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of other buildings, a tavern might be the only structure available to have meetings, hold public auctions and conduct other such business. None is known to have been located in Union Mills, a few miles from present day Clifton, Virginia until the advent of William D. Willcoxon's tavern establishment. He apparently went into business in 1831 as he is recorded paying the required Fairfax County Tavern (Ordinary) license fee of \$150.00 on May 16, 1831 with his father, Rezin Willcoxon as co-signer. Fairfax County court records reflect he continued to pay his tavern license throughout the 1830's. Surviving records also indicate that depositions for court cases in the neighborhood were routinely taken at his tavern.¹

William D. Willcoxon was the oldest son of Rezin Willcoxon and Elizabeth DeNeale Willcoxon.² He grew up on the Willcoxon farm, now known as Blenheim, in the City of Fairfax. This former Willcoxon home is famous for the graffiti left on its walls by Union soldiers when it was commandeered as a Civil War hospital. It is now the site of the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim. It is

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

by Jenée L. Lindner, M.A.



Mary Dye Willcoxon of Wolf Run Shoals, Fairfax County, Virginia, likely befriended many of the young Union soldiers encamped around her home during the Civil War, but none more so than Lt. Carmi Marsh of the 13th Vermont Infantry. Mary was the widow of Fairfax County tavern keeper and miller, William DeNeale Willcoxon and daughter-in-law of Rezin and Betsey Willcoxon of Fairfax Court House.

A landmark favored as a neighborhood gathering point was an ordinary or tavern. Taverns of that time were more than just drinking places. In the absence



Mary Dye Willcoxon and William DeNeale Willcoxon, Jr., c. 1865.
Photo courtesy: Clifton Historical Society.

From the Desk of the President-

Fairfax, Virginia - January 2016

Happy New Year from the Board of Historic Fairfax City, Inc. We look forward to 2016 and our upcoming events and activities.

Currently, Design Minds, a Fairfax City museum exhibit design company, is developing initial concepts for improved use of exhibit space at Blenheim and for a redesign of the Fairfax Room at the museum. HFCI funded this project for \$20,000. Your membership fees helped make this possible. Thank you! Sometime in the next two to three years the museum will move forward to implement a new design for the Fairfax Room. Funds will need to be acquired for this large project.

During the last several months, HFCI has been approached by the Virginia Historical Society to initiate a lecture series here in collaboration with George Mason University, the Fairfax County Historical Society, Friends of Historic Fairfax Courthouse, and others. This project is in the initial planning stage and could offer an expanded lecture program if plans are approved by this collaborative group. Our annual meeting lecture could initiate this new, broader series.

When Spring arrives, do visit the Kitty Poser Garden in Old Town Square as it takes shape. Hildie Carney and others have worked extensively with the landscape architect to design and implement a plan that maintains the integrity of concepts from Kitty Poser's original design.

I hope to see you around town at our historic sites.

Sandra Wilbur, President
Historic Fairfax City, Inc.

At the Fairfax Museum and Historic Blenheim...

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center

New Exhibit at Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center:

Vietnam Combat Art - A special exhibition through January 25th. The reproductions of studio art include sketches, paintings, and illustrations done by teams of artists employed by the U.S. Army to record the soldier experience in Vietnam. The traveling exhibition was organized by the U.S. Army Center of Military History in partnership with the County of Roanoke, the City of Roanoke, Salem, the Town of Vinton and the Stonewall Jackson Chapter of the Association of the U.S. Army.

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 February 14 2 p.m.
"Vietnam Combat Art."

Discussion of the U.S. Army's collection of professional works of art depicting the American soldier experience in the Vietnam War with Sarah Forgey, Curator of the U.S. Army Art Collection for at the Center for Military History. Gallery tour will follow talk.

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, January 23, 2 p.m.

“When Did the Civil War End?: The Voyage of the CSS Shenandoah.”

Local historian and author William Connery will tell the story of a Confederate steamer and its attack on a U.S. whaling ship near the Aleutian Islands in the summer of 1865 in a program titled: Book sale and signing of Civil War books will follow.

Saturday, February 27, 2 p.m.

“Behind the Scenes’ with Elizabeth Keckley”—

Lillian Garland will portray Elizabeth Keckley a former slave turned professional dressmaker and confidante of Mary Todd Lincoln.

Saturday, March 19, 2 p.m.

“The Peace That Almost Was”

Book talk and signing with author Mark Tooley on the 1861 Washington Peace Conference, the bipartisan, last-ditch effort to prevent the Civil War.

Saturday, April 30 - Historic Blenheim

FAIRFAX CIVIL WAR DAY – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Period music, living history encampments and demonstrations, military firings and drills with Company D, 17th Virginia Infantry, “Fairfax Rifles,” C.S.A., tours of the Historic Blenheim House and more. \$5/adults and \$3/children 12 and under. Free shuttle from free parking at Fairfax High School.

Saturday, May 21, 2 p.m. - TBA

Saturday, June 25, 2 p.m.

“For Brotherhood and Duty: The Civil War History of the West Point Class of 1862”

Book talk and signing with author Brian R. McEnany who follows the cadets from their initiation, through

coursework, and on to the battlefield, focusing on twelve Union and four Confederate soldiers.

Saturday, July 23, 2 p.m.

“The Civil War and the Fairfax Courthouse,”

A talk by Katrina Krempasky of the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Division.

