



A

ALEXANDRIA HISTORY

A CHRONICLE OF THE 17th VIRGINIA

THE MYSTERY OF LEDGER G

ALEXANDRIA IN THE WAR OF 1812

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A Chronicle of the 17th Virginia Regiment—"The Reminiscences of Col. Arthur Herbert"

by T. Michael Miller*

When the Civil War erupted in 1861, Arthur Herbert was among those Alexandrians who cast their lot with their native Virginia. Born in 1829, Herbert was a prominent Alexandria citizen who, with John W. Burke, established the famous banking firm of Burke and Herbert in 1852. His mother died when he was a child and he was raised by his uncle John Peyton at "Welbourne" in Loudoun County. Later, Arthur traveled extensively throughout the western United States and, upon his return to Alexandria, resided at "Muckross" near the Episcopal Seminary.

Arthur Herbert became first lieutenant of the Old Dominion Rifles when that organization was formed on January 7, 1861, and was elected captain when Montgomery Corse was promoted major in the following month. The Old Dominion Rifles became Company H of the 17th Regiment of Virginia Volunteers on June 10. In April 1862, Herbert was elected major of the 17th and became its lieutenant colonel in November of that year when Lt. Col. Mayre was promoted colonel to succeed Corse. On July 8th, 1864, he received promotion to colonel of the 17th, which he had commanded since Mayre was wounded at Second Manassas in August, 1862.

Col. Herbert took part in the engagements of Blackburn's Ford, First Manassas, Williamsburg, Seven Pines, Frayser's Farm, Second Manassas, South Mountain, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Manassas Gap, Cold Harbor, Bermuda Hundred (where he was wounded in May 1864), Dinwiddie Court House, Five Forks, and Saylor's Creek, and in the sieges of Yorktown, Suffolk, and Petersburg. Upon the termination of the conflict, he returned to Alexandria and worked for his former partner, John Burke. From November 1865 to November 1869 the firm operated under the title Burke, Herbert & Company. In November 1869 the bank resumed its original name, Burke & Herbert Bank. For the next 24 years he strove diligently to rebuild the South, and in 1889 retired from the banking business to "Muckross."

Married to Alice Goode Gregory of Petersburg, Virginia, Col. Herbert sired five daughters. He was quite active both socially and philanthropically in Alexandria. A lifetime Episcopalian, for 53 years he was

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a member of the Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Seminary. Col. Herbert died at his home on 23 February 1919, age 90.

He delivered the following reminiscence of the 17th Virginia Regiment before the Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans of Alexandria in February 1887. The speech is historically important because it provides the reader with the impressions of a high ranking Confederate officer about the activities of the regiment. Heretofore, the only other chronicles of this organization had been penned by: Edgar Warfield,¹ Geo. Wise,² Henry Bennett,³ and Alexander Hunter.⁴

FOOTNOTES

1. Edgar Warfield, *A Confederate Soldier's Memoirs* (Richmond: Masonic Home Press Inc., 1936).
2. Geo. Wise, *History of the Seventeenth Virginia Infantry, C.S.A.* (Baltimore: Kelly, Piet & Co., 1870).
3. Henry Bennett, "Diary of a Confederate Soldier," in *The Years of Anguish, Fauquier County, Virginia, 1861-1865*, eds. Emily G. Ramey and John K. Gott, (Warrenton, Va.: The Fauquier Democrat, 1965), pp 44-52.
4. Alexander Hunter, *Johnny Reb and Billy Yank* (New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1904).

THE 17th VIRGINIA INFANTRY

I am here to-night in response to your invitation, to read before you my account of the fights of the 17th at Flat Creek and Drury's Bluff. To my comrades of the 17th, all that brings up the record of the regiment must be interesting, even though the subject be handled by a novice like myself. To the comrades of other commands who have honored me by their presence, I hope they will bear with me if I add some stories that only a 17th man can wholly appreciate. Without further preface, then, I will give some memories of the old war days, fraught as they are with the humor and pathos of a soldier's life. Passing over many minor events, I will take up my theme after the organization of the regiment at Manassas.

You will all recollect the squad, company and battalion drills, guard mountings, duties of sentries, countersigns, and all that pertained to the school of the soldier with which we went through and were gradually shaped up for the grand work before us. Two incidents of sentry duty may not be amiss just here. Do you see that sentry as he walks his post, the air of importance that beams from face and figure, the military swagger as if the fate of armies depended upon his vigilance? The Corporal has just placed him upon outpost duty and for the first time whispered to him the countersign. And now he paces his post, with the air of a veteran. For awhile, visions of deeds of daring, rapid promotion, the plaudits of his companions, and last, but not least, the bright smiles

of the "girl he left behind him," fill his imagination. The night grows dark, the stillness is being felt, a nervous tremor steals over him and he starts at the slightest sound. Can his senses deceive him? that must be footsteps in the distance. Nearer and nearer they come, the tension now is great; can it be the stealthy tread of the foe? "Halt!" "Who goes there?" No answer; the enemy is upon him. "Halt and give the counter-sign, or I'll fire"; bang! and as the report dies away an old sow, with a boo, boo, boo, scampers through the brushwood, nearly upsetting the Corporal and the guard as they rush to his relief. A roar of laughter follows and our sentry's visions of glory fade away before the chaffing of his comrades.

On another occasion an old cow drew the fire of a night picket and when found untouched, seemed, with her mild eyes, to reproach the boys for the racket they had kicked up about her.

Can't you remember the martial strains of the old First Regiment Band and the way we envied our more fortunate comrades, the commanding form and martial figure of the drum major, who, some of the boys from the rural districts mistook for the commander in chief of the army.

