gen. Lee ever fought. The grand strategy of the campaign also was fine, and seems to have completely deceived Gen. Pope. Indeed, Pope failed to comprehend Gen. Lee’s purpose

from start to finish, and, on August 30, when I was preparing to push him off the Warrenton pike, he still imagined us to be in retreat, and his most unfortunate movements were based on that false assumption. Had Pope comprehended the true situation as early as the afternoon of August 28, as I think he ought, it might have gone hard with Jackson before I arrived. Pope was outgeneraled and outclassed by Lee, and through improper dispositions his fine army was outfought. Still, it will not do to underrate Pope; he was an enterprising soldier, and a fighter. His movements in all the earlier stages of that campaign were excellent for his purpose to temporarily hold the lines first of the Rapidan and then the Rappahannock. In the secondary affair with Banks at Cedar Mountain, we had gained quite a success, yet Pope promptly concentrated and forced Jackson back again over the river.”

I said to the general that I thought the world generally would agree with him as to that campaign and then asked him in which of the battles he thought Lee displayed his poorest generalship.

He promptly answered, “Although it is perhaps more supererogation to express my views, yet I will give them to you for what they are worth. I have always thought the preliminary dispositions to capture Harper’s Ferry, involving as a corollary the battles of South Mountain and Antietam, were not only the worst ever made by Gen. Lee, but invited the destruction of the Confederate army. I was opposed to the movement because his plan and the topography of that vicinity made necessary the division of our army into four parts in the immediate presence of a superior enemy. But chiefly owing to the timidity if not incapacity of the Federal

(Continued on page 5)

Longstreet...

(Continued from page 4)

commander, and somewhat to the prestige we had gained on the Chickahominy and along Bull Run, we captured Harper's Ferry and escaped with a drawn battle. Tactically, as usual, Lee fought a good defensive battle at Sharpsburg with greatly inferior numbers and withdrew at his leisure across the Potomac without molestation.

LEE'S MILITARY ATTRIBUTES

"General Lee was a large-minded man, of great and profound learning in the science of war. In all strategical movements he handled a great army with comprehensive ability and signal success. His campaigns against McClellan and Pope fully illustrate his capacity. On the defensive, Gen. Lee was absolutely perfect. Reconciled to the single purpose of defense, he was invincible. This is demonstrated by his Fredericksburg battle, and again in the Wilderness, around Spotsylvania, at Cold Harbor, and before Petersburg.

"But of the art of war, more particularly that of giving offensive battle, I do not think Gen. Lee was a master. In science and military learning, he was greatly the superior of Gen. Grant or any other commander on either side. But in the art of war, I have no doubt that Grant and several other officers were his equals. In this field his characteristic fault was headlong combativeness; when a blow was struck, he wished to return it on the spot. He chafed at inaction; always desired to beat up the enemy at once and have it out. He was too pugna-

cious. His impatience to strike once in the presence of the enemy, whatever the disparity of forces or relative conditions, I consider the one weakness of Gen. Lee's military character.

"This trait of aggressiveness," continued Gen. Longstreet, after a pause, "led him to take too many chances—into dangerous situations. At Chancellorsville, against every military principle, he divided his army in the presence of an enemy numerically double his own. His operations around Harper's Ferry and Antietam were even worse. It was among the possibilities for a bold, a penetrating, fighting commander like Grant to close the war in the East after Antietam. Our previous losses had been heavy; the morale of the army was low, and it was reduced by that battle and straggling to less than 30,000 effectives, whereas McClellan had fully 80,000, quickly reinforced to over 100,000. About this time Gen. Lee officially informed the Richmond authorities of his great fear that the army was in danger of actual dissolution from straggling and desertion."

PUGNACITY AGAINST STRATEGY.

In the immediate presence of the enemy Gen. Lee's mind, at all other times calm and clear, became excited. The same may be said of McClellan, Gustavus Smith, and most other highly educated, theoretical soldiers. Now, while I was popularly called a fighting general, it was entirely different with me. When the enemy was in sight, I was content to wait for the most favorable moment to strike—to estimate the chances, and even decline battle if I thought them against me.

CONTROVERSIES OVER GETTYSBURG.

"What were your relations with

Gen. Lee subsequent to Gettysburg, general, were they as cordial and confidential as before?" I asked.

"Every bit," the general answered quickly and unhesitatingly. "They continued to be of the closest and most affectionate character. I was unaware of the slightest diminution of confidence in my military judgment. These friendly relations continued until long after the close of the war. My disagreement with him about some of the details of the Gettysburg campaign had no more effect to estrange us than my descent from the Sharpsburg tactics of the previous year.

RAPIDITY OF JACKSON.

"General, what about Stonewall Jackson? Was he as great a man as the people of the South thought?"

