

# RECONNAISSANCE

NEWSLETTER OF THE J.E.B. STUART BIRTHPLACE PRESERVATION TRUST, INC.  
P.O. BOX 1210, STUART, VIRGINIA 24171 • 276.251.1833 • WWW.JEBSTUART.ORG



**Dr. James A. Keesee**

*President*

**Mrs. Shirley O. Keene**

*Vice-President*

**Mrs. M. Coates Clark**

*Secretary*

**Mr. Brian Jessup CPA**

*Treasurer*

**John R. Broughton**

*Editor*

## Look Inside For:

*page 2*

The President's Page  
Historic Inscriptions

*page 3*

What The General Wore

*page 4*

Between a Pig and a Peak

*page 5*

The Lee Tree

*pages 6-7*

New Trust Directors  
A Gift of Love

*page 8*

An Admirer's View  
Of General J.E.B. Stuart

*page 9*

Historic Document

*page 10*

Scenes from the  
Highland Games

*page 11*

Membership Information

## 1ST ANNUAL HIGHLAND GAMES HELD AT LAUREL HILL

*by Glen King*

*The Blue Ridge Scottish Heavy Athletic Association*



Dear reader, it has been a cherished dream of mine for a very long time that somehow, in some way, I could be instrumental in the establishment of the Highland Games at a suitable location in southwest Virginia. That dream became a reality on April 26th with the holding of the first annual Highland Games at Laurel Hill. It was as if an idea and a venue had come together like a cosmic accident when in a discussion of my dream with fellow worker, Ronnie Haynes, who happened to be a member of the Board of Directors of Laurel Hill, who immediately said, "why not Laurel Hill." As he and I walked over the sunlit, beautiful high meadows of Laurel Hill, I knew instantly that this was the ideal place for the recreation of those ancient games of Scotland. And, quite coincidentally, it is difficult to find a more glorious Scottish heritage than that of the Stuart family. As we continued our walk in silence, I could hear the echoing of the drums and pipes, the swishing of the kilts and the cheering of the crowds and I knew a prayer had been answered. From that moment on, the work began.

My organization, the Blue Ridge Scottish Heavy Athletic Association, presented its proposed program to the Board of Directors of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Trust, who I must say adopted it with great enthusiasm and support. Obviously, to present a program of this nature requires a great deal of assistance from both the Association and the Trust. I knew that I could count on the contributions from not only the Association

members but from the Scottish heritage groups throughout the area, but I was simply amazed and gratified by the manner in which the Trust and its Board of Directors rolled up their sleeves and went to work. When one embarks upon the difficult talk of expressing gratitude to a large number of participants, the one certain result is that inadvertently the names of some will be omitted. So, permit me to express my heartfelt thanks to all of the Trust members, the athletes, the entertainers, the vendors and clans and to the Ararat Rescue Squad who faithfully ensured the safety and health of all for the magnificent job they did during this initial Highland Games at Laurel Hill.

For those readers who, for whatever reason were unable to attend the Games, I would like to highlight some of the day's activities which will hopefully provide a little flavor for the reader about modern day Highland Games. First, the opening ceremonies set the tone for the day with words of welcome, anthems, prayer and the accompanying notes of the Jamestown Pipes and Drums. The parade of the Tartans followed with the marching of the clans to the majestic notes of the Jamestown Pipes and Drums. Under the main tent there were great musical performances. The magnificent singing group, the Celthix, performed, highlighting their mastery of Celtic music. The musical performances included the Jamestown Pipes and Drums along with the lyrical voice of DorNel Pratt whose vocal renditions of Celtic songs will not soon be forgotten. The athletic events of the afternoon were great crowd pleasers. Those who watched did so in awe as these tremendous athletes competed in the stone put, caber toss, sheaf toss and weight throw for height events. And judging by the thunderous applause in appreciation of the talents of these great athletes the afternoon events were a great success. Other activities that claimed the attention of the crowds were the exhibition of the Border Collie dogs and their sheepherding

*continued on page 11*

# THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

---

Dear Friends of Laurel Hill,

In my prior term as president of this fine organization (2005), I had the pleasure of overseeing the final strokes of a long time dream of the board of directors, the paving of Laurel Hill's internal roadways. This was possible due to the receipt of a most generous gift from a long time supporter, the late Mr. William Smith and the unrelenting foresight of our board members. The fruition of this major investment completed the evolution of the Birthplace from little more than a cow pasture to a more inviting park setting.

Now the board has again placed me at the head of the table and dealt me a great hand to play. I am honored and humbled that they have conveyed their confidence in me once again. Already, in my first three months the board has succeeded in the promotion of Laurel Hill to thousands of tourists and businesses at Fast Track 2008 in Martinsville, Virginia and at a welcome center on Interstate-77 near the North Carolina state line.

On April 5th, "Park Day" over twenty people from four states appeared to assist the board with a general tidying of the grounds and roadside. The weather was very threatening that day, however, much was accomplished.