2016 New Exhibition

OPENING - February 13, 2016

“Civil War Journey: the Maps and Sketches of Private Robert Sneden,”

Eyewitness accounts and images from Union soldier Robert Knox Sneden (1832–1918), showcasing forty-five of his watercolor maps and drawings from the Virginia Historical Society’s collection. Through April 30.

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:

Special Event – Chocolate Lovers Festival – Saturday and Sunday, February 6th and 7th

Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center: Open 9 am. – 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

Historic Blenheim: Open 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Saturday only.

Ratcliffe-Allison House, 10386 Main Street: Open 12 – 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday

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.

Apple Federal Credit Union
 The Honorable Carolyn Pitches
 Peregrine Computer Consultants Corp.
 Michael Brown

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...

Richard Ratcliffe's Racefield. The history and location of Richard Ratcliffe's thoroughbred horse racing track, lost to history for more than 100 years, rediscovered. Thoroughbred horse racing at Fairfax Court House in the 19th c.

located at 3610 Old Lee Highway in Fairfax City, Virginia and open to the public.³

In the early 1840's, William Willcoxon changed professions from a tavern keeper to a miller. He bought the old grist and saw mill and adjoining 7-acre lot, once called Dye's Mill, then Kincheloe's 'old mill seat,' as the highest bidder at an auction in 1845. The mill property was located at the end of Union Mills Road on the south end of Popes Head Creek, close to Bull Run. He joined forces with William Suddath, a millwright, to restart the complex. Their unwritten agreement was that Willcoxon would repair and rebuild the millrace, and Suddath would restore the mill. It was called by this time Union Mills.

William DeNeale Willcoxon would soon settle down, full of promise, to raise a family comfortably. He married Mary E. Dye on December 28, 1847 in Prince William County, Virginia. She had lived at Dye's Mill, as a child. William was ten years older than Mary.⁴ They lived on a homestead known as *Terrapin Hollow* on Wolf Run Shoals Road, Clifton, Virginia. *Terrapin Hollow* stood directly behind the estate now known as *Quailwood*.

Unfortunately, William D. Willcoxon died on November 14, 1849 at the age 39⁵ after only two years of marriage, leaving Mary, a widow at age 29, and pregnant, with one small child. Their first son, also called William DeNeale Willcoxon, was born in 1849 shortly before his father's death. In 1888, he too, died young and left a widow, Mary Manning Willcoxon, and three young



Terrapin Hollow, now known as *Quailwood*, was the location of Mary Dye Willcoxon's home, above Wolf Run Shoals, in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Photo credit: Jenee L. Lindner, March 2015.



Camp of the 12th Vermont Infantry, near Wolf Run Shoals, Fairfax County, Virginia, c. 1862-63.

Photo source: *Army Life in Virginia*, George G. Benedict, c. 1895, Free Press Assoc., Burlington, VT.

children. Their second son, John Ratcliffe Willcoxon, was born in 1850 after his father's death. He died in childhood.

Mary E. Dye Willcoxon was the fifth child of John Hixson Dye and Ann 'Nancy' Hixson Johnson Dye.⁶ Her family was deeply rooted on both sides of Bull Run. The Dye, Hixson and Johnson families were originally from Windsor, Middlesex County, New Jersey and had moved to Prince William County, Virginia, about 1770.⁷ All three families intermarried. Mary's grandfather, John Hixson Dye, Jr., died in Prince William County, Virginia in 1798. A few years later, her father, when about 25 years old, moved from Prince William County across the Bull Run to rebuild the old mill in Fairfax County with funds from his father's will. Mary's grandmother, Mary Hixson Dye, accompanied him to keep house for her bachelor son.⁸

This John H. Dye became a Fairfax County resident in June of 1809. Within ten days of his purchase, John had mortgaged half the 90 acres he had acquired from his widowed mother to Matthew Lee of Prince William County. (Today, the former Union Mills site is located just south of Balmoral Estate subdivision, through the woods south of Quigg Street and Balmoral Forest subdivision, and then across the Popes Head, in the northwest corner of Hemlock Overlook Regional Park.)⁹ The money John borrowed financed the construction of a gristmill for mainly corn and wheat, a saw mill for timber, a fulling mill for wool and a milldam.¹⁰

Wheat farming had replaced tobacco as the top export in Fairfax County. John Dye wanted a piece of that pie. The merchant shippers of Alexandria petitioned

the legislature that it would be necessary to set standards of how the wheat should be ground and packaged. They could not compete with the flour exported from Baltimore and Philadelphia unless this was done. Inspectors were appointed at the ports of Alexandria, Colchester, Dumfries and Fredericksburg. Every barrel of flour was to carry the miller's mark before it left the premises – as well as the inspector's stamp when it was processed at the port.¹¹

The Union Mills neighborhood was hilly with streams in steep valleys running through the area. Popes Head Creek, Johnny Moore Run, Wolf Run, Ford Run, and Bull Run all flowed into the Occoquan River. By the 1860's second growth pine forests grew thick in the area. However, the presence of John Dye's mill indicated the existence of another form of commerce beyond just subsistence farming and timber harvesting: sheep. The hilly land was well suited as grazing pasture for sheep. The presence of large flocks of sheep in the neighborhood is substantiated by the existence of a John Dye's fulling mill in the area to process wool.¹² *Fulling*, also known as *tucking*, or *walking*, was a first step in wool cloth-making which utilized water driven machinery to mechanically

cleanse the raw wool to eliminate oils, dirt, and other impurities, and to make it thicker. *Fuller's earth*, a type of clay, was used to help remove these oils and impurities from the wool.¹³ The workers who did this job were known as *Fullers*, *Tuckers*, or *Walkers*, all of which are now common english surnames.

