



James City Cavalry Picket Lines



September 2025 Dispatch – Williamsburg, Virginia

Camp #2095  10th Brigade  Virginia Division  Army of Northern Virginia

Camp 2095 - Our 20th Anniversary Year!

Next Muster

Wednesday, September 24th, 2025, 6:30 pm
Colonial Heritage Club House
www.colonialheritageclub.com/find-us
6500 Arthur Hills Drive
Williamsburg, VA 23188



Meal Cost: \$23.00 Per Person

Payment by check or exact cash only please.

Non-camp members please contact Jeff Toalson (757) 220-0131 or troon24@cox.net to make a dinner reservation. Camp members will be contacted by the 'Call Team' for your reservation. Attendees without a reservation are welcome to attend the meeting but may not receive a dinner.

JCC Web Site: <http://www.jamescitycavalry.org>

To add or remove an email address for the Picket Lines distribution list, or for questions or comments regarding the newsletter, email to: jccpicketlinesdistribution@gmail.com. To email one of the camp officers directly, see **Camp Officers** on page 3.

September Guest Speaker

Ms. Shelly Liebler
Executive Assistant
and Docent

***"Fort
Pocahontas:
Preservation
and Memory"***



The Action at Wilson's Wharf on May 24, 1864, is one of the lesser-known Virginia Civil War engagements. This battle and its location may have faded into obscurity if preservation had not intervened. This presentation will give a history of the location, including information on the battle between U.S. Colored Troops and Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, along with the story of how one historian and the grandson of President Tyler put Fort Pocahontas back on the map and into Civil War memory.

A Wisconsin native, Shelly Liebler is the archivist at the Virginiana Room at the Hilton Library of the Newport News Public Library system. She had a 15-year career in marketing, sales, and administration before raising her family. As a homeschool parent she developed an interest in history which has translated to her current role as tour guide and docent. Shelly is also a freelance photographer, conveying stories of the Civil War and other subjects through images.

Camp Journal for Last Muster

Meeting:

Held August 27th at 6:30 PM at Colonial Heritage Club House,
James City County, Va., **36** Attendees

Welcome given by Cmdr. Jeff Toalson

Pledge & Salute to the Flags led by Treasurer Jon Holland

Blessing:

Given by Sr. Chaplain George Corbett

Break for Supper

The SCV Charge read by Compatriot George Bridewell

Program:

1st Lt. Commander Ron Perry welcomed Mr. Jay Gaidmore to the meeting. Jay is the Director of Special Collections for the Swem Archives at the College of William and Mary. He provided an enlightening presentation on "Collection and Preservation" and we gained a greater understanding of the wide variety of materials in the archive. It was an educational and enjoyable evening.



Mr. Jay Gaidmore (R) is welcomed by 1st Lt. Cmdr. Perry

Committee Reports and Announcements:

Old & New Business

- Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Jon Holland
- Comments - Cmdr. Jeff Toalson
- WCWRT Update – Compatriot Bill Miller
- Camp Christmas Party on December 10 (Wed.) in downtown Toano . . . details to follow

Book Raffle

Proceeds of \$63 were donated to the Camp Treasury from the raffle of the four donations.

Benediction

Given by Chaplain David Stover



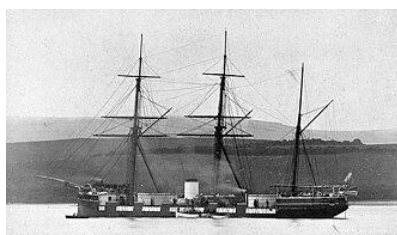
Camp Officers

Commander	Jeff Toalson troon24@cox.net
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2nd Lt. Commander	Steve White garrettsgrocery@gmail.com
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Chaplain	David Stover gor_cabot1@msn.com
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Historian	Fred Boelt fwb@widomaker.com
Webmaster	Don Woolridge dsw1229@gmail.com
Archivist/Editor	Paul Huelskamp jccpicketlinesdistribution@gmail.com

WBTS in September

Sept. 1862 – Contract for the “Laird Rams” Cancelled

The secret Confederate contract for two ironclad ram ships with the Laird shipyard in England was cancelled due to political pressure from the Union. The ships went on to become the British warships HMS Wivern and HMS Scorpion.



