

RECONNAISSANCE

FALL 2013

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



Inside:

page 2

The Director's Page

page 3

**6th Annual
Highland Games**

pages 4-5

The Birthday Party

page 6

The Stuart Pavilion

page 7

A Chance Encounter

page 8

**Membership
Information**

LETCHER HOME-SITE IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY

by Ronnie Haynes

The first and largest phase to the William Letcher home-site has been completed. With the removal of the large house that stood on the site for many years the grounds are now ready for a number of other improvements this spring.

The old house which was in a bad state of repair and had no historical significance was not economically feasible to renovate. Our plans call for interpretive signs to tell the history of Letcher's time on the property. There will also be information about the Stuart's, as well as the Mitchell's and the Dellenback's, the last owners of the site. There will be upgrades to road and parking area. New directional signs will also be placed. Informational kiosk and brochures to tie the site to Laurel Hill will also be developed.



William Letcher the great grandfather of J.E.B. Stuart settled this site about 1778 and was an ardent supporter of the Patriot cause during the Revolutionary War. He was murdered by a British sympathizer in 1780. He is buried near the site of his home and the grave is the oldest marked grave in Patrick County. This area of the Laurel Hill is not as well known as the site of J.E.B. Stuart's boyhood home but we now hope to give it the attention it deserves.

The story of William Letcher is very unique. This is where the story of Laurel Hill and James Ewell Brown Stuart starts. We have the first phase of the project completed and none of this could have been possible without the generous contributions by our members and supporters like you. Thank you.



THE DIRECTOR'S PAGE



L to R: Shirley Keene, President, Ronnie Haynes, Vice-President, Shelby Inscore-Puckett, Secretary, and Brian Jessup, Treasurer

The Board of Directors of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust met Tuesday 6:00 p m on November 23, 2012 at the Ararat Ruritan Club building in Ararat, VA.

Through the many donations from our members and supporters the Trust will begin improvements to the Letcher gravesite which is part of the birthplace property. The grave of William Letcher, a Revolutionary soldier and great-grand father of J.E.B. Stuart is the oldest marked grave in Patrick County. The grave was saved from being moved to Saltville, VA back in the 50's. The parents of Mary Dellenback Hill, Thelma and Charlie M. Dellenback, Sr., the owners of the property at the time, knew the historical value of the grave and her dad just didn't think the grave should be disturbed. Mary is now on the Board of Directors for the General J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust.

Plans are to grade, smooth, landscape, and gravel the area. Interpretive signs, markers and an information kiosk will be added. A brochure will be developed to tie this site in with Stuart's birthplace. New directional signs will be added along Ararat Highway. The Board also looked at preliminary plans by Vice President Ronnie Haynes for a proposed new Interpretive Center and Museum at Laurel Hill. Trust President, Shirley Keene, expressed appreciation to everyone for making each October Civil War Encampment successful. The public was invited to attend the 2013 birthday celebration at Granny's Attic in Stuart, VA.

Please visit our website www.jebstuart.org for more information and about other upcoming events.



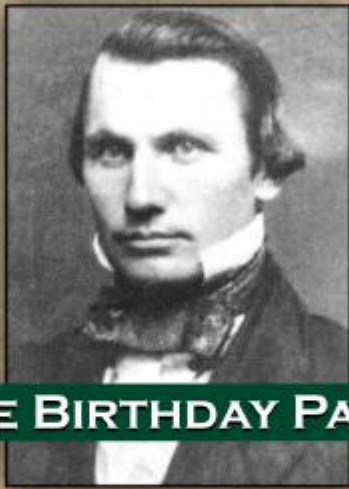
6TH ANNUAL HIGHLAND GAMES

On June 1, 2013 the Laurel Hill Scottish Highland Games were enjoyed by many visitors.



Music, food, vendors, bagpipes, athletics and other attractions were at the festival from 9 am to 5 pm.





THE BIRTHDAY PARTY OF GENERAL J.E.B. STUART



There was a birthday party at Granny's Attic in Stuart, VA on Feb. 9, 2013 from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm for General J.E.B. Stuart.

Birthday cake and lemonade were served. There were people coming and going all day. One couple was from as far away as Texas.

Live music was provided by Mike Pendleton and his band, The Lone Ivy Band.





Board Members present:
 President, Shirley Keene,
 Vice President, Ronnie Haynes,
 Secretary, Shelby Inscore Puckett,
 Dan River District Tourism,
 Tom Bishop,
 Coates Clark,
 Amy Brown Sawyers,
 Mike Pendleton,
 and Mary Dellenback Hill.



THE STUART PAVILION

Early in 2002, the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Trust led by its then president, Mr. John Broughton, began a new phase at Laurel Hill to assist its visitors in understanding the life of General Stuart, as well as his life and times as the Commanding General of Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia. The Stuart Pavilion would be a significant step in helping us to educate its many visitors.

The Stuart Pavilion houses five large interpretive signs depicting the wartime exploits of General Stuart. It consists of a large floor of brick pavers with a post supported roof over the entire area. The Pavilion measures thirty-four feet in width, and sixteen feet in dept and is located adjacent to the Historic road bed.

The five interpretive signs each measuring twenty-four by thirty inches are arranged in a semicircle. The text for each sign has been written by the eminent Stuart historian, Robert J. Trout. The texts are complemented by the paintings of such renowned artists as Charles Hollbauer, Don Troiane, Dale Gallon, and John Paul Strain.

