

The Family Tree Searcher

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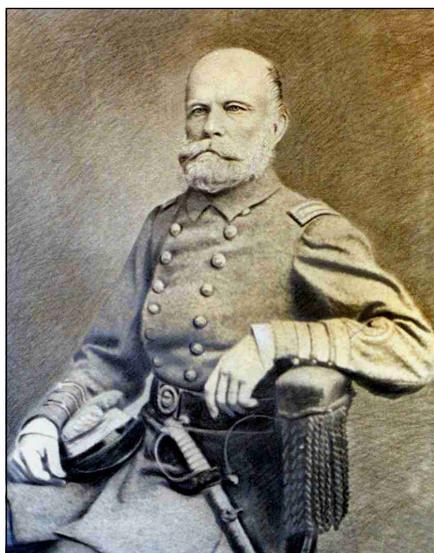
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Commodore Thomas Jefferson Page

By L. Roane Hunt



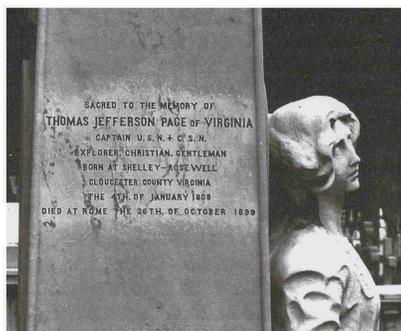
Recently, we received a request from Nicholas Stanley-Price, representing the Friends of Non-Catholic Cemetery in Rome, where Thomas Jefferson Page (1808 - 1899) is buried with eight members of his immediate family. He asked for a high resolution copy of Commodore Page's portrait (shown on the left) that is included in the "Hall of Fame" portion of the Gloucester County website. These portraits previously hung on the walls of the colonial courthouse.

The grave site on the right shows a large monument for T.J. Page with the inscription on the left side. He was a naval officer in the U.S. Navy and an explorer who served in the Confederate Navy during the Civil War. He was a grandson of Thomas Nelson, Jr., signatory of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and of John Page, a minor figure in the American Revolution and a friend of Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson Page is famous for having made various maps of Argentina and Paraguay (1853-1856) and for having mapped the river systems of Paraguay (1859-1860).

A brief commendation for Commodore Page is included in the Civil War display in the Gloucester Museum of History by Robert and Lisa Harper:

"Commander of the naval battery at Gloucester Point, Page spent 33 years in

(Continued on page 33)



Confederate Navy Service of Peter William Smith & George Washington Marquis Lafayette Smith

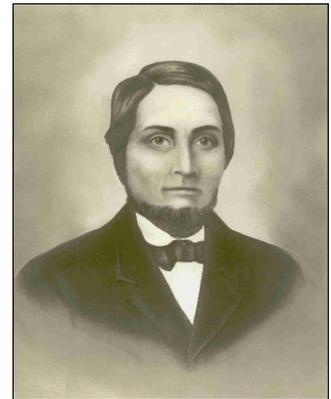
By Robert Hilton Lindsay, III
Great-Great-Grandson of Peter Smith
& Great-Great-Great-Nephew of Washington Smith

Introduction

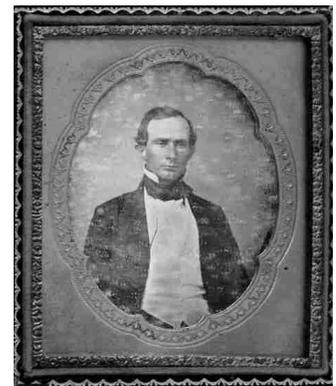
This article incorporates documented evidence of Peter and Washington Smith's Confederate States of America Naval Service with comments and conjectures based on known facts. Sources consulted include books by various authors, personal correspondence of wartime participants and their families, government publications and documents, and discussions with contemporary individuals.

Most heavily relied upon was the "Official Records [of the] Union And Confederate Navies In The War Of The Rebellion," an end of the 19th century United States Government endeavor to compile in book volumes surviving records from both navies. When Richmond was evacuated April 2, 1865, the majority of Confederate records and correspondence were destroyed. However, when Federal troops entered the city on April 3, they found numerous papers of official or legal nature scattered in the streets. U.S. General Godfrey Weitzel notified Secretary of War Edwin G. Stanton of this by telegraph, and Stanton ordered him to have those pertaining to military or government matters collected and sent to Washington. Many Confederate Navy documents contained in the "Official Record" probably originated from papers salvaged by this measure. The federal government compiled volumes are now also available in the form of modern day private sector reprints as well as on computer readable disks and in web accessible formats.

Modern mine warfare's roots can be traced to the time of Peter and Washington's (and Peter's body servant Richard Cooke's) association with early maritime development and use. Although deployment of similar devices in the rivers and bays of several Confederate states predate their involvement with the damaging of the U.S. gunboat *Commodore Barney* August 5, 1863, and the U.S. North Atlantic Blockade Squadron's Flagship *Minnesota* April 9, 1864, these incidents can arguably be considered milestones in the technology's evolution as a viable method of combating an enemy. Peter Smith's destruction of the U.S. gunboat *Commodore Jones* May 6, 1864, demonstrated mine warfare's tactical value by halting the advancing Union forces, thereby delaying the fall of Richmond.



Peter Smith



Washington Smith

Peter And Washington Smith's Confederate Army Service—An Overview

Prior to its secession from the United States, with the exception of those having certain specified occupations, Virginia required that all eighteen to forty -five year old able bodied white males must be members of their local militias, the majority belonging to “line” militia companies. They mustered quarterly, were armed only with personally owned firearms such as shotguns and hunting type muskets, had no uniforms, and received little military training. There also existed a smaller size “volunteer corps” composed of men who voluntarily enlisted, purchased and wore uniforms, and were armed by the state with weapons more suited to military use. These companies were attached to the local “line” militia and mustered annually with the combined regiment. Volunteer companies attended additional drills, had their own armories, and marched in special event parades. Peter and Washington were both prewar members of 21st Virginia Militia volunteer companies.

On April 15, 1861, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln officially proclaimed war on states that had by that time seceded and formed the Confederate States of America. He called on Virginia and other Union states for 75,000 volunteers to invade those that had rebelled, the objective being to retake and hold Federal forts, armories, etc. In reaction to Lincoln's proclamation, the Virginia State Legislature on April 17, passed the Ordinance of Secession from the United States, and also Ordinance No.9 that both authorized and required the governor to call for twelve month volunteers to protect the Commonwealth from invasion. Passage was kept secret, however, until April 20 so that Federal property in Virginia could be immediately seized with minimal resistance.

In response to Governor John Letcher's Ordinance No. 9 mandated call, Peter and Washington's volunteer militia companies were redesignated as “twelve month volunteer companies in state service.” That meant individuals wishing to remain or become members had to enlist for twelve months' service, and after so doing, there was no turning back. Allegiance to the “Old Dominion” ran high, and fueled by patriotic stories told by men who had fought in the late 1840's war with Mexico, volunteer corps members signed up en masse—most Southerners initially believed the “Yankees” would not fight, and the war would be over in a few months if not weeks. Peter enlisted on Saturday, April 20, at Rowe's Store in Guinea and Washington on Tuesday, May 7, at Gloucester Court House, but little did either comprehend of what they were to face over the next four years. Both companies, including Peter and Washington, served in the vicinity of Gloucester Point and Guinea until May 4, 1862, then withdrew towards Richmond.

Peter enlisted for twelve months' service in his prewar unit, the Gloucester Invincibles, a foot soldier company that was to be later redesignated as Company F of the 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment. His main duty for most of the remainder of 1861, and continuing at least into the early months of 1862 (including after he was detailed to the Quartermaster Department in February), seems to have been captain of a seven man crew schooner used as a “guard boat” patrolling the mouth of the York River (see Note 1).

A ledger of ship registration for the Port of East River in the District of Yorktown kept by William Williams, inspector and surveyor for the Custom House, at Williams's wharf in Mathews County, Va., indicates that Peter, Washington, and Washington's future father -in-law, Henry Hughes, were owners of the schooner *California*. In the spring of 1861, Virginia

Note 1: The surviving wood fuel requisition form for the “Month of March, 1862,” is signed and dated (Wednesday) March 5th by “P.W. Smith, Capt. Guard Boat” and “J.H. Crump, Assistant Quartermaster.” Peter received one and one half cords of wood, probably for cooking use and heating the living quarters on board the schooner. The March 5th date confirms that he continued as “guard boat” captain after being detailed to the

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

was forming a state navy and had few state owned water craft, suggesting Peter's "guard boat" may have been the *California*. Whatever the schooner's name, it would be interesting to know if its use was volunteered under private ownership, or had the state taken possession by forced sale or sale with owner consent. In May of 1861, the first U.S. Navy ship ventured up the York River, prompting the Confederates to reinforce their Gloucester Point fortifications with a naval gun battery. With more intrusions being expected, the schooner "guard boat" was almost certainly procured in the most expedient manner, and that would have been to acquire it by some means locally (see Note 2).

In early May of 1862, peninsula area Confederate forces, including those at Gloucester Point, withdrew towards Richmond (by then capital of the Confederacy) under pressure from U.S. General George B. McClellan's "Peninsular Campaign." The 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment was eventually stationed about eight miles east of Richmond at Burton's Farm near Chaffin's Bluff on the north side of the James River. There it assisted with construction of fortifications to protect Richmond while only experiencing combat with the enemy during the Battle of Malvern Hill. When Peter's enlistment time expired in July of 1862, he was discharged at Chaffin's (see Note 3).

By the time of Peter's discharge, McClellan's army was retreating to Harrison's Landing on the James River. Since there was no significant enemy activity along the uppermost regions of the river below Richmond, Peter appears to have elected to return to his home "in Guinea neck on a narrow strip of land between Sedgy [sic. Sedger] Creek [now the Perrin River] and Mobjack Bay" (see Note 4).

Washington's volunteer militia company, the Gloucester Light Dragoons, was a mounted unit armed primarily with sabers and pistols and trained in mobile light infantry

Quartermaster Department in February. His reassignment that month on paper but not in actual duties may have been part of a general reorganization to improve military operational efficiency in anticipation of the enemy becoming more active as the weather warmed. 1862 Quartermaster regulations set forth the department's responsibilities, including - "provides the quarters and transportation of the army; storage and transportation for all army supplies; army clothing; camp and garrison equipage; fuel." After the Confederates withdrew toward Richmond, James H. Crump was an assistant quartermaster at Chaffin's Farm, James River, from June, 1862 until March 11, 1865, then reassigned with other clerks and mechanics to a Richmond emergency defense unit.

Note 2: The "Month of January, 1862" wood fuel requisition signed by "P.R. Page, Col. 26th - Va Vol. Comg. Post" and dated (Tuesday) January 14, confirms that the "guard boat" was under the army's jurisdiction. Modern sources say two "picket boats" were in use near the mouth of the York River, and that the primary mission of Gloucester Point army forces was to protect the naval gun battery. Besides picketing the water approach, outposts were maintained in Guinea by mounted troops to warn of an attack by land.

Note 3: When state volunteer militia units became part of the Confederate Army, their twelve month enlistment obligation began anew. This is why Peter's service starting April 20, 1861, did not end until the summer of 1862.

Note 4: The Confederate Congress passed a conscription law April 16, 1862, extending for three years the service obligation of men age eighteen to thirty -five already serving that could not claim a legally recognized exemption and amended the law September 27, increasing the age limit to forty -five: Why Peter's service time was not extended is unknown, as he was thirty -four (born November 5th, 1828) when discharged. Could he have been given an "exemption" so he could report on Union ship movements and shore activity along the York River? After May of 1862, the enemy controlled York County, southern Gloucester County, and the river inland as far as West Point. In October, while oystering near Washington's Capahosic home, Peter was called ashore by Confederate Army Lieutenant John L. Doggett, a Signal Corps officer and Gloucester native, and given orders from the Secretary of War to accompany a Chesapeake Bay ship raiding party. Besides being responsible for conventional forms of communication such as the telegraph, the Signal Corps maintained "agent" (spy) networks behind enemy lines and coordinated certain secret missions, arousing suspicion that Peter was more than an ordinary civilian.

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

tactics. Upon later entering Confederate service, it was redesignated as Company A, 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment (see Note 5).

When General R.E. Lee reorganized portions of his army after McClellan's army's retreat, Company A, 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment, became Company A of the 5th Virginia Cavalry Regiment commanded by Colonel (later General) Thomas L. Rosser. Rosser's regiment was part of the Army of Northern Virginia's cavalry corps under the overall command of General James Earl Brown "JEB" Stuart. It accompanied Lee's army's move northward performing picket duty, acting as Lee's "eyes" on scouting missions and participating in battles and skirmishes throughout northern Virginia (including what are now parts of West Virginia) and western Maryland. In the summer of 1863, Stuart's cavalry shielded Lee's army's mass movement from enemy discovery and protected its flanks and rear as it made its way to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, then back to Virginia.

Washington transferred to the Confederate Navy on November 5, 1863.

Confederate Navy Service

When the Confederate Army was being formed, it was not uncommon for influential civilians to obtain high ranking commissions, and troops from states allowing it, elected company officers by popular vote in the summer of 1862. Throughout the war, however, Confederate Navy officers above Acting Master (see Note 6) had served as commissioned U.S. Navy officers, been students who had resigned from the U.S. Naval Academy, or were "passed" Confederate Naval Academy midshipmen. U.S. Navy officers who resigned to join the Confederate Navy were referred to as having been "of the old navy."

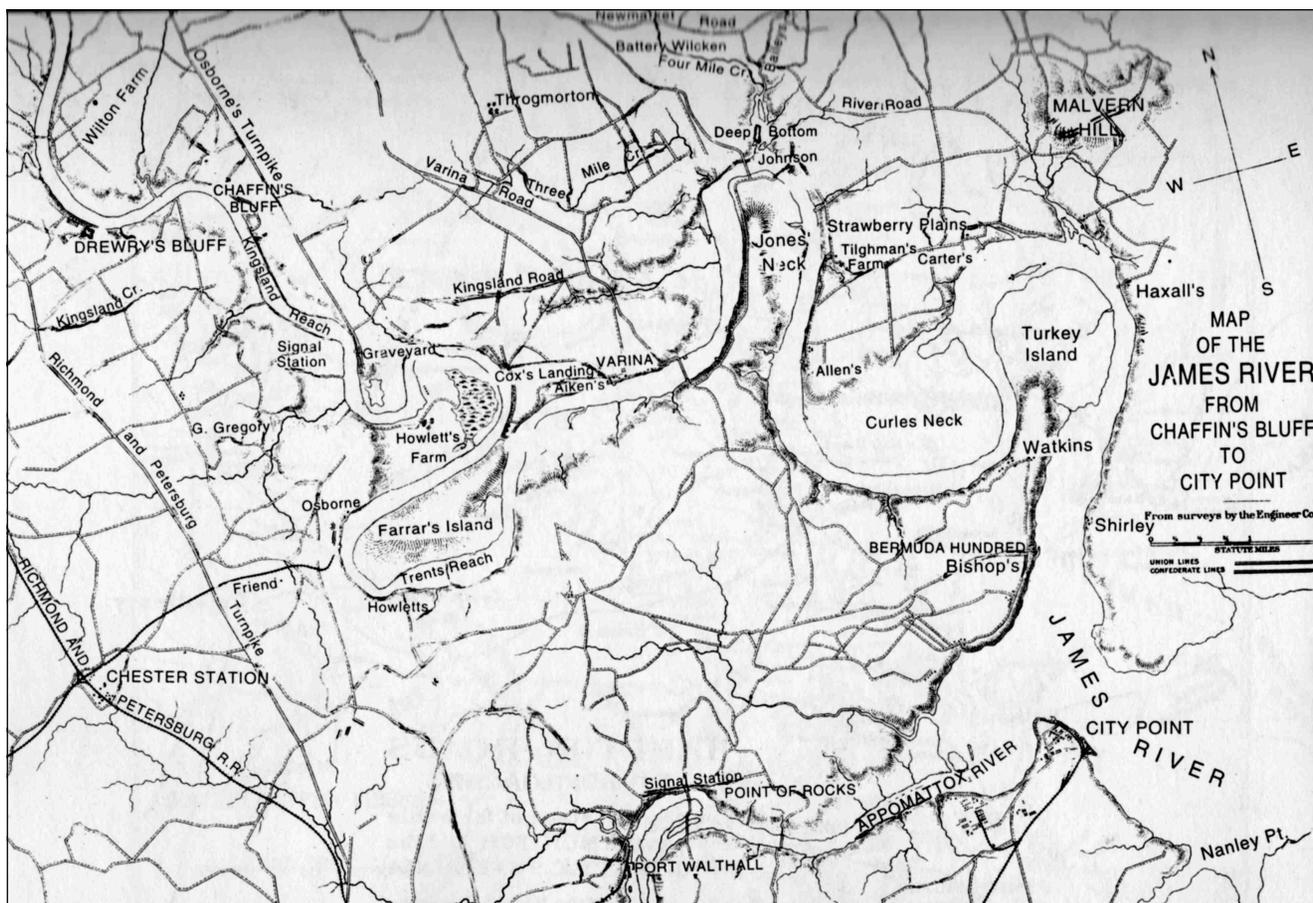
Confederate Navy Forces Protecting against River Attacks on Richmond

River forces protecting Richmond before the Submarine Battery Service was formed consisted mainly of James River Squadron members commanded by officers "of the old navy." Norfolk had been the squadron's operational headquarters until forced to move when the area fell into enemy hands in the spring of 1862. Afterwards, they first manned major naval gun positions at Drewery's Bluff, then at Chaffin's Bluff and smaller gun batteries built near the river. When necessary, they provided small arms fire (in concert sometimes with local Confederate Army units) against Federal incursions, and with few exceptions (the Submarine Battery Service's *C.S.S. Torpedo* being one), they also manned all James River assigned warships (including later built ironclads) until April 3, 1865.

Note 5: As a point of interest, individuals in mounted units before and during Confederate service were responsible for supplying their own horses. Being a relatively wealthy farmer, this would not have been a problem for Washington. However, it is not known why he reenlisted in the Confederate Army after his initial enlistment expired in the summer of 1862. A three year reenlistment \$60.00 bonus and sixty day furlough were being offered at the time, but it is doubtful these incentives would have had major influence on his decision. When the original three year conscription law was passed, he was about thirty-eight and therefore not liable for extended service until the law was amended in September.

Note 6: Acting Master was comparable to the modern day rank of Lieutenant, Junior Grade. In a later reorganization, older career officers were relegated to service in the Regular Navy. To provide more opportunities for advancement in rank, younger career officers were assigned to the Provisional Navy, as were those in service only for the war's duration (most being "not in line for promotion"). Peter (while in enemy hands following his May 6, 1864, capture) and Washington were both designated as "Acting Master, not in line for promotion, Provisional Navy" on Thursday, June 2, 1864.

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith



At the times Peter and Washington each joined the Submarine Battery Service, it was a separate organization from the James River Squadron, although both operated in the same geographical areas of the river. When needed, Submarine Battery Service members and equipment were placed on temporary duty with the James River Squadron, the frequency increasing as river war activity intensified in late 1864, and into 1865 (see Note 7).