A band we must have, and it was nonsense to suppose a soldier could fight without having his blood stirred by martial music. And so our commander averred himself to the popular clamor, had a detail from the companies made of men supposed to be fitted with suppressed musical genius. Well, these fellows blew and snorted through their old brass horns until the sounds were like the groans and wails of the Inferno. A burst of sound from them one day startled a visitor; with some emotion he exclaimed, "What is that?" the 17th replied with a conscious air of pride, "That's our band." "Your what, excuse me", did not come too soon for there was ire and fight in the 17th man's eye. The band had turned three tunes, but could not round a corner with either, and we were to have them out on dress parade. The momentous hour arrived and the boys were on the qui vive, two to one being bet by some that their wind would not hold out the two lengths of the battalion. Well, they started, but the music was so excruciating and the men became so convulsed with laughter as almost to break up the parade. The Colonel ordered them back to the ranks with the hope they would be shot in the first fight they got into. After the band came a six foot cross-eyed countryman as a fifer, and his little son as drummer. There was no pomp and circumstance of glorious war about them. The boy was so short that his coattail swept the ground in his rear, as the drum did in front. They appeared at one dress parade which so taxed the discipline of the regiment that they were discharged without another trial. They gave the boys the grins as they swept up and down in front of the battalion. The fife shrieking wildly "Billy in the Low Grounds," and the juvenile drummer to keep pace with his long-legged dad, missing the drum every other lick. "Is it music ye would be getting out of

the likes of him, wid his blowing one way and looking another," said one of our Irish boys. So the old regiment's only music was the "music in the air" from the hum of the minnie, the shrieking of shells, and the songs of the boys on the march.

Blackburn's Ford first brought before us the realities of war. There we looked first upon the dead and wounded of both armies and the first impressions were very solemn, but not lasting. This was but a foretaste of the harrowing scenes which so soon were to deaden the sensibilities of even the gentlest among us. Can you recall our hospitals at Manassas? the utter wretchedness and discomfort of them, the sights of suffering both from sickness and wounds, men in all stages of disease, the pale faces that turned in mute appeal for help and sympathy, and the despair that would steal over their countenances, upon which the shadow of death was slowly passing, as no answering glance met their closing eyes. This was before our noble women, in answer to an impulse begotten of the times, lent their aid and made of what seemed a veritable hell on earth an entrance, we may hope, of the portals of the blest. None but God alone can know the deeds of mercy our brave women performed and the sacrifices of every comfort made by them; but the fruits are with him.

You will all recollect the state of the roads in the spring of 1862—mud, rain and all manner of unpleasantness—the condition of the command as we neared Richmond, and how we went into camp and were allowed time to brush up for the march through the city. Many friends of the men were refugees there at the time, and the man who could don a boiled shirt or collar was looked on with envious eyes by his less fortunate comrades. The people lined the sidewalks along the line of march, the girls waved their handkerchiefs from the windows, men cheered and threw up their hats, an occasional greeting of "How are you, old boy?" and a hearty "God bless you!" from the crowd as some old friends recognized each other. But on the stream of companies, regiments, brigades and batteries pass, for it was Longstreet's division on its way to the Peninsula, the heroes of Blackburn's Ford and Manassas. The toll of the march, the rain, the mud, all is forgotten, and as the boys wheel into Main street and the long line of troops is seen, cheers rend the air from windows, housetops and sidewalks, and there comes from the moving column the old rebel yell. Can't you hear it now, and does not the old feeling of soldierly pride and daring come over you once more? Twenty-five years have passed since then, but I need no enchanted wand to conjure up that day. The embarkation for the Peninsula was a busy, bustling, funny scene. And our experience in the trenches while it was raining continually, with no tents, the wagons miles away, the skies dark and lowering, the water, the mud, the utter discomfort every old soldier will never forget. After two weeks of this uncanny life, without change of clothes, we moved towards Williamsburg to meet

McClellan's advance, and the day after made one of the most brilliant fights of the war. Our regimental loss was heavy, although we were driving the enemy, and only left our advanced position about 9 o'clock at night. The falling back from Williamsburg that night, with the roads in their then condition, the all night tramp and the day following, will only pass with life from the memory of those men who participated in it. Seven Pines follows with its heavy death roll and its heroic daring. Yet from some unaccountable oversight, in the light of history we are unknown as participants in it—one of the bloodiest battles of the war. In passing over the Seven Days' fights around Richmond, I must relate an amusing incident occurring in our regiment. I believe it was at Frazier's Farm, where all the dash of our brigade was lost by not being supported on either flank.

As the regiment swept by, Dr. Snowden caught the eye of Capt. B——, whose face wore a foreboding and serious look and sung out: "Cheer up, Captain; if you are wounded I have some medical stores for you," at the same time shaking his canteen. "Give it to me now, Doctor," said B., "life is uncertain and its joys are fleeting," and, seizing the canteen, drew inspiration for himself and a hearty laugh from those who heard him.

Not seeing the Doctor here tonight I will say, in his behalf, no surgeon in the Army of Northern Virginia was easier to find on a battlefield than he, and none ever kept nearer his regiment's line of battle in action, or was more prompt to succor his wounded.

In August, 1862, we broke camp around Richmond and the stirring events of that campaign opened before us. With light hearts and bright aspirations the men of the old regiment left scenes now historic and made forever memorable by deeds of bravery never excelled by any people, and plunged once more into active movements, such as the forced march, the bivouac, the outlying picket, which brought to the faces of the men the glow of health and an appetite that rejoiced even on the hard fare of a Confederate haversack. Do you see the old regiment, that moving human tide, as it surges along? The tramp, tramp of the feet, the hum of the voices, the peculiar jingle and rattle of the accoutrements, the song of the Gypsies as they break out in the old camp chant, "Keep your shoes upon your feet; forward march and never retreat."