John Hixson Dye married his first cousin Ann "Nancy" Hixson Johnson in 1812. She was raised on the Johnson family farm called *Clover Hill Farm*, located in what is presently the City of Manassas, Prince William County, Virginia.¹⁴ All of their children would be born at Dye Mills. By 1820, the milling firm became "John H. Dye & Brother." John's brother, Daniel Dye, had decided to buy into the milling business by purchasing Matthew Lee's mortgage and one-third interest in the acreage on which the mills were situated.¹⁵ That same year the Dye fulling mill processed 3,000 pounds of wool and 100 yards of cloth. One of the Dyes' best customers was James Hewitt Hooe, a sheep importer who raised his biggest flocks on his farm near Centreville.¹⁶



Wolf Run Shoals Ford Road, looking north into Fairfax County. Note the "sunken" condition of the road indicating its long use. Photo credit: Jenée L. Lindner, March 2015.



Wolf Run Shoals Ford on the Occoquan River, looking south into Prince William County. Photo credit: Jenée L. Lindner, March 2015.

John Hixson Dye died on September 26, 1826 at age 41. His death may have been the result of an epidemic illness as two of the Dye's children, Johnson and Virginia, aged two and three died the following day. John was buried in the Johnson family cemetery located on *Clover Hill Farm*. His widow, Nancy, was left with six other children. The eldest child, Albert, was just 13 years old.¹⁷ John Hixson Dye left Nancy one-half of his estate, the other half went to Albert when he turned 21.¹⁸ After John's death the mill was rented out for several years. Albert never ran the mill. It became known as Kincheloe's 'old mill seat' after the last tenants.

For the Dye family, the one remaining constant seems to have been the family home. They continued to live in the house upstream from the miller's house. There were not enough families living around the mill to justify calling it a village. Yet, there were plenty of neighbors to give aid to a widow with small children.¹⁹

When the Orange and Alexandria Railroad was constructed through the area in the early 1850's, a station was established at Union Mills in October 1851. Silas Burke, the director of O & A railroad, purchased the right-of-way for the line, Fairfax County's first railroad. In

September 1855, Dye's Mill Post Office was established at the station. It was not called Union Mills Post Office because there already was one of that name in Virginia.²⁰

The Civil War, quite literally, came to the doorstep of Mary Dye Willcoxon at Wolf Run Shoals. Mary, resided here with her two young sons and boarders.²¹ This area of Fairfax County was considered the *de facto* dividing line between the North and South during the war. The Occoquan River, the boundary between Fairfax and Prince William counties, was a natural barrier between the opposing forces.

Wolf Run Shoals was one of several fords over the Occoquan. It was a strategic crossing point for both competing armies.²² The crossing was marked by three shallow, low slung, gravel islands called shoals. The depth of the water varied with the season. Ordinarily, the water was only as high as a horse's thighs. Occasionally, after heavy rains, horses would need to swim. In the 1900's a dam was constructed downstream, submerging the shoals under twenty to thirty feet of water.

After the Confederate victories at the battles of 1st and 2nd Manassas in 1861 and 1862, the southern forces built barricades and bivouacked in the Manassas area and along the Prince William County side of Bull Run for over a year. These positions were later abandoned. To counter these actions, on the Union side, half of the Second Vermont Brigade was ordered from their camp at Fairfax Courthouse. They established new camps along Bull Run at Union Mills in Fairfax County. On November 26, 1862 the 13th, 14th, 15th Vermont regiments were ordered to establish a camp on the Occoquan River at Wolf Run Shoals to guard the fords across the Occoquan, Bull Run, the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.²³ Each regiment had about 800 men. Later, even more Vermont regiments came and joined in picket duty. Overnight, several thousand Union soldiers were encamped on Mary Dye Willcoxon's farm.

Pvt. Unite Keith, of Cambridge, wrote to the Morrisville paper to a lieutenant's encounter with a local man of whom he asked directions to Wolf Run Shoals:

"It's right smart walk I reckon – a heap sight further than I want to walk."

"But, How far is it?"



Wolf Run Shoals as depicted on the McDowell Map, c. 1862. Note the location of "Mrs. Coxin." This is likely Mary Dye Willcoxon. Credit: Map of N. Eastern Virginia..., August 1, 1862, Gen. Irvin McDowell Source: Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

"Wall, it is about three halloos and a long walk beyond."

"But, my friend, you do not measure distance as I do; how far is three halloos?"

"Oh, I reckon it is as far as you can hear a man halloo at three times."²⁴

*Camp Near Wolf Run Shoals, VA,
Feb 7, 1863*

*By Pvt. George Grenville Benedict²⁵
12th Regiment Vermont Volunteers*

"For the Twelfth, also, the change within the three weeks past is not a slight one. It has exchanged the broad stretches and open region of Fairfax Court House, for a rough and broken country, wooded with scrub oaks and second growth pines growing on worn out tobacco fields, and scantily peopled with scattered "secesh" farmers. Near us, several hundred feet below the level of our camps, runs the Occoquan River, a muddy stream about as large as the Winookske. Across it, on the heights beyond, are earthworks thrown up by Beauregard's (Confederate) soldiers last winter, now untenanted. Our camp is on a knoll from which the men have cleared the pine trees. It is much narrower in its limits than our former fine camp near Fairfax, and it is less attractive in almost every particular. ... The men have had all they could do in digging rifle pits, picket duty, constructing corduroy roads, - of which they have made miles between this and Fairfax Station, - and the labor of clearing and making camp; and between rain and snow and mud have had the roughest time they have as yet known."