Note 7: In the fall of 1864, when Submarine Battery Service Commander Hunter Davidson, an almost twenty year "old navy" veteran and member of the U.S. Naval Academy's second graduating class, was relieved and sent to Europe on "special service" (see Note 8), the Submarine Battery Service and James River Squadron command structures became more interwoven. Davidson's successor, Lieutenant J. Pembroke Jones, did not interface directly with Navy Secretary Stephen R. Mallory as had Davidson, but was given command of underwater mine defenses in the mouth of the Cape Fear River near Fort Fisher below Wilmington, North Carolina, as well as those on the James. On May 6, 1864, John K. Mitchell took command of the James River Squadron and all war vessels except for the *Patrick Henry*. (His orders upon assuming command will later be discussed in detail.) Although the *Torpedo* was officially assigned to the Squadron fleet May 6, the Submarine Battery Service continued as a separate organization essentially under the Squadron commander's direction. Late 1864 and early 1865 records contain several communications between Commander Mitchell and Peter Smith, indicating Peter and the *Torpedo* were then engaged in a variety of river defense related activities. Raphael Semmes of *C.S.S. Alabama* fame relieved Mitchell February 18, 1865, remaining the central authority over river defenses until Richmond's April evacuation. Both Mitchell and Semmes were plagued with manpower shortages from illness at all command levels and lower ranking desertions. Peter's Tuesday, February 7, 1865, letter to Washington's wife confirms the prevalence of sickness when writing he is "very unwell."

Note 8: Hunter Davidson's "special service" (secret mission) was to bring a ship's cargo of mine related supplies and other materials to the Confederacy. The *City of Richmond* sailed from Europe in early January of 1865 with Davidson as captain. During the first few weeks of its voyage, it served as tender ship for the ironclad ram *Stonewall*, recently acquired in Denmark by Confederate agents and commanded by Thomas

Early Torpedo Development and Formation of the Submarine Battery Service

After the March of 1862 battles between the ironclads *Monitor* and *Merrimac* (*Virginia*) and the *Virginia's* later destruction (see Note 9), the crew, including Hunter Davidson, first made their way by rail to Richmond. Shortly afterwards, they constructed and manned naval gun batteries at Drewery's Bluff, as the limited number of army field guns on site were inadequate to defend the Confederate capital against a Union ironclad river attack.

Mathew Fontaine Maury, "Pathfinder of the Seas," headed early Richmond area Confederate maritime mine development efforts. Shortly after assisting with the Drewery's Bluff gun installations, Davidson became his "apprentice." In the fall of 1862, when Maury was sent to Europe to study explosives technology there and to procure mine fabrication materials needed by the Confederacy, the Submarine Battery Service was created under command of Hunter Davidson. Until his fall of 1864 departure on "special service," he reported directly to Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory, and with Mallory's support, Davidson continued with Maury's previous work of perfecting the devices (see Note 10).

The Confederate Congress officially created the Submarine Battery Service in October of 1862 — its prime directive at the time being to develop, deploy, and maintain stationary submerged mines (torpedoes as they were then called) in the James and Appomattox Rivers below Richmond and to man the shore positions from which they were to be detonated. Based on the work of Captain Francis D. Lee in Charleston, South Carolina, Davidson and his Submarine Battery Service colleagues also later developed a reliable percussion detonating fuse intended for use with a spar mounted torpedo. Washington Smith participated in an April, 1864, mission where this offensive type weapon damaged the U.S. North Atlantic Blockade Squadron's 4,833 ton Flagship *Minnesota*.

Mine warfare of any type was considered uncivilized by many older officers in the military establishments of both North and South throughout the conflict, even though by 1864, the Federals (to a limited degree) as well as Confederates were using them (see Note 11).

Jefferson Page, a Gloucester County native and "old navy" member. In May 1865, after receiving word of the Confederate Government's evacuation from Richmond and Jefferson Davis's later capture, both vessels were surrendered in foreign ports. Page relinquished the *Stonewall* to Spanish authorities in Cuba for \$16,000 which was used to pay the crew. He then sailed to Italy where his family was living, died there in 1902, and was buried in Rome. Davidson surrendered the *City of Richmond* in Bermuda, made his way to England, and was back in the "reunited" states by 1867. On Page's advice in the early 1870s, he traveled to Europe to procure ships for Argentina's navy and then moved to that country to be the first chief of its torpedo division in 1875. In 1877, Davidson moved to Paraguay to chart its rivers, remarried after his first wife's death, and lived there until his death in 1913.

Note 9: By May, 1862, Union forces had taken control of the Gosport (Norfolk) Navy Yard. The *Virginia* then had no way to re-supply locally and drew too much water to sail to the upper James (shallower draft Union ironclads could and later did), so Captain Josiah Tattnall ordered Davidson and Catesby Jones to set the ship afire. About two hours later she was totally destroyed when her magazine's 36,000 pounds of gunpowder blew up. (Guns used by the *Virginia's* officers to augment those at Drewery's Bluff were some of the ones taken to Richmond after *Virginia* seized the Navy Yard April 21, 1861.)

Note 10: Mallory was one of the first government officials to recognize the tactical value of mines. By employing them, a relatively few men could effectively combat a larger and better equipped opposing force. His advocacy was to be later vindicated by the psychological effect mines had on the enemy as well as physical damage they were capable of inflicting. Confederate General Gabriel Rains, another proponent, was given command of a separate organization formed the same date as the Submarine Battery Service, but under the War Department where work was focused on the development of land mines.

Note 11: During the war, Federal torpedoes never achieved the level of technological sophistication of those developed by the Confederates; nor did they deploy them nearly as extensively. As an example of Confederate

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

Men involved with the use of these “infernal machines,” as they were often called, would likely be described in modern terms by their 1860’s critics as guerillas or even terrorists. In addition to the river mining activities and manning of detonating positions, Submarine Battery Service members participated in several missions similar in scope to those performed by modern day Navy SEALs — in today’s world, it might have been considered to have been somewhat of a special operations unit. Because of the covert nature of their work and prevailing enemy attitudes towards these men, Secretary Mallory required all Submarine Battery Service members to swear themselves to secrecy, and while on duty, to carry papers signed by President Jefferson Davis and himself attesting to the bearer’s navy status. If captured, it was hoped this official recognition would cause the enemy to hold the individual as a prisoner of war rather than a nonmilitary traitor subject to death.

Peter Smith Joins the Submarine Battery Service

Service records compiled after the war identify Peter as Acting Master CSN as of Monday, February 16, 1863, and *C.S.S. Torpedo* pilot, 1863-1864, James River Squadron. This is not totally accurate — except for short interval James River Squadron assignments, Peter served in the Submarine Battery Service (which was officially under the Office of Ordnance and Hydrography) essentially from the time he joined the navy until Richmond fell, and as stated earlier, the *Torpedo* was assigned to the Submarine Battery Service until May 6, 1864, continuing to be used almost exclusively by it until later.

The Submarine Battery Service was a small volunteer unit originally consisting mostly of “men not otherwise liable for military service.” In May of 1864, it had a total of thirty - two men — “24 at the batteries, 6 telegraph operators, and a signalman, all under T. H. Friend.” Why Peter joined is unknown, but one incentive might have been that members were eligible for “prize” money based on the value of ships destroyed. Whatever his reasons for joining, he definitely developed a high degree of respect for Davidson, his original commander, as he named a son born in 1867 Hunter Davidson Smith. Records clearly show Davidson’s confidence in Peter as well. During Davidson’s absence in early August of 1863, Peter was in charge of “submarine defenses” when the U.S. gunboat *Commodore Barney* was damaged. Also, on May 6, 1864, he detonated a torpedo destroying the U.S. gunboat *Commodore Jones*. After killing one man, the Federals captured Peter and another. Peter refused to reveal the locations of other torpedos, but upon being placed in the lead craft to “suffer its fate,” his compatriot broke and told all he knew. While living in Paraguay, Davidson wrote in 1908 — “Mr. Peter Smith of York River, Va, one of the bravest men I ever met ... ” — without doubt, Hunter Davidson highly respected Peter Smith.

Speculation suggests a number of things in combination may have motivated Peter to join the Confederate Navy. He had prewar experience with the schooner *California* and possibly other vessels. Records state he “knew the bay” and could “take a vessel into almost any river between there [Gloucester/Mathews area] and Baltimore.” His October 1862 orders from Secretary of War George W. Randolph to act as a raiding party “pilot”

ingenuity, on Sunday, November 27, 1864, the nine hundred ton U.S. Army transport ship *Greyhound* was sunk seven miles east of Bermuda Hundred, James River, by a mine disguised as a lump of coal (probably developed by Gabriel Rains). After being shoveled into the ship’s boiler, it exploded, setting fire to the ship - how it was placed in the coal bin still remains a mystery today.

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imply that Confederate authorities were well aware of his maritime abilities. John Taylor Wood, Jefferson Davis's nephew, headed the expedition with General R.E. Lee's older brother, Sidney Smith Lee, being second in command. Using three whaling type boats transported overland by wagons, the twenty-man (including Peter) mission's objective was to disrupt cargo shipments to or from the United States by destroying merchant vessels in retaliation for the Union's blockade against all ships attempting to enter or exit ports in the Confederacy. After burning the *Alleghanian* in the bay where "she was anchored east of the channel, opposite Gwynn's Island," Peter was allowed to return home. Federal forces later captured him at Washington's Capahosic home as he attempted to make his way to Richmond. After being shackled in "double irons" (hands and feet), Peter was interrogated and held on the U.S. Navy stores ship *Brandywine* anchored in Hampton Roads until his December exchange at Aiken's Landing on the James (see Note 12).



Aiken's Landing

It is suspected that the harsh treatment Peter received from his captors strengthened his resolve to seek further resistance to the "invaders." The Confederate Navy needed men with maritime experience, and if assigned to the upper James, he would only be a few days' travel from his home. His February 7, 1865, letter to Washington's wife shows that he could obtain leave time for such visits. Earlier in 1862, while still in the 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment at Burton's Farm, Peter almost certainly came in contact with Chaffin's Bluff naval personnel, some of whom were from Gloucester (see Note 13). After his December 1862 exchange, conscription laws from which he seemingly had earlier been suspiciously "exempted," may have obligated him to enter into some type of military

Note 12: Under an agreement signed July 22, 1862, exchanging prisoners was typical practice, although it eventually became more sporadic, and was later halted completely by General Grant after he took command of most U.S. forces. An "equivalent importance scale" was used (for example, fifteen privates equaled one colonel) if men of identical rank were not available. Regardless of rank, if a man could not be exchanged within ten days after capture, he was to be paroled and required to go home to await notification of his exchange. (In Virginia, those not exchanged on the battlefield were often held until they could be exchanged in groups at Aikens.) When Washington was still a member of the 5th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, he was captured and paroled on Wednesday, October 1, 1862, at Warrenton, Virginia, and was at his home when Peter was arrested there in early November following the *Alleghanian's* destruction. Washington was turned over to local U.S. Army authorities, and although the records say he was known to be a private in the 5th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, no evidence has been found of his being incarcerated, suggesting that he had papers attesting to his being home on parole rather than on leave.

Note 13: On July 2, 1862, the four companies that had previously served at Gloucester Point under Navy Captain Thomas Jefferson Page were detailed from the 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment to man the naval guns at Chaffin's Bluff. There is little doubt that Peter knew Captain Page and probably most of his men. Page, known primarily for being the *Stonewall's* captain, was an uncle of Powhatan R. Page (killed June 17, 1864) who commanded the Gloucester Point fortifications while Peter was "guard boat" captain.

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

service. John Taylor Wood conducted other successful ship raiding expeditions besides the one on which Peter served as “pilot,” and the Confederate Congress passed a resolution February 15, 1863, thanking Wood and all others who participated in these ventures. Since Peter became Acting Master February 16, could the resolution have offered him this rank? Some or all of the above may have induced Peter to join the Confederate Navy.

The *C.S.S. Torpedo*

The term “pilot” as used in the records to describe Peter’s 1863-1864 *C.S.S. Torpedo* assignment can be said with almost certainty to be referring to him as its helmsman, the individual who “steers the boat.” A seventy foot long, one hundred fifty ton wooden gunboat, the *Torpedo* normally operated just east of Richmond within a ten to fifteen mile segment of the James River. On John Taylor Wood’s fall of 1862 Chesapeake Bay raiding expedition, Peter acted as a pilot “guide” in waters not familiar to Wood or the others. In its normal service area, the *Torpedo* would not need this type pilot. Although it saw use for mail delivery, as a picket boat, an ice breaker, a tug for towing other boats in for repair, and occasionally for special missions that will be described later, it usually served as the Submarine Battery Service’s floating headquarters and for placing and maintaining torpedoes in the river. These explosive devices contained as much as 2,000 pounds of cannon formula black powder that when dry could easily be unintentionally ignited by a carelessly controlled small flame or static electricity spark. If wet, however, it was useless.

On board the *Torpedo* experiments were carried out to improve detonator water tightness and reliability, to reduce the size of electric batteries, and to increase their current output. Davidson’s implements of destruction were electrically detonated by semi stationary wet cell batteries hooked in series on shore. Torpedoes submerged at several places in the river’s immediate area were connected by wire to the batteries. At a nearby concealed observation position an operator had in his possession a smaller battery that was wired to the remote larger ones, the entire system being interconnected such that he could select the torpedo to be exploded. Aiming stakes in the water and on the opposite river bank gave him the ability to precisely know the underwater torpedo locations, allowing him to “cross the wires” on his small battery, causing current from the larger batteries to detonate the selected torpedo at the instant a moving enemy ship was over it. The dangerous nature and exacting demands of this work would have required those involved to be intelligent, skillful at their respective duties, and have a high degree of dedication to their cause.

Richard Cooke’s Confederate Navy Service

Born circa 1841, Richard Cooke (see Note 14) was a former slave belonging to Peter Smith. He is described in Fred Wolf’s 1915 Gloucester News Reporter writing as Peter’s body servant while they were on the James in the summer of 1863, and according to Peter’s January 1909 obituary, Cooke remained with Peter “until his [Peter’s] capture” May 6, 1864.

Note 14: The January through March 1864, *Torpedo* crewmember muster role lists him as “Richard Cook.” In Confederate veteran Fred Wolf’s 1915 published account of the attempted destruction of the U.S. gunboat *Commodore Barney*, Wolf calls him “Jim Cook.” It is not known whether “Jim” was a nickname or simply incorrect - since Mr. Wolf’s account was published more than fifty years after the described event, his memory of Cooke’s first name could have been mistaken. Peter’s 1909 obituary refers to Richard Cooke as “Dick Cook,” and the 1870 Gloucester County census records identify him as “Richard Cook.”

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Although no information has been found to date to support this conjecture, Washington being a Submarine Battery Service member when Peter was captured, probably arranged for Richard Cooke's return to Gloucester. In Peter's June 26, 1863, letter to Washington's wife, he writes — "I understand Mr. Thos. Baytop is in the city [Richmond] and will start for Gloucester today." His February 7, 1865, letter to her says — "I hope you do not think hard of me not coming to see you when I was in Gloucester." These statements illustrate that wartime travel between Richmond and Gloucester occurred throughout the war, but it is doubtful that a "free black" would have been able to make such a journey alone and without official "travel pass" papers.

Peter's February 7, 1865, letter to Washington's wife, asking her to "remember him kindly to Mr. Cook" suggests that Richard Cooke was most likely then living with or near Washington's family. His Confederate pension application states that he served for "three years" until "April 9, at Appomattox" as a "marine" (see Note 15).

Why Cooke may have remained in military service after his mid-1864 return to Gloucester is puzzling. Peter's February 7, 1865, letter documents him as being in Gloucester County at that time and provides no indication that Peter expected Cooke to return to the James River "submarine defenses." Even though Peter was almost seventy-eight years old when he signed Richard Cooke's pension application attesting to the validity of Cooke's service, it is doubtful that he would have knowingly done so on a less than truthful document. Peter was paroled in Williamsburg in early May, but Washington received his at Appomattox. Could Richard Cooke have returned to the James River defenses in the final weeks before the fall of Richmond and been with Washington at Appomattox? The parole list consulted does not contain Cooke's name, and Peter's 1909 obituary leads one to think probably not. However, Peter's February 7 letter states that after Washington's "special service" he hopes Washington will "be able to get a leave of

Subm Defences Jas River Feby 7 1865
My Dear Sister

Our dear Washington is not here just now he went on some special service last week and does not expect to get back before next week and then I hope he will be able to get a leave of absence and come home as I know you want to see him very bad.

I hope you do not think hard of my not coming to see you when I was in Gloucester. I was only there five days and the yankeys made a raid just at that time. I left some time before my leave expired. I would certainly have come but for fear of the yankeys finding out that I was in Gloucester.

I suppose you heard of our river commissioners starting for Washington. They went no further than Fortress Monroe —was there met by Lincoln and Seward but did not succeed in accomplishing any thing so we have no alternative left but to fight it out.

I am glad to inform that there will soon be a general exchange of prisoners and I hope your Bro. may be one of the first to come on as I know something of a prison life but his suffering is nothing like mine was.

You will please Kiss all the dear little children for me and tell them I want to see them very bad. You must excuse my short hurried letter as I am very unwell. Remember me kindly to Mr. Cook and tell him I would like very much to see him please write often,

Very truly your Bro
PW Smith

Letter from Peter W. Smith to sister -in-law Catherine Hughes Smith, wife of George Washington Smith.

Note 15: At no time during the war were there more than about six hundred marines serving the Confederacy, and they were usually assigned to shipboard duties such as boarding parties or to guard details. It is unknown if Cooke officially carried on marine roles, but the records indicate other Confederate Navy blacks were. His "marine" designation may have been for pay purposes only, but he is known to have participated in activities exposing him to capture. Had that occurred, marine classification may have been a way of identifying him as a Confederate combatant eligible for exchange rather than having his captors consider him to be a "contraband" (Yankee term for runaway slave).

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

absence and come home as I know you want to see him very bad.” It is doubtful that Washington made it home before his surrender, but if he did, Cooke may have returned with him. February 18, 1865, records identify Washington as being hospitalized (probably in the Richmond Naval Hospital) — the likely reason being effects suffered during a documented end of January “special service” (to be discussed later) in which he is thought to have participated. These questions will probably never be answered with complete certainty.

Stories, passed through Peter’s family to his present day descendants, indicate that when war was imminent Peter freed his slaves (how many he had is unknown). Richard Cooke’s name does not appear as a “free black” in the 1860 Gloucester County census publication consulted. Since slave names were not included, it is assumed Cooke was then still a slave belonging to Peter. It is, however, known that Cooke was instrumental to the detonation of a large underwater torpedo that damaged the U.S. gunboat *Commodore Barney* in August of 1863, and according to his 1906 pension application, he served on the *C.S.S. Torpedo* which is confirmed by its January through March of 1864 muster role.

The level of esteem that Peter Smith and Richard Cooke had for each other is illustrated by Peter’s February 7, 1865, letter to Washington’s wife — “Remember me kindly to Mr. Cook and tell him I would like very much to see him,” and Peter’s January 1909, obituary which states that at the burial Dick Cook “gave unmistakable signs of distress.”

Special Mission for the *C.S.S. Torpedo*

Peter writes in his Friday, June 26, 1863, letter to Washington’s wife — “I have heard from the 5 Va. Cavalry this morning. They were very badly cut up and several of our Gloucester men wounded & missing, but thanks be to God I understand ‘Washington’ is safe so far, and I sincerely hope the alwise hand of providence may watch over him and take care of him. I am in Rich’d awaiting orders and expect to leave in a few days but where for I do not know.” The Confederate Navy Department shared the Mechanics’ Institute building (located at the southwest corner of Capitol Square) with the War Department where reports of Confederate Army activity would have been received by telegraph. This is most likely how Peter obtained his information about Washington and the “5 Va Cavalry” (see Note 16).

