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1861-1865



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Colonel Mottrom Dulany Ball: A Founding Father of the State of Alaska

by William Page Johnson, II



Mottrom Dulany Ball, of Fairfax Court House, Fairfax County, and Alexandria, Virginia, was a musician, poet, teacher, lawyer, soldier, and a founding

father of the

All Was Lost

In late April 1865, after serving four years in the Confederate cavalry, Mott Ball returned to his father's estate, *Elmwood*, near Lewinsville, Fairfax County, Virginia. He was found there by his younger brother, William S. Ball, "*sprawled out on the lawn... dazed and unable*

to realize that actually all was lost."¹ *Elmwood*, along with all the outbuildings and personal property, was gone. Even the old elm trees that once shaded the mansion had been cut down. Although he would later return to Fairfax and rebuild, Mott left *Elmwood* and settled in Alexandria, Virginia. He returned to the practice of law with his uncle William Heath Dulany. Their law practice, which operated in the courts of Alexandria and Fairfax, was soon thriving once again.

In December 1866, Mott Ball, "*together with Ed. Reade, James Faulkner, Tip Nelson, John Nelson, and others*"² were all accused by Orrin E. Hine, Assistant Superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau at Vienna, Virginia,



Colonel Mottrom Dulany Ball c. 1864

Photo credit: Unknown



From the Desk of the President-

Fairfax, Virginia - October 2015

I hope you all had an enjoyable summer and are refreshed and ready to move ahead on several historic preservation initiatives and HFCI activities. Here are updates

1. The proposed construction of a sidewalk and retaining wall on "Rust Curve" – the west side of Route 123 between the bridge over Accotink Creek and Whitehead Street (the Pritchard / Brinkley home).

The HFCI Board opposes these changes for both historic preservation and aesthetic reasons and has expressed our concern to the mayor and City Council.

2. Jermantown cemetery. As you may know, Novus Residences, LLC, will be developing a property just west of this historic cemetery. Through city proffers the developer has agreed to maintain the cemetery grounds for the next thirty years and will create a contemplative space and landscaping between the new development and the cemetery.

An HFCI committee is working with the developer to design and implement a plan to preserve, enhance and dignify this important space.

3. Paul VI high School (formerly Fairfax High School) will be sold by the Diocese of Arlington by 2020 as Paul VI is relocated. The school building was constructed in 1935 by the WPA and is a local landmark.

Because of its background and cultural importance to our city, HFCI supports and will advocate for the preservation and civic repurposing of this historic school building.

A Call To Action!

We value all HFCI members and want to encourage you to pitch in to promote our goals and participate in our activities. Here are some suggestions.

- * Be an active historic preservation advocate for the above-mentioned HFCI initiatives.
- * Become a guide for our Historic Fairfax walking tours.
- * Join in planning and making our annual Taste of the Vine a successful fund-raiser.

* Help sell White House Christmas ornaments at the annual Fairfax Craft Fair at Fairfax High School.

Finally, a sincere thank you for your membership in HFCI and your participation in our activities.

Sandra Wilbur

At the Fairfax Museum and Historic Blenheim...

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center

New Exhibit at Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center:

"An Artist's Story: Civil War Drawings by Edwin Forbes," March 15 – October 14, 2015 - Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center

The Fairfax Story - Hamill Gallery. Permanent Fairfax history exhibition.

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center "Second Sunday" Programs

Programs are held at **2 p.m.** on the second Sunday of each month. Unless otherwise noted, programs are held at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street. Free (unless noted). Check back to find out about additional programs planned throughout the year. Information: **703-385-8414**.

Sunday, November 8 – SPECIAL LOCATION Historic Blenheim

"The End of World War II in the Pacific"

Local historian Jim Lewis will examine the final battles of World War II and the surrender of Japan.

Sunday, December 13

"Dining with the Washingtons"

Book talk and signing by author Stephen A. McLeod, Manager of Library Programs, at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim

Historic Blenheim Civil War Interpretive Center Program Series Programs are free and held at 2 p.m. on Saturdays (unless otherwise noted) at the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway. Information: 703-591-0560.

Saturday, November 14

“Civil War Photographs from the George Eastman House Collection”

Dr. William Stapp, former curator at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, will speak on the Civil War photographs featured in the traveling exhibit at the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, “Between the States: Photographs of the American Civil War” (November 7 – December 31, 2015). Dr. Stapp will discuss the images and the photographers.

Sunday, December 6, NOON – 4 p.m.

“Christmas in Camp”

(RECOMMENDED FOR CUB SCOUT TROOPS WANTING TO EARN AN HISTORIC SITE BADGE Scout leaders must make a reservation—703-591-6728)

Discuss Civil War-era holiday customs and how soldiers celebrated the holiday, make Victorian ornaments, listen to holiday songs, and join camp drills with Company D, 17th VA Infantry, “Fairfax Rifles” C.S.A.

2015 Traveling Exhibitions

March 15 – November 29, 2015 - Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center **EXTENDED!**

“An Artist’s Story: Civil War Drawings by Edwin Forbes”

November 7 – December 31, 2015 – Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim

“Between the States: Photographs of the American Civil”

For information about adult and youth group tours and hands-on programs, please call: 703-385-8415 or 703-591-6728

Other Information of Interest:

Walking Tour

11 am Guided walking tour (approx. 90 min.) of Old Town Fairfax with stops at the Fairfax County Courthouse, several antebellum homes with a Civil War history, and the City of Fairfax Cemetery (formerly Fairfax Confederate Cemetery).

Location: Meet at Fairfax Museum and Visitors center, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax 703-385-8414. Wear comfortable shoes and bring water.

Volunteers and docents are sought for the city’s historic buildings: Ratcliffe-Allison House, Historic Blenheim and the Civil War Interpretive Center and Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. Additionally, volunteers may be interested in assisting with walking tours and special events. For information [email](#) or call **703-385-8415**.

The city has published a free self-guided walking tour brochure that provides a brief history of the city and noteworthy buildings in the Old Town Fairfax Historic District. This brochure is available from the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main Street, or call **703-385-8414**.

Select historic buildings are open during city special events, including the Chocolate Lovers Festival, Civil War Weekend, Independence Day Celebration, Fall Festival and Festival of Lights and Carols. To arrange group tours of city-owned historic buildings [email](#) or call **703-385-8414**.

The Historic District was listed in the National Register of

Historic Places in 1987. It includes a variety of building and monument types and styles, including:

Fairfax Courthouse (1800)
 Ratcliffe-Allison House (1812)
 Joshua Gunnell House (c.1830)
 William Gunnell House (c.1835)
 Ford House (c.1835)
 Fairfax Elementary School (1873)*
 Old Fairfax Jail (1885)
 Old Town Hall (1900)
 Marr Monument (1904)

*Fairfax Elementary School was converted into the Fairfax Museum & Visitor Center in 1992.

Welcome New Members!

The President & Board of Directors of HFCI extends a hearty welcome to all new HFCI members.

The O'Hares

DUES ALERT

If you have not paid your annual Historic Fairfax City, Inc. dues they are now due. Please remit based on the schedule below. Annual dues payments should be made out and sent to: **Historic Fairfax City, Inc.**, 10209 Main Street, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Your annual dues help HFCI to continue to meet its basic goal of preserving the unique history of the City of Fairfax. Tax deductible donations over and above dues payments are encouraged.