Laurel Hill hosted the first annual Highland Games and Living History event on April 26. This event attracted hundreds of visitors of all ages to the Birthplace. A large percentage of these were first time visitors and from as far away as Maine and

Florida. The directors who were on duty this day were frequently approached by complimentary visitors expounding how much they enjoyed learning about General Stuart, Laurel Hill and the Civil War as well as the Highland Games and festivities. The "Celthix", a local musical group, as well as Ms. DorNel Pratt local vocalist and guitarist, performed during the day. The Jamestown (NC) Pipes and Drums entertained, played and marched over the grounds throughout the day. We are proud of how well this event was presented and supported. Glen King from the Woolwine community is lauded for his planning and execution of the games and other Celtic events.

A work already in progress is a facelift for the area at the entrance to Laurel Hill, much as your favorite dress or your most comfortable shoes receive in time. The fence and plant beds that served well in the past, reached an unsavory condition and needed replacement. As time and funding permit, the placement of new entrance landscaping will appear.

The financial donations and encouragement of our loyal supporters facilitate the continued development of this beloved site to which cause we remain dedicated. Your generosity is truly appreciated.

With kindest regards always,

James A. Keesee  
President



## HISTORIC INSCRIPTIONS

---

Sometimes, among the myriad of questions that are posed to the Trust via email concerning the life of General Stuart, there are questions of general interest that we are pleased to answer and publish in the Newsletter. This question was posed about the inscriptions contained on the magnificent equestrian statue of General Stuart located on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia. The question is "could you please tell me the inscriptions on the four sides of the Stuart statue on Monument Avenue in Richmond." We are pleased to provide the answer:

On the East Side: "General J.E.B. Stuart, Commander of Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia, Confederate States of America. Erected by his comrades and the City of Richmond A.D. 1906

On the West Side: "Born in Patrick County, Virginia, February 6, 1833. Died in Richmond May 12, 1864, aged 31 years. Mortally wounded in the Battle of Yellow Tavern May 11, 1864. He gave his life for his country and saved this city from destruction.

On the North Side: "His grateful country will mourn his loss and cherish his memory. To his comrades in arms he has left the proud recollection of his deeds and the inspiring influence of his example."---Gen. R.E. Lee, to the Army of Northern Virginia May 20, 64.

On the South Side: "Tell General Stuart to act on his own judgment and to do what he thinks best. I have implicit confidence in him."---Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville.



# WHAT THE GENERAL WORE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT OF MAJOR GENERAL J.E.B. STUART

by Robert J. Trout

## Part III General Stuart: The Verbal Descriptions

Col. J.E.B. Stuart's talent for leading cavalry, matched by Stuart's vision on how cavalry should be used, was rewarded on September 24, 1861, when Stuart received a well-deserved promotion to brigadier general. It is the image of Stuart as a general that flashes through one's mind whenever his name appears. When, during the war, the camera first focuses on his now well-known features, it sees him as a general – a general who carries great responsibilities upon his young shoulders. Some scholars might rely completely upon the five photographs taken of Stuart for a description of the man and his uniforms, but those who “know” him well realize that not even the camera could capture all that was Stuart. So let us continue to explore, if only for curiosity's sake, what the eyewitnesses say of Stuart's attire.

Please note that not every individual reference to Stuart's uniforms and equipment, and there are many, will be investigated. Only those that provide a certain amount of detail can be explored due to the limited space available. An example would be the sash and shoulder straps that some Baltimore ladies sent to Stuart in December 1861. Stuart wrote to Flora about the gift but gave no additional information, making further comment as to what color or type mere speculation. Our investigation will be limited to those descriptions that provide sufficient detail to allow further analysis.

Perhaps the finest eyewitness description of what Stuart wore comes from John Esten Cooke. In his *Wearing of the Gray* (pp. 12-13), Cooke gives a composite view of Stuart's attire. Too long to excerpt here, it should be read, as it provides some details not available anywhere else. The only problem with what Cooke wrote is that it does not reflect Stuart's uniform at any specific time, being, as stated earlier, more of an amalgam. It also contains some misleading statements. Stuart did not always wear his coats unbuttoned, as one of his photographs shows. However, over all, Cooke reveals a great deal about Stuart's uniforms and accouterments.

While Stuart may have been satisfied with his Federal undress uniform while he was a lieutenant

colonel and colonel, he immediately took steps to rectify his lack of a proper Confederate uniform once he became a general. In a letter to Flora on October 21, 1861, he wrote that his uniform was not paid for and had yet to be made. Just when the tailor delivered this first of Stuart's Confederate uniforms is unknown. The earliest description we have of him in Confederate gray comes from John Esten Cooke.

During the morning hours of June 12, 1862, Stuart placed 1,200 men into column and began his first major mission for the new commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee. Cooke captured the moment (*Wearing of the Gray* p. 166) and described the young cavalryman as wearing a gray coat, a pistol in a black holster, a light French saber, cavalry boots above the knee, and a brown hat with a black plume. Some elements of this description require additional mention. After months of making due with his old blue, U.S. uniform, Stuart wears gray, the color of the uniforms of the Confederacy. Of significant importance is the presence of the famous plume, which can be verified from another source. Sergeant Benjamin J. Haden mentioned in a short memoir that Stuart wore a feather during the “Ride Around McClellan.” Finally, the French saber, might not mean one coming from France, but more likely referred to a saber of French design.

