

Jefferson Comes Home

“Tommy”

THOMAS GARLAND JEFFERSON

Virginia Military Institute Corps of Cadets
BATTLE OF NEW MARKET, MAY 15, 1864

Mortally Wounded

by Gordon L. Harvie

While attending a meeting of the High Bridge Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans, in Farmville, Virginia, during the summer of 2023, I heard a suggestion from a visiting United Daughters of the Confederacy member that there should be a memorial established in Amelia County, Virginia, to honor “THOMAS GARLAND JEFFERSON, a native son killed in the WAR for SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE, 1861–1865.”

I shrank with quiet embarrassment that I had not thought of it myself as young Jefferson is my kinsman. Mortally wounded at New Market, Virginia, in 1864 while serving with the Virginia Military Institute Cadet Corps, he was eventually buried at the New Market Memorial at VMI.

From his home at “Winterham” with father, John Garland Jefferson, and mother, Otelia Howlett Jefferson, Thomas’s large immediate family, cousins, and descendants continued on in the county for a century and a half, most with their final resting places at the Presbyterian Church Cemetery at Amelia Court House. Not forgotten, Thomas nonetheless was not included in the final gathering of his family.

Hoping to establish a more prominent memorial, within days I arranged to have a grave marker placed in the family plot at the cemetery. With the inscription, “Buried at VMI,” Thomas has joined both parents,

numerous siblings, and many more cousins. With fresh interest in my young cousin’s short life and its sad ending, I began to read again of the battle and circumstances in which he perished.

The one nearly ubiquitous photograph of Thomas (left) in the study of New Market, assumed to have been taken near his matriculation at the Institute, August 1, 1863, always struck me as if he were asking himself, “What have I gotten myself into?” As remarkable as the photograph is, I wanted a detailed image with a more resolved visage, thus deciding to create one (see new image on page 4). Using a copy of the photo, I began to discover subtle detail, often hidden between and behind the antique cracks of the photo. Within that subtlety, some detail was missing, making it necessary to invent from common human structure, an



example being lack of definition in Thomas’s left ear for which I used my own as a model.

I spent so much time with Thomas I began to refer to him as “Tommy,” considering his youth and family privilege. In reading of the battle and aftermath, I learned of Eliza Clinedinst Crim, in whose mother’s New Market home Thomas died, and her lifelong correspondence with New Market Cadets, becoming known as “Mother Crim.” In a letter to Thomas’s fellow cadet and roommate, Moses Ezekiel, she said she often thought of “Little Tommie Jefferson.”

See Jefferson, page 3

Amelia County Historical Society

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Amelia Facebook Page

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Monday and Friday

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

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Newsletter

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Membership Dues*

Individual.....\$20
 Family.....\$25

***Dues Will Increase by \$5 on July 1, 2024.**

President's Message

Spring traditionally brings renewal and the fresh hopes for a season of growth. The Society accelerates its activities at this time of year, focused on Amelia Day in the second week of May, a commemoration of the county's 1735 founding. Amelia became a separate political entity on March 25 that year, the British parliament's New Year's Day under the Old Style Calendar then in use. The founding justices first met in early May in Pridesville, after the roads became more passable and the weather more temperate. The Society has participated in every Amelia Day since the day's inception in 1985, and we hope that you will join us May 11 on the courthouse square. An Amelia-Nottoway American Revolution 250 table also will set up nearby in commemoration of the United States Semiquincentennial Anniversary.

This spring also marks the 160th anniversary of the Civil War battle at New Market, Virginia, which occurred on May 15, 1864. The engagement famously saw the reluctant use of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) cadet corps by Confederate General Breckinridge to plug a gap in the rebel line of attack. In the ensuing melee of cadets advancing in parade line formation against Union artillery, cavalry, and infantry, the Institute suffered a fourth of its unit as casualties, including ten cadets killed in action or mortally wounded. Among the latter was Cadet Private Thomas Garland Jefferson of Winterham Plantation in Amelia. He died in the arms of his roommate Moses Ezekiel three days later after his compatriot had moved him to a house in New Market. The cadets killed in battle are buried on the campus of VMI around sculptor Ezekiel's statue, *Virginia Mourning Her Dead*.

