



"To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish."

Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, UCV Commander General



March Camp Meeting

**Finley's Brigade Camp 1614 will hold its monthly Meeting on March 12th at the VFW.
Social time at 6:00 and meeting at 6:45.**



St. Marks Lighthouse



Constructed in 1842 to replace an earlier 1831 structure which was threatened by erosion, the St. Marks Lighthouse is located at the mouth of the St. Marks River on Apalachee Bay. After Florida seceded from the Union in January 1861, the Confederates continued to operate the lighthouse until the mid 1861s, when authorities determined that it could not be secured against the Union navy. They removed the lens for safekeeping. In June 1861, Confederate forces erected a small artillery battery about 50 yards from the lighthouse which they named **Fort Williams**, and used the lighthouse for lookout purposes. In June 1862, Union navy ships shelled the lighthouse. They sent ashore a landing party, which destroyed the evacuated Fort Williams and burned the lighthouse keeper's quarters. No casualties were reported for either side. In July 1863, the Union navy shelled the lighthouse again and a landing party set fire to the wooden stairs of the lighthouse to prevent it from being used as a lookout post.

In March 1865, approximately 1,000 Union troops landed in the vicinity of the lighthouse for an expedition against **Newport, St. Marks and Fort Ward**, which culminated in the **Battle of Natural Bridge**. After being repulsed by the Confederate forces, the Union troops retreated back to the lighthouse area where they reboarded their transport vessels.

The lighthouse was relit with a new fourth order Fresnel lens in January 1867.

Source: Florida Civil War Heritage Trail



The Newport Executions

On the morning of March 7, 1865, as the main Federal column retreated to the Gulf from the **Battle of Natural Bridge**, Southern troops captured four Union soldiers at Newport, Florida. For two of them, it would be their last day on earth.

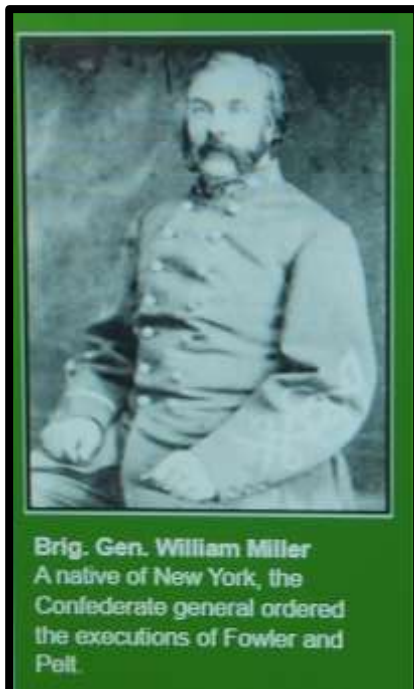
All four of the captured men were members of Company 2, 2nd Florida U.S. Cavalry, and were among the troops from that regiment who had been left to prevent Confederate soldiers from repairing the Newport bridge and crossing in the rear of the main Union column as it marched to Natural Bridge. The bridge had been partially demolished by Southern troops on March 5, 1865, to prevent its use by the Federal column.

The men of the 2nd Florida U.S. Cavalry, fighting dismounted, dug shallow rifle pits on the east bank of the St. Marks River and kept up skirmishing fire with Confederate soldiers and civilians on the opposite shore throughout the day of March 6, 1865, while the main bodies of both forces battled upriver at the Natural Bridge. When darkness fell, the men of both sides were exhausted.

In the confusion of the night and in their utter exhaustion, some of the Union soldiers entered a darkened structure to sleep. Other men joined them there, but it was so pitch black that they could not see each other so they all stretched out on the floor and went to sleep.

When dawn broke, the Federals realized they had been sleeping side by side with exhausted Confederate soldiers who had pursued the main Union column down from Natural Bridge. They bolted for the door, but were fired upon and captured by alert Southern sentries who were guarding the area.

For two of the captured Federals – **Corporal Asa Fowler and Private Peter Pelt** – they had the misfortune of being captured by soldiers from the 2nd Florida Cavalry (CS). Both men had earlier deserted from this regiment and were quickly recognized by their former comrades.



