



GEN. JOE'S DISPATCH



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Coming Events

June 9, 2015 - **Regular meeting of Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler Camp #863** - Masonic Lodge, Conyers, Georgia

June 12 & 13, 2015 - **Georgia Division Reunion** - Nash Farm Battlefield

July 14, 2015 - **Regular meeting of Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler Camp #863** - Masonic Lodge, Conyers, Georgia

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GRISWOLDVILLE: Do We Tell the Truth?



Old, gray haired, weakly looking men and little boys, not over fifteen years old, lay dead or writhing in pain ... They knew nothing at all about fighting and I think their officers knew as little... That is probably one of the most familiar quotes you will ever find regarding the November 22, 1864 Battle of Griswoldville, Georgia. Almost anyone who has read much about that battle recognizes those words - we almost know them by heart. But, are they entirely true? You could have found that same array of "old men and young boys," to some extent, in both armies of the late War period. The famous quoted words by Lt. Charles Wills, came from an eyewitness, but still a Union soldier expressing a personal opinion - a snapshot in the fading light of a moment, if you will. Yet, few other words have come to so exemplify the battle more than the image that Wills' words convey of Southern men who were less than able-bodied, and not as experienced as veteran front line troops; which is just not the whole story ... With each repetition of the words that Charles Wills left, I feel as though I am making an excuse for men who do not need me to validate anything they did, or who, as the song says, "need no pardon for anything they've done." It is almost as if we are trying to excuse the loss of that battle by say-

ing, in essence, that the South did not send their best to the field that day but the North did. I readily agree that the Northern soldiers our ancestors challenged that day were nothing less than the best the Union Army had to offer. Those who led them said there never was a better brigade - hardy, battle-hardened Midwestern men of the 15th Corps, mostly veterans who had served from Shiloh through the Atlanta campaign - some companies armed with repeating rifles, defending the high ground. If that was not a dreadful foe, what was? But OUR Confederates ancestors took them on anyway... Too often we have had to settle for letting those who won the War write their version of OUR history. Enough is enough!

In the early stages of the Battle of Griswoldville the two-gun Union Battery of the 1st Michigan Battery, H, was effectively silenced by Ruel Anderson's Confederate guns. The Georgia Militia at Griswoldville had been eager to charge these Union artillery pieces but Anderson's Napoleons made it unnecessary. Clearly, the Georgia Militia men were not cowards. Occasionally, you will read (on the Internet, so it MUST be true!) about the Confederates charging uphill facing the fearsome Union artillery fire of grapeshot canister. Forlornly daring as that sounds, there is little, if any, truth to it. The two, comparatively (3" Ordnance Rifles) small Union artillery pieces, were observed by overall Confederate Commander Pleasant Philips, to be "firing weakly" even as the battle started and were silenced, early on, (as we



By: John Wayne Dobson

said) by Southern guns; thus Yankee artillery was not really a factor at all.... We must always be careful not to settle for myths when facts are available. Speaking of the four Confederate cannons, we often hear that they were submerged in the swamp to evade capture. I can see no reason for this move unless all artillery horses were dead and the guns could not be removed - then, it is entirely reasonable. Maybe this tale is true, but where did it come from? I have combed the Official Records and any vestige of a Griswoldville source since 1995 - I have yet to find this incident even mentioned in print. If anyone out there knows where I can find it, please help me out!

Again, popular myth often creeps in the back door of history when it is commonly said that the Confederate lines went forward against overwhelming numbers (another Internet fallacy). Actually, there were about 4,300 Southern men and four pieces of artillery opposing some 1,500 Yankees, counting all infantry, artillery and cavalry. I will qualify that by saying that there was another, entire, Federal infantry brigade only a mile behind the point of attack on Duncan's Ridge.

We have read, with good authority, that the Federals found a "14 year old boy with a broken arm and leg" - not dead, but wounded and later carried to the Union campfires for care. A Union soldier wrote (Theodore Upson /103rd Illinois), that "next to him (the 14-year old boy), cold in

Continued on page 3.



Our Commanders' Comments



By: Commander John Maxey



Southern Gentlemen

This month's comments will have to begin on a somber note. Most of you know and remember Ellen Gibson. For those who might not, she was

the wife of Ed Gibson, a charter member of Joe Wheeler Camp # 863 and a life time member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. This true daughter of the South was a strong supporter of our camp and its many

activities. At many of the Lee/Jackson dinners she would prepare a large Confederate Flag cake that was as beautiful as it was tasty. Our hearts and prayers go out to Ed and the family during this this difficult time.

