



The Millrace

March 2018

1

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: MORE ROADS!

Centreville's history is tied to its roads. Continuing the theme established in the last issue, this quarter's edition includes three more articles about or pertaining to roads.

<i>Update from the Board</i>	Paul Hancq	p. 1
<i>Centreville Bus Tour</i>	Paul Hancq	p. 2
<i>Improved Roads</i>	Claudette Ward	p. 4
<i>Artillery Hill</i>	Claudette Ward	p. 7



UPDATE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greetings to all the members of the Historic Centreville Society (HCS)!

On November 12, 2017, we held our September event (two months later than usual): Celebrate Centreville's Past. At the outset, before an audience of 15 people, Debbie Robison did a marvelous presentation about the early history of this area. She started with the Dogue Indians, who used it as a seasonal hunting ground, and transitioned to early European settlers who were "Carving Out the Wilderness" (a slide title) into the British proprietary colonies. Further, Debbie told us about stream and place names like Pope's Head and noted that our familiar place names and locations were largely in place by 1770. Her talk related how this area developed largely as a result of economic interests. The arrival of a large influx (20,000) of convicts to the Northern Neck around that time was a surprise, at least to me. We heard how William Carr Lane and his brother James bought parcels of convicts to sell for

MARCH MEETING!



Monday
March 12
7:30 pm
at the
Centreville
Library

Join us for an enlightening discussion with archaeologist **Mike Johnson** about excavations of ancient Native American sites in Thoroughfare Gap and the Centreville area.

AND, election of Historic Centreville Society Officers.

Nominations from the floor will be accepted.

Update continued ...

profit. Back then, travel through the country meant passing through many gates to access lands owned by people. Tobacco in hogsheads rolled down the rolling roads to market. (Of course, economics helps explain why people settled here.) Debbie mentioned Centreville's own Newgate Tavern, the site of which is now a pocket park, especially how indentured servants and slaves were processed through there. Mount Gilead and Lane's Mill were also topics. After Debbie's talk, we adjourned to four different display tables, each staffed by one of us and focused on a local topic of interest for viewing and individual discussion: (1) McAtee's Tavern (Debbie Robison), (2) Mount Gilead (Ted McCord), (3) Newgate Tavern (Cheryl Repetti), and (4) Level Green (me). This was a successful event about local history.

On December 4, 2017, we assembled again for our Annual Christmas Dinner at Mount Gilead, a time-honored tradition for this society. After the usual social time, 15 of us enjoyed a tasty catered meal. Next came Show & Tell:

-- Ted McCord told us that his father, a physician, had Belle Willard Roosevelt as one of his patients. Belle was a granddaughter of Joseph Willard and Antonia Ford, famous local citizens of the Civil War era, and was also the wife of President Theodore Roosevelt's son Kermit. Ted read aloud a note that Belle wrote to Ted's father. This is an interesting historical connection. Ted also showed pictures of his mother and her first cousin, Mildred DeBell, when they were young, and Mildred was present for that.

-- Next, I said Happy Birthday to the Historic Centreville Society. (I remembered that Cheryl Repetti reminded me we are 30 years old this year!)

-- Tim Duskin talked of the Centennial of World War I and he played a song off of a CD from that timeframe.

-- John Carter told the story of how he received 300 letters written by his great, great, grandfather, a member of the Confederate Army during the Civil War. This ancestor (named William McClellan, I think) wrote some of those letters while stationed in Centreville near the Grigsby House. John passed around an actual, handwritten letter (in a protective sleeve) from that ancestor. (I liked holding that piece

of history in my hand.) This ancestor was 6'5" tall, so he really stood out!

-- Claudette Ward talked about a Spanish coin from 1793, a copy of five Spanish milled dollars, and one dollar from the City of Portsmouth, dated 1861. She also told the story of a ship that was saved because a fish got stuck in the hole in the hull, which stopped the leak.

-- Lynne Garvey-Hodge spoke of a book by a suffragist who was jailed at the Occoquan Workhouse and also of her own related experience. Lynne often portrays suffragist Mrs. Robert Walker, so it was meaningful that a granddaughter of Mrs. Walker has contacted Lynne. As it turns out, this granddaughter lived in the same rooming house at the same college that Lynne once lived in. She passed around a book about the suffragists and told some stories.

Have you ever wondered about the Native American (Indian) presence in the Centreville area? Come to our next quarterly event and find out more!