Visit us on the web:
HFCI Website!

<http://www.historicfairfax.org>

In the Next Issue...

***One Virginia Woman Who Was Not The Enemy:
 Mrs. Mary Dye Willcoxon of Wolf Run Shoals.***

Ball endnotes continued:

- Congress, 1879-1880, v. 4, n. 105, *Letter of William J. Burrell to Commander L.A. Beardslee, U.S.N., July, 11, 1879*, in regards to the alleged indian uprising; U.S. Govt. Prtg. Ofc., Wash., D.C.
- ³⁹ Ibid 38.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid 38.
- ⁴¹ *New York Times*, March 22, 1880, p. 1, c. 3.
- ⁴² *Alaska Appeal*, February 15, 1880, p. 8, c. 1.
- ⁴³ *Evening Star*, February 21, 1880, p. 1, c. 5.
- ⁴⁴ *Sacramento Daily Union*, June 22, 1881, p. 4, c. 2.
- ⁴⁵ *Daily Alta California*, August 26, 1881, p. 1, c. 4.
- ⁴⁶ Wells, Harry, L, *Alaska and the Klondike: The New Gold Fields and How to Reach Them*, © 1897, Portland, OR.
- ⁴⁷ Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the Forty Seventh Congress, 1881-1882, © 1882, U.S. Govt. Prtg. Ofc., Wash., D.C.
- ⁴⁸ *New York Times*, December 7, 1881, p. 1, c. 2.
- ⁴⁹ *Sunday Oregonian*, January 14, 1900, p. 4, c. 4.
- ⁵⁰ *Evening Star*, April 14, 1880, p. 1, c. 2.
- ⁵¹ Pacific Coast Steamship Company, *All About Alaska*, © 1888, Goodall, Perkins & Co., San Francisco, CA.
- ⁵² Claus M. Naske and Herman E. Slotnick, *Alaska: A History of the 49th State*, © 1979, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, MI.
- ⁵³ Chester A. Arthur: "First Annual Message," December 6, 1881. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29522>.
- ⁵⁴ *Alaskan*, December 19, 1885, p. 1, c. 2.
- ⁵⁵ *Alaska Appeal*, March 15, 1880, p. 4, c. 1.
- ⁵⁶ Wells, Harry, L, *Alaska and the Klondike: The New Gold Fields and How to Reach Them*, © 1897, Portland, OR.
- ⁵⁷ *Evening Star*, January 2, 1885, p. 1, c. 6.
- ⁵⁸ *Evening Star*, April 22, 1885, p. 1, c. 8.
- ⁵⁹ *Evening Star*, July 22, 1885, p. 1, c. 5.
- ⁶⁰ *Alaskan*, February 27, 1886, p. 3, c. 5.
- ⁶¹ *Alaskan*, August 20, 1887, p. 3, c. 1.
- ⁶² *Alaska Bar Association and Sketch of Judiciary*, © 1901, Sanborn, Vail & Co., San Francisco, CA.
- ⁶³ *The Critic*, September 27, 1887, p. 1, c. 1.
- ⁶⁴ *Alaska Bar Association and Sketch of Judiciary*, © 1901, Sanborn, Vail & Co., San Francisco, CA.
- ⁶⁵ *Alexandria Gazette*, November 25, 1887, p. 3, c. 1.
- ⁶⁶ Baker, Marcus, *Geographic Dictionary of Alaska*, p. 114, © 1906, U.S. Govt. Prntg. Ofc., Wash., D.C.

of being part of a “gang of ruffians, who all live in the vicinity of Langley,” who “attempted to break up, the religious meetings held at the house of Robert Gunnell (colored) in Langley... [and] many other petty outrages.”³

Hine further reported that he “brought them to the attention of the local authorities, but thus far have been unable to obtain any action favorable to the Freedmen.”⁴ It would appear that that a case was not made against the men due to lack of evidence.

Mott was a gifted orator and was frequently called on to apply this skill, both as a lawyer and a speaker at public events.

“The tournament came off at Fairfax Court House, Thursday, according to the programme... Col. Ball delivered a coronation address in the Court House of rare beauty. Dancing was had to the music of a Georgetown band, and was kept up till nearly morning.”⁵

Unlike a lot of his contemporaries, Mott Ball was not bitter about the defeat of the South. In a speech at Analostan (now Roosevelt) Island in the Potomac River, opposite Georgetown, D.C., in October 1867, he stated:

“He was glad to meet and shake the hand [of the] warm friends who hand greeted him, and while he unfortunately fought against the ‘stars and stripes,’ he looked upon it now as the emblem of freedom, and hoped all would rally round it, from every section, and the asperities of the past, wrapped in the dark clouds of oblivion, be forgotten.”⁶

Mott moved briefly to Baltimore about 1869

where he practiced law. At this time, he donated a portrait of his great-great-grandfather, Daniel Dulany (1722-1797), to the Superior Court of Baltimore. Daniel Dulany had been a member of the Maryland Legislative Assembly, and the Governor’s Council before the American Revolution. Mott had rescued the painting from Woodbury during the war. Unfortunately, the portrait of his great-great-grandmother, Rebecca Ann Tasker (1724-1822), had had the face cut out, presumably by a Federal soldier.⁷

In Alexandria, Mott was a member and officer of the Friendship Fire Company. He drove the team of horses that pulled the fire engines. In March 1871, he resigned his membership in Friendship over a dispute regarding the acquisition of a new steam fire engine. He then assisted in founding of the Columbia Steam Fire Company in March 6, 1871.⁸ In addition to being a charter member of Columbia he also served as an officer of the corporation.

Mott Ball was a Freemason and a member of Alexandria Lodge No 22. This was the same lodge that President George Washington, his cousin, had also been a member of.⁹

In 1872, Mott Ball purchased a controlling interest in the Alexandria newspaper the *Standard and Sentinel* from Joel Miller. Ball had previously served as a member of the board of directors of the *Standard and Sentinel*.¹⁰ Partnering with Miller, the new *Virginia Sentinel* newspaper, with Ball as editor, began publication in March 1872. The *Alexandria Gazette*, a rival newspaper, initially acknowledged the new venture favorably:

“The Standard and Sentinel having been purchased by Messrs. M.D. Ball and Joel Miller, these gentlemen will publish, in its stead, the Virginia

DAILY AND WEEKLY
Virginia Sentinel.
 Largest Circulation in Alexandria and Surrounding Country,
 Making it the
Best Advertising Medium in this Section.
 All the latest news, gotten up in the most attractive style; the Literary Department filled with the choicest selections; the Editorial and Local columns conducted with spice and spirit, and in politics untrammelled, it labors vigorously for the welfare of the State and the development of a liberal sentiment, and encouragement of the arts which build up communities.

TERMS:
 Daily.....\$5, in advance
 Weekly.....\$1, in advance
 (Which includes Postage)

Address
VIRGINIA SENTINEL
 ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Chataigne's Alexandria City Directory 1876-1877

Sentinel. The first Number, a favorable specimen, has appeared.”¹¹

Several months later disaster struck, when in June 1872, a fire consumed the Old Alexandria Theater (aka Liberty Hall). The offices of the *Virginia Sentinel*, located right next door, were heavily damaged. The newspaper survived, however.

