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"THE BEAU IDEAL OF A SOLDIER:"  
BRIGADIER GENERAL CHARLES DIMMOCK

BY

EUGENE M. SANCHEZ-SAAVEDRA

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND  
IN CANDIDACY  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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*approved -  
William Daniel  
July 23, 1971*

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## PREFACE

All the world's a stage  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts...  
As You Like It, Act II. Sc. 7

Charles Dimmock (1800-1863), the subject of this biography, played "many parts" in his lifetime; Soldier, Educator, Hero, Businessman, Engineer, Promoter, Family man and Civil Servant. A northerner by birth, Dimmock adopted the state of Virginia as his mistress and place of residence and he devoted the last twenty years of his life to the state's military and civil development.

With Richmond, Virginia, in the 1840's and '50's, as his stage, Dimmock, who was certainly the hero of his own biography, worked with an astonishing variety of supporting players, ranging from the top civil and military leaders in America to the lowliest private in Richmond's Public Guard.

It is the purpose of this brief sketch of his life to reveal the delicate interplay of personalities and events leading up to Virginia's participation in the Civil war, with Dimmock acting the role of catalyst in some and of active participant in others.

In the past three years it has been this writer's rare privilege to work with many considerate people who took an interest in his fumbling researches and who made available to him their own talents and notes in the preparation of this paper. This writer wishes to express his appreciation of their unselfish aid to the following persons:

To Dr. W. Harrison Daniel, Chairman of the Department of History at the University of Richmond, who painstakingly read and corrected the original draft, and whose valuable suggestions helped put the entire work into a better perspective.

To Dr. Louis H. Manarin and Mr. John W. Dudley, of the Virginia State Library, Archives Division, who made it possible for the paper to be written.

To Mr. Randolph W. Church and Mr. Milton Russell, of the Virginia State Library, for the same reason.

To Mr. Bernard J. Henley of Richmond, Virginia, whose tireless researches in Virginia Newspapers provided this writer with grist for his mill.

To Mr. Lee A. Wallace, Jr., of Falls Church, Virginia, whose years of research in the field of the Virginia militia provided both an inspiration and many references that would have gone unnoticed.

To Mr. Giles Cromwell of Richmond, Virginia, who spurred this writer's interest in the Virginia Manufactory of Arms and the weapons produced there.

To Mrs. Catherine Smith, curator of the Picture Collection of the Virginia State Library, who patiently endured this writer's excessive requests for pictorial sources.

To the Company of Military Historians, whose members provided inspiration for further research.

And to my wife, for putting up with me while this paper was in progress.

## I. EARLY LIFE, 1800-1836.

On September 7, 1817, a tall, dark haired youth arrived at South Dock, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, to commence his military education. The new arrival, appointed from Massachusetts and named Charles Dimmock, proved academically brilliant and an industrious worker. During his four years as a cadet in the class under Professor Edward H. Courtenay, Dimmock was among the first to experience the sweeping reforms instituted by the Academy's new superintendent, Sylvanus Thayer, who had replaced Alden Partridge in 1817.<sup>1</sup> Thayer, recently returned from touring post-Napoleonic France, had studied the methods employed at St. Cyr and the Ecole Polytechnique and began introducing the Napoleonic method at West Point. During his administration of West Point, Thayer transformed the struggling Academy into a respected institution of higher learning, and he obtained the services of trained instructors, including Captain

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<sup>1</sup>George W. Cullum, Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, N. Y. 1802-1867. 2 vols. (New York: D. van Nostrand, 1868). Vol. 1, p. 213.

Marcus Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians; the Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968). p. 259.



Claudius Crozet, a former Napoleonic artillery officer and mathematician.<sup>2</sup> In 1818, Crozet introduced Colonel Guy de Vernon's Treatise on the Science of War and Fortification as a basic text, and he revived the use of the blackboard in American education, a humble but effective device, used extensively in Europe. Crozet was appalled at the lack of elementary background in descriptive geometry and simple arithmetic displayed by many of his engineering students and took pains to correct their deficiencies. Cadet Dimmock profited from the improved educational methods and graduated with honors, standing fifth in his class at commencement on July 1, 1821. Upon graduation he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the First Regiment United States Artillery.<sup>3</sup>

Superintendent Thayer recognized Dimmock's abilities and appointed him Assistant Professor of Engineering under Captain Crozet, a post which he held until July 3, 1822, when he was transferred to the garrison

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<sup>2</sup>Col. William Couper, Claudius Crozet, Soldier-Scholar-Educator-Engineer (1789-1864), in Southern Sketches Number 8, First Series (Charlottesville, Va.: The Historical Publishing Co., 1936). p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.

at Fort Independence, Massachusetts.<sup>4</sup>

To further his education, Dimmock obtained a year's leave of absence in 1823, and embarked on the "Grand Tour" of Europe, ostensibly to visit major fortifications and armories, but more probably to relax after six years of constant duty. Upon his return in 1824, the young lieutenant reported once again to Fort Independence and resumed his former duties.<sup>5</sup>

During the spring of 1824, while Dimmock was in Europe, the United States Army had established the Artillery School of Practice at Fort Monroe, Old Point Comfort, Virginia, commanded by Colonel John Rogers Fenwick. In 1825, Charles Dimmock was assigned to the experimental school at the unfinished fort as an instructor.<sup>6</sup>

The installation at Old Point Comfort was as yet in a state of confusion when Dimmock arrived in 1825; the bastioned, irregular hexagonal walls, designed by General Simon Bernard, another Napoleonic refugee, would not be completed for another decade. On the site of the present Hotel Chamberlin, which replaced two earlier hotels, both named the Hygeia, stood a roughhewn tavern operated by William Armistead, where the officers

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.; Letter of Gen. Winfield Scott to Gov. McDowell of Virginia, January 2, 1844. Original not seen. Copy furnished by Mr. Lee A. Wallace, Jr., Falls Church, Va.

<sup>5</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. Vol. 1, p. 212.

and workmen congregated after hours.<sup>7</sup>

Dimmock, surrounded by good food, a temperate climate and constant activity, enjoyed his life at Fort Monroe and soon preferred Virginia to his austere boyhood home in Massachusetts. With regrets he was forced to leave the south for two years' duty at Fort Trumbull, Connecticut, and at Fort Severn, Maryland, from 1826 to 1828.<sup>8</sup>

On February 20, 1828, Dimmock was promoted to first lieutenant of the First Regiment of Artillery and reassigned to Fort Monroe, becoming adjutant of the Artillery School of Practice. One of the privates in Company H of his regiment, which arrived at the post in December 1828, was a young volunteer of nineteen, known as "Edgar A. Perry," a distracted boy who nevertheless became regimental sergeant-major in 1829.

"Perry," whose real name was Edgar Allen Poe, had enlisted after quarrelling with his foster father, John Allen of Richmond. When Poe's mother died, Allen allowed his stepson to attend her funeral and procured a substitute for him, on the condition that he enter West Point. "Edgar A. Perry" obtained the substitute and was discharged on April 15, 1829.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>William M. E. Rachal, "Walled Fortress and Resort Hotels," Virginia Cavalcade, II, 1 (Summer, 1952), pp. 21-22.

<sup>8</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.

<sup>9</sup>Rachal, "Walled Fortress and Resort Hotels," p. 22.

Fourteen days later, Lieutenant Dimmock received a commission as acting captain in the Quartermaster Department at Fort Monroe, a position which he held for the next seven years.<sup>10</sup> Intermittently, however, Dimmock's duties as quartermaster were interrupted by temporary assignments as a consulting engineer on Army constructions. During most of 1831, 1832 and 1833, he superintended sections of the Delaware Breakwater and conducted other surveys in the area.<sup>11</sup>

After completion of this project, Dimmock wrote to Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup on July 19, 1833, reporting his arrival at Fort Monroe, "in readiness to enter upon the duties of Yr. Dept. as soon as Capt. Green turns over the books property & instructions of the Dept."<sup>12</sup>

On July 27, 1833, President Andrew Jackson arrived at Old Point Comfort to recuperate from a recent illness. By this time, a smaller fortification had been completed at the "Rip-Raps," an artificial island close to Fort Monroe, named Fort Calhoun. While staying at the small fort, Jackson toured the entire area and witnessed

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<sup>10</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. p. 212.

<sup>12</sup>Letter Book of Lt. Charles Dimmock, Fort Monroe, Va., 1833-1837 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia), Accession 24542. Unpaged volume. Dimmock to Jesup, July 19, 1833.

artillery demonstrations conducted by some of Dimmock's former students at the School of Practice. Fort Calhoun, later renamed Fort Wool in 1862, became Jackson's "Summer White House" during the remainder of his term of office.<sup>13</sup>

In October 1833, economy forced the authorities at Fort Monroe to reassign enlisted men out of the quartermaster department and Dimmock had to carry on his duties with the aid of indifferent civilian employees. Besides this annoyance, the new quartermaster found himself in the middle of open hostilities between Engineer and Artillery officers over the occupation of inadequate living quarters. On November 11, 1833, Dimmock complained to his superiors that a certain Captain H. W. Griswold and his family were occupying seven ordinary rooms with fireplaces, one chamber without a fire, two kitchens, one washroom, a barn, a stable and other facilities and refused to vacate any of them, despite the fact that other officers were compelled to share quarters far less spacious.<sup>14</sup> Apparently, Griswold's was only one case out of many that made Dimmock's life miserable as the post filled up. Although he judiciously assigned rooms on a "first come, first served" basis, many complaints issued from late arrivals who had to

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<sup>13</sup>Rachal, "Walled Fortress and Resort Hotels," p. 23.

<sup>14</sup>Letter Book of Lt. Charles Dimmock, 1833-1837, Dimmock to Jesup, November 11, 1833.

live in the damp casemates, built into the walls of the fort. Lieutenant Robert E. Lee and his new bride were among those who had sumptuous quarters, as were Captain Andrew Talcott and Lieutenant Joseph E. Johnston.<sup>15</sup>

Besides soothing the tempers of peacetime officers, Dimmock's duties included maintenance of the enlisted men's barracks. On May 12, 1835, he reported on the antiquated heating system then in use:

The Stoves now in use in the Barracks at this place are quite burnt out and unsafe--and new ones of some description will have to be procured this coming fall...<sup>16</sup>

To replace these fire hazards, Dimmock thoroughly investigated various products and manufacturers' claims and decided upon the "Notts Stove," produced in New York, "as plain as possible as the usual cast Iron ornaments are ever getting broken."<sup>17</sup> By October 30, six stoves arrived from New York in time to be installed before the onset of cold weather.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Rachal, "Walled Fortress and Resort Hotels." p. 23.

<sup>16</sup>Letter Book of Lt. Charles Dimmock, 1833-1837. Dimmock to Green, May 12, 1835.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Dimmock to Green, October 30, 1835.

In January 1836, Dimmock received orders to report to Savannah, Georgia, to join his regiment and he began closing his accounts at Fort Monroe. On January 25, his superior, Captain Timothy Green, advised General Jesup that he was "now engaged with Lt. Dimmock, Asst. Q. M. in the examination of Q. M. property."<sup>19</sup>

Lieutenant Dimmock retained his regimental post as assistant quartermaster of the First Artillery until August 20, 1836, when he received a brevet promotion to the rank of captain as the regiment left Augusta, Georgia, to participate in the Florida Indian wars.<sup>20</sup>

Following the tragic, blundering and often brutal attempts at relocating the Indians of Georgia and Florida in the Southwest, the Seminoles, led by the brilliant Osceola and other chiefs, rebelled against the Federal Government and carried on a war of attrition from December 7, 1835, to April 19, 1842. The United States Army, commanded by relics from the War of 1812, was hampered by extreme heat, disease, winter uniforms issued in the summer and a lack of accurate maps. Old personal feuds between the staff officers, notably General Edmund P. Gaines and General Winfield Scott,

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Green to Jesup, January 25, 1836.

