



J.E.B. STUART BIRTHPLACE, INC.
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RECONNAISSANCE

SUMMER 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE J.E.B. STUART BIRTHPLACE PRESERVATION TRUST, INC.
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BETTIE HAIRSTON'S FIRST LOVE

by Aubrey and Roger Morris

The sun had descended behind the western hills and young Bettie Hairston, whose family owned the Beaver Creek Plantation near Martinsville, was becoming anxious. She looked through the window and peered up the red-clay road that climbed the hillside just beyond a field of knee-high corn stretching endlessly, or so it seemed, across the rolling landscape.

Finally, as the sun began to set, she saw a rider top the hill and cantor his bay horse down the slope. The rider was her seventeen-year-old cousin, James Ewell Brown (Jeb) Stuart. In the saddle well before dawn, Jeb had traveled about thirty-five miles from his home at Laurel Hill, located in the southwestern part of neighboring Patrick County. Young Jeb was making a final visit with relatives before leaving for West Point in late June.

Although to twenty-first-century Americans, the Hairston and Stuart families would have little in common, much less be related, it is rather amazing that Jeb was able to hold all Hairstons' close regardless of distance and time. With twelve Hairston plantations in Southside Virginia alone, this was a daunting task in the nineteenth century—or any other time. Yet young Jeb had a special fondness for young Bettie, and obviously she loved him.

The three-day visit with Bettie Hairston and her family passed quickly. A contributing factor could have been her designation as escort for the gangly young man. They strolled among the tall boxwoods and out to the garden. They waded Beaver Creek, dug out several crawfish and walked the quarter-mile to the spring. In the evenings they sat on the porch to hear the passing field slaves' serenade. Later, at the piano, Bettie played a few familiar tunes and Jeb joined her in song. But, the three days were over and soon Jeb was to leave for West Point. He said his 'goodbyes' and he rode off in what would become some of the most formative, exciting years of his life.

Stuart arrived at West Point July 1, 1850 to begin his military career. He worked hard and at the end of the term found himself ranked eighth in a class of seventy-one.

He had been home on furlough in the summer of 1852 and a visit to 'Beaver Creek' resulted in the following letter:

West Point
 Sept. 23, 1852

*My dear cousin,
 . . . Since I parted with you, I have been busy traveling up to my arrival here on the 28th August, but I assure you no change of place of situation could prevent me, from often recurring incidents connected with my visit to Beaver Creek, with the motions of pure delight; indeed every circumstance is now painted as vividly as if it were but yesterday that I saw you. The blackberry hunt, the walk over to the spring, my exploit on the water gap, our frequent excursions in the garden, the old hen catching lightening bugs, the harvesters' serenade, and above all your delightful performance on the piano, which I was rascal enough to enjoy without your; all revive in my heart unfading recollections of the joy I experienced during that visit. I will never forget it. The gourd which you were so kind as to give me I carried from Beaver Creek home in my hand, and thence brought it in my trunk to this place, and it is now hanging before me in a very conspicuous part of our room. . . .*

Though they were distant by several hundred miles, Jeb and Bettie continued to write each other, though their fondness for each other is obvious by her homemade gifts and the prominence that he placed on them by placing the gifts in his room.

As time went on, Jeb grew up and now in his fourth year at the academy Stuart began to ponder his future as an Army officer. In a letter

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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. Memberships begin at \$25.00

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Dear Friends,

First, I feel I must tell you how grateful and humble I feel to have been elected as the first female president of your Trust. It is a great responsibility as well as an opportunity for me to carry on the legacy of my predecessors in improving the physical character of Laurel Hill, and the interpretation of the role of the property in the life of one of America's greatest soldiers. I pray that I will be found worthy of the confidence placed in me. If the first six months of my term are indicative of what lies ahead, it will be a busy term indeed.