But as the day wears on the boys have no breath to waste on song or story: it is a forced march, and all hearts are centered upon the work now before them. It is whispered that old Stonewall is bearing down on the enemy's flank and that Longstreet now must soon be in his front, and so a hush falls upon the ranks. Day has passed into night and still on we go. "Boys, we will never love another country, will we?" comes from an old grumbler, but they brace up for the work, and the human current still moves on. At the head of the regiment marches old Johnny Ready, with his pipe glowing in the darkness like a firefly, carrying a

pack that would have given a camel the backache. "Give us a light, Johnny!" might be heard and the answer, "To the Devil wid ye; do ye take me for a match box?" But he was never known to be without that important article, and never refused a comrade, though the grumble generally accompanied it. "Halt! Break ranks!" and into camp we go. "Pile on the rails, boys," and soon the camp fires blaze, the camp kettles boil, the frying pans hiss, and the old Confed is stretched on his blanket with his feet to the fire, the toil of the march forgotten, and the danger of the future undreamed of. He lights his pipe, and speculates on the movement, then comes to the conclusion that "Mars Robert" knows what he is about, closes his eyes and falls into that deep, sweet sleep, known only to him who has earned it by a free play of his muscles in God's pure air.

Well, comrades, we have passed the Gap, and are passing on down the old Gainesville pike, and now and then the boom of a gun tells us that Stonewall Jackson is waking the enemy up, and the next morning dawns on the 2d battle of Manassas. Leaving the 2d Manassas to the historian, we pass on by Leesburg, across the Potomac, through Frederick City, to Hagerstown. Will any of us ever forget that night in Hagerstown before the battle of South Mountain? The moon shone brilliantly, and the streets were filled with Confederate officers and men. The citizens were much divided in sentiment, and when calling at a house with a brother officer to see a lady, an old man seeing our uniform, slammed the door in our faces. At another house, near by, the rooms were brilliantly lighted and filled with lovely women, who welcomed and entertained us in the most charming manner. On mounting my horse to return to camp, I heard our glee club, Smith, Kidwell, Atwell and others singing some of the old camp songs. I asked them to serenade the ladies, which they did with pleasure. Then I told them of the old man's reception, and asked them to sing him some of their most rebellious songs, which they did with a gusto. I never heard whether the old gentleman appreciated the delicate compliment paid him. The next day the battle of South Mountain, or Boonsboro', was fought, and the 17th Virginia held the position assigned her, against great odds, until ordered to fall back, which was done about 9 o'clock p.m., when we continued to march all night, a weary, weary thing at best, but especially so after a hard fight.

On the morning of the 16th the battle of Sharpsburg opened. From our position we had a splendid view of the fight on our left. I must leave the description of this brilliantly contested battle and come to the incidents pertaining wholly to our part in the struggle. About 4 o'clock p.m. the ball opened for us, a courier reporting that the enemy was advancing upon our position in force. The General rode up and enquired for Col. Corse. "Here I am," was the prompt reply from our old colonel. "What shall we do, Corse?" "We will have to meet them," he

said, and the command, "Fall in!" sounded down the thin line (for from losses in battle, straggling, etc, the three regiments mustered only about 200 men). Then the enemy's batteries opened and swept the hill above us with round shot and shell. A section of our artillery, all we had, supporting us was soon silenced, and we moved up without support. We reached the top, swept by the enemy's guns, in full view of one line of battle, supported by another, the latter cheering on the first. It was the forlorn hope of the war, and I felt it so as the men began to drop on every side. Our regiment was on the right of our line, and you will recollect the rail fence in front, and as we poured in our fire the first line of the enemy squatted and from their overlapping us returned their fire both in our front and right flank. "Forward to the fence men!" shouted the colonel, and some few obeyed the order and were taken prisoners or shot down. Again the order rang out, "forward to the fence!" but, alas! it fell upon ears closed forever, or upon men racked by ghastly wounds. "There are no men to go to the fence!" I shouted back to the colonel, who, with Tom Perry and myself, were about all that remained. I saw the Zouaves mounting the fence and felt there was nothing left but to be shot in my tracks, get away or be taken prisoner, the latter fate being worse than the first. Did I run, boys? Oh no! but I did some of the tallest walking of the war, with the expectation and fear of having a bullet through my back at every step. The history of the 17th tells you of a rally under General Toombs and his gallant Georgians and their retaking the hill. Well, old comrades, the fight is over, and with the ambulance corps I once more ascend the hill now lying bathed in a flood of moonlight, so peaceful, so still. What a contrast to the pandemonium of human passions of a few hours before! Our dead were lying thick where the last stand was made. Carefully we look for and tenderly raise the wounded, bathe their bloodstained and blackened faces and send them to the rear. Then we gather our dead and digging a trench wrap them in their blankets and lay them side by side in their last resting place and over them read the burial service of the church. Years may come and go, but the scenes of that day and night can never be forgotten. The face of one Confederate boy (not of our regiment) is with me yet. Lying on his back, with his fair, young face turned to that heaven where I hope his departed soul had mounted, a smile of angelic beauty rested on his features. All was peace, and may we not hope that in his last moments he caught sight of the pearly gates, and that it was the reflected light of the celestial city that shone there still? I must now pass on to the article I was requested to read, viz: "The Skirmish at Flat Creek Bridge and the Battle of the 16th of May at Drury's Bluff."¹

In closing, I would say the theme of to-night might be added to indefinitely. The events of that four years of battle hardship and trial crowd upon me when I sit down to record them. Old faces and forms rise up before me; and memory teems with incident till then forgotten.

FOOTNOTE

1. Col. Arthur Herbert, "The Seventeenth Virginia Infantry at Flat Creek and Drewry's Bluff," *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 52 Vols. (1876-1959; reprint ed., Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint Co., 1979), 12:289.

The Mystery of Ledger G

by Terry Alford*

Ledgers are the oft-neglected stepchildren of the world of manuscripts. Heavy, unwieldy, dirty, they can appear intimidating slag-heaps of accounting mumbo-jumbo, a baffling salute to arcane early bookkeeping practices. That is why some historians will go through long careers without ever touching one. But the truth is that ledgers are also mother-lodes of information, not all of it narrowly economic in nature. Their entries can illuminate many things, like family relationships, fashions and tastes in goods, the movement and employment of ships, the currents of trade, the cost of money, the creditworthiness and reputations of people, the commercial life of a community—all mixed against a background of the fortunes and misfortunes of some enterprising individual of long ago.