<sup>20</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.

with whom he had fought a duel, became a crucial factor in the war's management. Gaines, who had accomplished little in Florida, was replaced by General Duncan L. Clinch as commander of the expeditionary force, but Clinch fared little better and was, in turn, replaced by Scott on January 21, 1836.<sup>21</sup>

Scott's army, raised mainly from South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, included Captain Dimmock and the First Regiment of Artillery. After five months of distressing marches through swampland, Scott called a halt to the pursuit of the elusive Seminoles on May 30, "when, having accomplished nothing, he too left the seat of war; and, like General Gaines before him, found more agreeable duties elsewhere."<sup>22</sup>

On September 9, 1836, the Richmond Courier and Daily Compiler reprinted an article from the Fredericksburg Arena, concerning the exploits of Captain Charles Dimmock in the Florida War:

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<sup>21</sup>Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians, pp. 135-136.

<sup>22</sup>Henry B. Dawson, Battles of the United States by Sea and Land, 2 vols. (New York: Johnson, Fry & Co., 1858). Vol. II, p. 443.



We have learnt, within a few days past, of an act of gallantry on the part of an officer of the army, which we deem it our duty to give to the public--especially as modesty, which is the almost separate concomitant of valour, has induced him, in his official report, to keep himself entirely out of sight.

Our readers may recollect a skirmish, some months ago, between a small party of U. S. troops, and a superior force of Indians, in the vicinity of St. Augustine, in which the latter were routed with considerable loss. Brevet Capt. Dimmock, then of 1st Artillery, commanded the regulars, and in his official report, have a brief and technical account of the fight. A brother officer, some time afterward, accidentally overhearing some soldiers speaking with admiration of the part Capt. D. bore in the skirmish, was induced to believe that he had not done himself justice. His suspicions were increased when, on asking the particulars from the Captain, he received a reluctant and guarded account of the affair. The officer summoned to his presence the Sergeant who was with the party--there was no other commissioned officer than Capt. D.

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attached to it; and learnt the following details:

In the midst of the action, whilst Captain Dimmock on horseback, was directing, and by his coolness and courage, animating his little party, he was suddenly, and as if by concert, set upon from different directions by two Indians of huge stature. They fired simultaneously and wounded Captain Dimmock in the leg, at the same time bringing down his horse. Disengaging himself from his horse, with great activity, he gained his feet in time to bring down one of his antagonists, as with fearful yells, they rushed to take his scalp, thinking their fire had killed him. On seeing his companion fall the other Indian took to flight, but not in time to save himself. Captain Dimmock wheeled about, and with great coolness, shot him dead with the other barrel of his fowling piece. In the meantime, the wounded Indian, though unable to rise, had siezed a gun, but before he could use it, Captain Dimmock dispatched him with his sword.

We give this little incident, from admiration of gallantry and presence of mind, and on the most unquestionable authority--- and with no view whatever, of

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nominating Capt. Dimmock for the Vice Presidency. We are gratified to be able to state that the casualties of the service have presented an opportunity of promoting this gallant officer, and that he is now a full captain in the 2nd Artillery.<sup>23</sup>

Like many other officers in 1836, Dimmock was disgusted with the Florida war and he resigned his commission, not wishing his talents and life to be cut short so abruptly. On September 30, 1836, Charles Dimmock became a private citizen, after nearly nineteen years in the military services, and returned to Virginia to follow a promising career in civil engineering.<sup>24</sup>

#### CIVIL ENGINEER, 1836-1843

While serving at Fort Monroe, Charles Dimmock had been exposed to a way of life considerably different from that in Massachusetts or at West Point. Following the War of 1812, the states along the Eastern Seaboard had engaged in programs of internal improvement,

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<sup>23</sup>The Richmond Courier and Daily Compiler, (Richmond, Virginia), September 9, 1836.

<sup>24</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.



Charles Dimmock  
ca. 1830

embracing canals, plank roads, corduroy turnpikes, swamp drainage, breakwaters and sewer systems. In 1785, Virginia took an early lead in canal building and slack-water navigation, but fell behind New York in this respect. Nevertheless, on February 5, 1816, the Virginia General Assenbly passed an "Act to create a fund for internal improvements," embodying a state supported Board of Public Works, headed by the governor, treasurer and attorney general. The first two principal engineers chosen by the board were Loamm Baldwin and Thomas Moore, who served from 1817 to 1822.<sup>25</sup> On April 26, 1823, Claudius Crozet resigned from the West Point faculty to accept the place vacated by Moore in Virginia.<sup>26</sup> During Charles Dimmock's two tours of duty at Fort Monroe, Crozet was engaged in surveys in the immediate area and his presence perhaps hastened Dimmock's ultimate decision to seek employment with the Board of Public Works.<sup>27</sup>

In 1826, however, Crozet encountered strong opposition in the Legislature to his advocacy of railroads over the costlier canals and his suggestions were passed over in the committees dominated by Joseph Carrington

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<sup>25</sup>Couper, Claudius Crozet, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>See the printed reports of the Board of Public Works in the Virginia State Library from 1823 to 1832. Crozet worked in the Norfolk-Princess Anne area several times.

Cabell and Wyndham Robertson in the General Assembly.<sup>28</sup> By an Act of Assembly passed on April 2, 1831, the Board of Public Works was reorganized into a three-man body, composed of the governor, lieutenant governor and the treasurer, with the second auditor acting as a liaison between the board and the various canal and road corporations. In a direct slap at Crozet, the principal engineer's salary was cut from \$3,500.00 to \$2,500.00 per year, to commence in 1832.<sup>29</sup> On October 28, 1831, Crozet resigned his position and accepted an offer to become State Engineer of Louisiana, a state in which railroads were favored over canals and in which he could hear French spoken.<sup>30</sup>

The Louisiana weather and Crozet's health were incompatible, however, and he returned to Virginia in 1837, soon becoming involved in the creation of the Virginia Military Academy out of the old Lexington Arsenal. On February 2, 1838, he was offered once again the position of principal engineer of Virginia. Although the James River and Kanawha Canal remained

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<sup>28</sup>Couper, Claudius Crozet, pp. 55-56

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 66-68.

the chief project of the Board of Public Works, the provincial ideas of Cabell and Robertson were no longer in the ascendancy and several, small railroad companies were in operation.<sup>31</sup>

Late in 1836, Charles Dimmock received his first assignment as a civil engineer in the pay of Virginia: a survey of part of Princess Anne County in preparation for a canal route. Before undertaking this work, Dimmock was called away from his duties to appear as a witness for the defence at a special board of inquiry, examining General Winfield Scott for mismanagement of the Florida War.<sup>32</sup>

The embittered General Edmund P. Gaines had presented formal charges against his old rival, and he retained enough influence with the War Department to cause the convening of a special tribunal at Fort Frederick, Maryland. This board met from July 20, 1836, until January 30, 1837, to decide whether Scott's conduct merited a court-martial. Since the charges were based more on Gaines' personal venom than on any mismanagement on Scott's part, Scott requested his former subalterns to appear as witnesses, and their convincing testimony

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 73, 92.

<sup>32</sup>Board of Public Works--"Applications for Jobs" (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia). Folder marked "Miscellaneous."

earned a dismissal of the case.<sup>33</sup>

On November 27, 1836, Charles Dimmock sent a short note to James Brown, second auditor of Virginia, explaining that the Princess Anne surveys would be delayed somewhat, since

I am now on my way to attend the Court of Inquiry at Frederick Md. as a witness in behalf of Genl. Scott, to be absent probably about 2 or 3 weeks...If...the few weeks absence which in justice to Genl. Scott I am compelled to take, will make no difference, I hold myself ready immediately on my return.<sup>34</sup>

On December 12, Brown received another communication dated at Old Point Comfort, advising him that Dimmock had returned to Virginia, and enclosing a personal letter from General Scott to Governor Wyndham Robertson.<sup>35</sup>

Dimmock managed to complete his surveys, plans and recommendations during December 1836, and he submitted his report and maps to the General Assembly on January 8, 1837, detailing the topography and proposed routes of

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<sup>33</sup>Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians, p. 136. Another of Scott's accusers was Dimmock's other commanding officer, Thomas S. Jesup, Q. M. G.

<sup>34</sup>Board of Public Works--"Applications for Jobs," Dimmock to Brown.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. This Wyndham Robertson was Crozet's adversary on canals.



canals to connect Linkhorn Bay and Back Bay and the waters of the Lynnhaven and North rivers.<sup>36</sup> For the next two years, Dimmock worked under Claudius Crozet on the routes of the Danville and Wytheville Railroad and the Wilmington and Raleigh line, in cooperation with the North Carolina legislature.<sup>37</sup>

Once again, during 1837 and 1838, Dimmock's services were hired by the United States Army, although in his civilian capacity, to act as a consulting engineer on the U. S. military road connecting Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, with Fort Smith, Arkansas. After completion of this work, he returned to Virginia in late 1838.<sup>38</sup>

During his employment as a civil engineer, Dimmock acquired a family. His wife, Henrietta M. F. Dimmock, bore him a son, Charles H., in the late 1830's or early 1840's, and another son, Marion, a few years later. Besides their sons, the Dimmocks had at least one daughter, Cora, who married Eugene Carrington in Richmond in 1859.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia. Session 1836-1837. (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, Public Printer, 1837)., Doc. 39(c), p. 12.

<sup>37</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.

<sup>38</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 213.

<sup>39</sup>Richmond City Chancery Court, Volume 2, 1878 (Microfilm in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). p. 141. Will of Mrs. Henrietta M. F. Dimmock listed. The Richmond Daily Dispatch, April 16, 1859.

Since the Board of Public Works limited its engineers to a fixed salary on the state pay scale, Dimmock saw brighter opportunities to support his family in style by entering private enterprise. Although the state government issued charters, gave supervision and assigned consulting engineers to the various transportation improvements, the actual motivation behind such endeavors was the growing number of joint-stock corporations that organized for the purpose of building and profiting from railroads, toll bridges, turnpikes and other internal improvements. To obtain qualified personnel, these companies paid high salaries, and Dimmock sought a position with such a concern. In 1839 the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad hired him as their general agent and he became president of the company in 1841.<sup>40</sup>

Arthur Emmerson, president of the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad in 1839, was, like many another prominent citizen, a member of the state's volunteer militia. In January 1808, Emmerson had formed the Portsmouth Artillery Company, which was still in existence in 1839, although Emmerson's advanced age prevented him

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<sup>40</sup>Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad Manuscripts (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.) 1833-1847.

from taking an active part. Dimmock, who had spent four years as a cadet and fifteen more as an army officer, recognized the militia as a way to become an officer again without jeopardizing his family and career.<sup>41</sup>

With his obvious qualifications, Dimmock had no difficulty in procuring a captain's commission in the Seventh Regiment, Ninth Brigade, Fourth Division of the Virginia Militia, and he was elected to command the Portsmouth Artillery Company, which changed its name to the Portsmouth Light Artillery Blues.<sup>42</sup> On July 4, 1840, the Portsmouth Old Dominion reported that:

This veteran corps turned out on Monday last in excellent style, under their new and highly popular commander, Captain Charles Dimmock--than whom there is not probably a more efficient officer in the state.<sup>43</sup>

Besides the lure of a quasi-military life, the militia offered Dimmock a chance to enter Virginia society, from which his northern upbringing had excluded him previously. The phenomenon of the volunteer

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<sup>41</sup>Executive Papers, Militia Series, Portsmouth City, 1789-1829 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

<sup>42</sup>Culum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.