The next detailed description we have of parts of Stuart's uniform comes several months later in a letter Stuart wrote to Flora about his narrow escape at Verdiersville on August 18, 1862. In the letter Stuart listed the items he abandoned in his effort to escape capture. They were a haversack, blanket, talma, cloak, and hat. Of these, the only one he gave any additional information about was the hat, stating that it had a palmetto star. This six-pointed star was a symbol of South Carolina and was used by Stuart to fasten the brim of his hat to the crown. The hat meant a great deal to Stuart, because he had won it on a bet. On August 11, Stuart had met with some of his old friends, now in the Federal army. During their light-hearted conversation, someone mentioned that the Northern newspapers seemed to claim every battle a Federal victory. Stuart bet one of his friends, Brig. Gen. Samuel W. Crawford, a hat that the newspapers would claim the Battle of Cedar Mountain, fought on the ninth, as a Federal

*continued on page 11*

*The Museum of  
the Confederacy,  
Richmond, Virginia,  
Photography by  
Robert J. Trout*

# BETWEEN A PIG AND A PEAK



*This unique narrative is comprised of portions of an article from The Standard an Abingdon newspaper dated August 15, 1878. Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart and Miss Virginia Stuart, mentioned in the narrative were respectively, the widow and daughter of the famous Confederate cavalry general, James Ewell Brown Stuart. These two women were residing in Saltville in 1878. The original newspaper item was titled "White Top, A Genuine and Jolly Trip."*

"When the question was first suggested that ladies could make a camping trip to the famous growing resort, White Top Mountain, the idea was hooted at and regarded as out of the question. But otherwise, it only required ladies of the right kind of mettle, as the road and mountain paths were said to be difficult and dangerous--so that even the most careful and experienced rider was put to his test in ascending and descending the occasional steeps.

"On Tuesday morning the 6th, a party of seven ladies---Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart, Mrs. M.R. Harris, Misses Sallie Anna and Gertrude DuPre, Miss Virginia Stuart, and Miss Mossie Harris, and six gentlemen---Dr. Warren DuPre, President Martha Washington College, Profs. DuPre and Smith of Wofford College, S.C. Messers. Warren DuPre Jr., Beverly DuPre and Mr. Findlay Harris attended by a cook, Jack, and a hostler, John, left Abingdon in wagons equipped with all the paraphernalia of camp and outdoor life.

"Their journey would be thirty-one long mountain miles, the last nine of which would have to be made on horseback up the narrow mountain gorges, through dangerous defiles, around fearful precipices and over felled trees and stones. The first drive of fifteen miles to dinner was over a splendid road and was exceedingly pleasant. The next was over that part of the road which left "The Laurel" and ran a few miles through Tennessee. This part of the road was shady and pretty but very rough though susceptible of improvement.

"Long before night, just as the sun was dodging behind the mountains, the party reached the farm of Mr. John Montgomery, in Taylor's Valley, the farthest point a vehicle could reach on the road to White Top. In a few minutes the wagons were

unloaded, the tents pitched and everything made ready for a good supper and a comfortable night's lodging.

"After supper the evening was spent most pleasantly as though all were at home. When the party retired, the sky was clear and bright, each little star looked the brighter when compared to the somber shades of the mountains.

"About two o'clock, a small voice was heard from one of the tents: "Say, you there in the other tent, it's raining." The whole party awakened in a moment. Gloomy thoughts for the morrow were expressed as the rain splattered on the tents. Outside, a visiting hog, rooting and grunting around, created an acute tension since some campers took it to be a "varmint." An earnest appeal went up through that tent top to Wilburn Waters (a legendary longhunter of the region) or some other good bear-man to come to the rescue.

"The next morning a heavy fog hung over the valley, but by nine o'clock that fog went up the mountains and scampered away. After a hearty breakfast, the tents were struck and packing for the ride was done in some confusion, for everybody waited for someone else to do the chores. Worse yet, several folks would try to do the same chore at the same time.

"At ten o'clock the caravan moved, the ladies riding and the gentlemen walking. Passing up the mountain from Taylor's Valley was the worst part of the road, being a steep, narrow, winding pathway around a rugged precipice. One wrong step could hurl a horse and rider five hundred feet, to a dashing splashing brook below. This place had tested the courage of many, and on one occasion a whole party turned about and returned home.

"The ladies rode over it with care, at the same time commenting upon the grand and magnificent scenery beyond. Once safe, they stopped to take a long breath and a draught from the cool, crystal waters of a mountain spring. The base of White Top, proper, was safely reached and a halt for dinner called.

"After dinner the two-mile ascent was begun and in two hours and a half the party mounted the brow

*continued on page 5*



# BETWEEN A PIG AND A PEAK

of the mountain with a whoop and a hurrah; they stood fairly intoxicated with a scene before them grander and more beautiful than any artisan could paint. They found a camping place near a spring bubbling up from almost the very top of the mountain, 6000 feet above the level of the sea. In less than half an hour, the tents were up and everything ready for supper. Waterproofs and shawls were needed, for the thermometer was down to a very low degree.

