

THE VOICE

of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and
Cobb Memorial Archives

THIS PLACE CHAMBERS COUNTY: TRAILS, ROADS AND OTHER PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

The Spring General Membership meeting of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society will occur on Sunday, April 15, 2018, at 3:00 p. m. EDT in The Lanier Room, H. Grady Bradshaw Library in Valley, Alabama. The general public is invited to experience a presentation on the history Chambers County.

Dr. Horace (Mac) McLean Holderfield, Vice President for Editing *The Voice*, in a power point program will present historical maps and other visuals which portray the physical history of the area which became Chambers County. His presentation will show maps, including maps from the University of Alabama collection, identifying Indian trails, Indian names of creeks and villages, and later settlers' roads. He will also present images showing the rural locations of homes and buildings from the first aerial photographs taken by the Federal Government for use by the US Department of Agriculture in the 1930's. The content of Mac's presentation may be helpful for persons studying rural family history and wanting to develop a sense of house location for family ancestors and neighbors.

"I was born into farm families composed of many elderly relatives who were the last non-mechanized farmers in Chambers County, Alabama and Heard County, Georgia. The farm land was treasured, almost worshiped by these people. The fields had names as simple as the Gray Field where Indians had lived or as disturbing as the Devil's Half Acre. Stories were told about the animals, branches and creeks and about the

trees and the woods. No one ever boasted of how much wealth they accumulated at the end of the year but showed pride in how well they had built, maintained the farm and grown the plants and animals appropriate to the land in their era while struggling to survive the vagaries of decades of economic change, weather and bugs. These ancestors did not perceive the land nor their labor as commodities. They possessed many self-sufficiency skills which contributed to their sense of self-worth and independence. I absorbed my ancestors' attachment to the earth of my birth place on Stroud Creek in Chambers County and a motivation to understand the land's physical elements as well as the societies of the people who lived here," states Mac.

In the pre-electronic past, rural farm families spent much time sharing stories across generations inhabiting a household. Among Dr. Holderfield's families, an oral tradition of storytelling about the olden times was maintained. His curiosity about his families' historical experiences stimulated his interest in local history from childhood and led to two degrees in history from Auburn University and a year, as a Fulbright Fellow, studying Medieval History in Germany. He then taught history for six years before seeking further education. As a Kellogg Fellow, Dr. Holderfield earned a PH. D. from Florida State University in Higher Education. He and his wife Linda returned

to the family farm property in 1998. He retired from twenty-five years of employment with the South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education where for the prior eighteen years he served as the Associate Executive Director for Instruction.



New Alabama, 1824, Pub. by A. Finley, Philad.

THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING

Sunday, April 15, 2018, 3:00 p. m. EDT

*The Lanier Room, H. Grady Bradshaw Library
Valley Alabama*

CEDRIC — FROM JUGTOWN TO GHOST TOWN

By CVHS Member Charlie Powers, M.A. History
Adjunct Instructor Point University and University of West Georgia

How many people even know that Chambers County, Alabama, has its own “Ghost town”? If one were to look up the communities on the county’s website, you will notice one listed in black as “inactive”. This community was Cedric, though there is very little physical evidence of its existence left today – at least above ground. Cedric’s location and history, however, are certainly more significant than many people realize.

Cedric was one of many small (but flourishing) “jug towns” located primarily in the southern part of Randolph County as early as the 1830s. There were many communities (mostly in Randolph County) that thrived here producing valuable (and rare) pottery of the highest quality in East Alabama. Cedric was one of the earliest of these “jug towns”, but its longevity was challenged by the Civil War and the subsequent relocation of the next generation of its founding family. By 1907, when the new railroad passed through its former location, Cedric had officially gone from being a “jug town” to a “ghost town”.