Virginia, particularly northern Virginia, was left utterly destitute by the war. In those bleak days, a few former Confederate officers, like James Longstreet, John S. Mosby, and Mottrom Dulany Ball came to see the futility of resistance to change. The old Virginia was gone. Mott understood that the only way for Virginia to return to prosperity was to embrace Reconstruction and change.

After the election of Republican, Ulysses S. Grant, as President of the United States, Mott Ball did the unthinkable and switched political parties. He used the *Virginia Sentinel* to support Republican candidates and their reconstruction goals. The response was as predictable as it was swift. In 1874, while he was out-of-town, Isaac L. Ball,¹² Mott's first cousin and an employee, was beaten with a club in the offices of the *Virginia Sentinel* by a former employee, reporter, Louis E. Payne.¹³

Mott persevered. In 1876, he again strongly supported the candidacy of the Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes, for President. He travelled throughout the region giving speeches in support of Hayes. For this, he was mercilessly vilified by the old regime, in particular, by Harold Snowden, Editor of the rival *Alexandria Gazette*.

“Col. M. Dulany Ball, ...the hero of Peyton's Grove, who surrendered a company of brave, gallant and confiding Virginians, without firing a shot, and then instead of remaining a prisoner until he was exchanged, took the oath of allegiance almost before he was asked, and came to Manassas and hung around there, although advised to go back, until some agreement was patched up by which he could retain his rank...”¹⁴

On September 15, 1876, Mott Ball addressed a Radical Republican meeting in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

“The Radical Meeting Friday night was addressed by Popham, M. Dulany Ball of Alexandria, and our Radical Candidate for Congress in this District – Bristow, A sweet set of Scalawags and office seekers to teach the people honest politics.

We hear that Bristow's speech would have disgraced a school boy.”¹⁵

Several days later, on September 18, 1876, he was a featured speaker at a gathering of Republicans at Fairfax Court House. The event was recorded in a newspaper account the following day:

“Col. M.D. Ball, a native born citizen of our village, who never fails in all his

*speeches to tell of his having fought four long years for the Southern cause, but as he declared yesterday, under a deception practiced by the democratic party upon his youth and inexperience. His appearance was the signal for hisses, whistles and such like. This course upon the part of his former associates was regretted, and the people were finally appealed to by Thomas Moore, Judge James Sangster, and Lt. Gov. Thomas to permit the speaker to proceed without interruption and I am glad to say he did, with an occasional question.”*¹⁶

The Prince of Scalawags

His support of Hayes enraged Snowden. The editor of the *Alexandria Gazette* labeled him “*The Prince of Scalawags.*”^{17,18} In late September 1876, just before giving a speech in Baltimore in support of Hayes, Mott was handed the following letter:

“Baltimore, September 29, 1876.

Colonel Mottrom Dulany Ball:

Dear Comrade –How is it thus that you are on this platform to-night? Are you not degenerating your earlier manhood – your Ball, your Dulany, and Turberville blodd, and others who, when you were born, ordained you to be beyond purchase?

Your gallant record was not that of fool and thief ‘when we wore the gray.’ This night denounce your alliance with this dunghill of corruption and return to the fold of intellect, principle and honor, where no Mosby’s, Butler’s, or even Ditty’s are known. A noble cause which

so bravely espoused in the battle cry of freedom bids you back. Will you not return, and let no brow or wound of the Eleventh blush with disgrace!

*Yours, hastily,
ELEVENTH VA. CAVALRY.”*

In his speech, Mott defended his actions and responded directly to the author of the letter:

*“Why do I stand with this ‘dunghill’ of corruption to-night? I will try and tell my friend. I speak as a representative Southern man because the issue is not what it was in 1861. What it was then I met according to my conscience and faith and political education. But the issue now is restoration of a devastated section and the perpetuity of a great and glorious Union. Because we tried to get out of the Union in 1861, and the fact has been demonstrated that we couldn’t, are we going to set our teeth in grim opposition to all the advantages which the Union offers now? We fought the fight as best we could, but we failed. The attempt of the South to set up a magnificent Government of their own was an abject failure, and now that the defeated have suffered so terribly, there is no need that they should make such futile endeavors to accomplish in the council what they could not in the field.”*¹⁹

On October 30th, at a speech given in Oxford Hall²⁰ in Portsmouth, Virginia, a riot occurred when Ball attempted to address the crowd. He was repeatedly interrupted with insults and called a “*damn liar.*” The meeting quickly turned violent. When a brick was thrown through a window landing

on the stage the meeting abruptly ended. As Ball and other speakers exited to the street, they were attacked by the large crowd that had gathered outside. One speaker was seized and severely beaten. Pistol shots rang out, although no one was hit. In the confusion, Mott Ball and the other speakers were spirited away to safety.²¹ The following day Mott Ball wrote to U.S. Marshal Charles P. Ramsdell²² seeking Federal protection of Republican voters.²³

In a close race, Rutherford B. Hayes was elected President, although the vote in Virginia heavily favored the Democrat, Samuel J. Tilden.

Ball's *Virginia Sentinel* folded in the fall of 1876, just before the election.²⁴ Mott returned to the practice of law in Alexandria full time. President Hayes, however, would not forget the support and determination of Mottrom Dulany Ball.

North to Alaska

Alaska had been purchased from Russia in 1867 for \$7,000,000, or just .02¢ per acre. The acquisition was widely criticized in the press as *Seward's Folly*, a reference to then Secretary of State William Seward. Most Americans at the time had only a vague idea where Alaska was and considered it a vast unexplored wasteland of ice and timber, if they thought of it at all.

From 1867 to 1877, civil administration of the new territory fell to the United States Army. In June 1877, the Army withdrew from Alaska entirely and the administration of the territory was transferred to the United States Treasury Department. Alaska would go through several more administrative changes until a Territorial Government was finally established in 1912 leading to statehood in 1959.

Having been a strong supporter of President

Hayes, Mott Ball was rewarded for his loyalty. In 1878, President Hayes appointed him Collector of Customs at Sitka, Alaska, with a salary of \$2,500, the equivalent of \$50,000 today when adjusted for inflation. The position was among the most prized presidential appointments in the country at the time because in addition to his salary, the collector of customs received a percentage of the customs duties he collected.²⁵ In addition, the Office of Collector of Customs, in Alaska was the chief representative of the United States government, making Mottrom Ball the de facto Governor of the territory.

At the end of July 1878, Mott Ball arrived in Sitka, Alaska with his wife and family to take up his new duties. Accompanying them was Dr. Upton H. Dulany, Mott's uncle, who was to serve as Deputy Collector of Customs. Mott moved his family into the former U.S. Army headquarters building which subsequently served as the United States Customs House in Sitka. Traditionally, Baranoff's Castle,



The U.S. Customs House, formerly the U.S. Army Headquarters, on present day Lincoln Street, Sitka, AK. Mottrom Ball and his family resided here beginning in 1878. U.S. Army Barracks are also visible on the right.

Photo source: Alaska State Library, Historical Collections, Juneau, AK
Photo credit: Eadweard Muybridge, c. 1868.



