

# THE VOICE

of the *Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and  
Cobb Memorial Archives*

## CHIEF WILLIAM MCINTOSH IN CONTEXT



*Creek Chief William McIntosh*  
[image from Wikimedia Commons]

The Spring program of CVHS will be held virtually on April 27<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00 PM (EDT). Our presenter, Dr. Gary Van Valen, is a longtime instructor of History at the University of West Georgia. As an expert on Native American history and contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities, he will be presenting about the assassination of Muscogee leader William McIntosh in 1825. This year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both this event and the signing of the Treaty of Indian Springs (which preceded it). In addition to the presentation topic itself, Dr. Van Valen will also be briefly discussing (and promoting) an

upcoming event in which McIntosh's living descendants will be giving a public appearance on April 30<sup>th</sup> in Whitesburg, Georgia.

William McIntosh was the son of a Scottish Loyalist and a Muscogee (Creek) woman, who became a leader in his mother's nation in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. He played important roles in negotiating treaties with the U.S. government between 1805 and 1825 which resulted in the surrender of all Muscogee lands in Georgia, and he fought on the side of U.S. forces in the First Creek and First Seminole wars in Alabama and Florida. In 1825, Upper Creeks from Alabama killed McIntosh at his home on the Chattahoochee River as punishment for the final land surrender of that year. McIntosh almost immediately became a subject of history and legend. This presentation will clarify what historians actually know about McIntosh's identity, his position in Muscogee society, and his actions in the context of both Muscogee culture and U.S. Indian policy.

Essentially, the history of William McIntosh is very relevant not only to the history of Alabama overall, but especially for the regions of

East Alabama (including Chambers, Lee, Randolph, and other counties). This land cession to the United States Government in 1825 opened up this land for White settlement. Interestingly enough, since this occurred five years before the passage of the Indian Removal Act, the Muscogee ("Creeks") in this area were not immediately subject to removal. Unfortunately, they would be removed in the following decade with the outbreak of the Second Creek War in 1836.

Gary Van Valen, our presenter, was born in New Jersey and grew up in the town of Dumont. He completed his B.A. in history at Montclair State University in 1988, his M.A. in Latin American history at the University of South Carolina in 1995, and his Ph.D. in Latin American history at the University of New Mexico in 2003. He is a historian of Latin America and indigenous peoples who has taught at the University of West Georgia since 2006.

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### THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING

Sunday, April 27th, 2025

3:00 PM (EDT)

VIRTUAL MEETING

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## CHIEF WILLIAM MCINTOSH IN CONTEXT - *continued from previous page*

He is the author of *Indigenous Agency in the Amazon: The Mojos in Liberal and Rubber-Boom Bolivia, 1842-1932* (University of Arizona Press, 2013), which won the American Society for Ethnohistory's Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Book Award, as well as several articles and chapters in edited volumes. He is currently collaborating with fellow West Georgia faculty and members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in a project to highlight the role of William McIntosh in local history.

On Wednesday, April 30th, the descendants of Chief William McIntosh will hold a public meet and greet at the Whitesburg, GA, Public Library. The event will be from 1:00 to 3:00 pm and is meant to commemorate

the bicentennial of Chief McIntosh's death. It has been arranged by the Friends of McIntosh Reserve. McIntosh lived in the eastern edge of what is now Carroll County, Georgia. A public commercial area in Carrollton bares his name ("McIntosh Plaza," where Publix and Target are located).

Join us for this very informative and interesting presentation on April 27<sup>th</sup>. To attend this virtual meeting email [ccpowers02@gmail.com](mailto:ccpowers02@gmail.com) prior to 12:00 PM noon (EDT) on Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. You will then be sent the Zoom link with instructions regarding how to join the meeting.



## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Jason Williams*

Spring is in full bloom! As we celebrate the annual renewal of the beautiful land our ancestors farmed and developed, please take the time to join us for our upcoming meeting. We hope to hold more meetings in - person this year and are planning some special events to commemorate the historic anniversary of the CVHS as well. If you find a membership renewal form in your Newsletter this month, it means you still need to send in your dues for 2025. We continue to appreciate your support as we preserve and share our special history.



