“Tappahannock and Its Role In The War Between The States”

by CARROLL M. GARNETT
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It is a distinct privilege to participate in this function honoring the founding of Tappahannock 300 years ago. What a span in time! What history has transpired here! My role is to high-light the principal action here between Confederate and Union Forces in the Great War, 1861-1865. A great deal more happened in Tappahannock than one might imagine, much of which has never before been reported.

At the outset it is important to identify a few people and/or places, all connected with Tappahannock:
William N. Ward, from the historic home “Bladensfield”, located near Warsaw, Richmond County, was “West Pointer” being in Lee’s Class of 1829; he left “The Point”, however, before graduating to enter the Episcopal ministry; he followed this calling until about 1860 when he became head of Mrs. Gray’s Boarding School For Girls, located directly across the street from the courthouse in Tappahannock; his family resided with him at this school. When Virginia seceded and on urgings of citizens of his county, he sought and was commissioned a major in the CSA on May 25, 1861 and placed in command of “Major Ward’s Essex and Middlesex” Batallion, and infantry unit composed of four companies, two from Essex and two from Middlesex; also, one cavalry company was temporarily assigned; this was Company F (Essex Light Dragoons), 9th Regiment of Cavalry. Ward during the early months of the war frequently supervised the drilling of troops on the streets in Tappahannock and used his home there as a type of headquarters. Major Ward’s Batallion was the nucleus of what was to become the 55th Virginia Regiment of Infantry, formed in September, 1861, with the addition of four companies. During the period 1861-62 there were two commanders at Fort Lowry: Lieutenant Henry Howell Lewis, CSN, commanded the “Water Battery” and Major Ward commanded the military troops assigned. The 55th Regiment, along with Company F, 9th Cavalry, was used to defend the fort. Major Ward’s career as a soldier ended May 1, 1862 when he was not re-elected to his command.

George Edward Pickett, a native of Richmond, graduated from West Point in 1846; he then served 15 years in the U.S. Army before entering Confederate service as a Captain of Infantry on September 20, 1861. He was promoted to full colonel almost immediately (on September 23, 1861) and designated temporarily commander of the defenses of the lower Rappahannock. In this capacity he had his headquarters at both Tappahannock and at Fort Lowry. He was promoted to Brigadier General while serving in this assignment in January 1862 and transferred as a Brigade Commander in the Peninsula Campaign.

In June, 1861 Lieutenant Henry Howell Lewis, CSN, was designated Commander of the Battery at Lowry’s Point on Direction of General Lee. The Battery contained large coastal guns and Lee recognized that naval officers would be more familiar than soldiers with these cannon. Accordingly, in these situations, Lee directed naval officers to instruct the military assigned in the techniques of firing.

Lieutenant Lewis was also commander of the CSS Rappahannock, used to defend the fort as well as to deliver supplies from Fredericksburg.

From a distinguished family, Lewis was the great grandson of Fielding Lewis, builder of "Kenmore" in Fredericksburg and Betty Washington, the President’s only sister. Lieutenant Lewis had entered the U.S. Navy as a midshipman at an early age and his papers had been signed by President Andrew Jackson. Lewis married Anne Ogle Taylor of "Mt. Airy", Richmond County, on November 30, 1841.

William Latane of Tappahannock was a medical doctor. At age 28 he entered Confederate service on June 10, 1861 in his home town and was assigned as a private in Company F, The Essex Light Dragoons, 9th Regiment of Cavalry. He was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant almost immediately, on July 1, and in time became captain of his company.

In General Jeb Stuart’s first raid around McClellan’s Army, June 1862, The Essex Light Dragoons were there with its parent regiment, the 9th Cavalry. On Friday, June 13, 1862, Latane was killed by the enemy during a cavalry charge at Old Church, Hanover County, Virginia. His brother, John Latane, also with The Essex Dragoons as a lieutenant helped recover the body.

William D. Washington’s famous painting hangs in many

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homes throughout the country and is captioned, "The Burial of Latane". This, plus a few verses by John R. Thompson, the editor of the Southern Literary Messenger, canonizes his Memory.