The following is the true and uplifting story of the friendship between Virginian, Mrs. Mary Dye Willcoxon and Vermont Lieutenant, Cami Marsh, during the Civil War near Wolf Run Shoals, Fairfax, Virginia.

**"ONE VIRGINIA WOMAN THAT WAS
NOT AN ENEMY**

By R.O. Sturtevant

History of Thirteenth Vermont Volunteers²⁶

In December 1862, occurred the raid known as Dumfries Raid by General J. E. B. Stuart and his Cavalry Corps, consisting of Generals Hampton, Fitzhugh, Lee and Wm. H. F.- Lee's Brigades. As a result of the exposure during the raid many were taken sick, and among them Lieut. Carmi L. Marsh. He was taken to the hospital in Fairfax Courthouse with an attack of pneumonia. Getting better, he returned to the Camp. The day previous the Regiment had been ordered to Wolf Run Shoals. This was twelve miles away, and over a rough muddy road. Lieutenant Marsh made the rainy trip in one day. By reason of weakness, from recent sickness, reached Camp completely exhausted, and broken down. He was at once taken with Cerebral Spinal Meningitis. He was taken to the Field Hospital Tent, and his parents advised by telegraph that he was dangerously ill, and to come at once. His father and mother came immediately and finding their son dangerously ill obtained permission from the Surgeon, Dr. Nichols, to remove him to a farm house a mile and a half from Camp, the home of Mrs. Wilcoxon where he could receive better care than in a drafty tent.

The lady was a widow, born and bred in Virginia, and naturally sympathized with the Confederate side, but she had a good heart and could give shelter to a sick and suffering enemy. She was very kind, and did all in her power for the comfort of the sick officer and his parents. They remained with Mrs. Wilcoxon till March 18th, then started for Vermont. Lieutenant Marsh being reduced in weight to seventy-five pounds, arriving home in Vermont, he soon regained both flesh and strength. There being no postal communications at that time, no correspondence was had with Mrs. Wilcoxon, then about 45 years of age, and strange as it may seem, none after the war

ended. Many years later Marsh met one of Mosby's Cavalry, who told him that in the Spring of 1863 he was one of a squad sent by Mosby to capture a Union Officer at Mrs. Wilcoxon's home near Wolf Run Shoals. That Mrs. Wilcoxon persuaded them not to take the officer, as he was a sick man, and very low.

Being in Washington in 1898, it occurred to Marsh that he would like to see Mrs. Wilcoxon again. With this object in view he went to Virginia, made many inquiries, spending several days in the search, only learning that this Mrs. Wilcoxon had married a man named Selecman, moved further south, and it was understood, she was living in the vicinity of Manassas, and again a widow.

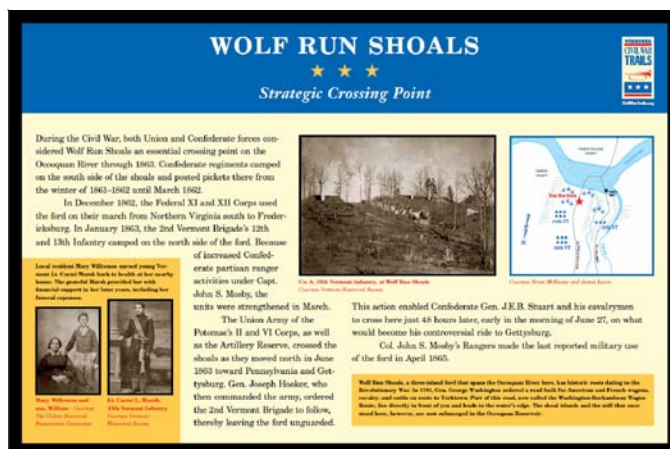
Mary Dye Wilcoxon's second marriage would be to Redmond Selecman on 9 April 1873 in Alexandria, Virginia. Mr. and Mrs. Selecman would be listed on the 1880 census living in Occoquan in Prince William County. Mr. Selecman would die on 20 November 1884. She would move to Manassas, Virginia.²⁷

To most this would have ended the search, but anyone who knew Carmi L. Marsh and his perseverance and will power, will readily understand that it was only an incentive to renewed exertion. He went to Manassas and finally found where Mrs. Selecman lived. He went to the house, and asked for her. Thirty-five years had passed and Marsh was not sure if she was the Mrs. Wilcoxon that had been so kind to him, so he did not introduce himself, but asked her if she was the lady who lived near Wolf Run Shoals, in '63. She said she was. He then asked if there was ever a Union Soldier sick at her house? Her reply was yes, there was a man there at one time, named Lee. Marsh said he knew no one of that name, and inquired if there was ever any other one sick at her house. She said yes, there was a young man named Marsh, and his father and mother were with him. Being satisfied as to her identity he told

her who he was. To say that she was surprised is to state her condition mildly. She could hardly realize that he could have taken so much trouble to find her. After a long interview, and on ascertaining that she was in poor circumstances, he gave her a sum of money and returned to Washington. Later he sent her a present and wrote something like this. "I am sending you, by express prepaid, some sugar and syrup which I hope will please you. You can hardly imagine how glad I was to see you after so many years, and how often I had thought of your kindness in taking us into your house." You were then 'Casting bread upon the Water', you know the bible says, "Cast your bread upon the Waters, for thou shalt find it after many days". I have figured it out to be just twelve thousand seven hundred and ninety-three days from the time I left your house until I came back. Truly a long time to wait, but it came.