Castle Hill, Sika, Alaska, south toward Sitka Harbor, c. 1924.
Photo source: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of History
& Archaeology, Anchorage, AK Photo credit: The Photo Shop Studio.

located on *Castle Hill* immediately behind the Customs House, had served as the Russian Governor's residence, but by May 1878 it was reportedly so dilapidated that it was uninhabitable.²⁶ Castle Hill was also the site of the formal exchange of Alaska to the United States from Russia in 1867.

Mott Ball and his family had arrived a little more than one year after the United States Army had withdrawn from Alaska entirely. During that time, Sitka had descended into a state of near anarchy.

Mott replaced Henry C. DeAhna,²⁷ a former Union army officer, who had been appointed Collector of Customs by President Hayes in October 1877. Henry DeAhna was a man of dubious reputation, and consequently was never confirmed by the United States Senate. However, before final action by the Senate, DeAhna travelled to Alaska to assume his duties. The Treasury Department advanced him the enormous sum of \$1,250 "*for collection of revenue*,"²⁸ the equivalent of \$25,000 today.

When he arrived at Sitka, DeAhna was reportedly appalled by the conditions he encountered. He left after just one day on the job and apparently kept the advance.²⁹ In his official report, Special Agent, William G. Morris, of the

United States Treasury Department stated of DeAhna:

*"[He] knows as much about the collection of the revenue in the district of Alaska as Sitting Bull does about the Sermon on the Mount."*³⁰

On the other hand, Morris praised the new Collector, Mottrom Dulany Ball, in the same report:

"This gentleman entered upon the discharge of his duties in July last, and

FLAYING A WOMAN ALIVE.

San Francisco Chronicle.

By the last mail from Alaska we learn the particulars of the flaying and hanging of an Indian woman for the alleged offense of practicing witchcraft, and torturing of a young girl on suspicion that she was an accomplice. These atrocities were committed by the Sitka Indians within three hundred yards of the central authority of the United States in Alaska—namely, the custom house, at Sitka; yet no one was armed with authority to interfere. The same Indians have the white residents of Sitka at their mercy, and may, whenever the inclination seizes them, flay and torture to death every white man, woman and child of a community which the United States is bound by every principle of honor and humanity to protect. We have no government, no law, and no means of enforcing law in Alaska. Crimes against persons and property are perpetrated openly and with impunity, and the only redress open to the sufferer is to act as judge and executioner and kill the offending party. It is a national shame and disgrace that such a condition of lawlessness should be permitted to exist in a territory of the United States, and Congress can not undertake a more creditable work of legislation than providing a government for that outlying Territory of our common country.

San Francisco Chronicle, August 4, 1878, p. 1, c. 7.

is bringing to the task ability and judgment. My correspondence with him has been of a satisfactory character, and in a recent interview with him at this port, on his return to Alaska, I am convinced he fully understands the gravity of the position in which he is placed and the responsibilities of the office he has assumed. ...Aside from the mere routine of collecting the revenue, the collector of customs and his deputies, as matters now stand, are the only semblance of or really the defacto law in the Territory."³¹

Shortly after arriving in Sitka, Mott and Sallie Ball's daughter, Sallie Lewis Ball, was appointed Postmistress of Sitka. At just twelve years of age she was thought to be the youngest United States Government official in the country at the time.³² She served as Postmistress from 1879 until 1881. She was reappointed to the position in 1885 when the Ball family returned to Sitka and served until 1887.

Osprey Incident

The Treasury Department, and consequently, Mott Ball, were woefully unprepared to effectively administer the immense Alaska wilderness. Without a territorial charter, laws, or the presence of the army for protection, effective civil administration was nearly impossible.

While Ball did his best, he was handicapped by these limitations. Treasury Agent William G. Morris, who had initially supported Ball, later complained to Washington about the lack of effectiveness of the "*Copperhead Ball*."³³ Morris' criticism, it would later appear, seems to have been largely self-serving. Despite the adversity, Ball was

very involved in the local governance of the Alaska territory and did achieve a measure of success. In addition to his duties as Collector of Customs, he served variously, and often concurrently, as Postmaster, Fire Chief, Militia Commander, and Chief Magistrate, or Mayor, of Sitka. Because of this, he was very popular with the people.

When Mott Ball and his family arrived at Sitka in July 1878 there was considerable unrest among the indigenous Tlingit (pronounced CLING'-kit) Indians. The Tlingit, which means, *People of the Tides*, were divided into two clans, or moieties, the Raven and the Eagle.

Tlingit culture, particularly in the area of native justice, was misunderstood by the whites. The Tlingit used a system of compensation or retaliation, to peacefully settle disputes between individuals and clans. If a Tlingit were killed or injured, whether by accident or intentionally, his relatives would demand suitable compensation. This compensation was typically in the form of blankets, the chief currency of the Pacific Northwest. If such compensation were not paid, the injured family would retaliate taking an *eye for an eye*.

To the Americans, this custom resembled simple blackmail. Worse, this lack of understanding and respect by whites was the basis of most confrontations with the Tlingit, occasionally with tragic consequences.

The departure of U.S. Army signaled, to the Tlingit, that the United States had abandoned Alaska. Within a week the Tlingits tore down a portion of the old Russian-built stockade that had separated the native village from the white settlers. The stockade had long been a focal point of anger and resentment by the Tlingits. U.S. Government storehouses and buildings were broken into and

looted. A period of six months of civil unrest followed.

In March 1877, the sealing schooner *San Diego* left San Francisco on a hunting and fishing expedition to the Bearing Sea. Ominously, on departure the *San Diego* “fouled” against a ferry boat, damaging both vessels. The *San Diego* continued on however and arrived in Sitka in May 1877. After considerable time, six Tlingit men were induced to join the expedition as deck hands for which they were to be paid \$13 per month. On July 12, 1878, the *San Diego* was blown ashore during heavy weather. The crew abandoned the vessel. Their “canoe” capsized.³⁴ The captain and several men were drowned, including five of six Tlingits. The survivors managed to beach the *San Diego* and make repairs. On August 20, 1878, the crippled ship limped back into San Francisco Bay.³⁵

News of the disaster did not reach Sitka until the lone Tlingit survivor returned to Sitka in January 1879 and related the story. Their chief, *Kaht-leahn*, along with a delegation of Tlingits, went to meet with Collector of Customs Mottrom Ball. Kahtleahn angrily demanded one thousand blankets for the life of each man as compensation. Mott tried to reason with Kahtleahn. He explained that

this was not the way such matters were dealt with in the United States, and further that the United States government was not responsible for their deaths. Ball did agree, however, to telegraph the Collector of Customs in San Francisco and attempt to secure from the company which owned the *San Diego* the back wages and property of the men. Kahtleahn was not satisfied with this and Colonel Ball ordered him out of his office. As Kahtleahn left Sitka with his delegation he was overheard expressing threats that if he were not paid one thousand blankets, then five white men would die in retaliation.³⁶

In January 1879, a white settler, Thomas J. Brown, was murdered in nearby Hot Springs in retaliation for an earlier unrelated incident. The Indian perpetrators, Kotkowot and Okhkhonot, were caught, arrested, and confined in the guard house in Sitka to await trial in Portland, Oregon.