“After supper to the surprise of all in the party, another group of campers came from the eastern side, and shortly, another from the south, then another and still another, making five in all; everyone wending their way to the point of rocks to witness the grandeur of the setting sun.

“Behind a cloud, fringed with small silvery clouds, the sun descended in a heavy golden brilliancy which dazzled foliage, mountains, shadowed valleys and sky. As it dropped further, a halo of soft and peculiar light spread over the scene. Not a word was said; hardly a breath was drawn, silent reverence reigned supreme.

*continued from page 4*

“Sunrise the next morning was not as gorgeous as sunset, it rose tranquil and serene to rule and govern the day. Heavy clouds rested upon the valley below in wavy folds. Mountain peaks peeped up above them like so many pretty islands in a sea. “Ore Knob” in North Carolina laid to the eastward, and the gray smoke from its copper mines curled and rolled as it went straight upward into the sunny sky. The early risers stood spellbound until the knocking of a case knife on a tin cup reminded them that if they wanted any breakfast, they had better hurry to get it.

“The next move was to mount the “Lashorn” a tree upon the top of which twelve of the party sat with ease, leaving room for as many more. Abingdon was in view. About eleven o’clock the journey homeward began. Upon reaching Taylor’s Valley, Mr. Montgomery had a good supply of trout and the party enjoyed a fish supper. Friday evening, just at dusk, the party turned into the College gate, dusty, but happy at having made a successful trip and return without an accident to mar the journey’s pleasure.”

*The Trust acknowledges with gratitude the kind permission of The Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia to reprint this article from their 2005 Bulletin.*

## THE LEE TREE

Great ideas from little acorns grow! A bit of a paraphrase from an old poem, however, in this case it really does fit the occasion. This is the story of a mighty white oak tree that once grew and provided shade for countless generations in eastern Hanover County, Virginia. Historical accounts relate that among those who sought its cooling shade were General Robert E. Lee and his staff during the Civil War. Although this fact has never been substantiated, David Ruth, assistant super-intendent of the Richmond National Battlefield said, “there’s much truth that Lee and his staff were right there.” Over the ensuing years, this mighty oak was revered and protected even as the Sledd Run subdivision was built around it, but in 2003 its demise occurred as hurricane Isabel roared through the county. In the hurricane’s aftermath, thoughtful citizens garnered enough acorns from the tree to fill forty three grocery bags in the hope that the legacy of this great tree would live on. The tree did not produce any more acorns before Isabel, so what was gathered was the last crop of the “Lee Tree” acorns. The Virginia Department of Forestry then provided assistance and the healthy acorns were planted and allowed to grow for about a year in the state’s nursery in Augusta County. At the same time, a plan evolved to sell the saplings from this historic tree to assist with the ongoing fund raising effort to preserve and protect the Civil War battlefields

of Virginia. The Civil War Preservation Trust and the APVA are the main recipients of the funds realized by the sale of the saplings.

State forestry officials estimate the “Lee Tree” at more than four hundred years old, which means that it would predate the early settlers traveling up the James River in 1607 to what is now Richmond. That means it was a nice, little tree when Jamestown was founded. As of December, 2007, two thousand saplings, each two to three feet tall were available for sale. The sixty dollar cost includes ten dollars for shipping and comes with a certificate of authenticity. Anyone interested in purchasing a sapling may contact the above mentioned organizations.

Your Trust is now in possession of one of the famous “Lee Tree” descendants thanks to the thoughtful and most generous gift of Mr. Glenn Gray of Surry County, Virginia, a former resident of Patrick County. Mr. Gray desired that the tree be planted at Laurel Hill, the birthplace of one of General Lee’s most able and prominent field generals. The sapling is currently being nurtured at the Keese Tree Farm in Patrick Springs until the appropriate time and location at Laurel Hill is selected for the transplanting.

# NEW TRUST DIRECTORS

*It is a privilege for the Trust to announce the election of four new Directors. We welcome each of them and look forward to a productive and fruitful term of service to the community.*



***Dr. Roger N. Morris***

Dr. Roger N. Morris - Dr. Morris is a native of Bassett, Virginia, and currently resides in Stuart, Virginia with his wife Patricia and his twin teenage sons, Alex and Brad. Dr. Morris is the current Superintendent of the Patrick County School System having served as such since July of 2007. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a B.S. degree in education in 1988, he obtained his M.S. degree in 1990 from Longwood College and a Doctorate of Education degree in 2002 from the University of Virginia. He has extensive experience in all facets of the educational process, including teaching, administration and finance. He is an active church member and volunteer with community organizations. His love of Civil War history will be a great asset to the Trust as it continues its mission of public service.