Rich’d Va
June 26th 1863

My Dear Sister

I understand Mr Thos Baytop is in the city and will start for Gloucester today so I avail the opportunity of writing you a few lines as there is a prospect of its Reaching you. I have heard from the 5 Va Cavalry this morning. They were very badly cut up and several of our Gloucester men wounded & missing, but thanks be to God I understand “Washington” is safe so far, and I sincerely hope the alwise hand of providence may watch over him and take care of him. I am in Rich’d awaiting orders and expect to leave in a few days but where for I do not Know. I will Send you the Comb & Ella The Song Book & Lizzie some candy if I see Mr Baytop. Excuse this short note as I am afraid it will be too late.

Write soon & Very Affectionately
Your Bro &
PW Smith

Letter from Peter W. Smith to Catherine Hughes Smith, wife of Peter’s brother, George

Note 16: Peter was probably referring to casualties suffered on Wednesday, June 17 at Aldie, Virginia. The records show five men killed, thirteen wounded, and forty taken prisoner. Skirmishes involving the 5th Virginia Cavalry Regiment also occurred at Upperville on June 19 and Middleburg June 21, but losses were minimal. Speculation further suggests that this letter was written at the Mechanics’ Institute building or on board the *Torpedo* either docked or anchored near Rocketts. The secrecy surrounding Peter’s orders implies

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

Records show that on Saturday, July 4, 1863, the *Torpedo* was anchored in the lower James River near White Point lighthouse in the vicinity of Newport News and was in use as a flag-of-truce vessel carrying Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens. Messages between the *Torpedo* and U.S. Navy forces indicate Vice President Stephens was requesting that the *Torpedo* be allowed to pass through the blockade and proceed to Washington, D.C., to deliver a communication from Jefferson Davis to Abraham Lincoln. "I [Stephens] desire to proceed directly to Washington city in the steamer *Torpedo*, commanded by Hunter Davidson, of the C.S. Navy, no person being on board but the Hon. Mr. Ould, (see Note 17) myself, and the boat's officers and crew." On July 6, the request was denied, and the *Torpedo* returned up the James to Richmond.

Surviving records identify Peter as the *Torpedo's* pilot for part of 1863. He was familiar with the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers as far north as Baltimore, making him an ideal helmsman on such an important mission. His having been ordered by the Confederate Secretary of War to act as a guide type pilot for John Taylor Wood's fall of 1862 raiding party shows that high level officials were aware of Peter's knowledge of the bay. Being in Richmond on June 26, "awaiting orders" and expecting to leave "in a few days," but not knowing where he was being sent, leaves virtually no doubt that Peter was to be the *Torpedo's* helmsman when Jefferson Davis had his communication ready for delivery. Richard Cooke was probably on this mission as well, since he served as officers' steward on the *Torpedo* while Peter was assigned to it.

Richard Cooke Damages the U.S. Gunboat *Commodore Barney*

About 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, August 4, 1863, a four boat U.S. Navy reconnaissance mission started from off Newport News up the James River. Around 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday in the vicinity of Cox's farm, a torpedo exploded near the bow of the five hundred thirteen ton *Commodore Barney* (see Note 18). Twenty men were thrown overboard, and the engine was disabled, necessitating that a sister ship take her in tow.

As stated previously, during Hunter Davidson's absence that day, Peter Smith was in charge of "submarine defenses." After attempting to detonate other malfunctioning torpedoes down river as the enemy ships passed, Peter sent Richard Cooke to the next up river station "as fast as his legs would carry him." Cooke prepared the electrical apparatus, and when a fellow Confederate from the nearby 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment arrived, told the man he was "all ready," then "crossed the wires." Although the *Commodore Barney* survived, and the follow-up U.S. Navy officers' reports declared their mission to have been a success, this incident halted further Federal ship ventures of any significance

that he and the *Torpedo* would have both been close to where the orders would originate - the highest level of the Navy Department for such a mission, and that the ship would have been kept manned and supplied for a short notice departure.

Note 17: Judge Robert Ould was Confederate prisoner exchange commissioner. The trip's official purpose was to open negotiations for resuming exchanges, but some historians believe there were also additional reasons. U.S. Secretary of War Stanton had stopped them, and the swelling numbers of prisoners on both sides were suffering from inadequate care. Since the North had a larger manpower pool, he felt it could win the war by attrition.

Note 18: The *Commodore Barney* and *Commodore Jones* destroyed by Peter May 6, 1864, were originally ferryboats, a number of which the Federals converted into gunboats. Their decks designed to support heavy loads, shallow drafts, and ability to move in reverse as readily as forward made them ideal craft for transporting troops and equipment by way of the often narrow and heavily shoaled, meandering southern rivers.

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

into the Confederate held portion of the river until early May 1864.

Washington Smith Joins the Submarine Battery Service

Confederate Congressional acts of April 1862 and May 1863 authorized army members to transfer to the navy, the need becoming more extreme as time progressed. Washington transferred from the 5th Virginia Cavalry Regiment to the Confederate Navy on Thursday, November 5, 1863, was appointed Acting Master on Saturday, November 28, and paid Saturday, December 5 in Richmond, probably at the War Department in the Mechanics' Institute building as remaining compensation owed for his cavalry service. It is only conjecture, but Peter likely had a role in Washington's transfer. Lee's army was decimated at Gettysburg, and although the 5th Virginia Cavalry Regiment did not directly participate in those early July 1863 battles, Peter's June 26 letter (written as the army was moving towards Gettysburg) expresses concern for his brother's well being. The favorable higher government level recognition that torpedo usage was gaining by this time and dire shortage of naval personnel suggest Peter may have intervened through Hunter Davidson's direct ties with Secretary Mallory to initiate and/or expedite Washington's navy transfer and assignment to the Submarine Battery Service (see Note 19). Being composed of such a small number of men, it seems improbable that without influence Washington would have been placed in that particular unit. The January through March 1864, *Torpedo* muster role shows Peter and Washington were the only Acting Masters assigned to her during that time, further suggesting Peter's influence with Davidson.

Again there is no supporting evidence, but after being paid December 5, 1863, Washington might have been granted leave time to visit his family with orders to report on the *Torpedo* January 1. There were three officers assigned to her January through March of 1864 — Peter, Washington, and an engineer in charge of the propulsion system. Since Peter and the engineer would have been occupied maintaining or operating the ship, Washington may have assisted with the experimental work Davidson carried out on board. If so, that may explain why he was chosen to be one of the torpedo boat *Squib's* seven man crew when it attacked the North Atlantic Blockade Squadron's Flagship *Minnesota* in April. Records identify the *Squib's* crew by name and mission responsibilities for most of them. By process of elimination, Washington's role appears to have been associated with attaching the armed torpedo to the *Squib's* bow mounted spar and possibly with adjusting the torpedo to the desired water depth as the target ship was approached. If this was the case, it would lend additional support to the conjecture of his being involved with spar torpedo development. A "cool headed" man (as a cavalryman, Washington had "seen the elephant", i.e., engaged in combat) familiar enough with the apparatus to prepare it in the dark for use would have been a necessity for crew survival and mission success.

As the *Torpedo* was also used for arming and deploying stationary torpedoes, maintaining the associated electrical wiring and verifying that river currents had not altered torpedo locations, crewmembers including Washington would have participated in these activities.

Note 19: As stated earlier, a cavalryman was responsible for providing his own mount and was paid \$.40 per day, the only compensation he received unless the animal was killed in battle. Washington may have requested a transfer because his horse had been severely wounded, was weak from malnourishment, or suffered from hoof-and-mouth disease. Due to the ravages of war, procuring another was almost impossible even if a man had funds to buy one, and if he had no mount, he had to walk - no small feat in a highly mobile unit.

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When enemy aggression increased in the spring of 1864, Washington's responsibilities became more focused on duties associated with torpedo detonating positions. Records from late May and early June show he acted as an observer of enemy movements near the Confederate held portion of the river and was in command of the men who accompanied him. Telegraph messages he sent to Davidson reflect his familiarity with the local area, suggesting he had on previous occasions performed in this capacity. Washington's assignment to "submarine defense" batteries are documented as late as January 22, 1865 — during preparations for what would become known as the Battle of Trent's Reach. Peter and the *Torpedo* were temporarily assigned to the James River Squadron's attack flotilla, but since Washington "had no knowledge of commanding a ship," he was placed in charge of "Semmes Submarine Battery."

The Torpedo Boat *Squib* Attacks the Flagship *Minnesota*

The approximately forty -six foot long *Squib* was the first of several such lightly armored, low silhouette wooden vessels eventually built by the Confederates and called torpedo boats. Each had a name and was powered by a single cylinder coal fired steam engine. On the end of an eighteen foot long wooden spar attached to the boat's bow by hinge was a percussion detonated torpedo containing about fifty pounds of black powder. By using a rope and pulley mechanism, the torpedo could be adjusted up or down to achieve the desired underwater position for inflicting maximum damage to an enemy ship. The percussion fuse system consisted of several separate fuses located such that slight variations in the torpedo's angle with respect to the target vessel's hull on impact would still result in at least one of the fuses detonating.

The *Squib* and its crew (including Washington) under command of Hunter Davidson began the mission by being towed, possibly by the *Torpedo* with Peter Smith as helmsman, to where the river was under enemy control. From there, they proceeded to Hampton Roads traveling under cover of darkness and hiding in creeks during daylight. On Saturday, April 9, 1864, after making its way into the enemy fleet, the *Squib* rammed its spar torpedo into the North Atlantic Blockade Squadron's two hundred sixty -five foot long *Minnesota* at approximately 2:15 A.M. inflicting major structural damage to the flagship but not sinking it. The wave created by the explosion almost swamped the *Squib*, causing her single cylinder engine to "catch on center." Under enemy fire the torpedo boat's engineer was able to restart the engine, and the attackers escaped while continuing to receive fire from small arms and shipboard cannons. Davidson first sailed east to confuse the enemy, then reversed course for the Pagan River to hide. After learning the Confederates' location, the U.S. Navy sent out a one boat capture party that engaged in a firefight with them, but when the Federal officer in charge was killed by a shot to the head his crew fled in their craft. The *Squib* then headed back up the James River to safe haven.

After the attack, the recommendation was made by their superiors that one U.S. Navy officer be relieved and two dismissed from service. However, it is unknown if those actions were carried out. Davidson's official report to Navy Secretary Mallory expressed commendation of the highest degree for the *Squib* crew's mission performance, but Secretary Mallory's fears regarding possible enemy reprisals against Submarine Battery Service members were shortly afterwards confirmed — Admiral Samuel Phillips Lee (a third cousin of Confederate General R.E. Lee) sent word by way of the U.S. commissioner for

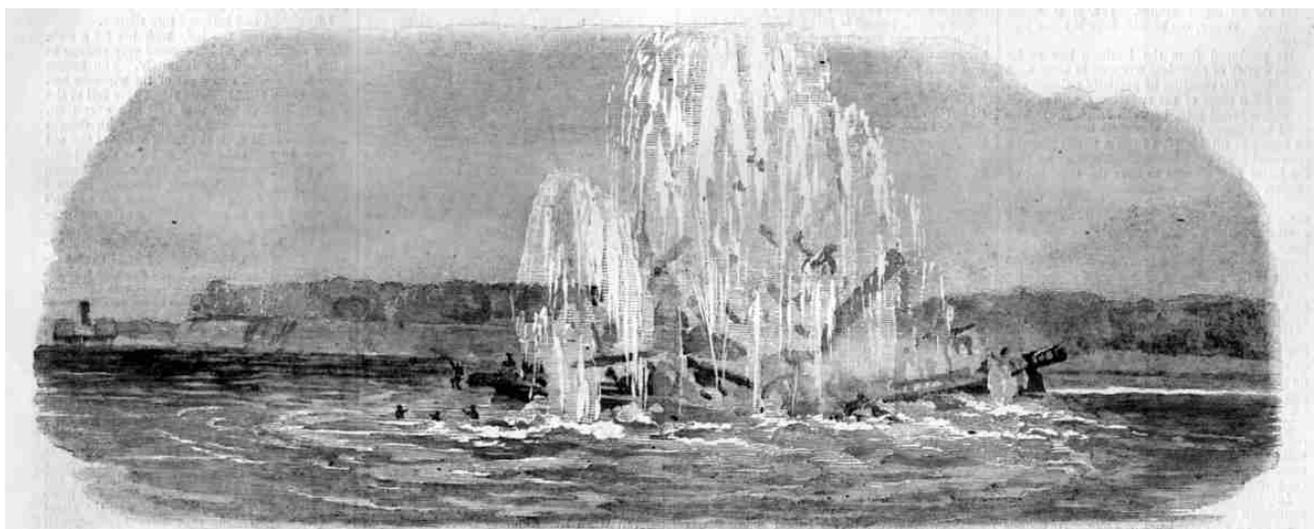
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prisoner exchange that Davidson would be hanged if he was ever caught (see Note 20).

Peter Smith Destroys the U.S. Gunboat *Commodore Jones*

By the end of April 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant had devised a plan to crush his opponent. His Shenandoah Valley troops would disrupt Richmond's westward railroad lines preventing Lee from bringing reinforcements from that region while (beginning with the Battle of the Wilderness) Grant pushed Lee's main army southward. Simultaneously, the U.S. Navy was to transport General Benjamin F. Butler's Army of the James from Tidewater to City Point (Hopewell). From there, the navy would support Butler's army as it pressed on toward Richmond, trapping Lee's forces between Butler's and Grant's.

Before embarking from the Newport News area at 3:00 A.M. on May 5, Admiral S.P. Lee issued orders to be followed if torpedoes were encountered. On Wednesday, May 6, as part of the flotilla neared Confederate lines, contrabands warned the Federals there were a number of torpedoes in the vicinity. In accordance with Admiral Lee's instructions, smaller vessels dragged the river bottom with grappling hooks in advance of the larger ships. On that afternoon, Peter and two comrades-in-arms manned the forward most operator position at Deep Bottom on the river's south side opposite the mouth of Four Mile Creek.



**Destruction of the United State GunBoat "Commodore Jones" on the James
(*Harper's Weekly*, May 20, 1864)**

Note 20: A proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln on April 19, 1861, stated that persons acting under "pretended authority," to "molest a [blockading] vessel of the United States" would be held "amenable to the laws of the United States for the prevention and punishment of piracy." The United States never officially recognized the Confederacy as a legitimate form of government; therefore, members of the *Squib's* mission probably could legally have been considered by Admiral Lee to be pirates subject to hanging. Fortunately for Confederate Navy personnel, this proclamation was rarely enforced. The few instances where it was involved "privateers" (civilians acting under government authority) early in the war who had been issued Confederate "letters of marque" (government papers carried by privateers that authorized their actions). Even in these cases, only one or two captured men were hanged, the rest being imprisoned and eventually exchanged or released. A detailed "privateering" discussion is beyond the scope of this writing, but it was used extensively by the United States against Great Britain in the War of 1812 and was still legally recognized under U.S. law until Lincoln's proclamation. This condemnation created friction between the United States and the international community, especially with the British. It is interesting to consider what may have happened to Davidson, Washington, and other *Squib* crewmembers had they been caught.

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Peter's intended target was the ironclad *Atlanta*, captured in Georgia by the enemy in July of 1863, after running aground. She had been placed in U.S. Navy service and was accompanying their other ships that day to bombard Confederate heavy gun positions. As Peter waited, the *Atlanta* stopped while several smaller craft moved forward then reversed direction. Around 2:00 P.M., believing the flotilla was retreating down river, he "crossed the wires" as the five hundred forty-two ton *Commodore Jones* passed over a torpedo. The ship was completely destroyed, killing approximately forty-five men on board. From one of the smaller boats dragging the river, the coxswain fired at a man running from the area killing him instantly. Then men put ashore from the *U.S.S. Mackinaw* after the explosion discovered Peter and Jeffries Johnson just as Peter was preparing a second torpedo for detonation. After being taken aboard the *Mackinaw* and interrogated to learn the locations of other torpedoes, Peter would only say there were many others in the river, and Johnson responded that he knew nothing since he had only recently joined the "river defenses" to be near his home in the area. However, when he was placed in the lead craft "to suffer its fate," Johnson "talked," and the Federals "learned more in ten minutes than they had [previously] in the entire war." Johnson's fate is unknown, but Peter was sent to Fort Lafayette where he endured very harsh conditions. Referring to Washington's wife's brother in his February 7, 1865, letter, Peter says — "I know something of a prison life but his suffering is nothing like mine was." On September 17, Peter was moved to Fort Warren, where he remained until exchanged (see Note 21).

Washington Smith Reports on Federal Activity after Peter's Capture

Records show that towards the end of May and into early June 1864, Washington acted as a forward observer along the river reporting his findings by telegraph to Hunter Davidson behind Confederate defense lines (see Note 22).

Davidson in turn kept James River Squadron Commander Mitchell and Navy Secretary Mallory informed. On June 3, while armies under Generals Grant and R.E. Lee were engaged at Cold Harbor, Davidson exhibited grave concern that Federals along the river

Note 21: Completed in 1822 between the lower end of Staten Island and Long Island, New York, Fort Lafayette was converted to a military prison in July of 1861. After Lincoln declared martial law, and on Sunday, April 21st, 1861, suspended the constitutionally guaranteed writ of habeas corpus (right of the accused to a court trial), most "political" prisoners were held there, as were many captured "privateers." When Peter was captured in the fall of 1862, (supposedly as a private citizen "forced" to join the expedition that burned the *Alleghanian*), the Federals intended to send him to Fort Lafayette. Records show, however, that the Confederates selected one or more Union military prisoners to be held "hostage" in his stead, and Commissioner Robert Ould then negotiated an exchange. Fort Lafayette's prison "cells" were cold, dark, and damp; the meager food rations were often served half cooked, and the drinking water was dirty - by some accounts containing tadpoles. Completed in 1850 in the Massachusetts Bay off Boston, Fort Warren became the prison site where most captured Confederate Navy officers were sent, and though living conditions were harsh, they were not as severe as those at Fort Lafayette. Nothing has yet been found to support this conjecture, but it is believed that Peter's Fort Lafayette location was known by Confederate authorities. Because of the critical role Peter played in "river defenses" and his demonstrated dedication to duty, Davidson and Mitchell most assuredly wanted him back as soon as possible, and may have petitioned Secretary Mallory to exert his influence. Peter's October exchange with other navy officers at Fort Warren suggests Mallory, who would have known of negotiations on their behalf, brought pressure through Commissioner Ould to have Peter moved to Fort Warren in time to be one of those exchanged.

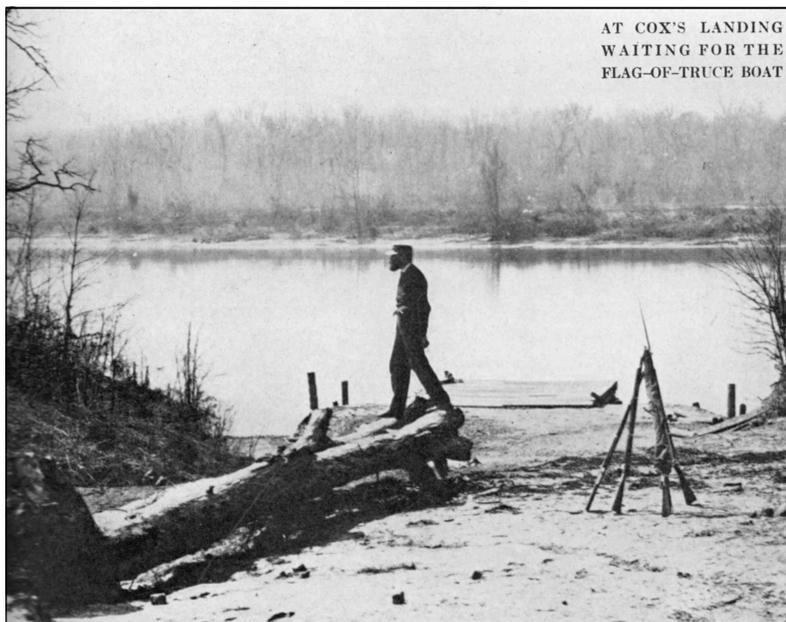
Note 22: Washington's observation sites at Signal Hill and Cox's barn fell permanently into enemy hands when they succeeded September 29th in capturing Fort Harrison, a major Confederate Army stronghold later constructed where the 26th Virginia Infantry Regiment was stationed in 1862. Based on the wording of Washington's May 29th message - "Mr. Gregory is all ready," a torpedo detonating position was probably near Cox's barn.