Shortly afterward, Colonel Ball received word that no compensation would be paid by the owners of the *San Diego* for the deaths of the five Tlingits. Colonel Ball subsequently informed Kahtleahn of this. Kahtleahn’s reaction is not known. However, the facts to him must have been clear, five members of his clan were killed without compensation, or justice of any kind. One white man had been killed



Castle Hill, Sitka, Alaska, c. 1880. U.S. Customs House (left), Baranoff's Castle, (center left), former U.S. Army Barracks (right), Parade Ground (foreground).

Photo source: Fred Wildon Fickett papers, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage.



Castle Hill, Sitka, Alaska c. 2013. Baranoff's Castle and the U.S. Customs House were destroyed by separate fire's in 1894 and 1936. The U.S. Army Barracks was demolished before 1937.

Photo source: Google Earth

and two of his clan were in jail awaiting trial. He was, no doubt, a very angry man.

On February 6, 1879, Kahtleahn, hosted a *potlatch*, or feast. These traditional events ordinarily occurred in the fall. Many Tlingit men became drunk on *hoot-che-noo*, a Tlingit word for a strong alcoholic drink made with molasses. Hoot-che-noo is the origin of the modern slang word, *hootch*, for hard liquor.

A contemporary recipe for hoot-che-noo is as follows:

"Take a bits worth of beans, rice, potatoes, a few raisins, two bits worth of hops or yeast and a handful of flour; pour a little water upon these ingredients, stir well, boil for an hour, then leave it till it ferments. When this is satisfactory, then put the quantity of molasses to be used – say a gallon – with double the quantity of lukewarm water, and the whole is stirred till it is thoroughly mixed, and left to ferment. When this is over it is called the mash."

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The drunken feast and behavior of the Tlingit's frightened the white residents. They barricaded themselves in their homes, fearing an impending massacre.

After witnessing 15 to 20 armed, drunken, Tlingits approaching the town, Sitka merchant, W.J. Burwell recalled:

"I started immediately for Colonel Ball's, having stopped at our store for my six-shooter. On my arrival at the custom-house, where Colonel Ball resided, occupying the upper story, I found the house in complete darkness,

*and the door barricaded on the inside. After frequent knockings and failures of response I started for the priest's, knowing that a number of families had taken refuge there."*³⁸

Enroute to the St. Michael's Russian Orthodox Church, Burwell encountered several other citizens who had armed themselves against any attack. At the church Burwell briefed Father Nicholas Metropolsky on the situation.

*"I told him the state of affairs, and that if there was any trouble down town, would inform him... I requested that he go down stairs and inform the families and quiet the agitation, as the women were crying and the children screaming, expecting instant annihilation. There were, to the best of my knowledge, twenty-five families quartered there at the time."*³⁹

A short time later Burwell returned to the Customs House.

*"...we came down to Colonel Ball's...after calling and giving my name, succeeded in getting in. [I] found at the head of the stairs, a clothes-press, so arranged that in an instant, it could be thrown so as to blockade the stairs, and prevent ingress. [I] found Colonel Ball, and with him Dr. Dulany, in considerable alarm, with their rifles and revolvers, together with ammunition laid out on the table."*⁴⁰

Mott Ball called a citizen meeting the next morning in the Customs House. A militia was formed, arms were issued, and a nightly guard posted. Mott appealed to his superiors for assistance. A petition was also drafted appealing to

the British government for help and circulated amongst the citizens for signatures. Collector Ball agreed that danger was imminent, but he declined to sign because of his official position. The petition was to be delivered to any British warship at Esquimalt Harbor, near Victoria. A San Francisco newspaper printed an excerpt from the document; its complete wording remains a mystery: *'We have made application to our Government for protection and aid, and thus far it has taken no notice of our supplication and plea to the U.S. Navy to send a vessel for their protection.'*

In March 1879, in response to the appeal, the British sent the warship *H.M.S. Osprey* from Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The U.S. Revenue Cutter *U.S.S. Wolcott* and *U.S.S. Alaska* arrived soon after. However, the perceived indignity of having the British come to the aid of Americans in Alaska caused some embarrassment for the Garfield administration. It was played up in the press as the *Osprey Incident*. In response, administrative authority was quickly turned over to the United States Navy. In June 1879, the *U.S.S. Jamestown* arrived in Sitka. Commander Lester A. Beardslee, the Captain of the *Jamestown*, exercised legal authority over Alaska. Mott Ball continued to serve as Collector of Customs, but without administrative authority of the territory.

In January 1880, Mott Ball was selected by the citizens to travel to Washington to advocate for civil representation.

*"The Collector of Customs, M.D. Ball, is now in this city and has consumed considerable time in support and advocacy of this Bill, which, he says, is demanded by 8,000 civilized people in the Territory, whose treatment is 'a blot upon the Nation's honor.'"*⁴¹

Mott took with him some *hoot-che-noo* for members of Congress to taste. The members decided *"there might be a worse beverage, but they should not like to try it."*⁴² In February, Col. Ball, along with Sheldon Jackson, and others, testified before a Senate sub-committee on territories.⁴³ Nothing came of these hearings, however, and Mott returned to Alaska.

In July 1881, President James A. Garfield failed to reappoint Mottrom Ball as collector of customs in spite of a petition in support of Mott Ball signed by nearly all of the citizens of Sitka. President Garfield appointed Treasury Agent William G. Morris to replace Ball.⁴⁴

Allegedly, Garfield's decision was because Mott was a former Democrat, and former Confederate officer. While this certainly may have been true a more likely explanation was the furor of the *Osprey Incident* and manipulation by William G. Morris.

First Steps Toward Statehood

Based on his experiences in the lawless days following the departure of the U.S. Army, Mottrom Ball understood the need for a more permanent form of government. A strong case can be made that the movement for permanent civil government in Alaska, and ultimately statehood, began with him.

After being replaced as Collector of Customs, Mott began to work in earnest for the establishment of a civil government in Alaska. He was the principle organizer, and one of fifteen Delegates, to the Alaska Territorial Convention held at Harrisburg (now Juneau), Alaska on August 16, 1881. The purpose of this convention was to adopt resolutions to be sent to the President of the United States and Congress calling for the establishment of a territorial government in Alaska. The convention also established a date, September 5, 1881, for the

election of a representative from Alaska to Congress in Washington, D.C.⁴⁵

*"In the summer of 1881 a convention was held at Juneau, to take steps to secure a government for Alaska. This convention selected Mottrom D. Ball as a delegate to congress to secure legislation. He went to Washington, and, though not admitted to a seat in congress, his presence did much to attract attention to the needs of that section of the country. For several sessions various Alaska bills were before congress, and June 17, 1884, a bill Introduced the year before by Senator Benjamin Harrison became a law. This act provided for a governor, district judge, clerk of the court, marshal, collector of customs, and four commissioners, since increased to five, one to reside in each of the chief towns, and all to be appointed by the president. Sitka was made the capital and place of official residence, also a land office. The laws of Oregon were made applicable to the district, and an Oregon Judge was appointed to administer them. The law prohibited the cutting and export of timber, the killing of fur seals, except by the company with which the government had a contract, and the importation, manufacture or sale of liquor."*⁴⁶

As had already been demonstrated, Mott Ball was very popular with the people of Alaska. He was overwhelmingly elected as Alaska's first representative to Congress, receiving 236 out of 294 votes cast.⁴⁷ In September 1881, he travelled to Washington to take his seat in the United States House of Representatives.