I have long felt that we, as the foremost historic property in southwest Virginia, must do more and work harder to involve the local school children in history programs within the context of the Civil War and the role of Laurel Hill in that war. Such programs must be tailored to appeal to the different age groups among the school system's population. To that end, I hope you enjoy the article in the following pages depicting the third, fourth and fifth grade students from adjacent Carroll County, Virginia, during their recent visit to Laurel Hill. I am pleased to report that the second annual Highland Games at Laurel Hill was a resounding success. More than one thousand people were attracted to the one day Games highlighting the Scottish heritage of the Stuart family. We are most grateful to Mr. Glen King and his organization for the organizing and presenting to the public a truly great demonstration of Scottish athletic events, authentic Scottish food, and the ever popular bagpipers. It was truly a great day. We must also record our gratitude to Dr. Cliff Boyd, Dr. Rhett Herman and the archaeology and physics students of Radford University who during the first week of June labored to locate and uncover the foundation of the original Letcher home which had been lost for more than two centuries. The

accompanying article will attempt to do a small measure of justice to their magnificent work. It is with great pride that we present our lead article in this issue written by our Board member Dr. Roger Morris and his father Mr. Aubrey Morris who co-authored the fine Civil War novel "A Distant Bugle." These and other fine articles of interest by renowned historian and author Robert J. Trout, Board members, Ronnie Haynes, Tom Bishop and Coates Clark are included in this issue.

Once again we look forward to the upcoming 19th Annual Encampment and Reenactment at Laurel Hill during the first full weekend in October. We are pleased and honored that Robert J. Trout and Dr. Roger Morris and his father Mr. Aubrey Morris will be with us to meet with you and autograph copies of their literary works. And once again, the re-enactors will present thrilling reenactments of Civil War battles. The food, music, fellowship and special events will be as always the hallmark of our fall gathering. We hope that each of you can be with us.

We deeply appreciate the financial support that you our members have so graciously donated in order that Laurel Hill may continue on its journey as the only preserved site in America dedicated to the memory of James Ewell Brown Stuart.

With kindest regards, I remain,
Sincerely yours,

Shirley O. Keene
President



THE LEE TREE

You may recall the article in last summer's newsletter concerning the receipt of a gift from Mr. Glen Gray of Surry County, Virginia of a sapling offspring from the great oak tree that once stood in eastern Hanover County, Virginia. This giant white oak tree which was estimated by the Virginia Department of Forestry to be more than four hundred years of age, was destroyed by hurricane Isabel in 2003. It had provided cooling shade for countless generations including many believe General Robert E. Lee and his staff. The tree

hereafter bore his name. Thanks to many thoughtful citizens, acorns were gathered from the fallen tree and taken to the Virginia Department of Forestry where two thousand saplings were patiently nursed to health. Thanks to the thoughtful gift of Mr. Gray one of the "Lee Tree" saplings is now in the earth of Laurel Hill the birthplace of General Lee's great cavalry commander, which will rise as symbol of the unity of these two great generals.



BETTIE HAIRSTON'S FIRST LOVE

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to his father he wrote:

I have not as yet any fixed course determined upon after graduation . . . Two courses will be left for my adoption, the profession of arms and that of the law. . . . In making the selection I will rely upon the guidance of Him whose judgment cannot err, for "it is not with man that walketh to direct his steps".

Like any young man, Jeb had doubts about the love of his youth and it seems that a choice of career was not suited for Bettie. It appears that a "lovers spat" over his career selection ended the relationship. In a letter to Bettie, Jeb made his feelings plainly known:

. . . Now tell me candidly, had you not rather see your cousin a bold Dragoon than a petty-fogger lawyer? I have no doubt that you have a sort of partiality for the life of a farmer but for the young man for whom capital has not already been accumulated is forced to adopt one of the hireling professions . . .

And that was that. The love between Jeb and Bettie was over. The once flowery prose of his former letters had disappeared. Jeb had come to the logical conclusion that she could not--or would not share the life of a soldier.

As with any first love that ends abruptly, the two lovers moved on with their lives. Jeb Stuart went on to graduate from West Point in July 1854, went home and waited impatiently for assignment. Finally, he was commissioned as second lieutenant and assigned to duty in Texas. Stuart's final letter to Bettie Hairston—pinned at Fort Duncan, Texas January 18, 1855—had the famous Jeb Stuart flair with an exit from a relationship that would rival any love story from Shakespeare. After a letter filled with his evaluation

of Shakespeare's writings, Jeb ended the letter with:

*Whatever be my fate may you be happy.
Your affectionate cousin,
J.E.B. Stuart*

This last statement seemed to sever the cord that bound the young lieutenant to cousin Bettie.