HMS Wivern, aka the CSS
Mississippi

Commander's Comments

We thank Mr. Jay Gaidmore for an enlightening presentation on the wide range of the marvelous collection of documents and historical items held in the Swem Library Archives.

A key current focus of Jay's is the collection of WW-1, WW-2, Korean and Viet Nam war letters, diaries and emails. The emails are very important for more recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. If you have family letters, or letters of your own, from some of these conflicts he is very interested in adding them to their collection. Originals, envelopes, select photos, military records, and varied minutia are all desired. Stipulations can be made where researchers cannot access the materials for 50 years, or some such number, so that no person discussed is still alive. Oral histories either recorded or transcribed are also desired.

Last year I donated 85 letters and other documents of my great uncle Clayton Hook who served in the 354th Regiment of the 89th Infantry Division in France from October 1917 to May 1919. This past month I donated 19 original letters and several dictations of oral history relating to Captain Glen Toalson and his service in the 33rd Infantry Division in New Guinea and the Philippines. These letters span from 1939 through 1946. Included were military records, select photos, Japanese occupation currency, an unopened pack of G.I. issue Raleigh cigarettes and other items. Also included are letters from his parents and his future wife which detail insight into life and concerns on the home front.

We could all help the Swem build their archives with records of ourselves and our ancestors in many of these conflicts. Consider looking through things you or a family member has saved. If you need an introduction to Jay or if you have some questions, feel free to contact me.

This is an opportunity to preserve history before it is lost. I could have written none of my 5 books of WBTS history if people, just like you, had not saved letters of soldiers and family members.

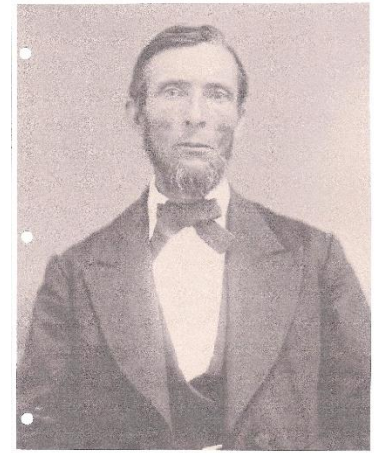
Jeff

Confederate Gravesites

(Contributed by Historian Fred Boelt)

David Spencer Cowles was born on April 27, 1819, presumably in James City County. He was the son of Thomas Edward and Caroline Spencer Cowles. Caroline was the daughter of David Spencer and his wife, Sarah Taylor, and David Cowles was named for his maternal grandfather. David's father died when he was about four years old, and he grew up among family in the county.

On December 2, 1841, David Cowles married Maria Woodson Childrey, the daughter of Charles Childrey of Henrico County. How did they meet? This brings to mind the question – did David go to work in the Richmond area as a young man? In 1845, David Cowles bought the house on Francis Street in Williamsburg, today known as the Moody House. In the 1850 census, his occupation was listed as “mechanic,” and in addition to his family, three apprentices were included in his household.



DAVID SPENCER COWLES

David Cowles sold the Williamsburg property in 1855 and moved the family to James City County. He and Maria had nine children, seven of whom lived to maturity. In the 1860 census, Cowles' occupation was listed as “farmer.” On April 1, 1861, David Cowles, then forty-two years old, enrolled in Burnt Ordinary with Capt. Geddy in Company I, 3rd Virginia Cavalry and he mustered into service as a private in Williamsburg on June 24th under Colonel Ewell. He served on vidette duty in July and August and was detailed to the ordinance department in September and October. He was listed as “sick” starting in December 1861 and continuing through the winter. March 21 through April 13, 1862, Cowles was in Seminary Hospital in Williamsburg with “nostalgia.” His service record ended here, probably due to his age and illness.

After the war, David Cowles returned to farming and timbering. In 1873, he purchased the 375-acre Amblers farm fronting on the James River. This land is owned by James City County now and a part of the site is Jamestown Beach Event Park. He and his family were longtime members of the James River Methodist Church originally located on the site of the present-day James River Baptist Church. David Spencer Cowles died on June 2, 1894, and was buried among his family in the Cowles-Spencer cemetery on Longhill Road.