**The VOICE** is a quarterly newsletter of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 718, West Point, Georgia 31833

Editor: Ron Williams ([hopewellroad@yahoo.com](mailto:hopewellroad@yahoo.com))

Find us on Facebook and visit our website at <https://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 newspaper, 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.



General R. C. Tyler  
[image from Wikimedia Commons]

W. J. Slatter was among the brave men who defended the city of West Point, Georgia, on Easter Sunday, 1865, as Yankee soldiers made their way into the town. From Fort Tyler, located on a high hill overlooking West Point, Slatter was one of just over one hundred men under the command of General Robert C. Tyler on that fateful day one week after the Civil War had ended and the day after the death of Abraham Lincoln.

From ten o'clock in the morning until near sundown this tiny force fought off a much larger enemy in the battle that is known as the last Fort battle of the Civil War. In the battle, a sniper's bullet took the life of General Tyler, a man whose story is shrouded in a bit of mystery.

Slatter, who fought beside the general, was a friend, and early in the 20th Century, Slatter shared a letter written to him by the general just two months before the general's death. The letter, shared here in full, first appeared in the

magazine *The Confederate Veteran* and gives a first-hand account of the mindset of Southerners as the "War of Northern Aggression" was coming to an end:

"In Bivouac near Augusta, February 1865.

"My dear Slatter:

"Seated by a bivouac fire in the piney woods of South Carolina, the black smoke from a thousand lightwood fires ascending, the cold, bleak winds blowing heavily from the northwest, the division (which I am now commanding, Bates) being inspected by brigade inspection commanders are my surroundings. The Army of Tennessee extends between here and Charleston, and en route to this and other points there has been some skirmishing at several points recently; Results indefinite generally.

"Wheeler fought the Twentieth Yankee Corps and some cavalry on Saturday and Sunday, repulsing them handsomely on both days. The fight was some fifteen miles from Augusta. I do not have any idea how long this (Cheatham's) corps will be held there. The health of the troops is good; they need rest very much; discipline lacks; organization wanted. System required a new vigor instilled, which nothing but rest and discipline can impart.

"Yet the old Army of Tennessee is a grand organization; am proud to be a member of it, humble as it may be. It is composed principally of veteran troops, battle-scarred heroes, bronze visaged, sturdy sinewed, iron willed, brave and self-sacrificing. They are a noble band. It will be glory enough when peace shall once again smile upon us with all her blessing for me to tell my friends that I was one of that army.

"You have doubtless heard much of certain brigades and divisions, of the part performed by them in the recent campaign into Tennessee, of the bravery of this and the bad contact of that. Many reflections

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## A LETTER FROM GENERAL TYLER -

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have been cast on (unnamed) division, but from all accounts I am constrained to the belief that his division did as well as could be reasonably expected under the circumstances. In my own brigade, the Tennessee Consolidated Regiment, numbering about three hundred and fifty men, one hundred and eighty-five were captured while in line of battle (in front of Nashville) before they would retreat.

“The propriety of taking the negro as soldiers is being discussed more or less by the army; have not heard as yet sufficiently to form an opinion as to whether it be popular with the army, but I’m sure that some prominent officers who were bitterly opposed to it eighteen months since are now advocates for the plan. One thing is certain: our army must be increased, the skulkers and deserters must be returned, and every exertion made by those who cannot come to send them forward.

“My health continues good. I’m suffering considerably from my limb, but I’m in hopes will be able to endure. How are all the good people of Troup? My heart warms when I think of the many kindnesses received at their hands, and hope the day is not far distant when I may be permitted to visit them once again. My kindest wishes to all. Tender to your good lady my salutations, and believe me very truly.

“Robert C. Tyler”

Isn’t it sad to think that General Tyler would not live to see the time when “peace would once again smile upon us” and that his next visit to all the the people of Troup County would cost him his life?