But the young lieutenant would not be alone for long. In the summer of 1855, he was assigned to Fort Leavenworth Kansas. Several days after arriving at the fort he went horseback riding with Flora, the daughter of Colonel George Cook. On November fourteenth of that year, James E. B. Stuart married Flora Cook.

Some have stated that Jeb proposed to Bettie before he left for Texas and she turned him down. Of course some of the details are left to oblivion since both have long since passed away. The fate of Jeb Stuart is well-known as he would go on to be one of the most famous casualties of the Civil War. After the war, Bettie married her cousin James Thomas Watt Hairston and settled into a life of operating the family business enterprises in various states.

About the Authors: Aubrey and Roger Morris, previously have co-written the Civil War historical fictional novel *A Distant Bugle*. Aubrey resides in Bassett and continues to write short essays and his next novel. Roger is the Division Superintendent for Patrick County Public Schools and is on the Board of Directors for the Jeb Stuart Preservation Trust. **Note:** The quotes from the JEB Stuart letters are taken from the *Hairston and Wilson Family Papers, 1800-1906*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Manuscripts Department.

THE 2ND ANNUAL HIGHLAND GAMES AT LAUREL HILL

by Glen King



The Jamestown Pipe and Drum Corps

On April 26th of this year, high temperatures accompanied the commencement of the 2nd Annual Highland Games and Festival at Laurel Hill. Along with the record temperature, record breaking crowds came to enjoy the celebration of J.E.B. Stuart's Celtic ancestry. Visitors from Scotland, Ireland and Canada were among the nearly twelve hundred people in attendance. The ceremonies were opened with a prayer offered by Pastor Rick Randle of The New Hope Church of the Brethren of Elamsville, Virginia. The national anthems of Scotland, Ireland and the United States were sung a cappella by the talented Ms. Renee Harvish. Mr. Jim Barnett, a native of Glasgow Scotland, who currently resides in Henry County, Virginia recited a poem by Robert Burns, Scotland's Poet Laureate.

Delighting the crowds during the festivities were the magnificent Jamestown Pipe and Drum Corps., whose music filled the air, and the Scottish Heavy Athletics

whose feats during the ancient tests of strength brought roars from the viewers. Athletes from a five state region participated in the throwing of trees and iron implements which replicated those thrown in these events for hundreds of years past. At the end of the afternoon's seven highly contested events, Mr. Jeff Couch emerged with the coveted title of the Laurel Hill Champion. Mr. Couch was awarded a Sports Kilt donated by California's world renowned company, Sports Kilt International. There were many other activities which served to educate as well as to entertain. The Handweavers Guild of America, Bud Thompson's Blacksmithing and livestock by Houchins Running River Ranch gave the public insight into how the people of the early Celtic tribes survived.

During the mid-day ceremonies, the Parade of the Tartans held the audience spellbound as the members of ten clans represented their Scottish families in a parade demonstrating the colorful tartans of their clan. Simultaneously with the parade, Master of Ceremonies, Glen King recited the history of each clan. With this year's event came a new tradition, that of awarding the "Iomlaine" which loosely translated from the Celtic means one of a big heart. Mr. Junior Watson of the clan Buchanan received this award for his tireless dedication to the enlightenment of the public in matters of all things Scottish.

No Highland Games would be complete without the harmony and lyrics of the music of Scotland. Throughout the day the sounds of that wonderful musical group The Celts and those of the magnificent vocalist Dornelle Pratt floated over Laurel Hill to standing room only audiences. The many vendors in attendance from both the local area and from afar provided goods not normally seen in stores, and were much appreciated and patronized. At the close of the day, drawings were held and the lucky winners went home with kilts and other Celtic items donated by Celtic Croft, Alpha Kilts of the USA, Ancestral Names and Union Kilts of the United Kingdom. Mr. Glen King thanked all who helped to make this event a very special time for all, and reminded everyone that next year's Highland Games at Laurel Hill will be held again in April of 2010.



One of the many beautiful displays.



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

WHAT THE GENERAL WORE: PART IV GENERAL STUART: THE CONTEMPORARY SKETCHES

by Robert J. Trout

The previous article discussed four of the six contemporary sketches made of General Stuart. Three of these were by Frank Vizetelly and the fourth by an unknown artist. As mentioned, these sketches were not all executed with Stuart posing for the artist and as a result must be examined carefully when trying to discover what Stuart wore. Accuracy was not always the primary goal of the artist.

