



15th Regimental Report

Camp #51 Lexington County, S.C.
Sons of Confederate Veterans



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**Winner of the S. A. Cunningham Newsletter Award,
Camps with over 50 members.
2002 SCV National Convention - Memphis Tennessee**

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Palmetto Level First Place
2002 South Carolina SCV State Convention - Aiken**

Mrs. Alberta Martin

The Last Confederate Widow

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**15th Regiment SC
Vols
P.O. Box 84381
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29073**



The Old Man's Darling

By Matthew Linton Chancey

Crouching in a muddy Virginia trench, Pvt. William Jasper Martin, hot, wet and far from home, shivered with fever and contemplated his prospects. The backwoods 18 year-old boy represented the shattered remnants of an army that had captivated the world. The Army of Northern Virginia had started with a few local militias in fancy uniforms and smoothbore muskets, and within two years had earned an everlasting legacy of valor which would fill thousands of books and millions of hearts the world over. They came from all over the South: from the well-bred, tidewater Virginia Cavalier to the ruddy Scottish Presbyterian of the Southern Highlands. These men represented the South united and the hope of the young confederation of American States which had banded together—as their fathers and grandfathers had—to form a government of their own. Now in the summer of 1864, the South's greatest army was slowly sinking into the mire around Petersburg and into history.

Today, the American Civil War is considered by most to be ancient history. Aside from your core group of history buffs, many Americans have trouble placing the War Between the States within the right century, let alone understanding the significance of why it was fought.

However, The War Between the States did not take place that long ago. It is true that the technological wonders of the 20th century have created a seemingly insurmountable wall between the Old South and the New. But the Old South is not that old. There are people still living today whose grandfathers fought in America's greatest and most devastating war. There are even those living who had fathers marching under Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson. But there is one individual connected to the Old South in a way in which none other can boast. Pvt. William Jasper Martin's wife still lives. Mrs. Alberta Martin (92) is the last known living widow of a Confederate veteran.

If you want to visit "Miz" Alberta, you will not find her living on a plantation estate in Natchez, Mississippi, or Savannah, Georgia, but in a small assisted living facility in Elba, Alabama. Miz Alberta has been called "the last link to Dixie" because to meet her is to meet history face-to-face. Although she never lived in the 19th century, her connection to Pvt. W.J. Martin and the Confederacy is special and unique. Since 1996, Miz Alberta has received the "Alabama State Pension for the Widows of Confederate Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines." Her story is one of two centuries, two worlds, two societies, two political philosophies and two nations^¾ all intersecting in the life of one truly remarkable lady.

Humble Beginnings

Miz Alberta was born Alberta Stewart on December 4, 1906, down in a little hollow by a sawmill at a place called Dannely's Crossroads in Coffee County, Alabama. Today, although the sawmill is long gone, Dannely's Crossroads looks much like it did in 1906—a simple intersection surrounded by cotton and peanut fields. An old filling sta-

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New in the Camp Store
Proceeds go to the Camp Projects Fund

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The History of **Bill Yopp**

Laurens County was created December 10, 1807 from Wilkinson County. It was home of many slaves. In most homes Negroes were treated with kindness and generosity. They acted as servants in their master's homes. In 1845 the County had a population of 3,285 whites and 2,760 blacks. There was a large Negro population, but only a few slave owners who were mostly large plantation operators. They made up a great portion of the wealth of Laurens County in the early to mid 1800's.

In the History of Bill Yopp a relationship between the slave and slave owner is demonstrated. Bill Yopp was born on one of the largest plantations in Laurens County, which was owned by Jeremiah Yopp. He was the fourth of eight children. It was a custom on the plantations to choose the brighter boys and girls for the butlers, maids, and valets. When Bill was seven, he became the constant companion of Jeremiah's son, Thomas McCall Yopp. Bill accompanied Thomas everywhere, even fishing and hunting. As a boy, Bill, held the horses and acted as assistant cook. Bill had whatever his master had, venison, trout, coffee, bread, syrup and cakes. Over time the boys developed a closeness between them. Also, Thomas Yopp would visit the servant's cabins at night, usually accompanied by Bill, to check on their well being.

The religious education of the slaves was not neglected. The Yopp and adjoining plantations set aside a part of the neighborhood church for blacks. They were invited to attend every religious service. Other plantation owners built chapels and employed clergy for their slaves.

On January 16 1861, Jeremiah Yopp, attended the Convention of Secession at the capital in Milledgeville. The people of Laurens County agreed to side with the Cooperationists who wanted to remain in the Union. Another plantation owner, Dr. Nathan Tucker voted to remain in the Union. Yopp voted with the majority to secede from the Union.

The Blackshear Guards were the first company of Confederate Soldiers in Laurens County. They were organized on July 9, 1861. Later the company became a part of the 14th Georgia Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Thomas Yopp was elected as the First Lieutenant, and nine days later he was promoted to



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tion sits on the corner, representing the only commercial establishment in the community; and scattered here and there are a few house trailers and the remains of old barns and sharecropper homes.

Miz Alberta's parents, like many folks in the rural South at that time, were sharecroppers who spent their lives moving from field to field, planting and picking under the steamy southern sky. "Back then times was hard," comments Miz Alberta, "Back in the olden times, we lived poor. Everything was cheap, but you had no money. It don't seem like nothin's like it use to be. Seems like ever'thing has got modern."

Folks alive today who grew up as sharecroppers will tell you that the arrangement usually resulted in farmer and field hand getting the essentials of life, but not much more. The better the soil in a particular field, the better the crop yield—which translated into greater profits for the sharecropper. Consequently, the Stewarts moved nearly every year, sometimes just across the street to work in an adjacent field.