The *New York Times* picked up the story:

*"The gentleman who has for two or three years urged Congress to provide for Alaska is M.D. Ball, a Virginian, who was not long ago Collector of Customs in Alaska. It was understood that the Alaska Bill just mentioned had been inspired by him."*⁴⁸

The *Sunday Oregonian* illustrated the problem Alaskans then faced:

*"Alaska suffers because she has no one to speak for her. The delegates she sends, without authority, to the House of Representative are denied seats. Turned out of Congress, an exile in his own country, the best the delegate can do is to employ among members the arts of the lobbyist, in vague hope of creating a sentiment in favor of much needed legislation for his district."*⁴⁹

However, the Committee on Elections in the House refused to recognize Ball's election and he was not seated. However, the House did vote to pay his expenses for travelling to Washington. Now out of a job, Ball returned to the practice of law.



Sidewheel Steamer U.S.S. Ancon at anchor, Sitka, Alaska, c. 1887.

M.D Ball died on onboard, September 13, 1887.

Photo source: Alaska Historical Society, Juneau, AK

Photo credit: William H. Partridge

Mott Ball stayed on in Washington and continued to push for the establishment of a civil government in Alaska. He lectured on the subject of *“Alaska, an Account of its People”* at Willard Hall, adjacent to the Willard Hotel, in Washington, D.C. The admission price of .50¢ went to the benefit of Sitka schools.⁵⁰ He contributed to a pamphlet, *All About Alaska*, published by the Pacific Coast Steamship Company.⁵¹

Although he was denied a seat in the House of Representatives, ultimately Mottrom Dulany Ball is credited with getting Congress to finally focus attention on Alaska. He corresponded with members of Congress, including Senator Benjamin Harrison, a future President of the United States. He warned Congress *“that Alaska would not advance in civilization or population until they passed laws to protect the rights of persons and property.”*⁵²

On December 6, 1881, the new President, Chester A. Arthur, acknowledged the needs of Alaska in his first State of the Union Address:

*“I regret to state that the people of Alaska have reason to complain that they are as yet unprovided with any form of government by which life or property can be protected. While the extent of its population does not justify the application of the costly machinery of Territorial administration, there is immediate necessity for constituting such a form of government as will promote the education of the people and secure the administration of justice.”*⁵³

Subsequently, for several sessions numerous Alaska bills were presented to Congress.

In February 1882, Senator LaFayette Grover, and Congressman Melvin C. George, both from

Oregon, introduced legislation to provide for civil government in Alaska. The Grover-George bill, however, did not provide for a separate judicial branch. Senator Matthew C. Butler, of South Carolina, with the assistance of Mottrom Ball, crafted substitute bill for *“The Organization of the Territory of Alaska,”* which was introduced on April 21, 1882.⁵⁴ Like Mott, Matthew Butler was a former Confederate cavalry officer. Butler’s bill, was reported out of the Committee on Territories, but failed before the full Senate.⁵⁵ After this, Ball returned home to Sitka.

The following year, 1883, Senator Benjamin Harrison, of Indiana, introduced a bill which eventually would be known the *Alaska Organic Act of 1884*, or the simply the *Organic Act*. Harrison’s bill was remarkable for its simplicity. The act provided for the creation of the District of Alaska, with a governor, district judge, clerk of the court, U.S. marshal, U.S. attorney, collector of customs, and four commissioners, all to be appointed by the President. The laws of Oregon were made applicable to the district, and an Oregon judge was appointed to administer them. The act also established a land office and provided for the education of children. The act prohibited the cutting and export of timber, and the killing of fur seals, except by companies with which the government had a contract, and the importation, manufacture and sale of liquor, notably *hoot-che-noo*. Sitka was made the temporary capital.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the Organic Act made no provision for representative government.

In 1884, Mott supported Grover Cleveland for President. After the election, in January 1885, Mott participated in Cleveland’s inaugural parade, leading *“a detachment of one hundred mounted citizens.”*⁵⁷ In April 1885, he met with President Cleveland in the White House.⁵⁸ Mott’s timing was perfect. Less than a year after the passage of the Organic Act and the establishment of the various offices in Alaska,

President Cleveland was compelled to fire most of them due to incompetence. In July, President Cleveland appointed Mott Ball U.S. Attorney for the District of Alaska.⁵⁹ Mott and his family returned to Sitka. In November that same year Mott founded the *Alaskan*, a Sitka newspaper, and served as its first editor.

In February 1886, Mott Ball, in the *Alaskan* newspaper, asserted his claim to a small parcel of land *“between the shore of Sitka Bay and Indian River, extending back from the mouth of said river so far as to include ten acres of land.”*⁶⁰ Today, this land comprises a portion of Sitka National Park, also known locally as Indian River Park.

Although he was the U.S. Attorney, Mott continued a private law practice. In August 1887, he became a founding member of the Alaska Bar Association.⁶¹

Sometime during the summer of 1887 Mott Ball fell ill with a lung ailment. He continued to work however when he could. In early September, as the district court convened for the month, he sought out the judge. Struggling for breathe, he confided, *“Be as patient as you can, for with me the sands of life are nearly run through the dial and I shall soon be gathered to the land of my fathers.”*⁶² Several days later, in an attempt to recover his health, he arranged for the family to travel south to San Francisco, California. The Ball family left Sitka on September 10, 1887. Mottrom Dulany Ball died onboard the side-wheel steamer *S.S. Ancon* on route to California on September 13, 1887. He was just 52 years old. His wife, Sallie, accompanied his remains back to Virginia. He was buried in the Falls Church Episcopal Cemetery, in Falls Church, Virginia, on September 28, 1887, with Masonic honors.⁶³

Following his death his friends in the Alaska

Bar Association presented the family with the following resolutions of respect:

“Whereas, Almighty God has taken away from us our beloved friend and associate, Hon. M.D. Ball, late Unites States District Attorney for the Territory of Alaska; and

Whereas, His untimely death, before the shadows of life’s afternoon had gathered around his pathway, has made a vacancy in the little handful of civil officials, and attorneys, who are endeavoring to up hold and enforce the laws in this isolated portion of our national domain; it is therefore,

Resolved, That in his death the Civil Government has lost a faithful, able and conscientious official; the Alaska bar a vigilant, industrious, and eloquent advocate; the Territory an upright, courteous, high minded citizen.

That Col. Ball’s manly and genial social qualities endeared him to our hearts, and that we feel a sense of deep personal loss at his being called away to return no more forever.

That to his wife and children at this time of most bitter bereavement, we extend our tenderest sympathy, and commend them to the widow’s God and the Father of the fatherless for that solace which passeth all understanding.

Resolved, That an engrossed copy of these resolutions be presented to the family of the deceased.”^{64, 65}

Mottrom Ball's Legacy

Mottrom Dulany Ball's enduring legacy is his inclusion among the earliest and strongest advocates for the establishment of civil government in Alaska. He was the first person elected to public office from Alaska. Therefore, he should rightly be considered a founding father of that state. His significant contributions to Alaska have likely been overlooked as they occurred so early in the development of the state and because he died so young.