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## RECALLING VALLEY AUTHOR J. L. STRICKLAND’S FIRST WORK OF FICTION *by James Patterson*

J.L. Strickland (January 7, 1940 - December 25, 2022) was a writer in Valley, Alabama. In 2012, I met J.L. after his first work of fiction was published in Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine (EQMM).

J.L.’s obituary at <https://www.johnsonbrownservicefh.com/obituary/JohnnyJL-Strickland> mentions his passion for writing: “He was an avid writer, writing articles for the Valley Times News, Southern Living magazine, Readers [sic] Digest, and multiple other newspapers.” J.L., the obituary noted, also “wrote monologue jokes for Jay Leno for The Tonight Show and wrote books that are sold on Amazon.”

J.L. worked his entire life in the textile mill industry with West Point Pepperell in the Valley. Readers of the Valley Times-News (VT-N) may remember his humorous columns, often using his unique cotton mill credential “Linthead Emeritus.”

While attending Valley High School, I read my first issues of EQMM during summers and holidays. A neighbor, who was an avid mystery reader, shared his secondhand copies of the then-monthly magazine with me. EQMM has a reputation for publishing an exciting mix of mystery stories by amateur and accomplished writers.

While working in California, a friend at the San Francisco Public Library shared his secondhand copies of EQMM with me. When I browsed the Table of Contents for the August 2012 issue, I saw “Amazing Grace, Sorta” in the Department of First Stories. It was written by J.L. Strickland.

While I have been a digital subscriber to the VT-N for many years, I did not recognize J.L. as a writer from Valley, Alabama. His biographical note, or bio-note, accompanying “Amazing Grace, Sorta,” did not mention Valley. However, J.L.’s bio-note led me to think he had to have been from Valley.

“J.L. Strickland grew up in an east Alabama cotton-mill village where he worked for several decades as a weaver,” the bio-note read. “During all of that time he was also writing freelance for professional humor markets and

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## J. L. STRICKLAND'S FIRST WORK OF FICTION - *continued from previous page*

contributed many topical monologue jokes to the late-night talk shows, including work for Jay Leno and Bill Maher.”

EQMM's Department of First Stories published works by new fiction writers. This was a big moment in the literary career of J.L. Strickland. It was his first published work of fiction. “Amazing Grace, Sorta” was 11 pages.

EQMM and its sister publication Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine receive hundreds of amateur short mystery stories every week. Few of these stories ever make it to publication in the magazines. J.L.'s story made it!

I wrote a letter to J.L. addressed to the editor of EQMM. Again, I did not know who he was or where he was located. EQMM's editor forwarded my letter to him. We began corresponding by email.

After congratulating J.L. on his first work of fiction in EQMM, I learned that he knew many of my relatives who lived and worked in Fairfax. I had plenty of questions. He had plenty of answers.

In response to a written letter I mailed J.L., a family member wrote back to inform me that he had been ill. We eventually lost touch.

While reading “Fairfax Alabama: My Hometown” by Dorothea Smith Leak, I saw a photo of JW Strickland with “25 years Fairfax Mfg. Mill, Weaving Dept. Maintenance Auditor.” I emailed Ms. Robin Brown, Archivist, Cobb Memorial Archives, H. Grady Bradshaw Library, in Valley. Ms. Brown is my “go to” person for questions about Valley's people and places.

“Mr. Strickland was a funny, insightful, and kind man,” Ms. Brown emailed. “I'm glad to have had the opportunity to interact with him, though I only met him once briefly in-person.”

Mrs. Brown continued: “With some frequency, he penned letters to the editor which were published in the Valley Times-News.” She reminded me that Strickland “often signed his pieces, ‘JL Strickland, Linthead Emeritus.’”

For “Amazing Grace, Sorta,” his first published work of fiction, the Valley author used “J.L. Strickland.”

I enjoyed reading “Amazing Grace, Sorta,” set in an unnamed Alabama town. It is a colorful short mystery story about a family searching for a missing relation. Strickland uses his trademark humor throughout the story.

“Alabama is hot anyway, but it was sho' nuff hot that August day. We got global warming 'bout a thousand years before ever'body else did,” Strickland wrote. Another time, Strickland has a male character describe a female character as a woman who “put the hay down where the goats could get it.” Strickland meant this in a non-agricultural sense.