The bulk of this newsletter is written by Jefferson's kinsman, Gordon L. Harvie, also of Amelia. His composition recognizes "Tommy's" story in his final days as a callow youth called to war. Gordon, my brother-in-law and the son of former Society President Joyce Link Harvie, sought to remember Private

Jefferson this year by placing an unobtrusive granite marker in the cadet's honor in the Jefferson family burial plot in the Amelia Presbyterian Cemetery. The gesture symbolically reunited the young soldier to his family and native county.

In a time of history erasure and the toppling of monuments and other memorials erected by generations of Virginians and other Americans who revered their ancestors and the ideals for which they struggled and died, this was an apt personal and family tribute to a youth who was not yet in his majority and who tragically was caught up in the greatest conflagration in this Nation's history. Mr. Harvie's act also reminds us of author William Faulkner's admonition that "The past is never dead. It's not even past." This is particularly true when the ancient ghosts who raised such memorials invoked, as they invariably did, the Spirit whose energies still remain abroad and most definitely reside in the adjacent hallowed grounds. Thus, "*Videte ergo quid tu facis*" – "Be careful what you do." I think that you will find Thomas G. Jefferson's, and Gordon's, stories of interest.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Whitaker, President

**Baked Goods Wanted for Amelia Day**

Amelia County Historical Society

Please drop off your pies, cakes, cookies, breads, muffins, cupcakes, jellies, etc., at the Jackson Building
between the hours of 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 10, 2024.

16501 Church Street, Amelia C.H., VA 23002

Monetary Donations Also Encouraged to PO Box 113, Amelia, VA 23002

Jefferson — *from page 1*

Born in Amelia County on January 1, 1847, little is necessarily known about Thomas G. Jefferson. On a day early in the War in 1861, he was no doubt home at “Winterham” where troops from Amelia mustered for service in the local militia, soon to be elements of the Confederate army as part of the 23rd Virginia Infantry. Obviously too young at fourteen years old to join his neighbors, he must have been taken by the excitement of the day.

Entering VMI over two years later, he had only begun to live outside the family. A series of letters archived at VMI from his father to Superintendent Francis H. Smith begin in June 1863 as efforts to have Thomas enrolled in the military school. Mr. Jefferson stated that Thomas “is over five feet high” and included testimony of his character from his teacher. A letter from prospective cadet Jefferson to Colonel Smith in the summer of

’63, acknowledging the appointment, apologized for late response due to delay in the mails. Soon after, as a new cadet and as reported in an upperclassman’s memoir: “poor little Jefferson” fainted during drills in the late summer Shenandoah Valley swelter. Three times through late fall, elements of the cadet corps were called to meet Yankee forces, although they never made contact with the enemy.

Months later, in early spring 1864, Mr. Jefferson wrote a long letter imploring Colonel Smith not to allow Thomas to resign, the motive given by the son to his father as a desire to join the Confederate army. While Thomas had cited the law that “all youths [of] 17 are required to be put into service,” he had also been discouraged by his academic struggles. Professing no dissatisfaction with rules and regulations at the Institute, he thought that he “cannot go through the examinations.” Regardless of the motive, Mr. Jefferson was desperate that his son remain at the school, writing, “I hope and believe he will be enabled by hard study to stand creditably in the examinations.” The father further stated bluntly, “My reason for being very much opposed to his leaving the Institute at this time is that he is I believe from his age and being tenderly raised entirely unfit for the army and therefore believe he can be of more use to the government where he is in a Military point of view by being used as you have so judiciously done with the young men under your care in marching them out to meet Yankee raids....”



1923 New Market Reenactment by VMI Cadets
-Harris & Ewing Photo, Library of Congress

Later mention of Thomas in New Market history is essentially eulogistic. His pastor wrote, “... being the eldest son, and greatly trusted by his father, he was frequently called upon to overlook and execute important matters of business.” The same writer wrote, “... he was an unusually dutiful son, conscientious, polite, and especially respectful and deferential to his seniors. He was unobtrusive, reticent, and reserved with strangers, but manly, decided, resolute, and fearless. His tender and affectionate devotion to his mother, expressed by his habitual regard for her wishes and comfort, was as attractive as it was conspicuous and uncommon.”

Finally, Thomas’s pastor wrote, “... although but a stripling, and incapable of service in the field ... but chafing under the restraints imposed by youth, [he] coveted an opportunity of taking a personal part in the war for the defense of his home, and liberty, and country.”