<sup>43</sup>The Portsmouth Old Dominion, July 4, 1840. This company became Grimes' Battery during the Civil War, and was reactivated as Company C, 1st Battalion Artillery, Va. National Guard, in 1906.

militia organizations as social clubs was not confined to the South, although some of the more flamboyant expressions of this movement originated below the Mason-Dixon line. Marcus Cunliffe observed that the prosperous citizens who organized these companies

were liberated from domestic and commercial preoccupations, and transformed by magnificent costume. They could feel patriotic, and therefore democratic, and yet elevated into a romantic-genteel realm where one might talk without embarrassment of nobility, honor, chivalry, gallantry.<sup>44</sup>

As opposed to the "line militia" of able-bodied citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, who reported sullenly to "muster days" shouldering cornstalks and umbrellas, the elite volunteers were addicted to gaudy uniforms and equipment and held gala balls, parades and fireworks displays, to the delight of the populace and their own edification. The transfiguration of lawyers, bankers and craftsmen into colonels, majors and captains bolstered sagging egos and removed them, for a brief moment, from the drabness of daily existence to the mythical realm

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<sup>44</sup>Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians, p. 230.

of Ivanhoe, free from balding heads and spreading midriffs. Friendships made through militia connections lasted lifetimes and business connections grew firmer.

In 1841, Charles Dimmock's abilities and new acquaintances resulted in his promotion from captain to lieutenant colonel of the Seventh Virginia Regiment, a high honor for so recent a resident and a higher one for a northerner.<sup>45</sup>

As lieutenant colonel, Dimmock's duties were largely administrative and the only surviving documents concerning his activities, between April and July 1842, deal with the settlement of a dispute over the elected captain of the Portsmouth Rifle Company. After the resignation of Captain John P. Young, Lieutenant Samuel P. Forbes was elected in his place, but failed to qualify, although the state adjutant general had already issued his commission. Dimmock ordered a new election on June 4, and the company chose William P. S. Sanger, former head of the Portsmouth Grenadiers. When the authorized statement of this new election reached Adjutant General William Harvie Richardson, he refused to send the new commission, because his

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<sup>45</sup>The Portsmouth Old Dominion, October 23, 1841. The Portsmouth Light Artillery Blues were commanded by Lieutenant Theophilus Fisk, editor of the Portsmouth Old Dominion, after Dimmock's promotion.

records indicated that Forbes and not Young was the last incumbent. The exchange of correspondence between Dimmock and Richardson continued until mid-July, when the misunderstanding was finally cleared. In the meantime, Dimmock had been deluged with complaints from the Rifleman, thus deprived of a captain for four months. Late in 1842, Dimmock resigned his commission, probably disenchanted by the mountains of paperwork over petty squabbles.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Executive Papers, Militia Series, "Certificates of Elections of Officers, June 1-August 31, 1842" (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

## II. CAPTAIN OF THE PUBLIC GUARD AT RICHMOND, 1843-1863.

On January 22, 1801, the Virginia General Assembly had authorized the creation of a permanent body of troops to protect the Capitol, the Bank of Virginia, the Penitentiary and the new Virginia Manufactory of Arms in Richmond from possible recurrences of slave uprisings. This sixty-eight-man corps, originally sponsored by Governor James Monroe, had become a permanent feature of Richmond life, enduring well after the threat of servile insurrection had faded.<sup>47</sup> Commanded successively by an old veteran of the Pennsylvania Continental Line, a Scottish immigrant named Alexander Quarrier, by a War of 1812 veteran named Blair Bolling and by Adjutant General W. H. Richardson's brother, John B. Richardson, the "Public Guard," as it was styled, had sunk into a state of relative disorganization by 1843. In December 1843, Captain Richardson died after a long illness, but both of the Public Guard's lieutenants were under suspension for brawling on the

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<sup>47</sup>E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra, "An Undisciplined Set of Vagabonds," Virginia Cavalcade, XVIII, 4 (Spring 1969). See Appendix A.

parade ground and the corps was commanded by its orderly sergeant, Peyton Henley.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the lack of discipline among officers and men, the Public Guard presented great opportunities in the state service for its commanding officers, and the post of guard captain was coveted in Richmond.<sup>49</sup>

During 1843, Charles Dimmock was engaged in the steamboat business in Norfolk, but the major artery for his craft was the James River and Kanawha Canal, which began in Richmond.<sup>50</sup> Since he was no longer connected with either the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad or with the Portsmouth militia, he moved his family to Richmond late in 1843, to be closer to his business. On January 29, 1844, the newly-organized Richmond Grays elected him their first captain and he accepted the position.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid.; Auditor's Item 141; Accounts of the Public Guard (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

<sup>49</sup>Executive Papers, August-November 1839, Folder for October 1839 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Joseph Reid Anderson was among the applicants.

<sup>50</sup>See Chapter III: "Business Ventures."

<sup>51</sup>Louis H. Manarin and Lee A. Wallace, Jr., Richmond Volunteers, the Volunteer Companies of the City of Richmond and Henrico County, Virginia 1861-1865 (Richmond: Westover Press, 1969). p. 248.



Once again a member of the militia, Dimmock decided to aim for a higher office and signified to several influential friends that he wished to apply for the captaincy of the Public Guard. Indeed, he had indicated the same idea somewhat earlier, in December 1843, and wrote to General Winfield Scott to send a recommendation to the governor on his behalf.

On January 2, 1844, Scott sent a highly complimentary letter to Governor James McDowell. "Charles Dimmock, Esq.," wrote Scott,

late Captain in the Army, is desirous of filling the vacant place in the Public State Guard of Virginia...Premising in the way of apology for this communication that every commander in the army feels himself bound to comply with such requests coming from juniors, it gives me great pleasure to say that Capt. Dimmock graduated No. 5 at the U. S. Military Academy...was continued at the Institution as Assistant Professor of Engineering...was appointed Adjutant of the Artillery School...at Old Point Comfort...then received the commission of Captain in the Quarter Master's department, which showed the confidence of the army in his administrative talents, and in his prudence and probity...<sup>52</sup>

Such high praise from the highest-ranking officer in the United States Army was not without its influence in Governor McDowell's choice of a guard captain.

To make certain, however, Dimmock, who feared that

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<sup>52</sup>Winfield Scott to James McDowell, January 2, 1844. Original not seen. Typescript copy furnished by Mr. Lee A. Wallace, Jr., Falls Church, Va.

his place of birth might adversely prejudice the governor, sent McDowell a newspaper clipping from the Boston Daily American of December 22, 1843, containing a letter from Dimmock to his brother in Boston. This lengthy epistle concerned Dimmock's views on the case of George Latimer, a fugitive slave from Norfolk, who had been set free by an illegal action of the Boston courts.<sup>53</sup> This affair, termed the "Boston outrage," stirred great anti-Massachusetts feeling in Virginia and Dimmock's letter, which supported Governor McDowell's position, was sent in an obvious attempt to curry favor. In the letter, written according to the effusive, rhetorical models of the day, Dimmock inveighed against Massachusetts' "violation" of the Constitution and warned that such actions could only lead to immediate disunion. He heaped criticism on all persons who spread the "poison" of abolitionism without offering to bear the expense of returning the Negroes to Africa, which he estimated at \$25, 000, 000.00.

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<sup>53</sup>Executive Papers, Box 309, January-May 1844 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). See Appendix for a detailed treatment of the Latimer case.

The editor of the Boston paper had printed the letter in full, adding that,

In giving place to the preceding letter, we are of course not to be responsible for the opinions it advances and the positions it assumes with so much eloquent indignation. Coming as it does from a son of Massachusetts, we have thought it might not be uninteresting to some of our readers to note the change which a residence at the South, under the influence of the institution of slavery, has wrought on the feelings and sentiments of an intelligent son of the North.<sup>54</sup>

Dimmock's letter not only proved his support of Governor McDowell's policies but also effectually severed his ties with Massachusetts and demonstrated his commitment to Virginia. Dimmock was notified that he had been chosen for the post of guard captain on February 13, 1844, and he accepted the commission on the same day, requesting Adjutant General Richardson to inform the governor of that fact.<sup>55</sup>

During the month between Captain John B. Richardson's death and Charles Dimmock's acceptance of the office, the disciplinary situation in the Public Guard had eased somewhat under the supervision of Sergeant

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Folder with correspondence for 1844, Dimmock to Richardson, February 13, 1844.

Peyton Henley, who was given the brevet rank of third lieutenant. On December 28, 1843, the adjutant general had allowed lieutenants Elijah Brown and Edward Scott Gay to resume their duties on a probationary basis. Brevet Lieutenant Henley benefitted more from the disgraceful affair than anyone else in the guard, since his sergeant's pay of \$17.00 per month was increased to \$26.00 for himself and \$8.00 for David, his personal body servant.<sup>56</sup>

On February 1, 1844, twelve days before Dimmock's commission, seventy-six of the non-commissioned officer, musicians and privates signed a statement, addressed to Governor McDowell, affirming their respect "for each of the Officers at present belonging to the corps." The document concluded with a statement of the men's "partiality for zealous, able and long tried officers," who deserved promotions for their "firmness of character."<sup>57</sup> The officers in question, of course, were lieutenants Brown and Gay, who, despite their explosive temperaments, were both experienced and understanding subalterns.

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<sup>56</sup>Auditor's Item 141, Accounts of the Public Guard (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, Session 1843-1844 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, Public Printer, 1843)., Document 19.

<sup>57</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.) Folder for 1844. Personnel of the Public Guard to James McDowell, February 1, 1844.

First Lieutenant Elijah Brown had been born in Cumberland Town, Providence County, Rhode Island, on October 19, 1781, the day Cornwallis surrendered his army at Yorktown. Brown, trained as a blacksmith, came to Virginia in 1811, where he became a barrel welder at the Virginia Manufactory of Arms and an ensign in the Independent Company of Artificers, raised from workmen at the armory. Before setting out as a guide for supply wagons en route to Point Pleasant and Fort Meigs, Ohio, Brown applied for and received a commission as third lieutenant in the First Regiment of United States Artillery. After a promotion to a second lieutenantcy in 1814, he served to the end of the war as commander of garrison at Fort Powhatan, Virginia.<sup>58</sup>

On April 8, 1817, Elijah Brown was commissioned Ensign of the Public Guard in Richmond and was promoted to lieutenant on April 21, 1818.<sup>59</sup> Always a conscientious officer, Brown was twice passed over for promotion to captain, due to his lack of formal education and his northern origin.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>The John K. Martin Pension Papers, (?) War, A-E, Folder marked "E. Brown" (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). In 1844, Brown applied for guard captaincy and enclosed all his previous commissions. Also see Executive Papers, Boxes 238 and 309 (Mss. in Virginia State Library).

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

Second Lieutenant Edward Scott Gay, on the other hand, was a member of the Virginia gentry, related to the Rolfe-Bolling-Randolph family, and born in Goochland County, ca. 1795. A splendid horseman, Gay joined the Goochland Troop of Cavalry, becoming second lieutenant in 1822. In 1823, he was commissioned lieutenant of the Powhatan County Troop and in 1825, he was elected captain of the Cumberland County Troop.<sup>61</sup>

Before he received a commission as second lieutenant in the Richmond Public Guard in 1841, Gay's name appeared as captain of the Powhatan Troop in 1831, and captain of the Goochland Troop in 1835, and he probably moved to Richmond in 1838 or 1839.<sup>62</sup>

Serving under the three officers mentioned above, were a number of sergeants and corporals, whose number fluctuated; two musicians: James Edwards, the famous "blind fifer of Richmond," and Nicholas Pepe the drummer; and between fifty and sixty privates drawn from all classes of society.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Executive Papers, August-November 1839, Folder for October 1839 (Mss. in Virginia State Library.) Gay was Captain Blair Bolling's cousin.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid. His application for the captaincy was dated from Richmond on September 23, 1839.

