

# RECONNAISSANCE

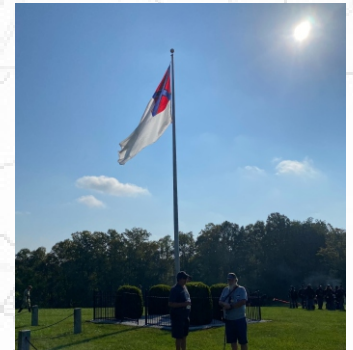
NEWSLETTER OF THE J.E.B. STUART BIRTHPLACE PRESERVATION TRUST, INC.  
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1833-1864

## Laurel Hill Encampment 2021

The board of the JEB Stuart Preservation Trust was confronted with a tough decision in the summer of 2020. The decision involved whether or not to hold the annual encampment in the face of the Covid pandemic. In the interest of public safety for both the participants and attendees, a difficult decision was made to cancel the event. In the face of some public sentiment about anything related to the Civil War, there were concerns about how the 2021 encampment would be received and attended. We are pleased to report our fears were unfounded. The 2021 encampment was the best attended in several years. Over the two days of the 2021 encampment, nearly 1,000 people were in attendance. Vendors signed up and even arrived early to set up their tents to prepare for the weekend. Over 100 reenactors showed up to do battle on Saturday and Sunday afternoon, complete with cannons and riders on horseback. And despite the fact that one of the food vendors had to cancel at the last moment, fast thinking by some board members resulted in a table full of pizza, and no one went to bed hungry. People enjoyed the speakers and music in the main tent, meeting and photo sessions with very knowledgeable actors portraying figures from the Civil War, and shopping from a large selection of items from numerous vendor tents. The Trust Tent happily sold out of its items and the profit there goes right back into the next re-enactment, as well as the upkeep of the park. We were delighted to have John Stuart, a direct descendant of JEB Stuart, as a visitor. All of the special events were fully attended and very well received. All in all, we believe everyone had a good time, and we look forward to the next encampment the first full weekend in October, 2022. We hope to see you there!!



**Inside:**

page 2-3

Tribute to  
Marvin Keene

Saga In Richmond

Happenings at  
Laurel Hill

*Walk Back In Time...Come Join Us...Experience the Simple Life*



## *Tribute to Marvin Keene*

*May 24, 1941 - Jan. 11, 2022*

It is with much sadness that the Trust informs you of the passing of one of Laurel Hill's most dedicated volunteers. Mr. Marvin Keene, a U.S Army and National Guard Veteran, passed away on January 11, 2022, at the age of eighty. About twenty years ago after retiring from VDOT, Marvin began volunteering at Laurel Hill when his wife Shirley joined the Board of Directors. Shirley later served as President for ten years. It was one of those unique times where the Trust was the benefit of not one, but two important members. Marvin had a hand in many of the projects and improvements at the site, attended and helped at all events, and worked behind the scene on tasks that are vital to any non-profit organization. Marvin epitomized what a volunteer is, with his participation in the Patrick County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard, the American Legion, and the Southern Virginia Motorsports Museum. When his health began to decline he continued to do what he could and it was a personal comfort to have him accompany me on our numerous trips to the Birthplace. He is survived by his wife Shirley, and son Robbie Lawrence. With his stories and humor he was a joy be around, and a loyal companion and friend to all. Marvin will be greatly missed, and fondly remembered. Rest in Peace, Good Buddy.

*by Ronnie Haynes*

### *The Sad Saga in Richmond Continues ...*

The Board of Directors of the JEB Stuart Birthplace Trust wishes it could report positive news concerning the Stuart Monument in Richmond; however, at this time, there simply is none. For those who are not aware, Richmond City Council, the Mayor, and possible others came up with a plan that passed on their responsibility and gave all the statues and pedestals to a group who did not apply for them. The fate of these works of art, including General Stuart, will now be decided by the Black History Museum of Culture in association with the Valentine Museum in Richmond. In an interview with the Richmond Times, the director of the museum stated that all applicants for the statues would be considered along with input from other individuals and groups before any decision was made. When pressed further, he said that all options were on the table, including their destruction, but they would not go to sites, that in his mind, glorified the Confederacy or the "Lost Cause". He also stated this process would take years. It appears that these monuments are now in the hands of those who have little or no interest in seeing them displayed in a respectful, honorable way ever again. An amendment to the current monument bill by our local delegate Wren Williams could have helped the process but did not pass the legislative committee. However, he vowed to bring it back again in the next session. There has been some talk of legal action among some of the applicants, including the Trust, but there is little interest in pursuing this long and expensive process, with no reasonable assurance of success. The JEB Stuart Trust plans to keep the lines of communication open and continue to appeal to Richmond to do the right thing. We urge you to contact Richmond and encourage them to allow Jeb to be brought home to his birthplace, which is, without question, the most appropriate and logical place for it.

*by Ronnie Haynes*