Cedric, Alabama was officially settled by two brothers, Bennett J. and Joseph Rushton. The Rushton brothers, like most other “Potter’s families” in the area, originated in Edgefield, South Carolina before “Alabama Fever” and Indian Removal drew them to Alabama. All of these families specialized in a form of pottery that was far more valuable in the Southeastern United States of the early 19th century: stone-burned pottery. Stone-burned pottery produced shinier, more aesthetically

articulate works of pottery than most other conventional methods. This method used Alkaline clay and different burning methods to produce a permanent sheen that was usually olive green in color (though burnt wood ash could be applied for various other colors). This secretive technique originated in Imperial China (discretely reaching Europe by the 17th century). Prior to 1830, very few places in the United States produced this type of pottery (one of which was Edgefield, SC).

The potters of Edgefield were eager to migrate west (as many Americans were in those days) and seek out a location

with adequate clay deposits necessary for large-scale pottery production. With the advent of the Creek War of the 1830s, many of these families packed up and headed to East Central Alabama. This particular location in Alabama (the Randolph / Chambers



Created at Cedric Jugtown stamped J. R., Joseph Rushton. A Double Handle Bean Pot, mega Rare ca.1830-1850. Photo by Gary Price

line) was not just coincidental, but rather crucial to large-scale pottery production. Located on the “fall line”, this area produced large deposits of (primarily) red and alkaline white clay. Furthermore, the old “Settlement Road” passed right through the heart of this area. This road is no longer featured on maps created after the Civil War, but in the 1830s it was well-traversed (and vital for commerce as there were no railroads). While Rock Mills and Bacon Level are considered the oldest of these “jug towns” to be settled, it is very possible that Cedric was settled by the Rushton brothers as early as 1834 (before the final Creek

War). The brothers also married the Lawrence sisters from Chambers County, furthering social and economic ties to the area.

In order to better understand the development of Cedric, it is crucial to understand the upbringing and worldview of the Rushton brothers. Both came from a relatively affluent family in Edgefield, SC (though certainly not the wealthiest of their day). The Rushtons were slave owners, though the number of slaves they owned was likely to have been very small. With the exception of Hickory Flat, the other “jug towns” in this area were mostly founded by slave owners. Hickory Flat’s founder, a lawyer named Cecil Demosthenes Hudson, was a prominent opponent of slavery (and later a “Unionist” during the war). Prior to the Civil War, it is unknown as to whether or not there was any conflict between the Rushtons and Cecil D. Hudson over the slavery issues.

The Rushtons were educated, and the unique naming of their new community reflects a very interesting insight into their literacy and education. The name “Cedric” was not actually used (at least not in this form) until the publication of English author Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* in 1820. Scott’s three-volume work focuses on an aristocratic family of Anglo-Saxon descent (at a time when England’s nobility were dominated by Normans of French origin). The head of this family was an older, cool-headed patriarch named Cedric. Scott purposefully “misspelled” the original Saxon name “Cerdic” for various reasons. In any case, Scott’s spelling of the name was not widely known outside of the reading public of Britain and the United States in the 1830s, so it is a unique choice of name for a “jug town” founded by settlers in East Alabama. According to Gary Price, a local historian and expert on



Grave stone of Joseph Rushton with shards from his operations at Cedric. Shards contain distinctive elements which assist the researcher in identifying the creators of unstamped items. The creator may leave clues in the way the handles are made and pressed onto the pots, in reoccurring rings and decorations, and in the homemade glazes.

pottery in Randolph County during this time, the Rushtons had a fondness for the character of Cedric, a gentle, even-tempered patriarch of a family struggling to adapt to a changing world. The Rushtons were, indeed, in a changing world, but their fortunes were brighter than those of the literary Cedric and his house.