Since 1898 General Marsh, made this good woman an annual visit, has taken his wife, daughter and grand-daughter to see her, and never failed to send her a check quarterly. He never asked what kind of bread she cast on the water, out it must have been even better than government "Hard Tack", as it came back after thirty-five years, multiplied an hundred-fold.

In July 1902, Mrs. Selecman was ill, her friends wrote General Marsh that she



Civil War Trails marker at 8598 Wolf Run Shoals Road, Clifton, VA. Dedicated June 21, 2014.

wanted to see him once more. He went at once, found her quite low, but she knew him so that he felt fully repaid for his long journey. She lived only a week, dying July 29th, 1902. He paid the doctors' and druggists' bills, expenses of her illness and funeral charges, and has always been glad, and thankful, that he found her who had befriended him, and that he was able to make her last years comfortable.

The reader of this article will be somewhat at a loss to decide which character most to admire. The woman. Southern born and bred, naturally antagonistic, who from the goodness of her heart, and inclination to relieve suffering, took the sick enemy into her house and exercised her utmost powers



Lt. Carmi Marsh, 13th Vermont Infantry who was nursed back to health by Mary Dye Willcoxon.

Photo courtesy: Vermont Historical Society.

to restore him to health, or the soldier, so cared for, who after many years, with an earnest desire to. In some degree, repay her for her devotion, untiringly searched till he found her, infirm and in poor circumstances, and then from his unbounded generosity supported her in ease and comfort till her dying day. The Comrades of the Regiment, with no uncertain voice, have made their decision."

Mary Elizabeth Dye Willcoxon Selecman died in Manassas, Prince William County, Virginia, at age 84. Sadly, both of her husbands and her two sons, preceded her in death. However, her gift of charity in time of war was repaid in her golden years when she received the gift of charity from the Civil War soldier she had saved.

Author's Note: A special thank you to Jim Lewis and Brian McEnany for their work and research for the dedication of the Wolf Run Shoals Marker on June 21, 2014, at 8598 Wolf Run Shoals Road, Clifton, VA 20124. Also, thanks to John McAnaw of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table and Bill Olsen of the Prince William County Historical Commission who have contributed much to preserving the history of Wolf Run Shoals.

(Endnotes)

- ¹ Paula Elzey, Ed. Stone Ground: A History of Union Mills.(Fairfax County History Commission, 2003), p. 32 & "W.D. Willcoxon Ordinary License," Ordinary Book 1816, p.178, May 16, 1831, Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records.
- ² Rezin Willcoxon was born in 1771 in Prince George County, Maryland. He died on Nov. 28, 1855 in Fairfax, Virginia. His wife Elizabeth 'Betsey' DeNeale Willcoxon was born on December 8, 1784 in Fairfax, Virginia. Rezin Willcoxon would own at one time over 1,000 acres in Fairfax, Virginia. They were both buried at the Blenheim Estate cemetery in Fairfax, Virginia. As documented above, below is listed their nine children and spouses based on census, birth, death, and marriage records.
Jenette (Jane) Hoeff (1806–1890) m. John Hooe Sweeney (1799–1864)
William DeNeale (1808–1849) m. Mary E. Dye (1818–1902) widow Mary m. Redmond Selecman (1808–1884)
Josiah (1813–1861) m. 1) Mary Francis Turley (1824–1844) m. 2) Julia Weir (1830–1862)
John (1815–1820)
Ann Elizabeth (1817–1859) m. Sheldon J. Hoag (1810–1867)
Margaret Conn (1820–1904) m. Richard Ratcliffe Farr (1804–1845)
Catherine Buck (1822–1910) m. Newman Burke (1802–1889)
Albert T. (1825–1889) m. Mary H. Eskridge (1839–1903)
Virginia (1827–1882) m. Napoleon B. Watkins (1824–1882)
- ³ <http://www.historicfairfax.org/historic-buildings-sites/>
- ⁴ Virginia, Select Marriages, 1785–1940 [database on-line]. 2014, Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc.
- ⁵ Alexandria Gazette, p. 3.
- ⁶ John Hixson Dye was born in 1786 in Prince William, Virginia and died on September 25, 1826 at (Dye's Mill) Union Mills, Fairfax, Virginia. His wife Ann "Nancy" Hixson Johnson was a cousin. Ann was born in 1796 in Prince William, Virginia. She would die in 1861 while residing with her widowed daughter Huldah Dye Corbett in Fairfax, Virginia. Nancy was buried where she had been raised on her Johnson family's homestead called Clover Hill Farm, in Manassas, Prince William, Virginia. Her father, Rut Johnson, Jr. seems to have been a forester and orchardist as well as a farmer, for

he set aside one field in which he planted acorns and raised a 'crop' of oak trees and the other in which he set out apples. [Virginia Writers Project, Prince William: The Story of its People and Its Places (Printed by Whittet & Shepperson:Richmond, Virginia, 1941) pgs. 117-118.] Her grave in the *Clover Hill Farm Cemetery* is next to her husband and several deceased children. Below is listed their eight children and spouses based on census, birth, death, marriage records and *Stone Ground: A history of Union Mills*, ed. Paula Elzey. The children were all born at (Dye's Mill) Union Mills, Fairfax, Virginia. Of note, William Willcoxon, born on September 22, 1808 in Fairfax, Virginia, the husband of daughter Mary Elizabeth Dye, died Nov. 1849 and be buried in the *Clover Hill Farm Cemetery*. William and Mary's first son, William Willcoxon, Jr., died in 1888 and is buried there. Today, there are ten unreadable grave markers. We can assume two of them belong to Mary E. Dye Willcoxon Selecman buried near her first husband, August 1902, and second son, John Ratcliffe Willcoxon, who died in 1868(?)