Although modern family portraits usually picture family members neatly groomed and in comfortable living quarters, the only known picture of the Stewart family shows everyone in a cotton field—little cotton sacks hanging around the tiny bodies of the children. "Before we were old enough to pick, they would put us in a cotton basket and take us out to the field with 'em. They would hang 24-pound flour sacks around our necks. I started pickin' cotton just as soon as I could wear that sack. When we'd get that little ol' cotton sack full, we emptied it into our mama or daddy's sack. We shook peanuts, stacked peanuts, hoed peanuts, hoed cotton and picked up roots where they'd clear a patch ...for plantin' next year. It was *hard* work."

Even though the Stewarts and most of their neighbors were dirt poor, Miz Alberta still remembers some of the good times they had down on the farm. Every 4th of July, ol' Doc Donaldson, who owned many of the fields in the area, would have a big Independence Day dinner where all his hands and anybody else who wanted to come could spend the day eating and playing games. Mr. Stewart loved to dance, and, according to Miz Alberta, "He could play the fiddle right smart." He decided to throw a party one day for all the neighbors. So they cleared the furniture and beds out of one room and had a big dance. Miz Alberta remembers that the guests spit tobacco juice all over the floor, and her daddy promised never to host another indoor dance again. Such was life on the red dirt roads in Curtis, Alabama.

With the good times came some bad as well. When Alberta was 11 years old, her mother died after a long, painful battle with cancer. In 1918, Alberta's brother, A.J., went off to war in France for Uncle Sam. Shortly after A.J. shipped out, so did the rest of the Stewarts. Mr. Stewart decided to move his family to a place that might have been as distant as Europe as far as the children were concerned—Tallassee, Alabama (around 100 miles from Curtis).

It was in Tallassee that Alberta married her first husband, Howard Farrow, in a little

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church on a street corner. Mr. Farrow made his living driving a taxi cab. While she was pregnant with their first child, Miz Alberta worked 12 hours a day in a cotton mill until her clothes could no longer hide her condition. Shortly before their son, Harold, was born, Mr. Farrow abandoned his young, pregnant wife. Matters only worsened. When Harold was only six months old, his father burned to death in a violent car accident. After Howard's death, Alberta and her father moved back south, this time outside of Opp, Alabama, in Covington County. They moved in with Alberta's half-brother and his family. Living conditions were cramped in the little house, and Miz Alberta would periodically take Harold out for some fresh air in the front yard. The house was surrounded by a picket fence, and it was at this fence line that Miz Alberta remembers seeing an old man frequently passing by on his way to town. Unbeknownst to her, this particular old man had passed the house for reasons other than to meet some old war buddies at the corner store for a game of dominoes.

Mr. Martin

Little is known of the early history of Pvt. W.J. Martin. He was born in Macon County, Georgia in December 1845, but spent most of his life in the Covington County area. W. J. joined the Confederate army in May, 1864. He fell in with Company K of the 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment, which at the time was involved in the siege of Petersburg and action around Richmond. As for the rest of his War record, confusion abounds, since there were three or four W. Martins in the 4th Alabama Infantry, including two in company K. It appears that several records have also been commingled.

What happened after Pvt. Martin arrived in Petersburg is sketchy. He took part in the Howlett's House skirmish near Richmond and was eventually hospitalized with Rubella. Some records list a William Martin as a deserter, but that William Martin was recorded as being born in Alabama. William Jasper Martin was born in Georgia. The William Martin who was listed as a deserter joined the Army when he was 16. William Jasper Martin joined when he was 18. To add to the confusion, when W.J. was in the hospital, some of his comrades reported him dead.

Despite the ambiguity of the official record, Pvt. Martin later convinced the State of Alabama that he was eligible for the Confederate veterans' pension through the production of witnesses testifying to his military service. Additionally, the War Department could find no evidence in 1920 that William Jasper Martin was a deserter. Mr. Martin, like so many other Alabama Confederate veterans, applied for a pension late in life—as one's net worth had to be \$400.00 or less to be eligible.

We may never know for sure whether W.J. was a deserter or not, but we do know that veteran Pvt. Martin was a true Confederate at heart. Miz Alberta remembers that he made an effort to attend every annual reunion of the United Confederate Veterans in Montgomery. "Mr. Martin," as Alberta called him, had changed considerably since his military days—at least physically. The sounds of battle long since faded, the old warrior

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was in his eighties now. But his elderly frame hid a youthful spirit.

Their courtship was brief—just a few conversations over the fence rail. He asked; she consented. Mr. Martin then had to ask Mr. Stewart for his daughter's hand. Mr. Stewart gave his consent. Although it was an unusual match, he had little of which to complain. Mr. Martin was a sober man, and his generous pension of \$50.00 a month would give Alberta and Harold a good life.

The wedding was scheduled for Saturday, December 10, 1927. W.J. was nearly 82; Miz Alberta had just turned 21. It may be safe to assume that never had the town of Opp heard such a story. This was to be a most abnormal marriage, and the gossip flowed freely. Mrs. Martin went to town and bought herself a blue dress with a floral design in front extending from the neckline down to the hem. Mr. Martin wore a dress shirt and sport coat. They were married at the courthouse in Andalusia, the Covington County seat. When asked if she loved him, Miz Alberta stated that her marriage to W.J. was not based on the type of love found between two young people, but on mutual respect and need. Both wanted companionship and support—a young widow with a baby to look after, and an old man who needed someone to take care of him.

The uneventful wedding concluded, Mr. Martin took his new bride home to meet the family. Mr. Martin lived with one of his sons (from an earlier marriage) and his family. Thus the peculiar wedding gave way to a *very* peculiar honeymoon when the new Mr. and Mrs. Martin spent their first night together in the same bedroom with four other family members. Needless to say, Miz Alberta remembers that "after that first weekend, we got out of that place and found us our own home in town."