Our May meeting was very special thanks to Compatriot Gene Wade and his newly published book about the Confederate cemeteries in Covington and Oxford. This is History first hand. This is also the result of many hours of hard work and going the extra mile. Thank you Gene.

The June 9th meeting will be our last before the Division Convention at the Nash

Farm Battlefield. Several of us are planning to be there for the Saturday meeting. I know we'll all have a good time.

Until then, be on the look-out for a friend to invite to our camp. I know they'll enjoy themselves.

Have a "Dixie" day,

John L. Maxey,
Commander



Georgia Division Reunion Coming June 12th & 13th



By: J. H. Underwood, Editor

**118th GEORGIA
DIVISION CONVEN-
TION/REUNION**

**JUNE 12th & 13th,
2015**

**The Reunion will be
held at:**

**Nash Farm Battlefield
100 Babbs Mill Rd.
Hampton, Georgia
30228**

**Host Camp: Col.
Charles T. Zachry #108**



120th National Reunion, July 15-19 2015



By: J. H. Underwood, Editor



Richmond, Virginia; The Major General J.E.B. Stuart Camp #1343 is honored to host the 120th National SCV Reunion, July 15 through July 19, 2015 in Richmond Virginia.

Scheduled events includes a Reception at the

Museum of the Confederacy. This plan is very tentative and subject to change depending on the turn of events between now and then, there is no certainty this will happen at all. Intentions are the reception will be either a celebration of our victory in court where we will have attempted to stop the completion of the merger of the MoC with the

American Civil War Museum at Historic Tredegar or it will be your last chance to view the worlds largest collection of Confederate memorabilia before it disappears forever. Contingency plans call for an alternate venue should these fall through.

Speakers scheduled for the event are Ms. Kelly Hinson in a Theatrical Production portraying Mrs. Anna Jackson, wife of Gen. Stonewall Jackson in a very moving reading of their wartime letters, Mr. James R and Walter D. Kennedy at the Heritage Luncheon, Chaplain-in-Chief Dr. Ray L. Parker at the Chaplains' Breakfast, and History Talks programs by Mr. Michael D. Gorman on Richmond Again Taken; Photographing the Confederate Capital in 1865 and Mr. John J. Fox, III on Stuart's Finest Hour; The Ride around McClellan, June 1862.

Sounds like a very interesting week in Richmond.



GRISWOLDVILLE: Do We Tell the Truth?



By: John Wayne Dobson (Continued from page 1)

death, lay his father, two brothers and an uncle; (that is 1 wounded boy and 4 dead relatives). No doubt they were not especially old nor very young men. Among the dead and wounded were black Confederate soldiers about whom little is known.

I really tire of hearing how these Georgians were armed with only squirrel rifles, shot-guns and smooth bore muskets - the men of the Athens battalion made the excellent Enfield-pattern rifles they carried - that was their trade. The 1,000 Militia-owned rifles that Hood threatened to confiscate from the Macon Arsenal were the Austrian Lorenz - about as good a muzzle-loader as anyone had at the time. We hear about the Spencer rifles of the Federal brigade. In truth only a few selected companies were armed in this manner - effective as they were, it is not like every Union soldier at Griswoldville had one.

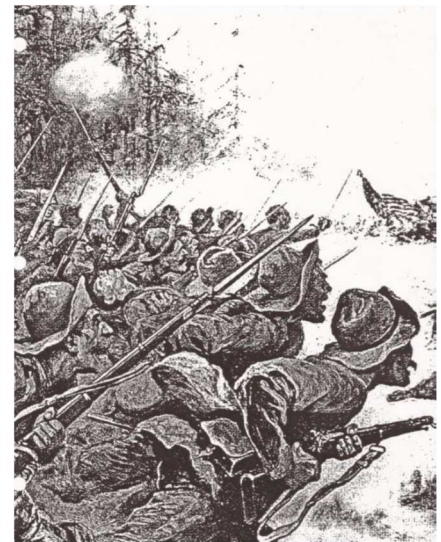
I am a bit weary of hearing how the Southern commanding Officers had little battle experience - I am not sure how you would get much more experience than General C.D. Anderson gained during his pre-Militia time with the 6th Georgia Infantry and still live ... there are others, like Lt. Colonel Evans (State Line) who had first served in regular front line Confederate units then with Georgia's Militia and State Line. I do acknowledge that both the aged and the young stood in the Southern ranks that day - the middle-aged,

too. The short, the tall the thin, the heavy, the good, the bad and the ugly... Generalizations are nearly always ridiculous. I simply refuse to concede that the Southern defeat was due to any ineptitude or cowardice of the men or the officers. I will not agree they attacked foolishly and I cannot find it in me to detract from their incredible bravery and heroism. Most of all, I will not cheapen their sacrifice by saying they died in vain, or possessed "more courage than discretion", nor will I ever be content with any Northern version of OUR history.

