

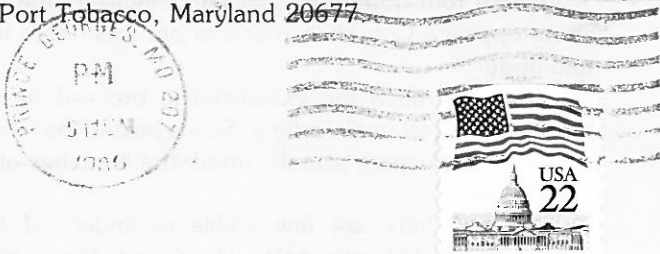
OFFICERS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- OFFICERS:**
President.....VACANT
Vice-President.....Mr. Richard E. Heise
Secretary.....Mrs. Beverly Tierney-Holly
Treasurer.....Mr. Charles G. LaHood, Jr.
- BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**
Mrs. Wm. M. Albrightain
Mr. Warren E. Barley
Miss Eleanor Higdon
Mrs. Kathryn S. Jones
Mrs. Margaret Langley
Mrs. Vivian Malczyk
Mr. Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr.
Mr. Gilbert Milstead
Mrs. John Hanson Michell
Mrs. Susan Shaffer
Mr. Fred Zihlman
- PAST PRESIDENTS:**
Mr. George C. Dyson
Mr. Eugene Jenkins
Mr. H. Maxwell Mitchell, Jr.
Mr. W. Preston Williams
- COMMITTEES:**
Friendship House (Furnishings)
Mr. Warren E. Barley, *Chairperson*
Mrs. John Hanson Mitchell
Mrs. William Ellinger
Mrs. Watson Perrygo
- Ways and Means:**
Mrs. John Hanson Mitchell - Friendship Dolls
Mrs. H. Maxwell Mitchell - Stationery
Mrs. Carl Hampton - Books
- Membership:**
Mrs. Eleanor Higdon, *Chairperson*
Mrs. Henrietta Barnhart
Mrs. Dorothy Crist
Mr. George C. Dyson
Mrs. Olga S. Hamer
Mrs. Jane Wheeler
Mrs. Vivian Malczyk
Mrs. Emma Middleton
Mrs. Sandra Mitchell
Mrs. Nellie M. Shelor
Mrs. Katherine Turner

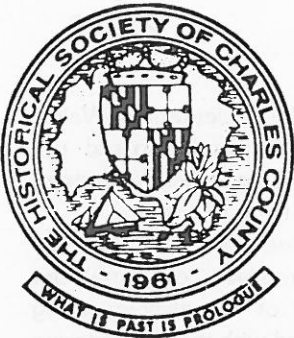
- Memorial Fund:**
Mr. Richard Heise
- Publicity:**
Mrs. Alva E. Jones
- Budget:**
Mr. Charles G. LaHood, Jr.
Mrs. Robert Petri
- SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROOM:**
Liaison:
Mr. Charles G. LaHood, Jr.
Mrs. Leo F. Middleton
Research and Correspondence Committee:
Mrs. George C. Dyson, *Chairperson*
Miss Eleanor Higdon
Mrs. Elaine Walker
Mr. Elwood Leviner
Mrs. Richard Shaffer
Mrs. Margaret Langley
- Oral History:**
Mrs. Richard Shaffer, *Chairperson*
- Graveyard Survey:**
Mr. Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr., *Chairperson*
Mr. Walter B. Huber, Jr.
Mrs. Margaret Langley
Mr. Gibert Milstead
Mr. Spencer Milstead
Mr. W. Preston Williams
Mrs. Dorothy Wilson
Mrs. Anita Wood

EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles of historic interest on Southern Maryland are requested for possible publication in future issues of **The Record**. Please send your typewritten manuscripts and other communications to: Editor, **The Record**, P. O. Box 261, Port Tobacco, Maryland 20677.



The Historical Society of Charles County
Post Office Box 261
Port Tobacco, Maryland 20677



The RECORD

Publication of the Historical Society of Charles County, Inc.

No. 37 May 1986

Mr. Richard E. Heise, *Acting President*

Elwood M. Leviner, *Editor*

Orphans of the Confederacy

Garth E. Bowling, Jr.