No sooner had the gossip died down in Opp when it was announced that Mrs. Martin would be expecting her second child. Ten months after the marriage, Willie was born. Mr. Martin was very proud of his little boy. He would periodically take him into town, carrying the lad on his shoulders to show off his prize.

Remembering the War

Mr. Martin never talked very much to his young wife about his service with the 4th Alabama. One of the few things she remembers is his complaining about how hungry he was and how on passing a field, he would dig frantically to find a potato or something left from the harvest. The grim memories of trench warfare also were related. Mr. Martin told Alberta about how he and his messmates would constantly throw firewood, blankets, and anything else on the floor of the trench in order to stay out of the mud. He also confided to Miz Alberta that Union men had tried to get him to enlist and serve Abe Lincoln's army—a proposition he flatly refused.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin's marriage was brief, lasting only 4 1/2 years. During the 1920s and '30s, Pvt. Martin and his Confederate comrades began slipping into eternity at an ever-increasing rate. His funeral was very simple and without pageantry. Today, be-

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neath a large cedar tree in the Cool Springs Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery in Opp, Alabama, a simple VA marker identifies his grave. Today, when asked why she married a man so much older than herself, Miz Alberta just smiles and says, "It's better to be an old man's darlin' than a young man's slave!"

Two months after Mr. Martin's death, Alberta married again, this time to Mr. Charlie Martin. Charlie happened was the grandson of W.J. Martin from his first marriage, which had taken place over 50 years earlier. By this time, the folks in Opp had seen just about everything. At first, the local clergy were not sure how to handle the marriage, so Charlie and Alberta were temporarily estranged from their church. But upon further study of the Scripture, it was agreed that the Martins were not committing sin, and the couple was welcomed back into fellowship.

In 1936 the Martins moved to Elba, where they spent most of their life together. The two were married for over 50 years until Mr. Martin's death in 1983. After Charlie died, Miz Alberta settled down for permanent widowhood. She led a quiet life, playing bingo at the local Senior Citizens Center and attending church with her friends. Every now and again someone would ask her about her Confederate husband, but for the most part Miz Alberta's past remained largely unknown. That is until Daisy Wilson Cave, supposedly the "last known living Confederate widow" died around 1990.

The overlooked widow.

In the Spring of 1996 when the Pvt. William Rufus Painter Camp # 1719 realized who they had in their back yard, Dr. Ken Chancey, a visiting SCV member from the Col. William C. Oates Camp #809, Dothan, Alabama, volunteered to visit Miz. Alberta and see if the SCV could offer any assistance to her. After driving around Elba trying to find the right street, he finally received a police escort to her house. Miz Alberta was pleased as always to have visitors and listened intently as Dr. Chancey asked her questions about her needs. She made two requests to the doctor: One was that he help her receive the recognition to which she believed she was entitled for marrying into history. She modestly stated that she had never done anything all that important in her life, but she was the last Confederate widow. The second request was that the SCV look into her eligibility for a Confederate pension. After receiving assurance from Dr. Chancey that he would do his best, the two said their good-byes.

On to Richmond!

In 1996, the SCV held its 100th anniversary convention in Richmond, Virginia, at the majestic *Jefferson Hotel*. Men from all over the country gathered for the opening session of the Convention. SCV members could be easily identified—their Sunday suits glittered with heritage metals and Bonnie Blue lapel pins. The convention promised to be the one of the most memorable in SCV history.

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In the main ballroom the 5th Alabama Infantry Band played Southern music with passion, and the stage was draped with a huge Confederate Battle Flag. After the ceremonies began, the Commander-in-Chief of the SCV announced that they had a special guest among them. "Men, can you believe it? We still have one with us!" He then introduced Alberta Martin as the last known living widow of a Confederate veteran, and the brand new recipient of the "Alabama State Pension for the Widows of Confederate Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines." Mrs. Martin was slowly wheeled down the aisle by Dr. Chancey. As she passed, whispers could be heard, "That's the widow...that's her, boys." The men burst into a rousing ovation while Miz Alberta, with both hands, began throwing kisses. This provoked the men to more intense applause and some were observed weeping, as they no doubt realized the special connection this 89-year-old woman had to their own Confederate heritage.

With the applause and rebel yells continuing, Miz Alberta was asked if she would like to say anything. She told the men that she loved them and thanked them for all they had done for her. With that, the ovations and rebel yells started up again. This was the largest and warmest reception Mrs. Martin had ever received in her life.

Miz Alberta has since been to numerous reenactments, Confederate grave dedications, a funeral for an unknown Gettysburg casualty, a meeting with a Union veteran's widow, dedication of the Jefferson Davis Presidential Library, several more SCV annual conventions, and the recent Confederate Flag rally in Columbia, S.C.. Who would have thought that Fate would have it that a little old woman, who grew up dirt poor in southeast Alabama, would become the most unique direct link to an old civilization that has endeared the hearts of millions? Alberta Martin's life is a silent reminder to us not to get so caught up in "progress" that we forget the important lessons and experiences from the past.

The seeds of her unique legacy have apparently fallen on fertile ground, for in the last ten years, Confederate heritage groups have mushroomed in the North and South. Never since the end of Reconstruction has there been such a renewed interest in what it means to be Southern and a descendant of a Confederate soldier, sailor, or marine. With this movement is developing a common icon—not of a masculine reenactor in his dress grays, or a suave politician speaking on State's Rights—but of a little old widow from Elba, Alabama, waving a Confederate Battle Flag and blowing kisses to descendants of men who fought along with her late husband for the cause of Southern independence.

Ol' times there are not forgotten...

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<http://lastconfederatewidow.com/>

Confederate Letters of Affection

As our wives, girlfriends, and others have reminded us, the month of February is the month that we show to our special lady what she means to us. This was also true during the war then as it is with our troops around the world today. I am sure that our own Camp members who were in the service are well aware of how important these letters were to them as they also were to our ancestors.