***Michael D. Pendleton***

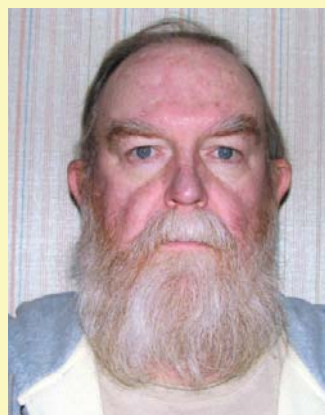
Michael D. Pendleton - Mike Pendleton, a native of Patrick County, was educated in the Patrick County school system graduating from Patrick County High School in 1988. He continued his education with the study of electronics in the Danville, VA Community College graduating in 1990. He is currently employed by the John Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery Corp. located in Kernersville, NC. He and his wife the former Melissa

Lackey were married in November 1995, and are members of Providence United Methodist Church in Stuart. Mike's love of history, especially that of the Civil War led to his membership in the Wharton-Stuart Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and to long service as a re-enactor with Company D, 51st Virginia Infantry. He has been actively involved with both organizations striving to educate the public concerning the Civil War and the lives of common soldiers of the Confederate cause.



***H.E. (Chip) Slate II Esq.***

H.E. (Chip) Slate II Esq. - Chip Slate, a life long resident of Patrick County, was raised in the Claudville community, a short distance from Laurel Hill. He was educated in the Mt. Airy, NC school system graduating from Mt. Airy High School. Continuing his education, Chip attended Campbell University graduating in 2001 with a B.A. degree in Government. During this period, Chip worked in Washington, DC with the Hon. Virgil Goode in the House of Representatives and then with Senator Jesse Helms in the Senate. He then continued on to law school at the Campbell University School of Law graduating with a J.D. degree in 2004. Chip is married to the former Christina Leventis of Sumter, SC, having tied the knot in May of 2007. He is the chairman of the Virginia Motorsports Museum and Hall of Fame located in Stuart, VA. He currently practices law in Stuart, Virginia.



***Richard J. Murray***

Richard J. Murray - Richard is the living proof that one does not require a southern heritage to belong to, and make significant contributions to the preservation of historic sites. Richard was born in Bronx County, New York and grew up in Westchester County, New York. He matriculated through the public school system graduating in 1968. In 1969 he began his life's work as a



lineman for the New York Telephone Company working for thirty four years in that capacity, retiring in 2003. In 2004, Richard moved to the Woolwine community of Patrick County, renewed a long time interest in Civil War history, and looked for opportunities to be of service. With the encouragement of new friends in Woolwine, Richard found his way to Laurel Hill where he volunteered to assist in any capacity that he might be needed. His talents and abilities were soon evident and his dedication to the advancement of Laurel Hill made him an ideal candidate for the Board of Directors.



## A GIFT OF LOVE

*by John Broughton*

Sometimes amid all the bad news that our media serves up to us every day, there comes that one shining moment that restores one's faith in humanity. That moment came recently when your Trust began taking receipt of a large collection of Civil War paper and video material. This donation is the result of more than forty years of travel over Civil War battlegrounds, interaction with many of the leading lights of Civil War scholasticism, copies of many records taken from such collections as the National Archives and the Southern Historical Collection and so much more that it truly boggles the mind that one person could, in the span of four decades, collect and preserve such a vast amount of material. The collection contains a great deal of material relating to the life of General Stuart as well as other wartime leaders of the South. Your Trust was in competition with other such organizations for the placement of this collection, therefore it is with rightful pride I can state---we won!

At this point, I know that you are wondering who this person is that could have amassed such a magnificent collection, and as importantly, possessed the spirit of love for the subject to have the material preserved and protected for the future use of ordinary people as well as scholars. Her name is Janet K. Pease and she lives in Arvada, Colorado, a northwest suburb of Denver. For nearly forty years Janet has, in her role as a teacher of history, produced scores of high school students for whom she made history, especially Civil War history, a real and meaningful subject. Janet was born and raised in Illinois and received her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science as well as her Master's Degree from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Aside from doing her student teaching in Iowa City, Janet has always taught American History at Arvada West High School, from which

she will retire this June. Janet relates that many years ago, "we arrived late at National Airport in Washington, DC, rented cars and drove to Manassas where we stood by the Stonewall Jackson monument as the sun went down on a mild day. There, my love of the Civil War was born; I knew that I had to find out what had happened there and to this day, Manassas is my favorite battlefield." During her reading of Chambers' two volume biography of Stonewall Jackson, she was introduced to James Ewell Brown Stuart and a new love affair began. Elsewhere in this issue you may read her tribute to General Stuart written by her in 1983 after the 150th anniversary of his birth celebration held in Richmond, Virginia. From time to time, in future issues we will reprint selected material from the collection.

The Trust archivist Mrs. Shirley O. Keene, along with selected assistants have begun the task of cataloging the material. Mrs. Keene estimates that it will most likely take a year or more to fully complete. The future issues of the newsletter will keep everyone advised as to their progress and the final home of the collection.