Strickland mentions several cities and place near Chambers County, including Bremen and Columbus, Georgia; Pine Mountain; and Lee County. He also mentioned the Chattahoochee River.

I am glad that I wrote the editor of EQMM to make the connection with J.L. Strickland. He was proud his work was published in EQMM. I was proud of his success. Again, there is fierce competition among writers for space in EQMM and AHMM.

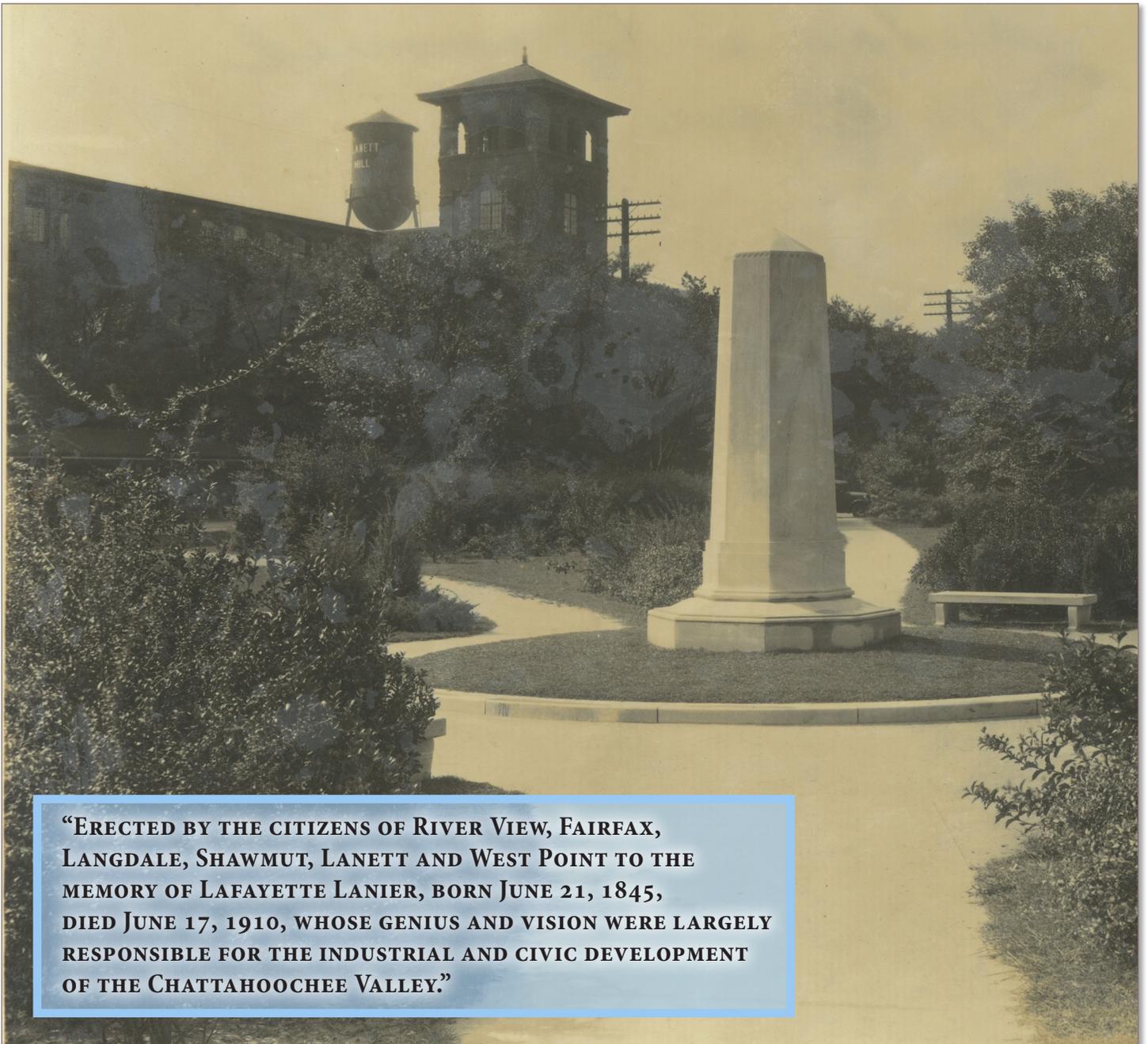
If J.L.'s high school or the Bradshaw Library were to adapt “Amazing Grace, Sorta” as a local stage production, I think it would be a great way to honor J.L. Back copies of EQMM August 2012 are available on the Web.