By 1860, the community of Cedric was well-established in the northern part of Chambers County (and a small part crossed over into Randolph County). The part in Randolph was the location of both the Rushton Pottery Shop (where all of their wares were either sold directly or sent elsewhere for sale) and the largest clay deposit that they utilized. This clay deposit was exploited so heavily that all that remains of it today is a swamp. There were houses and other facilities likely to have been found on the Chambers side of the line, but no concrete physical evidence remains today (at least above ground). It should be noted that Cedric, like many of these original “jug towns”, was very small. All of its limited infrastructure would have most certainly centered around pottery production. Pottery was of far greater

value during this period because it was used across all social classes for a variety of food preservation purposes. It could store milk, vinegar, honey, and even pickled meats in a world without modern refrigeration. Furthermore, the “stone burned pottery” of this area made it especially sought after by pottery buyers from around the Southeast. Because the only way in and out of this collection of jug towns was the old Settlement Road, business was more or less steady and constant. This also allowed for Cedric and other small “jug towns” (like Bacon Level, Hickory Flat, and Rock Mills) to remain relatively small and somewhat self-sufficient. In the years following the Mexican-American War, there was a small number of potters from this area who relocated to Texas (particularly Rusk, TX). Bennett J. Rushton eventually decided to do

so in 1852, leaving the future of Cedric in the hands of Joseph Rushton Sr. and his family. For the remainder of the 1850s, however, Cedric continued to thrive as it had before.

All of this relative prosperity was eventually challenged by the American Civil War. Pre-existing political and ideological differences between pro-Confederate potters’ families like the Rushton brothers and “Unionists” like Cecil D. Hudson came to the forefront. The Rushton brothers were avid supporters of the Confederacy and devoted much of their financial and material resources to supporting the war effort. This put a heavy strain on the prosperity of Cedric, though pottery was still being produced and sold commercially during this time. During Reconstruction, however, the “jug towns” suffered an even bigger blow. Almost all railroads in the South were destroyed during the war, and before the rails of nearby West Point, Georgia, were rebuilt and operational, pottery sales on the old Settlement Road were declining. When Joseph Rushton Sr. passed away in 1868, his son Joseph Rushton Jr., the only remaining patriarch of the family, decided it was time for a fresh start. As early as 1848, at least one of the original Edgefield settlers had relocated to Rusk, Texas. Realizing that his pottery trade could be successful there, Joseph Jr. packed up his family and



Search for Cedric: Martha Price with Terry Rushton and his wife Karen; Terry Rushton is a Direct Descendant of Joseph Rushton. On this day Martha found several inches under dirt and organic decay the Grave Stone of Joseph Rushton buried here in 1868. Photo by Gary Price

left Cedric behind in 1869. Cedric had now lost the family who financed what limited infrastructure and economic prosperity it had. By 1900, Cedric's families, workers, and resources had been absorbed into a growing Rock Mills. This is evident by the presence of Edward Rushton, the son of a former slave who once served the Rushtons, in the main pottery shop in Rock Mills around 1900. Because of his knowledge of the Rushton's trade secrets, he was a valued employ for the Rock Mills store (having more influence and limited authority than most Black workers in the pottery industry at the time). Still, Cedric was abandoned by 1907, when the Settlement Road was already defunct and a new rail line was constructed where part of the town once stood.

While Cedric, Alabama may never have been a very large or complex community in its own right, it was a part of a thriving and vital pottery trade in the mid-Nineteenth Century.

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www.chamberscountyal.gov

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Malinda Powers*

Over the many years that our organization has produced a quarterly newsletter, its format has certainly evolved. We hope you like our latest rendition. We are initiating a process to minimize our hands-on design work and are using professional assistance to manage the design, printing and mail prep in order to allow our CVHS volunteer workers more time for research and article preparation. For more than a decade we have presented a twelve-page publication on quality paper in order to provide you with the sharpest black and white images from the photographic collections of individuals and The Cobb Archives. In the spirit of Public History, we have sought to provide brief articles about our people and this region.