"Jackson was undoubtedly a man of military ability. He was one of the most effective generals on our side. Possibly he had not the requirements in a commander-in-chief, but no man in either army could accomplish more with 30,000 or 40,000 men in an independent command. But in joint movements he was not so reliable. He was very self-reliant and needed to be alone to bring out his greatest qualities. He was very lucky in the success of his critical movements both in the second Manassas campaign and at Chancellorsville."

Subsequently in the conversation Gen. Longstreet said: "I suggested to Gen. Lee that Stonewall Jackson be sent to the Trans-Mississippi instead of Kirby Smith, as the best fitted among all the Confederate generals to make headway against the Federals in that region. The suggestion met with Gen. Lee's approbation, but Lee wanted Jackson himself

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Longstreet...

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“Did Gens. Early, Ewell, or A. P. Hill size up anywhere near Jackson as leaders in independent command?”

HILL AS A CURLED DARLING.

“Not by any means,” replied Gen. Longstreet. “Hill was a gallant, good soldier. There was a good deal of ‘curled darling’ and dress-parade about Hill: he was uncertain at times, falling below expectations, while at others he performed prodigies. A division was about Hill’s capacity.

THE MENACE OF JOHNSTON.

“I had a high regard for them all. Gen. Johnston was one of the ablest generals the war produced. He could handle a large army with ease. But his usefulness to the South was greatly impaired by the personal opposition of the President. He dared take no risks on account of this ‘fire in the rear, fearing that he would not be sustained, perhaps discredited before the world. A menace like that will paralyze the best efforts of any commander in the field. Gen. Johnston never had a fair trial.



*Civil War Re-enactors;
America's Living Historians.*



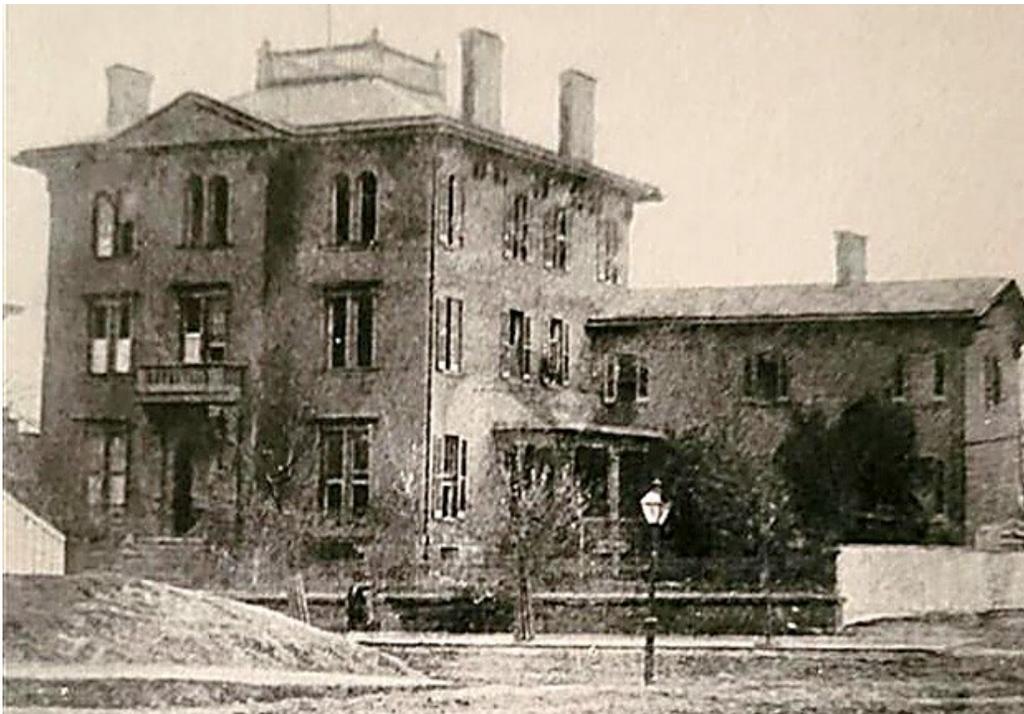
Pvt. George Parks

(Continued from page 1)

Alexandria's military governor, before being converted into a hospital with 100 beds.

Sadly, George died on December 9, 1863, of chronic diarrhea, likely a symptom of dysentery contracted from contaminated food or water. He was buried in Alexandria National Cemetery.

Following the end of the Civil War Francis L. Smith returned to Alexandria and reclaimed his home. One of his clients was Robert E. Lee, who in 1870 was attempting to regain title of his wife's family estate, known as Arlington. The estate had been seized by the Federal Army in May 1861 and would become Arlington National Cemetery. Smith's home, now known as the Vowell-Smith House, is today a private residence and in 2025 was listed for sale at \$8.5 million.



Left, the Wolfe Street General Hospital, had been the private residence of attorney Francis L. Smith, who fled to Richmond with his family following the Federal occupation of Alexandria.

Smith's house was first used as a residence or office by Gen. John Slough, Alexandria's military governor, and then as a hospital with 100 beds.

510 Wolfe Street is once again a private residence.