

Chesterfield families during the Civil War

Editor's note: The following story was submitted by Mike Thomas, Pattie Grady, Terry Roach and Diane Dallmeyer, all members of the Chesterfield Historical Society.



Photo courtesy of Chesterfield Historical Society **Brothers James and John Bailey both fought in the Civil War and returned home to run sawmills in the county. Two other brothers also survived the war, but another sibling named Thomas was not as lucky.**

A century and a half after it began, the Civil War still has a large presence in Chesterfield County, and don't look for things to change in the next few years! The General Assembly created the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission in 2006 to prepare for and commemorate the sesquicentennial of Virginia's participation in the American Civil War (www.virginiacivilwar.org).

Although the year 2011 is the actual 150th anniversary, the commemoration will launch on April 29 this year with a signature conference entitled "America on the Eve of the Civil War" at the University of Richmond.

Planning for the sesquicentennial is also already under way in Chesterfield County. A committee has been formed, consisting of representatives from the county government, Chesterfield Historical Society, Chesterfield Heritage Alliance, National Park Service, Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau and Petersburg Area Regional Tourism. The goal of the committee is to highlight both the military campaigns and the effects of the war on the home front.

"By telling the stories of soldiers and civilians, we hope to reach a broader, more diverse audience," explained Scott Williams, chairman of the Chesterfield Historical Society's Military History Committee.

Among the items currently in the works are an updated Civil War brochure for Chesterfield County, Civil War signage at county parks and the Bermuda Hundred Campaign driving tour. The committee is also working on developing special exhibits for local libraries that will tell the story of the soldiers who fought and the civilians who endured the hardships brought on by the war. In addition, the committee is working with Central Library to develop a process for scanning historic documents pertaining to the Civil War. Looking to 2011, the committee is planning a commemorative vigil to remember those who lost their lives during the Civil War. An enthusiastic Williams said, "We hope to have a number of other

events between now and 2015 as we mark the important role Chesterfield had during the war."

Chesterfield is the only locality in the nation where an entire campaign was fought, and as the sesquicentennial draws nearer, the county's seven Civil War sites will be popular spots for visitors and residents alike to learn about the war. Perhaps they will also learn some of the stories of the families who gave beyond measure for the cause of states' rights, like those featured below.

The Patram family

When coal was discovered in the Winterpock area of Chesterfield in 1837, land immediately became very valuable, and the little community of Winterpock grew into a boomtown of nearly 1,000 residents. Within that community was a family named Patram. Elizabeth Patram was young enough to require her father's consent when she wed Daniel Patram in 1817. She gave birth to two daughters, Minnie and Martha, followed by sons Edward (1827), Richard (1832) and Robert (1840), as well as another daughter, Susan, in between. They lived in the Summit area of Winterpock. Summit was a railroad station on Beach Road, and there is a present day road with that name near Clover Hill plantation.

We know that the Patrams had at least three sons who fought together in the war, and census documents indicate there may have been more. Although censuses in the early 1800s do not list family members by name, over the course of 30 years, six male children were counted on one or more of the surveys. Edward, Richard and Robert can be accounted for through pension applications many years after the war.

Edward served in the 14th Virginia Regiment of Infantry and was wounded in the battle of Malvern Hill where he was shot through the back, at Gettysburg where he was shot in the head, and at Drewry's Bluff, and finally, Five Forks, both of which resulted in chest wounds. His pension application states, "I am disabled from any manual labor from weakness in the chest and shortness of breath," but at age 61, "I can ably do a little work."

Caroline Patram, widow of Robert who served in the "company commanded by Captain James Snead" (Company I, 14th Virginia Infantry), filed for her widow's pension in 1900. Married to her veteran husband in 1882, she was left widowed in 1899 when he died of "paralysis," and she applied for his pension of \$25 annually. Richard Patram served in the 41st Virginia Regiment and was wounded on Dec. 13, 1862, at the battle of Fredericksburg where his left arm was removed "at the sholder [sic] joint." Richard's pension of \$30 was awarded in 1888 when he was 56 years old.

The Bailey family

On the south side of Swift Creek in central Chesterfield is land that belonged to Joseph Bailey in 1862. Bailey erected a house on the property around the time of the Civil War in the area of today's Bailey Bridge Road. The Baileys were a large family with deep roots in Chesterfield's history and on which a good deal of research has been done.

According to the Bailey family history book, written and researched by Mary Ellen Howe, "The year 1861 brought the cruel reality of the Civil War to Chesterfield County. All able-bodied men in the Skinquarter area joined the Confederate forces." In May of that year, Joseph and four of his brothers were mustered into service. Joseph, Thomas, James, John and William were part of Mahone's Brigade. Muster records show Thomas was a carpenter after his enlistment in 1861, at age 30, working on winter quarters. Thomas died on June 2, 1862, of wounds he received at the Battle of Seven Pines, leaving three sons and a daughter.

Ms. Howe wrote, "The four surviving Bailey brothers returned to Chesterfield County to continue their lives." James enlisted in May of 1861, at about age 21, for one year and re-enlisted the following year. Wounded at Burgess Mill in 1864, he survived to become a lumberman, sawmill owner and owned several thousand acres of land in Chesterfield, which he left to his sons. After his first wife died, he married her sister and had five sons.

John went back to farming and also ran a sawmill. He had three sons and two daughters and is buried in the cemetery at Mt. Hermon Baptist Church on Genito Road. Brother William was only 18 when he enlisted with his brothers in 1861. William, who was detailed as a cook, was wounded at the Battle of the Crater. He became a farmer in Powhatan. The least prolific of the Bailey boys, he fathered twin daughters. Joseph, who enlisted in 1862 at about age 26, and "paid [his] own travel expenses to muster, \$4.40," was wounded at Malvern Hill, as well as at the Wilderness in 1864. He also returned home to farming. Marrying in 1866, he, too, had five children.

All five Bailey brothers served in the 6th Virginia Infantry, part of Mahone's Brigade, one of Virginia's premier units.

The Cox family

Clearly, the war was a tragedy in our young nation, and the toll it took on families on both sides can't be romanticized. Gen. Lee's battered army entered Chesterfield in the Ettrick area on April 3, 1865, on the way to Appomattox. They traveled River Road to Winterpock, before turning north toward Amelia County.

Judge James Cox of Clover Hill plantation learned of the proximity of the general's troops and invited Lee and his staff to lunch, an occasion written about by Cox's daughter in her memoir, "My Confederate Girlhood." Upon their

departure the next day, "Mrs. P," presumably the mother of the Patram brothers, accosted the general to cry, "Oh, Gen. Lee, what's become of my Dolly?"

Kate Virginia Cox Logan's account continues, "divining at once that Dolly must be not a toy but a soldier, the general, forgetting for the moment his own overwhelming troubles, replied courteously and sympathetically: 'Madame, if you will tell me your Dolly's name and his company and command, I shall try to find him for you.'"

Each poor Confederate woman considered that Gen. Lee was the protector of her individual son.

Bands of brothers, families whose names are still heard in Chesterfield today, houses we drive by daily, battles with familiar names. All tell the sad story of the war fought right here in Chesterfield.