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

may resume their movement. History has shown, however, that Peter's destruction of the *Commodore Jones* demonstrated to Admiral S.P. Lee the awesome power of Submarine Battery Service river defenses, and he had no stomach for immediately testing them further. After the capture of Fort Harrison and an attempt by U.S. Navy forces to shell Drewery's Bluff, the conflict along the river essentially became a stalemate. The Federals constructed river obstructions at Trent's Reach several miles east of those put in place by the Confederates, and General Butler's army troops dug in at Bermuda Hundred.

Peter Smith Rejoins his Submarine Battery Service Compatriots

Peter was exchanged on Tuesday, October 18, 1864, at Cox's Landing on the James River with a group of men consisting primarily of the *Atlanta's* captured officers. Hunter Davidson, his former commander, was enroute to Europe for "special service" at the time of the first reference to Peter found dated after his exchange. It seems that he had resumed his former *Torpedo* helmsman duties, and she was to be outfitted for her upcoming assignment. November 18 records show Peter had recently prepared an inventory of the ship's contents for her new temporary commander, Lieutenant Ivey Foreman. The *Torpedo* had been ordered to participate in picket duty with other James River Squadron vessels after first having her field carriage mounted howitzer cannon "properly fitted" (deck mounted) and then receiving "proper ammunition." Secretary Mallory was still pressing Commander Mitchell, who as said earlier, had taken command of the James River Squadron May 6 (the same day Peter had been captured) to use his ironclad ships (now consisting of the *Virginia II*, *Richmond*, and *Fredericksburg*) to attack the Union's City Point supply depot. When Mitchell assumed command of the James River Squadron, he was also given command of "all naval vessels in the James River, except the *Patrick Henry* (the Confederate's floating naval academy for midshipmen's training)" and ordered to "prepare them for service against the enemy with all possible dispatch" (see Note 23).



Note 23: In April 1862, U.S. Admiral David G. Farragut's fleet fought its way past Confederate forts guarding access to New Orleans by way of the Mississippi River resulting in their surrender, and shortly afterwards, surrender of the city itself. Only days before Farragut's attack, Mitchell had taken command of the Confederate naval defenses, and although a formal investigation exonerated his actions, his service record had been "blemished." Despite Secretary Mallory's impatience, Mitchell was determined to avoid additional negative marks against his career when attacking City Point, so he delayed taking action until the James River Squadron's gun batteries on shore and ironclad ships could be adequately manned by properly trained crews. The *Atlanta's* former officers exchanged in October with Peter provided the needed experienced command personnel, and the Confederate Army was directed to transfer enlisted men for training as sailors.

Confederate Navy Service of Peter & Washington Smith

On Thursday, December 8, in an order to Acting Master Shippey of the gunboat *Roanoke*, Commander Mitchell states that he just found out the *Torpedo*, “temporarily disabled from an accident to her machinery,” was at Rocketts (see Note 24).

Mitchell also indicates that the *Torpedo* had been in use as a mail boat. To guard against a surprise night attack on the gun batteries nearest enemy lines, gunboats and ironclads were being sent down river after dark to Kingsland Reach for picket duty. Since these vessels returned at daylight to anchorage off Chaffin’s Bluff, the *Torpedo* at that time was probably seeing service as a picket boat at night and a rotating turn at mail delivery during the day to and from Richmond. Mail boat duty appears to have been shared by several ships as Commander Mitchell’s December 8 communication to Master Shippey further states — “If required, you [meaning the *Roanoke*] will take her place as the mail boat until relieved by the *Shrapnel* tomorrow morning.” The wording of this message implies that if repairs to the *Torpedo* are completed in time to perform mail delivery, the *Roanoke* would not be needed for that duty, and that the *Shrapnel* was scheduled to do so the next day.

The Battle of Trent’s Reach

In late January 1865, Commander Mitchell decided to proceed with the City Point attack. On the 15th, Lieutenant Charles W. Read, commander of the *Squib* class torpedo boats, had sent a boat to reconnoiter down river, and Masters Mate J.W. Billups reported freshets (floods) had washed away much of the enemy’s river obstructions (see Note 25).

On its journey, Mitchell’s Squadron would have to pass by Federal land positions near the river, negotiate what remained of the enemy’s obstructions, and battle their ships. The stakes were high, however, as Grant’s army was now on the southside of the James and might be forced into retreat if its access to the City Point supply depot could be blocked.

Records show that the winter of 1865 was extremely cold with considerable snow and ice. Adequate clothing and food were in short supply, and although manpower was increased in the fall of 1864, shortages from sickness and other reasons still remained.

Note 24: The Confederates had two shipbuilding and repair sites at Richmond. Named after Robert Rockett who began operating a ferry service from there in 1730, the Rocketts community below Chimborazo Hill had by the early 1860s become a thriving inland seaport where numerous businesses and light industries both utilized and serviced the primary shipping industry. When the U.S. North Atlantic Blockade Squadron successfully blocked maritime traffic through Hampton Roads in May 1862, both sides of the James in the Rocketts area were turned over to Confederate officials for their use. Afterwards, only ships of war docked at the existing wharves, taking on supplies from local military facilities. Rocketts Navy Yard was constructed on the river’s north bank, and on the southside almost directly across from it, a second facility known only as the “yard opposite Rocketts” was built. Although both shipyards engaged in building ironclads, gunboats, and torpedo boats, it seems that most ship repairs were performed at the Rocketts Navy Yard.

Note 25: As stated earlier, the Confederates and Federals had each blocked the channel near their opposing land defense lines to prevent the other side from mounting a river attack of any significance. The obstructions consisted of such things as felled trees, heavy chains, “cribs” filled with stones, and sunken ships (no longer serviceable because of rotting hulls). As an additional defensive measure besides the various Submarine Battery Service manned stationary “electric” torpedo sites, the Confederates had also anchored smaller percussion detonated torpedoes below the water line in the vicinity of their primary obstruction line. The freshets barely disturbed the Confederate obstructions, but did wash away the anchored torpedoes. Held in reserve were “fire ships,” i.e., non -serviceable vessels that could be ignited and set free in the river, as well as a large number of free floating torpedoes of various designs. Should Federal ships ever breach the main protection lines, these implements of war could be deployed with the hope that river currents would carry at least some of them into the advancing enemy.

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The *Torpedo* and its crew were to participate, but since Lieutenant Thomas P. Bell (then commanding the *Torpedo*) was ill, Mitchell placed Peter in command of the mission (see Note 26).

Scheduling their departure based on the time of that evening's high tide, the Squadron sailed for enemy held waters under the cover of darkness at approximately 7:00 P.M. on Monday, January 23. The *Fredericksburg*, being the smallest of the three ironclads and drawing the least water, led the way followed by Commander Mitchell's Flagship *Virginia II*, and then the *Richmond*. To avoid collisions in the narrow twisting river channel, the gunboats and torpedo boats had been lashed to the ironclads. The *Torpedo* was secured to the starboard side of the *Virginia II* "abreast of shield," and the torpedo boat *Scorpion* "on starboard quarter" behind the *Torpedo*, with the gunboat *Nansemond* being tied to the *Virginia II*'s portside. At about 8:00 P.M., after receiving fire from the enemy's Fort Brady (see Note 27) as the Squadron passed by, the *Virginia II* came too close to shore, driving the *Torpedo* aground "near the head of Devil's Reach."

The stranded *Torpedo* was cut loose from the *Virginia II* with Lieutenant Bell, Peter, and the rest of the crew remaining on board while the flagship continued onward with the Squadron. Around 9:00 P.M., the *Nansemond* returned from her mooring to the *Virginia II*, and for about a half hour unsuccessfully attempted to free the *Torpedo*. Thus began a series of mishaps throughout the night and next day that doomed the mission to failure.

The *Virginia II* and *Richmond* anchored five hundred yards apart about a half mile above the Federal obstructions at approximately 10:40 P.M., and Commander Mitchell ventured out in the torpedo boat *Scorpion* to personally verify that his ironclads could pass through the barrier. The *Fredericksburg*, having been sent forward from the other two ironclads, stood by along with the gunboat *Hampton* until Mitchell completed his inspection, then proceeded forward with Mitchell "seeing her through." Although the ship successfully negotiated the barrier, she began to leak after striking an object below water and also damaged her torpedo outriggers (see Note 28).

Mitchell then returned up river in the *Scorpion* to his flagship while the *Hampton* joined the *Fredericksburg*. To his dismay, upon his arrival about 1:45 A.M., he found that in his absence the *Virginia II* had dragged her anchorage until going aground, and due to the falling tide, the *Richmond* had also become grounded.

Before his ship had become immobilized, Captain John M. Kell of the *Richmond* sent the gunboats *Drewery* and *Beaufort* (that were lashed to his ship at the beginning of the mission) to the aid of the *Virginia II*. After the *Nansemond* returned to the *Virginia II* from her attempt to free the *Torpedo*, the *Drewery* was ordered to the *Torpedo*'s assistance and was able to drag her off the river bank shortly before midnight. The two ships then headed

Note 26: As said previously, Washington, "having no knowledge of commanding a ship," was assigned to relieve Boatswain Thomas Gauley in command of "Semmes Submarine Battery," a torpedo operator's station near Semmes Naval Gun Battery.

Note 27: After the Federals captured the area in September 1864, they built Fort Brady at Signal Hill where Washington had been a forward observer in late May and early June.

Note 28: Torpedo outriggers were part of the apparatus employed by the ironclads for protection against striking surface or slightly submerged percussion (contact) detonated torpedoes. By early 1865, the enemy also had "contact" torpedoes, and the river was littered with ones disbursed by the Confederates that had broken free of their anchors and been scattered by river currents. The threat was real - on February 17, the Confederate flag-of-truce steamer *Schultz*, in use as a prisoner exchange transport ship, sank after she hit a wayward Confederate mine. Fortunately, only the crew was on board at the time.

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down river to the flagship, the *Drewery* towing the *Torpedo* until she built enough steam to travel under her own power. Upon reporting to the *Virginia II* for orders, the *Torpedo* was sent to anchor “opposite [Confederate] Battery Dantzler, under cover of a wooded point of land.” With the exception of the later grounded *Drewery* and the torpedo boat *Scorpion*, all of the wooden boats would be ordered there before dawn to “secure them from enemy observation, or at least afford some protection from his fire.”

As the *Torpedo* proceeded towards Battery Dantzler about half past midnight, the *Drewery* joined the *Beaufort* and *Nansemond* in trying to free the *Virginia II*. After a fruitless effort, the *Drewery* returned to the *Richmond* and there ran aground herself. Both the *Beaufort* and *Nansemond* then attempted to free the *Drewery*, but she refused to move. During all of the groundings and attempted removals, the Confederate ships were under almost constant small arms, cannon, and mortar fire aimed in their general direction in the darkness by the Federals. Mitchell, now back on his flagship, saw there was no hope of continuing the mission until the following evening, so he recalled the *Fredericksburg* and *Hampton* from down river and sent them to join the other ships off Battery Dantzler.

Just before dawn, Kell ordered the crew of the still grounded *Drewery* aboard his ironclad, anticipating that the wooden vessel would be an easy target at daylight. As feared, about fifteen minutes after being abandoned, the *Drewery* blew up when her magazine was hit by a percussion detonated shell fired by an enemy shore battery. Unfortunately, six volunteers in the torpedo boat *Scorpion* were attempting to free the *Drewery* when she exploded. Two were killed, the others thrown into the river, and the damaged *Scorpion* drifted to the Federal’s obstruction line where she later “fell into the hands of the enemy.”

The rising sun also allowed the Federal’s shore batteries and later their ships (including the double turreted ironclad *Onandaga* that had fifteen inch guns) to “take deliberate aim” at the *Richmond* and *Virginia II*, inflicting serious damage until the tide rose enough for them to float free late that morning and retreat towards Battery Dantzler. There they waited with the ironclad *Fredericksburg* and wooden ships until 9:00 P.M. that night when the Squadron assembled in “order of battle” formation and resumed its eastward journey. As the flotilla approached the Federal’s previously breached (by the *Fredericksburg* and *Hampton*) river obstructions, it encountered a “brilliant Drummond light” (see Note 29) shining from shore, “which illuminating the reach [Trent’s Reach], would allow him [the enemy] to direct his fire almost as well at night as by day.”

Commander Mitchell then decided to call his ironclad commanders together for a “council of war.” Since the Federals could accurately aim their guns by Drummond light and because of the damage already incurred by the ships, the “council” agreed that total disaster could only be avoided by aborting the mission. If they pressed forward, they only had about an hour of remaining floodtide to pass over the shallows of Trent’s Reach.

The seemingly endless series of errors continued — when reversing course, the *Hampton’s* propeller became “fouled” in the *Virginia II’s* anchor chain, sustaining damage to where the *Hampton* was unable to move under her own power. She was lashed between the *Torpedo* and the *Nansemond*, and on Wednesday the 25th at approximately 2:45 A.M., the Squadron proceeded to “run the gauntlet” back to Chaffin’s Bluff, the last ship

Note 29: Using a calcium based fuel, Drummond produced a greenish colored bright light that was projected by mirror. The expression “being in the lime light” originated from their common usage in theaters to illuminate the stage during plays.

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returning to anchor there at about 7:30 A.M. (see Note 30).

Peter Smith Ignores the Grim Reaper During The Mission

Although still ill, Lieutenant Bell was in command of the *Torpedo* when the Squadron sailed Monday evening, January 23. Surviving records do not explain this — a January 22 order from Commander Mitchell clearly placed Peter in command. It is suspected, however, that Lieutenant Bell made a last minute appeal to accompany the mission, and even though ill, received Mitchell's approval due to the shortage of available officers.

After the *Nansemond's* unsuccessful attempt to free the grounded *Torpedo*, Lieutenant Bell sent Peter and all other crewmembers but two on board the *Nansemond* with orders to "report the condition of the *Torpedo* to flag-officer." Bell also made a request to Lieutenant Walter R. Butt, commanding the *Nansemond*, that he tell Commander Mitchell, "if I [Bell] do not hear from you [Commander Mitchell] after sufficient time for him [Butt] to communicate with the flagship I [Bell] would take it for granted I was left to use my own discretion." At about 10:30 P.M., the *Nansemond* departed to report to the *Virginia II* down river. Afterwards, upon seeing "the enemy collecting on the north side of the river," and fearing the *Torpedo* would be captured, Bell ordered the two crewmembers on board to "sink" the ship's ram (spar) torpedo in the river (see Note 31), "bank" the engine's boiler fire, and destroy "all other property on board which would be servicable to the enemy."

When the *Nansemond*, with Peter aboard, reported to the grounded flagship, he was ordered to board the gunboat *Drewery* and return up river "to try if possible to get the *Torpedo* off." After the Squadron's return to Chaffin's the morning of the 25th, Peter described in his report to Mitchell what occurred when they reached the *Torpedo* — "On arriving close to *Torpedo*, Captain Wall [the *Drewery's* commanding officer] furnished me with a hawser [thick rope line], which I carried to the *Torpedo* and made it fast. In the meantime the enemy opened heavy fire upon us from Dutch Gap. Lieutenant -Commander Bell, of the *Torpedo*, and all the crew except myself and two men left the *Torpedo*. We succeeded in getting her off, by the assistance of the *Drewery*, under fire." In his January 25th report to Commander Mitchell, Lieutenant Wall of the *Drewery* describes the danger faced while freeing the *Torpedo* — "The enemy opened fire from the north bank with their sharpshooters upon me all the time I was engaged in towing her off."

When preparing his February 3 report to Secretary Mallory regarding the mission's failure, Commander Mitchell wrote — "Acting Master P.W. Smith" ... "bravely remaining steadfast to his duty, is worthy of special notice." Of Lieutenant Bell, Mitchell says — "A letter from Lieutenant T.P. Bell, explanatory of his conduct on the occasion, is herewith enclosed; it is not satisfactory to me, and I submit that his conduct be made the subject of investigation." (see Note 32)

Note 30: Passing through heavy enemy fire on the way back, the lashed together *Torpedo*, *Hampton*, and *Nansemond* arrived at Chaffin's around 5:00 A.M. For failing to destroy the James River Squadron fleet, William A. Parker, U.S. Navy commander of Federal river defenses, was relieved and later court martialed.

Note 31: Each gunboat as well as torpedo boat had been equipped for the mission with a spar torpedo similar to the one the *Squib* used to attack the *Minnesota* in April 1863.

Note 32: While in the Naval Hospital in Richmond, Lieutenant Bell wrote the following explanation for his desertion from the *Torpedo* and actions thereafter - "I took the line from the *Drewery*, gave the order for her to go ahead, started forward to see if the *Torpedo* started off. At that moment the enemy opened a heavy fire with musketry. I endeavored to shelter myself by stepping on the guards or outside the vessel, and by so doing

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Peter continues in his January 25 report to Mitchell — “After getting her off Captain Way [sic. Wall], sent me an engineer and three men. We immediately got up steam and proceeded on down to the squadron. Lieutenant Bell destroyed all the ammunition, ram torpedo, and several other things whilst I was gone to the flagship in the *Nansemond*. When I reached the squadron I was furnished with ammunition, ram torpedo, and such things as could be spared.” Peter was then ordered to take the *Torpedo* to shelter “opposite Battery Dantzler,” and states in his January 25th report that after its arrival there shortly before 1:00 A.M. on the 24th — “The crew of the *Torpedo*, hearing of the *Torpedo* being saved, came [from Battery Semmes where they had gone with Lieutenant Bell] down to the batteries [Dantzler] at Howlett’s at 1:00 p.m. [sic. A.M.] yesterday [January 24th] evening and got on board the *Torpedo* having been ordered up there with other wooden gunboats to be concealed from the enemy’s monitors”.

Throughout the daylight hours of January 24, the ships (including the *Torpedo*) anchored off Battery Dantzler were subjected to fire from sharpshooters and shore batteries, but received little damage. As had been hoped, the enemy could not shift their larger guns enough to take accurate aim and were being shelled themselves by Confederate Batteries Semmes and Dantzler.