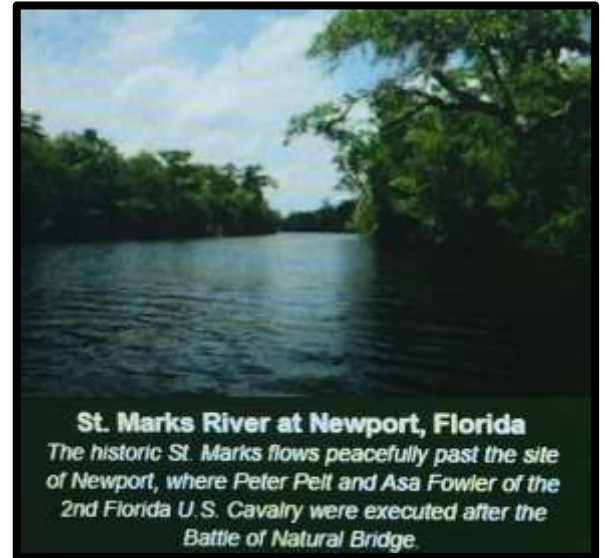
Desertion was a capital offense, and both of the unfortunate men were dragged before a drumhead court martial convened at the order of **Brigadier General William Miller**, second in command of Confederate forces at the Battle of Natural Bridge. Convicted of desertion, they were sentenced to death.

A firing squad marched in front of the prisoners who were tied to fence rails planted into the ground. At the order of an officer, they were shot.

Fowler fell instantly dead, pierced by 13 bullets. Pelt fell with a cry, pulling down the rail to which he was tied, and struggled for several minutes before dying. Both men were then stripped naked and dumped into a hole.

The grave site has been lost to time and remains unmarked to this day.

The executions placed a bloody exclamation point on the Confederate victory at Natural Bridge.





Finley Brigade's **Lee-Jackson Event** was such a success that the camp was able to present a check for \$450 to the **Mary Ann Harvey Black Order of the Confederate Rose, Chapter #5**. The ladies were responsible for decorating the tables and the room for the event and did an excellent job.

Seen here, accepting the check from Cmdr. Bess is **Lisa Bess**, OCR President, **Kylee Bess** and **Kathleen Butler**.



Other action at the February meeting included presenting compatriot **Gerald Bell** with a Finley's Brigade Volunteer Service Award for performance of duty as the **Cresset Newsletter Editor** for 2023. What a pleasant surprise it was and what a lovely, well-done award. Thanks for the honor!



After cleaning two miles of Natural Bridge Road leading to the State Park, the clean-up crew posed for a quick picture, We had a great turn-out of workers on the 24th. **Stan Willis** took the picture of these eight. We had one guest and one compatriot had to leave earlier. Eleven guys did a great job as they prepared for the reenactment on 3-2-24.



The Crypt Keeper's Report

J. R. Miller



Application for a headstone for **W.G. Lester**, buried in Old City Cemetery, has been mailed to the V.A. and has been approved as of Feb 12th. It could be a couple of weeks or several months before the headstone arrives. Mr. Lester was

a member of the **Order Of Odd Fellows**. We will ask the local chapter if they want extra engraving on Mr. Lester's headstone.

Headstones for **J.Q. Gallagher and Edward Gallagher** are at Hall Monuments for extra engraving on the back reflecting their membership in the Order Of Odd Fellows, when completed the headstones will be installed in Old City Cemetery.

The replacement headstone for **Hugh Black** has been received and was delivered to Hall Monuments. Extra engraving was completed and is now back in our possession. The placement of Black's headstone was completed in February.

A replacement headstone was installed in Meacham Cemetery in Liberty County Florida for **Josephus Bracewell** (Confederate). Mr. Bracewell's original headstone was a Union Shield headstone. No one knows how that happened, but the error has been corrected.