Paul Hancq
President



Historic Centreville Bus Tour

By Paul Hancq

On November 18, 2017, I went on a half-day bus tour of Centreville. In a way, that was an unusual thing for me to do since I usually take bus tours at faraway places that are unfamiliar to me, but Centreville is my home. This bus tour was definitely worth my time, though.

Our host and tour guide was Jim Lewis. He provided frequent narration of local history all morning and much of that pertained to Centreville during the Civil War.

After gathering at the Fairfax County Government Center's commuter parking lot, we boarded the bus and heard about General J.E.B. Stuart's Winter 1861 headquarters, Camp Qui Vive, as we passed its former site just off West Ox Road. While on Lee Highway, we learned about its history. One part that I found

Bus Tour continued ...

enlightening was the description of the Centreville plateau as an elevated area with natural obstacles all around, which made it a great location for a military fort.

We turned off Lee Highway to Braddock Road near the current site of Jireh Bakery Cafe to hear about Royal Oaks, the Newgate Tavern, and the history of Braddock Road itself. William Carr Lane and his brother James figured prominently in this narrative, especially since they bought and sold convicts, making Newgate an appropriate name for the early settlement. (Newgate was also a prison in London, England back in the 18th Century.) George Washington visited here several times! The Harrison House and Havener House were also sights and stories.

We stopped at the Old Stone Church (Church of the Ascension), which was designated as the first Union Army hospital after the Battle of Blackburn's Ford, just before the First Battle of Manassas (Bull Run). Centreville's geography influenced the development of roads and forts in this area.

The establishment of the Centreville Historic Overlay District (CHOD) came up next as we moved into the heart of that area. Of course, the Spindle Sears House was mentioned as was St. John's Episcopal Church.

Our next stop was Mount Gilead, the sole survivor of the historic village of Newgate. Mount Gilead resident Ted McCord greeted our large group (38 people, I think) and proceeded to tell us about the history there. Mount Gilead dates back to 1785 at least since it shows up in the property records then. When we left there, we learned about the two roads to Chantilly and saw some beautifully preserved earthworks situated in a nearby townhouse development.

After a short ride, we disembarked again to walk the Covered Way, the trench with earthworks on both sides that was capable of providing protection to soldiers from shot and shell during the Civil War. It took us approximately 15 minutes to walk to the Apex Fort, which was easily seen as area foliage was mostly gone by this time of year.

Our next stop was the Chantilly Battery Fort on

Wharton Lane, which was connected to the Apex Fort via earthworks back in the Civil War. Headed west, we saw the sites of Fort Johnston, now Pickwick Shopping Center, and Artillery Hill, which used to be situated on a ridge between Alto Plaza and Walgreens before Lee Highway was straightened.

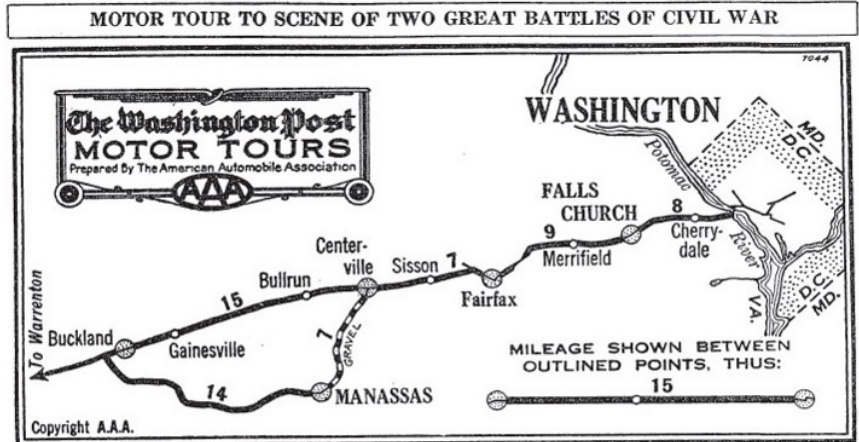
Another stop that I found particularly interesting was the "Site of Military Railroad Terminus," as it is noted on a historic marker there. During the first year of the Civil War, Confederate supplies arrived by train at Manassas Junction but had to be transported to Centreville, where the troops were encamped in winter quarters. Roads were muddy and impassable, so soldiers built a temporary railroad from Manassas to Centreville. While at the Terminus location, we heard the story of the execution of Privates Dennis Corcoran and Michael O'Brien, two of the Louisiana Tigers (a Confederate military unit) who were convicted of mutiny and sentenced to die by firing squad. Execution took place at the same location as the Terminus site, just off New Braddock across from today's Centre Ridge Elementary School.