David and Maria Cowles oldest son, William Thomas, was born on February 14, 1845. Although only seventeen years old, he enlisted in Company H, 5th Virginia Cavalry on May 1, 1862. Perhaps he felt an obligation to replace his ailing father who seems to have left the Cavalry about this time. His service records are incomplete. He later enlisted as a private in Company B, 1st Battalion, Virginia Light Infantry, on May 25, 1863, in Richmond. Marked present on several rolls in 1864, it was noted that he surrendered at Appomattox.

In both the 1870 and the 1880 censuses, William was living and farming with his father. On January 17, 1885, he married Jeannette Thorpe, a resident of Williamsburg. In the 1900 and 1910 censuses, William and Jeannette Cowles were living on the south side of Duke of Gloucester Street approximately where the theatre in Merchants Square is located. William was active in the Magruder-Ewell Camp, Confederate Veterans. He died on September 6, 1918, and was buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery. At that time, there were only six other Confederate veterans living in Williamsburg.

S.C.V. Oakwood Cemetery Project

(Contributed by Historian Fred Boelt)

We ordered a headstone for the grave of York County soldier Private William Moore of Co. I - 32nd Virginia Infantry. In 1860 William was married and owned a farm in the Halfway House district of the county. He and his wife Martha Ann had 4 daughters and a new son. He enlisted on January 28, 1862. He was admitted to Chimborazo Hospital on May 14, 1862, as the 32nd arrived in Richmond after withdrawing from Williamsburg. He died of pneumonia on June 7, 1862. He was buried in Oakwood at site B A 110.



Oakwood Cemetery

Camp Donations

(Contributed by Treasurer Jon Holland)



**The Surry Co.
monument in its
original location**

Surry Monument

The Cavalry sent a \$200 donation to the 13th Mechanized Cavalry to assist with the financing of their restoration and installation of the Surry County monument which formerly stood in front of the courthouse in downtown Surry.

Virginia Heritage Defense

It was our pleasure in June to send an annual contribution to the Virginia Division Heritage Defense Fund. We mailed a \$400 check to Heritage Defense Coordinator Frank Earnest to support the Division in their ongoing work to preserve and defend our heritage.



U.D.C. Ceremony at Cedar Grove Cemetery

(Contributed by Sr. Chaplain George Corbett)

The U.D.C. held a private ceremony to honor the burial of the 4 unknown sets of Confederate remains at Cedar Grove Cemetery in Williamsburg. 36 people attended, all by invitation, and the majority were National, State and Headquarters staff of the U.D.C. Commander Kenny Bage and 1st Lt. Commander Mike Pullen of the Virginia Division of the S.C.V. were invited as were Commander Jeff Toalson and Sr. Chaplain George Corbett of the James City Cavalry. Kenny and Mike had prior commitments and could not attend. President General Julie Hardaway conducted a moving ceremony that included placing a small amount of soil from the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana with the Virginia soil so that regardless of where these soldiers called home there would be some of their home soil at the gravesite. Commander Toalson presented a short history of the osteological and military records research used to narrow the list to the 17 most likely soldiers and then read the rank, name, and unit of each of those Confederate soldiers. Only time will tell if the Ancient DNA Laboratory and the team at Colonial Williamsburg will achieve success in confirming their identities.



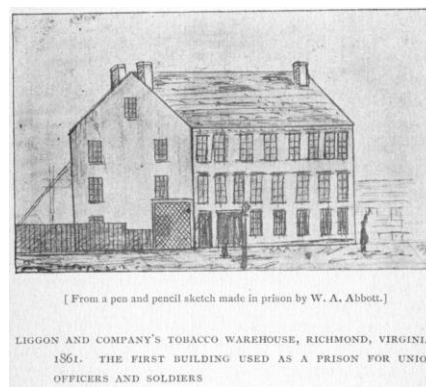
Cedar Grove Cemetery

Prison Hospital Cleanliness – Richmond 1862

(Contributed by Cmdr. Jeff Toalson)

Daily Richmond Examiner – Saturday Morning, Feb. 15, 1862 [p. 3 – col. 2]

Seventy-three are now in the prison hospital; some half dozen of whom are quite ill. The hospital is scoured, fumigated with tar, and thoroughly white-washed once a week. When a man is taken into the hospital building he is scrubbed from head to foot with warm water and soap, to clean him of any possibility of vermin; his hair clipped short, and his scalp anointed with mercurial ointment [to kill lice]. Dr. Higginbotham, who is in charge of the hospital and also has a supervision of the whole prison, [notes] that out of three hundred and fifty cases of badly wounded men he only lost twenty-four. A registry is kept giving the name of each prisoner, his age, his place of nativity, his regiment and company, when and where captured, and how wounded.