We are committed to providing interpretation of the experiences of our ancestors and not simply to applying generous adjectives to describe them and their activities. We always refer to *The Voice* as a newsletter but for your benefit we want it to be a bit more than a newsy letter. Of course, the hallmark of *The Voice* must continue to be highest quality, well-researched articles on local or regional topics of interest that we can produce. Mr. Don Clark was an outstanding editor when we enhanced the publication more than a decade ago. Dr. Horace M. (Mac) Holderfield has been our editor for the past several years and we hope our improved working process will allow him more time to solicit articles, edit and continue to research and write for *The Voice*.

We are adding some new features to our regular articles, in addition to updating the format of our communication piece. "*From the Vault*" will feature artifacts from our organization's security box. These treasures that have been tucked away for decades include letters, journals, diaries, photographs, and other pieces of the past that our founders safeguarded years ago. Another addition to our layout is "*In the Spotlight...*" which will highlight a different CHVS publication each issue. In the next few issues, we'll be adding "*Places in Peril*", that will point to certain local/regional places that are in danger of being lost due to neglect or development. We also are planning a regular column that informs our readers of regional history-related events or opportunities.

Communication is changing exponentially, and we want to stay current. Check us out on Facebook. We hope to see our outreach expand by encouraging members and guests to share personal memories and stories from our area's past. Facebook is also an excellent tool for sharing genealogical information about local family histories.

Finally, we want to break through to new publics with our on-line bookstore and connect with additional persons who would be interested in our historical inventory.

Thanks so much for your continued support. The future continues to look bright for CVHS!

The Voice is a quarterly newsletter of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 718, West Point, Georgia 31833
Editor: Dr. Horace (Mac) Holderfield | Find us on Facebook and visit our website at <http://cvhistoricalsociety.org>

MISSION STATEMENT: As a non-profit membership organization, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society seeks to preserve and promote the history and heritage of Chambers County, Alabama, West Point, Georgia, and the greater Chattahoochee Valley area. CVHS produces and sells historical books and media, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and presents programs with speakers on historical topics of local and regional interest.

VISION STATEMENT: Having been in continuous operation since its founding in 1953, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society strives to uphold the vision of its founders while posturing the organization for growth in the 21st century.

THE ARCHIVES REPORT *by Robin Brown*

As the spring season begins, Cobb Memorial Archives is moving ahead with new and ongoing projects. Archives volunteer Mickey Burdette has nearly finalized his project of indexing the full run of *Westpointer* magazines. The inaugural issue appeared in December 1953. Elmer Smith Jr., an inspector in the Finishing Department at the Lanett Bleachery and Dye Works, won the company-wide naming contest for the new publication. The final issue of the *Westpointer* appeared in June 1966. Indexed alphabetically, by year, this resource will make the *Westpointers* more accessible to researchers. Cobb Archives appreciates the many dedicated hours Mickey spent on this project.

A recently processed collection of special interest to genealogists is the Sheila Coupland Collection. In her spare time, Mrs. Coupland diligently researched her family history. Surnames Tittle, Foster, Jordan, Philpott, and Prophitt are among those she traced.

In April, Monique Fischer, senior photograph conservator at the Northeast Document Conservation Center, will visit the Archives. She will examine the six Margaret Bourke-White photomurals that decorated the Shawmut Testing Laboratory for more than 70 years.

In addition to assessing the photomurals, she will also lead a care and handling workshop for

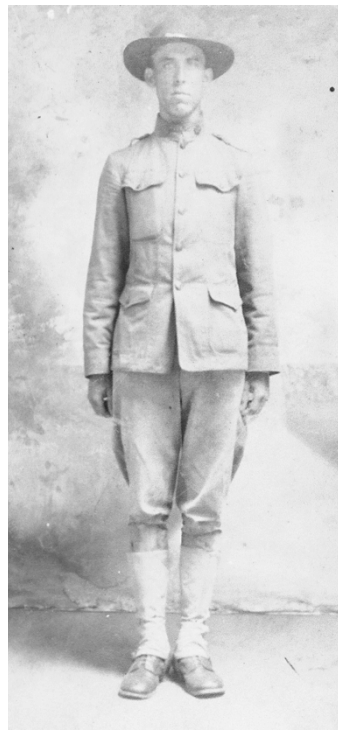
photographs. Her visit is funded through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

To keep up with the latest at Cobb Memorial Archives, please find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/cobbmemorialarchives/>. Be on the lookout each month for the Archives' column, Inside the Archives, that appears in the *Valley Times-News*. Each article highlights a different collection available for research at Cobb Memorial Archives.