Back on the bus we went. We heard more narration about the old roads, parts of which are still visible, and how they match up with today's roads. We went by the place where John Singleton Mosby (the Gray Ghost) had been wounded on September 14, 1864, which is now the corner of Lee Highway and Clifton Road.

Our final stop occurred at the Woodlands Retirement Community off Lee Highway on the way back to where our cars were parked. In the back, we could clearly see a sizable portion of a "fill" from the unfinished Manassas Gap Railroad, the same railroad that is located on the Manassas Battlefield.

During the 19th Century, railroad builders cut higher ground and filled lower ground to level out the route for the railroad, and there is a tall fill here. We heard the story how the Panic of 1857 reduced the amount of capital available to the railroads, which caused some of them to go bankrupt and put an end to its construction.

As we stood on both sides of the small wooden bridge over the headwaters of Difficult Run, we learned about the run being the boundary line between Loudoun and Fairfax counties in 1757. This



At left: Car passing through Manassas Battleground mid 1920s. Photo courtesy of Federal Highway Administration Dr. S. M. Johnson Photo Gallery of Lee Highway, available online at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/johngal2.cfm>. **At right:** AAA Washington Post Motor Tours Map from 1928. Note Centreville Road was still gravel. Washington Post, 1928.

Bus Tour continued . . .

exact location was specifically mentioned in the descriptive text for the boundary lines. Finally, we found out when and why the boundary line evolved to its position today. Lots of quid pro quo led to that.

While I fancy myself as someone who is somewhat knowledgeable of local history, I learned things on this tour. For example, while I had heard of the Terminus site and the Corcoran and O'Brien execution for years, I did not know where those were, so it was new and interesting for me to visit that location.

If you are interested in taking a future Historic Centreville Bus Tour, you could contact Jim Lewis by email at antietam1862@verizon.net or by telephone at (703) 620-2956. He told me he will probably do another one of these tours at some point.



Improved Roads By Claudette Ward

As more and more people owned automobiles, there was a great need for improved roads. Farmers needed better roads in order to get their produce to market. An article in the Herndon Observer of January 1, 1925 reported that "they have began grading on the Rt. 29-211 between Fairfax and Centreville. A camp which looks like a small city has

sprung up in the property of Norman Crouch. Work has started on the Quarry."

Norman Crouch was my grandfather. He leased the northeast corner of our farm to the State Highway Department for a convict camp and staging area for the paving of the road. The convicts (prisoners) worked on the road. His farm was on the south side of Lee Highway (Rt. 29) about 2 miles from Centreville.

I heard my grandfather talk to people about the convict camp. They asked him if he wasn't afraid, and he said "no." I don't know how long it was there. I suppose there were temporary buildings, but I'm not sure.

The quarry mentioned in the article was in back of the Crouch property. I don't know if it was on the Senes land or Cobb property. Mr. Cobb's road ran by it. Hampton Forest Way is about where Mr. Cobb's road was, except the Cobb road went straight all the way to Braddock Road. Stone was dug from the quarry for the road. Then the quarry was abandoned and it filled up with dark green water. There was a tall cliff in back of it. When Hampton Forest was built in the early 1980's the quarry was filled in. from the quarry for the road. Then the quarry was abandoned and it filled up with dark green water. There was a tall cliff in back of it. When Hampton Forest was built in the early 1980's the quarry was filled in.

The Herndon Observer of July 3, 1925 reported the progress of the road:

The rains of the last few days have interfered with

Improved Roads continued . . .

the laying of the concrete roadway on the Fairfax-Centreville road, the paving of which started last week. So far, about 700 feet of the 18 foot wide concrete has been laid, it is expected faster progress will be made from now on. Some grading is being done at the Centreville end of the roadway, but before the paving machine reaches there this will be completed. It is practically assured that the road will be built and ready for use this year.

At the same time the road was paved, bridges were also built over the stream. Before this, they had to be forded, and automobiles frequently got stuck. Will Crouch told me "Norman (my grandfather) lost a gold mine when they paved the road!" He often had to hitch up a team and tow out a car. (Will was Granddad's cousin).

With better roads, people began to travel more. A popular tourist destination was Washington, D.C. . Along the major highways, gas stations and tourist camps were built. Between Centreville and Fairfax there were several. Next to the Crouch farm there was Will Yowell's Amoco station, he also sold snacks and soft drinks. Near that, Norman Crouch built a garage for his son Claude (my father) to run, on part of his farm. It was named Willow Spring Garage. He towed and repaired vehicles, sold Texaco gas, oil and tires. There was also a small store that sold refreshments to travelers, and local people bought bread, tobacco, and kerosene. Most people didn't have a phone, this was where they came to make a phone call, and people called there to get a message to them.