With each contribution of \$50.00 you have placed a brick under our Pavilion and helped us to enhance Laurel Hill. Your name, the name of a loved one or the name of a Civil War ancestor, whatever your choice may be, has a place in our floor for the future.

We wash and clean the bricks semi-annually and we have placed an index at the Pavilion that will enable you to find the brick that you had placed. If you have any special instructions as far as placement please let us know.

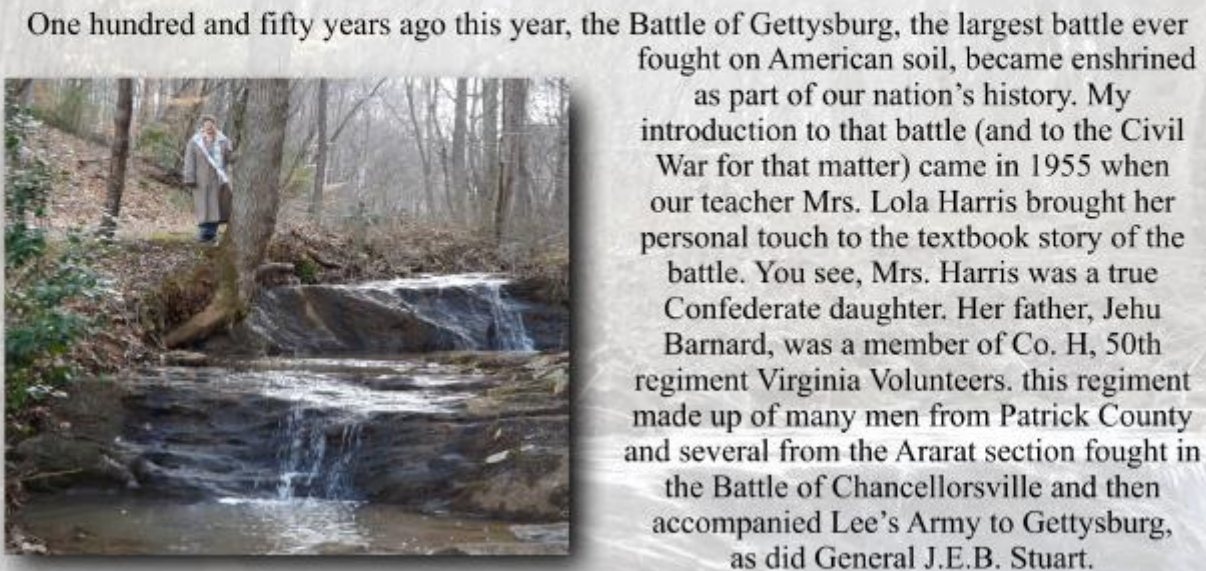
The Board of Directors of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace wants to sincerely thank you for your help and support.

Shirley Keene, President



A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

by Shelby Inscore-Puckett



One hundred and fifty years ago this year, the Battle of Gettysburg, the largest battle ever fought on American soil, became enshrined as part of our nation's history. My introduction to that battle (and to the Civil War for that matter) came in 1955 when our teacher Mrs. Lola Harris brought her personal touch to the textbook story of the battle. You see, Mrs. Harris was a true Confederate daughter. Her father, Jehu Barnard, was a member of Co. H, 50th regiment Virginia Volunteers. This regiment made up of many men from Patrick County and several from the Ararat section fought in the Battle of Chancellorsville and then accompanied Lee's Army to Gettysburg, as did General J.E.B. Stuart.

From Stuart's role in the Battle of Gettysburg, notwithstanding (we'll leave that to a more scholarly treatise), my imagination sometimes conjures up a chance encounter of General Stuart and the Ararat men of the 50th - the Barnards, the Bowmans, the Eppersons, the Montgomerys, the Pucketts, the Smiths and other soldiers from the Ararat community.

I'm sure General Stuart would have inquired about what was happening at Laurel Hill, his beloved childhood home. The soldiers would have told him the farm had been sold to two brothers from Mt. Airy who divided the land into parcels that were sold to different people. But they would have told him no one had built a house where the Stuart home had stood overlooking the Ararat River.

Later in that same year of 1863, war weary J.E.B. Stuart wrote to his brother William Alexander saying he would very much like to return "to the old home place" and live out the rest of his life. He was never to realize that dream. Surviving Gettysburg and the difficult months afterward, General Stuart continued to be a major figure in the Confederate Army until his death at Yellow Tavern on May 12, 1864.

Though not a Confederate daughter, I have, by blood and by marriage, a kinship with several Confederate veterans. Those men fought with General Stuart and unlike him lived to return back to the beautiful hills of Patrick County. The J.E.B. Birthplace Preservation Trust works hard to make Laurel Hill a place that not only honors General Stuart's legacy but also honors and preserves the heritage and pride of the Ararat community and Patrick County. In the Sesquicentennial year of the Civil War and the Battle of Gettysburg, visit us at Laurel Hill and develop your own personal kinships.



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

MEMBERSHIP

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

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, VA 24171, or email us through our website at www.jebstuart.org. Memberships begin at \$25.00.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

(Please 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 IS A
PERFECT GIFT FOR THE HISTORY LOVER IN YOUR LIFE.**

RETURN FORM TO:

J.E.B. STUART PRESERVATION TRUST
P.O. BOX 1210
STUART, VA 24171

MEMBER INFORMATION:

(Please print)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____