<sup>63</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Captain of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Several muster rolls are extant for the 1840's.

In March 1822, the Public Guard had moved from its shabby barracks on Capitol Square, built in 1802, to the Manufactory of Arms at Fifth Street, known simply as the "State Armory" after its operations ceased in 1821. In the same year, 1821, the captain of the Public Guard, Blair Bolling, had the duties of Superintendent of Public Edifices added to his combined title of Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard.<sup>64</sup>

When Charles Dimmock assumed the captaincy of the Public Guard, he also took on the duties of Superintendent of the Armory and Public Buildings, whose combined salaries paid him \$81.67 per month, hardly a fortune, but sufficient to supplement his income from his steamboat concern.<sup>65</sup> Upon inspecting the State Armory's barracks and particularly the central cupola, reserved for the incumbent captain, Dimmock was appalled at the dilapidated condition of the entire building, which had received no paint in over five years and which required plastering, glazing and other repairs.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid. Formerly the Adjutant General was Superintendent of Buildings.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid. Dimmock to Richardson, February 15, 1844.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

This neglect was due partly to the guardsmen's lack of enthusiasm over menial tasks and partly to the General Assembly's reluctance to spend money on the huge, antiquated Armory. Early in 1843, the legislature, encouraged by the success of the Virginia Military Institute, had debated a proposal to abolish the Public Guard and create a similar military academy at the Richmond Armory. The Public Guard, now Virginia's only military company maintained at state expense, had, from 1816 to 1839, been one of two such organizations, the other having been stationed at the Lexington Arsenal. The Public Guard at Lexington, commanded by Captain James Paxton, had degenerated into a haven for drunkards and fugitives and the slovenly guardsmen neglected their duties openly.<sup>67</sup>

In 1837, the General Assembly created the Virginia Military Institute, abolishing the Lexington Public Guard and turning the arsenal into barracks and classrooms until permanent quarters could be built. Some of the old guardsmen remained at the Institute in the capacity of watchmen and janitors, but their intemperate habits and bad influence on the

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<sup>67</sup> Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia. Session 1842-1843 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, Public Printer, 1843). Appendix of Bills.

Reports of the Superintendent of the Lexington Arsenal, 1816-1839 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).



cadets resulted in their immediate discharge. The guns and equipment stored at Lexington were placed under the control of the academy's superintendent and instructors and artificers from Richmond reported periodically to clean and repair the weapons.<sup>68</sup>

Although the initial proposal to abolish the Richmond Guard and establish an academy did not pass the legislature, there were enough proponents of the measure left to resubmit the bill in the future. Since Captain Dimmock did not wish to follow Captain Paxton into unemployment, he constantly hounded the legislature's Armory Committee with reports of the unsafe condition of the buildings and he attempted to reform the Public Guard into a creditable and necessary body.<sup>69</sup>

With redoubled attention to detail, Dimmock studied the inefficient operations of the Armory and personally supervised the five civilian artificers on the payroll. He catalogued the scattered machinery that had accumulated for half a century and cleared the parade ground, in the rear, of the cannon that lay strewn about the grounds.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Col. William Couper, One Hundred Years at V.M.I., 4 vols. (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1939). Most of Volume 1 deals with the arsenal.

<sup>69</sup>The Richmond Times and Compiler, January 4, 1845.

<sup>70</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Captain of the Public Guard. Dimmock to Richardson (n.d.) and Dimmock to McDowell, Aug. 12. 1845.

Besides keeping the buildings in repair, Dimmock attempted to improve the guardsmen's personal comfort and health, commuting rations for men in the infirmary and contracting to draw water from the City Water Company's hydrant, instead of from the stagnant well at the Armory.<sup>71</sup>

To increase discipline and morale, the new captain adapted the regular army drills and musketry practice to the needs of his garrison, whose legal obligation was to protect the governor, the legislature and Richmond's public buildings from riot, arson, invasion and escaped convicts. As a former career officer, Dimmock realized that morale is adversely affected by an ill-fitting uniform and improved by a neat, well-tailored one and he began to design a new outfit for his company, combining style and economy.<sup>72</sup>

Since 1823, the Public Guard had worn a cumbersome, obsolete uniform, consisting of a heavy, swallow-tailed "coatee," trimmed with blue gimp, heavy woolen pantaloons, half-gaiters, ankle boots and impractical bell-crowned shakos, with plumes, cords and tassels. Their shirts and underwear were of rough

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., Dimmock to McDowell, October 28, 1844.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., Dimmock to McDowell, May 25, 1844.

flannel. To add to their discomfort, the guardsmen on duty were required to wear leather crossbelts, from which the bayonet and "cartouche" box were suspended, and a knapsack which strapped over the shoulders and across the chest. Until cotton fatigue dress was adopted in the late 1820's, the men had to perform all their tasks in full dress, minus the belts and knapsack. With the exception of their leather accoutrements, all articles were manufactured in the State Penitentiary on Spring Street.<sup>73</sup>

Dimmock wrote to Henry Stanton, Assistant Quartermaster General of the United States Army, at the Office of Army Clothing and Equipage in Philadelphia and obtained detailed lists of prices for the different articles of clothing, trim and buttons needed by the Public Guard. The itemized list, when compared with the cost of each article at the Penitentiary, proved that buying complete uniforms for eighty-four men in a three-year enlistment would save the state \$3,316.32 if the purchase was made in Philadelphia. The wasteful concept of spending more to provide the state-operated

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<sup>73</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. During the War of 1812, the Public Guard wore civilian clothing with crossbelts and round hats. In 1823, Blair Bolling instituted clothing reforms that dressed the men in copies of the U. S. Army uniforms of the period. The shakos were poorly tanned and often rotted on the men's heads.

penitentiary store with revenue seemed to Dimmock to be taking money out of one pocket and putting it in another. In his report to the Adjutant General, Dimmock pointed out that "what the Guard loses, the Penitentiary gains and both are State establishments," noting that such an arrangement presented an "unfair exhibit of the economical management of the Guard, and therefore is unjust."<sup>74</sup>

Governor McDowell bowed to Dimmock's unimpeachable logic and authorized the purchase of new uniforms, tailored to the captain's design, from Philadelphia tailors. The complete outfit was basically the United States Artillery uniform: a double-breasted, navy-blue roundabout, sky-blue kersey trousers and laced ankle boots. The shoulder straps, collar piping and trouser seams were edged in red twill and the brass buttons bore the Virginia coat of arms. The most original feature was the cap, a tall, reinforced affair with only a slight belled crown, topped by a red plume with a black tip. The Virginia state arms were likewise displayed on the diamond-shaped brass plate on the cap's front.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., Dimmock to Richardson, February 3, 1845. Henry Stanton (d. 1856) is not to be confused with other officers of the same name.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., Dimmock to McDowell, May 31, 1844, enclosing a sketch.

On March 13, 1845, Dimmock persuaded the governor to allow the creation of a brass band to augment the Public Guard's fifer and drummer. Within four years, ten competent musicians were enlisted, including immigrants from Spain, Germany, England and Ireland, led by James B. Smith, a former New York gardener. By September 1848, "Smith's Armory Band" was charging admission for their concerts in Capitol Square and performing at private and civic functions.<sup>76</sup>

Possessed of a new uniform and a military band, the Public Guard needed only a company banner to complete its transformation into a proud, volunteer company. Between April 8, and April 10, 1845, Dimmock wheedled approximately one hundred dollars from the state treasury to purchase a painted silk flag from William Horstmann and Sons, Military Outfitters, a highly respected firm with branches in New York and Philadelphia.<sup>77</sup>

On June 17, 1845, The Richmond Enquirer printed a description of the new flag when it arrived in Richmond. The banner was of blue silk, painted on

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., March 13, 1845.; The Richmond Whig, September 5, 1848.

<sup>77</sup> Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Dimmock to McDowell, April 8-10, 1845.

one side with the United States arms and on the other with the Virginia state arms. Below the state seal was a "suitable inscription," indicating the Guard's establishment in 1801. The artist who had prepared the flag was E. H. Murray, the same person who had painted a similar flag for the Richmond Light Infantry Blues.<sup>78</sup>

Besides clothing his men and imbuing them with a martial spirit through music and a flag, Dimmock sought to improve their living standards by erecting small tenements on the Armory grounds to house married soldiers and their families. At the suggestion of the Reverend William Duvall, Dimmock established a small chapel in an unused workroom in August 1845.<sup>79</sup> The Armory Chapel soon became a thriving place of worship for local citizens who had no other church in the immediate neighborhood, including workmen from the Tredegar Company.<sup>80</sup> A temperance society, sponsored by the Armory Chapel, formed a strange contrast to the bibulous proclivities of earlier guardsmen and it attracted many converts. On

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<sup>78</sup>The Richmond Enquirer, June 17, 1845.

<sup>79</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Dimmock to McDowell, August 5, 1845.

<sup>80</sup>Cornelius Walker (ed.), The Memoirs and Sermons of the Reverend William Duvall, City Missionary (Richmond: 1854). pp. 74-76, 87-88, 160.



1823



1844

UNIFORMS OF THE RICHMOND PUBLIC GUARD

August 28, 1846, the anti-saloon lecturer, William W. Green of Fredericksburg, delivered an address to the "Armor and Tredegar Total Abstinence Society of Richmond."<sup>81</sup>

In his capacity of Superintendent of the Armory, Captain Dimmock carried out a plan to improve the armory complex physically and to landscape the grounds. In February 1846, he recommended to Governor William Smith that the state should grant a request from several citizens for brick clay from the Armory lot. This apparent generosity made the citizens happy and saved the state from the expense of grading the property and removing rubble.<sup>82</sup> While this work proceeded, Dimmock designed pattern gun carriages to mount the miscellaneous ordnance temporarily stored in sheds and workrooms. The wooden parts of the carriages were made in the Penitentiary shops while the iron fittings were cast at the Armory itself.<sup>83</sup> After the cannon were mounted, Dimmock submitted a sketch of two special sheds to store them. If the guardsmen did the carpentry themselves, Dimmock

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<sup>81</sup>The Richmond Whig, September 9, 1846.

<sup>82</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Dimmock to Smith, February 17, 1846.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., Dimmock to Smith, August 12, 1846.



estimated the cost of the sheds at \$75.00, and he was authorized to begin immediately.<sup>84</sup>

On May 9, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico and the Public Guard was caught up in the popular hysteria as much as any of the other Richmond military units. The First Regiment of Virginia Volunteer Infantry, commanded by Colonel John F. Hamtramck, swelled out of proportion as eager young men flocked to the recruiting stations. On May 20, the Richmond Daily Whig reported that the "gallant corps of volunteers, of this city, now numbering upwards of one hundred strong, were carried through their exercises, yesterday evening, by Capt. Dimmock of the State Guard."<sup>85</sup> Sixteen Public Guardsmen enlisted for the war and obtained their discharges from Dimmock.<sup>86</sup>

Richmond's "war fever" and the accompanying adulation of heroes were gratified at the announcement that the late Major Samuel Ringgold, the hero of

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>The Richmond Daily Whig, May 20, 1846.

<sup>86</sup>Governor's Message and Annual Reports of the Public Officers of the State, and of the Boards of Directors, Visitors, Superintendents and Other Agents of Public Institutions or Interests of Virginia; Printed Under Resolutions March 18, 1847 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, Public Printer, 1847). Document 13, pp. 4-5. See Appendix B for their names.