In 1938 Norman Crouch sold the land where the convict camp had been to J.R. Lane, who built a house to live in and several small white cottages for tourists. He called it Pleasant Acres and directly across the road Mike Mohr built and ran the Happy Hour dance hall.

A few miles further east there was Manuel's tourist camp, restaurant and gas station. Where Rt. 29 met up with Little River Turnpike near Fairfax, there was the largest tourist camp, Kamp Washington; which gave its name to the area.

Today there are stores where Kamp Washington and Manuel's were. The only tourist camp, now



Holmes' Garage on Lee Highway, 1920s.

called a "motel" left is Pleasant Acres. Later owners changed and enlarged the original small cottages. Soon it too will be gone. There are plans to build a Senior living facility on the site.

Lee Hwy. was widened to a four lane divided highway about 1939-1940. Prison Camp 30 was located near Kamp Washington on the north side of Lee Hwy. between Ridgetop Road and the present Storage Facility. In 1921 "the Rambler" wrote that there was a convict camp there. Probably only a part of it moved to the Crouch property in 1925, then went back there when the road was completed. For years the prisoners worked on the roads with a guard. Camp 30 moved to a new location about 1954, on West Ox Road, across from the 29 Drive in (outdoor movie); which was back of Hunter's Lodge, a country music dance hall. It's now the Costco shopping center. County office buildings are now where the prison was.

Happy Hour Dance Hall is now a tool rental place. The small building that was Yowell's Amoco station was lived in for years, and then torn down when Lee Hwy. was widened. After the death of his son, Norman Crouch rented the garage, and then sold it to W.W. Herring in 1941. His son owns it now, but it is only a towing business.

Lee Hwy. is to be widened again, to six lanes.

Learn more about the history of Lee Highway at the Federal Highway Administration website:
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/johnson.cfm>

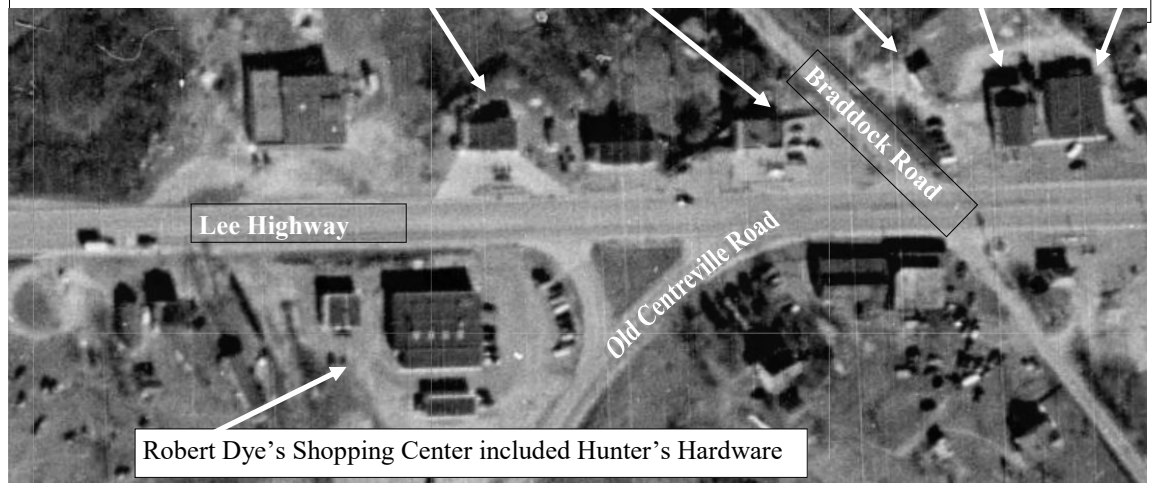
2017

Walgreens, TitleMax (Merchant Tire), Phone Store (Centreville Restaurant), Jireh's (Payne's General Store) and Verizon Store (Payne's Restaurant)