Lieutenant Butt, commanding the *Nansemond*, describes in his followup report, the three lashed together ships’ return to Chaffin’s under fire during the early morning of the 25th after the mission was aborted — “When just above Battery Garnett the enemy’s sharpshooters opened upon us from the north bank, which, as we advanced, became so severe as to preclude the possibility of a man showing himself above the hammock nettings to return the fire. Before reaching Signal Hill, [the enemy’s] sharpshooters on the south bank opened, those on the north bank firing by battalion as a cover to a field battery, which next opened, together with a mortar battery in the vicinity of Crow’s Nest and the Signal Hill battery proper. It seems almost miraculous that we should have passed through this fiery ordeal unharmed.” (see Note 33)

Washington Smith’s Early February Secret Mission

In Peter’s February 7, 1865, letter to Washington’s wife, he writes — “Our dear Washington is not here just now he went on some special service last week and does not expect to get back before next week ... ”

Following the Battle of Trent’s Reach, Commander Mitchell approved the first (and only) step taken in what was intended to be a second attempt to deprive General Grant’s army of access to supplies from City Point. On February 3, about one hundred sailors and marines under the overall command of Lieutenant Charles Read left Drewery’s Bluff on

place the rail of the ship between me and the enemy, as the [pilot] house was no shelter. In so doing my foot slipped and I was precipitated overboard. I found the vessel had started off. I was caught by one of the torpedo guys, but being so weak from sickness I could not regain the steamer, had to let go and swim on shore. I endeavored to join the ship by going down the [river] bank, but found the enemy had crossed on the _____ had to turn back. I did not know anyone else had gotten ashore. I did not give any order for the men to leave the ship, and left myself against my will. I ordered the crew to shelter themselves until the enemy stopped firing. I then took the men to Battery Semmes; could not get any farther myself, having a chill I sent the men to the squadron as soon as I could, intending to follow as soon as I was able.”

Note 33: After their return to Chaffin’s Bluff, Lieutenant Joseph D. Wilson, commanding the *Hampton*, reported - “I may mention as an instance of the severity of the enemy’s fire that 810 balls and slugs were found on the deck of the *Hampton* after she had anchored near Chaffin’s Bluff. These shots were received between Batteries Garnett and Semmes.”

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foot. Accompanied by wagons carrying torpedoes and whaling type boats, the mission's objective was to travel overland around the Federals' main defenses and disable or sink the enemy's ironclads, thereby clearing the main obstacle to another City Point attack by the James River Squadron's ships. However, rather than following a directly eastern route, however, the expedition set out behind Confederate Army lines to the west, turned south, and then doubled back to the east below Grant's forces in the Petersburg area, the intention being to launch their small boats in the James River in the vicinity of Surry County. Confederate Navy Lieutenant John Lewis (see Note 34) had earlier been sent ahead to scout a safe route from the Blackwater River overland to the James and was to rendezvous with the expedition at an agreed upon Blackwater fording location.

Other than low temperatures, the first three days and two nights of the trek proved to be uneventful, but during the third night the weather turned extremely cold, and it began to sleet before dawn. That morning the expedition broke camp, managing to press onward even though the driving sleet and icy roads made it almost impossible for the mules to pull the wagons. On the fourth night, they found a deserted farmhouse about a mile from the rendezvous site that offered shelter from the elements and the opportunity for some much needed rest. As the men huddled near fires they built in the old house's fireplaces, a young Confederate entered, declaring that the enemy knew of the plan, and intended to ambush them at the river ford. The youth said that as a prisoner at Fort Monroe he overheard Lewis informing a Federal officer about the mission, and since he had already planned his escape, he decided to do so as quickly as possible and brave the elements to warn them.

After reviewing their options, the decision was made to retreat a mile or so from the farmhouse, cover their tracks, and hide in the woods while Lieutenant Read went forward to verify the man's story. As an added precaution, no fires were lit while they waited for Read throughout that night and most of the next day. About 4:00 P.M., Lieutenant Read returned and said they must head for safety immediately as Yankee cavalymen had already begun searching for them. Traveling at night and hiding in the woods during daylight, the group encountered a civilian who agreed to guide them through enemy held territory to a spot on the Appomattox River where he said they could make their way across to Confederate forces not far from the opposite shore. The man took them to an area of the river between enemy picket positions where the water was about waist deep.

Note 34: When Virginia seceded, John Lewis was a mate aboard a U.S. merchant ship in port at Norfolk. He left the vessel, eventually joining the Confederate Army, and was wounded in the 1st Battle of Manassas. Lewis transferred from the army to the navy in late June 1864, became a 1st Lieutenant July 26 in the Provisional Navy, then served on the Confederate ironclad *Albemarle* in North Carolina, and later the gunboat *Drewery* on the James River. Although a "Yankee" by birth, his service record indicated that he could be relied upon for such a critical part of the mission, but unfortunately this trustworthiness was to be proven false. Lewis probably foresaw the Confederacy's impending demise and viewed the scouting role as an opportunity for him to "make amends" with the winning side in the war. At that time, desertions by enlisted men were steadily increasing, and in addition to Lewis, although to a lesser degree, desertions of lower grade officers were occurring. Fewer and fewer men on the front lines of the James River defenses continued to be willing to suffer imprisonment or die for what was ever more clearly becoming a "lost cause." Having previously requested and been denied a conference in Washington, D.C., peace overtures from Confederate "Comissioners" Vice President Stephens, Assistant Secretary of War John A. Campbell, and former Senator Robert M.T. Hunter were rebuffed by U.S. President Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward at a meeting February 3 on board the *River Queen* off Fort Monroe. Several days before, the Richmond Sentinel newspaper had reported on the "hoped for peace," and the failure in Hampton Roads to reach an agreement to end the war was common knowledge. Peter writes in his February 7, 1865, letter to Washington's wife - "I suppose you heard of our River Commissioners starting for Washington. They went no further than Fortress Monroe - was there met by Lincoln and Seward but did not succeed in accomplishing anything so we have no alternative left but to fight it out."

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Crossing there on foot was not a pleasant prospect in below freezing temperatures but still preferable to being captured or killed by their pursuers. After wading through with their wet clothes frozen, the mission members finally returned to safe haven with no losses of men or equipment throughout the entire journey, but about three fourths of them were still hospitalized when Richmond was evacuated April 2 (see Note 35).

The Last Days of Peter and Washington Smith's Confederate Service

Following the late January Battle of Trent's Reach, the Squadron assessed damages to its ships and prioritized repairs needing to be made at Rocketts while essentially remaining bottled up behind their river obstructions and "electric" torpedo defenses. Manpower was of constant concern due to the ever increasing rates of sickness and desertions. Also, river ice and freshets continued to threaten their infrastructure well into February.

On Saturday, February 4, 1865, while Washington was away on "special service," Commander Mitchell responded negatively to Peter's "application for the *Torpedo*" — "as she is now the only boat in connection with the *Beaufort* (that is crippled) that we can use to protect the Wilton Bridge from ice and to keep open our communication [mail delivery] with [to and from] the city. As soon as she can be spared from this indispensable duty you can have the use of her." (see Note 36)

Peter's "Subm Defences Jas River" heading on his February 7 letter to Washington's wife substantiates that he was on duty with the Submarine Battery Service's torpedo defenses when requesting use of the *Torpedo* several days earlier. He probably wanted to inspect the defense system's underwater components out of concern that the freshets

Note 35: Although Washington's name is not mentioned in the limited information found about this mission, it is almost certain that he was a participant, and Peter most assuredly would have been aware of many details about it as well as the ultimate objective. By calling it a "special service" in his Tuesday, February 7 letter, he knew the expedition was to be kept secret and would not have divulged anymore than a brief mention, as intransit letters could (and sometimes did) fall into the enemy's possession. The large number of men involved (about one hundred), Peter writing that Washington left "last week" (the described mission is documented as departing Friday, February 3), Peter expecting Washington to return "next week" (the week of February 12), and the mission's objective (incapacitate or destroy the enemy's ironclads in preparation for another City Point attack) all support this conclusion. Had the mission not been betrayed, Washington's main role would probably have been to help attach the torpedoes to the spars after the boats were launched but still near the shoreline, and then as a crewmember on one of them, "aim" its torpedo when the craft attacked an enemy ironclad. He already had attack boat experience from the April 1863 *Squib* mission. Later, in Mitchell's Sunday, February 19, 1865, report (after Raphael Semmes took command of the James River Squadron on the 18th) regarding the status of the ships, he cites the *Torpedo* as being temporarily attached to the Squadron and lists Washington as assigned to her but in the hospital. Washington's name is on the Appomattox parole list as a member of the Confederate Army. This suggests he may have been one of the mission participants still in the Richmond Naval Hospital when the city fell, and wanting to avoid capture but unable in the ensuing chaos to get back to the "submarine defenses," drew on his cavalry experience to accompany General Lee's retreating forces.

Note 36: Wilton Bridge, the eastern most of two floating bridges between the "river defenses," and Rocketts linked Wilton Farm to Drewery's Bluff, serving as a critical manpower and supply avenue between the two sides of the river. The draw span on one of these bridges (which one is unknown) became an impediment to the Squadron's retreat when Richmond fell. Although Mitchell did not state how the *Beaufort* was "crippled," it is suspected the damage occurred while breaking ice near the Wilton. She had been sent there on the 2nd, following concerns expressed to Mitchell by C.S. Army Engineer Corps Captain Charles T. Mason who was stationed at Drewery's Bluff. Several weeks later the *Beaufort* was still "crippled" as Mitchell states in his February 19 status report on Squadron ships - "not servicable except in emergencies; should be sent to the navy yard to go on the ways as soon as possible to examine propeller and rudder."

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and/or ice may have moved one or more of the torpedoes out of alignment with their aiming stakes or damaged submerged segments of the wiring connecting them to the electric detonating batteries. Except for Raphael Semmes replacing John Mitchell as Squadron Commander on February 18, nothing further of any major significance took place on the river itself until April 2.

Commander Semmes made weekly visits to the Navy Department in Richmond and while in town in early March paid a visit to his (ironclad) *Richmond* commander John M. Kell who had also been his executive officer on the Confederate raider *Alabama* (sunk June 19, 1864, while battling the *U.S.S. Kearsarge* in the English Channel). Kell, who was recovering in Richmond from illness, told his commander that various government departments were “preparing for evacuation.” Later, on Saturday, April 1, Semmes noted in his diary after visiting with Treasury Secretary George A. Trenholm and Navy Secretary Mallory that both had been packing to move. Neither had given him any indication of how severely the army’s defense capabilities had deteriorated.

Admiral Semmes was an astute and experienced warrior — ever since arriving on the James River, he had thought to himself that it was only a matter of time before Richmond fell. His silent prediction finally materialized on Sunday, April 2. While eating dinner about 4:00 P.M., a courier entered and handed him a message from Secretary Mallory — “Sir: — General Lee advises the Government to withdraw from the city, and the officers will leave this evening, accordingly. I presume General Lee has advised you of this and of his movements, and made suggestions as to the disposition to be made of your squadron. He withdraws upon his lines toward Danville this night; and unless otherwise directed by General Lee, upon you is devolved the duty of destroying your ships this night, and with all the forces under your command joining General Lee. Confer with him, if practicable, before destroying them. Let your people be rationed, as far as possible, for the march and armed and equipped for duty in the field.”

Being unable to communicate with General Lee, Semmes issued orders to “abandon ship,” deciding to destroy the ironclads where they were anchored at Chaffin’s Bluff and move his men to Rocketts in the wooden boats. Between 1:00 and 2:00 A.M. on April 3, fires were set on the three ironclads, and the smaller boats, with Peter possibly at the helm of the *Torpedo*, left them to their fate. In describing the *Virginia II*’s destruction, Semmes wrote in his memoirs — “The spectacle was grand beyond description. Her shell-rooms had been full of loaded shells. The explosion of the magazine threw all these shells with their fuses lighted into the air ... The explosion shook the houses in Richmond and must have waked the echoes of night for forty miles around.”

When the wooden ships approached one of the bridges (thought to be the one above the Wilton), Confederate Army troops were streaming across from the north side, denying the Squadron passage through the draw span until just before dawn. Peter and his comrades would have witnessed an overwhelming sight shortly after reaching Rocketts about day break — the sky seemingly ablaze and filled with acrid smoke. As they arrived, fires were already being set by the last of the retreating army to destroy warehouses and bridges. Their flames were soon joined by those from the *Torpedo* and her sister ships set ablaze and then cast adrift by the Squadron. As the sun continued to rise, winds rose from the south causing blowing sparks to ignite virtually all structures between the river and Capitol Square. Looters, often drunk on their spoils, and dazed citizens wandered the streets.

If still in the Naval Hospital on April 2, Washington would have left that day with the army as did all others who could summon the strength. Those who had experienced

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northern prisons had no desire to do so again, and those who had not had heard stories of what to expect. Phoebe Yates Pember, a young widow from South Carolina and volunteer matron of one of Chimborazo Hospital's wings, succinctly said later — "The miracles of the New Testament had been reenacted. The lame, the halt, and the blind had been cured."

Nothing is known about Peter's actual escape, but Federal troops entered Richmond the morning of April 3 not long after the James River Squadron's arrival. Submarine Battery Service electrical expert R.O. Crowley was captured in the city several days afterwards by Union Cavalry troops. Crowley feared that he would be shot or hanged for his torpedo work, but instead, was taken aboard the U.S. Flagship *Malvern* where he was questioned by Admiral David D. Porter in the company of Abraham Lincoln. Porter asked Crowley for his assistance in pointing out torpedo locations, saying — "The war is ended, and we must clear the river for navigation," whereby a relieved Crowley agreed to do so.

If Peter was with the Squadron when its ships reached their final destination, knowing Crowley quite well, he may have sought initial refuge with him or possibly others in Richmond that could be trusted. Although Peter was neither shot nor hanged after destroying the *Commodore Jones*, he would not have known how "rebels" associated with torpedoes would be treated when total victory was almost within the enemy's grasp. Most assuredly expecting at the very least to receive a lengthy prison sentence if captured and having already experienced that first hand, he would have looked for a way to be quickly smuggled out of Richmond to make one last visit with his family.

The Appomattox parole list identifies Washington as a member of Company E, 25th Virginia Infantry Regiment, General William R. Terry's Consolidated Brigade (Colonel Titus V. Williams commanding), General John B. Gordon's Division, 2nd Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. Terry's Brigade saw heavy fighting during the week long retreat. When General Lee surrendered his army, the terms followed were those set forth in the original prisoner exchange agreement signed by both sides July 22, 1862.

Starting on April 11 and continuing over the next several days, about 30,000 Confederate fighting men surrendered their weapons and took the oath (generally administered by company commanders to their men in group formations) not to again take up arms against the United States until properly exchanged — essentially a formality since there was no prospect of continuing the fight. Each man then received a preprinted slip of paper, the blank spaces being filled in by a southern officer:

"The bearer _____, of Company _____, _____ Regiment of _____, a paroled prisoner of the Army of Northern Virginia, has permission to go to his home and there remain undisturbed. [authorizing signature]"

Federal troops captured by the Army of Northern Virginia were later transported to Camp Parole near Annapolis, Maryland, to receive their paroles. Similar procedures were followed when the other main Confederate Armies surrendered — General Joseph E. Johnston's Army of Tennessee on April 26 near Durham Station, North Carolina; General Richard Taylor's Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana on May 4 at Citronelle, Alabama; and General Edmund K. Smith's Trans -Mississippi Department on June 2 at Galveston, Texas.

When each of the four major surrenders took place, the news spread rapidly by newspaper and word of mouth. Numerous scattered Confederates then individually made

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their way to nearby cities to receive their paroles from Federal occupational forces while lists of prisoners “exchanged” continued to be compiled over the following months.

Peter Smith was paroled on May 3, 1865, in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Epilogue

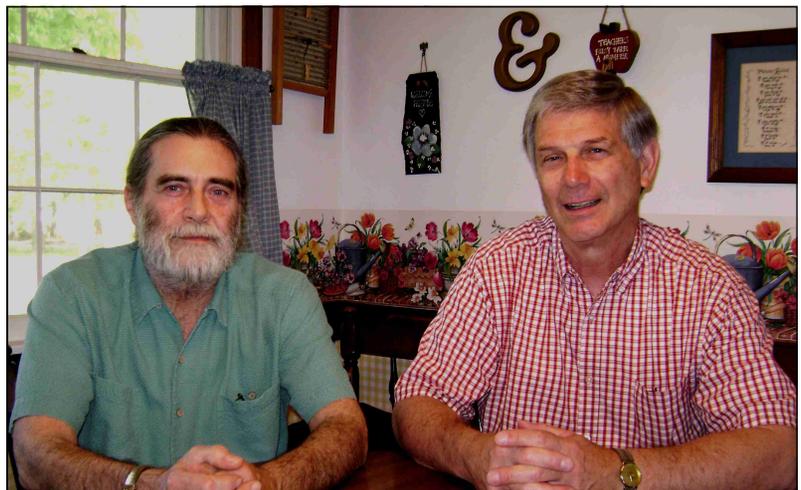
Peter and Washington Smith and Richard Cooke lived the remainder of their lives in Gloucester County. Passing on in 1869 during “Reconstruction” at about age forty -five, Washington unfortunately never experienced a return to true civic normalcy. Since he and two of his children died within a thirty -one day period, all three were probably victims of a communicable disease. Peter survived for almost forty -four years after the war and is buried next to his wife overlooking the waters he seemed so drawn to throughout his life. Little is known about Richard Cooke other than his livelihood was oystering and that, as the youngest of the three, he survived until 1922.

No greater tributes can be paid than those offered by one’s adversaries. After the war, two Union officers expressed their sentiments thusly:

“The torpedo is destined to be the least expensive but most terrible engine of defense yet invented. No vessel can be so constructed as to resist its power; ... the knowledge that a simple touch will lay your ship ... helpless sinking ... without even the satisfaction of firing one shot in return, calls for more courage than can be expressed, and a short cruise among torpedoes will sober the most intrepid disposition ... ”

“Notwithstanding the imperfections and consequent failures ... the ... list of vessels destroyed ... is a sufficient evidence of their utility; and ... it must be admitted that time, materials, and labor bestowed upon them was well expended. There is but little doubt that with a more perfect system ... southern ports would have been safe from any naval attack.”

Many countries saw the potential these “infernal machines” offered for defending their own waterways, and some employed the services of southern ex -torpedo officers after the war. With their use, a relatively poor agriculture based society was able for four long years to stave off the water-borne forces of a larger and more powerful nation was proof enough that torpedoes could level the playing field. Confederate foresight, perseverance, and results also gave birth to efforts that have culminated in today’s sophisticated United States Submarine based defense systems — Peter, Washington, and Richard Cooke’s dedication to duty was not in vain.



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Peter William Smith, Sr.

By William L. Lawrence

My great-great-grandfather was born November 5, 1818, near the Severn River in the Guinea area of Gloucester County to Anthony Smith, Sr., and his second wife, Sarah (Sally) King, widow of John King. Anthony had eight children by his first wife, Johanna, who died around 1815 and four by his second wife. Peter William (known as P.W.) was the youngest child. His brother George Washington (known as Washington) was four years older, and their lives intertwined until Washington's death in 1869.



Map shows land and home "X" of Anthony and Sarah Smith on the Severn River

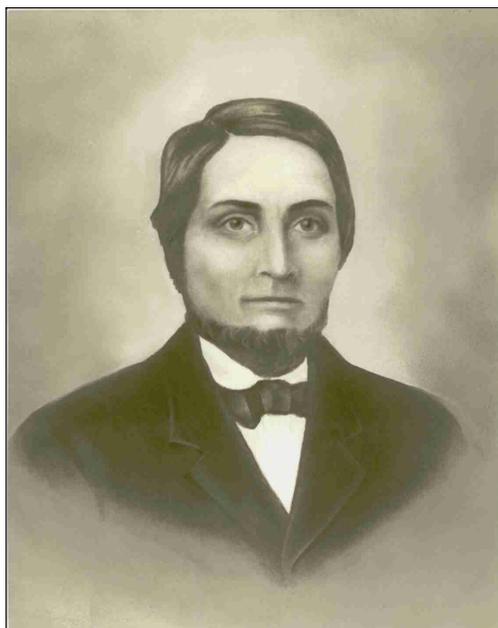
P.W. married a close neighbor, Francis (Fanny) Jane Rowe, in 1850, and they lived close to where they both grew up. They had six children, two girls and four boys, with the last being born after the Civil War.