The August 2012 issue of EQMM could become a collector's item. It contains a chilling short story, “Hey Dad,” by acclaimed author Joyce Carol Oates. It was, no doubt, another source of pride for J.L.'s story to be in the same issue with Oates. In a February 2025 email, the Editors of EQMM confirmed that “Amazing Grace, Sorta,” was “the only story we've published from Strickland.”

*James Patterson, a 1973 graduate of Valley High School, is a life member of the Auburn University Alumni Association.*



## THE LANIER MONUMENT *by Wayne Clark*



**“ERECTED BY THE CITIZENS OF RIVER VIEW, FAIRFAX, LANGDALE, SHAWMUT, LANETT AND WEST POINT TO THE MEMORY OF LAFAYETTE LANIER, BORN JUNE 21, 1845, DIED JUNE 17, 1910, WHOSE GENIUS AND VISION WERE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INDUSTRIAL AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY.”**

LANETT — A well-known landmark in Lanett has reached its centennial year. The Lafayette Lanier Monument was dedicated in June 1925. The mid-June unveiling of the 12-foot-tall shaft of Georgia marble drew a large crowd in what was then the Lanett Mill Park. A news story of the well-attended program appeared in *The Chattahoochee Valley-Times* on June 17th, fifteen years from the day Mr. Lanier had died in 1910.

The impressive monument was moved from its original location in the early 1960s when the mill park was converted into parking lots for the nearby Lanett Mill and the Lanett Bleachery & Dye Works. The mill and dye works are now gone, but the Lafayette Lanier Monument still stands just off a very busy stretch of Highway 29.

On the front side of the monument is a brass plate with a profile image of Mr. Lanier. Underneath, the following

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## THE LANIER MONUMENT - *continued from previous page*

inscription is engraved into the monument: “Erected by the citizens of River View, Fairfax, Langdale, Shawmut, Lanett and West Point to the memory of Lafayette Lanier, born June 21, 1845, died June 17, 1910, whose genius and vision were largely responsible for the industrial and civic development of the Chattahoochee Valley.”

“Opposite Lanett Mill in the park stands the imposing shaft of pink Georgia marble, the same being the means by which the good people of the Chattahoochee Valley would perpetuate the lasting memory of the late Mr. Lafayette Lanier Sr.” reads the 1925 news article. “This beautiful shaft was completed some weeks ago by the Presbrey-Leland Company of New York, and on Tuesday evening at six o’clock several thousand people from the six towns of the Chattahoochee Valley gathered about the shaft for the impressive unveiling ceremonies.”

Mr. R.W. Jennings, superintendent of Lanett Mill, served as the program emcee and introduced each person who spoke. Then as now, the monument stands inside an inner circle that’s approximately 20 feet across. During the dedication ceremonies, a group of young local school girls each carrying a beautiful bouquet of flowers stood on the monument circle, which is encased in a pink marble border.

Rev. H.M. Gray said an opening prayer, and a representative of each of the textile towns of River View, Langdale, Lanett, Shawmut and Fairfax and the mill office town of West Point spoke of what Mr. Lanier had meant to their town and to the entire area. According to the news account, Mr. Jennings delivered an inspiring account of what Mr. Lanier had done for the Chattahoochee Valley region. Miss Estelle Batson followed by reciting Sidney Lanier’s famed poem “Song of the Chattahoochee.”

A popular columnist for The Chattahoochee Valley Times, E.R. “Dad” Cook, delivered “a masterpiece of eloquence with feeling and sentiment, conveying a wonderful picture of the life and work of Mr. Lanier on behalf of the Chattahoochee Valley.”