An air of mystery attaches itself to a ledger when, from time to time, one manages to survive the years with no evident identification of who kept it or where it was kept. Such was the case recently when a 19th Century ledger from a private collection was examined.¹ Physically the ledger was an impressive volume, weighing almost twenty pounds, with eight hundred pages between its boards. On the spine was a gold-lettered label reading "Ledger G." But neither there nor in the interior of the ledger was the name of the individual or firm which had kept the record. The process by which the original owners of Ledger G were ultimately identified was an interesting one and an engaging test of one's skills in historical detection as well. It put a manuscript "in search of its author" and ended by opening a long-closed door onto Alexandria in the era of the Civil War.

A few things were evident about Ledger G at first glance. It was a business ledger, not a personal one. It had been kept principally between 1857 and 1861. Its entries were comprehensive and professionally entered in a modified double-entry bookkeeping system. The owners of Ledger G had been commission merchants. They specialized in sales of groceries, commodities, coal and industrial goods, and they had customers in the major cities of the eastern United States and in Canada and the West Indies. The sums of money they dealt with were large for the time. And the letter "G" revealed something, too. This was actually the seventh ledger in a series. Obviously Ledger G had been kept by a

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firm that had been around quite a few years, a merchant house of longevity and substance.

Step one in identifying the owners of the ledger was to establish the locale where the record had been kept. In the case of Ledger G this did not prove to be much of a problem. There were references in the volume to New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Richmond, but a more suggestive clue occurred in an account for "W. D. Massey, mayor." As the account did not specify mayor of what place, one might reasonably assume he was the local mayor, that is to say the mayor of the town or city wherein the ledger was kept. By reference to contemporary manuscripts—such as the account book of the "Sinking Fund of the City of Alexandria"¹²—one sees that William D. Massey was mayor of Alexandria, Virginia. The sinking fund account book also shows that J. H. McVeigh was President of the Common Council. Interestingly enough, a J. H. McVeigh had an account in Ledger G.

Another evidence of origin for Ledger G was the firm's business with Burke and Herbert, important bankers in Alexandria in that day as well as this. Robert Bell, an Alexandria bookseller and stationer, also had an account with Ledger G and was apparently the source from which the owners of Ledger G purchased the record volume in question. Other familiar Alexandria names in the ledger include James Green, a cabinetmaker; T. W. Ashby, Alexandria postmaster during most of the 1850's; T. A. Brewis, a city merchant killed in 1870 in the collapse of a portion of the Capitol building in Richmond; Archibald Henderson, long-time commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps; J. Leadbeater and Son, druggists; and Corse Brothers, brokers whose firm included Montgomery D. Corse, later a Confederate general.

There were accounts from the neighborhood of the city, too, like that for W. A. Lake of Mississippi, a congressman then resident in Washington, D. C. An account from the nearby Virginia countryside was for John A. Washington, the last family owner of Mount Vernon who sold the mansion to preservationists in 1860 and was killed the following year while an aide to General Robert E. Lee, his kinsman.

These entries, together with others which could be cited, made it clear *where* Ledger G had been kept. Now came the more challenging question of *who* had kept it.

The initial approach to this problem was simple: crosscheck in the records of some firm with whom Ledger G's owners did business. There, under the date and beside the amount provided by Ledger G, would be the name of the mysterious firm's owners. But, despite the massive amount of data Ledger G contained, such checking could not be easily done. There is a scarcity of manuscripts extant from Ledger G's corresponding firms. A few records which do exist are unprocessed or are currently unavailable to researchers. Even city tax records (and Ledger G's owners paid taxes aplenty) had gaps at the dates needed.

That being the case, Ledger G—from its tens of thousands of minute and unindexed entries—had to provide the answers itself. Fortunately it could do it. Ledger G is a true ledger. It is not simply a book in which the sales of a company were found. Nor does it tell only who did business with the firm and how they stood in debit or credit. It was a book of final entry in which every money transaction of the firm is recorded. This includes the profit-and-loss accounts of Ledger G's owners, their commission accounts, how much interest was due, what bills of theirs were receivable, what bills were payable, the company's capital account, and so forth. It was these internal company accounts, posted in the ledger, which led upon close reading to identification of the owners of the firm.

Specifically the owners were identified by their capital accounts. A capital account is a partner's account of his debits and credits with his own business. One such account in Ledger G belonged to William G. Cazenove. But did Cazenove own a company in Alexandria in the late 1850's? Yes, he did. *Boyd's Washington and Georgetown Directory* . . . (1860) lists Cazenove and Company, 27 and 29 North Union Street, Alexandria, a commission merchant firm.

A second capital account in the ledger was that of Cassius F. Lee. Ledger G indicated that Lee was Cazenove's partner. That he actually was is confirmed independently by a family member. A biographical sketch of Lee in his son Edmund's book *Lee of Virginia* (1895) contains the sentence, "[Cassius F. Lee] became a member of the mercantile firm of Cazenove & Company," the year unspecified.¹

There was no doubt about it. With information provided by the comprehensive nature of the ledger, the owners of the volume were identified as William G. Cazenove and Cassius F. Lee, principals of Cazenove and Company of Alexandria.

The firm these two men owned was big business by community standards. It brought in coal via the canals from the upper Potomac River. It supplied iron rails for the Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire Railroad, then under construction. It engaged in speculative shipments (or "adventures") of foodstuffs to the North. It sold powder and fuse from the du Pont mills in Delaware. And above all it exported whatever Virginia had to offer. From 1857 until the Civil War interrupted things in the late spring of 1861 Cazenove and Company had sales of nearly three-quarters of a million dollars.