Palo Alto, would pass through Richmond on December 16, 1846, en route to Washington, D. C. The funeral train reached Richmond several hours ahead of schedule, however, and departed before any local dignitaries could arrive. An anonymous enemy of Dimmock's, who signed himself "Ridgely," taking the name of Samuel C. Ridgely, Major Ringgold's lieutenant at Palo Alto, accused Dimmock of disrespect for not turning out his men to meet the train. Although Dimmock's rebuttal, printed in the Richmond Times and Compiler on December 18, cleared him of any culpability in the error, the retraction failed to have the same force as the original accusation.<sup>87</sup>

Not all Richmonders shared the war hysteria, however. Lieutenant Elijah Brown of the Public Guard wrote his brother Lewis in Rhode Island on September 12, 1847, noting that General Winfield Scott had surrounded Mexico City, but that

the war with Mexico has been unfortunate (sic) the war with Mexico has been unfortunate (sic) to the Present Administration. in no shape whatever could we gain but must be the losers as we know that thousand & thousand (sic) of valuable lives have been lost & Millions & Millions have been expended--a debt accumulated that will take One hundred years to liquidate if ever.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>The Richmond Times and Compiler, December 18, 1846.

<sup>88</sup>The John K. Martin Pension Papers. Folder marked "E. Brown." Elijah to Lewis Brown, September 12, 1847.

Throughout the war, Captain Dimmock managed to retain his own sense of proportion. The grandiose display of fireworks that traditionally marked the observance of Washington's Birthday was postponed to February 23, 1847, and held on the Armory parade grounds, instead of Capitol Square. On Dimmock's orders, twenty-five cents admission was charged and the proceeds were contributed to the fund for the starving in Ireland, then in the midst of the potato famine.<sup>89</sup>

The reforms envisioned and executed by Dimmock in the management of the Public Guard were not acceptable to all state officers and this hostility became of paramount importance in the late 1840's. As mentioned above, certain legislators had introduced bills into the sessions of 1841-1842 and 1842-1843, to abolish the Public Guard and create a second state military academy. The Committee on the Armory, composed of delegates from Fauquier, Loudoun, Lancaster, Richmond and Hanover counties, had reported in 1843 that the cost of building a new warehouse to store arms and of converting the present armory would be prohibitive. The committee studied the functions of the Public Guard, who sent nineteen men daily to the

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<sup>89</sup>The Richmond Times and Compiler, February 19 and 22, 1847.

Capitol and Penitentiary, policed the Armory, received and delivered arms, cleaned and repaired weapons and did a great number of menial tasks at the Armory and the Capitol. If these men were removed, concluded the committee,

the cadets might perform all the duties required of the public guard if they had the inclination. The state of society and public opinion might, and we fear would, prevent them from performing a great deal of drudgery now accomplished through the public guard.<sup>90</sup>

In his efforts at reforming the duties and discipline of the guard and in his renovation of the Armory, Captain Dimmock inadvertently opened the controversy once more. During the General Assembly sessions of 1844-1845, 1845-1846 and 1846-1847, the Armory School Bill was introduced with modifications, but Dimmock's supporters voted it down each time by narrow margins.<sup>91</sup>

When Dimmock persuaded the governor to begin ordering uniforms from Philadelphia, thereby cancelling the contract with the Penitentiary, he incurred the enmity of Colonel Charles Morgan, its superintendent, who resented the loss of revenue to his agency. While

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<sup>90</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia. Session 1842-1843. (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, Public Printer, 1843). Document 44.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., Sessions 1844-1845, 1845-1846 and 1846-1847. Bills number 101, 139 and 91, respectively, deal with the "Armory School."

he was unable to regain the contract, Morgan attempted to blacken Dimmock's reputation by charging him with negligence in guarding the convict labor parties.<sup>92</sup>

Since its establishment in 1801, the Public Guard had, as one of its chief duties, the task of augmenting the "citizen watch," or internal guard of the penitentiary on Spring Street. These watchmen were largely untrained and public opinion was decidedly against their bearing firearms, so the professional soldiers in the Public Guard were required to supply this deficiency.<sup>93</sup>

During the years 1801 to 1807, the Public Guard was commanded by an old Scotsman named Alexander Quarrier, who, with his first lieutenant, Thomas Underwood, attended more to their land speculations in the west than to their guard duties. This laxity culminated in the death of a prominent Richmond merchant, John McCredie, at the hands of William Nash, a drunken sentinel of the Public Guard, on February 5, 1807.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia. Session 1822-1823. (Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, Public Printer, 1822). p. 131.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>94</sup>Saavedra, "An Undisciplined Set of Vagabonds," pp. 41-43.

Although the General Assembly voted to abolish the guard on December 31, 1807, the necessity of arming the Citizen Watch seemed a worse alternative, and the Public Guard was reinstated on February 11, 1808, under Lieutenant Peter Crutchfield.<sup>95</sup> In 1823, the Committee on the Armory examined all the acts relating to the Public Guard and commented on this sudden shift of opinion in 1808:

The gradual accumulation of public property in Richmond and the rapid increase of convicts in the Penitentiary, produced the necessity of departing from the policy of 1807...<sup>96</sup>

On August 6, 1823, an extensive fire at the Penitentiary placed all the convicts directly under the vigilance of the Public Guard in the Armory until the damage could be repaired. Besides adding to the Guard's regular duties, the Penitentiary fire set the precedent for considering the guardsmen as jailors.<sup>97</sup>

By 1846, however, the regular military and custodial duties of the guard details at the Armory

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<sup>95</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates, 1822-1823., p. 131.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>97</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Correspondence for 1823. Also see any Richmond newspapers for August 1823. See Appendix A.

and Capitol Square made this custom a heavy burden. In the half century since the Alien and Sedition Acts and Gabriel's slave revolt, Virginians had become accustomed to the public ownership of firearms and Captain Dimmock saw no logic in the continuance of the practice of keeping guns away from the Citizen Watch. When Colonel Morgan criticized Dimmock publicly for not providing a sufficient guard over the labor gangs on Capitol Square, the Captain took his case directly to the governor:

The working party...has one soldier from the guard at the Penitentiary as usual, one from the Bell House Guard, making two, besides one of the citizen watch from the Penitentiary in all then three, for this one working party in the small compass of the Ct. House...pray is not this enough?...If the Col. wants more men why not send out some of the citizen centinels.<sup>98</sup>

Dimmock then attacked the heart of the question by suggesting that the citizen guard assigned to the labor gang "take a musket and thus be useful..."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory, op. cit., Dimmock to Smith, June 6, 1846. The Alien and Sedition Acts and war with France have been cited as one cause for the establishment of the Armory. Gabriel's revolt was the direct cause for forming the Public Guard.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

His recommendation was heeded and the governor endorsed Dimmock's letter as follows: "Ordered that the citizen watch be armed with pistols & a gun if necessary."<sup>100</sup>

Although thirteen Public Guardsmen were sent daily to the Penitentiary and three to the Capitol Square Bell House, Colonel Morgan remained dissatisfied with the arrangement and continued to harrass Dimmock. In 1848, after a few prisoners successfully escaped, Morgan charged Dimmock with negligence, going as far as to suggest that the Public Guard had never apprehended any fugitives in the past. A special board of Inquiry convened, but Dimmock satisfied this body by submitting a lengthy history of his men's past successes in this endeavor.<sup>101</sup>

While the irascible Morgan continued to grumble, the governor considered the matter closed and affairs remained in statu quo. According to Walter S. Griggs,

the Public Guard...worked convicts in the Square, and visitors from Europe and the North were sometimes mildly amused by the sight of a small gang of docile convicts mowing the grass, trimming shrubs, and otherwise keeping the place in order under the casual watch of one of these grey-clad guardians.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid. Endorsement by William Smith.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid. Dimmock to Richardson, January 24 and 26, 1848.

<sup>102</sup>Walter S. Griggs, Jr., The Capitol Police (Xerox copy from typescript, 1968?). Virginia State Library Call Number F/233/8/C2/G8. p. 8.



In 1849, Lieutenant Elijah Brown, the oldest officer in the Public Guard, retired after nearly thirty years' constant service. An elderly bachelor, Brown had amassed considerable real estate in Richmond, including several islands in the James River, located close to the Armory. When he died on April 4, 1850, his property passed to his brother and his family in Rhode Island, who sold it to various individuals in Richmond.<sup>103</sup>

After Brown's retirement, his place in the Public Guard was filled by Second Lieutenant E. S. Gay, while Gay's position was filled by A. C. Layne, who received his commission on November 8, 1849.<sup>104</sup> Lieutenant Layne was extremely popular with the men and on December 10, 1852, Sergeant David King presented him with a handsome sword which had been paid for by the non-commissioned officers and privates.<sup>105</sup>

During the decade 1850-1860, the Public Guard and State Armory developed into Richmond's showpiece of military glory, keeping well abreast of the volunteer militia companies. In this ten-year period, the

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<sup>103</sup>The John K. Martin Pension Papers, Folder marked "E. Brown." In the same collection is a packet of surveys of the islands. In 1861, "Brown's Island" became the Confederate States Ordnance Laboratory.

<sup>104</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Muster Roll for 1849.

<sup>105</sup>The Richmond Daily Compiler, December 10, 1852.

Guard received three changes in their uniforms; by 1859 they were dressed in navy-blue frock coats with yellow shoulder straps and collar piping, sky-blue kersey trousers, blue shakos with yellow plumes and white cross belts.<sup>106</sup> After Garibaldi's victories in Italy, the Public Guard adopted red shirts as its fatigue uniform in 1860.<sup>107</sup>

In the same year, a young New Yorker named Elmer E. Ellsworth started a national "craze" among the volunteer militia in the United States; the outlandish "Zouave" drill that swept the country in a few months after his National Guard Cadets first demonstrated it in Chicago. His militia company, soon renamed the United States Zouave Cadets, adopted the Algerian costume of red fez, embroidered shirt, sash and baggy trousers tucked into low gaiters. They were trained by the athletic Ellsworth in his own version of the Algerian drill, which entailed gymnastic exercises with musket and bayonet to bugle signals. By October 1860, Captain Dimmock had trained the Public Guard in this novel, but impractical, form of military mania, and the red-shirted privates

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<sup>106</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, February 23, 1859.

<sup>107</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, December 31, 1859.



Charles Dimmock  
ca. 1848

demonstrated the art in Capitol Square, to the amazement of passers-by.<sup>108</sup>

Such displays of military preparedness in peacetime were not without their hazards. On February 26, 1851, the Public Guard fired a salute on the Square as a carriage, driven by a certain Colonel Tomlin drew abreast of the platoon. As the men discharged their muskets, the horse bolted, throwing Tomlin and a companion into the street as the carriage bounced onto the sidewalk. Mrs. John Rutherford and Miss Betsy Coles were injured by the frightened horse which kept running until the light buggy was completely demolished against the Square's iron railing.<sup>109</sup>

In May of the previous year a less serious accident had occurred when a recalcitrant cow, belonging to a farmer named Price, was shot and killed on the Square by an overzealous sentry. Price sued the Public Guard and collected compensation. What the animal was doing in the Square in the first place was not established.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians., pp. 241-243. The Richmond Enquirer, October 23, 1860. Elmer Ellsworth, "the first man killed in the Civil War," was responsible for hundreds of Zouave companies, both North and South, that endured throughout the Civil War, although most adopted more sensible clothing by 1862.

<sup>109</sup>The Richmond Daily Times, February 27, 1851.

<sup>110</sup>Executive Papers, April-June 1850 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.) Correspondence of J. B. Floyd. Dimmock to Floyd, May 23, 1850.