In 1852, P.W. Smith became captain and one-third owner of the schooner, *California*, with his brother, Washington, and Henry Hughes, the county surveyor and Washington's later father-in-law. Washington had gone to work as a clerk in Mr. Hughes's store and fell in love with his daughter, Catharine Susan. They were married around 1857. P.W.'s oldest son, Augustine Warner (called Willie), married Laura Lee Hughes, Catharine's younger sister. Captain P.W. Smith sailed goods from Gloucester to Baltimore and the ports in between until the Civil War started in 1861. Both he and his brother, Washington, were in the Confederate army and navy as shown in the preceding article written by my cousin, Bob Lindsay.



The schooner *California* carrying a load of lumber

Peter William Smith, Sr.



Peter W. Smith, Sr.
"P.W."



George Washington Smith

Family of Peter William Smith, Sr.

Peter William Smith, Sr., b. 1828, d. 1909
+m. **Frances Jane Rowe**, b. 1830, d. 1907
Sarah E. Smith, b. 1850, d. 1926
+m. **Franklin Pryor Smith**, b. 1854
Augustine Warner Smith, b. 1852, d. 1913
+m. **Laura Lee Hughes**, b. 1852, d. 1883
Grace Elizabeth Smith, b. 1853
+m. **John Edward Smith**, b. 1844
Peter William Smith, Jr., b. 1855, d. 1876
Rosewell Columbus Smith, b. 1857, d. 1944
+m. **Mary Frances Thomas**, b. 1867, d. 1937
Hunter Davidson Smith, b. 1866, d. 1932
+m. 1st **Octavia E. Willey**, b. 1867, d. 1899
+m. 2nd **Emma Ruth Smith**, b. 1876, d. 1968

Family of George Washington Smith

George Washington Smith, b. 1824, d. 1869
+m. **Catharine Susan Hughes**, b. 1837, d. 1912
Mary Ella Smith, b. 1855
+m. **Edward S. Stubbs**, b. 1850
Susan E. Smith, b. 1860
Catharine Stuart Smith, b. 1862, d. 1948
+m. **William Henry Harwood**, b. 1852, d. 1905
George Washington Smith, Jr., b. 1866, d. 1869
Henry Hughes Smith, b. 1868, d. 1869
George Washington Smith, Jr., b. 1870
+m. **Virginia ?**, b. 1867

Peter's mother died in 1860 and is buried in Jerusalem Cemetery near Bena. Her tombstone inscription is presented in the right inset. He would later donate land for a family cemetery on Burt Lane near Severn Wharf Road and also one at Drum Point on the Ware River in Zanoni.

On July 4, 1870, Peter bought the plantation known as Mount Pleasant from Augustine W. Robins and his wife, Elizabeth. It is the now the present site

**Sacred to the memory of
My beloved mother
Sarah SMITH
Who departed this life
October 19, 1860 Aged 76 years
By her affectionate son
P.W. Smith**

Peter William Smith, Sr.

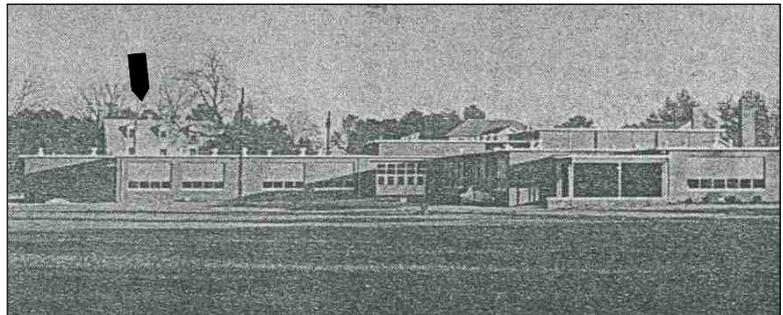
of T.C. Walker Elementary School.

Several years before, he and Washington had purchased some nearby property known as Drum Point which also included Horse Point. Horse Point had a building that according to family history was some sort of trading post. According to Elizabeth Harwood, it was moved to the Cappahosic area by Peter and Washington around 1867, and it became Washington's home. When I asked her how she knew this, she said "my grandmother told me this and she was George Washington's daughter." It is presumed that the house was moved by barge since both brothers had had recent naval experience. Unfortunately, within a thirty-day period in 1869 Washington and two of his sons died. They are buried in Valley Front Cemetery. Peter bought his brother's one-half interest in the Drum Point property from his widow.

By 1882, Peter had opened a store at the "terminus of the new Ware River road" or the end of the road going to Drum Point (now



Mt. Pleasant with Peter W. Smith standing on the porch



The roof of the Mt. Pleasant house can be seen (black arrow marker) behind the Gloucester Intermediate School (now T.C. Walker Elementary School) before its demolition



The house moved from Horse Point on the Ware River to the Cappahosic area on the York River

Bailey's Wharf Road). The steamship Northampton started her regular stops on the three wharfs (Roane, Smith, and Thompson, later Hockley) of the Ware River on October 1, 1883. Besides running the store, he also had an oystering business. A small cottage was built near the pier. He spent his time between this cottage and his home at Mt. Pleasant about four miles away. Peter's youngest son, Hunter Davidson, became the wharf agent at Severn Wharf on the Severn River which was started by Hunter's uncle, Samuel Rowe.

In 1876, Peter's namesake died young and was buried beside his grandmother in the Jerusalem



Smith Wharf on the Ware River

Cemetery in Bena. The following year, Peter's daughter, Gracie Elizabeth, who had married John E. Smith from Portsmouth, had a son whom she named after her father and deceased brother. She died shortly thereafter, and her son, Peter W. Smith, Jr., was raised by his grandparents. He was Gloucester County's treasurer from 1916 to 1954. Peter, Jr., married a young woman named Annie Laura Brown. She was raised across the river from Smith Wharf on the Ware Neck side. They had nine children.

Peter sold the adjacent point of land called Horse Point to his son, Rosewell, in 1885. "Rose" married Mary Frances Thomas in 1886, and they had five children. This point of land is separated from the mainland by a marsh. A corduroy road covered with oyster shells had to be constructed to get access. The land has been handed down several generations and is now known as L's Island, home to the Lawrences, Newbills, and Lindsays.

Peter W. Smith, Sr., died on January 11, 1909, and is buried near the old steamship wharf on Drum Point overlooking the Ware River. His property was sold to settle his estate, and the Drum Point property was purchased by George Bailey. Smith Wharf became known as Bailey Wharf, and the road that Peter had constructed for his shipping business is now called Bailey's Wharf Road.

(T.J. Page— continued from page 2)

the U.S. Navy before the outbreak of the Civil War. When Confederate troops evacuated Gloucester Point in May of 1861, Page remained behind with a gun crew firing across the York at Union forces trying to occupy Yorktown. Captain Page went on to command the naval battery at Chaffin's Bluff until 1863 when he was sent to France to await command of a new ironclad battleship. Before the deal was finished, France decided not to sell the ironclad to the Confederacy, and the ship went to Denmark instead. Through a series of deals, the ship was sold to the Confederacy and was named the *CSS Stonewall*. The ship proved unseaworthy, causing Page to put into a Spanish dry dock for repairs. On the 11th of May, 1865, Page reached Cuba, only to be told of Lee's surrender. Page sold the *CSS Stonewall* for \$16,000 to pay off his crew and spent the remainder of his life in Italy."

Commodore Page was invited to participate in the dedication of the Confederate Monument in the Gloucester Courthouse Circle. Although he was unable to attend, his letter from Florence, Italy, was read during the ceremony, and the letter was included in the program. The program was re-printed by Betty Jean Deal and L. Roane Hunt in 2004.

General William B. Taliaferro & Family

By L. Roane Hunt

Robert E. Goodlier (1925-1999) settled in Gloucester in 1992 and lived at Roaring Springs, the site of the last muster of the Gloucester Militia on May 4, 1860. To commemorate the occasion, Goodlier painted the scene described by historians. For many years, one of the prints has been displayed at the Gloucester Museum of History. Now, the Goodlier family has donated the original painting for permanent display in the museum.

At the last muster, 21st Regiment formed on the road west of the Court Green and marched to Roaring Springs at mid-morning. The regiment formed under Col. Warner T. Jones, Major Thomas S. Taliaferro, and Adj. Richard M. Page. General William B. Taliaferro, who was in charge of all the Virginia Militia, galloped onto the field astride his famous charger, Comet, where he made his inspection of the troop. At 1p.m. the line marched back to the Court Green and was disbanded. The muster was a “gala” occasion and many turned out to watch.



The original painting by Robert Goodlier of General Taliaferro reviewing the last general muster of Gloucester Militia at Roaring Springs Plantation, on Saturday, May 4, 1860, was donated to the Gloucester Museum of History by the Goodlier family. Standing in the foreground from the left are Bill Weaver, chairman of the committee to commemorate the Civil War; Betty Jean Deal, museum director; and Bill Lawrence, chairman of the museum committee.

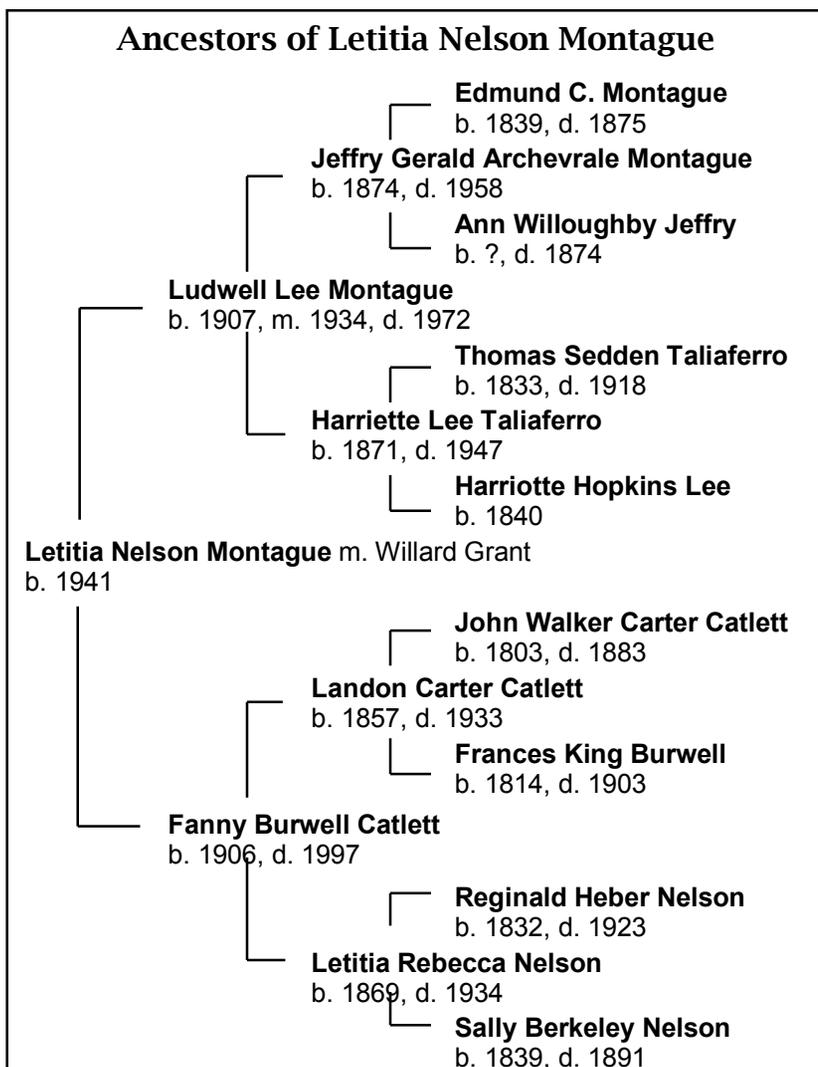
General William B. Taliaferro & Family

* * *

Letitia “Tish” Grant, speaking to the GGSV in September 2008, described her Taliaferro family of Ware Neck—doctors, lawyers, farmers, and Civil War officers. The adjacent pedigree chart shows the ancestors of Tish Grant. Tish is a descendent of the Ware Neck Taliaferros. Her great-grandfather was Thomas Sedden Taliferro who owned “Lowland Cottage.” She is also a descendent of the John W. C. Catlett of “Timberneck.” She is the daughter of Ludwell Lee Montague, the prominent historian who was the author of Gloucester County in the Civil War.

Tish described Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro and his effort to provide estates for each of his sons. Also, she showed copies of portraits, sketches, and photographs of various Taliaferro family members. Some of these are shown in the following pages of this article.

The portrait and family chart for Dr. William Taliaferro (1770-1851) is presented below. He married the daughters of Warner Throckmorton and lived at “Church Hill” at the headwaters of the Ware River. He first married Mary Throckmorton, and they had one son, Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro. A



Descendents of Dr. William Taliaferro

Dr. William Taliaferro, b. 1770, d. 1851

+m. 1st **Mary Throckmorton**, b. abt 1772

Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro, b. 1802, d. 1877

+m. 1st **Frances Amanda Booth**, b. 1802, d. 1824

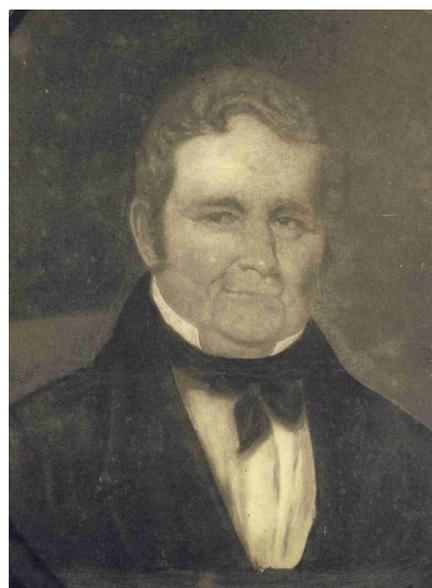
+m 2nd. **Leah Seddon**, b. 1810, d. 1895

+m. 2nd **Harriet Throckmorton**, b. abt 1780

Col. Alexander Galt Taliaferro, b. 1808

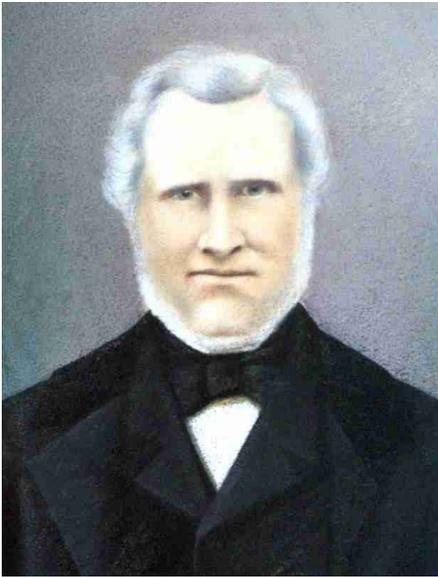
+m. **Agnes H. Marshall**, b. 1815

Dr. William Taliaferro, Jr., b. 1812, d. 1870



Dr. William Taliaferro (1770-1851)

General William B. Taliaferro & Family



**Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro
(1802-1877)
Virginia State Senate**

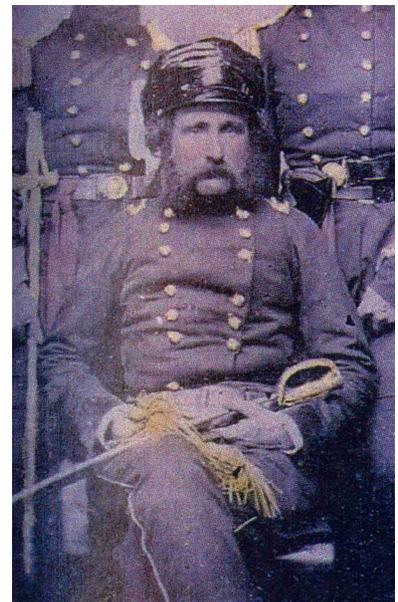


Alexander Galt Taliaferro & wife

copy of his portrait that hung in the old courthouse is presented above. He served in the Virginia State Senate. After Mary died, William married her sister, Harriet, and they had two sons. The first was Alexander Galt Taliaferro, also shown above with his wife, Agnes Marshall. Agnes was a granddaughter of Chief Justice John Marshall, and she was descended from the Lewises of Warner Hall by her mother. Alexander and Agnes moved from "Cowslip Green" to Culpepper County, VA, in 1953, and he was a farmer and lawyer. He is shown in his uniform in the adjacent photo. Dr. William Taliaferro, Jr., lived with his father, and they both practiced medicine in Gloucester.

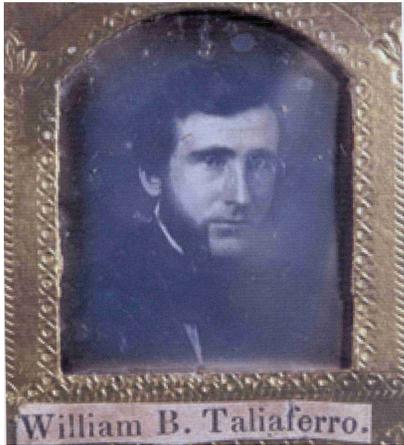
Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro married twice. A chart of his descendents is presented on the next page. He established his home in Ware Neck, and he assisted his sons in acquiring their estates nearby. He settled at "Belleville."

Warner's first marriage was to Frances Amanda Booth, and they had one son, William Booth Taliaferro, who was the highest ranking officer in the Civil War from Gloucester. He married Sally Nivison Lyons, and they lived at "Dunham Massie." They had eight children. He served in the Mexican War and the Virginia State Legislature prior to his service in the Civil War. After the war, he was active in Gloucester as a practicing lawyer and farmer. He was chairman of the committee to erect the monument that now stands in the center of the Courthouse Circle. Copies of his photograph before the war and his portrait that hung in the old courthouse are presented on the next page.



