

The HISTORY
of the
City of Fredericksburg
Virginia

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On all original matter herein,

By

H. B. LANE, Chairman of History Committee,
for the City of Fredericksburg, Va.

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When war was declared between the United States and Spain, and volunteers were called for by the government, the Washington Guards, which had been reorganized by Captain Maurice B. Rowe, promptly responded and was mustered into the United States service as Company K of the Third Virginia regiment of infantry. It went into camp at Richmond, Virginia, and was soon transferred to Camp Alger, named in honor of the then Secretary of War, near Washington city. Before these troops were ordered to the scene of action peace was declared and they were ordered back to Richmond and mustered out of service, having been in the service of the United States seven months. The company then returned to Fredericksburg.

The Guards numbered one hundred and twelve men on the rolls, was a splendid body of patriotic young men and reflected credit upon the town. Soon after being discharged from the United States army the company was reorganized, reentered the service of the State and now numbers sixty-two men, under the command of Captain Thomas M. Larkin. They have often been called upon to discharge important and delicate service, and have responded with alacrity.

In 1883 a colored volunteer company was organized in town, called the Garfield Light Infantry Blues. It was organized by Benjamin Scott, of Richmond, who was its first captain. Captain Scott soon returned to his home in Richmond and was succeeded in command by Captain Lucien G. Gilmer. This organization continued in existence several years, but was finally disbanded, having fallen below the minimum number required by law.

THE CONFEDERATE CEMETERY.

Soon after the citizens of Fredericksburg returned to their desolated homes at the close of the Civil war, and had gotten their dwellings in a condition to be occupied, the thoughts of the patriotic ladies were at once turned to the Confederate soldiers who had fallen and were buried in Fredericksburg and on the several adjacent battle-fields. They were anxious that the remains of these brave men should be gathered up and interred in some place

where their dust would be preserved and the names of the known saved from oblivion.

As a result of a consultation, and a call published in the newspapers of Fredericksburg, the ladies of the town met in the basement of the Presbyterian church on the 10th day of May, 1865, one month after the surrender of Gen. Lee, and organized the Ladies' Memorial Association of Fredericksburg, elected officers, appointed a board of directors, an executive committee and an advisory board. This was the first ladies' memorial association chartered in the South and among the first to decorate the soldiers' graves with flowers.

The best methods for accomplishing the patriotic work of the association were discussed and adopted at this early date. The plan was to raise as much money in town and in Virginia as possible and then issue an appeal to be sent all through the Southern States for funds, because every Southern State was represented on the battle-fields in and around the town by their heroic dead. These appeals were sent out as soon as they could be gotten ready and had the desired effect. Funds soon began to flow into the treasury and a suitable site was selected, west of and adjoining the city cemetery, which was purchased, and the work of gathering up the dead commenced. The number gotten from the different battle-fields and buried in the ground purchased by the association numbered about fifteen hundred. The circular sent out had, in addition to the organization of the association and the list of officers in full, an appeal, which was as follows:

“To all true hearted women and men, who would rescue from oblivion the memory of the brave, who died in defence of home and country, we present this appeal: The stern pressure of military necessity made it impossible, properly, to care for the remains of the gallant dead who fell on the bloody fields of Fredericksburg, Wilderness, Chancellorsville, Spotsylvania Courthouse and in scores of skirmishes which, in a war less terrible, would have been reckoned as battles.

“Our Association proposes to preserve a record, and, as far as possible, mark the spot where every Confederate soldier is buried in

this vicinity, whether he fell on these memorable fields or otherwise died in the service. To the bereaved throughout our suffering South we pledge ourselves to spare no exertion to accomplish this work.

“In a land stripped of enclosures and forests, desolated and impoverished as ours, we cannot, without aid, guard these graves from exposure and possible desecration; we can only cover them with our native soil. And, with pious care, garland them with the wild flowers from the fields. But, with the generous aid and cordial coöperation of those who have suffered less, but who feel as deeply as we do on this subject, we confidently hope to accomplish far more—to purchase and adorn a cemetery, to remove thither the sacred dust scattered all over this region, and to erect some enduring tribute to the memory of our gallant dead.

“Shall that noble army of martyrs, who, for years of toil and suffering, bore, in triumph, the ‘Conquered Banner’ from Chattanooga to Gettysburg, sleep on the fields of their fame unnoticed and unknown? Shall their names pass from the knowledge of the living to be treasured only in the mind of Him ‘to whom the memory of the just is precious?’

“What spot so appropriate for the last resting place of these heroes, as some commanding eminence overlooking the memorable plain of Fredericksburg? And what nobler work for the hearts and hands of Southern women, than upon its summit to rear a monument to the unrecorded Confederate dead, which, through all time shall testify to the gratitude of the people for whom they so gloriously died? As no State, and scarcely a town or county throughout the limits of the late Confederacy, is unrepresented on these battle-fields, may we not hope that the coöperation required in order to accomplish our holy work will be as universal?

“An act of the Legislature of Virginia will be obtained, incorporating our Association, so that the property may be held perpetually dedicated to its sacred uses. We solicit such contributions as the appreciative sympathy of friends in all parts of our country, and of the world, will extend us. As soon as sufficient means are obtained our Association will proceed to purchase and improve

grounds appropriate for a cemetery, and remove thither the remains of the honored dead.

“Our Association, although its organization is but recent, has been enabled to rescue from oblivion the names and places of burial of many of the noble dead, who fell upon the fields of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and all the objects of the Association will be pressed as rapidly forward as the requisite means are procured. All auxiliary societies, which may be formed, are requested to correspond with our Association; and, should they desire their contributions to be specially appropriated to the graves of any individuals, or of any particular State or section, the trust will be sacredly discharged.

MRS. JOHN H. WALLACE, *President.*

MISS ANN J. CARTER,

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* Yet living.