Children:

Albert Johnson Dye (1813-1876) m. Mary Knife. Albert left for Missouri before the 1850 census. He met his wife in Missouri. By 1870, they were living in Boone Co., Kansas and later, died there. Henry Clay Dye (1815-1876) m. 1) Emily Fouch 2) Diana Matthews. They moved permanently to Sulphur Rock, Independence, Arkansas before 1850 and, later, died there.

Huldah Ann Dye (1816-1893) m. John Corbett. Buried *Clover Hill Farm Cemetery*, Manassas, Prince William, Virginia.

Emily Dye (1820-1891) m. James Hendley Simpson. Moved permanently to Columbus, TX in 1861 and, later, died there.

Mary Elizabeth Dye (1818-1902) m. 1) William Willcoxon 2) Redmond Selecman. She was residing in Manassas, Prince William, Virginia, at the time of her death. John H. Dye (1823-1823) Buried *Clover Hill Farm Cemetery*, Manassas, Prince William, Virginia.

Johnson Dye (1823-1826) Possibly Buried *Clover Hill Farm Cemetery*, Manassas, Prince William, Virginia.

Virginia Dye (1824-1826) Possibly Buried *Clover Hill Farm Cemetery*, Manassas, Prince William, Virginia.

John Hixson Dye (1826-1831) Buried *Clover Hill Farm Cemetery*, Manassas, Prince William, Virginia.

7 Elsey, *Stone Ground*, p. 16.

8 Fairfax County Deed Books L2:318. John Dye's father's will was probated in Prince William County in 1798. When her mother executed a deed of trust for her son for 45 acres she was listed as residing in Fairfax County.

9 <http://www.balmoralgreens.org/article.php/20060714044036837/print>

10 Elsey, *Stone Ground*, p. 15.

11 William Waller Hening, *A Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*, Vol. III (1969 Reprint Edition), 143 and 511-512.

12 Nan Netherton, Donald Sweig, Janice Artemel, Patricia Hickin, and Patrick Reed, *Fairfax County, Virginia: A History* (Fairfax, Virginia: Virginia County Board of Supervisors, 1978), 170.

13 Elsey, *Stone Ground*, p. 15.

14 Elsey, *Stone Ground*, p. 20.

15 Fairfax County Personal Property Tax Book, 1820; & Fairfax County Deed Book P2:203.

16 Carol Drake Friedman, "The Importance of Sheep in Fairfax County History" in *Yearbook: The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia Volume 22, 1989-1990* (Fairfax, Virginia: The Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia, Inc., 1989), p. 76.

17 Elsey, *Stone Ground*, p. 22.

18 Fairfax County Will Book Y1:371-372.

19 Elsey, *Stone Ground*, p. 32.

20 Ibid., p. 33 & Fairfax Minute Book 1847, p. 117. Nov. 8, 1850,

21 1860 United States Federal Census

22 Jim Lewis and Brian McEnany, *Wolf Run Shoals Dedication* (Unpublished manuscript, 2014), p. 2.

23 Howard Coffin, *Nine Months to Gettysburg* (The Countryman Press: Woodstock, Vermont, 1997), p. 73.

24 Ibid., p. 130

25 Ibid., p. 110

26 Ralph Orson Sturtevant, *History of the Thirteenth Vermont Volunteers, 1862-1863*, pp. 865-867.

27 Ibid. 4.

Fairfax News of 50 Years Ago

RICHMOND, Va.—George Mason College at Fairfax faced a crucial vote in the General Assembly today on a bill that would convert it into a degree-granting branch of the University of Virginia.

Southwestern Virginia lawmakers placed the bill in jeopardy yesterday when they forced through an amendment to raise Clinch Valley Junior College in Wise County to the same four-year status proposed for the Northern Virginia institution.

Both Gov. Mills E. Godwin Jr. and former Gov. A. S. Harrison Jr. had recommended that George Mason be given full academic status in line with recommendations from the State Council on Higher Education.

The measure of Del. James M. Thomson, D-Alexandria, and the entire Northern Virginia contingent in the House reached the House floor by unanimous vote of its Education Committee.

Evening Star, February 2, 1866, p. B3, c. 6.

Fairfax County Gets Its Courthouse Back

The Fairfax County Courthouse is back in the county again, even though the historic structure hasn't budged an inch from its site Rt. 236 and Chain Bridge Road.

For nearly five years, the courthouse has been technically

in the City of Fairfax. This came about when the city, formerly a town within the county, assumed independent status on July 1, 1961.

A stroke of a pen "moved" the courthouse Friday when Senior Judge Paul E. Brown of Fairfax Circuit Court signed an order changing the city's boundaries so that all county-owned land within the municipality was cede back to the county.

Now the 6-square-mile city encircles a 25-acre plot of Fairfax County.

The city, in turn, remains surrounded by 410 square miles of Fairfax County.