**Col. Alexander Galt Taliaferro
Born 1808**

General William B. Taliaferro & Family



William Booth Taliaferro
Young Member of
Virginia State Legislature



Gen. William Booth Taliaferro
(1822-1898)

**Descendents of Warner
Throckmorton Taliaferro**

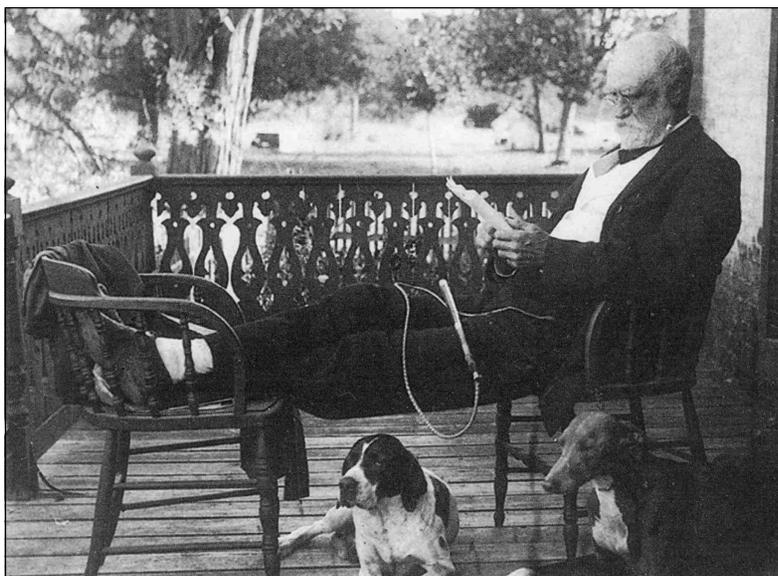
Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro b. 1802, d. 1877
+m. 1st **Frances Amanda Booth**, b. 1802, d. 1824
Gen. William Booth Taliaferro, b. 1822, d. 1898
+m. **Sally Nivison Lyons**, b. 1828, d. 1899
Leah S. Taliaferro, b. 1854, d. 1931
James Lyons Taliaferro, b. 1855, d. 1928
Warner Langbourne Taliaferro, b. 1856, d. 1941
Fannie B. Taliaferro, b. 1858, d. 1867
George Wythe Booth Taliaferro, b. 1860, d. 1931
Mary L. Taliaferro, b. 1868, d. 1958
William C. L. Taliaferro, b. 1871, d. 1946
Dr. Edward Carrington Stanard Taliaferro, b. 1874, d. 1932
+m 2nd. **Leah Seddon**, b. 1810, d. 1895
Dr. Philip Alexander Taliaferro, b. 1827, d. 1901
+m. **Susan Lewis McCandish**, b. 1828, d. 1903
Susan Seddon Taliaferro, b. 1829
+m. **Judg. Beverley Randolph Wellford, Jr.**, b. 1828
Fanny Beverley Wellford, b. 1859
Philip A. Wellford, b. 1869
Rev. Edward T. Wellford, b. 1870, 1956
Susan Seddon Wellford, b. 1876
Maj. Thomas Seddon Taliaferro, b. 1833, d. 1918
+m. **Harriotte Hopkins Lee**, b. 1840
Priscillafia Taliaferro, b. 1861
Thomas Seddon Taliaferro, Jr., b. 1864
Harriote Lee Taliaferro, b. 1871, d. 1947
Maj. Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro, Jr., b. 1834, d. 1881
+m. 1st **Mary Paul**
+m. 2nd **Frances Hardy**, b. 1847
Thomas Hardy Taliaferro, b. 1871, d. 1941
Maj. Edwin Taliaferro, b. 1835, d. 1867
+m. **Fannie Bland Tucker**

Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro's second marriage was to Leah Seddon. They had four sons and one daughter. Their eldest son was Dr. Philip Alexander Taliaferro, and he is shown in a relaxed position on the next page. He married Susan Lewis McCandish who descended from the Byrd and Lewis families of "White Hall" and "Warner Hall," respectively. He practiced medicine in Gloucester.

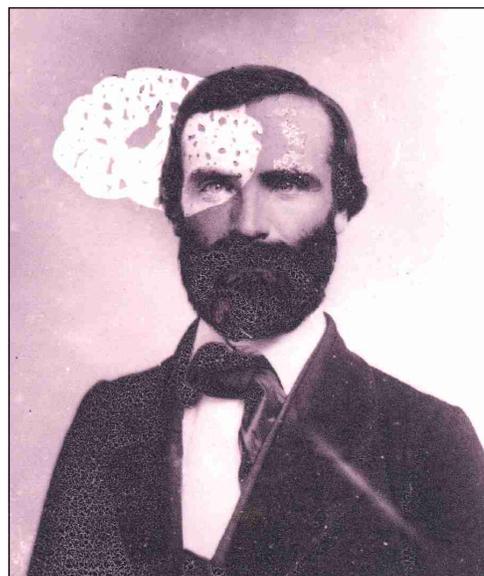
Their second son was Thomas Seddon Taliaferro, and he settled at "Lowland Cottage," a section of the original "Cowslip Green." His photograph is also presented on the next page. He married Harriotte Hopkins Lee, and they had three children. Their daughter, Harriotte Lee Taliaferro, married Jeffry Gerald Archevrale Montague, and they were the parents of Ludwell Lee Montague.

The third son was Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro, Jr. Prior to the Civil War, he lived at "Isleham," located on Chapel Neck in Mathews across the North River from Ware Neck. He married twice, first to Mary Paul and then to Frances Hardy. After the war, he lived in

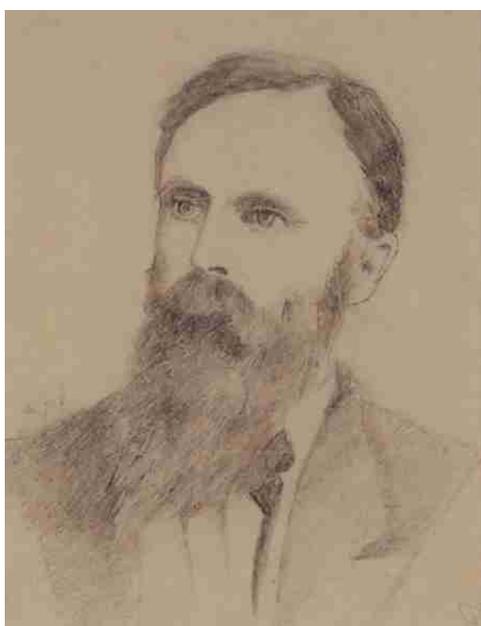
General William B. Taliaferro & Family



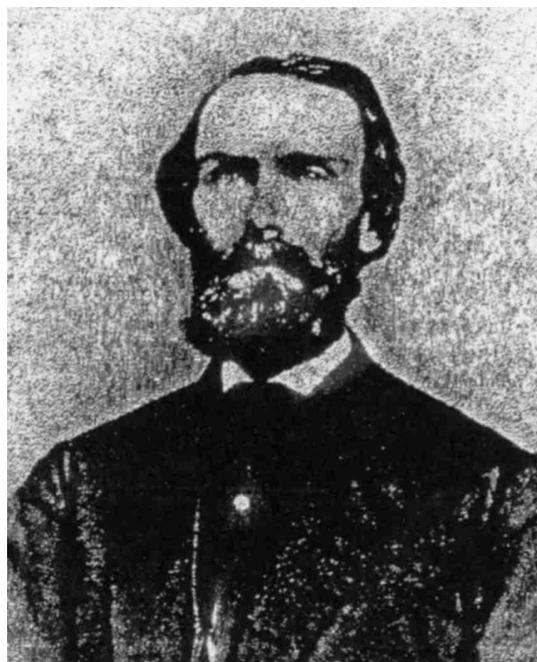
Dr. Philip Alexander Taliaferro (1827-1901)



Maj. Thomas Sedden Taliaferro (1833-1918)



Maj. Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro, Jr., (1834-1881)



Maj. Edwin (Ned) Taliaferro, (1835-1867)

Florida as indicated by the 1870 census. He settled in Norfolk, VA, and worked in real estate.

Their youngest son was Ned Taliaferro. He married Fanny Bland Tucker and died soon after the war in 1867.

Their only daughter married Judge Beverley Randolph Wellford, Jr., of Richmond, VA., and they had four children. Their son, Rev. Edward T. Wellford, married Courtney Brooke

General William B. Taliaferro & Family

Selden and ministered for many years in Newport News, VA.

Warner Throckmorton Taliaferro, Sr., lived with Judge and Susan Wellford in Richmond while he was serving in the State Senate following the Civil War. He was there when he received a very special letter from his son, Gen. William Booth Taliaferro, describing the confusion in Gloucester after the war during the early years of reconstruction. The letter is included in papers donated by the family to the Virginia Historical Society.

Dunham Mafsie Feby 12th 1866

My Dear Father,

I have no excuse for not writing you, none, none for I should have written many times and I have commenced several letters and thrown them aside because I was too inert to finish them. These sad times seem to have made me supremely lazy. Every thing around me is so desolate, every thing so going to decay, every body I meet so despairing so hopelefs and without any future, that I can not escape the contagion produced by things animate and inanimate, and drift along with the current into hopelefs idlenefs. I fear most of our people are like myself, so appalled at the total shipwreck of their affairs that they do not know where to turn or where to begin to repair damage, and so fold their hands and do nothing. I think there was much more depression manifested at the Ct House on Monday and Saturday than I have ever seen yet. The action of our Yankee masters too, has of late added much to it. You have heard of their seizing the records in certain cases of felony because the parties were Union men, & their refusal to allow them to be tried by our courts. And the conduct of the Freed men agent here has been so arbitrary and so harrassing that we can never know where we stand with relation to the Negroes, and whether we make contracts or not.

I am too much rejoiced that you are removed from the sad & saddening influences which surround us here, and that you have the excitements of a more occupied life and the pleasure which the responsibility of your situation at this crisis produces. I have read every paper I could procure since you left home, and I have kept pace as far as I could with your legislative career, and have particularly scrutinised your votes, and I can say for myself and, I believe, I can say in your constituents that in no single case would I have had you to have voted otherwise than as you did. I wish you would send some of the papers containing notice of your speech on the negro question to some of our people. I have not been able to see any of them myself yet. Ned, who spent a few days with us, says he heard it talked of in Williamsburg, but he was unable to see the paper. I have been most anxious to visit Richmond during the session for I do particularly desire to see you in your seat in the Senate, but I fear that will be impossible as my horse is too poor to ride to Richmond. I have not a dollar in the world to go any other way.

I shipped my wheat crop to Baltimore yesterday in order to purchase a bbl of flour. It was exactly nine bushels, seven having been stolen or eaten by the rats. I have never yet been able to get a fence around my wheat field, and fear I will not. I have Oliver, who has performed all his duties so far as known faithfully & well. He has supplied me with wood & I have had a plenty of fire all the winter. Little can be done on the farm and the country is under water and has been during the entire winter.

Jam and Old Parrot are to cultivate on shares, but I can not procure any real labour and fear I shall make no corn next year. Old Mr. Anderson has not yet ploughed a furrow or cut a rail, and I do not believe he and his two sons will make a single bbl of corn, but simply live in my house and fish & oyster. I shall be compelled to plant my last year corn field again this year in corn as I have no other fence on my land and even that in bad order. Still I believe I would oppose a fence law as it is just as easy to enclose the corn field as to enclose a pasture. I am very glad that you disposed of that embarrassing question as you did. The feeling of our people is certainly averse to a fence law, whilst I believe other parts of your district are in favor of it.

General William B. Taliaferro & Family

I am very uneasy about the fascy (?). There has been no development of it among my horses or mules, but it is all over the County, several cases at the CtHo and I fear it will kill many animals for us. The severe winter & the quantity of rain with the absence of forage has put an end to a number of cattle already. I have lost none yet and hope to save all. Three of yours have perished. I will urge your people to do the best to take care of them, but there is little provender. I think all at Elmington (Burgh Westra) will do well as there is great deal of grafs on the fields there. They look in good order.

My women Sarah & Pet left me on the first of Jany, and we could not procure a cook or washer for ten days. Sally¹ had to cook, which she did very cheerfully, and I made up the fires & cleaned up the rooms. Some people have not procured servants yet. There is no one white or black at Cousin Anne's yet, in the house or on the farm. I have Sams wife Jane and her daughter, and we are very well satisfied.

I have seen a good deal of Tom & Hally lately. They and the children are well. Tom is getting along about as well as any body else. Phil is doing something that pays now and then and a good deal that does not pay always.² He is well and interested in his house and garden and with pet schemes as always. The children go to school on tomorrow, Mrs. Wyatt having returned. Sally has gone to the Church to assist in taking down the decorations which were put up at Christmas. The Cockes are very much interested in the choir and there is a famous practicing every Saturday at different houses in the neighborhood. It is really a great addition to the Church services as all the chants are regularly performed.

There was to have been a very lazy (*?-hole in paper*) dancing party at Mr. Tabb's and there actually was a very elegant entertainment at which thirty persons were present, but on the evening last Thursday we had the most terrible storm of the season and the wonder is so many reached there. I started and turned back. Sally, Leah & Jimmy were there as they went in the morning, Sally having consented to matronize the affair.

I have been much pleased to learn that you were getting on so comfortably at Sue's.³ & all - wish I could see you all. It would be a great treat and a great relief to me.

God Blefs you

My dear Father. My love to

My Mother sister & Bevy & Fanny and believe me ever affly yours

Sally & the Children send love to all

WmBTaliaferro

Oliver desires me to say to his daughter that they are all well save Milly who is a little indisposed and he hopes she (his daughter) will behave herself and remember her mother's admonitions.

(Note across the top of the page in pencil): Capt Williams is getting on quite well. He wishes to know if you can sell him an odd ox.

Foot Notes:

- 1 His wife, Sally Lyons (1828-1899).
- 2 "Brother Phil" was a physician and was known for his generosity to all who needed his help. He lived at Burgh Westra.
- 3 Warner T.'s daughter Susan Seddon Taliaferro Wellford who lived in Richmond with her husband, Beverley Randolph Wellford.

Achilles School History

*By Mrs. Milton T. Harris, Sr.
(The former Marghuerita Lucille Dodd)*

Submitted by Lorrimer H. Hogge, Jr.

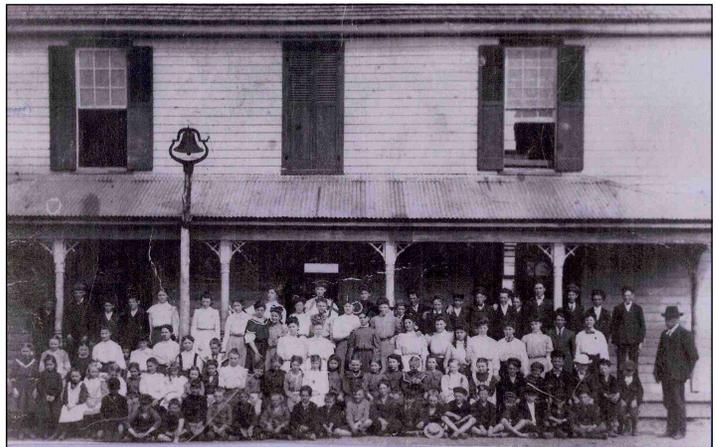
To record the history and achievements of Achilles School would require several volumes. The history is of a school that had its beginning in a log cabin across the road from the present school site. This school is located in the southeastern part of Gloucester County a short distance across the York River from Yorktown and Williamsburg.

We have no records or information concerning the number of years that the log cabin school was used, nor when it was changed into a two-room frame building. One of the former teachers of Achilles remembers entering the first grade in 1892 in this two -room school.

The need for more and larger classrooms is nothing new. In 1903, Achilles School was made a four-room school by raising the building to two stories. There were two rooms with a hall between, upstairs as well as downstairs. There was a porch the full length of the front of the building. These four rooms housed grades one through seven.

In 1910 the patrons of Achilles School realized the necessity of putting their school curriculum on a firmer and higher basis. In order to do this, the school building had to be enlarged and the faculty increased.

Work was begun in the summer of 1910. The porch was removed and two large rooms—one downstairs and one upstairs—were added to the front of the building, making it a T-shape building. A small porch was left on each side of the addition. This work was completed in October of the same year.



Achilles School in 1904



Achilles School History

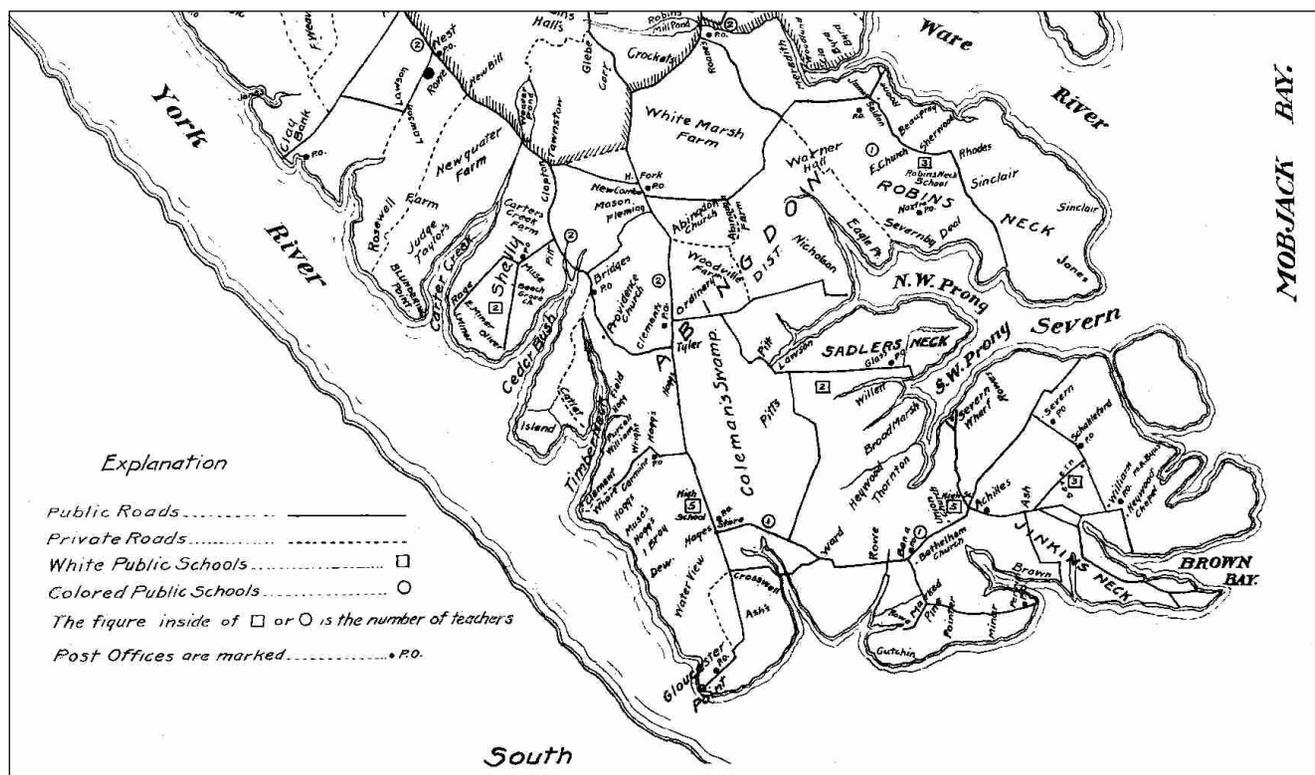
The faculty was increased from four to five, and the enrollment consisted of 120 girls and boys. The curriculum was broadened to include the first year of high school subjects. Three young ladies were enrolled in the freshman class. The school was fortunate in having a principal who launched out with a strong and decided initiative and who led the school successfully through the early stages of its high school existence.

The year 1912 saw the birth of a literary society -the Phoenix—which proved an important factor in the intellectual and social life of the students. It was gratifying to see so many prospective orators, debaters, and readers. The Eglantine Literary Society was organized on February 2, 1928. Then literary contests were held annually between Achilles and Botetourt.

Growth continued. In 1914 the first class to be graduated from Achilles High School consisted of the three young ladies who enrolled in 1910. The last class to be graduated from Achilles High School was the class of 1952 consisting of 23 members -16 girls and 7 boys. The largest class to be graduated from Achilles High School was the class of 1939 consisting of 43 members—24 girls and 19 boys.

Three factors contributed to this growth: (1) the untiring efforts and the cooperation of the people of the community; (2) the consolidation of schools, Sadlers Neck and Severn Schools were closed and later the high school pupils from Hayes High School were transferred to Achilles High School; (3) the innovation of school buses.

During the early years of the high school, athletics -though limited-played an important part in the student body. The girls' basketball team played many match games and never knew defeat. The boys had a baseball team, and although their efforts were great, their achievements were poor.



R.A. Folkes Map of the lower Gloucester County shows school location in 1912. Achilles, Hayes, Sadlers Neck, Severn Schools are included.