In the grain trade the firm was a powerhouse. The peak year of 1857 found the company selling 11,887 barrels of flour, worth \$80,000. A fair amount of this flour was sold locally, but Cazenove and Company did a thriving business with cities in Maine and Canada. According to Ledger G the firm had dealings with at least fourteen firms in St. Johns, New Brunswick. Wheat exports were important, too. Wheat exporting in Alexandria reached a high-point in 1857 with the export of 231,572

bushels. The importance of Cazenove and Company's activities may be gauged by the fact that it sold 93,000 bushels of wheat that year.

Even interest due on outstanding accounts could be a significant source of income to a firm this large. For 1857 alone the company had due it more than \$14,000 in interest charges.

And what of the firm's owners? The true founder of the company was Anthony-Charles Cazenove, a merchant-prince of Alexandria who at his death in 1852 left his son William well-endowed in several regards to continue an already thriving business. William G. Cazenove (1819-1877), an honors graduate at Princeton and an attorney, ran the family business thereafter. "His temperament was ardent," wrote a contemporary.⁴ It led him into secessionist politics and the Confederate army.

Grandson of Richard Henry Lee, Cassius F. Lee (1808-1890) had an ancestry no less distinguished. An attorney by education like Cazenove and related to his partner by marriage, Lee was religiously inclined and introspective. He demonstrated more dread than exhilaration at the onset of civil war. "I deeply grieve over the condition of our once happy and prosperous country. I have never been a secessionist . . . but a large majority of my people having decided otherwise, I must unite my destiny with theirs," he wrote in June of 1861.⁵ The sentiment is strikingly similar to that of his first cousin and lifelong friend Robert E. Lee.

Cassius Lee's anxiety was not out of place. The war brought chaos to Cazenove and Company, chaos well documented by Ledger G. Clerks resigned, Cazenove fled south, business plummeted, accounts became uncollectible, transportation was disrupted, and the company became a fatality of the war. Lee's country home (now in part the site of Fort Ward Park) was taken over and abused by soldiers while Lee himself was arrested several times for disloyalty. He went into exile in Canada in 1863 and remained until the war was over. His association with Confederate agents while there forms an interesting chapter in his life.

In 1865 Cazenove and Lee returned to Alexandria. Both were much reduced in wealth and prospects. Cazenove spent his later years in the railroad business, Lee lived to reach the venerable age of eighty-one. Postwar hardships did not prevent him from sharing his business talents with the Protestant Episcopal Seminary, located near the country home to which he retired. He served as treasurer of the Seminary for twenty-five years, and, as one writer notes, its growth Lee "not only witnessed, he was largely instrumental in the success."⁶ Despite the losses brought by the war, then, there is no reason to think Lee's postwar years were without their happinesses and moments of accomplishment. It seems appropriate that today his portrait adorns a wall in the Seminary's oldest building.

These men and their times were all brought evocatively to life by the pages of a forlorn old ledger. It proves again the saying that every

manuscript has its story to tell to those who will pause and read it. Ledger G certainly did. It spoke in volumes.

FOOTNOTES

1. Author's collection. Ledger citations in the text are taken from the volume, *passim*.
2. Lloyd House Collections.
3. Edmund J. Lee, *Lee of Virginia, 1642-1892* (1895; reprint ed., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), p. 474.
4. *Alexandria Gazette*, August 15, 1877.
5. Lee to Mrs. John Fowle, Alexandria, Va., June 29, 1861, quoted in John Askling, ed. and comp., "Letters From Mrs. Cassius F. Lee, of 'Menoken' . . ." unpaginated. (Typescript, 1970, in Lloyd House Collections).
6. William A. R. Goodwin, *History of the Theological Seminary in Virginia and Its Historical Background*, 2 Vols. (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1924), 2:42.

Alexandria in the War of 1812

In August, 1814 the City of Alexandria surrendered to the invading British naval forces under Captain Gordon without firing a shot. For this the city was the object of scorn from many parts of the country. Why did the city leadership surrender to the British forces?

On 4 October 1814 the National Intelligencer carried the official account "... of the occupation of Alexandria . . . together with the causes which led to that distressing event." The editors believe this statement should be republished in the hope that it will arouse interest in this period of Alexandria history.

The following officers are mentioned in the account: Brigadier General William H. Winder commanded the Tenth Military District which included Maryland, the District of Columbia, and the portions of eastern Virginia lying between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. Captain James A. Gordon commanded the British naval force in the Chesapeake which went up the Potomac River and occupied Alexandria. General Robert Young commanded the second brigade of General Winder's forces. They were assigned to defend the approaches to Fort Washington (Warburton). Admiral Cockburn commanded the British Flotilla supporting the attack on Washington from the Patuxent River. The Admiral and his seamen and marines accompanied the British Army under Gen. Ross in its attack on Washington.

ALEXANDRIA.

I. COUNCIL, Sept. 7, 1814

PRESENT—THOS. HERBERT, President; John Gial, And. Fleming, Henry Nicholson, J. B. Patton, John Cohagen, James Millan, John Hunter, Reuben Johnston, R. L. Taylor, Wm. Veitch, Anthony Rhodes.

The following narrative of the occupation of this town by the enemy and of the circumstances connected with that unfortunate transaction, having been submitted to Council and duly considered and examined, the Council do unanimously concur therein, and it is thereupon ordered, that it be published in both of the papers printed in this town.

THOS. HERBERT, *President, At a meeting of the committee of vigilance, this 7th of September, 1814.*

Present—Charles Simms, Mayor; Joseph Dean, Matthew Robinson, Jonah Thomson, Wm. Herbert, Thos. Vowell, Edmund I. Lee.

The following narrative of the occupation of the town of Alexandria

by the British squadron, was submitted to the committee, who, upon examining the same, unanimously concur in it.