Compatriot Crocker's hard work is paying off in Jefferson County Florida. Over a dozen V.A. headstones have been applied for. The proper proof has been obtained and submitted so there should not be any burps from the V.A. When these headstones are received, we will need to establish a convoy to Jefferson County.

We still need to paint the fence at Solders Cemetery in Quincy. Every weekend it is either rainy or it is too cold to paint. It is my hope to have the fence painted by our memorial service, which is fast approaching. If the weather pattern does break, I will issue a work-day order. I may try to get the retirees of the camp to take a weekday and start painting the fence. In March we have Natural Bridge and Woodville Founders Day so that is two Saturday's that are off the calendar. I suspect that it will take at least three work days to completely paint the fence.





Chaplain's Corner

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. —Luke 5:5

As a child, do you remember playing with a board full of holes of different shapes? We had to put blocks into the holes that matched the shapes of the blocks. Maybe you are as I and cannot remember that far back, but you may recall your children or grandchildren playing that game. This is where we get the saying, “It’s like trying to put a square peg in a round hole.” Conventional wisdom tells us that will not work. One cannot make a square peg fit into a round hole. That is, in the natural world. With God, things do not work like that. God does not deal in conventional wisdom. “*His ways are not our ways,*” says the Word of God.

The full context of this verse encompasses verses 4-10, but verse 5 is the key. If verse 5 is the oyster, then the word “nevertheless” is the pearl. **Nevertheless is the key to this month’s “Chaplain’s Corner.”**

Andrew and his brother Simon (Peter), and their partners James and his brother John (the sons of Zebedee) were fishermen. They were not men who fished for enjoyment on the weekends—no; they were professional fishermen. They knew everything about fishing. They had fished all night, as Peter states in verse 5, and caught nothing. Conventional wisdom is to NOT go back out to fish. What would this guy (Jesus) know about fishing? It will never work. Peter, however, decides to abandon conventional wisdom this once and to trust this Jesus. In the verses following, you will find the results: both boats were so full of fish that the boats were about to sink. The word “nevertheless”=FAITH—trusting God at His Word. God cannot do a couple things. One thing He cannot do is lie, and another is He cannot fail. It is hard for this flesh to trust Him, but if one takes a chance, as Peter did in this scripture, one will see that God WILL honor His Word. The next time, it is easier to trust Him; the time after that, it is even easier, and so on, and so on. The Bible asks the question, “*Can God provide a table in the wilderness?*” Well, the answer to that is a definite YES. He fed the Children of Israel bread from heaven and made water come out of a rock. The Lord Jesus fed 5,000 men (not including women and children) with five loaves and two fishes; He fed 4,000 men (not including women and children) another time; He stood up in a boat and rebuked the wind and the sea, and they obeyed Him; He healed the sick and raised the dead; most importantly, He paid the price for a lost and undone, sinful human race to be reconciled to God. Is there ANYTHING too hard for Him? The answer to that question is a resounding NO!

“Giving 10% of my gross income doesn’t add up.” “How can I only make it on 90% of my pay?” “Why should I give up my Sunday morning and evening? I only have that one day off.” “What good will prayer do?” Have you ever heard these sayings/questions? I have. As a matter of fact, I have used them myself. Even though I may not have spoken them aloud, my actions were saying them. I went through a period of robbing God of HIS tithes and offerings, and suffered untold misery. I will never do that again! Mark it down, 90% goes SO much further than 100%. I have more time when I spend time with him. I get more rest when I spend Sundays in His house. Gentlemen, trust God! He will never fail you. Consider: less is more; the way up is down; others before yourself—worldly speaking, these are completely backwards; however, they are 100% aligned with “His ways.” Stop cheating yourselves out of manifold blessing. Turn loose of the wheel and trust Him. How is it that we say we can trust Him with our immortal soul, but we cannot trust Him with the daily things in our lives? Think about that for a minute. It really sounds silly, doesn’t it? I encourage you to **NEVERTHELESS**.

God says in Malachi 3:10, “*Prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*”

My duties as Chaplain include assisting members in need. With that in mind, please let me know if you are aware of any who are sick, bereaved or in need of any services we may offer. Contact me as indicated below.