Soon after the New Market battle, Mr. Jefferson’s letter to Colonel Smith revealed the anguish over Thomas’s death as he asked of a witness, “if our son in his last moments said anything he thought might give comfort to his poor distraught mother?” A year after the war ended, still in obvious grief but with some impatience, Mr. Jefferson asked Colonel Smith “of the determination of those having management of the VMI in regard to the matter as I wish to have his remains brought home or a suitable railing put around his grave with a suitable monument over him.” Two months later he wrote that he was satisfied his son would have preferred burial with his comrades, thereby giving consent to burial at VMI. Mr. Jefferson further said that “Miss Eliza Clinedinst can identify Thomas’s grave.”

One wonders about Mr. Jefferson’s state of mind in his remaining years after having pled with Smith to help keep Thomas enrolled at the Institute—while avoiding peril in the CSA army. Beyond discussions of his family’s concern is academic and historic wonder at young Thomas’s death in rebellion against the country of his namesake and ancestor, Thomas Jefferson of Monticello. The eulogistic testimony of Thomas’s pastor of the cadet coveting “an opportunity of taking a personal part in the war for the defense of his home, and liberty, and country” confirms his will and purpose for the cause, sentiments repeated in later decades of memorialization throughout Virginia and all of the South, results of the War notwithstanding.

See Cousin Tommy, page 4

Cousin Tommy

by Gordon L. Harvie

Tommy was the first cousin of my great-grandmother Anna Maria Jefferson Harvie. Four years older, Ann grew up with Tommy at Winterham in Amelia County, after Tommy's mother and father welcomed Ann and her three siblings when their father died, years before the War.

I grew up a few miles from the home, my father renting the farm from Judge John Garland Jefferson*, Tommy's nephew, to raise hay for his herd of cattle. I have pictured Tommy riding horses or with his family in a wagon traveling in one direction to neighboring plantations and farms, or in the opposite direction with his father to the court house village. He probably visited the home of the future Confederate veteran, my great-grandfather, to whom his cousin Ann married, or maybe the home where I grew up.

Tommy will be in good company on my wall with other Confederates in the family and many notables of the cause. From previous testimony, it seems Tommy would be honored, at least, to be in their company. He probably had awaited with eagerness the latest news of "Gen'l Lee," "Gen'l Jackson," and the Army of Northern Virginia. In any event, while remembering the sadness his death brought the family, knowing I've traveled the same roads, entered the same doorways, and, here, eavesdropped on conversations that carried hopes of adventure and service, it seems I've gained a long-lost cousin, Thomas Garland Jefferson – "Tommy."

*Judge Jefferson in 1958 founded the Amelia Historical Collection, which is today's Amelia County Historical Society, Inc.

Both of the Gordon L. Harvie pieces are used by permission, © 2024 Gordon L. Harvie.

A Family's Memorial



An Honoring of Kinship

Gordon L. Harvie of Amelia paid tribute to his kinsman Thomas Garland Jefferson late last year by placing the granite marker (above, left) in the Jefferson Family Plot (above, right) at the Amelia Presbyterian Cemetery. The print at center is from Mr. Harvie's pencil sketch of the 1863 ambrotype or tintype of Cadet Private Jefferson around the time that he matriculated at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). "Tommy" is buried at VMI beneath the statue, *Virginia Mourning Her Dead*, sculpted by Moses Ezekiel, his roommate at the Institute. Cadet Ezekiel removed the mortally wounded Jefferson from the New Market battlefield and stayed with him during his last three days.



Upcoming Events

Amelia Day Booth – The Society will host its annual Amelia Day booth on Saturday, May 11, 2024, on the Washington Street side of the courthouse square. Set-up will begin at 7:30 a.m. The day’s festivities begin at 9:30 a.m. and will continue until 5 p.m. We shall offer our traditional baked goods for Mother’s Day weekend and ask members to please consider donating their homemade pies, cakes, cookies, and other dry goods for sale. You may drop them off at the Society on Friday, May 10, from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. In addition, the Society will sell Amelia history-related books, maps, family trees, tiles, and other mementoes. Several of our “go-to” books and maps, including *Historical Notes on Amelia County, Virginia*, have sold out or are in limited supply. We are in the process of obtaining new editions. In lieu of baked goods, we encourage members and clients to donate funds for furtherance of our operations and goals. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Amelia County Historical Society, PO Box 113, Amelia, VA 23002.



