

THE HOWLING DAWG

NOVEMBER 2016



"God give us one more thing - grateful hearts ..."

16th Georgia Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Company G

"The Jackson Rifles"



The Griswoldville Battlefield Commemoration – Saturday, November 19, 2016

The Panorama of Griswoldville

Often, one of the most challenging tasks of producing this newsletter is reviewing and selecting from a vast array of available, outstanding photographs – such was the case this time. Among this issue's Griswoldville Commemoration & other event contributors were: (forgive me if I leave anyone out) Kellie Banks, Cathy Brooks, Clarence Berry, Molly Wilkins, Francis Baer, Brenda Dobson, Heidi Edge and Beth Colvin. Volunteer photographers aptly convey the stories of this newsletter. We are so grateful and applaud the selfless efforts of all who faithfully contribute each month. The cover photo, above, captures nearly all of the involved area. The only portion unseen is that of the tents and displays, just out of the picture to the immediate left. We are grateful for the tremendous turnout of participants as well as spectators on a very blustery Fall day.

My, how, this endeavor has developed into its second decade. It is a team effort, headed by Almighty God and we are grateful most of all to HIM. We also – more than we can say or I can write – thank all the SCV Camps, UDC Chapters, Children of the Confederacy, the State of Georgia, the Jarrell Plantation staff, re-enactment units and countless volunteers (again, forgive me if I left anyone out) who honored their ancestry and made this annual observance possible

The Griswoldville Battlefield Commemoration – Saturday, November 19, 2016



The Griswoldville Battlefield Commemoration – Saturday, November 19, 2016



Memories of Nash Farms - November 12-13, 2016





THE CAMP OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

(2218) of Old Clinton, Jones County, GA met briefly after the Griswoldville Battlefield Commemoration. The minutes and treasury reports were approved. We deeply appreciate Lt. Col. Steve Walczak's appropriate and memorable words as guest speaker at Griswoldville. As is our custom, we will not meet in December. We are both pleased and proud to announce that Past SCV Camp 1399 Commander, former Georgia Volunteer Battalion Commander, legendary 16th Georgia commander, and cherished brother, Col.

Steve Smith of Byron, Georgia will be our keynote speaker for our annual Lee-Jackson Banquet on Thursday, January 19th, 2017. Georgia Division Adjutant Tim Pilgrim plans to be with us in February of 2017. March 2017 brings us a long-time friend from the Putnam County Camp, Hank Segars who will speak on the topic of "The Civil War in Popular Culture". Two well-liked speakers, Sherrie' Raleigh and Ed Shelor will also return in 2017 - May and June respectively. Our guest speaker openings for Camp 2218 meeting programs are all nearly filled for 2017. To schedule meeting programs contact Adjutant Dobson to apply.



Lt. Col Walczak

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

2016

DECEMBER 4 – 6pm PARADE IN COCHRAN, GA (Alan Richards @ 478-308-9739)

DECEMBER 4-5 – RICHLAND CHURCH (Frank Hendrix @ 478-955-8814)

DECEMBER 10 – 10am-12pm *FREE* CANNONBALL HOUSE KID'S CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER – NO SCV CAMP 2218 MONTHLY MEETING - *MERRY CHRISTMAS*

2017

JANUARY 19 – LEE-JACKSON BANQUET – CAMP 2218 – *EVERYONE IS INVITED!*

JANUARY 21 - GEN. LEE BIRTHDAY EVENTS – GA SCV - *DETAILS FORTHCOMING*

FEBRUARY 16 – SCV CAMP 2218 MEETING – *GA DIV. SCV ADJ. TIM PILGRIM*

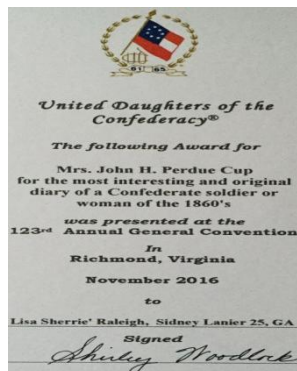
FEBRUARY 17-19 – OLUSTEE, FL

MARCH 3-5 – 152nd Anniversary of the Battle for Broxton Bridge, SC

APRIL – CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL DAY

MAY – OLD CLINTON WAR DAYS

NOTE: THE 16TH GA, CO. G HAS ELECTED *NOT* TO HOST A WINTER DRILL IN 2017



In an earlier edition of this newsletter we mentioned some of the awards that The Sidney Lanier Chapter #25 of Macon, GA received at their recent 123rd Convention. However, word has now come to us about this General UDC award, presented to Sherrie' Raleigh for submitting the most interesting, unpublished Confederate soldier diary - that of William T. Balkcom of Twiggs County, GA. Mr. William Birdsong so graciously allowed her to transcribe it and submit it to the UDC for record keeping. Sherrie' adds that she could not have won it without that family's wonderful help.