Our exhibit on World War I is on display and still attracting interest. If you haven't had a chance to see it, please stop by. Hope to see you at Cobb Archives soon!



*Cary Carlisle Robinson,
Waverly Community*



*Ion Grady Dixon,
Cusseta Community*



*David Home Williams,
Hopewell Community*

*WWI Transportation Unit, Chambers Soldier,
Buffalo Community*



Among the treasures that have been preserved and safeguarded by our organization, there is a small diary along with a slightly faded photograph of its author. It is our most beloved of a variety of interesting artifacts from our area's past collected by our founders over sixty years ago.

Louis Merz was born November 8, 1833, at Durkeim, Barvaria (the present Bad Durkheim, Rhineland-Palatinate). Due in part to discrimination against the Jewish population, he immigrated to Philadelphia when a young man. Louis soon became friends with Heyman Heyman, an immigrant from Prussia who lived with Louis's cousin, Sam Cohen. Other close friends originally from Prussia were Levi Stern and Stern's wife, the former Lena Herzberg. All were in the mercantile trade.

In 1853, Heyman and Merz moved south to LaGrange, Georgia, where Heyman was a bookkeeper and Merz a countryside peddler. While in LaGrange, they boarded with Reuben and Arabella Lanier whose young boys would decades later become textile pioneers. In 1854, when the Atlanta & West Point Railroad extended its tracks to West Point, Heyman, Merz, and the Lanier family heard opportunity calling and moved to the region's latest "boom town". At West Point, the mercantile firm of Heyman & Merz grew quickly. Within a few years, Louis's sister immigrated from Bavaria to Cincinnati, Ohio, and on his trips north to buy merchandise for the store, Heyman and Betty Merz became acquainted. By the end of the decade, Heyman and Louis were not only business partners, they were brothers-in-law. Louis's brother, Daniel, joined the firm as well.

Two weeks after Fort Sumter was fired upon and the War of the Rebellion began, Louis Merz joined the West Point Guards, Company D of the 4th Georgia regiment. After organizing at Augusta, the regiment was sent to the Tidewater region of Virginia, and trained at Camp Jackson near Norfolk. It was here, on January 1, 1862, that Merz recorded his first entry into the cherished diary. In July, Company D lost several of its best men at Malvern Hill, including Captain George F. Todd. Merz continued to write a few days after the battle, with his final entry on July 9 documenting a visit from none other than Heyman Heyman.

Doles-Cook Brigade was part of Lee's invasion into the North. Undoubtedly, there was little time for journaling as Company D marched through the Shenandoah Valley that summer towards Antietam, Maryland. It was there that