FORT LOWRY

In early May, 1861, state engineers were ordered to make a survey of the lower Rappahannock for the purpose of establishing defensive water batteries. Lowry's Point, located about six miles down-river from Tappahannock, was selected because it was the narrowest and most difficult portion of the channel and could be best defended by the guns then available. Construction of the fort began in May under the direction of Major Thomas H. Williamson, later by Lieutenant James Keith Boswell, and still later by Captain Conway R. Howard, all engineers from the Virginia Militia, each serving separately.

302 slave and free negroes worked from May-October, 1861, constructing the parapet of the fort for a total of 3,869 days; free negroes were paid an average of .50¢ per day and slave owners were paid .70¢ per day; subsistence included. Workers came from Essex, Richmond, and Middlesex Counties. They were impressed into labor. Total labor cost of the fort was $2,250.55, the height of the parapet of the fort was 7½ feet; the thickness on the water side, 16 feet, and on the land side about 12 feet. The parapet was formed by extracting sections on marsh sod and then placing these sections onto the parapet in masonry form.

On June 15, 1861, Lee reported to Governor John Letcher of Virginia the defense of the Rappahannock was set with a 4 gun battery of 8 inch columbiad and 32 pounders. A columbiad could project a shell weighing 52 pounds and the 32 pounder, a shell weighing that much. Four additional cannon of the same type were added later and all these large coastal guns were rifled later.

A magazine was dug about ten feet deep in the center of the fort and lined with timber; a separate shell compartment was also dug.

Water was struck about 10 feet deep but sulphur content precluded its use for drinking; consequently, drinking water had to be maintained at the fort in kegs.

The heavy guns of the battery were under command of Lieutenant Henry Howard Lewis, already mentioned.

The military troops at the fort, stationed about 500 yards away from the battery with "Tent City" under the command of Major William N. Ward, previously noted. Major Ward not only commanded the troops at Fort Lowry but was their Chaplain as well. Orders were given to Ward in June, 1861 by General Holmes, commanding the district, to maintain the fort in constant readiness and fight to the last man; every craft must be hauled to and troops must not undress at night so that battle readiness could be employed.

The guns of the fort were manned by Company A, 55th Virginia Regiment of Infantry, known as the "Essex Artillery" under the command of Captain Evan Rice.

There was a hospital at the fort which was under the direction of Surgeon Henry Gresham; however, he was not appointed until September 16, 1861 and resigned in May, 1862; his successor was Dr. James H. Southall. Because the fort was located in a marshy area, considerable sickness occurred. During a period in March, 1862, 160 troops were confined to the hospital at one time, and on March 26, one soldier dropped dead while walking. An auxiliary hospital to the fort was located in Tappahannock and many of the troops were sent their for treatment.

The fort had several large barracks, capable of housing 8,000 troops, a headquarters building and picket station, 150 shanties and numerous tents. All batteries of this type needed land troops to defend them: The 55th Regiment of Infantry and Company F (Essex Light Dragoons), 9th Regiment of Cavalry were the units assigned to Fort Lowry and were either assigned there or at camps nearby: Camp Sullivan located one mile from Fort Lowry; Camp Byron located at Dunscliffe; Camp Field located near Tappahannock; Camp Saluda located in Middlesex County; Camp Ashby located at Urbanna and Camp Harmony Village, also located in Middlesex.

In March, 1862, General Holmes withdrew his troops from the Northern Neck and made the south side of the Rappahannock his defensive line. The enemy, of course, immediately took over the vacated area and this left Fort Lowry defenseless. Lee ordered the fort abandoned and troops moved to Caroline and Spotsylvania Counties. The guns of the fort were moved to Fredericksburg on March 27, 1862, using the steamer "Virginia" to pull the barge containing the cannon; three of the eight were lost overboard and should be presently on the bottom near the old fort.