Brandy Station,
Sunday night, Nov. 1 [1863]

My dear Mollie

I recd a letter today from a very handsome lady to play cupid. Although not accompanied by her likeness yet her image was so indelibly impressed upon my mind that the likeness itself could not recall the features more vividly than they are impressed. I first met her in a village in Western Va when I was about 17 years old and she 8. I afterwards saw her frequently and occasionally was in her company, and notwithstanding the disparity of our ages, I became so favorably impressed with her fair face and gentle manners that I frequently said to myself that I wished she was older or I younger.



In 3 to 4 years she had grown so much that the disparity in age seemed to grow less. Never did a lady witness the budding of a flower with more requisite pleasure than did I the budding of that pretty little girl into womanhood. She made much of my thoughts while in Mexico and more upon my return home. While at the University of Va., I not infrequently found my thoughts wandering from the dry textbook to contemplate by the aid of memory the features and form of this little girl.

After I completed my studies, I traveled in the west and expected to find a home in some western state, but not finding a place to suit me, together with the persuasions of that fair face, induced me to return. I entered, as you know, actively into the pursuit of my profession with the determination to make at least a fair reputation and tried to withdraw my thought from everything else, but I found this little fairy constantly and pleasantly intruding into all my plans, whether of pleasure or interest. At this period she met me politely and respectfully but seemed to grow more distant, coy & reserved, so that I frequently thought that even the ordinary attentions of common politeness & courtesy were no special source of pleasure to her. In a few instances when she has arrived at about the age of 15 this shyness and reserve seemed to be forgotten, and I would pass an hour or two in the enjoyment of her company with great pleasure to myself and I imagined with at least satisfaction, if not enjoyment, to her. I began to think that my happiness was identified with hers. I began to pay her special visits or at least seek opportunities by which I might be in her company. I sought her society on pleasure rides and thought it not a hardship to ride 65 miles in 24 hours if part of the time might be spent with her. She always exhibited or observed the decorum of modest reserve which might be construed into neither encouragement nor discouragement.

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After the deliberation & reflection which I thought due to a matter which involved my happiness for life, I felt that her destiny and mine were probably intended to be united, and that all the adverse counsel which I could give myself could bring no objections. I felt that I ought both as a matter of duty and happiness give my whole life to her, who for 9 years had my attention and devotion, though concealed love.

After a few little billets and interviews, and with a full declaration of the love I desired to bestow, I received a measured and loving response and was made most happy in the anticipation of the celebration of the nuptials fixed at some 6 months hence. This time glided nicely & happily, though not too rapidly, away from me. The hours of leisure were spent with her and my visits were always welcomed with that cordial welcome, that maiden modesty, so much to be admired. 'Tis true that on one occasion she did rest her elbow upon my knee and look with confidential pleasure in my face and made me realize that indeed I had her whole heart.

Suffice it to say, the happy day of our marriage arrived and since then, hours, days, and years of time, confidence & happiness passed rapidly away, and only to make us feel that happy as were the hours of youthful days, they compare not with those of later years and perhaps even these may not be equal to that which is in reserve for us.

I don't know how much pleasure it affords you to go over these days of the past, but to me they will ever be remembered as days of felicity. And how happy the thought that years increase the affection & esteem we have for each other to love & be loved. May it ever be so, and may I ever be a husband worthy of your warmest affections. May I make you happy and in so doing be made happy in return. A sweet kiss and embrace to your greeting.

But maybe you will say it looks ridiculous to see a man getting gray-haired to be writing love letters, so I will use the remnant of my paper otherwise...

Yours affectionately,
H Black

Camp near Lanjer, Ark.
May 10th 1863.

My Dear Amanda,

It has been a long time since I had an opportunity of writing to you, and I gladly avail myself of the present opportunity. I am not certain that I will have a chance of sending this but I will write a few lines any how and try and get it off to let you know that I am among the living.

We have been on a raid into Ms. but I have not time to give you the particulars of our trip. I will write in a few days if I can get a chance to send it and write you a long one. I just came off of picket and found the boys all writing to send by a man that has been discharged who is going to start home this morning. I was quite sick three or four days while in Mo. but have entirely recovered. We captured a good many prisoners while in Mo. and killed a good many. We went up as high as Jackson 8 or 10 miles above Cape Girardeau.

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We fought them nearly all day at the Cape on Sunday two weeks ago today. The yanks boasted that we would never get back to Ark but they were badly mistaken, for we are back again and have sustained but very light loss, we never lost a man out of our company and only one or two out of the regt. I wish I had time to give you a full description of our trip. It would be very interesting to you I know; but you will have to put up with this little scrawl for the present. I am in hopes that I will get a whole package of letters from you in a few days. I never wanted to see you half as bad in all my life as I do now. I would give anything in the world to see you and the children. I have no idea when I will have that pleasure. We can't get any news here - do not know what is going on in the outside world. The boys will all write as soon as they get a chance to send them off.



We will remain in this vicinity, I expect for some time to recruit our horses. Our horses are sadly worsted. We found plenty to eat and to feed our horses on in Mo but hardly even had time to feed or eat as we traveled almost insesantly night and day. We could get any amount of bacon of the very best kind at 10 cts and every thing else in proportion.

I must close for fear I do not get to send my letter off. Write often I will get them some time. I will write every chance, do not be uneasy when you do not get letters, for when we are scouting around as we have been it is impossible to write or to send them off if we did write. Give my love to the old Lady and all the friends. My love and a thousand kisses to my own sweet Amanda and our little boys. How my heart yearns for thou that are so near and dear to me. Goodbye my own sweet wife, for the present. Direct to Little Rock as ---.