The Ball Islets, located in Sitka Sound, southwest of Sitka National Park, are named for him.⁶⁶

(Endnotes)

- ¹ Ball, William S., *Reminiscences of an Old Rebel*, © 1929, Privately published, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA.
- ² Report of O.E. Hine to S.P. Lee, Dec. 1, 1866; "Virginia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.3.1/TH-267-11600-115655-45?cc=1596147> : accessed 20 February 2015), Fairfax Courthouse (Fairfax County, assistant subassistant commissioner) > Roll 75, Letters sent, Aug 1865-Oct 1868 > image 74 of 146; citing NARA microfilm publication M1913 (College Park, Maryland: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).
- ³ "Virginia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.3.1/TH-267-11600-115655-45?cc=1596147> : accessed 20 February 2015), Fairfax Courthouse (Fairfax County, assistant subassistant commissioner) > Roll 75, Letters sent, Aug 1865-Oct 1868 > image 74 of 146; citing NARA microfilm publication M1913 (College Park, Maryland: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).
- ⁴ "Virginia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:MM9.3.1/TH-267-11600-115655-45?cc=1596147> : accessed 20 February 2015), Fairfax Courthouse (Fairfax County, assistant subassistant commissioner) > Roll 75, Letters sent, Aug 1865-Oct 1868 > image 74 of 146; citing NARA microfilm publication M1913 (College Park, Maryland: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).
- ⁵ *Evening Star*, September 21, 1867, p. 3, c. 4.
- ⁶ *Evening Star*, October 11, 1867, p. 3, c. 5.
- ⁷ *Alexandria Gazette*, April 13, 1870, p. 3, c. 4.
- ⁸ *Alexandria Gazette*, March 7, 1871, p. 3, c. 2.
- ⁹ Proceedings of an Annual Communication of the M.W. Grand Lodge of Virginia..., © 1877, James E. Goode, Printer, Richmond, VA.
- ¹⁰ *Alexandria Gazette*, February 18, 1871, p. 4, c. 1.
- ¹¹ *Alexandria Gazette*, April 2, 1872, p. 2, c. 1.
- ¹² Isaac Lauk Ball (1853-1906) was the son of William Waring Ball and Dorothy McCabe. He married Frances Catherine Hedgeman in 1881. He is bur. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, McLean, VA.
- ¹³ *Richmond Whig*, June 12, 1874, p. 2, c. 4.
- ¹⁴ *Alexandria Gazette*, August 1, 1876, p. 2, c. 1.
- ¹⁵ *Fredericksburg News*, September 18, 1876, p. 3, c. 5.
- ¹⁶ *Alexandria Gazette*, September 20, 1876, p. 2, c. 3.
- ¹⁷ *Alexandria Gazette*, August 1, 1876, p. 2, c. 1.
- ¹⁸ The term, Scalawag, was used as a slur against southern whites who supported Reconstruction and the Republican Party after the Civil War.
- ¹⁹ *Alexandria Gazette*, September 30, 1876, p. 2, c. 4.
- ²⁰ Oxford Hall was located at 306 High Street, Portsmouth, VA.
- ²¹ *Evening Star*, November 1, 1876, p. 1, c. 4.
- ²² Charles Pitt Ramsdell (1825-1882) was born in Hamilton, Oneida Co., NY. He was the son of Erastus W. & Mahettabel Cordelia? Ramsdell. He was a schoolteacher in Rockland, Venango Co., PA in 1845. He was Secretary of the Laona Temperance Soc. in Chautauqua Co., NY in 1847. He married Mary Jane Davis in 1849. In 1855 he started the *American Citizen* newspaper in Venango Co., PA. He was a founding member of the National Republican Party, from Venango Co., PA, in 1856. He was elected, as a Republican, to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from Venango Co. in 1858. In 1859, he sold his newspaper to his brother, Floyd C. Ramsdell. In 1860, he was appointed assistant clerk of the Pennsylvania State Senate. In 1864 he was living in Oil City, PA. He was a director of the Hopewell Oil Company of Phila., PA, that same year. In 1865, he established the Oil City Monitor newspaper and the Monitor Oil Company, of which he served as president. In 1869 he moved to Surry Co., VA. He was a delegate to the Republican State Convention from Surry in 1872. Later that year he was a member of the Electoral College from Virginia, and an Elector for President Ulysses S. Grant. In 1873, he was nominated at the Virginia Republican Convention held at Lynchburg for Lt. Governor of Virginia along with Robert W. Hughes for Governor. The Republicans lost to the Democratic candidates. In 1874, he was appointed U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Virginia by President U.S. Grant. In 1876, he was Chairman of the Republican Party of Virginia. He was gored by an enraged Alderney bull on his plantation in 1882 and died from his wounds. He is buried in Centralia Cem., Chesterfield Co., VA. His brother Hiram J. Ramsdell was a correspondent for the *New York Tribune* during the Civil War.
- ²³ *Petersburg Index and Appeal*, November 1, 1876, p. 2, c. 2.
- ²⁴ *Alexandria Gazette*, November 26, 1876, p. 2, c. 1.
- ²⁵ Official Register of the United States, Officers and Employees...etc., © 1879, U.S. Govt. Prtg. Ofc., Wash., D.C.
- ²⁶ *Daily Sitka Sentinel*, February 19, 1887, p. 3, c. 1 & 2.
- ²⁷ Henry Charles DeAhna (1823-1891) b. Bravaria; In an 1864 telegram, former Major General Henry W. Halleck attempted to warn U.S. Senator Milton S. Latham about De Ahna, "A man calling himself Henry C. De Ahna, and who was a so-called colonel under Fremont, by whom he was court-martialed and dismissed the service, has succeeded, as I have learned, by worming himself into the confidence of Secretary Seward and Francis Blair, to get himself nominated to the Senate for a brigadier general, or some other office. I would rather trust my dinner to a hungry dog, than give such a responsible position to a foreign adventurer of this stamp. I have not the least doubt he would take pay on either side, and fight on none." See Reports of Committees of the U.S. House of Representatives 1863-1864, © 1864, U.S. Govt. Prtg. Ofc., Wash., D.C. Another source describes de Ahna as "a consummate scoundrel and a dangerous man to be at large." See O'Neill, Robert F., *Chasing Jeb Stuart and John Mosby*, © 2012, McFarland & Co., Inc., Jefferson, NC.
- ²⁸ Report of Major William G. Morris, Special Agent, United States Treasury Department, to November 25, 1878. Seal and Salmon Fisheries and General Resources of Alaska, © 1898, U.S. Govt. Prtg. Ofc., Wash., DC.
- ²⁹ Williams, Hon. Gerald O., *When the Navy Ruled Alaska*, Alaska Historical Society, Juneau, AK.
- ³⁰ Ibid 29.
- ³¹ Ibid 29.
- ³² *Oswego Morning Herald*, July 26, 1879, p. , c. 5.
- ³³ Ibid 29.
- ³⁴ *San Francisco Bulletin*, August 21, 1878, p. 3, c. 3.
- ³⁵ Ibid 34.
- ³⁶ *New York Herald*, May 3, 1879, p. 3, c. 3.
- ³⁷ Ibid 36.
- ³⁸ The Executive Documents of the United States Senate, 2nd Session, 46th

Fairfax Court House News of 150 Years Ago

FAIRFAX COUNTY COURT.—The County Court of Fairfax commenced its August term, on Monday, at Fairfax Court House—the first time for four years. There were a large number of persons present. J. B. Troth was elected Presiding Magistrate, vice T. B. Brown resigned. A number of persons were released from taxation; and overseers of roads were appointed and hands allotted. The Grand Jury only found one indictment. The Court appointed a committee to receive proposals for the repair of the Court House and Clerk's offices. The Court remained in session until Thursday morning, and transacted a considerable amount of business, principally relating to administrations, roads, taxes, unlawful detainers, &c.