Amelia Day 2018



Eggleston Plaque, 2023

June 2, Eggleston Road Marker Dedication at Grub Hill Church – As a follow-up to last November’s plaque dedication to Major Joseph Eggleston, a cavalry officer of the Continental line in the American Revolutionary War, the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), Richmond chapter, will dedicate a Pomeroy Foundation roadside marker that indicates Eggleston’s burial site. Amelia County Historical Society, Christ Episcopal Church, Amelia, and the Amelia County American Revolution 250 Committee will co-sponsor the June 2, 2024, 2 p.m. event, which will occur outside the cemetery fence. The SAR Color Guard, dressed in period uniforms, will present the Colors and fire a musketry salute. Major Eggleston, captured at Monmouth, New Jersey, and later paroled, served as Lieutenant Colonel Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee’s chief of staff in several actions in the southern theater of the war. He was cited for gallantry under fire at Augusta, Georgia; Eutaw Springs, South Carolina; and near Guilford Court House, North Carolina. Refreshments will be served inside St. John’s Episcopal/Grub Hill Church, located four miles north of the county seat on Route 609, with the public invited. If you would like to volunteer to assist in the day’s operation, please let us know by May 24, 2024, at (804) 561-3180 (answering machine).

Juneteenth Booth – The Society this year again will sponsor a table at the June 15, 2024, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Juneteenth Celebration, sponsored by the Russell Grove Association. The event will take place at the old Russell Grove School, home also of the Amelia County Public School Board Office. Anyone desiring to assist in the day’s sales and creation of new items suitable for popular sale at the event should contact Society President Michael Whitaker or Librarian Sylvia Gray at (804) 561-3180 (Monday and Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.).

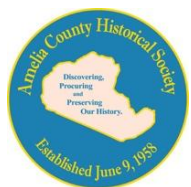
July 14, Virginia Highway Marker Dedication for Amelia’s Rosa Dixon Bowser – Society Vice President for Archives, Emanuel Hyde, III, in his capacity as the Director of Emanuel Productions, will lead a memorial event to honor the life of Amelia native and black educator Rosa Dixon Bowser at the Amelia County Veterans Center (ACVC), 16440 Five Forks Road, Amelia, Virginia 23002, on July 14, 2024, beginning at 3 p.m. Arrangements for the event remain in planning, but the session at the ACVC will be followed by the unveiling of a Virginia Department of Historical Resources cast-iron highway marker on Patrick Henry Highway (US 360) near its intersection with Grub Hill Church Road (County Route 609). The Historical Society will participate. Ms. Bowser was born into slavery at or near Clay Hill Plantation in 1855 and rose to prominence as Richmond’s first African-American teacher, founder of what became the Virginia State Teachers Association and a President of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in Virginia. Further details of the day’s activities will be announced on social and local media in the near future.

Projects in the Works

As part of the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commemoration (VA250) Committee's call for county and other Virginia locality histories, the Amelia Committee for AmRev250 queried the Historical Society for inputs to be featured on the Commonwealth's mobile museum kiosks, soon available across the state. VA250 historians continue to refine the submitted lists, but based largely on the Society's 1982 volume, *Historical Notes on Amelia County, Virginia*, the Amelia AmRev250 chairman submitted data in the categories below. Readers are invited to comment on submissions and/or omissions from these lists, which show a degree of subjectivity, via email response to ameliahistoricalociety@tds.net. Please reference "Amelia AmRev250 Kiosk Submissions" in your subject line.