As ever your devoted and loving Husband,
J.C. Morris

<http://spec.lib.vt.edu/cwlove/cwlove.html>

February Speaker Dr. Jonathan Leader State Archeologist

Friend of Camp 51 and the SCV, Dr. Leader will be speaking this month on the work that he and others are doing in Florence, in relation to the Florence Stockade.

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Captain. Private Bill wanted to join Captain Yopp, so he enlisted in the Blackshear Guards as the company drummer. In those days, the drummer marched in front of the soldiers going into the battle. The troops went to Atlanta for training and then to Lynchburg, Virginia. They were sent to West Virginia in August where fought under the command of General John B. Floyd. General Robert E. Lee was in overall command of the West Virginia forces.

Bill was given the nickname "Ten Cent Bill", because he shined the shoes of the men in the Regiment and performed other duties for ten cents. He always charged that amount no matter what the duty was. Bill had more money than the other soldiers. He said they never spoke unkind words to him. The soldiers taught him to read and write and when he was sick, they took as good care of him as possible. When Bill became homesick, Thomas paid for his trip home. After a short stay at home, Bill realized his place was back in Virginia with Thomas Yopp. The company became part of the Army of Northern Virginia in the winter of 1861.

Bill stayed as near to Thomas Yopp, as he could. When Captain Yopp was wounded in the shoulder at Battle of Seven Pines in Virginia, Bill went with him to the hospital. They returned to Laurens County while Captain Yopp recovered from his injury. In the fall of 1862, they went back to join their troops. At Fredericksburg Captain Yopp was knocked unconscious when a shell burst over him. Bill stayed by his side again. He stayed at his side all through the war. When he recovered Capt. Yopp, was reassigned to the Navy, and Bill was not allowed to go. Bill surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. When the war was over, Bill was sent home a free man.

Bill officially took the last name Yopp, though he was still known as "Ten Cent Bill". The days of reconstruction created hard times for both blacks and whites. "Ten Cent Bill worked at the Yopp Plantation along with his brother. In 1870 Bill left Laurens County and went to Macon. He worked as a bellboy at the Brown House in Macon, a porter in an Albany Hotel in New York, was a servant to a family in California, and was a waiter on railroad dining cars. He served ten years as a porter on the private car of a railway president. Then he worked on a Navy collier and at Camp Wheeler. His varied career led him around the United States and the world.

In his later years, Bill returned to Georgia to find his former master Thomas McCall Yopp destitute and in poor health. Captain Yopp now over eighty years old was moving into the Confederate Soldier's Home near Atlanta. Bill Yopp visited the home often. He collected money to help the soldiers at Christmas. The Confederate Veterans were so appreciative of his help that they gathered money and awarded Bill a medal, which was presented to him in March 1920. Earlier that year in January, the board of trustees voted to allow Bill to stay at the Home for as long as he lived. At the death of Captain Yopp, 92, Bill made an address expressing his admiration of the kind and generous disposition of his old master and the respect of each other.

Bill died on June 3, 1936 and was buried in the Confederate Cemetery at Marietta, Georgia. His former master, Captain Thomas McCall Yopp was also buried there. Bill Yopp was the only black person buried in the cemetery. The state of Georgia provided his gravestone, that reads: DRUMMER BILL YOPP, CO. H, 14TH GA.INF.,C.S.A.

http://bridges.nlamerica.com/wlhs/us-2000/bill_yopp.htm

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Black Confederates

Why haven't we heard more about them? National Park Service historian, Ed Bearrs, stated, "I don't want to call it a conspiracy to ignore the role of Blacks both above and below the Mason-Dixon line, but it was definitely a tendency, which began around 1910." Historian, Erwin L. Jordan, Jr., calls it a "cover-up" which started back in 1865. He writes, "During my research, I came across instances where Black men stated they were soldiers, but you can plainly see where 'soldier' is crossed out and 'body servant' inserted, or 'teamster' on pension applications." Another black historian, Roland Young, says he is not surprised that blacks fought. He explains that "...some, if not most, Black southerners would support their country" and that by doing so they were "demonstrating it's possible to hate the system of slavery and love one's country." This is the very same reaction that most African Americans showed during the American Revolution, where they fought for the colonies, even though the British offered them freedom if they fought for them.

It has been estimated that over 65,000 Southern blacks were in the Confederate ranks. Over 13,000 of these, "saw the elephant" also known as meeting the enemy in combat. These Black Confederates included both slave and free. The Confederate Congress did not approve blacks to be officially enlisted as soldiers (except as musicians), until late in the war. But in the ranks it was a different story. Many Confederate officers did not obey the mandates of politicians, they frequently enlisted blacks with the simple criteria; "Will you fight?" Historian Ervin Jordan, explains that "biracial units" were frequently organized "by local Confederate and State militia Commanders in response to immediate threats in the form of Union raids...". Dr. Leonard Haynes, an African-American professor at Southern University, stated, "When you eliminate the black Confederate soldier, you've eliminated the history of the South."

1. The "Richmond Howitzers" were partially manned by black militiamen. They saw action at 1st Manassas (or 1st Battle of Bull Run) where they operated battery no. 2. In addition two black "regiments", one free and one slave, participated in the battle on behalf of the South. "Many colored people were killed in the action", recorded John Parker, a former slave.
2. At least one Black Confederate was a non-commissioned officer. James Washington, Co. D 34th Texas Cavalry, "Terrell's Texas Cavalry" became it's 3rd Sergeant. In comparison, The highest-ranking Black Union soldier during the war was a Sergeant Major.
3. Free black musicians, cooks, soldiers and teamsters earned the same pay as white confederate privates. This was not the case in the Union army where blacks did not receive equal pay. At the Confederate Buffalo Forge in Rockbridge County, Virginia, skilled black workers "earned on average three times the wages of white Confederate soldiers and more than most Confederate army officers (\$350-\$600 a year).
4. Dr. Lewis Steiner, Chief Inspector of the United States Sanitary Commission while observing Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's occupation of Frederick, Maryland, in 1862: "Over 3,000 Negroes must be included in this number [Confederate troops]. These were clad in all kinds of uniforms, not only in cast-off or captured United States uniforms, but in coats with Southern buttons, State buttons, etc. These were shabby, but not shabbier or seedier than those worn by white men in the rebel ranks. Most of the Negroes had arms, rifles, muskets, sabers, bowie-knives, dirks, etc., and were manifestly an integral portion of the Southern Confederate Army."