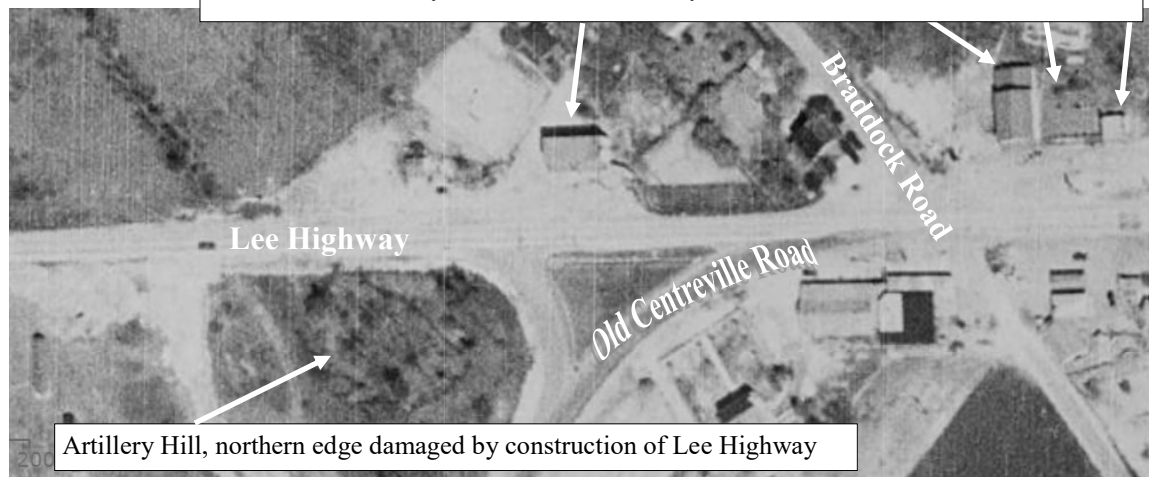
1953

Turberville Store, Merchant Tire, Centreville Restaurant, Payne's General Store and Payne's Restaurant

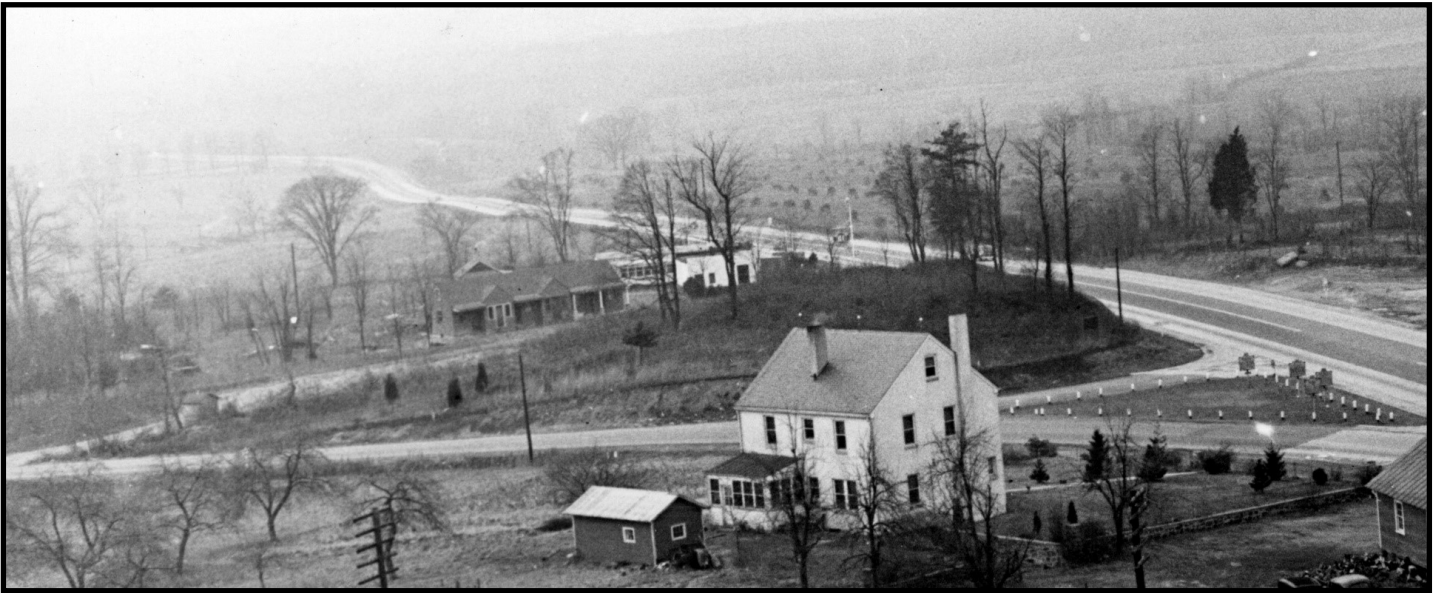


1937

Turberville Store, Payne's General Store, Payne's Restaurant, Centreville Restaurant



The changing view of Artillery Hill and nearby Lee Highway. A sequence of aerial views show Artillery Hill in 1937, 1953, and 2017. Seen in all three views are Payne's store and Payne's restaurant, today's Jireh's and Verizon. The itinerant, little Centreville Restaurant building is also in all three views, but in a different location in each. Photographs from Fairfax County aerial imagery collection available online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/maps/aerial-photography>. Images annotated by Cheryl Repetti.