Fort Lowry never fired a shot against the enemy because the enemy never came up-river that far while the fort was operational. President Lincoln was advised of the fort being abandoned and ordered its destruction. So, on April 14, 1862, six gunboats Jacob Bell, Satellite, Island Belle, Resolute, Reliance, and Piedmontesca, all opened in unison on Fort Lowry; no troops were present at the fort except for a few pickets who were scattered. A subsequent landing party by the navy burned the installation including hospital, barracks and headquarters building.

The Union Navy Squadron was under the command of Lieutenant E. P. McCrea, a Virginian who remained with the Union; he had several brothers who served with the Confederacy. The attacking Union Force consisted of converted steamer and/or ferry boats; they drew about 8 feet; length about 150 feet; had an average of two large cannon on each; and crew of about 30 each.

From a strategic standpoint the placement of water batteries would be more advantageous at the mouth of the river; this was attempted several times at the beginning, in 1861, at Gray's Point in Middlesex County and across the river at Cherry Point in Lancaster, but efforts were abandoned because cannon of sufficient caliber to command the channel could not be obtained.

After the burning of Fort Lowry, the installation functioned thereafter only in a limited capacity to the end of the war as a supply depot and as a picket station as well as temporary camp for passing troops. Fort Lowry remained the only "Water Battery" a permanent installation on the Rappahannock during the war.

THE FRENCH LADY

The date, Tuesday, June 18, 1861: residents of Tappahannock were thrilled to suddenly hear a flourish of martial music coming from the river's edge and then spying members of a brass band, followed by marching troops, all clad in bright but unusual uniforms, moving smartly up Prince Street to the Spirited Strains of "Dixie" and being led by a color bearer with the new Confederate

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and drill and await the release of its leader, the colonel. However, due to great length of time Zarvona was confined, the above company was consolidated with other Confederate commands, being assigned on August 16, 1861 to the 47th Virginia Regiment of Infantry as Company H. While Stationed at Tappahannock this Maryland Zouave Company was successful in recruiting 16 men during the period July 5-15, 1861. Records of Essex County Courthouse reflect on July 11, 1861 92 rations were furnished. The Maryland Zouaves by Wesley Fogg @ 0.40¢ per meal for a total of $36.80. Lieutenant Henry W. Daingerfield, the Quartermaster for Major Ward’s Essex and Middlesex Battalions, billed the CSA for the amount explaining the Commissary and Quartermaster Departments in Fredericksburg had failed to furnish the necessary supplies.

Colonel Thomas’ health was greatly impaired due to his long-time severe imprisonment and this precluded his return to active Confederate service. He died at the home of a brother in Southern Maryland in 1875; he was 42 years old.

RECRUITMENT CENTER

Tappahannock was a recruitment center during the war. As an example during the period May 21-July 24, 1861, four separate companies of troops entered Confederate service here. They were:

1) Company A (Essex Artillery), 55th Virginia Regiment of Infantry, entering service on May 21st the oath being administered by Major W. H. Kerr.

2) Company E (Westmoreland Greys), 55th Regiment, entering service on July 24th the oath being administered by Major William N. Ward.

3) Company F (Essex Sharpshooters), 55th Regiment, entering service on May 21st the oath being given by Major Kerr.

4) Company F (Essex Light Dragoons), 9th Virginia Regiment of Cavalry, oath given June 10 by Major Ward.

INLAND SEAPORT

Tappahannock during the war was an important inland seaport. Union records alone reflect the following ships based at Tappahannock, were captured on either April 19-20, 1862: Schooners — Sarah Ann, Sabine, Monterey, Falcon; Sloop — Reindeer.

THE RAPPAHANNOCK EXPEDITION

Now we come to the landings by Union Forces at Tappahannock. There were several. The first such invasion was part of The Rappahannock Expedition as referred to by the Union Navy.

On Monday, April 14, 1862, after the shelling and burning of Fort Lowry, the six attacking gunboats plded to Tappahannock and anchored. The commander of the squadron Lieutenant E. P. Mc Crea, USN, previously referred to, fired a blank shell over the town and hoisted a white flag. Townspeople were seen running in all directions, waving truce materials, and many left their homes open and exposed.