CHARLES SIMMS, *Chairman*, THOS. VOWELL, *Sec.*

A respect for the opinions of others, and a due regard for the character of the citizens of Alexandria, have induced the municipal authorities of the town, to exhibit to the public a faithful narrative of the occupation of Alexandria by the British squadron under the command of Captain Gordon, together with the causes which led to that distressing event.

To those who are unacquainted with the situation and condition of Alexandria in regard to its means of defence, it will be proper to state, that it is situate in the District of Columbia, upon the west bank of the river Potomac, about six miles below the city of Washington; the depth of water admitting large frigates to come to the very wharves of the town.

It is totally destitute of fortifications of any kind, and its protection against invasion by water, depended entirely upon a fort about six miles below the town, commonly known by the name of Fort Warburton, which was exclusively under the control of the government of the U. States.

About the month of July last, it was announced that Gen. Winder was appointed to the command of the tenth military district of the U. States, comprehending the district of Columbia and a portion of the adjoining states of Virginia and Maryland, including the city of Baltimore.

In consequence of reports that the enemy contemplated an attack upon the City of Washington, the municipal authority of Alexandria thought it advisable to appoint a Committee of Vigilance for the purpose of procuring information of the approaches of the enemy, and of obtaining assistance and advice as to the measures which it might be proper to pursue for protection and defence. As soon as this committee was appointed, they caused representations to be made to General Winder of the defenceless condition of the town, and earnestly entreated that some measures should be taken for its protection. Gen. Winder was called on, because it had been distinctly understood that the Secretary of War would receive our communications through this channel only. From General Winder every assurance was made that could have been wished, that every thing in his power should be done for the protection of the town. His means however were very inconsiderable—he had no money to expend in fortifications or even in the erection of batteries; and unless some defence of this sort could be obtained, the town would be exposed to the mercy of the enemy, if he should approach by water and should succeed in passing the fort. The Committee of Vigilance was duly impressed with the necessity of providing some adequate defence against an attack by water, and some of its members, under the authority of the committee, had repeated interviews with Gen. Winder on this subject; in one of them, the President of the United States was present, and he was distinctly given to understand, that unless there was provided an adequate defence for the town, it would be at the mercy of the enemy and would be compelled to make the best terms in its power. These representations and requests produced no other effect than the repetition of the assurance of an earnest desire on the part of Gen. Winder to afford every assistance in his power.

On the 19th of August a levy en masse, was made of the militia of the town and county of Alexandria, and on the 20th and 21st they were ordered to cross the Potomac, and stationed between Piscataway and Fort Warburton. They took with them all the artillery which had been mounted at the expense of the corporation, except two 12 pounders, which were left without ammunition, and nearly all the arms belonging to the town. They left no men but the exempts from age, and other causes, and a few who had not reported themselves, or had found substitutes; and it is not believed that, after their departure, one hundred effective armed men could have been mustered in the town. The two iron twelve pounders remained until the 25th, when, Alexandria being open to the enemy, then in full possession of Washington, they were removed at some distance from the town, by orders received from Gen. Young.

On the night of the 24th, the Alexandria militia were ordered to recross the Potomac: they did so, and were marched through town without halting, to the country, and without giving information to the authorities or inhabitants of the place of their destination, and on the evening of the 27th, when the fleet approached, the municipal authorities of the town knew not where they were. It has since appeared that they were *then* stationed about nineteen miles from town by the orders of Gen. Winder. It is here proper to state that Gen. Winder on the morning of the 24th informed the Committee of Vigilance, who waited on him, that he could send no part of the forces with him to Alexandria; but that he had ordered Gen. Young to cross over to Alexandria, if practicable, if not to fall down the river. The Committee of Vigilance, on receiving this information, sent boats over to the Maryland shore sufficient in number to bring over the whole of Gen. Young's force at once; but when the boats reached him, he had received orders from the Secretary of War to retain his position, as Gen. Young in a communication to the Mayor stated.

The Committee of Vigilance, despairing of obtaining any assistance from the general government, and having information of the rapid approach of the enemy towards the capital by land, and that their squadron was approaching Alexandria by water, deemed it their duty to recommend to the Common Council a resolution to the following effect:

"That in case the British vessels should pass the Fort, or their forces approach the town by land, and there should be no *sufficient force* on our part to oppose them, with any reasonable prospect of success, they should appoint a committee to carry a flag to the officer commanding the enemy's force about to attack the town, and to procure the best terms for the safety of persons, houses, and property, in their power."

This recommendation was made on the day of the battle at Bladensburg, and on the same day was unanimously adopted by the Common Council.

The battle of Bladensburg having terminated in the defeat of our troops, and Gen. Winder having been obliged to retreat from the capital towards Montgomery Court House, about fifteen miles to the west of it, the city of Washington was left in the entire possession of the enemy. The citizens of Alexandria saw nothing to impede the march of the British to their town—saw nothing to restrain them from committing the most brutal

outrages upon the female portion of society, having neither arms nor men to make defence with; the President of the United States and the heads of the departments were absent, and it was not known where they were to be found; no military commander or officer of the general government was present to direct or advise.

In this state of things it was considered by the Common Council as their duty to send a flag to the British commander at Washington to know what treatment might be expected from him in case his troops should approach Alexandria, and should succeed in obtaining possession of the town. Admiral Cockburn, to whom the communication was made, assured the very respectable gentlemen who bore that flag, that private property of all descriptions should be respected; that it was probable that fresh provisions and some flour might be wanted, but that whatever they did take should be paid for.

While these things were going on in the city of Washington, the British squadron had been gradually ascending the Potomac, and on the 27th of August, three days after the battle at Bladensburg, it reached Fort Warburton. No change had taken place in relation to the means of the defence of the town of Alexandria. Upon the fort did the safety of Alexandria now entirely depend. The citizens looked with great anxiety to this point for protection. But, to their great surprise and mortification, and without the concurrence or wish of the municipal authority of the town or of any member of it, the fort was abandoned and the magazine blown up by the United States' garrison on the evening of the 27th, without firing a single gun. The following correspondence between the Secretary of War and the commander at the fort, shows by what authority he acted. (See the National Intelligencer of the 30th Aug. last.)