The change probably won't mean anything but added confusion for the average Fairfax citizen, but it does unglue a sticky solution for law enforcement and court officials.

County police officers, rather than city policemen, now have the power of arrest for crimes committed within the courthouse and in other county-owned buildings and facilities.

Late last year, warrants charging assault within the county jail were dismissed by a county court judge who ruled that only the city's Municipal Court had jurisdiction.

An agreement signed by the city and county last spring provides that any additional land acquired by Fairfax County for Courthouse expansion also will be ceded by the city, according to Fairfax Commonwealth's Atty. Ralph G. Louk.

The unusual arrangement has a precedent in Virginia. A small portion of Henrico County, site of the jurisdiction's courthouse, is surrounded by the City of Richmond.

Evening Star, February 5, 1966, p. B5.

THE EVENING STAR

Washington, D. C.

Wednesday, April 20, 1966

A-11

★

Fairfax City Cuts Tax Rate For New Budget

Fairfax City council last night adopted a \$6.1 million budget for fiscal 1966-67 and fixed a \$3.48 tax rate to finance it.

Most of the budget—\$3.3 million—is devoted to the cost of training the city's 6,000 school-age children. The city educates the children in eight schools operated by Fairfax County. The city anticipates paying \$615 tuition per child next year.

The new tax rate means a reduction of 32 cents from the present \$3.80 property levy. City Manager William Zollman attributed the cut to the council's desire to reduce expenditures and its opportunity to profit from the anticipated 2 percent state sales tax and other increases in local revenue.

Left unchanged in last night's action was the city's current \$4.75 levy on automobiles and other non-household personal property.

EveningStar, April 20, 1966, p. A11, c. 8.

Fairfax News of 100 Years Ago

FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE, Va., January 8:—Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Israel and son of Denver, Col., spent the holiday season with Mr. and Mrs. Frank T. Israel.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Keith entertained a number of the young friends of their daughters, Anne Gordon and Hannah Morris, at a Christmas dance Thursday of last week.

The Misses Moore gave a reception Wednesday in honor of Mrs. Cadell Smith of New York, who is the guest of her sister, Mrs. John S. Barbour.

Burnett Canfield of Washington spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. William E. Graham.

Miss Peggy Fred and Miss Leishman of Washington and Douglas Janney of Occoquan were guests last week of Dr. and Mrs. Howard Fletcher.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Troth were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. George B. Canfield.

Rev. and Mrs. George Tyler entertained a large number of relatives at a family reunion this week, their son Morgan coming from Indiana to attend.

Evening Star, February 6, 1916, p. 10, c. 4.

LEGISLATURE AUTHORIZES A NEW VIRGINIA HIGHWAY

**Would Link Macadamized Roads at
Fairfax Court House With That
in Fauquier County.**

Announcement is made by Mitchell Harrison, president of the Warrenton and Fairfax Turnpike Company, Inc., that the Virginia legislature has passed a bill authorizing that company to establish a modern highway, suitable for motors, linking up the present macadam-

ized roads at Fairfax Court House with the same class of road that is being constructed in Fauquier county.

About twenty-five miles remain to be built between Fairfax Court House and Buckland, in Fauquier county. It is stated. When completed this will make a good motor road from Washington and Alexandria to and beyond Warrenton, Va., in the hilly district of Fauquier county—a road through the Manassas battlefields.

With the extensions that now are being built—from Warrenton west and south, it is said, it will only be a short time before the road is continued straight through to the Shenandoah valley, and also south, crossing the Rappahannock river, by way of Orange to Charlottesville.

Evening Star, January 16, 1916, p. 12, c. 1.

A MID-WINTER pathfinding trip over Virginia roads on Washington's birthday anniversary was indulged in by a party of local motor enthusiasts.

At Vienna, 16.2 miles, we crossed the railroad and followed the macadamized road on to Oakton, where a stop was made at a tollgate to pay 25 cents before continuing our journey to Wiley, where we crossed the electric car tracks and Fairfax Court House, 21.2 miles from Washington. The road from the National Capital to this point is ideal, with the exception of the slight break near Vienna. We made a brief stop at Fairfax, visiting the old courthouse, built in 1800; the jail and the new annex, which contains the records of the county, including the original will of George Washington, which is inclosed in a glass case on the wall in the treasurer's office.

It was in front of the old courthouse that Capt. John Quincy of the Warrenton Rifles fell on June 1, 1861, in the first conflict between the armed forces of the north and south, being the first soldier to fall on either side in battle. Passing the courthouse on the left we soon left the town in the rear of us and when a mile out we turned into the left fork and experienced our first rough road. The road from Fairfax is rolling and very rough. There are considerable stones in the road, which could easily be utilized in the construction of a macadam roadway to connect this place with the new road

out from Warrenton. It is this stretch of road that the Warrenton and Fairfax Turnpike Company intends to rebuild into a fine macadamized highway, the link extending from the courthouse to the county line of Fauquier and Prince William, a short distance west of Buckland.

Centerville, 8.9 miles from Fairfax, was reached after an hour's run over rough roads and a short stop in the town. Centerville was the scene of much activity just before the battle of Manassas. This was one of the great stopping places in the days before the war, when the stage line was operated between Alexandria and Warrenton, and many old houses were seen that suggested days gone by, many of which have historic memories connected with them. Turning to the left at the far end of the village we were soon wending our way in the direction of Stone Bridge.