THE 16TH GEORGIA, CO. G - "*The Jackson Rifles*"



Brig. Gen. Herbert Burns - 478-668-3598
Honorary Colonel J. C. Nobles - 478-718-3201
Rev. Joey Young – Hon. Member - 678-978-7213
Capt. Wm. "Rebel" Bradberry, Cmd. – 404-242-7213
1st Lt. Noah Sprague – 706-491-9755
2nd Lt. Charles Whitehead – 478-986-8943
Color Sgt. Kevin Sark - 478-731-8796
Adjutant: 5th Corp. "Duke" Dobson 478-731-5531
Treasurer: 6th Corp. Earl Colvin – 478-214-0687
1st Sgt. Alan "Cookie" Richards - 478-308-9739
2nd Sgt. Nathan Sprague – 478-320-8748
1st Corp. Dan Williams - 478-230-7189
2nd Corp. Brick Lee Nelson - 478-986-1151
3rd Corp. Avery Allen - 478-662-3732
Lead Chaplain – Joel Whitehead, Jr. - 478-986-8798
Hon. Chaplain Ronnie "Skin" Neal – 478-808-8848
Assistant Chaplain – Charles Hill – 770-845-6878
Musician – Drew Edge – 478-365--1897
Musician – Chance Sprague – 706-491-9755
Musician - Aaron Bradford – 302-668-8029
Musician - Oliver Lummus – 302-668-8029
Musician - Al McGalliard - 478-318-7266

ON FACEBOOK: "JACKSON RIFLES". And @ scv2218.com, thanks to Al McGalliard.

A SPECIAL INVITATION

We received a call at the Cannonball House on Friday (10/29/16) from Kim Ward of "Anderson Station" Confederate Restaurant (229-591-8023) in the town of Andersonville, GA, regarding a free meal to re-enactors dressed in uniforms or period dresses. I did call and talk with her and she verified that this is true for Tuesday, December 13, 2016 from 6-8pm. Please pass the word. Perhaps a group of us can go together. They are trying to build up support for Andersonville. If you need more info, give her a call.

Thanks, Wayne Dobson 16th GA 478-731-5531

A SMALLER DAWG ?



prayers, I could use. God will provide for all that HE wishes to be done. - Duke

Teaching What We Have Been Taught



Private Anthony "A.J." Odum talks about Civil War uniforms to a class at Westside Elementary in Warner Robins, GA

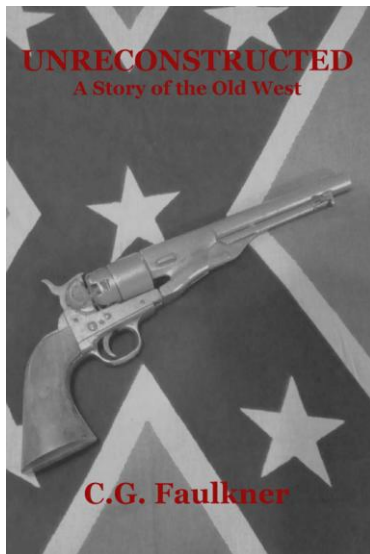


Pictured above is the 5th grade *Project SOAR* class from Monroe County, GA. Col. Steve Smith, Adj. Wayne Dobson, Pvt. Kellie Banks and Pvt. Colton King made a Battle of Griswoldville presentation to the class on November 8th. This has become an annual event that we look forward to. The student in uniform is Noah West-Groover who placed a wreath at the Griswoldville monument on behalf of the class.