"She breathes, she burns, she'll come, she'll come," are the concluding words to Maryland's state song. James Ryder Randall was exercising wishful thinking when he expressed these thoughts in his stirring poem. Randall, as well as many other loyal Southerners, expected Maryland to secede and join the Confederacy in the spring of 1861, but this was not to be. Though the Old Line State never left the Union, many of her native sons did. Most historians agree that over 20,000 Maylanders crossed the Potomac and joined the Southern forces, many of these being Charles Countians.

The exact number of Confederate soldiers and sailors from Charles County may never be known. Most of the Charles Countians who fought in Maryland Confederate units, such as the 1st Maryland Battalion, or the 1st Maryland Artillery, can be identified. But some journeyed to all parts of the Confederacy and fought with relatives and friends who resided in other states. Records of Confederate units do not usually show if an enlistee was a resident of another state. There is no doubt that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Marylanders fought as members of other Confederate units. At the request of high ranking Confederate Marylanders, the Confederate government offered inducements for Marylanders to transfer their services from the various state regiments to which they were attached, in an effort to unite all Confederate Marylanders into the "Maryland Line." This, did not occur, probably because the war had been in progress and the Marylanders were reluctant to leave the comrades with whom they had formed close relationships in the other state regiments.

Wherever the Charles County Confederates may have served, those who fought with the Army of Northern Virginia under Robert E. Lee stood the greatest chance of keeping in contact with loved ones and friends back in Charles County. However, the Potomac River was not the only barrier between them and their homeland. Unlike the other Confederate soldiers and sailors, they were outcasts in their own state. Whereas Virginians or North Carolinians could return to their homes from time to time during the war, Marylanders faced capture and imprisonment if they attempted to return to their homes. Private Randolph McKim of the 1st Maryland Infantry Battalion wrote that after receiving a thirty day furlough, he looked forward to

the prospect of a return to "civilization," but "... we Maryland boys had no home waiting to open its doors to us during our furlough." McKim goes on to say:

"To be a Confederate soldier meant for the Marylander, in addition to hardship and danger, exile from home and kindred. It meant to be cut off from communication with father and mother, brother and sister and wife. It meant to have an impenetrable barrier of forts and armies between him and all he loved and cherished best in the world. Twenty thousand Marylanders went into voluntary exile for the cause which (to them) represented Liberty and Constitutional Self-Government."

Just as an orphan faces life without the support of its real parents, the Confederate Marylanders faced the onslaught of the Federal forces without the support and protection of their mother state. As a result of this dilemma, Maryland soldiers and sailors were sometimes affectionately referred to as the "Orphans of the Confederacy." However, even with this handicap, Marylanders attempted to sneak back home from time to time; and Charles Countians were no exception.

According to the childhood memoirs of Evelyn Ward, who lived in the Northern Neck of Virginia not far from the little town of Warsaw, her parents' home, "Bladensfield," became a regular stopping place for Confederate Marylanders returning to Southern Maryland during the war. Miss Ward writes:

"The many young Maryland men who had come across to join the Southern army had formed the Maryland Line. When one of the Maryland Line had a furlough, he was very apt to come to our part of the country and go across to Leonardtown with the blockade runners. While he waited the blockade runner's time, Bladensfield was a good safe place to stay. In that way it happened that we very often had a Maryland Liner as guest for a night, a couple of nights, or even a week at a time. My poor dear Mother! It was a pleasure to her to do what she could for those soldier boys who were trying to get a glimpse of home."

"The Maryland Liners came so often that it seemed quite like old Tappahannock days with young soldiers coming and going. We had a crowd of them at Christmas. Mamma said, "We must do all we can to make them have a good time."

"So trying to make things merry for us children and for the Maryland soldiers, Mamma stilled her heartache this first Christmas without our Brother Will. She had a Christmas tree in the studio trimmed with long strings of hollyberries and lighted by nub ends of candles. We had no presents for the soldiers, so we made them little round pincushions, but put no pins in them. Pins were scarce and precious in those days."