The final two sketches are by Ernest Crehen, a French artist living in Richmond. The first of these graces a wartime song sheet for "Riding a Raid" that was published by J.W. Randolph, Richmond Lithograph. Crehen attempted to capture Stuart as he may have appeared during one of his famous raids. Like the first Vizetelly sketch, Stuart is shown mounted at the head of a column of troopers. He is attired in what at first glance appears to be a frock coat. However, upon close examination, the coat does not have squared edges at the bottom but rounded ones. This writer has no knowledge of such a uniform ever being worn by Stuart and it is lamentable that such a mistake was made because the rest of the coat is quite acceptable. The button arrangement and the braiding on the closed coat are very accurate.

A cape fastened about Stuart's neck floats out behind him but looks much too short. However, this is the only image of a caped Stuart from the period and as such brings to mind the capes that Flora made for her husband to keep him warm. The dimensions of those capes are unknown and perspective might be involved in Crehen's rendition. It is possible that the artist saw Stuart in a cape and tried to recreate what he saw. In any event, seeing Stuart with a cape is a treat.

The trousers are not baggy as they should be and have no stripes. The belt buckle looks like a simple hollow-centered oval and unlike anything Stuart is known to have worn. The belt appears to cover a sash, one tassel of which is just visible alongside Stuart's gauntleted hand, which holds a

saber. Dragoon boots are once again featured. The hat sports a plume that has been drawn at a forty-five degree angle in relation to the hat's brim. Stuart was not known to have ever worn his trademark plume in such a fashion. The black hat should have the left side of the brim pinned up, but the positioning of the figure does not allow for a decision one way or the other. A hat band rather than a cord and acorns is shown. Taken in total, this sketch leans more toward a romanticized portrayal of Stuart.

The final sketch, another lithograph by Ernest Crehen, is a formal bust of Stuart in dress coat and plumed hat. A grave error is immediately discernable. Stuart is pictured in a double-breasted coat, wearing his famous plumed hat. The error is that the brim of the hat is pinned up on its left side and, as all other evidence suggests, Stuart always pinned it up on the right. However, by looking at the buttons of the vest the real error becomes apparent. The buttons appear to the right (the wearer's right) of the edge of the vest. For men the buttons should appear on the left (the wearer's left) of the edge of the vest when the garment is closed. What this means is that the portrait is in reverse. Once it is viewed with this in mind, a more favorable opinion of the work is possible.

Probably based on the most famous of Stuart's photographs (the general seated holding his famous plumed hat on his knee) the portrait has some excellent detail. The coat is correct, down to the grouping of the buttons in pairs, although only two pairs are visible on each side of the coat. The edging of the coat appears lighter and could be the buff trim that general officers' coats were to have. The collar insignia is correct and the collar is lighter (indicating a buff color) than the coat, which is as it should be. Shoulder insignia of some type is visible on both sides. The picture of Stuart has what appears to be gold trim coming up from the back of the coat over the shoulder, stopping at the seam. Crehen may have interpreted this as a shoulder rank insignia similar to Federal officers and drawn it as such.

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A HISTORY LESSON

AT LAUREL HILL

By: RONNIE HAYNES



Past President John Broughton talks history to eager listeners.

About midmorning on the 26th of May as threatening clouds billowed in the skies above two bright yellow school buses slowly made their way up the long incline and parked at the crest of the hill. Many school children stepped off in wide-eyed anticipation of the days events. The third, fourth and fifth grade class, about seventy-five children from Gladesboro Elementary in Carroll County Virginia had made the first of hopefully many future visits to Laurel Hill. These students, accompanied by their teachers, Judy Beasley, Alana Sexton, Tonya Gardner, Donna Price, Jennifer Johnson and several adults had come to learn more about the site of the birthplace and boyhood home of Major General James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart. This educational event was hosted by the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust Inc.