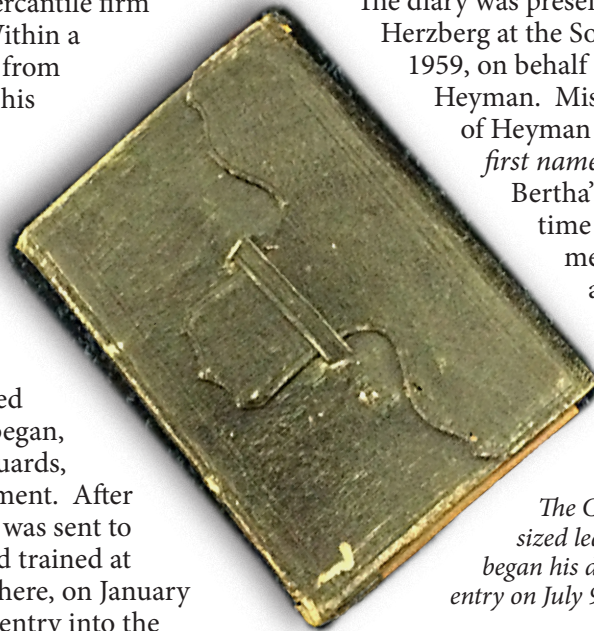


Private Louis Merz, C.S.A. Enlisted in the West Point Guards, Company D, 4th Georgia Regiment Volunteer Infantry, Doles-Cook Brigade

he fell. His small diary- along with a poem clipped from a Richmond newspaper, "Prayer During Battle", by the famous German poet Theodore Korner- was found in an inside pocket of his uniform.

Louis Merz was buried in a soldier's grave in Richmond. His diary was discovered in the aftermath of the battle and, eventually, returned to sister Betty in West Point. She passed it down to her youngest daughter, Bertha.

The diary was presented to CHVS by Miss Fannie Herzberg at the Society's meeting on June 25, 1959, on behalf of the diary's owner, Miss Bertha Heyman. Miss Herzberg was a granddaughter of Heyman (*who had eventually changed his first name to Herman*) and niece of "Miss Bertha", who was 94 years old at the time and unable to be present at the meeting herself. Bertha Heyman was a charter member of CVHS and the first president of the West Point Woman's Club.



The Confederate soldier's diary is a pocket-sized leather bound notebook of 64 pages. Merz began his diary on January 1, 1862, with his last entry on July 9 of the same year.

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- Merz, Louis. *Diary of Private Louis Merz, C.S.A. of West Point Guards*. 1862.

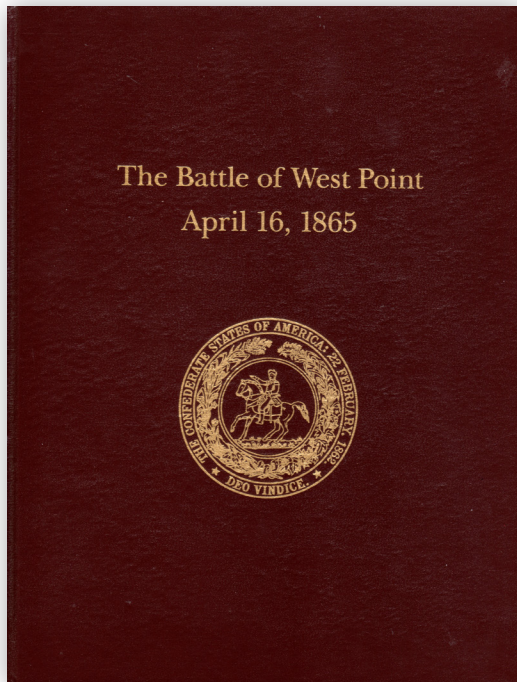


Commemorating the anniversary of the Battle of West Point at Fort Tyler on April 16, two of our outstanding related publications are featured this quarter:

The Battle of West Point

Now in its second printing, this book includes not only a detailed description of the battle but also several primary sources from both military and civilian witnesses to the event.

The most authoritative source on the last fort battle of the Civil War. 144 p, with index. Hardcover. Eleanor D. Scott and Carl Summers, Jr., Editors. CVHS Publication No. 20, 1997. \$25.



The Battle of West Point: Last Fort to Fall (DVD)

Produced several years ago with the Historic Chattahoochee Commission, the Fort Tyler Association, the West Point Visitor Center, and local donors, this high quality and diligently researched documentary includes maps, historical images, reenactors, and period music. 24 minutes, with additional commentary feature. A Doug Roberts VISUALvoice production. \$20.