AN AUTHOR IN OUR MIDST

We learned, just before Thanksgiving that our own Christopher G. "Chris" Faulkner, of SCV Camp 2218, The Camp of The Unknown Soldier, has published an e-book (a post War Between the States Western), now available on AMAZON Kindle. We certainly congratulate him! The link is:

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MYR6JO8/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1479998088&sr=8-5&keywords=unreconstructed



Unreconstructed: A Story of the Old West -

Unreconstructed is the story of an unapologetic former Confederate Cavalry Officer, Captain Thomas Jefferson Fortner. Tom comes home to Georgia after the surrender at Appomattox to a land of devastation. His family had been murdered at the hands of a Union Colonel during Sherman's March to the Sea. His fiancé was killed outside Richmond. His farm burned to the ground. Despite all of this tragedy, he tries to rebuild and start anew. Then, comes Reconstruction, the punishment of the South by Yankee radicals, adding insult to the injury of the War. By 1868 he can tolerate no more, leaves the home of his forefathers and goes west to the Colorado territory. But the War is not ready to be left behind. What follows is a story of revenge, adventure, romance and friendship in the old west of America. Tom must face one more battle before his war will truly end.



Whoever keeps commandments keeps their life,
but whoever shows contempt for their ways will die.

— PROVERBS 19:16

Sent to us by: Sherrie' Raleigh



(James 5:16)

You may not recognize many of the names on this page, but they surely represent real people – real needs. Just because you do not know them personally nor the nature of their circumstance does not mean that you cannot bow your heart and head for a moment and ask God to meet the needs of those listed here according to His will ... Thank you.

Rev. Joey Young and family / Rev. Gary Berrier & family
Ethan and Crystal Bloodworth / Terry & Vickie Berrier
Tommy and Elaine Wallace / Ed & Val Elliott
J.C. Nobles and family / Joel & Jessie Whitehead
Tim Fowler / Frank Foulke / Matt Whitehead & family
Roy & Dana Myers/ Bruce Whitehead
Mrs. & Mrs. Herbert Burns
Gary Banks and family
Barbara Garnto and family
Perry Harrelson and family
Ben Jones / Judi Powers
Chris and Shelby Faulkner/Gale Red
Richard Durham / Kim Cann
Paul Jerram / Edna Fowler / Duke
U.S.A. & Israel
Paramedics & Firefighters
Those who are alone during the Christmas season
Travelers

Our political leaders, judges & voters, missionaries, ministers of the Gospel. Even our enemies and, if you will, for Me & You, that we may boldly witness. And, *please*, do let me know of others.

(For privacy, in some cases, I do not publish the details of these requests but will share if you contact me.)

In Deepest Sympathy

OBITUARY

Mr. James Howard Banks, age 82 of McDonough, Georgia passed away November 13, 2016. He was born in Madras, Georgia to the late Howard Smith and Thelma Helen Brown Banks. He was preceded in death by a brother, Ray Banks and grandsons, Jason Banks and Jonathan Banks. He was a loving husband, brother and exceptional father and grandfather, he made us all his family.

James was a friend to all that knew him. He enjoyed helping people, hunting, fishing, and was an overall sportsman. He will always be known for his humor and wit. Survivors include his wife, Peggy Banks of McDonough; children, Gary (Sheri) Banks of

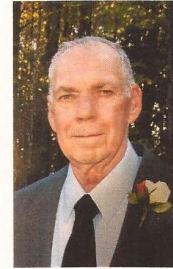
Warner Robins, Ronnie (Donna) Banks of Clarkesville, Rusty (Anne) Banks of Ft. Mills, SC and Bonnie Banks Kirstine of Stockbridge; brother, Julian (Susan) Banks of Sharpsburg; sister, Joanne Martin of Fayetteville; nine grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. Funeral services will be held Thursday, November 17, 2016 – 12:00 pm in the Chapel of Haisten Funeral Home. Rev.

Al O'Quinn will officiate. Interment will follow at Sherwood Memorial Park in Jonesboro at 2:00 pm. Friends may visit the family Thursday morning from 10:00 am until the hour of service. Contributions are asked to be made to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite, 1001 Johnson Ferry Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30342-1605 in memory of Mr. Banks.

Haisten Funerals & Cremations
1745 Zack Hinton Parkway
McDonough, Georgia 30253
(770) 914-8833
www.haistenfunerals.com

195CSFX
Messenger
Printed in U.S.A.

In Loving Memory of



**James Howard
Banks**

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory
for ever and ever.
Amen

Born
May 2, 1934

Passed Away
November 13, 2016

Memorial Service
Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 12:00 PM
Chapel of Haisten Funerals & Cremations
McDonough, Georgia

Officiating
Rev. Al O'Quinn

Interment
Sherwood Memorial Park
Jonesboro, Georgia

James Howard Banks is the father of Gary banks and grandfather of Jenny Banks, Jessie Whitehead and Kellie Banks.