Shirley Keene, president of the Trust started the day's activities with a warm welcome followed by a presentation by John Broughton and Tom Bishop on the history of the Laurel Hill Farm from the time of Jeb Stuart's great grandfather William Letcher in 1778, to the beginning of the preservation efforts in 1990. Many aspects of what life would have been like during Letcher's short time here and later when the Stuart's acquired the property were discussed such as the assassination of William Letcher in 1780 by a local Tory during the American Revolutionary War. From the time the Stuarts arrived in 1824 till the property was sold in 1859, this was a working

farm with crops and livestock. The Stuart family owned a number slaves during their nearly thirty-five years on this land along the Ararat River. The Stuart Home "Laurel Hill" was built about 1830 and burned in the winter of 1847-48.

The students were then split into two groups and members of the Trust guided the children to points of interest on the site such as the Stuart Pavilion where five interpretive signs are housed written by Robert J. Trout pertaining to the military life Jeb Stuart during the Civil War. Other stops on the tour were the house and kitchen site, Stuart Cemetery where Archibald, Jeb's father was buried until he was moved to Saltville in 1952 to be beside his wife Elizabeth. The slave cemetery, Native American site, historic roadbed and the state and national historic marker where also visited. There are eight interpretive signs on the birthplace property written by past president and emeritus board member John Broughton. A living history program was set up by Sammy and Benjamin Hughs, Justin LeViner and Terry Williams of the 51st Virginia reenactment group. Joan Williams was also there wearing a Civil War period dress. They had set up displays of the accoutrements, weapons and uniforms of the common soldier in the infantry, artillery and the cavalry with an authentic Civil War saddle. This saddle was used by a soldier from Patrick County and was the type that would have been used by troopers under Stuart's command. The re-enactors talked at great length about what life was like for soldiers in the Civil War and demonstrated the loading and firing of their muskets. Some of the students were given uniforms and shown the proper commands in marching and drill.

After a break at noon for lunch, Wayne Kirkpatrick, with the Dan River Basin Association, entertained the students with a presentation on aquatic life along the Ararat River and its tributaries. He had a hands-on display of "creek-critters" that would be found in these waters. He talked about how to and the importance of keeping our waterways clean Mr. Kirkpatrick volunteers hundreds of hours bringing the Trout in the Classroom Program to students and trains residents on how to monitor rivers and streams. The children were inquisitive with their comments and questions throughout the day. One of the more touching moments

A TOURIST'S TALE

By: TOM BISHOP

Greetings, dear readers, my name is Tom Bishop and I am, by vocation the Executive Director of the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, and by avocation I am a member of the Board of Directors of your Trust. Relocating, as I did from West Virginia to the town of Stuart, I soon came to realize I was surrounded by the name of Stuart, even to the address of my office--on the J.E.B. Stuart Highway. However, I was not exactly a "foreigner" since Patrick County was at one time the home of both my parents and my grandparents. Nevertheless, when I commenced work with the Chamber, I knew that my knowledge of the life of General Stuart was, for the most part, inadequate and that I needed to remedy the matter. My election to your Board of Directors further added impetus to this effort. Therefore, I decided that I should begin my education by visiting some of the more well known locations that played a part in his life as well as his untimely death. The thought then occurred to me that there could possibly be folks among the readership of our newsletter that had never visited these places, and their interest to do so might be piqued by my retelling of my journey. With that object in mind, the following is my tourist's tale.

My tour began at the place where General Stuart began his last ride. Three historical markers on the highway near U.S. Route 1 near the old location of Yellow Tavern tell the story of this final ride of the brilliant commander of cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia. It is indeed regrettable that visiting this site near Richmond today does not allow one to visualize what happened on that fateful day of May 11, 1864. A new shopping center, an upscale residential community, U.S. Route 1 and Interstate 95 dominate the landscape where Stuart fought his last battle. However, the three historical markers, along with a granite marker inside a fence on the old Telegraph Road memorializing General Stuart, and a Civil War Trails map and text marker permit one to grasp a basic understanding of the area.

