

Discover Page County's unknown stories... the American Civil War

Newsletter

October 2009

Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Page County Committee

Rod Graves
Chairman

Sharon Sampsell
Secretary/Liaison

Arthur Candenquist
Treasurer

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Charles Butler
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Gary Drum
Shelby Hartman
Terry Heder
Karen Riddle
Nancy Sottosanti

Partners:

County of Page
Luray Caverns Corp.
Luray-Page
Chamber of Commerce

Up-Coming Events:

Civil War Troops Memorial Service

10-02 Saltville

Civil War Reenactment

10-03 Ararat

A Southern Spy in Northern VA

10-8 McLean

The Battle of Bristoe Station

10-10 Bristoe

Final Journey of John Kline

10-10 Bridgewater

Tools of the Soldiers Trade

10-10 Alexandria

A Civil War Wedding

10-17 Suffolk

The Trial of John Brown

11-13 Winchester

Christmas in Camp

12-12 Alexandria

The Center Presents "The Civil War"

3-19 Virginia Beach

Civil War Days and Bus Tour

4-10 Luray/Page County

Reenactment of the Third Winchester Luray Valley Museum...

The Battle of Third Winchester, where over 50,000 soldiers fought and thousands perished, was reenacted on the grounds of the Luray Valley Museum and Gardens on September 11-13.



In the shadow of the Allegheny Mountains, rolling hills and meadows became hallowed ground as over 300 reenactors from across the country portrayed what has been considered the most important conflict in the Shenandoah Valley. An estimated 1,000 spectators experienced the echoes of cannon fire, gunfire rallies, galloping horses and riders in sword combat while watching Lt. General Jubal A. Early's confederates and Maj. General Philip H. Sheridan's union soldiers battle. A living history encampment and featured civil war era restored buildings including two barns untouched by Sheridan's burnings and a meeting house/church with original civil war soldier's signatures and Virginia Governor William Smith (1864-1865) brought civil war history to life in Page County.



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Page County Middle School Field to Trip to Living History...

The Page County Department of Recreation, the Luray Valley Museum and Gardens and the Page County Sesquicentennial for the American Civil War Committee coordinated with Page County Public Middle Schools to attend a living history field trip to the Third Winchester Reenactment and Encampment on September 11. 436 Middle school children were treated to guided tours of 9 different living history sites including 1) Page County civil war history stories; 2) Civil war era basket weavers; 3) The restored Elk Run meeting house with original civil war soldier's signatures on the walls and set up as a living history field battle hospital, 3) Both Union and Confederate living history encampments which including camp life, weapons and horses; 4) Restored civil war era Page County barns not destroyed during Sheridan's burnings - with restored freight wagon; 5) Sumter's camp; 6) Star Fort earthworks; 7) Artillery drill; and 9) Calvary drill. This event was a major achievement for the local Sesquicentennial committee - setting a precedent for local civil war education!



Civil War Days and Historical Civil War Sites Bus Tour Planned...

The Page County Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Committee is planning a county-wide Civil War Day, Historical Civil War Sites Bus Tour and a BBQ for Saturday, April 10, 2010. This event will feature a bus excursion to our county's civil war sites as detailed in our new Discover Page County's unknown stories...the American Civil War Historical Driving Brochure with a boxed lunch and a special BBQ supper at the Luray Valley Museum and Gardens with special guests to end the day. We are inviting each of our County's towns to coordinate their own events with a Civil War Day theme and activities. We hope to encourage local businesses, lodging, recreation and as cultural and art organizations to offer special activities and packages to commemorate the day, with a focus on local civil war history and support for the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War. Interested individuals should contact Sharon Sampsell, Page County Department of Recreation at 540-743-1180 or Karen Riddle, Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce for additional information.

Page County Civil War Website...

Our local committee is in the process of developing a Page County civil war history website that will promote the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and local civil war history. The committee is hoping to secure a gratis or volunteer opportunity to set-up up this website. Interested individuals should contact Sharon Sampsell, Page County Department of Recreation at 540-743-1180.

Did you know that in Page County....Page County's Only General Thomas Jordan...

A future "facile write, excellent manager, and loyal subordinate," Thomas Jordan was born the son of Gabriel and Elizabeth Ann Sibert Jordan on September 30, 1819 in the Page Valley, and became the only Confederate General produced from Page County. Educated first in Page County schools, Jordan matriculated at the United States Military Academy in the summer of 1836 and by 1840, graduated forty-first in his class which included future notables such as William T. Sherman (also one of his roommates), George Henry Thomas, and Richard S. Ewell. Commissioned as a brevet 2nd lieutenant, Jordan's first assignment was with the 3rd U.S. Infantry in the Florida Territory. In the early years of his extensive military career, Jordan proved a colorful figure, serving in the Second and Third Seminole Wars and the Mexican War under both Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott and in Pacific Northwest, where he served in the Steptoe War from 1857-58. During this same period of time, he also introduced steamboat navigation on the upper reaches of the Columbia River. Taking an extended leave of absence in 1860, then, Captain Jordan penned his first book entitled *The South, Its Products, Commerce, and Resources*. In the wake of Virginia's secession, Jordan tendered his resignation in May 1861 and was commissioned as lieutenant colonel of Virginia troops. Ordered to Manassas Junction, he was promoted colonel and made adjutant general to General P.G.T. Beauregard's Confederate Army of the Potomac. Jordan would follow Beauregard extensively throughout the war usually as senior staff officer and adjutant general of various armies including the Army of Mississippi. Likewise, he would also have his brother, Francis Hubert Jordan (formerly of Page's Company D, 7th Virginia Cavalry) frequently assigned with him as a junior staff officer. Undoubtedly, the senior ranking Jordan also had an influence in the assignment of another younger brother, Macon (former captain of Co. D, 7th Va. Cav.), to General Henry Heth's staff in the east. Colonel Jordan was particularly noted for his exceptional coordination of Confederate reinforcements while he remained at army headquarters at the Wilmer McLean house during the First Battle of Manassas and for his coordination of troops at the Battle of Shiloh following the death of General Albert Sidney Johnson. For his role at Shiloh, he was promoted brigadier general in September 1862. Jordan was paroled at Greensboro, N.C. on May 1, 1865. Following the war, Jordan was more noted for his work of the pen, including an article of the *Harper's Magazine* which attacked Jefferson Davis as "imperious, narrow, and lacking in administrative talents and statesmanship." In 1866, he edited the *Memphis Appeal* and in 1868, in collaboration with J.B. Pryor, penned his second book entitled *The Campaigns of Lieutenant-General N.B. Forrest*. In 1869, Jordan became involved in the Cuban independence movement and in May, landed on the shores of Cuba at Mayari with three thousand men and weapons and ammunition for six thousand. Successfully becoming the chief of staff and later, commander of forces in the rebellion against Spain, in 1870, he met and defeated a numerically superior army at Guaimaro. However with a price of \$100,000 on his head, supplies nearly exhausted and strict enforcement of the neutrality laws by President Grant, Jordan reluctantly resigned his commission and escaped prosecution for his violation of the neutrality laws. Upon his return to the United States, he became editor of the "Financial and Mining Record of New York" and championed the free coinage of silver. In 1887, he wrote the article "Notes of a Confederate Staff Officer at Shiloh" which was included in Volume I of *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Jordan died on November 27, 1895, and was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery, near Hastings-on-the-Hudson.¹⁰



Gen. Jordan