BIZARRE FOODS FILMS AT GRISWOLDVILLE



Some of The Cast and Crew at the Conclusion of Filming

Andrew Zimmern is a three-time James Beard Award-winning TV personality, chef, food writer, teacher and is regarded as one of the most versatile and knowledgeable personalities in the food world. He is the creator, host and co-executive producer of Travel Channel's hit series, Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern, which is all about exploring unusual foods and cultures around the world and in America's own backyard.



On Friday, November 18th, 2016 that American "backyard was on the 1864 Battlefield of Griswoldville, Georgia where he sampled and filmed the unique culture and cuisine of the 16th GA, Co. G, "The Jackson Rifles". He had also filmed a related segment at The Cannonball House in Macon, GA earlier that same day. There is a whole lot that you don't get told when you became a re-enactor – this day underscored that fact and ranked among some of the most unusual of our many adventures. It was an exhausting day but one filled with new-found friends and interesting fun. Of course, many wanted to have a picture made with Andrew. On Saturday, a cameraman returned for additional footage. We understand the production is to air around in February 2017 and will keep our readership advised.



APPARITIONS 2016

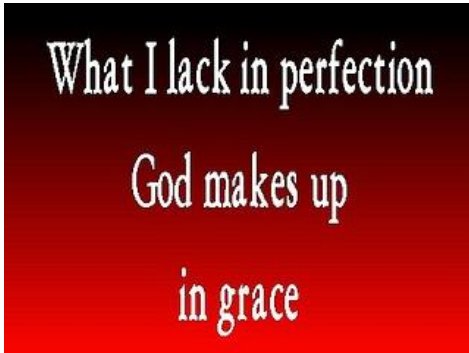
"Kate & Willie"

This year's presentation was based on the 1881 life of the Canning Family at "856 Mulberry Street, Macon, GA. (The Cannonball House") Performances were done on the evening of November 4th.



GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED

"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." - 2 Corinthians 12:8-10



Throughout all of our lives we have times that we struggle. Some of us struggle with different aspects of life. Some of them are doubt, sickness, and the death of loved ones. It is often in those instances that we most see God's grace. This grace that the Lord gives us is not just for specific circumstances but is a daily reality. His mercy and grace is new every morning (Lamentations 3:23). When you get bad news about your health His grace is there for you. When death takes your loved ones His great grace is there for you, as well. This grace is all sufficient it

lacks nothing and is a comfort to all who need it.

But what is grace? It is God's favor. His favor is when God is performing an act of kindness beyond what is due or usual. When He went to the cross it was a great demonstration of favor for us. When He arose from the grave, He bestowed more grace upon us. It is this grace that we should be thankful for. As we approach the Christmas season and celebrate Jesus' birth, let's be mindful that it started with his birth but did not end with the cross. He lives forever and extends his loving grace to us. We truly don't deserve His grace. Have you experienced God's grace?

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." - Hebrews 4:16

- Chaplain Joel B. Whitehead, Jr. - 16th GA



I m honored to present my new grandson: Colton Wayne Sifford, born Thursday, November 3, 2016. His brother, Landon Allen, is a rifleman in the ranks of the 16th GA, Co. G, "The Jackson Rifles." Truly, God has allowed this ol' Dawg Soldier to see many days and much good... I am grateful - Duke

Sherman's Brand of Pillaging

The writers of "Lincoln, as the South Should Know Him" (excepts below) were comparing Sherman's atrocities to the German invasion of Belgium in 1914. The latter may have been more British propaganda aimed at drawing the US into the war, but the point was made that Kaiser Wilhelm's troops were kind souls when compared to Sherman's bummers. The point is well made that the commanders, Sherman and Lincoln, were ultimately responsible for the behavior and criminality of the army.

"One of [General Joe] Wheeler's scouts, observing Sherman's advance, reported that during one night, and from one point, he counted over one hundred burning homes. And as to the looting, a letter written by a Federal officer, and found at Camden, S.C., and after the enemy had passed, and given in the Southern



Woman's Magazine, runs as follows: "We have had a glorious time in this State. The chivalry have been stripped of their valuables. Gold watches, silver pitchers, cups, spoons, forks, etc., are as common in camp as blackberries. Of rings, earrings, and breastpins I have a quart. I am not joking – I have at least a quart of jewelry for you and the girls, and some A1 diamond pins

and rings among them. Don't show this letter out of the family."