Following the signage indicating the route to the Stuart monument at Yellow Tavern, one stands in awe of this magnificent shaft erected by his cavalymen in 1888. It, of course, commemorates the Battle of Yellow Tavern where on May 11, 1864, Stuart led 4,500 cavalymen into battle facing Union General Sheridan's 10,000 mounted soldiers. As was Stuart's custom, he told his men "follow me" and never said "go get them boys." This placed him leading his troopers, and in the heat of the battle a dismounted cavalryman from the 5th Michigan Regiment named John Huff fired his .44 caliber pistol at the mounted figure in front of him at a distance of 10 to 30 yards and General Stuart was dealt a mortal blow. He died the following day at the home of his brother-in-law,



Dr. Brewer. Even today with all of modern day civilization crowding around this hallowed ground one can stand quietly at this site and be transported back to that fateful day in 1864 when the South lost one of its last best hopes for victory. Leaving Yellow Tavern, I knew my next stop had to be the final resting spot of General Stuart.

It is not a long trip from Yellow Tavern to the top of that scenic hill overlooking the James River, that is Hollywood Cemetery. It is here that many of our country's most famous men and women lie in eternal rest. A tour throughout this cemetery is indeed a history lesson, where at every turn one sees a name from history. From Presidents John Tyler and James Monroe to famous political figures to the many military heroes of the Civil War and before that rest here, it is indeed a "tour de force." When one reaches the top of the hill a strikingly beautiful shaft rises to the sky marking the final resting place of James Stuart and his wife Flora. The epitaph reads, "They so lived in this life that in the world to come they have life everlasting." The dates for James Stuart reads, "born February 6, 1833, died May 12, 1864, and for Flora Stuart, "born January 3, 1836, died May 10, 1923. It is interesting to note that two of their children and a number of their descendants are also buried in the same plot. It seems that no picture of the Stuart grave site cannot do justice to the beauty of this spot, far from roar of cannon and the tumult of the battlefield he lies in eternal rest.



The beautiful Episcopal church of St. James, which is but a block from his famous equestrian statue on Monument Avenue in Richmond, is the church in which his funeral service was conducted and is truly worth the time to visit. I would be remiss not to mention the wonderful collection of Stuart material that is housed in the Museum of the Confederacy, well worth the time to take it all in. All in all, Richmond is a veritable storehouse of Civil War history and will reward the visitor many times over for the time and effort taken to visit. Happy trails!

THE LETCHER HOME

FOUND AT LAST
BY: COATES CLARK



L-R Dr. Rhett Herman, Dr. Cliff Boyd, Dr. Susan Christopher

The long awaited telephone call came with the welcome news that the archaeology and physics teams from Radford University had selected the Letcher site for their summer excavation project. These teams, led by Dr. Cliff Boyd, professor of Anthropology and Dr.

Rhett Herman, professor of Physics, would be on site during the first week of June. The news spread quickly, and preparations began in earnest. A team of our members led by Mr. Ronnie Haynes began by insuring that all areas of interest to the teams were cleared of any obstructions and were easily accessible for the ground penetrating radar unit and for any forthcoming excavation. Plans were made for the provision of necessary sanitation facilities for the teams along with quantities of cold water as the weather promised to be sunny and very warm. Now, all there was left to do was to await their arrival.

Their vans loaded with equipment rolled in on schedule, and with little fanfare their operational plan unfolded. Dr. Boyd and Dr. Herman began by inspecting the area and outlining the most promising locations in which to establish their grids. Students, under the supervision of Dr. Boyd, fell to that task, and soon the site took on the appearance of a highly professional archaeological examination. In the meantime, a student skilled in the recording of oral traditions, conversed with Mr. Edward Dellenback, a long-time resident of the area whose family had owned the property for many years, eliciting many helpful observations. Early on the second day the cry went up, "the foundation of the old Letcher home has been found." Much of the rock foundation was exposed, while determination of the exact dimension of the old home was postponed, the teams turned their attention to other areas of interest. Dr. Herman and the Physics team utilizing the Pulse EKKO ground penetrating radar unit which is capable of detecting anomalies to a depth of twelve feet beneath the

ground, began a systematic survey of the entire site. When the radar indicated a location of interest, the site was flagged and a grid established for later excavation. An area of great interest to the Trust was that of the area surrounding the grave of Mr. William Letcher, the great-grandfather of General Stuart. Mr. Letcher died in August of 1780, and when in 1859 General Stuart's mother Elizabeth Letcher Pannill Stuart sold the property, she excepted this area from the sale stating "where William Letcher and others are buried." Who were the "others" and how many of them lay buried there was the question that until now there was no answer to. Dr. Herman and the physics students laid a grid some sixty meters around the grave site, dismantled the wrought iron fencing surrounding the rave site and began a meticulous search for any indication of additional graves. After an exhausting search the radar unit did not detect a single grave site. The possibility still exists that the graves Mrs. Stuart referred to lay outside the area examined. What we do know is that they do not exist in proximity to the grave of William Letcher. Turning attention to the areas identified by the radar unit, many artifacts were discovered. A large amount of native American material was found, along with shards of pottery, a button containing an "E" emblem, a large quantity of nails which Dr. Boyd dated to the 1800's along with other material taken back to the University for dating and identification which will be included in their written report.