"With Mamma and the girls taking care of them, the soldiers were merry even though their pincushions were without pins. We laughed and talked in spite of the Yankees. I had almost forgotten to tell that by some hook or crook, the soldiers managed to get a box of real candy for the girls."

On April 27, 1861, President Lincoln extended the blockade of the Southern states to include Virginia and North Carolina. In conjunction with this order, the Potomac Flotilla was established at the Washington Navy Yard on May 1, 1861. This action greatly reduced the traffic across the river and made the trip into Charles County dangerous. During these early months of the war, Captain F. Cox, of the 40th Virginia Infantry, was stationed at Mathias Point, across from Pope's Creek. Captain Cox complained in his letters home that the establishment of the Potomac Flotilla was preventing him from visiting his girl friend in Maryland. Federal boats traveled up and down the Potomac off the shores of Charles County constantly. To further complicate matters, on August 2, 1861, an order was given to "search without further warrant, upon the Maryland shore for arms, ammunition, or supplies where there are reasonable grounds for believing they are intended for the rebels." Frequent raids were made, particularly at Port Tobacco and Pope's Creek.

In addition to the Potomac Flotilla making passage into Charles County difficult General George McClellan, as well as other high ranking Union officers, feared a Confederate invasion from Virginia into Charles County, and thus, established a firm defense on the eastern shores of the Potomac. McClellan sent General Joseph Hooker's Division with eight thousand men and three artillery batteries to Charles County in October, 1861. In December, the division was strengthened by the arrival of four more regiments. However, by the spring of 1862, it was apparent that the Confederate forces were not going to invade Charles County. On March 9, General Hooker reported that the Confederate forces opposite Charles County on the Virginia shore had withdrawn and that he had destroyed all Confederate batteries between Aquia Creek and Cockpit Point. On April 7, 1862, Hooker's troops began leaving Charles County.

Although Hooker's soldiers departed in the spring of 1862, the Potomac Flotilla remained until the end of the war, and Federal soldiers remained on guard in Charles County, especially at post offices and along the shores of the Potomac. Throughout the war, Federal soldiers were stationed in and around the Port Tobacco area. As late as fall of 1864, there were a number of Union soldiers on duty in this town. Records show that Federal soldiers were captured

by Confederates on October 9, 1864. Lieutenant Walter Bowie, a Marylander in Mosby's Rangers, crossed the Potomac with seven of his men and captured seventeen Federal soldiers and eight horses at Port Tobacco.

When Lincoln called for volunteers in April, 1861, to put down the rebellion in the southern states, only one from Charles County volunteered. Most of her eligible young men crossed the Potomac and enlisted with the Confederate forces. As the war continued, many of the older men who remained behind were arrested and placed in prison, but in spite of the Union occupation and arrests, Charles Countians continued to oppose the Federal military. One such individual was Thomas Jones who lived near Pope's Creek. Jones was a secret agent for the Confederate government and ferried people and mail back and forth across the Potomac. Jones stated that, "The river was filled with gunboats plying up and down, day and night. An armed patrol guarded the shore and the federal government had a spy upon nearly every river in Southern Maryland. There was a detachment of troops stationed at Pope's Creek, and another on Major Watson's place, not three hundred yards from my house."

Even with Federal vigilance, Confederate Charles Countians continued to keep in contact and occasionally visit home. Captain William F. Dement, of the 1st Maryland Artillery, C.S.A., had a home in the Pomfret area of Charles County. According to family tradition, Captain Dement would return periodically to his farm to balance his accounts and check on the crops. There are other undocumented stories about Confederate soldiers returning to Charles County during the war, but perhaps the most intriguing story is about the legendary tunnel that led from the shore of the Potomac to the cellar of St. Ignatius Church at Chapel Point. Some believe that Confederate soldiers crossed the Potomac at night and crawled through the tunnel and up to the church to take part in religious services, since there was no nearby Catholic church on the Virginia side.