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5. Frederick Douglas reported, "There are at the present moment many Colored men in the Confederate Army doing duty not only as cooks, servants and laborers, but real soldiers, having musket on their shoulders, and bullets in their pockets, ready to shoot down any loyal troops and do all that soldiers may do to destroy the Federal government and build up that of the rebels."



6. Black and white militiamen returned heavy fire on Union troops at the Battle of Griswoldsville (near Macon, GA). Approximately 600 boys and elderly men were killed in this skirmish.

7. In 1864, President Jefferson Davis approved a plan that proposed the emancipation of slaves, in return for the official recognition of the Confederacy by Britain and France. France showed interest but Britain refused.

8. The Jackson Battalion included two companies of black soldiers. They saw combat at Petersburg under Col. Shipp. "My

men acted with utmost promptness and goodwill...Allow me to state sir that they behaved in an extraordinary acceptable manner."

9. Recently the National Park Service, with a recent discovery, recognized that blacks were asked to help defend the city of Petersburg, Virginia and were offered their freedom if they did so. Regardless of their official classification, black Americans performed support functions that in today's army many would be classified as official military service. The successes of white Confederate troops in battle, could only have been achieved with the support these loyal black Southerners.

10. Confederate General John B. Gordon (Army of Northern Virginia) reported that all of his troops were in favor of Colored troops and that it's adoption would have "greatly encouraged the army". Gen. Lee was anxious to receive regiments of black soldiers. The Richmond Sentinel reported on 24 Mar 1864, "None... will deny that our servants are more worthy of respect than the motley hordes, which come against us." "Bad faith [to black Confederates] must be avoided as an indelible dishonor."

11. In March 1865, Judah P. Benjamin, Confederate Secretary Of State, promised freedom for blacks that served from the State of Virginia. Authority for this was finally received from the State of Virginia and on April 1st 1865, \$100 bounties were offered to black soldiers. Benjamin exclaimed, "Let us say to every Negro who wants to go into the ranks, go and fight, and you are free...Fight for your masters and you shall

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have your freedom.” Confederate Officers were ordered to treat them humanely and protect them from "injustice and oppression".

12. A quota was set for 300,000 black soldiers for the Confederate States Colored Troops. 83% of Richmond's male slave population volunteered for duty. A special ball was held in Richmond to raise money for uniforms for these men. Before Richmond fell, black Confederates in gray uniforms drilled in the streets. Due to the war ending, it is believed only companies or squads of these troops ever saw any action. Many more black soldiers fought for the North, but that difference was simply a difference because the North instituted this progressive policy more soon than the more conservative South. Black soldiers from both sides received discrimination from whites that opposed the concept.

13. Union General U.S. Grant in Feb 1865, ordered the capture of “all the Negro men... before the enemy can put them in their ranks.” Frederick Douglas warned Lincoln that unless slaves were guaranteed freedom (those in Union controlled areas were still slaves) and land bounties, “they would take up arms for the rebels”.

14. On April 4, 1865 (Amelia County, VA), a Confederate supply train was exclusively manned and guarded by black Infantry. When attacked by Federal Cavalry, they stood their ground and fought off the charge, but on the second charge they were overwhelmed. These soldiers are believed to be from "Major Turner's" Confederate command.

15. A Black Confederate, George _____, when captured by Federals was bribed to desert to the other side. He defiantly spoke, "Sir, you want me to desert, and I ain't no deserter. Down South, deserters disgrace their families and I am never going to do that."

16. Former slave, Horace King, accumulated great wealth as a contractor to the Confederate Navy. He was also an expert engineer and became known as the “Bridge builder of the Confederacy.” One of his bridges was burned in a Yankee raid. His home was pillaged by Union troops, as his wife pleaded for mercy.

17. As of Feb. 1865 1,150 black seamen served in the Confederate Navy. One of these was among the last Confederates to surrender, aboard the CSS Shenandoah, six months after the war ended. This surrender took place in England.

18. Nearly 180,000 Black Southerners, from Virginia alone, provided logistical support for the Confederate military. Many were highly skilled workers. These included a wide range of jobs: nurses, military engineers, teamsters, ordnance department workers, brakemen, firemen, harness makers, blacksmiths, wagon-makers, boatmen, mechanics, wheelwrights, etc. In the 1920'S Confederate pensions were finally allowed to those workers that were still living. Many thousands more served in other Confederate States.

19. During the early 1900's, many members of the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) advocated awarding former slaves rural acreage and a home. There was hope that justice could be given those slaves that were once promised “forty acres and a mule” but never received any. In the 1913 Confederate Veteran magazine published by the UCV, it was printed that this plan “If not Democratic, it is [the] Confederate” thing to do. There was much gratitude toward former slaves, which “thousands were loyal, to the last degree”, now living with total poverty of the big cities. Unfortunately, their proposal fell on deaf ears on Capitol Hill.

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20. During the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1913, arrangements were made for a joint reunion of Union and Confederate veterans. The commission in charge of the event made sure they had enough accommodations for the black Union veterans, but were completely surprised when unexpected black Confederates arrived. The white Confederates immediately welcomed their old comrades, gave them one of their tents, and “saw to their every need”. Nearly every Confederate reunion including those blacks that served with them, wearing the gray.