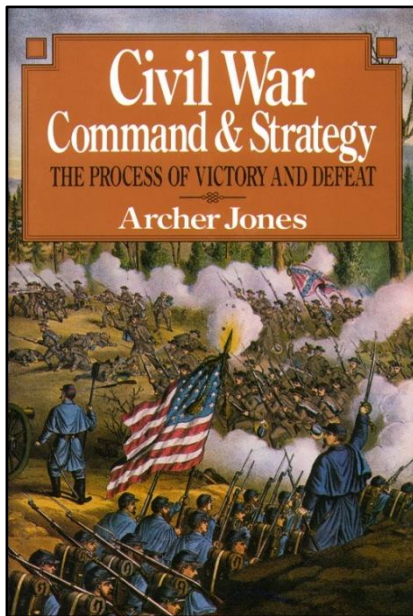


Ligon's Prison and Hospital. One of the first Union POW prisons & hospitals in Richmond.

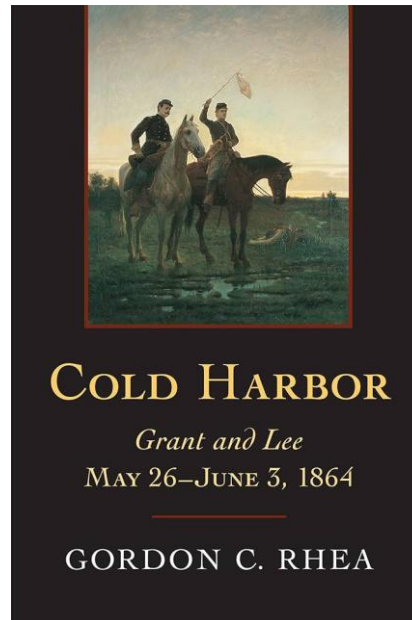
(note: This newspaper was among the 2025 Cavalry-Keating gifts to the Swem Archives)

September Book Raffle

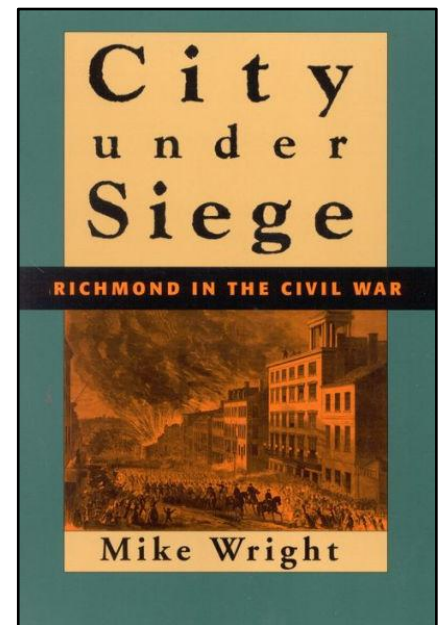
(Contributed by Compatriot Derick Hayman)



"Civil War Command & Strategy"
by Archer Jones

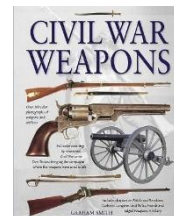


"Cold Harbor (Grant & Lee)"
by Gordon C. Rhea



"City Under Siege (Richmond in the
Civil War)"
by Mike Wright

Bonus Book:
"Civil War Weapons"
by Graham Smith



Williamsburg Civil War Round Table

<http://www.wcwrt.org>

At 6:30 PM on September 23rd at the Williamsburg
Library Theatre - Kevin Pawlak
will present:

**"Antietam Endgame: The Conclusion of Lee's
Maryland Campaign, September 18-20, 1862"**