Since no authorities from the town met the ships with a similar truce flag, Lieutenant Mc Crea landed with an armed launch, still exhibiting the sign of truce. At the shore he was met only by overjoyed negroes and he sent for the town’s authorities. Three came, one being a Doctor Gordon. Mc Crea said the town would not be harmed but he would take possession until he left. Later, he hoisted the American Flag from one of the tallest buildings, Dr. Roane’s house, which had been temporarily abandoned. Offshore, there was loud cheering from the crews of the vessels in seeing the National Flag. One of the townspeople told Mc Crea the flag would be torn down as soon as the boats left and Mc Crea replied he would then give them six hours to leave town before he burned it. At Dr. Roane’s house, many important letters were found as well as a Confederate Army signal book.

One of the negroes told Mc Crea not to drink whiskey in the town because it might be poisoned. According to reports of townspeople, they knew Mc Crea was a Virginian who had four brothers serving with the Confederacy, and believed Mc Crea behaved in most cowardly manner, fearing there were troops lying in ambush to attack him. He and his men visited the hotel and helped themselves to drinks at the bar but asked several times if the drinks had not been poisoned. Several townspeople followed Mc Crea and his group around and were impertinent to them, Dr. Gordon stating, “if I were able I would kill every damn one of you where you stand.” Philip Lewis, assigned to Company F. Essex Light Dragoons, was in the area, mounted and armed, making reports and sending off couriers. He was seen doing this and the Yankees attempted to capture him. He escaped by having his horses leap a ditch, then a fence, and turning in his saddle, waved good-bye to the enemy.

About twenty minutes after the Yankees left the town, Dr. Gordon chastised the men present for not immediately tearing down the American Flag, stating, “I will find a lady who will take it down.” This obtained the desired response for a shamed, now brave male proceeded to the high roof, tore down the flag but in the process slipped and would have fallen if it not been for the rail at the roof’s edge.

A civilian reporter was present with this expedition and described Tappahannock as follows: “the town is very pretty situated on the left bank of the river, some fifty miles below Fredericksburg. It contains two churches, a jail, a hotel and a large steam saw-mill, and many handsome old mansions that are fast going to decay, like the rest of the old ancient towns of the revolution.”

The squadron of gunboats laid off Tappahannock all night in hopes of capturing ships coming down the river. Lieutenant Mc Crea was rewarded because the sloop, Reindeer, Under Captain Ailworth, was captured containing shad, oysters, and important letters with valuable information regarding troops present at Fredericksburg. The captain of the sloop and its crew made an escape by using a small boat and rowing to the North Shore.

This expedition by the Union’s Potomac Flotilla was the very first to advance up the Rappahannock as far as Tappahannock. The citizens of the town, though greatly alarmed by the prior shelling and burning of Fort Lowry, escaped unscathed.

TAPPAHANNOCK LANDING, MAY 30, 1864

The next recorded Union landing occurred on Monday, May 30, 1864 at 8:30 AM when a squadron of the Potomac Flotilla, including the ships, Currituck, Anacostia, Primrose and Satellite anchored off Tappahannock. Several cutters from these vessels landed and conducted a reconnaissance of the town. Apparantly acting on intelligence gained shore, the gunboats later

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banner floating majestically. This was a contingent of the Maryland Zouaves, having secretly crossed the Potomac, then the Rappahannock and on their way to Richmond to offer their services to the Confederacy. Their leader was Richard Thomas who was from a distinguished southern Maryland family, his uncle being Philip F. Thomas who was Maryland’s Governor in the 1850’s and his father a Maryland State Senator. This 28 year old Zouave Commander was a well traveled professional soldier. He had attended West Point for a short period but lust for travel and adventure overcame him and he dropped out of “The Point”. We next find him as a surveyor on the Western Frontier; he then participated in the campaign against the Chinese Pirates in the Far East and later served with General Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Great Italian Patriot, in his overthrow of the Bourbon Dictatorship. The idea of Thomas outfitting his Maryland troops in the Zouave uniform apparently evolved because of the like dress of Garibaldi’s soldiers.