To offset such warlike demonstrations, however, the Armory Brass Band, led by James B. Smith, provided the Public Guard with good publicity and the citizens of Richmond with good music during the 1850's. When the international celebrity Lola Montez, a notorious mistress of Ludwig of Bavaria and mediocre danseuse, arrived in Richmond on her American dancing tour, the Armory Band serenaded her at her hotel. Among other selections, the band played "God Save the Queen," which created a stir among some individuals who detected political overtones in the music. Somewhat tongue-in-cheek, the Richmond Daily Dispatch suggested that "if anybody felt particularly indignant, they could very easily strike out the word 'save,' and insert another monosyllable quite as expressive, and of a meaning directly the reverse."<sup>111</sup>

Besides the good effects of the uniform, flag and band upon the Public Guard, discipline in general improved under Charles Dimmock's forceful leadership. Earlier captains, such as Blair Bolling, had found it necessary to subdue the "turbulent and refractory band" by erecting the "wooden horse" in the Armory archway, by "cobbing," or beating offenders on the soles of their bare feet with a paddle, and by tying

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<sup>111</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, February 19, 1852.

culprits to a ladder and ducking them in the canal.<sup>112</sup> Since floggings were strictly forbidden by the legislature, these less drastic but equally humiliating punishments seemed the only means of enforcing discipline.

Confinement in the dank guardroom had little effect, since the prisoners solaced themselves with whiskey, smuggled through the barred windows, which left them unfit for duty when they were released.

The construction of a high, board fence in the rear of the Armory had little effect and those guardsmen who seriously craved liquor often swam the culverts leading to the canal and escaped in that manner.<sup>113</sup>

Unlike his predecessors, who were forced to accept tubercular men, syphilitics, drunkards, epileptics and other volunteers unfit for duty, merely to fill enlistment quotas, Dimmock practiced a more effective screening of prospective guardsmen and weeded out men likely to desert or raise mutinies.

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<sup>112</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. See correspondence 1820-1839. "Cobbing," mentioned by Marryat in his sea stories, originated in the Ottoman Empire and was used in the Greek coup of the 1960's.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., Bolling to Floyd, October 9, 1833. Also see Bolling to the governor, January 13, 1824; August 10, 1829; September 1, 1830; and April 23, 1831.

As a result, courts-martial and desertions lessened in number as did medical discharges.<sup>114</sup>

Occasionally, however, unpleasant incidents occurred, such as the cases of Lewis Pritchett and James Keefe. On June 13, 1853, Private Pritchett was honorably discharged from the Public Guard. Evidently nursing some private grievance, he spent the next day in various saloons and returned to the Armory in the evening, where he threw a stone at the building and assaulted a corporal on sentry duty. In his inebriated condition, Pritchett was unable to escape and he was arrested promptly by a constable of the Citizen Watch, named McCormick. Pritchett was fined one dollar for drunken and disorderly conduct, one dollar for throwing the stone and he was required to post \$200.00 bond for good behavior.<sup>115</sup>

Three years later, on August 16, 1856, another guardsman, James Keefe, was arrested for forging the signature of the second auditor of Virginia to some documents. Although the details of the case are unclear, he was convicted of forgery on October 17, and sentenced to three years in the Penitentiary.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid. Easily one-tenth of Capt. Bolling's letters deal with desertions and medical discharges, while Dimmock's correspondence contains few references to such problems.

<sup>115</sup>The Richmond Daily Times, June 14-15, 1853.

<sup>116</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, August 16, and October 18, 1856.

Such incidents were infrequent, compared to the numerous instances of criminal behavior prior to 1843, and Dimmock's policies contributed in no small measure to this improvement. The discipline and efficiency with which he imbued his men carried over into Dimmock's management of the State Armory. On January 16, 1852, a reporter from the Richmond Daily Dispatch conducted his readers on a literary tour through the Armory, describing the daily activities of "this extensive establishment under the able superintendency of Captain Dimmock." He noted with approval the excellent state of repair in which the state's 60,000 stands of arms were kept by Master Armorer J. H. Knowles.<sup>117</sup>

The reporter was shown one hundred "cadet" muskets, cut down for the Norfolk Academy and he observed that "a good report would be heard from them when put into active service." Passing to a smaller workshop, the journalist saw the buffing and grinding apparatus, used to scour rust off old gun barrels, and the new artillery carriages under construction. He then witnessed a demonstration of the Model 1842 United States percussion rifle, the Hall's breechloading rifles, made at Harpers Ferry,

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<sup>117</sup>Knowles, formerly an officer in the Washington Rifle Corps of Richmond, had applied for a lieutenancy in the Public Guard in 1839.



and specimens of the "augur" rifle. This last arm was probably the experimental Prussian "needle-gun," the world's first bolt action rifle, invented by Johann Nikolaus van Dreyse.<sup>118</sup>

Inspecting the rows of swords and sabers in another room, the reporter took keen interest in the "four-foot scythe of Peter Francisco," a relic kept as a curiosity only. In concluding his article, the writer added an editorial comment on the folly of employing only five artificers to keep sixty thousand weapons in good repair. Wishing Captain Dimmock success in persuading the legislature of the need for more armorers, the reporter ended his tour by "coming out upon the open and airy drill-ground," to "take the fresh air and halt a short time for the 'Review of the Public Guard'"<sup>119</sup>

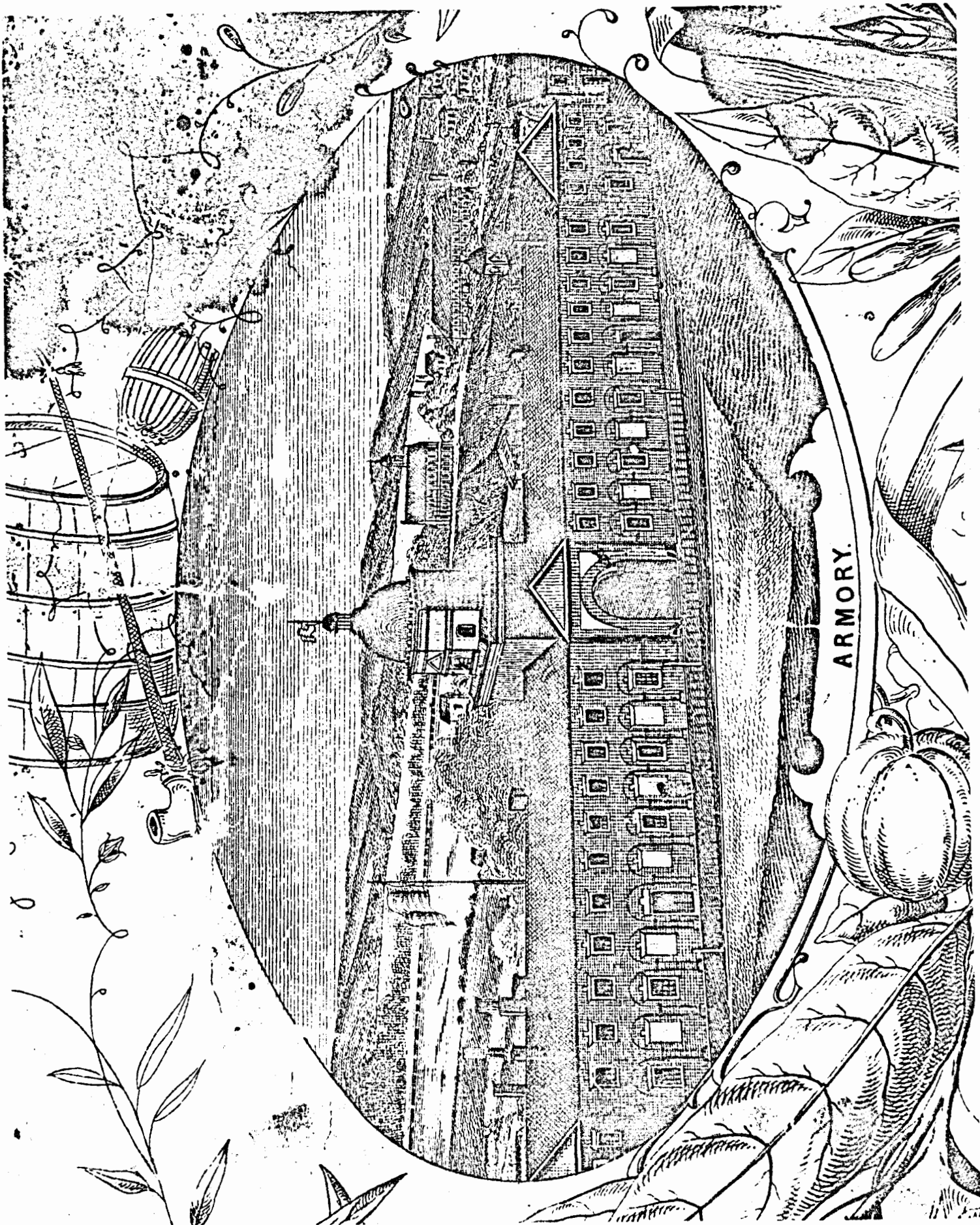
A more scholarly description of the State Armory in the 1850's, without the puns, is found in Dr. John P. Little's History of Richmond, printed in installments in the Southern Literary Messenger. According to Little, the Armory

stands between the river and the canal about a quarter of a mile above the basin, and presents very well towards the river. It has

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<sup>118</sup>Harold L. Peterson, "Johann Mikolaus van Dreyse," American Rifleman, 109, 4(April, 1961)., p. 24.

<sup>119</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, January 16, 1852. Peter Francisco, the six-foot, eight-inch "giant of the revolution," was presented with a sword by the Virginia legislature prior to his death in 1822.



ARMORY.

a handsome front, two wings and a cupola in the center; the barracks connect the two wings, and these circle round so as to include the parade ground, the cannon in long rows with piles of balls, and the workshops. Above an acre of ground is included in this area, and every thing is kept with soldier-like neatness and propriety. At first arms were manufactured and cannon made here; now workmen are employed in repairing and keeping in order the arms stored away.<sup>120</sup>

In 1856, O. Jennings Wise, Governor Henry A. Wise's eldest son, together with Marion Dimmock, Charles Dimmock's younger son, decided to form an auxilliary, junior company to the Public Guard, styled "The Guard of the Metropolis."<sup>121</sup> Since many of the volunteer militia companies had boys' brigades attached to them, Captain Dimmock recognized the publicity value of the idea and agreed to it. Governor Wise was likewise pleased with the boys' enthusiasm and gave Dimmock permission to cut down one hundred muskets to cadet length and to order neat, grey uniforms for the youthful volunteers. Years afterwards, John Sergeant Wise, O. Jennings Wise's younger brother, recalled fondly that

about this time we were seized with the military fever. In those days, the State of Virginia had a large armory at Richmond, and a standing army of a hundred men! The command was known as the "Public

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<sup>120</sup>John P. Little, The History of Richmond (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1933)., p. 91.

<sup>121</sup>John S. Wise, The End of an Era (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965)., pp. 59-60.

Guard," but the Richmond boys called them the "Blind Pigs." The syllogism by which this name was reached was unanswerable. They wore on their hats the letters P. G., which certainly is PIG without the I. And a pig without an eye is a blind pig. Q. E. D....

Captain Dimmock, commanding officer, was a West Pointer, I think, and the beau ideal of a soldier. His son Marion and my brother...conceived of the idea of forming a boy's soldier company...Captain Dimmock entered heartily into the scheme. The boys were drilled assiduously...and for several years the "Guard of the Metropolis" was one of the most striking institutions of Richmond. It always paraded with the Public Guard and the precision of its drill astonished and delighted all beholders.<sup>122</sup>

On July 14, 1857, the Guard of the Metropolis and the Richmond Junior Blues were scheduled to go into encampment on the farm of Mr. Peyton Johnson, superintended by Charles Dimmock "to prevent any accidents." The encampment was postponed, however, and the Junior Blues "decided not to participate," but the Guard of the Metropolis encamped without them on July 24.<sup>123</sup>

According to John Sergeant Wise, the Public Guard was "as well drilled and cared for as any body of regulars in the United States Army...and was a most valuable organization in many ways."<sup>124</sup> This

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid. Among the boys in this company was William Johnson Pegram, later to die in battle a few days before his promotion to general arrived. O. Jennings Wise commanded the Richmond Light Infantry Blues during the Civil War. Marion Dimmock became a successful Richmond architect in the 1880's and 1890's. He designed the Confederate memorial in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond.