This relinquishment of the fort decided the fate of Alexandria. Nothing was left to oppose the progress of the squadron, and on the morning of the 28th it passed the ruins of the fort on its way to the town; their barges had sounded a considerable distance above. About ten o'clock of the morning of the 28th, after the squadron was above the fort, the committee appointed by the Council to bear the flag to the enemy, *in case they should pass the fort*, set out upon their mission, and proceeded to the ship commanded by Capt. Gordon. They requested to know what his intentions were in regard to the town of Alexandria. They were informed by Capt. Gordon that he would communicate his terms when he came opposite the town. But he assured them, that, in the mean time, if the squadron was not molested by the inhabitants, the persons, houses and furniture of the citizens should not be injured. One of the gentlemen who attended the flag was the Mayor. Upon his return from the squadron, he was informed that a small detachment of cavalry from the army of Gen. Hungerford had been in town, probably for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy; that it had remained but a short time. Upon enquiry it was understood that the army of General Hungerford was at that time about sixteen miles from Alexandria, on its march to that place, having followed the British squadron along the shores of Potomac a great part of its way up. The force of Gen. Hungerford was composed of infantry and

cavalry, with two or three small pieces of artillery, not calculated to afford any protection to the town.

The municipal authority of the town had received no advices of the approach of this army; and after the return of the flag, it was too late to enter into any arrangements with General Hungerford for defence—he was too distant to afford relief.

The squadron, having suspended its approach to the town, did not reach it until the evening of this day. On the morning of the next day, to wit, the 29th of August, it arranged itself along the town, so as to command it from one extremity to the other. The force consisted of two frigates, to wit, the *Sea-Horse*, rating 38 guns, and *Euryalus*, rating 36 guns, two rocket ships, of 18 guns each, two bomb ships, of 8 guns each, and a schooner of 2 guns, which were but a few hundred yards from the wharves, and the houses so situated that they might have been laid in ashes in a few minutes. About ten o'clock in the morning of the 29th, Capt. Gordon sent to the Mayor the following terms:

*His Majesty's ship Sea Horse, off Alexandria,
the 29th day of August, 1814.*

GENTLEMEN,

In consequence of a deputation yesterday received from the city of Alexandria, requesting favorable terms for the safety of their city, the undermentioned are the only conditions in my power to offer.

The town of Alexandria (with the exception of Public Works) shall not be destroyed, unless hostilities are commenced on the part of the Americans; nor shall the inhabitants be molested in any manner whatever, or their dwelling houses entered, if the following Articles are complied with.

1st Article. All naval and ordnance stores (public and private) must be immediately delivered up.

2d Article. Possession will be immediately taken of all the shipping and their furniture must be sent on board by the owners without delay.

3d Article. The vessels that have been sunk must be delivered up in the state they were in on the 19th of August, the day of the squadron passing the Kettle Bottoms.

4th Article. Merchandize of every description must be instantly delivered up; and, to prevent any irregularities that might be committed in its embarkation, the merchants have it in their option, to load the vessels generally employed for that purpose, when they will be towed off by us.

5th Article. All merchandize that has been removed from Alexandria since the 19th inst. is to be included in the above articles.

6th Article. Refreshments of every description to be supplied the ships and paid for at the market price by bills on the British government.

7th Article. Officers will be appointed to see that the articles Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are strictly complied with, and any deviation or noncompliance on the part of the inhabitants of Alexandria will render this treaty null and void.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your most obedient humble servant,

JAMES A. GORDON, *Captain of His Majesty's ship Sea-Horse,
and Senior Officer of His Majesty's ships before Alexandria.*

To the Council of the town of Alexandria.

Upon the Mayor's receiving them he sent for the members of the Committee of Vigilance. These terms were borne by one of the officers of Capt. Gordon's frigate, who stated but one hour was allowed him to wait for a reply to them.—Upon their being read by the Mayor and the Committee, it was observed to the officer by the Mayor and one of the Committee, that it would be impossible that the Common Council could accede to several of them—that the municipal authority of the town had no power to recall the merchandize that had been sent out subsequent to the 19th of August.—The reply of the officer was, in that case it would not be expected.

He was further informed that it would not be in the power of the Common Council to compel the citizens to assist in getting up the sunken vessels. The officer answered that their sailors would then do it. He was required to explain what was intended by the term merchandize as used in the 4th article. He answered that it was intended to embrace that species of merchandize only which was intended for exportation, such as Tobacco, Flour, Cotton, Bale Goods, &c.

The Mayor and one of the Committee requested to know whether the Commodore intended to require a delivery of any more of the merchandize than he could take away with him. He answered it would not be required. This explanation was afterwards recognized by Capt. Gordon. With these verbal explanations the preceding terms were submitted to the Common Council. It will be here proper to remark, that when these terms were proposed and submitted to the Common Council, Gen. Hungerford had not arrived with his army, nor did it reach the suburbs of the town until the night of that day. The town was still without any means of defence, and it was evident that no defence could avail, but that species of force which would be calculated to drive the ships from their moorings. No communication had been received from the officers of the general government, and the town appeared to be abandoned to its fate.—Under these circumstances the Common Council could have no hesitation as to the course to be pursued. The citizens of the town of all descriptions, with an immense value of property were entirely in the power of the enemy, whose naval commander according to the proclamation of the President of the United States, dated on the first of September, has declared his "purpose to be, to employ the force under his direction in destroying and laying waste such towns & districts upon the coast as may be found assailable." A similar declaration had been made by Capt. Gor-

don to the committee who bore the flag. Against the attack of such an enemy was the town of Alexandria without any means of defence whatever. The people of the town were at his mercy, and compelled to yield to such terms as the "victor" might think fit to prescribe. If the members of the municipal authority and citizens of the town had given loose to the feelings of indignation which the occasion had excited, and had sacrificed the town and exposed their wives and daughters to the wanton insults of an unrestrained enemy, they would have betrayed their trusts and have deplored the consequences.