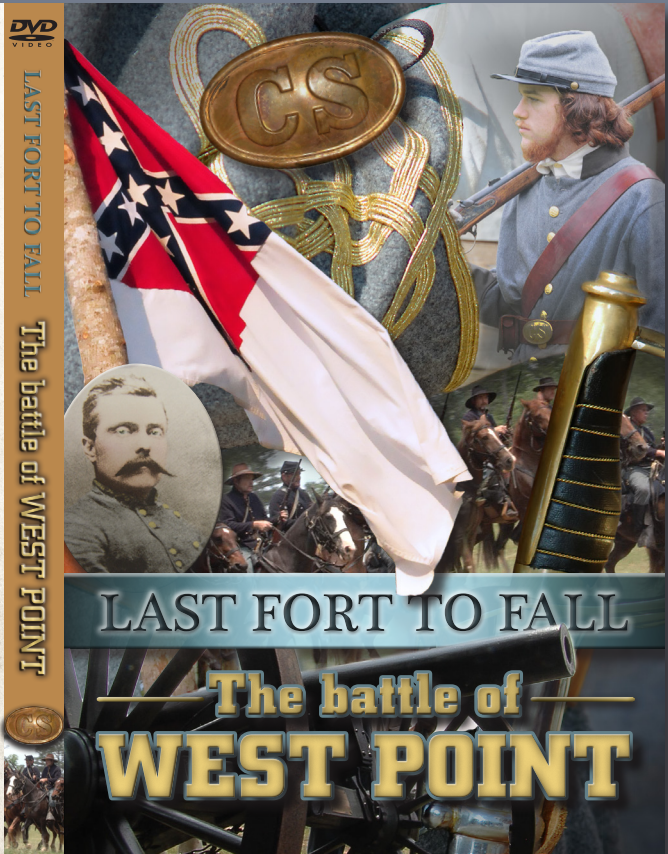
Look for these and a variety of other CVHS publications at our on-line bookstore on our website: www.cvhistoricalociety.org



2018 ANNUAL EVENT TO COMMEMORATE THE BATTLE OF WEST POINT

Visit Fort Tyler on Saturday April 14, 2018 for a day of living history. This annual event features military and civilian reenactors who would love to talk with you about Fort Tyler and the Battle of West Point. Also, on this day, the Fort is open past twilight and the path leading to the Fort is lit with luminaries for an enchanting glimpse into the past.

DVD on Ft. Tyler: **THE BATTLE OF WEST POINT** for sale on our website. See inside for details.




DVD VIDEO

LAST FORT TO FALL
The battle of WEST POINT

When the ladies of West Point presented General Robert C. Tyler with their flag, he was so moved by their devotion he declared, "I will die beneath its folds 'ere I surrender it!" Those words were tragically prophetic, for on April 16, 1865, Tyler was killed by a sharpshooter's bullet while defending the fort that had been named in his honor. Tyler was serving as post commander of the small, but important, Confederate railroad supply junction at West Point, Georgia. When a Union cavalry brigade threatened the town that Easter morning, Tyler occupied the fort with a hastily organized garrison of regulars, hospital convalescents, townspeople and even schoolboys. Against incredible odds, this small group of approximately 100 defenders held off 3,700 seasoned Union troops until their ammunition was depleted, giving Fort Tyler the distinction of being the "Last Fort to Fall".

This documentary has been diligently researched and engineered to provide an historically accurate account of the battle. Visit www.forttyler.com for more information. Produced in cooperation with the Historic Chattahoochee Commission.



SKETCH OF WEST POINT, GA., AND LINE OF DEFENSES UNDER SUPERVISION OF LIEUT. HESWOOD, Engineer in charge.

Scale: 1000 feet = 1 inch

Note: a. 100 ft. pole
b. Cavalry position
c. General Beauregard's and Bragg's

— Union
— Confederate

Running length: 24 minutes, with additional commentary feature
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A Doug Roberts, VISUALvoice, production

DVD VIDEO



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