In Tappahannock, the Zouave troops moved to their quarters at the Essex House and Thomas, desirous of paying his respects to the town’s ranking military officers, visited Major William N. Ward, CSA, at his residence, Mrs. Gray’s Boarding School. Members of the Ward family looked at Thomas in disbelieve as his Zouave uniform accentuated his unusual physical appearance: small in stature, dark complexioned, head shaven bald, and a scar ran down one cheek; however, his engaging personality and tall tales of adventure and danger soon won over the entire Ward family. He was accordingly invited for dinner and afterwards reciprocated by having the Zouave Band conduct a concert on the lawn which was attended by many townspeople.

Thomas was indeed a man of mystery and intrigue; eccentric but completely fearless. In less than two weeks he would become a national hero to the Southern Confederacy.

He had earlier visited Governor John Letcher of Virginia and presented a plan to capture a passenger steamer “St. Nicholas” running from Baltimore to Washington. The larger plan was to use this captured vessel to then capture the U.S.S. Pawnee, A formidable man-of-war operating on the Potomac and causing considerable difficulty for Confederate troops located on the South Side of the river. The plan was logical since it had been observed that the St. Nicholas was being used as the mail boat for the Pawnee and would run aside her in the night without being challenged. After consulting with experts, the Governor approved the plan.

One June 28, 1861, in late evening, the St. Nicholas left Baltimore on her regular run. In addition to her usual load of freight, there were a number of passengers, including a “french lady”, attired with heavy veil, speaking with a distinctive french accent, and using a fan to enhance her feminine charms; she travelled with several large trunks.

By the time the steamer had departed the dock at Point Lookout, Maryland, where the Potomac meets the bay, it was well past midnight. Suddenly, from the state room of the “french lady”, Thomas emerged with a shout, dressed in the flashing uniform of a Zouave, carrying a cutlass in one hand and a pistol in the other. This was the signal for his Confederates camouflaged aboard to go into action. They rushed into Thomas’ cabin, obtained weapons from the trunks and proceeded to capture the ship without resistance.

The final phase of the plan to capture the “Pawnee” did not materialize since she was absent from her usual station because of an irony of fate: she had sailed to Washington so officers and crew could attend the funeral of Commander James H. Ward, USN, killed by a Confederate sniper’s bullet on June 27, 1861 while aboard the USS Thomas Freeborn off Mathias Point, Potomac River. He was the first naval officer killed in the war. He had been instrumental in forming the Potomac Flotilla which had blockade responsibility for the Potomac and the Rappahannock and served as its commander from its formation, April 27, 1861 to his death.

This setback did not dampen the militant spirit of the new crew of the St. Nicholas for enroute to Fredericksburg, they captured in the bay the brig, Monticello, and schooners Mary Pierce and Margareet.

Thomas and crew were received at Fredericksburg as heroes and heroes. The St. Nicholas was renamed the CSS Tappahannock and was named the ship to supply and defend Fort Lowry. She was burned at Fredericksburg by Confederates to prevent capture in late March, 1862. Thomas was later commissioned a full colonel in the Virginia Militia and given permission to raise a regiment of Maryland Zouaves. he was to regret his disguise of “the french lady” as the Northern Press had a field day with this unusual ruse, referring to it as an unmanly act. Because of this, Thomas asked that his commission be in the name of Richard Thomas Zarvona, a name he used while serving with Garibaldi.

Colonel Zarvona’s luck ran out in early July, 1861 when he attempted to duplicate his feat on the Potomac. After the capture of the St. Nicholas, federal authorities naturally were very alert to any attempt by Confederates to repeat such a bold venture. Zarvona, ignoring the time interval and odds against success of a second such operation, boarded, this time in men’s clothes, the steamer Mary Washington out of Baltimore, but a short time later was recognized and captured before he could activate his plan. He was imprisoned, first at Fort Mc Henry and later at Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor. The Federal’s considered Zarvona a pirate and his prison life was very severe, being confined for the most part in total isolation.