21. The first military monument in the US Capitol that honors an African-American soldier is the Confederate monument at Arlington National cemetery. The monument was designed 1914 by Moses Ezekiel, a Jewish Confederate, who wanted to correctly portray the “racial makeup” in the Confederate Army. A black Confederate soldier is depicted marching in step with white Confederate soldiers. Also shown is one “white soldier giving his child to a black woman for protection”. - Source: Edward Smith, African American professor at the American University, Washington DC.

22. Black Confederate heritage is beginning to receive the attention it deserves. For instance, Terri Williams, a black journalist for the Suffolk “Virginia Pilot” newspaper, writes: “I’ve had to re-examine my feelings toward the [Confederate] flag...It started when I read a newspaper article about an elderly black man whose ancestor worked with the Confederate forces. The man spoke with pride about his family member’s contribution to the cause, was photographed with the [Confederate] flag draped over his lap...that’s why I now have no definite stand on just what the flag symbolizes, because it no longer is their history, or my history, but our history.”

Books:

Charles Kelly Barrow, et. al. *Forgotten Confederates: An Anthology About Black Southerners* (1995). Currently the best book on the subject.

Ervin L. Jordan, Jr. *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (1995). Well researched and very good source of information on Black Confederates, but has a strong Union bias.

Richard Rollins. *Black Southerners in Gray* (1994). Also an excellent source.

Dr. Edward Smith and Nelson Winbush, “Black Southern Heritage”. An excellent educational video. Mr. Winbush is a descendent of a Black Confederate and a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV).

This fact sheet is provided by Scott Williams. It is not an all-inclusive list of Black Confederates, only a small sampling of accounts. For more information about the SCV or “Confederates of Color” contact Mr. Williams at e-mail: swcelt@stlnet.com. For general historical information on Black Confederates, contact Dr. Edward Smith, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20016; Dean of American Studies. Dr. Smith is a black professor dedicated to clarifying the historical role of African Americans.



Commander's Comments

Commander's Comments
February 2003

Dear Compatriots:

I think we are off to a fine start for the year 2003. We had a good turn out for the Corley Street cemetery work on January 18. We found a number of graves and got a lot of work done. There is still much work to be done there. Let us try to schedule our next cemetery cleanup day for Saturday March 1, 2003. I would like to do it sooner but I am tied up for the next few weekends.

Last Sunday, February 2, I went to a meeting of the Town of Lexington Historic Preservation Review Board. I was granted the opportunity to address this group on our activities restoring cemeteries within the town and county. I specifically spoke about the work we did at the Fort Cemetery and our present project at the Corley Street Park Cemetery. The group was enthusiastic about the work we are doing. They brought to my attention three other cemeteries in the town that also need work. I went and visited these cemeteries this past week. Two of these cemeteries are very small. All three have Confederate veterans buried there.



This caused me to think about the need for our Camp to increase participation in the Guardian Program. The director of the Guardian Program is one of our own, Compatriot E. M. Clark. We have several cemeteries and graves in the Town of Lexington that need our care. To start, we need look no farther than our project at Corley Street Park. Jacob Abner Derrick (August 26, 1846 to August 7, 1906) was a private in Company I of the 15th South Carolina Volunteers. His grave has a government marker, but no Southern Cross of Honor. This grave needs a little care and maintenance including pruning of branches. There is a small cemetery on Butler Street behind the Comfort Inn that fronts on Main Street. The grave of Bayliss Earle Boozer (January 14, 1839 to February 16, 1861) has Southern Cross of Honor, but no government marker. Approximately half of the cast iron fence surrounding the cemetery is missing. Vines and saplings need to be removed and his unit needs to be researched so a government marker can be ordered.

There is a small cemetery on Old Chapin Road next to the Flight Deck Restaurant and shops. There is a government marker for Henry W. Taylor of Company K 20th South Carolina Infantry. There is no Southern Cross of Honor. Another grave is that of Henry D. Kunkle (July 14, 1846 to November 29, 1926). Research is needed to see if he is a Confederate veteran in need of a marker and cross. The largest of the cemeteries I visited is located at the corner of Hendrix Street and Third Avenue. Former Town Councilwoman Virginia Hilton called this cemetery to my attention. She stated that vandals pulled up Southern Crosses of Honor there. Not knowing to which grave they belonged, she took them to Horace Harmon, the director of the Lexington County Museum. Someone is needed to research the names of those buried there and return the crosses to the rightful graves. One grave there is that of Pvt. Carey P. Snelgrove (January 17, 1838 to June 16, 1869) who has a government marker but no cross. Other possible graves are those of P. A. Hendrix (January 11, 1822 to August 7, 1879) and William Christopher Hendrix (June 8, 1851 to January 10, 1997). There may also be unmarked graves present that had crosses with them.

We need volunteers for the Guardian Program. I think that it is fitting that as the Camp with the Guardian Director as a member, we should have the highest participation in the state. These graves and cemeteries described above need your help. Please step forward and take your place preserving your heritage. The Camp will help you at every step. We will provide any additional manpower needed to clean and restore these cemeteries and graves.

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Ladies of the 15th Regiment South Carolina Volunteers, Camp 51

We would like to encourage you to attend the meeting of the Lexington County Chapter of the Order of Confederate Rose.

The OCR meets monthly with the membership of the 15th Regiment SC Vols.

For membership information, email your request to OCR@15thregtscvols.org. or see one of the ladies at the next camp meeting.

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I was pleased with the turnout at our dinner meeting last month. The restaurant management assures me they can handle 60 people in that room with additional tables. We should look on that as a challenge. Keep bringing friends and relatives to our meetings. This is how we grow. We will keep working and growing as we meet our challenges to preserve our Southern Heritage and the good names of the Confederate soldiers.