<sup>123</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, July 13, and July 25, 1857.

<sup>124</sup>Wise, End of an Era, p. 60.

sentiment was apparently echoed by the other members of the Guard of the Metropolis.

In February 1858, the old bill to establish a military academy at the Armory was refurbished and presented to the General Assembly. After fifteen years of opposing such a measure, Dimmock realized that the perennial question might prove his undoing, and he made a complete volte face. In a note to Adjutant General W. H. Richardson on February 8, Dimmock hinted that he was willing to go along with a military school, provided that he would be appointed to its faculty or board of visitors. "Should the Armory Bill pass the House," he wrote,

I should like very much to visit West Point for the purpose of examining into the text books, and general system of management now in operation at that institution...<sup>125</sup>

Through his connection with the Guard of the Metropolis, Dimmock had become interested, for the first time since 1821, in the military and academic instruction of young persons. In August 1857, he had toyed with the idea of setting up a private academy in Richmond, and at various times he gave instructions in military tactics to small groups of boys, arranging the classes "so as not to interfere with their school."

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<sup>125</sup>Executive Papers, Box 384, January-February 1858 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Dimmock to Richardson, February 8, 1858.

with other schools."<sup>126</sup>

An investigation of conditions in the State Armory, by the Committee on the Armory from the legislature, put Dimmock's fears to rest, however. The Committee's report to the House of Delegates in 1859, declared the Armory to be in a "state of wretched dilapidation and decay...indeed, those portions in which arms are stored...are in risk of giving way at any moment."<sup>127</sup>

This state of affairs could not be attributed to Dimmock's neglect of the premises; on the contrary, his efforts prevented the Armory from collapsing altogether. In a report, dated February 21, 1801, the Armory's architect and first superintendent, Major John Clarke, had complained that "the workmanship of the stone walls of the Manufactory of Arms was so badly executed...it was necessary their defective work should be supported by abutments, arches, &c."<sup>128</sup> In other words, the imposing, arched facade hid a multitude of architectural weaknesses which only worsened with the passage of time. In March 1822, when the Public Guard first

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<sup>126</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, August 6, and September 18, 1857.

<sup>127</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia. Session 1859-1860. (Richmond: William F. Ritchie, Public Printer, 1859). Document 10, p. 3.

<sup>128</sup>Executive Papers, January-February 1801 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Clarke to James Monroe, February 21, 1801.

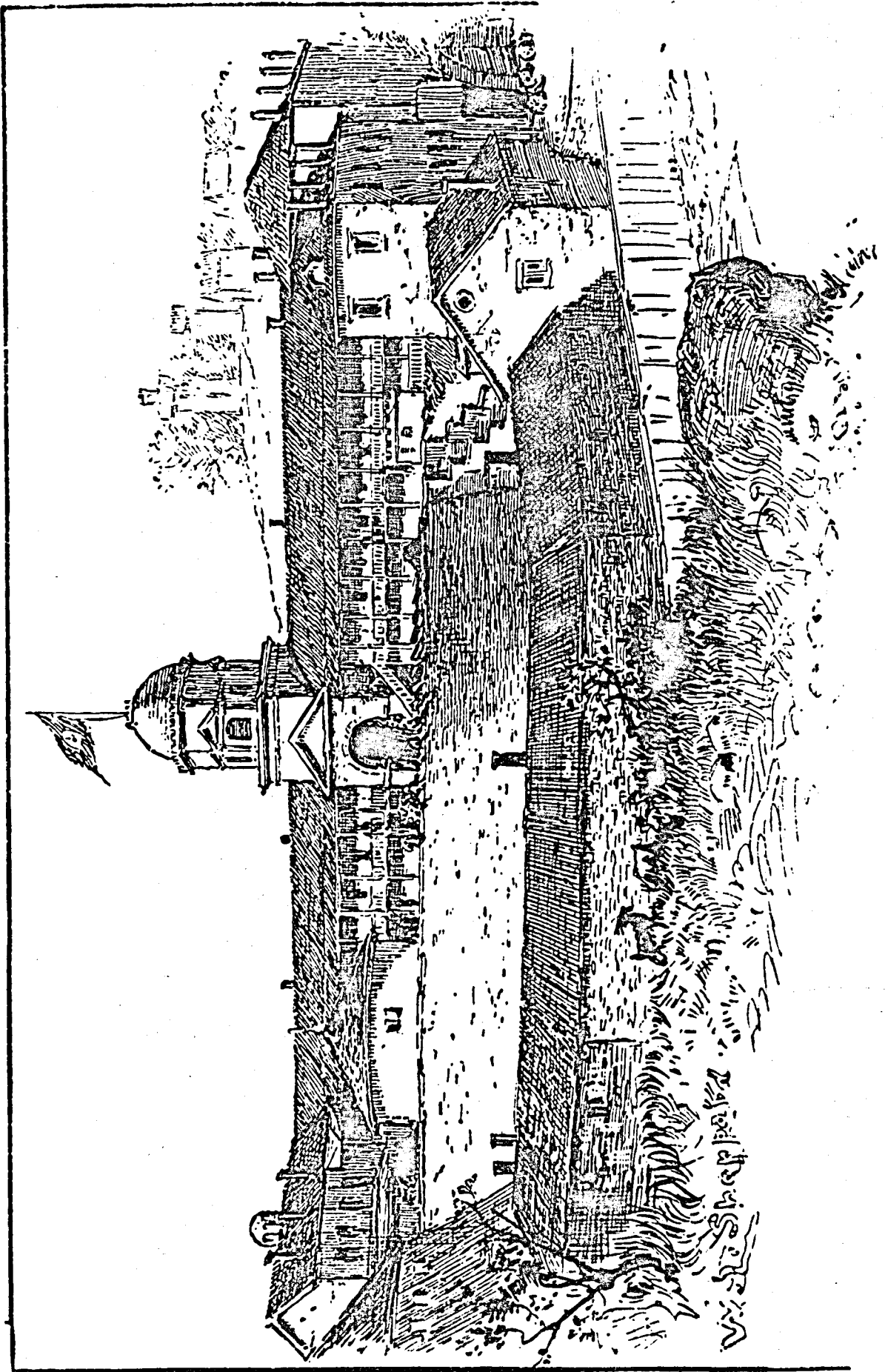
occupied the building, Captain Blair Bolling reported that the culverts had overflowed into the basement, much of the woodwork was rotted and that cows and pigs had taken up residence in the lower apartments.<sup>129</sup>

After the Armory School Bill was dropped from the docket again, Captain Dimmock, assured of the continuance of his livelihood, did not hesitate to petition Governor Wise for redress of a slight to the honor of the Public Guard. After planning a spectacular fireworks display for the inauguration of the Crawford equestrian statue of George Washington in Capitol Square, Dimmock had been informed by Parade Marshal William B. Taliaferro that a large detachment of the Public Guard would not be permitted to march in the festivities. Rather, they would be deployed as policemen to keep the spectators in bounds. Dimmock considered this to be "odious duty, always creating unpleasant feelings to have hired soldiers, imperiously restraining our citizens."<sup>130</sup> The same objection could be avoided if, instead of "hired soldiers," two men from each militia company participating were used for the purpose. The "subordinate position" of the Public Guard in the

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<sup>129</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Bolling to T. M. Randolph, March 9, 1822.

<sup>130</sup>Executive Papers, Box 384, January-February 1858 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Dimmock to Wise, February 19, 1858.



राष्ट्रिय प्रशासन



procession, however, was uppermost in Dimmock's mind, since the removal of a large guard detail on the Square, in addition to the men already on duty at the Armory and Penitentiary, would leave only a platoon to march in the parade. To require a further diminution of men was unfair to "one company that had been preparing and was very anxious to display itself with the troops coming from distant cities."<sup>131</sup>

During the year that followed the erection of "Crawford's Washington," and the visit of New York's Seventh Regiment for the reburial of James Monroe, Captain Dimmock had more important concerns than the position of his men in parades.<sup>132</sup> In 1859, Governor Wise and the Committee on the Armory seriously considered the demolition of the old armory, the construction of a new one and the establishment of a military school on the old site. This plan differed from the previous ones in that the Public Guard would be retained and possibly enlarged. Dimmock was appointed to prepare drawings of the old armory and rough sketches for a new facility, but the

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid. Since Dimmock was the engineer in charge of raising the statue, he felt the slight more keenly. See Chapter IV for details.

<sup>132</sup>See Chapter IV. Dimmock was Parade Marshal at Monroe's reburial.

captain's failing eyesight caused delays in his work.<sup>133</sup> In the midst of these deliberations, an anonymous letter, probably written by a disgruntled ex-guardsmen, arrived in the governor's office. In a semi-literate scrawl, further disfigured by highly original orthography, the unknown correspondent called for the abolition of "one of the grateist nuisances in the state, I mean the public gaurd."<sup>134</sup> The writer accused the officers of gross neglect of duty, pointing out that an increased town constabulary could perform all the Guard's duties at the Capitol and Penitentiary. The anonymous writer stated that the Public Guard was composed of

many classes of men. some young men of disapated habits...when on a spree come to Richmond and enlist, and as soon as thay get sober and begin to think what thay have done thay want their discharge when failing to get it, thay either desert or throw themselves away and are finely discharged for some miss conduct...it is in a word a very nearsery of Laziness, drunkenness and general worthlessness.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>Executive Papers Box 399, November-December 1859 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Dimmock to Wise, November 7, 1859.

<sup>134</sup>Executive Papers Box 398, September-October 1859. Anonymous writer to Wise, October 5, 1859. See pp. 54-56.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

In conclusion, the writer stated that, instead of the one hundred thousand stands of arms supposed to be at the Armory, there were only 27,980; "eaten up with rust," and the Lexington Arsenal was in worse condition, if possible.<sup>136</sup> Since the allegations were obviously untrue, Governor Wise filed the letter away without comment.

Several months earlier, Captain Dimmock had addressed himself to the governor on the reasons why discharged guardsmen often failed to reenlist; "Situated as this corps is within the scope of city temptations, from which it is impossible to keep its members," he wrote,

because of the small limits both of quarters and grounds, it is very necessary to enlist none but men of fair moral character and sober habits--men who have the basis of some self-respect; and this I find it impossible to do generally, because the pay is relatively insufficient to induce such men to join the guard...To get men for such service--steady men--\$9 per

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<sup>136</sup>Ibid. Since the Virginia Military Institute had not been called the "Lexington Arsenal" for twenty years, and the Richmond Armory had been much improved during the 1840's, the writer obviously had not seen either place for over a decade and his arguments were worthless. The letter indicated that Dimmock had made enemies in his career who would stoop to such low tactics to discredit him.

month is inadequate. I cannot get such men any longer, but am compelled to enlist, in too many instances, those who are unfit for the trust confided to them--such men as are unworthy of the service of this or any other state.<sup>137</sup>

As explained by Dimmock, the men's duties kept them on call twenty-four hours a day. Each morning, one orderly sergeant, two sergeants-of-the-guard, one corporal-of-the-guard, one corporal on police, the cook, the baker, the hospital steward, the bucket-carrier, ten bandsmen and fifty-six privates were detailed to their various duties. Three enlisted men remained on duty at the Armory, three at the Capitol and twelve at the Penitentiary. Each Public Guardsman had to serve on a guard detail every other day, the intervening time being spent in policing the garrison, drilling, cleaning arms and polishing their uniform insignia and buttons. In the regular army, each soldier was only required to perform guard duty once in four days. This factor, according to Dimmock, resulted in more volunteers for the United States army than for the state service.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Governor's Message and Annual Reports of the Public Officers of the State, and of the Boards of Directors, Visitors, Superintendents and other Agents of Public Institutions or Interests of Virginia (Richmond: William F. Ritchie, Public Printer, 1859). Document 1, pp. 433-434.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

In November 1859, nearly a month after John Brown's abolitionist raid on Harpers Ferry, Governor Wise was forced to trim the Public Guard to an essential force of trained soldiers. After a brief investigation of personnel, Wise decided that the bandsmen were the least essential members of the corps. Since the musicians were entered on the rolls as mere privates, assigned to band duty, the governor ordered Captain Dimmock to make these men perform the regular activities of guardsmen, although they had received no military training. According to a statement signed by privates Smith, Melton, Muller, Boucher, Emerson, Rittenhouse, Fox, Ellig, Tremer and Cardona, who comprised the band, they had enlisted as privates on the assurance of Captain Dimmock "that they would not be required to perform any duty except music duty."<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, Dimmock had promised them that, should their services as musicians no longer be required, they would receive their discharges forthwith, although their enlistments had not expired.