Ms. Pease is no stranger to the Trust. She has supported our efforts to preserve Laurel Hill for many years through her generous monetary donations. With this gift, representing as it does a professional lifetime of research and collecting relevant material, she has placed her trust and confidence in our organization to care for and preserve the material. For this we can only say thank you to Janet for everything, and that we will insure that "The Janet K. Pease Historical Collection" will be preserved and will stand as a monument to the dedication of America's teachers.

# AN ADMIRER'S VIEW OF GENERAL J.E.B. STUART

by Janet K. Pease

It seems fashionable these days for historians and amateur “buffs” to criticize Civil War figures and their actions, for what are to us obvious oversights, mistakes in judgment, and weaknesses in character or personality. Even such stalwarts as Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee have failed to escape the growing crescendo of this latter day “re-examination.” And certainly such critical comments have been directed against James Ewell Brown Stuart, particularly in any commentary on the Gettysburg campaign.

We seem to forget, however, the qualities that these men possessed may have been viewed differently by the contemporaries of these legendary figures. Their faults and weaknesses pale when judged against the background of confusion, disruption, chaos and the attendant disorder of a nation at war.

I am an unabashed admirer of General Jeb Stuart. What first attracted me to him, may well be what attracted others to him in the 1860's...his seemingly effervescent personality, his sunny disposition, even in the face of crushing adversity. Such color and flash are so associated with his presence, that he seems, even today, to be larger than life - a dynamic, dominating individual in every sense of the word, who was vividly remembered years after his death by ancient veterans, as recalled by John Thomasson in his JEB STUART. Perhaps in the tenuous early days of the Confederacy, this flash and vigor was exactly what was needed to inspire in the common soldier, that confidence in his commander so necessary, when facing seemingly insurmountable odds.

The real story of General Stuart's contributions to the Confederacy, however, are more frequently overlooked and forgotten today. They lay hidden in reports in the OFFICIAL RECORDS...in the interim days and weeks between the great campaigns that have received the most historical attention and analysis. General Stuart's great contribution to the Confederacy lay on the picket line, which had to be manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.....not only as a signal post through which intelligence reports from scouting parties could be sifted, but also as a guarantee that the Federals did not “steal a march” on General Lee.

Thanks to General Stuart and his usually air-tight screen of pickets and scouts, General Lee did not have to face unpleasant “surprises” such as did Union General O.O. Howard's 11th

Corps at Chancellorsville, or General John Pope's left flank at 2nd Manassas. Stuart's expert screening maneuvers allowed Stonewall Jackson's men and finally those of General Joseph E. Johnston to leave the Shenandoah Valley in 1861 and reach Manassas while Robert B. Patterson was telegraphing Washington, D.C. that Johnston was “still at my front.” Stuart's men also effectively screened Jackson's flanking movement at 2nd Manassas, and his (Stuart's) subordinate, Fitz Lee, made the vital discovery of Joe Hooker's “flank in the air” at Chancellorsville in May 1863. These movements, however, receive far less attention in today's analysis of Stuart, than do his more flashy raids on the Peninsula, or to Chambersburg in 1862.

Stuart was not without fault. Who is? Stonewall Jackson erred at White Oak Swamp, and Lee's assault against Malvern Hill was pointless. Some of Stuart's contemporaries, such as Lafayette McLaws, were critical of the banjo-playing ribaldry in the cavalry camps. Yet, I place more significance on the worthy opinions of Stonewall Jackson, for whom his friend Stuart was an excellent foil; or on those of Robert E. Lee, who in grief and respect stated that “he never brought me a piece of false information.”

Vain, showy, self-centered, and a host of other less complimentary adjectives may come to mind when Stuart's name is mentioned. Yet.....his equestrian statue stands on Monument Avenue in Richmond. A lively General Stuart graces a panel of “The Four Seasons of the Confederacy” in Battle Abbey in Richmond. His name has become one of the Great Triumvirate of Confederate Generals.....Jackson, Stuart and Lee. A celebration in February 1983 marked the 150th anniversary of his birth and was attended by honored descendants, patriotic groups and admirers. In short, Stuart's place in history is safe.

I believe that General Stuart would be well pleased with his place in history. Each of us hopes that when we leave this earth, that we will have made a contribution in some way..... and that we are remembered. Jeb Stuart has met this goal, several times over.

Surely his spirit smiled and sang on February 6th 1983, as his memory was duly honored in Richmond.

Ed. Note: This article is a reprint of a tribute to General Stuart

*continued on page 10*



# HISTORIC DOCUMENT

ED. NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS A REPRINT OF THE OBITUARY OF MRS. FLORA STUART, WIFE OF GENERAL STUART, TAKEN FROM THE RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH EDITION OF MAY 11TH, 1923. FROM THE COLLECTION OF JANET K. PEASE.

Mrs. J.E. B. STUART

WIDOW OF STUART DIES FROM FALL

BELOVED CONFEDERATE CHARACTER SUCCUMBS TO BLOW ON HEAD

END COMES IN NORFOLK

BURIAL IN HOLLYWOOD FOLLOWING SERVICES IN HOME OF SON-IN-LAW

(BY: ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Norfolk, Virginia May 10---Mrs. Flora Stuart, widow of the renowned Confederate cavalryman, General J.E.B. Stuart, and daughter of Major-General Philip St. George Cooke of the Union forces, died here late today at the home of her son-in-law R. Page Waller. She was 88 years old. While out walking Sunday, Mrs. Stuart fell, sustaining a blow on the head. Complications developed and death resulted.