Thanks again for your support,
Wayne D. Roberts
Commander

Ancestor Highlight

Service of William James Lowrimore, 7th Bat'n SC Inf'y Reserves

by his great-great grandson, Michael G. Kelly

The Confederate service of my great-great grandfather William James Lowrimore is sure but the details are ambiguous. There is no file on him in the Compiled Service Records. Lowrimore's grandson Jack Lawrimore told me that his grandfather didn't talk about the War but he knew that he enlisted at age 16 and was assigned to transport run-away slaves from Georgetown to Marion. Another oral family tradition says that Lowrimore was a guard at the Confederate prison at Florence, SC. Lowrimore applied for a Confederate pension about 1923 on which he stated that he served with the "7th Bat'n, Co. E under Capt. J. H. Johnson." The 7th Battalion SC Reserves were stationed at the Florence stockade under William H. Johnson, therefore, it is assumed that this was his unit. From these meager foundations I have assembled a sketch of William James Lowrimore's Confederate service.

William James Lowrimore was born February 13, 1848 in South Carolina near Sockee Swamp on the Williamsburg county / Georgetown county line. His father, W. A. Lowrimore, was a farmer and owned three slaves in 1860. Lowrimore enlisted into Capt. Johnson's Company on June 4, 1864; he was 16 years old.

In the Fall of 1864 confederate officers were sent to Florence, SC to construct a stockade. Three days later the first Union prisoners arrived at Florence. These men were herded together in an open field and guarded by just over 100 troops of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th Battalions of SC Reserves, composed of boys from 15 to 18 and men from 45 to 60. By October 27, 1864 there were 16,000 men in a stockade at Florence. Major-General J. G. Foster (USA) made the following report to Major-General H. W. Halleck (USA):

... "The stockade at Florence, S. C., is in a field near the junction of the railroads, and separated from the junction by a skirt of woods, as seen in the marginal sketch. Our men are permitted to build huts and brush shelters with materials obtained from the adjacent wood. They are treated very kindly by Colonel Harrison, who commands the depot and guard of 1,000 men. They are, however, destitute of blankets and proper clothing. Generally their condition is much better than at Andersonville. No military defenses are as yet erected at this depot. It is expected that all the officers and men now at Columbia, S.C., and vicinity will very soon be brought to Florence, increasing the whole number at that place to 25,000 men and officers."

"The ration issued to the prisoners at Florence consists of one pound corn meal, one-half pound of fresh meat, or one-quarter pound bacon daily. Sometimes a little molasses or vinegar is added. To check the prevalence of scurvy issues have been made of chopped sweet potatoes soaked in vinegar. The capability of the country to furnish supplies to the army and

the people seems from reports to be adequate to the absolute necessities of both. There is a sufficiency of corn and meat; of other supplies they have a limited amount, and of luxuries none.”

At the beginning of January, 1865, the 7th Battalion was stationed at Georgetown, SC when the first of Gen. W. T. Sherman’s troops entered the state. Between January and March, 1865, the Battalion was successively assigned to Trapier’s Brigade, Mercer’s Brigade, Chesnut’s Brigade and finally to Blanchard’s Brigade, McLaw’s Division, Hardee’s Corps.

The Battle of Bentonville was fought March 19-21, 1865. The order of battle included the 7th Battalion but I can find no evidence to indicate Lowrimore or the battalion were actually there, only that the battalion was assigned to a brigade that was there. On March 23rd, Blanchard’s Brigade was near Smithfield, NC and reported the 7th Battalion’s strength as 66 aggregate. By Apr 10th, the whole of Blanchard’s Brigade consisted of 50 officers and 279 men. Exactly how William Lowrimore ended his service is unknown.

William Lowrimore returned to Williamsburg County and raised a large family. He died January 27, 1934. He is buried in the Lawrimore family cemetery 100 yards from the house where he was born. His grave marker proudly states that he was "A CONFEDERATE VETERAN".

March 14th & 15th South Carolina SCV State Convention USS Yorktown - Mount Pleasant, S.C.

Calendar of U pcoming Events

| | | |
|----------|------|--|
| February | 27th | Camp Meeting Carolina Wings N Rib House |
| March | 1st | Corley Park Cemetery Day 8:30 - 1:30 |
| March | 15th | S.C. State Convention Mt. Pleasant |
| March | 27th | Camp Meeting Carolina Wings N Rib House |



Re-enactors 2003 Event Schedule

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Jan 24-26 | Hagood's March - Charleston, SC (BAE) |
| Jan 31 - Feb 2 | Rivers Bridge - Allendale, SC (BAE) |
| Feb 21-23 | Battle Of Aiken - Aiken, SC (BAE) |
| Mar 7-9 | The Columns - Florence, SC.(BAE) |
| Mar 14-16 | Battle Of Averasboro - Averasboro, NC (BAE) |
| Apr 4-6 | Battle Of Cheraw - Cheraw, SC (BAE) |
| Apr 12 | Ft. Sumter Living History - Charleston, SC (BAE) |
| Apr 25-27 | Fairview Church - Fountain Inn, SC (BAE) |
| May 3 | Confederate Memorial Day - Columbia, SC (BAE) |
| (BAE) | <i>Battalion Affiliated Event</i> |
| (O) | <i>Other</i> |
| (I) | <i>Information Only</i> |



15TH REGIMENT SOUTH CAROLINA VOLUNTEERS

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Email: SC_15th_Regiment@hotmail.com

Next Camp Meeting
February 27th, 7 PM
Carolina Wings Restaurant
North Lake Blvd. Lexington

“To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will submit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier’s good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles he loved and which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.”

Stephen D. Lee

The 15th Regimental Report is a monthly publication of the Lexington, South Carolina Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp 51.