The Common Council therefore were obliged to yield submission to the terms as explained, and did thereupon pass & publish the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the Common Council of Alexandria, in assenting to the conditions offered by the commander of the British squadron now off the town, has acted from the impulse of irresistible necessity, and solely from a regard to the welfare of the town. That it considers the assent by it given as only formal, inasmuch as the enemy already had it in their power to enforce a compliance with their demand by a seizure of the property required from us, and believing the safety of the persons of the inhabitants, of their dwellings, and of such property as is not comprehended within the requisition, to depend entirely upon the observance of the terms of it, the Common Council recommends to the inhabitants an acquiescence; at the same time it does expressly disclaim the power of doing any act on its part to enforce compliance; its authority in this particular being limited to recommendation only."

In the execution of the terms imposed by the enemy it is proper to state that the verbal explanations made by the officer to the Mayor, were generally adhered to. No merchandize was required to be brought back to the town. No assistance was required of or offered by the citizens in getting up the sunken vessels. The depredations of the enemy, with a few exceptions, were confined to flour, cotton and tobacco, which they carried off in some of the vessels then at the town; only one vessel was burnt; no private dwelling was visited or entered in a rude or hostile manner nor were citizens personally exposed to insult.

The loss sustained from the enemy it is believed will not exceed the following:—three ships, three brigs, several bay and river craft, the number of which has not been ascertained; all of which were carried away, and one ship burnt. The quantity of flour carried away it is believed will not exceed sixteen thousand barrels—about one thousand hogsheads tobacco, one hundred and fifty bales of cotton, and of wine, sugar and other articles not more than five thousand dollars worth.

The Editors of newspapers throughout the United States, are respectfully requested to re-publish the above.

Washington's Birthnight Ball

The Alexandria Library-Lloyd House recently acquired a copy of the *Massachusetts Centinel*, March 17, 1790, in which is reported the celebration of Washington's Birthnight Ball at Mr. Wise's Tavern. According to Mrs. Dorothy Kabler in *The Story of Gadsby's Tavern*, in 1790 Mr. Wise was operating the Bunch of Grapes Tavern on the northeast corner of Cameron and Fairfax Streets. Since it is the earliest newspaper account of this celebration in Alexandria in the Lloyd House collection, the editors felt it worthy of inclusion in this issue of *Alexandria History*.

By Saturday Evening's MAILS.

ALEXANDRIA, [VIRGINIA] FEB. 18.

ON Thursday last an elegant Ball was given at Mr. Wise's Tavern, in commemoration of that auspicious day which gave to the world the illustrious and beloved PRESIDENT of the United States. The company was numerous and brilliant. Every heart expanded with those pleasurable emotions which the happy occasion naturally inspired. Every countenance was suffused with joy; Beauty—always powerful—now arrayed in universal smiles—shone with unusual splendour. Most of the gentlemen present had been witnesses of the affectionate and pathetick leave which the Patriot and the Hero had taken of this town and neighborhood last spring, when called by the unanimous voice of his countrymen to fill the chair of empire.

In the very room where they were assembled to celebrate the day of his nativity, they had seen him labouring with sensations almost unutterable, excited by the necessity of bidding adieu to those whom he was pleased to honour with the appellation of "affectionate friends and kind neighbours." Upon this endearing circumstance they reflected, and will continue to reflect with peculiar complacency. Long—very long—may this great and good man live, to receive this annual tribute of the esteem, the affection, and the veneration of a grateful people!

Recent Alexandria Studies Available at the Alexandria Library, Lloyd House

The Alexandria Library has made a major contribution to Alexandria historical research by publishing *The Annals of Alexandria*, by William F. Carne, 1832–1909. These annals begin with the arrival of Capt. John Smith in 1608 and end in 1781, when the first town council had taken charge of the town's affairs from the board of trustees of pre-Revolutionary days. T. Michael Miller, who compiled the annals from many sources, has brought them into the 19th century by including the centennial oration delivered by Mr. Carne at the celebration in Alexandria on 9 March 1880.

Another notable achievement in research was completed by Mrs. Connie Ring, Fairfax County Circuit Court Archives. This study lists real estate transactions in Alexandria between 1749 and the 1790's as recorded in Fairfax County Circuit Court records and the minutes of the Alexandria trustees. The study complements a study done by T. Michael Miller and James Wools titled, *Title Search*.

A history of the Town of Potomac was prepared by Mr. Robert Crabbill, Alexandria Department of Planning and Community Development. Potomac, bounded by the Jefferson Davis Hwy, Ashby Street, Commonwealth Avenue, and Bellefonte Avenue, was chartered as a town in 1908, and annexed by Alexandria in 1929.

Miller also completed historical studies of two Alexandria neighborhoods: Shuter's (Shooter's) Hill and Jones Point. The latter formed the basis of a local cable television program, a tape of which is also available for viewing at the Alexandria Library.

The *Saga of Shuter's Hill* traces its history from its first appearance in official records as part of 6,000 acres granted to Robert Howson in 1669 to the ground breaking ceremony for the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in 1922.

In *Jones Point—Haven of History*, Mr. Miller traces the history of the point from the Margaret Brent land grant in 1654 to the present.

In 1983, the Historic Alexandria Foundation and the Alexandria Association commissioned an architectural study of the Alexandria Academy building by Nathaniel Palmer Neblett, A.I.A. The study consists of an architectural study of the building and preservation guidelines.

Finally, Dr. James Munson, wrote his doctoral dissertation, *From Empire to Commonwealth: Alexandria, Virginia 1749–1780*. Dr. Munson traces the development of Alexandria as a community designed for the commercial convenience of the surrounding planters to a town which served the needs of and was accountable to its citizens.