In closing, I ask you to examine the contents of the Georgia Militia units that fought at Griswoldville. The Militia Reserve was comprised of men between the ages of 16-17 and 50-60. It was called out and combined with the Militia Proper whose ages ranged from 18 to 45. These ages do not seem particularly young nor old. Later, the consolidated (Reserve & Proper) Militia units were reassigned to occupy two miles of trenches on the eastern edge of Atlanta as part of John Bell Hood's Corps. Governor Brown had organized the Militia forces of the State into southern and northern sections by an east-west line drawn through Macon. Those Militia men north of the line had, of course, been sent to Atlanta on July 20th, 1864. Those south of Brown's line manned the trenches east of Macon, commanded by Howell Cobb.

This same Militia distinguished themselves

beyond all reproach at Atlanta, at Jonesboro, Macon, Honey Hill and as much as anywhere on the frozen ground of Griswoldville! These gallant Southern soldiers received the public acknowledgement of their devotion to duty from Generals Johnston and Hood. At Griswoldville, they defended our beloved Georgia, and did all they could to take a stand against Sherman's March. As Adjutant General Henry C. Wayne said of these men, "they have done their duty and deserve the thanks of their County." God rest them, all.



'Appomattox' Exhibit At West Point



News Brief from "The Civil War News"



WEST POINT, N.Y. — To conclude its series of commemorative exhibitions for the Civil War Sesquicentennial the West

Point Museum is showing a new special exhibit, "Appomattox."

The exhibit, in the museum's Foyer Gallery, includes artifacts related to significant participants in the surrender

and other war items.

The artifacts include a uniform coat of Ulysses S. Grant, a sash reputedly worn by Robert E. Lee at the surrender, a frame of souvenirs fragments gathered by George A. Custer, and Philip Sheridan's Cavalry Corps badge and a shoulder strap from the uniform he wore at the surrender.

Other displays include a Confederate battle flag, a bugle used to sound "Assembly" ending a final cavalry charge, and a piece of the mythical Appomattox apple tree that Gen. Nelson A. Miles took as a souvenir.

Two contrasting depictions of the Confederate surrender, "Furling the Flag," painted by Richard Norris Brooke in 1872, and artist Ken Riley's "The Surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, April 12, 1865," round out the exhibition.

"Appomattox" is scheduled to run through April 2016. The West Point Museum is open daily except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days, at no charge, from 10:30 to 4:15. For more information call 845-938-3590 or visit on Facebook.

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Georgia Division 2015 Reunion Division Tag Fund Projects



By: Georgia Division Adjutant Tim Pilgrim

Here is a list of the projects that will be voted on at the 2015 reunion.

1. Project # 2015-001, Lumpkin County Confederate Monument, requesting \$19,773 the total cost of the project is \$21,970.

Submitted by: The Blue Ridges Rifles Camp # 1860.

The Camp will be erecting a black granite obelisk monument with colored engravings. It will be placed in Veterans park in Dahlonega, Georgia.

Project Recommended by the Georgia Division Executive Council.

2. Project # 2015-002, City of Nicholson, Ga. Confederate Monument, requesting \$13,335 the total cost of the project is \$14,817.

Submitted by: The Jackson County Volunteers Camp 94.

The Camp will be erecting a Grey granite

obelisk monument and will be located in the City of Nicholson, Ga. at the Community Center next to the existing Soldier's Monument.

Project Recommended by the Georgia Division Executive Council.

3. Project # 2015-003, Georgia Division Headquarters Proposal, requesting \$15,000.

Submitted by: Division Adjutant as a Division wide project.

The purpose of this project is to earmark \$15,000 from the Division tag funds to be applied toward the down payment to purchase a Division Headquarters building. Also to establish a budget and preliminary course of action to locate, evaluate and secure a Georgia Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans Headquarters.

Once a budget has been established. The Executive Council will create a Headquarters Committee, that will be charged with locating and

investigating potential headquarters locations that will be based the above assessments of cost, visibility, accessibility and historical. Once the location/s are established then the Headquarters committee will present location and plan to the Executive Council to be discussed on possibility vote on. Once the location has been approved then a detail business plan will be created by the Headquarters committee. Regular up-dates will be posted in the Georgia Confederate to keep Division Members updated of the progress.

Project Recommended by the Georgia Division Executive Council.