He attempted escape three times, once while swimming boldly to the Long Island Shore where he was captured by a sentinel. The remarkable point here was that Zarvona did not know how to swim, having taken a number of tin cans which were securely corked and tied them around his waist. The Confederate Government interceded a number of times in an attempt to obtain better prison treatment for the colonel but with no success. Once the Federal Government threatened to hang him but this was negated after the Confederates countered with the threat to hang two Union officers of equal rank. The Confederates did, in fact, retaliate for Zarvona’s ill treatment by placing at hard labor two Federal officers who were in the penitentiary in Richmond.

Zarvona was released from prison on April 30, 1863, being exchanged for a Union Captain, a Lieutenant, and five privates held by the Confederates in Richmond.

We have gone somewhat astray from Tappahannock but now we return. The raising of the Regiment of Maryland Zouaves did not materialize because of the long confinement of its Colonel. However, one such company entered Confederate service in Richmond on July 4, 1861 with Captain William Walters as its commander. This company was later ordered to Tappahannock to recruit

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periodically shelled the woods behind the town. After this shelling, another landing party from the ships destroyed a large quantity of wheat by burning the building where it was located.

DRAPER'S RAID

THE PRINCIPAL INVASION OF TAPPANHANNOCK OCCURRED IN THE FAMOUS DRAPER RAID OF THE NORTHERN NECK.

In June, 1864, Colonel Alonzo G. Draper, USA, was the commander of the military base at Point Lookout, Maryland, as well as being in command of the 36th Regiment, U. S. Colored Troops, assigned there; this regiment was formed on February 4, 1864 from the 2nd N.C. Colored Infantry, and was assigned to participate in the Joint Army-Navy Expedition to the Northern Neck, June 11-21, 1864, known as Draper's Raid. Five hundred troops of this regiment, along with fifty cavalrymen, and a naval landing force of one hundred made up the expedition. The naval commander was Lieutenant Edward Hooker, USN, Commander of The USS Commodore Read of the Potomac Flotilla.

Although outside the Northern Neck area, Tappan hannock became the last target of the raid early on Sunday morning, June 19th, 1864. The purpose of the raid was to capture prisoners, collect cattle, horses, sheep; destroy boats, seines, nets; collect farming implements and rescue contrabands (slaves).

The expedition had assigned a number of gunboats of the Potomac Flotilla along with several army transports to store captured fruits of the raid. The troops were landed at Pope's Creek in Northumberland County on June 12th. A force of 150 soldiers and 12 cavalrymen was then detached with orders to proceed to Smith's Wharf on the Rappahannock and then down the Rappahannock side of the neck to Warsaw; there the main body of the troops, which had marched on Montross, would form a junction with the other troops at Warsaw on June 14th. From Warsaw, the entire force moved to Union Wharf, located a short distance up-river from Sharps. The purpose was to load the transports with captured goods. On June 16th Confederate Cavalry attacked the Federal ships at this wharf and fighting continued intermittently through the night on June 17th, Confederates with a force of about 300 renewed the attack; the Federals had a force ashore of about 150 and they, with great support from the ships' batteries were able to drive off the attackers.

Shortly after dark on Friday, June 17th, Union troops were being embarked aboard the vessels and as this was about completed the Confederate Cavalry made a charge at the wharf but the batteries of the gunboats were able to repel them.

By 2:00 AM, Saturday, June 18th, the ships moved from Union Wharf to Layton's Wharf, about eighteen miles above Tappahannock. Here the wharf needed but little repair and the troops were then landed with the idea they would march down to Tappahannock which would allow more space aboard the transports to store the captured goods. However, the troops ran into a large Confederate force which necessitated taking the troops back on the gunboats, along with their horses, as the transports had been filled by this time. The attacking force was driven back by the vessels' batteries.