The best documentation of Confederate soldiers from Charles County returning home during the war can be found in the diary of John H. Stone. Stone lived in the Doncaster area of Charles County and was a Lieutenant in the 2nd Maryland Infantry Regiment, C.S.A. After the war, he compiled a series of letters that he had written to his sister during the war and called them his diary. In July of 1862, he and his close friend, Francis Higdon of Newport, returned to Charles County for a brief visit before returning to the army. One of Stone's letters to his sister reads as follows:

"We called on Mr. Reed who kindly transported us across the Potomac, landing us about midnight at Mr. Joseph I. Wills. We enjoyed his hospitality until Sunday evening when we resumed our journey homeward distant 16 miles. After four hours rapid walking we arrived home about sunset, much to the relief and joy of our friends. We had anticipated a pleasant time, but fate decreed otherwise.

"On the following Saturday a Regiment of Federal Cavalry arrived in Port Tobacco. They immediately posted a line of pickets a considerable distance from the village, thereby cutting off all communications from my friend

Higdon, who was at the time in another portion of the county. As I could not communicate with him and believing it unwise for me to remain at home I concluded to return to Virginia. At sunset I bade adieu to friends and started for Cob Neck where I arrived about midnight. Not being familiar with the road I traveled a considerable distance out of the way, but at last reached Mr. Semmes' home and after a refreshing sleep I was again ready to resume my journey. The first thing needed was a boat in which to cross the river. Fortunately I had not long to wait. Meeting Capt. Shorter I made known to him my situation and he agreed to land me on the Virginia shore if I would give him \$20.00, which I paid in gold."

"Whilst I was waiting for the night to set in I was joined by two former comrades. James Dorsett and Tom Green who like myself had concluded it unwise to remain on the Maryland side of the River. They had also been in the Confederate Service one year.

"When darkness overshadowed the water, with muffled oars we started on our risky trip. I say risky because we had to pass in sight of a near-by United States revenue cutter commanded by Capt. Andrew Frank an individual well known to myself and who at that time would be only too glad to gobble us up.

"When halfway over the river we were near being run down by a sailing vessel going rapidly under full sail and a fair wind.

"After four hours hard rowing we reached the Virginia shore opposite Cob Neck much to our relief both in mind and body.

"Feeling much too exhausted to proceed further we concluded to rest until daylight. So we passed the remainder of the night sleeping soundly under the branches of a wild cherry tree."

Today, there are few visible reminders of Charles County's Confederate past. Gray and black historical markers scattered around the county point out places where significant events during the War Between the States occurred. A painting hangs in the courthouse foyer, dedicated to the citizens of Charles County who supported the Confederacy. One Charles Countian remembers, as a youth, seeing some near-rotted logs lying on the ground which his father said were the old telegraph poles used by Hooker's soldiers during the winter of 1861-62. The congregation at Christ Church in Wayside is reminded every Sunday of their church's connection with the Confederacy as they view three beautiful stained glass windows dedicated to three young men from the area who died serving the Confederacy. The majestic "Rose Hill" mansion still stands as a living tribute to the famous Confederate spy, Olivia Floyd, as does "Eutaw," the home Captain William Dement would visit from time to time during the war. Old Confederate soldiers and sailors are buried all over Charles County, but few, if any, have headstones that indicate their participation in the War Between the States. Time seems to have forgotten those four tumultuous years of Charles County's past.



TOMBSTONES TELL A STORY

"Tombstones tell us a great deal about the culture of those who came before us," says Michael Mazzeo of the Historical Society of Charles County. Many tombstones, especially those on private, wooded property, are being lost due to vandalism, developmental and natural overgrowth. Since 1978 the Historical Society, under the direction of Michael Mazzeo and the Cemetery Committee, has transcribed over nine-thousand tombstone inscriptions from Charles County cemeteries. In order to make these inscriptions available to researchers and genealogists, the transcriptions will be entered into a computer and an alphabetical list as well as a list by cemetery will be produced.

The Charles County Heritage Commission is supporting Mr. Mazzeo and the Historical Society in their efforts and have provided a matching grant for the project. The Heritage Commission grants program works to expand the available resources on local history. The results of the research projects are made available to the public through the Southern Maryland Room at Charles County Community College.

A self-supporting organization, the Heritage Commission, obtains its funds from an annual fund raiser at Mount Victoria. This year's gala will be held May 10. For additional information, call Eloise Crain, 259-2406 or Kitty Newcomb, 934-2620.