Sherman long desired burning Columbia, (Illustration [left] of Columbia, February 17, 1865) in the most solemn manner calling *his* God to witness as to his truthfulness. When, after the overwhelming evidence that he did burn it was adduced, he unblushingly admitted the fact, and that he had lied on Wade Hampton with the purpose of rendering him unpopular, and thereby weakening his cause. But a mere lie shines white against the black ground of Sherman's character.

The necessities of war demanded that Sherman live off the country he traversed. Those elastic necessities may have been stretched to demand that he destroy even the pitiful stint of food that the South had left; that he wrest the last morsel from the mouth of the mother and babe, lest, perchance, some crumb thereof reach and nourish the men at the front.

But what necessity of war, except that brand that Sherman fathered and sponsored, demanded that the torch follow the pillager, that every home be burned, and famishing mother and babe be turned out in midwinter to die of cold and exposure?

It is a maxim of war, as it is of common sense, that the higher the rank the greater the fame or blame for any given act. Above Sherman, the perpetrator, stood the commander-in-chief of all the Federal armies, Abraham Lincoln. If Lincoln ever discountenanced Sherman and his methods, he never gave word to it, and he was a man of many words."

(Lincoln As the South Should Know Him, Manly's Battery Chapter, Children of the

From: bernhard1848@gmail.com Bernhard Thuersam, www.Circa1865.com The Great American Political Divide

150 Years Ago

by Larry Upthegrove

November 3, 1866: In Lexington, Virginia, the Lynchburg "Virginian" states that, "There have been eight hundred applicants for admission to Washington College, Lexington, VA. None are rejected on account of not being able to pay the College fees. General Lee is willing to accept their notes, believing the young men who receive their education under such circumstances will not fail to respond to their obligations whenever they are able." To be able financially to take this attitude makes a statement of the improving of the school under General Lee's presidency. Last year, there was barely enough money to keep the doors open, but the endowment is evidently much improved, thanks to generous donors like Cyrus McCormick.

November 9, 1866: In Wilkes County, N.C., on the 21st of last month, Tom Dula was convicted of the murder of Laura Foster. The jury deliberated all night and at daybreak announced the guilty verdict. The judge pronounced sentence: "*..that Thomas Dula be hanged by the neck until dead on November 9, 1866.*" With the State of North Carolina's top defensive attorney and past Governor Zebulon B. Vance representing him, Dula has been given a new trial and will have a much better day today than he might have. Tom Dula (pronounced Doo'-lee) "*Hang down your head Tom Dooley*"

November 15, 1866: In St. Louis, Missouri, today, Cathay Williams reverses her name to William Cathay and enlists in the US Army Buffalo Soldiers, some eighty years before women will be allowed in the regular army. She will be able to pose as a man for over two years despite being hospitalized several times. During her last illness (her first hospitalization was for smallpox; don't know what the second one was for), an army surgeon will discover her true sex; she will be outed.

November 18, 1866: In London, England, Kate Hankey is in the latter stages of recovery from a serious illness that almost took her life. Kate has been very religious, close to Christ, since she was a little girl when she started a Bible class for the other neighborhood girls. This month as she slowly recovered from "death's door" she began writing a long poem about Jesus, consisting of two parts. The first part will be put to music by W. Howard Doane the next year as the Hymn "Tell Me the Old Old Story". In 1870, Doane will put music to the second part, as "I Love to Tell the Story, creating two of the most beloved hymns of all time.

November 20, 1866: In Washington City, DC, of the 4,000,000 recently freed slaves, about 30,000 of them have gone to the Capital City, the "promised land". They are mostly destitute, without jobs or skills for city work, they "squat" where they can, find a place. The Federal Government opens soup houses, expands government hospitals and schools are opened by Aid Societies and Churches.

It is not known how long YoYo's have been around, but there are pictures from the Ancient Greeks, 500 BC, that show them. Today the first known patent is issued, protecting an "improvement of a bandalore". The term "yoyo" was coined in the Philippines' in the 1500's, meaning "come back". In the 1700's, the British began calling it "bandalore", that fading away when the Americans in the 1920's began mass marketing it as "yoyo".

November 29, 1866: Today, the last Thursday in November, is Thanksgiving Day, widely celebrated in the North, but at this point, the people of the South are more hopeful than thankful. The food harvests have not been good because of weather, many will face starving times in a month or so. Atlanta chronicler, Sam Richards doesn't even have a diary entry for this date and won't mention Thanksgiving in tomorrow's entry...maybe next year.....