At 4:00 AM, Sunday, June 19th, the ships began moving towards Tappahannock, arriving at 7:00 AM. Present were the Commodore Read, Jacob Bell, Fucksia, and the Thomas Freeborn. At about 3:00 PM this date Confederate Cavalry charged the Union Picketts shotted ashore but were repulsed by the guns of the USS Bell. The crews of the gunboats worked all nightembarking horses, cattle, and other captured supplies and the transports were so loaded that again the troops and horses had to be taken aboard the gunboats: This was completed by 5:00 AM, Monday, June 20th.

The raid was judged a success as between 400-500 head of cattle were obtained, nearly 200 horses, like number of sheep, several hundred contrabands, and a streamer load of farming implements. The Raid resulted in the following casualties: Union Army-two killed and two taken prisoners; Union Navy-one seriously wounded, one missing and two or three slightly wounded. Confederates: Two mortally wounded and fifteen captured.

FINAL RAID ON TAPPANHANNOCK

The final known Union landing at Tappahannock occurred as follows:

On March 13, 1865, the USS Delaware, a sidewheel steamer with crew of 57 and 3 cannon, under command of Captain J. H. Eldridge, landed a small force at Tappahannock, located and destroyed 8 small boats and one large flatboat which was being used as a ferry. The captain learned that a force of 80 cavalrymen had recently been in the vicinity, some of them leaving only a few minutes before the landing. Later this day the Delaware was joined by the USS Morse, also a sidewheel steamer with crew of 78 and 6 guns, under command of Captain George W. Hyde. At about 4:30 PM 20 cavalrymen were observed ready to cross Gordon's Creek (apparently Hoskins Creek) and the gunboats shelled them vigorously, driving them away; the Federals then shelled the bridge, destroying it and thereby cutting off the cavalry's communication with Fort Lowry.

In America's crucible of time, Tappahannock, with its magical three hundred years, clearly shares an important place. So a prominent part of this history occurred over a hundred years ago in the Great War for here was located, as now, The County Seat; here was located an important Confederate recruiting center; also, an important inland port and base for many vessels; located close to Fort Lowry, the only "Water Battery" on the Rappahannock; the object of many landings by Union forces; and home of many Confederate leaders. Today, as one walks along Prince Street and views the commanding monument featuring the lone Confederate soldier, there arises a mixed feeling of pride and pathos. The citizens of Tappahannock may feel reassured, however, as this soldier symbolically looks towards the Rappahannock, maintaining his constant vigil, like a mighty servant who never sleeps.

Minutes of The Society

The July meeting was held in the Essex Court House at 2:30 p.m. July 19, 1981, with our president, Mr. Charles W. H. Warner, presiding. The minutes of the April meeting were dispensed with as they appeared in the bulletin. Mr. Smith gave the Treasurer's report. It was suggested that our dues be raised to $5.00 for 1982. Mrs. Calvin Warfield made the motion, seconded by Miss Elva Powers and others, unanimously passed. Mrs. Jeannette

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Ellis announced the Refreshment Committee for today, Mrs. Wm. A. Wright, Chairman, Mrs. Emory L. Carlton, and Mrs. Robert Handley. Mr. Warner announced the Tri-Centennial Dinner on August 5, 1981, and stated that Tappahannock was a Port of Entry in 1680 and a population center and Benjamin Goodrich sold 50 acres to the Feoefes for the town site, March 25, 1682. Mrs. William Fleming brought in genealogical research papers on the Sale family and Mrs. Wright announced she had received from Mr. James E. Boulware, one of our members from Memphis, Tenn., papers concerning his family. Both of these papers will be filed in the Clerk's Office with the Society's historical data.

Mr. Warner then turned the meeting over to Mr. Calvin Warfield, Vice President and Program Chairman, who introduced our speaker, Dr. Ralph Brown Draughon, Jr. Dr. Draughon was born in Auburn, Alabama and received his B.A. in History at Auburn University, he later received his doctoral degree from the University of North Carolina, as well as a degree in Library Science from UNC. He served in the Navy and was a teaching fellow at the University of North Carolina, taught history at the University of Georgia and held several other positions involving history. He is now Historian for the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association at Stratford, with his office in the magnificent Jessie Ball duPont Memorial Library.