We are glad to learn that the inhabitants of the village of Fairfax Court House, and neighborhood, evince a spirit of determination to restore them to their former prosperity, as far as they are able.

Alexandria Gazette, August 26, 1865, p. 3, c. 1.

A negro man was shot and severely wounded near Cubb Run, in the upper end of Fairfax county, on Saturday last. Dr. Gunnell, of Fairfax Court House, who dressed the wound, was told that two men, clad in Confederate uniform, had inflicted the injury.

Alexandria Gazette, August 30, 1865, p. 3, c. 1

LETTER FROM FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE.

[Correspondence of the *Alexandria Gazette*.]

FAIRFAX C. H., Sept. 20.—The *Alexandria Gazette* is an old friend with our people, and they have learned to know old friends are best and to cherish them accordingly. Its receipt is now looked for with interest, and its contents, varied and agreeable, always perused with satisfaction. You will have all your old subscribers and many new ones.

The changes around this locality are numerous—for many homes are desolate, many farms laid waste—and many people are scattered abroad. But we are hopeful, and trust that as the olive branch of peace once more waves in our midst, justice will be granted to all, and happiness and prosperity follow the restoration of the State and the Union.

Monday was Court Day, and, as in former days, the citizens assembled, on business, or to see and converse with their acquaintances.—The Clerk and his Deputy were polite and efficient, in the Court room and in the Clerk's office, and expedited business to the satisfaction of all. Twenty-six deeds were admitted to record; one hundred and three applications for remission of taxes were granted—eighteen administrations on estates granted, and four wills ordered for record.

The candidates for Congress, each thinking his "own crow the whitest," addressed the people. Whether the people were edified, is another matter. But everything passed off pleasantly. You have had an account of the speaking.

The walls of the old Court House stand, "a monument of the past," but the building will be repaired and fitted up for its proper use. I will send you a letter occasionally, giving you the County news.

H.

Alexandria Gazette, September 21, 1865, p. 1, c. 1.

The provost marshal offices at Alexandria, Fairfax Court House and Fort Albany, have been abolished, and the records of the same transferred to Col. Ingraham's office, in Washington.

Alexandria Gazette, October 2, 1865, p. 3, c. 2.

A GRAND TOURNAMENT AT FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE VA.—A TOURNAMENT will be held at Fairfax Court House, on **TUESDAY, Sept. 5, 1865.** The Coronation Ball will be given at the Union Hotel in the evening. Addresses will be delivered by Col. W. D. Massey, P. M., of Alexandria, and Thos. J. Murray, of Fairfax. Knights will report to Captain Geo. A. Armes, at Fairfax Court House.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.—Amos Fox, W. Broughton, A. Hoag, Capt. Geo. A. Armes, D. M. Lee, R. R. Fowle.

COMMITTEE TO RECEIVE KNIGHTS.—Dr. Robt. F. Simpson, G. S. Miner, J. B. Bowman, G. W. Lee, C. W. Turly.

MARSHALS.—Col. James T. Close, W. H. Dulany, Col. Daniel F. Dulany, Albert Coxen, Amos Fox.

HERALDS.—B. McNeil, Dallas Powell, A. Alexander, Col. D. Windsor.

COMMITTEE OF INVITATION.—W. T. Powell, R. H. Cockerille, Dr. W. P. Gunnell.

CAPT. G. A. ARMES,

Fairfax Court House.

A Fine Band of Music will be in attendance. au 31-td

Alexandria Gazette, September 1, 1865, p. 4, c. 3.

LETTER FROM FAIRFAX COUNTY.

[Correspondence of the Alexandria Gazette.]

FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE, Sept. 27, 1865.—You have already announced the return home of Mr. John H. Barnes, who has been so long a prisoner of war—since 1863. He had been tried by a court martial, and sentenced originally to be hung. This sentence was subsequently commuted to imprisonment for ten years in the Albany prison, where he has been confined at hard labor. The representations of kind friends, who made a full statement of the case, and their zealous efforts, induced the President of the U. S., kindly to grant him a full pardon, on the 2d inst. Fancy may paint, but the heart alone can feel, the scene that ensued upon the re-union of husband, wife, children and friends. Now that peace once more prevails, all could rejoice at the return to his family of Jack Barnes, and the inhabitants of our little village were glad to see the “dead alive,” and one more family circle made happy. Let me not dwell upon the tender interview of the father with that bright eyed little girl—not unappropriately called from the sad times passed through—“war”—for every heart can beat in sympathy with the throbs of the beloved ones. **H.**

Alexandria Gazette, September 27, 1865, p. 1, c. 1.

FREEDMEN'S SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA.

The Freedmen's Bureau is now engaged in organizing schools in Fairfax county, Va., for the use of the freed people. One is already in operation at Fairfax Court House, with fifty scholars, under charge of Lieut. Smith, of the Veteran Reserve Corps. Schools will also be started at Drainesville and points in that section of the State.

Evening Star, September 29, 1865, p. 2, c. 4.

GUNNING IN FAIRFAX.—The Alexandria provost judge has given notice that all persons, white or colored, caught hunting, fishing or fowling on any lands in the county of Fairfax, and lying within five miles of navigable waters, without a license or permit from the owners of said lands, are liable to be arrested and forfeit their towing pieces or fishing apparatus, boats, or other means of conveyance to any officer making said arrest, and for the first offence a fine of three dollars, for the second six dollars, and for the third nine dollars, and all costs, with imprisonment until the same is paid. Penalties double if committed in the night or on Sundays.

Evening Star, November 1, 1865, p. 3, c. 1.

The Washington Star says:—“The Freedmen's Bureau has received from the Superintendent in charge of the 5th district of Virginia, his report for the month of October, from which it appears that all of the freedmen and refugees in Fairfax county, are self-supporting. There are no camps in the county where freedmen are congregated. There are one hundred and thirty-five colored people at Fairfax Court House, thirty at Fairfax Station, and about the same number at Lewinsville. Employment has been obtained for the freedmen, and there is not now one in the county who is dependent on the Bureau for support. The deportment of the colored people in the county has been very satisfactory, they appearing to appreciate the blessings of freedom, and no cases are reported where the former owners of slaves have attempted to oppress the freedmen in any way.

Alexandria Gazette, November 3, 1865, p. 3, c. 1.

"Preserving the Past. Protecting the Future."

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