To find at long last the foundation of the original Letcher home, established some two hundred and thirty one years ago, was a hallmark accomplishment of the Trust whose debt to Radford University, Dr. Boyd, Dr. Herman and the fourteen highly motivated students without whom this would not have been achieved, is forever recorded. At week's end, a luncheon was provided by the Trust ladies for the participants, along with small tokens of our appreciation for their efforts on our behalf. Mrs. Shirley O. Keene, Trust president expressed our gratitude for their splendid achievements after the luncheon. Dr. Boyd said that the team planned to return to the site next year to continue their exploration, and expressed his thanks for the thoughtful and cordial treatment they had received from the Trust members. More pictures of this event may be found elsewhere in this issue.



Past President John Broughton receives instruction on the radar unit from Dr. Herman.



The Letcher home foundation found!



Children learn of the life of a Civil War Soldier

occurred as one of the groups was walking towards the house site and some of the students noticed that the flag on the main flagpole was at half-mast. The tour guide explained that the flag was at half-mast in honor of Lt. Leevi Barnard from Ararat who had recently died in action while serving his country in Iraq. Young John West, the five year old grandson of Tom Bishop suggested that we should recite the pledge of Allegiance to the flag, which we all did. It was a humbling experience and also very encouraging to see such patriotism in one so young. Although the clouds were threatening during the day the bad weather held off until just the right time. As the students were being given mementos of their visit to Laurel Hill, raindrops begin to fall, perfect timing.

When the Trust was formed in 1990 one of the main purposes of the organization along with the preservation and interpretation of the property, is educational, and to conduct activities to define and explain the history of the Laurel Hill farm. It is our hope that this is the first of many future visits and that we made a lasting impression on these students, something that they can take back and share with others. Members of the Board of Directors participating in this event were Shirley Keene, Coates Clark, Richard Murray, Tom Bishop, John Broughton, Ronnie Haynes and our always reliable volunteer and photographer Mr. Marvin Keene. Laurel Hill is open year around to individuals for self-guided tours and guided tours for larger groups at no charge. You may contact the birthplace by phone at (276) 251-1833, website at www.jebstuart.org or email: laurelhill@jebstuart.org



Wayne Kirkpatrick teaches the children the importance of keeping our rivers and streams clean...

WHAT THE GENERAL WORE

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Remembering the reversal, the hat has the plume on the correct side. The other side is pinned up with a five pointed star. The remaining Stuart hat has a six-pointed Palmetto star, so this is most likely an error. The hat seems to have an edging, probably gold, as does the existing hat. A hatband, light in color, again most likely gold, rather than a cord with acorns is shown. This is the best rendition of Stuart's hat in any of the sketches.

In conclusion, the sketches add only a little of what we know of General Stuart's uniforms and equipment. Too frequently, the artists took liberties with or romanticized their subject. With two exceptions, Stuart probably did not pose for the artists,

who relied on some other source or just their imagination to complete their work. The best of the sketches, the one of Stuart sitting in his tent working, provides us with the most accurate Information, but even this is limited because of its size. Because of an artist's tendency to portray his subjects in a manner that fits in with the artist's goal for the work, sketches are the least reliable medium when attempting to discover what Stuart wore. The most accurate information comes from pictures taken during the war and from what has been preserved that Stuart actually wore or used. The former will be the topic of the next "What the General Wore" article.

HAPPENINGS AT LAUREL HILL



At the Highland Games - everywhere that Mary went the lamb was sure to go.



Arriving at Laurel Hill for the day



Investigating a possible grave site



Blacksmithing at the Highland Games



Learning what it was like as a soldier



Getting the right orientation