Mrs. Stuart had looked back on nearly three-score years of widowhood. The story of her husband, the plumed cavalier of the Confederacy, and marked today as the greatest leader of cavalry America has ever produced has gained with the passing years. She had been his wife scarcely ten years when her dazzling soldier husband was killed in battle.

Weave Romance Around Courtship:

Romance has been woven around the courtship of the great Confederate cavalryman. Mrs. Stuart was one of the most romantic figures in Thomas Dixon's "The Man in Gray" an historical novel of the Civil War, in which the glory of General Stuart and the heroism of his beautiful young wife are portrayed in striking phrases.

Major-General Cooke, then a colonel, was in command of Fort Riley, when the territory of Kansas was opened. Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart was in the regiment of Colonel E.V. Sumner commanding Fort Leavenworth. One day, news was spread to Fort Leavenworth that the prettiest girl in Kansas had come to Fort Riley from Virginia. Flora Cooke had dashed across the country from Harpers Ferry to visit her father.

Sent as messenger to Cooke, Lieutenant Stuart:

Lieutenant Stuart contrived to be sent as a messenger to Colonel Cooke, and there he met her. The next day he returned to his post and got a brief leave of absence to visit her for three days. He proposed and was accepted. He returned to Leavenworth to march with his regiment against John Brown and the insurrectionists on the Kansas plains. Soon afterwards, he married Flora Cooke

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Lieutenant Stuart resigned his commission in the United States Army and threw in his lot with Virginia. Colonel Cooke, his daughter, then the mother of two sons, and her husband met in Washington and the two soldiers bade farewell, each with a prayer on his lips that they would never meet in battle.

Meet on Battle's Fringe:

The young mother returned to her home in northern Virginia to wait and pray that her father and husband would not cross swords out where the war was raging. Time after time, as the conflict swept across Northern Virginia, she would follow on

the outskirts, and often she and her husband would meet on the fringe of battle.

In the last months of the war, when the struggling armies of the Confederacy were fighting with their backs to the wall, and Stuart came to be one of the strong arms of the waning cause, he led his men one day in a dash around the wings of the opposing forces. Suddenly a blue uniformed cavalryman whose horse had been shot from under him in the tumultuous fighting blazed away at General Stuart with a revolver. The bullet tore a gashing wound in the General's breast. He was taken to Richmond. A message was sent to his wife, but while she was hastening to him over the interminable roads that lay between, the plumed cavalier passed away.

Turns from Past to Future:

At the close of the war, the gallant cavalryman's widow bravely turned her face from the past to the future. She established a fashionable school for girls at Staunton, and most of her pupils were daughter of Confederate soldiers of Virginia and other Southern States. She had resided here with her son-in-law R. Page Waller for thirty years. Her only surviving son is Captain J.E.B. Stuart, U.S.A. retired, New York City. Funeral services will be conducted at the residence of Mr. Waller Saturday morning at 10:15 o'clock. The body will be forwarded to Richmond for burial in Hollywood Cemetery.

Mrs. Stuart Prominently Connected Throughout State:

The death of Mrs. Stuart removes an eminent Confederate character whose life and energies were associated with various stages of and following the War Between the States. She was more prominently known because of her interest in the education of Confederate soldiers, having devoted a large part of her life to this service.

Mrs. Stuart was prominently connected in Richmond and in the State. She leaves several nephews and nieces as well as a number of grandchildren.

Richmond relatives surviving the famous Confederate woman include three nephews and four nieces; John R. Cooke, Phillip St. George Cooke, and Stuart Cooke; Stafford Parker, Mrs. Austin Brockenbrough, Mrs. Raskerville Bridgforth, and Mrs. William J. Wallace. Her nephews and husbands of her nieces will act as pallbearers. Mrs. Stuart leaves a son, J.E.B. Stuart Jr. of New York City. Her daughter Mrs. Virginia Waller died several years ago in Norfolk where Mrs. Stuart resided for the past thirty years.

# SCENES FROM THE 1ST ANNUAL HIGHLAND GAMES



*"The Marching of the Clans"*



*"Trust Secretary, Coates Clark, shopping in her Scottish regalia"*



*"Off for a stroll, the grass looks great"*

## ADMIRER'S VIEW

*continued from page 8*

presented by Janet Pease to Dr. James I. Robertson's summer seminar of the "Campaigning with Lee" series in 1983 after the 150th anniversary celebration of his birth held in Richmond, Virginia. It is taken from the collection of her documents housed by the Trust.



*"Glen King tossing the caber"*



# WHAT THE GENERAL WORE

*continued from page 3*

victory. Crawford took the bet. He lost and several days later sent a hat through the lines under a flag of truce.