Dr. Draughon chose as his subject the Declaration of Independence, which he states is a living document which appeals to each new generation, that this declaration stresses that all men are created equal—is very controversial—today as it was when written, and the liberty it grants is very contagious and has had great impact on many countries in the world. Our State Department publishes this Declaration for the Chinese and it presents to this day, the problem of living up to the great philosophies contained therein. Ideas which have been beacon guides for all nations.

Dr. Draughon explained that Thomas Jefferson was a young member of the Committee selected to write this document and was allowed to do most of the writing because he was not involved in other activities at this time as were many of the other committee members like Richard Henry Lee, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Livingstone of New York who were already involved in so many other aspects of the formation of a young nation—such as The Articles of Confederation—trying to get all the separate colonies to act together. They were desperately trying to win many of the signers from their loyalty to the King and England.

Dr Draughon made this historical era live again for us in a very interesting way.

Following the program, the members adjourned to the Woman's Club next door for delicious refreshments and a delightful social hour.

ST. MARGARET'S HALL and BROCKENBROUGH HOUSE were the subject of interesting talks given at the fall meeting of the Essex County Historical Society, Sunday afternoon, October 18, 1981. Our president, Mr. Charles W. H. Warner, presided and welcomed all members and guests and thanked Miss Woolfolk for allowing us to meet in the Chapel of St. Margaret's Hall. The president noted that the School has three historic landmark houses on its campus and is one of the very few places boasting so many. Miss Woolfolk gave a very warm welcome to the group.

Mr. John Halle proposed that the society explore the idea of getting out a map of the old homes of the county. She showed a similar map done in King William County. The Society endorsed the proposal and suggested persons who might work on the project. Mr. Warner said such a map would be included in the History of Essex which is being written under the auspices of the Tricentennial Commission with Mr. Warner editing the book.

Dr. Calvin Warfield, vice president of the society, presented President Warner and his bride, the former Anne Hagerty Harp, with a gift of two antique silver spoons engraved with a W from the Society, which was received with much appreciation from both. Dr. Warfield then presented Mrs. William A. Wright and Mrs. Elizabeth Wise Blair who gave the history of the Brockenbrough nicknamed "B" house by the girls, which is the oldest of the three historic buildings, and which has been her home at the school for the past 15 years. Mrs. Wright outlined the history of St. Margaret's Hall with emphasis on the Wrights who owned it for over forty years before its being sold to the Church for the school. Time did not allow for a detailed history of the Anderton House, but it will be included later.

President Warner asked for both papers to be used in the Historical Society bulletin so that interested persons may obtain these fine papers when the spring bulletin is published.

Following the meeting the members and guests assembled in the Reception Suite on the first floor of St. Margaret's Hall for refreshments. Miss Woolfolk showed a number of items acquired in recent years, most of them beautiful antiques. The headmistress's office is nearing completion of a redecorating project under the direction of Austin Chinn who is an Interior Decorator with a firm in New York.

Delicious refreshments were served by the Hostesses Committee, Mrs. Nancy Tuck Ball, Chairman, Mrs. Lawrence Andrews, and Mrs. John Raines assisting, they were also assisted and helped in many ways by Mrs. Gertrude Atkinson, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, at the School and one of our members. Everyone enjoyed a delightful social hour.

ANNE T. WRIGHT, Secretary

Officers of the Society
President ............... MR. CHARLES W. H. WARNER
Vice President ........ MR. CALVIN N. WARFIELD
Treasurer ............... MR. LUDWELL SMITHERS
Secretary ............... MRS. WILLIAM A. WRIGHT

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE
Chairman, Mr. Charles W. H. Warner; Members; Mrs. William A. Wright, Mrs. J. M. Evans, Mrs. Charles N. DeShazo.

Meetings are held quarterly in the Essex Court House, in an historic home or church of the County. Dues are $5.00 per year. For copies of publications send $1.00 to Mrs. J. M. Evans, Box 8, Tappahannock, Virginia.