Two young granddaughters of Mr. Lanier, Misses Lucy and Alice Lanier, were given the honor of the unveiling. They drew the cords removing the covering and placing the 12-foot-tall monument to clear view from all sides.

There was much applause and cheering by the large crowd in attendance as the flower-bearing school girls heaped their bouquets at the base of the monument. Miss Gertrude Crowder then came forward to present an especially beautiful bouquet to a very special guest in attendance, Mr. Lanier’s widow.

Others to speak on dedication day included Judge N.D. Denson and Mr. Lanier’s eldest son, George H. Lanier. According to The CV-T, Judge Denson spoke in a deep, earnest voice that kept everyone at rapt attention and “Mr. George,” as he was known to many generations of Valleyans, expressed thanks on behalf of the Lanier family to the people of each mill town.

The program ended with a reception at which people from throughout the Chattahoochee Valley paid their respects to members of Mr. Lanier’s family.

Lafayette Lanier was born in 1845 and in his teenage years fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War. During the hard economic times of Reconstruction, he and brother Ward Crockett Lanier got into the banking business. This gave them the opportunity to study the economic conditions of the Deep South and got them to thinking about what could be done to improve the living conditions of Southern people. They saw a bright future in textile manufacturing. They acquired more than 75 percent of the stock of the Chattahoochee Manufacturing Company in what’s now Langdale and agreed for W.C. Lanier to handle the banking side and for Lafayette Lanier the manufacturing side. In 1880, they formed the West Point Manufacturing Company with offices in West Point and mills in Langdale and River View. Lanett Mill was added in 1894, Shawmut in 1908 and Fairfax in 1915.

The name Lanett came about by adding the “Lan” for Lanier and “ett” for Theodore Bennett of the Boston-based N. Boynton & Company sales agency that sold West Point products all over the country. The name Lanett Mill dates to the early 1890s. The nearby town changed its name from Bluffton to Lanett in 1895 to identify with the new industry that was bringing so many people to live, work and raise families in the area.





**\$20 *Last Fort to Fall*  
*The Battle of WEST POINT***

**DVD**

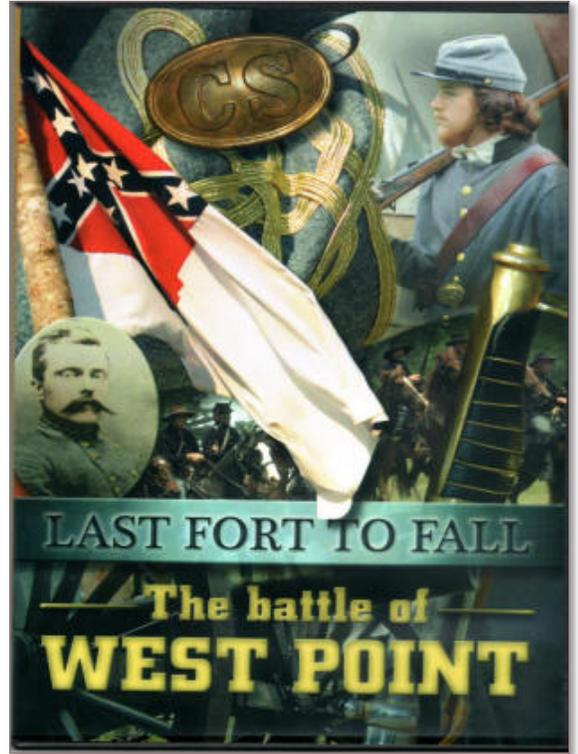
Historical photographs, maps and artistic renderings are combined with live-action reenactments to tell the story of the April 16, 1865, Civil War Battle of West Point, Georgia. Col. Oscar LaGrange led his 3,700 seasoned U.S. Cavalry troops against a hilltop redoubt defended by General Robert C. Tyler and his small garrison, townspeople volunteers, and hospital convalescents. Running length 24 minutes, plus commentary.

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The Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society  
P.O. Box 718  
West Point, GA 31833