The history of the hat after it left Stuart's possession can be found in Douglas S. Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants* (Vol. 2, p. 60) and is summarized here. The adjutant of the First Michigan Cavalry, Ford H. Rogers, captured the hat. He described it as being a soft, wide-brimmed hat of a light brown color and having a long feather. He kept the hat after the war in a trunk. Upon deciding to have it refurbished, he took it to a hat store. After a while, he went back for it and found that it had been thrown out during a cleaning out of second-hand hats.

The talma and cloak also require some clarification. A talma is a long cape or cloak. As used in the Civil War it could refer to an overcoat worn by mounted men or simply to a military cloak in general. However, Stuart mentioned a cloak as a separate item, so in all likelihood the talma Stuart lost was more of an overcoat than a cloak. As to the cloak, it was smaller and may have been worn over the overcoat. According to John W. Thomason, the smaller cloak was red lined (Jeb Stuart, p. 224), and Flora replaced it with another a red lined one, sporting a fur collar that was shot away at Fredericksburg (Jeb Stuart, p. 342).

On June 5, 1863, Stuart held one of his grand reviews at Brandy Station. One of the participants, George M. Neese of Chew's Battery of the horse artillery left a short but interesting description of the hat Stuart wore that day (see Neese's *Three Years in the Confederate Horse Artillery* p.167). Neese wrote that Stuart's hat was black with the brim turned up and held by a gold clasp that also held the plume in place. This is similar to a Hardee hat (also known as a Jeff Davis hat or a Burnside Pattern hat), which was the regulation hat for the U.S. Army and made famous by the Iron Brigade at Gettysburg. In both the color of the hat and the arrangement of the plume, this description is most interesting.

The mighty Prussian, Heros von Borcke, left a very brief description of another Stuart hat. On June 19, 1863, von Borcke received a serious wound at the Battle of Upperville. In writing about it afterwards, he claimed that the shot was meant for Stuart, something von Borcke could not know, but struck him because he was dressed like his commander in a short gray jacket and gray hat with plume (see von Borcke's *Memoirs of the Confederate War* part 2, p. 293). The evidence suggests that Stuart wore hats of varied color.

As mentioned earlier, there are many verbal descriptions of Stuart. Not all of them have been discussed here and not all of them are verifiable. For example, during the Gettysburg campaign a Federal Signal Corps officer, who had the misfortune to be captured, gave a description of Stuart that mentioned a black hat, looped up on one side and fastened with a star, and a large black plume. That seems to fit, especially since Neese mentioned a black hat at the review. However, the officer then stated that Stuart also wore a small metal shield on his chest from which ran a chain to the handle of a small stiletto, the blade of which passed through a button hole on Stuart's jacket. Certainly, as we have seen, Stuart wore many different hats, with many different clasps, and the plume is equally well documented. However, no other reference of which I am aware mentions the shield, chain, and stiletto. It may be true, but verification would be nice.

Many other references to parts of Stuart's uniforms exist in letters, memoirs, and biographies. Some are accurate. Some are not. Regrettably, space is lacking to investigate all of them. However, besides verbal descriptions we also have sketches of Stuart that were done from life. These will be the focus in the next article on "What the General Wore."

# 1ST ANNUAL HIGHLAND GAMES

*continued from page 1*

abilities by Craig Rogers from the Border Spring Farm. Display of Highland cattle by Peter Houchins from Running River Ranch attracted a large following. Blacksmith demonstrations by Bud Thompson and weaving by hand techniques presented by the Weavers Guild rounded out a full afternoon. The children's activities were conducted by the Scottish Heritage Society of the Blue Ridge to the delight of all the children in attendance.

These were, of course, just the highlights of a wonderful day of fun and learning which laid the groundwork for bigger and better Highland Games at Laurel Hill to be held each spring. To

paraphrase the words of a delighted individual who wrote a letter to the Stuart, Virginia newspaper, *The Enterprise*, and posed the following sentence, "the only relevant question is, when is the next one?" We have committed ourselves to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the Highland Games at Laurel Hill will take its place as one of the premier attractions held in southwest Virginia. With that promise I sincerely hope that you will be able to be with us for next year's event, and leave you with the old Celtic words "Cead Mile Failte" or one hundred thousand welcomes.





J.E.B. STUART BIRTHPLACE, INC.  
P.O. Box 1210  
STUART, VIRGINIA 24171  
276.251.1833

If you would like to become a member of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace,  
please let us know. Write to us at J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace, P.O. Box 1210  
Stuart, Virginia 24171, or email us through our website at [www.jebstuart.org](http://www.jebstuart.org). Memberships begin at \$25.00

cut along dotted line

## MEMBERSHIP

### J.E.B. STUART BIRTHPLACE PRESERVATION TRUST, INC.

#### CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP (CHECK ONE)

- GENERAL'S CLUB - \$500.00
- SUSTAINING - \$250.00
- PATRON - \$100.00
- SPONSOR/FAMILY/BUSINESS - \$50.00
- INDIVIDUAL - \$25.00

MAKE A PRESENT OF HISTORY!  
MEMBERSHIP MAKES A PERFECT GIFT.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

P.O. Box 1210,  
STUART, VA 24171