Achilles School History

In 1920 the citizens of lower Gloucester awakened to the fact that the presently used building had inadequate facilities needed to offer boys and girls a well-rounded education and that a new and larger building was needed. Through the cooperation of faithful parents, teachers and friends, the project of erecting a new building across the road from the original school site was begun. The cornerstone for this building was laid in June 1920. This building housed all students from the first through the eleventh grades. The major cost of the building program was met by private subscriptions, faculty plays, entertainments and May Days.

Four years later, construction began on a separate building for the high school pupils. The cornerstone for this building was laid in 1924.

The school continued to expand until it included a furnace room, a shop and home economics building, a combination gymnasium and auditorium, and finally a cafeteria which was dedicated on May 1, 1942. The gymnasium was built with no cost to the school board; the Community League—later called the PTA—appropriated \$1500 and it was built with CWA and WPA labor. The major cost of the entire school plant -which at this time consisted of seven buildings -was raised by the Community League and/or the PTA.

The curriculum expanded to include home economics, agriculture, commercial subjects and industrial arts.

It would be impossible to separate the history of Achilles School from the history of the Achilles PTA for the school was made possible only through the efforts of the patrons and teachers who labored so hard for the school they loved. The Achilles PTA has been surpassed by none in cooperation, in willingness to make any sacrifice, undertake any job, do anything that they felt was for the betterment of the children of Lower Gloucester.

The first Summer Round-up in Gloucester was held at Achilles High School on Monday, April 13, 1936, and was held thereafter annually until county-wide pre-school clinics were established.

Long before the day of school cafeterias in Gloucester, the pupils of Achilles School had the opportunity to buy hot homemade soup and pies made and sold by one of the patrons. Later the PTA sponsored the school lunch program until the present system became effective.

In 1941 a library was established with one of the high school teachers serving as part-time librarian.

Extra-curricular activities played an important part in the life of the students. In 1941 a gold basketball was given to each member of the girls' champion basketball team. The boys took part in the usual sports—football, basketball and baseball—and several silver cups were won by their champion teams. Boys and girls excelled in many literary contests and other forensic events.

May Day—an Achilles tradition—is still an outstanding event each year. Before the high school students were transferred to Gloucester High School, May Day was an all-day event drawing large crowds. In the morning there were intra-mural track and field events consisting of 50 yard dash, shot put, discus throwing, broad jump, high jump, chinning pole, pole vaulting and baseball throwing.

Following lunch—sold by the PTA—came the crowning of the May Queen who, with her court, was entertained by members of the elementary grades who presented the May Pole Dance and other dances and drills. This was followed by a softball game for the girls and a baseball game for the boys—usually with Botetourt. After supper, served by the PTA, a

Achilles School History

program would be presented in the auditorium.

In 1952, due to consolidation, the high school department of Achilles was transferred to Gloucester High School, and Achilles became again an elementary school of seven grades.

“By your fruits ye are known.” Among the religious, educational, and civic leaders of today, we find many who received their elementary or high school training or both at Achilles School. We find her famous sons and daughters in most every walk of life -doctors, dentist, ministers, deaconesses, nurses, teachers, realtors, military officers, beauticians, firemen, lawyers, county supervisors, members of school boards, merchants, bankers, typist, secretaries, school superintendents, supervisors and many others.

And now in 1966-outmoded and outgrown-the present school plant is to be replaced with a modern up-to-date plant. Achilles School will live long in the hearts and minds of those who were fortunate enough to be associated with this school, its pupils, teachers and patrons. The new Achilles Elementary School will continue to serve the needs of this community to the very best of its ability.

It is with pride and joy that we read in the pages of history -made day by day-of the success and the service to mankind of those who were students of Achilles School.

Principals of Achilles High School

| | | | |
|------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1911- | S. B. Kirk | 1925-1926- | Jessie Smith. |
| 1912- | M. Manaway | 1927-1931- | M. F. Starnes |
| 1913- | J. C. King | 1932-1935- | Dr. Fred Helsabeck |
| 1914- | Charles Henry Smith | 1936- | W. D. Barr |
| 1915-1921- | J. Walter Kenney | 1937-1942- | Maynard W. Berryman |
| 1916- | C. Weldon Hudson | 1943- | Edwin S. Lowe |
| 1917-1918- | F. M. Bristow | 1944- | Harold A. Newland |
| 1922-1923- | M. A. Waldrop | 1945- | Raymond M. Sauder |
| 1923-1924- | Charles A. Duff | 1946-1947- | George C. Chenault |
| 1924- | W. D. Bremner | | |

We must correct our errors:

In the 2001 Volume 5, no.1 issue of FTS, Joan Stubbs stated that Sarah Berkeley, daughter of Edmund and Lucy (Burwell) Berkeley, died childless in 1741. This error comes from one of her sources, *The Berkeleys of Barn Elms*, by Frances Berkeley Young. Mrs. Stubbs correctly shows Sarah's marriage to Ralph Wormley, which was noted in the *Virginia Gazette* dated Nov. 19, 1736. In fact, Sarah had a daughter Elizabeth in 1737, as recorded in the *Christ Church Parrish Register* (published by the NSCDA in Virginia), p.145. Elizabeth married Dudley Digges in 1760 (see *Marriages of Middlesex County, Virginia 1740-1852*, Page 26.

John Junius Smith: In His Own Words

Submitted by Robert W. Smith

The most valuable record of a person is produced in their own words. It is what they considered important and what they wished to be remembered. Some of this is indicated by the details they choose to include beyond the vital statistics.

Bob Smith responded to the GGS posting about early names of rivers and creeks of lower Gloucester County. His father had mentioned that he was born on Sedgers Creek in the Guinea area of Gloucester. Later, Bob wrote the following: "Attached are copies of Dad's autobiography. He passed away before finishing. The first page is his initial start and he came back later, started over and produced seven sheets... Thank you for your interest and kindness in helping me preserve these treasures... Bob Smith/rsmith17@neo.rr.com." (Sheet 2 shown below.)

The Autobiography of John Junius Smith

I was born on January 26th 1904 in Gloucester County, Virginia, at or near Achilles, Virginia, on the family farm which was on the north bank of Sedgers Creek about one quarter mile from north west end of this body of water. The farm house and the farm itself was approximately thirty three acres in size.

My parents were Mary Matilda (Nuttall) Smith and John Thomas (Jack) Smith, they were married on June 25th 1895 in the Union Baptist Church near Achilles, Virginia.

This marriage also resulted in the birth of my four sisters, Alice Anna (named after my grandmother), Mary Estelle, Lillie Mae, Ruth Virginia, and three brothers, William Franklin, George Washington, and Martin H. Smith. Martin H. Smith was born on March 13th 1910 and died on September 27th 1910.

My grandparents on my father's side, Alice Anna (Rowe) Smith died Nov. 4th 1912 and John W. Smith died May 22nd 1907. My grandfather had two brothers, William M. Smith, died June 8th 1861 and George W. Smith, died May 22nd 1879.

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I don't remember or was told anything about my life until I was three years old and only then because of a colt that was felled on the farm named Sebean, I do remember this colt that was

named Subean. I do remember this colt that was two years old at the time.

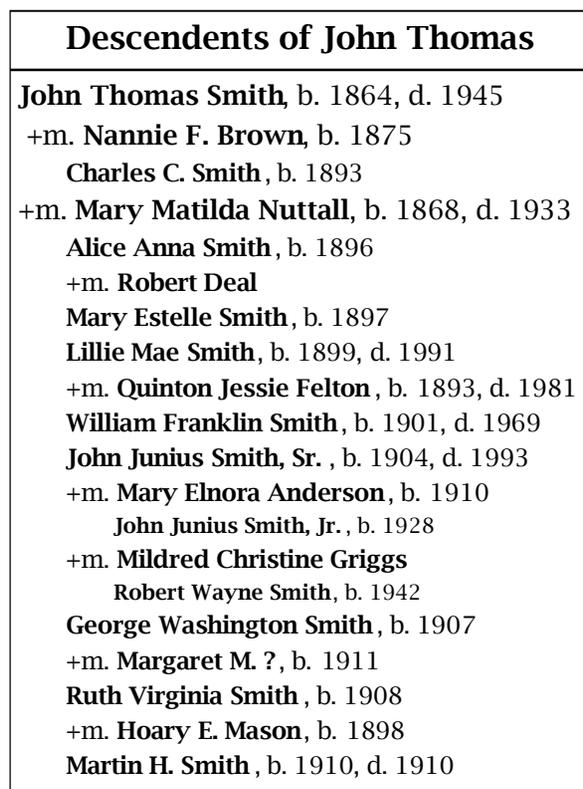
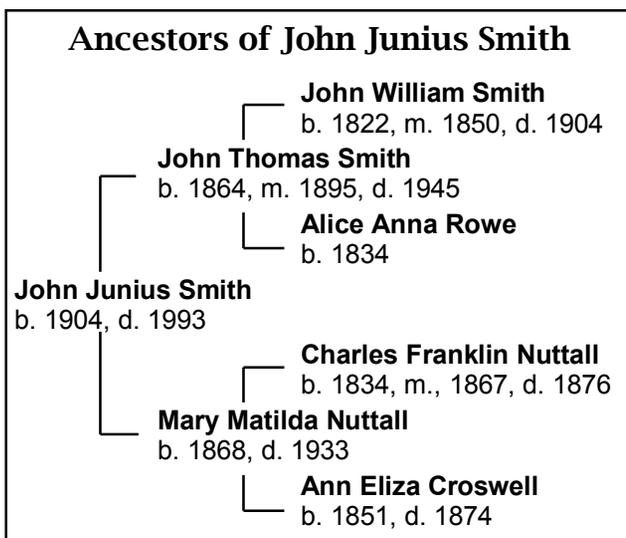
The old farm house which was of vintage construction was cool in the summer time but very cold in the winter time that was only heated then by a tin heater in one room of the building which was two stories tall with a colonnade between the main building and the kitchen which was one story.

The winters in those days were very cold and I had to sleep with my two brothers in one bed to keep warm during the nights.

Because of the date of my birth, I was allowed to go to school when I was six years old. I remained in school until the first year of high school which at that time had only eleven grades in the high school. At that time which was in May 1917 the lady assistant principal and the male principal had a disagreement and her class which included two grades was dismissed and because of his dismissal I did not return to school to continue my education. At the age of thirteen which was when I left school, I went to work in the fields for one of the large surrounding farm owners, Samuel (Sam) Rowe, who paid me one dollar a day for working ten to twelve hours a day with one meal dinner (midday) included in my work schedule planting and harvesting the crops which included potatoes and corn.

Tired of farm work, I was given a job with the Hall Brothers' (Edster and Olsey) machine shop (marine) as a grease monkey, dismantling and cleaning the parts. After one year of this, which I was paid three dollars a week for the work, I was promoted (??) and allowed to assemble the motors back to operating condition. I was in this machine shop for over three years and why I left I don't remember. In my spare time from these chores, I had to work on the family farm planting and harvesting the wheat and corn crops. In February of 1922 I went to Portsmouth, Virginia and boarded with my oldest sister, Alice, and her family. She had married to Robert Deal since June 14th 1913 and had a son and two daughters.

My brother, George, was working for the Sowing Veneer Company as a veneer machine operator, and the Exide Storage Battery Company had a small area in this company's building processing separators for the plates from the veneer for assembly in the storage fatters. I was given a job by the manager of this project operating a cut offsaw because the separators had to be a certain size and our quota was one hundred thousand a day. After this company closed down their operation, I was out of work for



John Junius Smith: In His Own Words

a short time. I was given a job by Thomas M. Rowe who was operating and owned a motorcycle and bicycle dealership selling and repairing same. I was assigned to the bicycle shop for a salary of twenty five dollars a week. My experience in the machine shop gave me the know how to repair bicycles. In 1926 I was offered a job with the Norfolk Motor Equipment Company on the recommendation of Bernard Appleby who was working there. I was assigned to the first floor selling motor parts (Auto) to the owners and operators of the several automobile dealers or repair shops. This company was wholesales I remember one instance a man came into the building one morning the other three clerks took one look at him and disappeared some where leaving me to wait on him to take his order. He did not look like he had very much money so on my way to the second floor I had to pass through the main office. I had already been given his name. I gave his name to the lady in the office and she checked and told me to sell him the padding and its contents if he wanted it. I finally finished with his order on the third floor. He was outfitting a new garage in Ashville, North Carolina and was the Buick dealer for that area the other clerks were envious of me and I found out there that you cannot judge a book by its cover. My friend Bernard Appleby had been operating the piston grinding machine, he was given a job as outside salesman and recommended me again to take over his job because of my mechanical experience.

I worked there until 1927 at which time I was offered a job again with T. M. Rowe which I accepted.

I had been courting a young lady by the name of Mary Elnora Anderson and we were married in May of 1927 and rented a house at 413 Henry Street in Portsmouth, our son John Jr. was born there on November 23rd 1928 at 12:45 PM. After several years of married life things developed under which I had no control and we separated and was divorced in June of 1935.

I was very much disappointed because of this and remained single until I met Mildred Christine Griggs in June 1937, we had a good courtship and were married on October 28th 1939. Our son Robert Wayne Smith was born on April 30th 1942 at 5:05 am.

After a disagreement with one of Mr. Rowe's customers, I left and was out of work until I was appointed as a substitute patrolman on the Portsmouth Police Department in February 1930 and worked here until I retired as a Captain on August 31st 1963.

During this time I was assigned to a number of positions in the department and learned from the beginning, a patrolman should walk his beat in a military manner and observe everything I view for the protection of its citizens and also their safety.

On July 1942 I was selected to attend the 20th session, a three months course with the National Police Academy (FBI) in Washington D.C. graduating the 31st of October 1942.

I returned to the department on November 1st 1942 and placed in plain clothes in the Detective Bureau Office. I remained in this position until I was promoted to Sergeant (1951) and put back in uniform as a night time Round Sergeant, from this promotion I went to Lieutenant in charge of the Traffic Bureau for a period of about five years and was then promoted to captain in charge of personnel and property also evidence, I remained in this position until I retired. All of these promotions were made because I was number one on the list under Civil Service Administration.

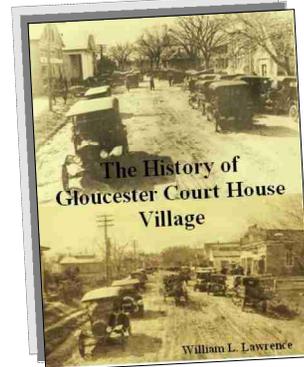
Note: John Junius Smith is a great nephew of Willis T. Smith, the boat builder who built the "Cornwallis" Ferryboat, first powered ferry on York River.

Where was the 17th Century Gloucester Jail?

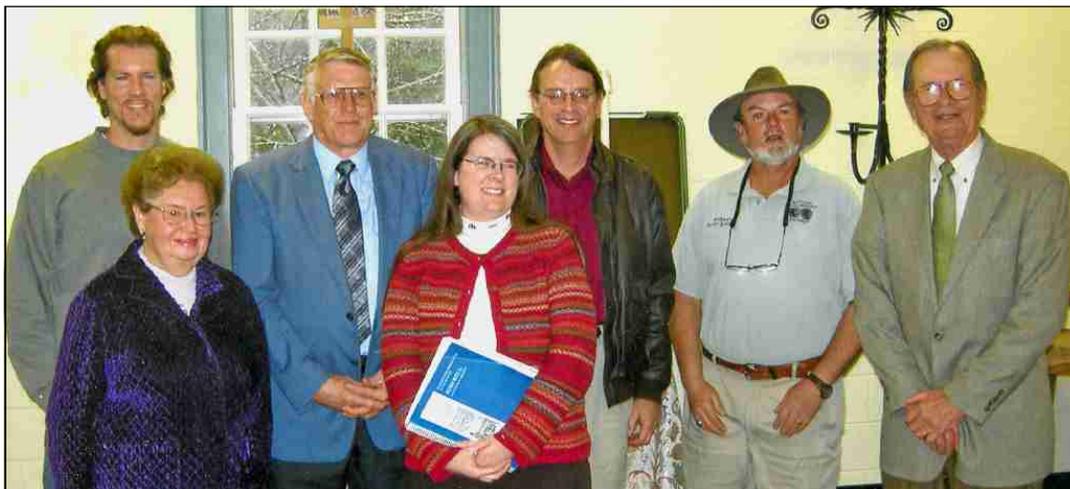
* Sainsbury MSS., 1686-1688, 12; *ibid.*, 1691-1697, 260; *ibid.*, 1715-1720, 698. Calendar of Virginia State Papers, I, 192.

One of the most interesting and important cases that were tried by special courts of oyer and terminer was that in which George Talbot, a prominent citizen of Maryland, was arraigned for killing Christopher Rousby, the King's collector of customs. The act was committed on board *The Quaker*, a revenue vessel, which at that time was lying in the harbor at the mouth of Patuxent Bay in Maryland. The captain of the vessel was unwilling to deliver Talbot up to the Maryland authorities, as he feared that they would not punish him as he deserved. He, therefore, sailed to Virginia with his captive and gave him over to Lord Howard, the governor. Lord Howard thought that his commission as vice-admiral gave him authority to punish offenses of this class, and so Talbot was confined in the jail of Gloucester County. The Maryland council wrote to Governor Howard asking him to send Talbot back to Maryland for trial, claiming that no other colony had jurisdiction in the case. At a meeting of the Virginia council, which was called to consider the matter, it was decided that all depositions should be sent to the King for his opinion as to whether Talbot should be tried in Virginia according to the rules of admiralty or be sent to Maryland to be tried according to common law. The Committee of Trade and Plantations at first recommended that Talbot be sent to England for trial, but afterwards decided that a special commission of oyer and terminer should be sent to the council of Virginia for his trial. The King also sent instructions to Lord Howard authorizing him to suspend the execution of the sentence against Talbot if he should be found guilty. But before this special court convened for his trial, Talbot escaped from the Gloucester jail and returned to Maryland. Fiske says that he was liberated by his wife, who one dark, wintry night sailed with two companions down the Chesapeake Bay and up York River until they came to Gloucester. Talbot was delivered from prison and taken back to his home in Maryland. The sheriff of Gloucester County and another prominent Virginian were sent to Maryland for the prisoner, but it is not stated whether they succeeded in bringing him back. At any rate, the case was put on trial in Virginia before the General Court acting under a special commission of oyer and terminer, and he was sentenced to death. The King commuted the sentence (1686) to five years banishment from the British dominions. Sainsbury MSS., 1682-1686, 134, 138, 142, 143, 146, 150, 162, 195, 209, 212; *ibid.*, 1686-1688, 3, 12. Randolph MSS., 426, 427. Fiske, *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors*, II, 158.

The History of Gloucester Court House Village



A new book written by William L. Lawrence and titled The History of Gloucester Court House Village was recently published by the Friends of the Museum. It covers the history of the village from 1651 to 2009. Many old photos from the 1880s to the present are shown. Short histories of over seventy buildings along Main Street from the Women's Club to Newington Baptist Church are covered. Included are many old survey plats, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous information, such as nine buildings on Main Street that have been moved.



Reports of the various history related activities were presented to the Gloucester Historical Society on March 1, 2009. Participants are shown in the group photograph by Zach Loesch. From the left: Thane Harpole, Fairfield Foundation; Rachael Burnette, Gloucester Historical Committee; Roane Hunt, GGSV, Hilarie Hicks, Rosewell Foundation; Warren Deal, 7th Va. Regiment Reenactment; Robert Harper, Clayton's Old Office; and Ben Borden, Gloucester Museum and Timberneck Farm development.