Chaplain Keith Lassiter (850) 567-0645
greynole01@yahoo.com

Compatriots,

Attached you will find the schedule of events for Natural Bridge (includes times). The opening ceremonies will be at 08:30am, Saturday March 02.

We will conduct the “Swearing in” ceremony for Compatriot Cade Kemp, in front of the monument at 2:00pm Saturday March 02.

Finley’s Color Guard has been requested to post colors at the UDC memorial Service on Sunday March 03, 1:00pm.

Finley’s Brigade set-up time is scheduled for 09:00am, Friday March 01. We will be in our usual location.

The resident ranger at Natural Bridge, Mark “Sparky” Stevenson, has officially retired. “Sparky” was a great supporter of this event and Finley’s Brigade. I wish him well as he begins this new chapter in his life.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at Natural Bridge. If you have any questions, please contact me.



I am committed to this task. I hope you will be too.

Your faithful servant, in the bonds of the South!

Commander Mark R. Bess

Upcoming Heritage Events and Opportunities

Mar 2-3rd - Battle of Natural Bridge Reenactment, Woodville FL.

Mar 9th - Camp Gordon Johnston Parade, Carrabelle FL, 10:45AM

Mar 12th - Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with the meeting at 6:45 PM

Mar 16th – Woodville Founders’ Day

Apr 9th - Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with the meeting at 6:45 PM

May 14th -Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with the meeting at 6:45 PM

Jun 1st - 54th Annual Florida SCV Reunion, Trenton FL

Jun 11th - Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with the meeting at 6:45 PM

Jul 9th - Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with the meeting at 6:45 PM

Aug 13th - Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with the meeting at 6:45 PM

Sep 10th - Regular Camp Meeting at VFW. Social Hour starts at 6:00 with the meeting at 6:45 PM

Battle of Natural Bridge reenactment: A schedule of events

March 1, 2024

- Reenactor registration and set-up

March 2, 2024

- 9:00 a.m. – Military and civilian camps open to the public.
- 10:00 a.m. – Infantry drill & field demonstrations
- 11:00 a.m. – Medical demonstration
- 12:00 p.m. – Historical presentations under the ball tent –
 - John G. Riley Center/Museum of African American History and Culture
 - Oration of Frederick Douglass by John Anderson
- 1:00 p.m. – Ladies Tea
- 1:30 p.m.– Artillery demonstration
- 2:00 p.m.- Swearing-in of Cade Kemp at monument.
- **3:00 p.m. – Skirmish on the battlefield**
- 4:30 p.m.–Military and civilian camps closed to the public.
- 5:00 p.m.–Annual meeting of the Natural Bridge Historical Society, Inc. under the ball tent – open to the public
- 8:00 p.m.–Civil War Dance under the ball tent – 1860s period dress requested but not required – open to the public.

March 3, 2024

- 9:00 a.m. – Military and civilian camps open to the public.
- 10:00 a.m.– Non-denominational church services at the monument
- 1:00 p.m. – 159th Anniversary Memorial Service - Chapter #224 United Daughters of the Confederacy
- **2:30 p.m. – 46th Annual Reenactment of the Battle of Natural Bridge**
- 3:30 p.m. – Conclusion and salute



The 54th Annual Florida Division Reunion

220 NE 4th Ave Trenton, Florida – June 1, 2024

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Quantity Total:

Registration Fee: *Members Only*

If Postmarked by May 15th **\$40.00** \$ _____

After May 15th **\$50.00** \$ _____

Ancestor Memorials: included with fee \$ _____

Total remitted \$ _____

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED.

We will have an Awards Luncheon and no Evening Banquet

NOTE: We will not be able to take meal reservations received after May 20th

NAME: _____ **CAMP NAME & NUMBER:** _____

Guest: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Please Mail Registration Form & Check to:

Commander Calvin Hart

4884 Victoria Chase Ct., Jacksonville, FL 32257

Please make checks payable to: SCV Florida Division Inc.