Evening Star, February 27, 1916, p. 26, c. 1&2.

Fairfax News of 150 Years Ago

FREEDMEN'S BUREAU.

A report of the Superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Fairfax county, Va., to the chief of the bureau, states that all the freedmen of that district are supporting themselves, with very few exceptions. Those who apply for aid are generally those who are improvident, and who have no just appreciation of the necessity of economy. While assisting such people, the superintendent says a few words of advice and encouragement, appealing to their pride as a free people, in most cases arouses in them a spirit that renders all further application for assistance needless.

Evening Star, January 2, 1866, p. 2, c. 1.

The Hotel at the Court House, under the proprietorship of J. H. Barnes, is being thoroughly refitted and is now one of the best hotels, outside of the cities, in the State.

Alexandria Gazette, March 22, 1866, p. 3, c. 1.

JAIL DELIVERY.—We learn that a general jail delivery occurred at Fairfax Court House, on Saturday night. The jail was broken open and all the prisoners, including two confined on the charge of murder, made their escape.

Alexandria Gazette, March 5, 1866, p. 3, c. 2.

FAIRFAX COUNTY COURT, which met on Monday, adjourned on Tuesday evening. There were but few in attendance. The Court transacted a good deal of probate business, and discharged two negroes who were tried for larceny. The case of Wm. McDoniel, charged with homicide, was continued until the next term, and bail refused. There was a "a free fight," outside of the Court, on Monday afternoon, caused by bad whiskey, and too much of it, and the result was, cut heads and bloody noses.

Alexandria Gazette, January 16, 1866, p. 3, c. 2.

Fairfax News of 200 Years Ago

At a meeting held at the Tavern, at Fairfax Court House, 18th March, 1816, a respectable number of republicans freeholders of the county of Fairfax being present—

Resolved unanimously, That John Love of Prince William county be nominated as a proper person to be supported at the next election, to represent the senatorial district composed of the counties of Fairfax and Prince William

Resolved unanimously, That Humphrey Peake and Robert Townshend

be nominated as proper persons to be supported at the next election to represent the county of Fairfax in the house of delegates of this commonwealth

JNO. C HUNTER,
Chairman.

T. C. NASH Jr Sec'y

Alexandria Gazette, March 20, 1816, p. 3, c. 1.

Horrid Murder.

On Thursday night the 4th of this month, a most cruel murder was committed on a Spaniard or Frenchman, in the county of Prince William, in Virginia, between Hay-Market and Buckland, by two unknown persons who are either Spaniards or Portuguese. The circumstances were according to the evidence of Mr. Jeremiah Hutcheson, a respectable citizen of Fairfax, (who had come on in pursuit of the suspected persons) taken by the mayor of this place, as follows :—

That on Thursday came to his house three persons who appeared to him to be foreigners—they were travelling up the turnpike road—one of them could speak broken English and was the interpreter to the others, who appeared not to understand the English language.—

This person said that he had with him five hundred dollars in money, and about the same amount in small jewellery, consisting of gold watches, gold chains and rings, which he carried in two boxes in a small valise. He was about five feet six inches high, well made, his countenance had a lively, active appearance—he had, on a blue superfine cloth coat, pantaloons of fine cloth, black worsted stockings, shoes, a fine furred hat, a fine colored cambric neckcloth, fine cambric ruffles to his shirt, a gold watch with a gold chain which was formed by two or three gold strands—his eyes were dark and his hair very black, his face and hands were pitted with the small pox. He stated that he had come from Philadelphia and had some friends in Baltimore; that he was endeavoring to raise money for the purpose of redeeming a near relation who was a pri-

soner in Algiers; that he was going a short distance further with the two persons who were with him, and that he should return in a few days. The same witness gave the following description of the persons who were with the Spaniard above described, and who are suspected of being guilty of the cruel murder.

One of them is about six feet high, has large whiskers and a light complexion—had on a bright brown great coat of strong cloth, bound round the waist with a belt, grey pantaloons of coarse cloth, a coarse wool hat, and a pack covered in part with a skin. The other suspected person is about five feet eight inches high, his hair cut short, his face red, dressed in a blue coat and pantaloons cut in sailor fashion, had a bundle tied in a handkerchief.

On Friday, the 5th instant, the dead body of the first described person was found by means of the blood, a short distance from the road, covered over in the snow and entirely naked. Near the body were found two walking sticks of hawthorn wood dyed black and much shivered, and a part of a gold chain and a razor with an ivory handle was found in the snow. The throat was cut from ear to ear, and the head gashed in eleven or more different places.

The suspected persons were seen the day before travelling in company with the murdered man, and, as they said, going to Fauquier court-house. The day after the murder the suspected persons were seen returning on the same road near Fairfax court-house, one of them having his face much scratched and endeavoring to conceal it.—The same persons were traced by Mr. Hutcheson and two others down the turnpike road to Alexandria, and seen by some persons in Alexandria on Saturday afternoon passing down King-street, apparently much fatigued.

A person was apprehended in this town on suspicion.—He was carried before the Mayor. He proving by several respectable witnesses that he was in Alexandria before and on the day the murder was committed and continued here ever since, was discharged.

Justice, humanity and public safety demand that all officers and others, not here but elsewhere should use their best exertions to detect and bring to trial the perpetrators of this wicked deed.

Alexandria Gazette, January 12, 1816, p. 3, c. 3.

"Preserving the Past. Protecting the Future."

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The Newsletter of Historic Fairfax City, Inc.

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