GENERAL STAND WATIE, CSA

Stand Watie was born in the Indian Territory [modern Wyoming] on December 12, 1806. He was 53 when The War began. Watie became chief of the Cherokee Indians during the WBTS and was the leader of Cherokee mixed bloods $\frac{3}{4}$ Cherokee. He lived a Cherokee lifestyle and was said to be kind to a fault. He received a commission from President Davis in Richmond that promoted him to General making him the only Indian General of the war. He was the last Confederate General to surrender on June 23, 1865 to Colonel Asa C. Mathews.

As a cavalryman he won praise of whites and enemy Indians who previously doubted most Indians ability in war. He has been called "The foremost soldier ever produced by the north American Indians." He was great at leading charges and once led a charge against 3-1 odds with artillery and captured the gun at Pea Ridge. One of his men after the charge [years later] said "His men would follow Watie to the jaws of death" and the "mysterious power of Stand Watie" was how they took the guns. He always led his command from the front.



"Sherman's terrible raid, on a smaller scale, might have been repeated in the Indian territory and Texas had it not been for General Watie and his command. His brigade was like a stone wall between Texas and the foe"

He was a great raider and feared by the Union. On one 14-day raid Watie traveled 400 miles, killed 97, wounded many more, captured 111, burned 6,000 tons of hay, captured \$1,500,000 of property, at a loss of only 6 men killed and 48 wounded. General Kirby Smith called it "one of the most brilliant raids of the war."

"Watie knew as much about movements of Yankees supplies as the Federal supply officers themselves," one Yankee report lamented. He fought for the Confederacy because Federal troops forced the Cherokee removal from Georgia [Trail of Tears] causing anger by Cherokee and Southern whites by how it was conducted. This played a role in Indian loyalty to the South in the war especially with the Cherokee. The Federals had killed the men, woman, children of a neutral tribe, driving more tribes to join the C.S.A. Indians sent delegate to CSA government. Richmond sent government officials, money, food and other supplies to help aid the Indian Territory's needs. The Confederacy fed and financially supported displaced Indian families, fleeing from union occupation. This also increased their loyalty.

SUBMITTED to Dixie Heritage - WRITTEN FOR SCHOOL REPORT

The Georgia Confederates Youth Camp

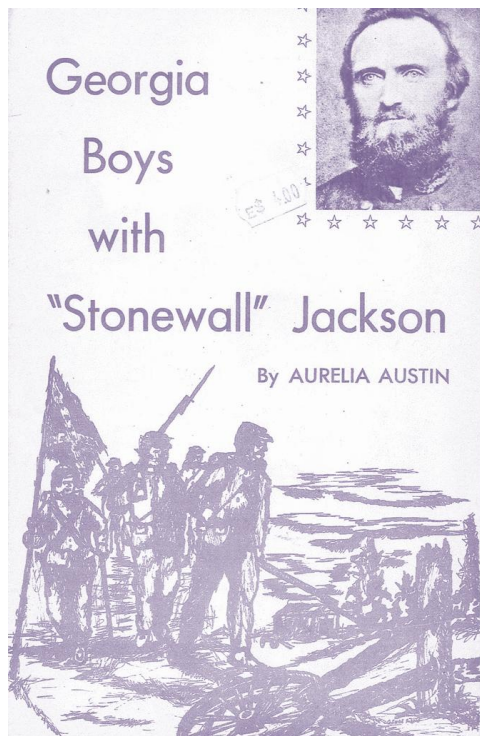
June 11th - 16th, 2017

- Ages 12 ~ 17
- Scholarships Available
- True Southern History Presented
- Banquet & Ball, Friday
- Co-ed: programs for boys and girls

"Every man should endeavor to understand the meaning of subjugation before it is too late... It means the history of this heroic struggle will be written by the enemy; that our youth will be trained by Northern schoolteachers; will learn from Northern school books their version of the war; will be impressed by the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors, and our maimed veterans as fit objects for derision... It is said slavery is all we are fighting for, and if we give it up we give up all. Even if this were true, which we deny, slavery is not all our enemies are fighting for. It is merely the pretense to establish sectional superiority and a more centralized form of government, and to deprive us of our rights and liberties." *Maj. General Patrick R. Cleburne, CSA, January 1864*

The re-writing of history by the enemies of the Confederacy has been going on for over 150 years. Who will stand up for the truth? Will you send Campers in 2017? The counselors and parents of campers at the GCYC are ready to do our "duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations." Thank You to all who were there in 2016. *Al Perry, Director, GCYC*

PURPLE ??????????