Important Dates in Amelia History

1. 1680 – First Frontiersmen, Indentures, & Slaves Arrive
2. 1729 – First Church in Amelia (Then Still Part of Prince George County)
3. 1730 – Last Sightings of Full-Blooded Monacan People & Warriors
4. 1734-1735 – Amelia County Founded
5. 1754 – Prince Edward County Formed from Amelia County
6. 1760 – Grub Hill Anglican Church (Raleigh Parish)
7. 1770 – 1784 American Revolution
8. 1781 – War Action in Amelia County
9. 1788 – Nottoway County Formed from Amelia County
10. 1793 – Amelia County Seat Moved to the Current Village Area
11. 1797 – 1881 Upper Appomattox Navigation Company
12. 1838 – Campbellite Debates in Amelia County
13. 1851 – Richmond & Danville Railroad Comes to Amelia
14. 1861 – Clay Hill Destroyed by Fire; Lewis E. Harvie & First Virginia Ordinance of Secession
15. 1864 – Kautz' Raid on R&D RR Bridges over Appomattox River & Flat Creek
16. 1865 – The Appomattox Campaign in Amelia; Battles of Sailors Creek; Samantha Neil Starts Black Education; Edmund Ruffin Suicide
17. 1870 – First Public Schools in Amelia
18. 1873 – McDowell Delaney Represents Amelia in General Assembly
19. 1893 – Jessie Mitchell Lynching
20. 1910 – Amelia's First Centralized Public School
21. 1917-1919 – Amelians in the Great War
22. 1928 – Captain Charles Collyer Sets Around-the-World Aviation Record
23. 1936 – Father Tabb Memorial Dedicated
24. 1941-1945 – Amelians in World War II
25. 1950-1953 – Amelians in the Korean War
26. 1951 – Montie Kennedy Pitches in the World Series
27. 1965-1975 – Amelians in the Vietnam War
28. 1969 – Full Public School Integration
29. 1988-1996 – Sharon Couch Competes in the Olympics
30. 2001-2024 – Amelians in the Global War on Terrorism



Projects — from page 6

Key Amelia County Historical Sites

1. Amelia Court House Sites
2. Amelia Springs Resort
3. Appomattox River & Tributaries (Especially Deep & Flat Creeks)
4. Barrett-Chumney House
5. Beth El Church (Jetersville)
6. Chinquapin Church Site
7. Clay Hill Cemetery
8. Coverly and Rebel Forts
9. Deatonville
10. Dykeland
11. Egglestetton
12. Glenmore (Riverside)
13. Goode's Bridge
14. Grub Hill Church (St. Johns/Grub Hill Episcopal Church)
15. Haw Branch
16. Hermitage Site & Cemetery
17. Ingleside
18. Jetersville
19. Morefield Mine
20. Namozine Church
21. Norfolk Southern Railroad (Originally Richmond & Danville Railroad)
22. Old Log Cabin (Amelia County Historical Society)
23. Paineville
24. Rutherford Mine
25. Sailors Creek Historic Battlefield and State Park (Including Hillsman House)
26. Salem
27. Tabb Memorial Park
28. Virginia Civil Rights Education Trail in Amelia
29. The Wigwam
30. Winterham Plantation



The Summer newsletter will present the Society's listings for "Famous Amelia Personages" and "Other Topics of Historical or Tourism Interest."



NOTICE!!

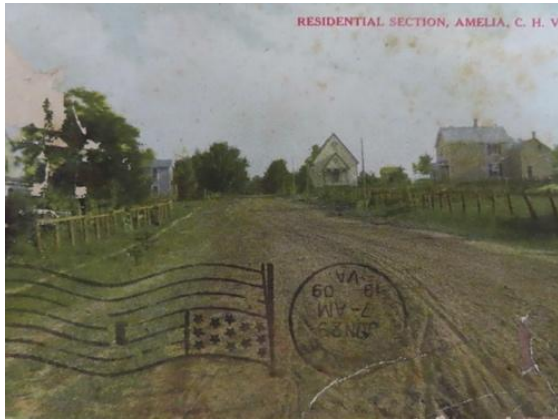
AMELIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP DUES WILL INCREASE ON JULY 1, 2024!!

By Decision of the Board of Directors

Individual Memberships: \$25 Family Memberships: \$30

*Cash, Checks, or Money Orders Payable to Amelia County Historical Society,
Post Office Box 113, Amelia C. H., VA 23002-0113*

Postcards from the Edge (of Amelia C. H.), Circa 1910



The above postcards of Amelia Court House from the first decade of the 20th century show continuity and change. The card at left, postmarked June 1909, depicts a “residential section” of the town with Christ Church at center. It was shot from what today is the intersection of Amelia Avenue and Goodes Bridge Road. The image of the old Post Office (right) on Main (now Court) Street is from the same period. Robertson’s Store, originally Levy’s Store, behind the tree and old car, burned down in 1916. It stood about where the Friends of the Library and Fringe Hair Salon are now sited. The “old” Amelia Hotel, destroyed in 1928, was behind the Post Office.



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