Above, a circa 1940 view of Artillery Hill, looking west down Lee Highway. The raised earthwork fort, visible behind the white house, has sprouted full-grown trees and its northern edge has been abruptly cut off by road construction. Joe Hanson, the Superintendent of Manassas Battlefield Park, once imagined including Artillery Hill as a welcome center for the park. Photo courtesy of Dennis Hogge.

Artillery Hill

By Claudette Ward

When I was a young child most of Artillery Hill Fort was still there. I remember my Grandmother saying to someone as we turned onto Rt. 28 to head to Manassas, “that was the breastworks.” I was only 5 or 6 years old and I didn’t understand what she meant. Grandma was born in 1870, only 5 years after the Civil War ended. She had lived here all her life. All the local people know it had been a fort.

Part of the fort had been destroyed in 1925 when Rt. 29 (Lee Hwy.) was hard surfaced and realigned to run straight through Centreville. Prior to that, it had turned to the right and followed Braddock Road to just past the Stone Church, where it turned to the left and ran along below the hill then back to where it is now. In the 1920s there were steam shovels which could easily cut through a hill. Before then there had been only man and mule or horse power to level a road, it was easier to go around a hill.

In 1925, people did not think of the Civil War as we do now, it was too close. Their parents had lived through it and told them of how everything had been torn up and destroyed. They had known men who

fought in the war. George Turberville’s father (also George) had just died in 1922, he had been one of Mosby’s men.

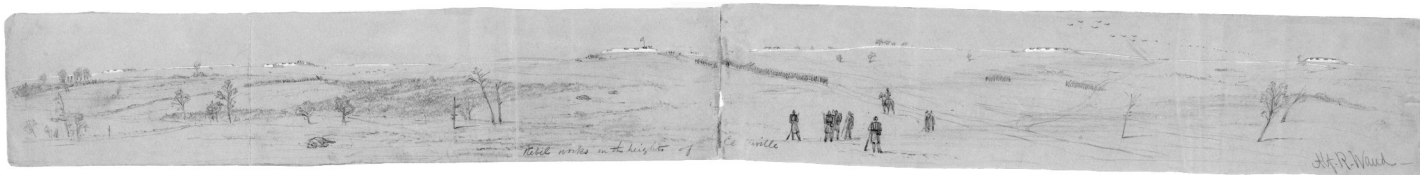
Old fortifications were reminders of the hard times. Now there were automobiles. People were happy to have a smooth hard surface road to drive on instead of getting stuck in the mud. They could easily drive to Washington to the big stores, or to see a moving picture show.

In 1943, Robert Dye leveled the rest of the fort to build a small shopping center. In 1943 Centreville residents were not thinking too much of the Civil War. World War II was foremost on everyone’s minds. Every family had someone in “the service”, sons or brothers, nephews and cousins. All the young men were off fighting the war.

At home, people were issued ration books. You had to have a stamp to buy almost anything. There were air-raid drills and black-outs.

The shopping center was not built (or completed) until a few years later. Centreville residents were glad to have a hardware store and drugstore in Centreville. In 1947 there was once again a Post Office.





“Rebel works on the heights of Centerville.” [sic] Drawing by Alfred R. Waud, 1860-65. Library of Congress Print and Photograph Collection, online at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004660500/>.

**Do you have a friend who might like to join the society?
Pass on our newsletter and bring potential members to meetings.
Members receive The Millrace four times a year.**

If you have an historical article that might be of interest to our members, the deadlines for submissions are the 1st of February, May, August and November. Send to: to Cheryl Repetti at MillraceHCS@gmail.com or by US mail to The Historic Centreville Society, P.O. Box 1512, Centreville, VA 20122

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Paul Hancq, President; Ted McCord, First Vice President; Cheryl Repetti, Second Vice President; Claudette Ward, Secretary; Linda Mellott, Treasurer; Joan Orvis, Debbie Robison, Michael Frey



The Historic Centreville Society
P.O. box 1512
Centreville, VA 20122