Included in a July 15, 1862 letter to his parents from, 2-1/2 miles due east of Richmond:

Pvt. James Thomas Thompson, Co. H. 11th GA

Writes: *"I would prefer my shirts striped and my drawers purple, and you can do as you please about the socks..."* (page 40)

The Grouch

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:" – Philippians 2:5

Around the table at this year's Thanksgiving meal it was casually mentioned that I had been asked to portray Santa Claus at an upcoming local event. Although I have reasonable girth for it, I had declined and my daughter, Louise, seconded that motion by pointing out that *"Daddy couldn't play Santa, he's too much of a grouch."* Everyone had an agreeable laugh and the feasting went on. I, however, could not release the moment from my mind as I tossed and turned on my bed that night. There was no use denying the candid remarks of one who knew me so well. She was so right. Some would say my Daddy was one before me, so I guess I got it honestly – no excuse. I do not like that reputation and I am not proud of it but I long ago resolved myself to the fact that people will think



what they will of you; right or wrong and we must individually give account. I will not try to defend myself per se but every accused person is allowed to have their day in court. I do self examinations, often. I compare my life to scriptural specifications and usually, if not always, I come up lacking. Being called "a grouch" is not a label you can just laugh off – those things stick with a fellow. Why am I that way? I wanted to know even if no one else did, so I reviewed my normal daily routine. Even in retirement I rise early and attend to what seems like an endless tide of chores.

That is a good thing because it serves my family, friends and even a few enemies. I like to work – always have and the more physical, the better. Sometimes I work late and all that is fine if you can get decent rest to recharge your depleted human batteries. I often can't. I have always been a light to moderate sleeper. Brenda declares that the only time I truly sleep well is when camping in the woods – agreed. When I am weary, I am grouchy and I doubt I am the only one affected this way. But this is not about making excuses – I never do that but I do try to explain. Fatigued, I am short tempered, sharp-tongued and, as Mama would say, *"ill as a hornet"*. I know this but I don't like it because in such a state I am prone to do things and say things I would later regret. *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me..."* (Romans 7:24). A famous comedian once quipped that *"he was put here on earth to point out stupid stuff."* I have no such commission even if I speak and write like it at times. I am an open book about what I think and feel and I am not yet convinced that is wrong. God has given me a measure of discernment to go along with my life experiences and at times I refuse to have any part with people, places and things that God has revealed certain truths about. At times I warn others and they do not always appreciate such meddling. I do think God entitles each person to a well-ordered opinion. I guess I have made *"spirited attempts"* (as J.C. Nobles would say) at change – I always fail – always... It is easy to shrug my shoulders and say, *"I am what I am,"* but that is not acceptable to me, to God or even mankind. I am in a mess. I have resolved that I will go to my grave as a smiling man with a bad reputation, just like I once feared I would die as a sot drunk. I don't really have a solution and often as not I am too proud or too ashamed to even mention my problems to anyone but my Lord. My life, as a whole, has not been good – IT HAS GREAT – IT HAS BEEN BLESSED. I have no room to complain about anything (but that does not always stop me). I know so many others have not been so fortunate and I will not stop to count my blessings in this writing. Just take my word for it, God has ALWAYS done for me and provided for me in ways that were consistently *"exceeding abundantly above all that I could ask or think"* (Ephesians 3:20), so that I am of all men *"without excuse"* (Romans 1:20).

Where do I go from here? The thought of giving up, sometimes passes but that has always been unacceptable to me. The impractical phrase that *"God is not through with me, yet,"* smacks off the lips like an excuse. I was diligently taught to do my best, always, and I do not label my shortcomings (*"short of the glory of God"* – Romans 3:23) as "mistakes" – I call them sin, because anything that does not conform to the image of Christ is SIN. (Romans 10:17)

Did Jesus get angry, was He ever grouchy? I don't know much about that because the Bible is not only conspicuous in what it does say but also in what it does not say. Brother Walter Sark often prayed in public *"make us more like Thee."* Yes, that is the goal and I am still in the hunt but the home team is behind and it is getting late in the game. That's my story, what's yours?

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

-1 Corinthians 10:31

11/25/16 Jwd