With this understanding, Governor Wise permitted the bandsmen to hire substitutes and receive their discharges once this was done. During the week of uncertainty over their status, however, some of the musicians had balked at doing guard duty and

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<sup>139</sup>Executive Papers Box 399, November-December 1859 (Mss. in Virginia State Library Richmond, Va.). Bandsmen to Wise, November 10, 1859.

Michael Cardona had to be confined in the guardhouse for insubordination. Governor Wise ordered Dimmock to release the man, recognizing that his actions implied "no spirit of rebellion or disobedience, but simply in his sense of enlistment as a member of the band." Cardona was promptly released and allowed to find a substitute.<sup>140</sup>

Since its creation in 1845, Smith's Armory Band had increased in size and popularity and its repertoire included military music, light opera scores and classical selections. On the evening of July 25, 1853, the band regaled a large audience in Capitol Square with marches, quicksteps, waltzes, instrumental solos and selections from Norma and La Fille du Regiment. The Richmond Daily Dispatch commented on the large size of the audience, adding that "some of the pieces played were excellent, but then again there were some of very ordinary character."<sup>141</sup> After James B. Smith's home was destroyed in a fire, the band gave a concert at Richmond's Metropolitan Hall and turned the proceeds over to Smith.<sup>142</sup> By May 1855, the organization had earned enough by their

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<sup>140</sup>Ibid., Wise to Dimmock, November 12, 1859.

<sup>141</sup>Quoted in Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, 1861-1865., p. 193.

<sup>142</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, January 19, 1854.

concerts to order a complete set of silver instruments, costing \$1, 000.00, and the quality of their performances presumably improved.<sup>143</sup>

On November 15, 1859, the Daily Dispatch reported that most of the bandsmen had obtained substitutes, and was "gratified to announce that we shall still have a fine band in Richmond, willing to furnish music for parades, celebrations, &c." Once "relieved of restraint," the musicians were willing to accept many more civilian engagements.<sup>144</sup>

Unlike bandsman Cardona, whose resistance to authority was based on his conviction that the state had broken its promise, another private in the Public Guard named Wesley C. Simmons was arrested shortly after the John Brown raid for a more serious form of rebelliousness. When asked, "If the Public Guard had been ordered to Harpers Ferry during the recent outbreak, which party he would have aided?" Simmons had replied "that he would have liked to have had the chance to aid Brown."<sup>145</sup> Such sentiments

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<sup>143</sup>The Richmond Penny Post, May 21, 1855.

<sup>144</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, November 15, 1859. In April 1860, Smith's Band joined the First Regiment Virginia Volunteers and served with it until April 1862. The band's most popular tune was Listen to the Mocking Bird. See John Esten Cooke's Wearing of the Grey.

<sup>145</sup>The Fredericksburg Virginia Herald, November 12, 1859.

"of a decided anti-slavery character" were not welcome in Richmond in 1859, and the guardsman underwent a special hearing before the Richmond Hustings Court, with his bail set at \$250.00.<sup>146</sup> Although Simmons pleaded "not guilty," he was indicted on November 20, and sentenced to a fine of twenty dollars and thirty days' imprisonment for "seditious speaking."<sup>147</sup>

In the atmosphere of terror following the Brown raid, Simmons' rash action placed himself, his wife and his three children in danger of lynching.<sup>148</sup>

Amidst the serious preparations between 1859 and 1861, to reactivate the State Armory as a manufactory of weapons, Governor John Letcher received an anonymous letter concerning Charles Dimmock's alleged mismanagement of the Armory. The two correspondents, who signed themselves "Paul and Barnabas," charged Dimmock with building experimental farm machinery with state-owned tools and materials, using the free labor of Private R. F. Cocke to construct a model reaper. The writers stated that Cocke had used \$150.00 of state lumber in this project and that he had been employed by Dimmock to make "tables and wardrobs and sutch like for sale to

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<sup>146</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, November 14, 1859,

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., November 21, 1859.

<sup>148</sup>The Fredericksburg Virginia Herald, November 12, 1859.



eney one that would buy." Besides these abuses, "Paul and Barnabas" likewise charged the captain with supporting at state expense, G. W. Mahone, Sr., an artificer who had lost his hand in a hunting accident and could no longer serve the Armory. In addition, the anonymous pair accused Dimmock of using poor materials and workmanship in building state artillery carriages, and, as a parting shot, they charged Dimmock with leaving the foundry gate open so that thieves could make away with the arms stored there. The letter ended with a cryptic warning to "lookout for John Brown."<sup>149</sup>

To answer the governor's queries about these charges, Dimmock was forced to leave his duties and gather depositions from the men under his command. Lieutenant E. S. Gay testified that not one dollar of state funds had been used to build reapers and furniture and that the gun carriages were "of the very best quality and workmanship." Moreover, Artificer Mahone's case had been reviewed by Governor Letcher personally, and the man had received only a small sum until he could work again. According to Lieutenant Gay, the foundry gate was never left open at night and the charges were "without foundation

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<sup>149</sup>Executive Papers, Box 412, September-October 1860 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.) "Paul and Barnabas" to Letcher, September 10, 1860. Unfortunately for Dimmock, these charges contained a grain of truth; Dimmock had used state facilities for his own purposes. See Chapter III.

and utterly false and malignant."<sup>150</sup> Although Dimmock chafed at the delay in his work, Governor Letcher pursued a wise course in collecting such testimony, which he filed with the anonymous letter. The wild charges against the captain could have proved embarrassing in later years if they had been found without the negating depositions.<sup>151</sup>

On April 14, 1861, Charles Dimmock was promoted to the rank of Colonel of Virginia Ordnance, but he retained the post of Captain of the Public Guard until his death in October 1863.<sup>152</sup> Dimmock's happiness over his long-deferred promotion was marred somewhat, however, by the death of his second lieutenant, A. C. Layne, early in 1861. Layne's position was filled by a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, Heber Ker of Northampton County.<sup>153</sup>

The preparations to turn the State Armory into a manufactory and ordnance depot seriously interfered with the regular functions of the Public Guard and the introduction of heavy machinery encroached on their living quarters. After forty years' residence in the Armory barracks, the Guard was forced to vacate them and seek quarters elsewhere. Dimmock

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<sup>152</sup>Senate Journal and House Documents. Extra Session, 1861 (Richmond J. E. Goode, Printer to the Senate, 1861). Document 32, p. 2. See Chapter V.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., Document 1, p. xxxvii. See Chapter III for Dimmock's dealings with Layne in the Armory Flour Mill.

procured "temporary" lodging in a row of brick houses next to Pratt's "Castle" on Gamble's Hill, overlooking the Armory. By the last week in March, 1861, the Public Guard was settled in the new barracks, which remained their permanent garrison until 1866.<sup>154</sup>

Colonel Dimmock's eldest son, Charles H. Dimmock, had followed his father's career closely, studying civil engineering. In October 1855, after seven years of working on various railroads, the younger Dimmock was placed in charge of surveys to connect the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad with the North Carolina Central Railroad. According to the Richmond Daily Dispatch, "Mr. Dimmock is a young gentleman of fine promise, and bids fair, ere long, to stand at the head of his profession."<sup>155</sup>

Through his father's influence, Charles H. Dimmock obtained a commission on the staff of Captain Andrew Talcott, commanding the State Engineer Corps, which later became a part of the Provisional Army of the Confederate States. On April 19, 1861, Colonel Dimmock proudly informed Captain Talcott

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<sup>154</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, March 22, and March 25, 1861. Pratt's Castle was an eccentric, wooden and tin structure with turrets, built by an equally eccentric owner. It remained standing until World War II.

<sup>155</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, October 25, 1855. The Map Collection, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va. has a Mss. map by C. H. Dimmock of the Pendleton-Warm Springs Turnpike, drawn in the early 1850's.

that "it is the order of the Gov. with your appro-  
bation that Chas. H. Dimmock, Esq. be an assistant  
to you."<sup>156</sup>

With its captain wholly occupied by the war effort, the Public Guard was commanded for the remainder of its existence by Lieutenant Edward Scott Gay, who became its last captain in October 1863, at Dimmock's death.<sup>157</sup> Under Gay's leadership, the Public Guard's numbers shrank from ninety-two, in 1861, to eighty-four, in 1863, due in large measure to the Confederate conscription. Unlike the troops in the field, the guardsmen received dress uniforms in addition to the Confederate-grey fatigue dress, four pairs of shoes and stockings per man, two flannel shirts, four cotton shirts, two pairs of underdrawers and a blanket in 1863.<sup>158</sup>

As the Civil War continued, the Public Guard became a haven for "slackers" from the regular army and for men and boys above and below the ages of enlistment. In late 1863, three brothers, Guy,

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<sup>156</sup>Miscellaneous Confederate Records (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Materials collected by Major R. W. Hunter in 1912. Dimmock to Talcott, April 19, 1861.

<sup>157</sup>Senate Journal and House Documents, 1861., Document 10.

Message of the Governor of Virginia and Accompanying Documents, 1863., Document VII, Report of the Adjutant General. See Chapter V.

<sup>158</sup>Ibid.

Robert and Temple Shinault, enlisted in the Guard to avoid conscription. By 1864, all three had deserted and were captured by the Union forces. According to the Confederate records in the National Archives, Guy Shinault had shipped aboard the steamer "Seneca" and crossed the Union lines near Cedar Point on the Potomac after jumping ship. He was sent to Fort Monroe and took the Oath of Allegiance on January 5, 1865. Temple Shinault was captured near his home at Milford Depot, Caroline County, and spent the next two years at Point Lookout and Elmira prisons. Robert Shinault crossed the lines near Cedar Point, but his subsequent whereabouts were not recorded.<sup>159</sup>

Like Dimmock, Lieutenant Gay also had a son in the Confederate army. Edward S. Gay, Jr., was promoted to the rank of captain in Company G, Third Virginia Infantry, Local Defense, at the age of sixteen. His company was composed largely of underage youths, and was a successor to the defunct Guard of the Metropolis.<sup>160</sup> After the war, when the Public Guard was reorganized by Governor Francis Harrison Pierpont

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<sup>159</sup>Records of the Virginia Confederate Soldiers (Microfilmed copy of Mss. in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.). Reel no. 1973.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid., Reel 397.

in 1866, W. S. Gay, Jr., became first sergeant in the company. He resigned this post on July 6, 1868.<sup>161</sup>

During the war years, the Public Guard existed as an anachronism, the creation of various Local Defense battalions making its functions almost unnecessary. On April 4, 1862, Colonel Dimmock was promoted to Brigadier General of Virginia Ordnance and transferred to the Lynchburg Depot.<sup>162</sup> Lieutenant Gay, approaching seventy years of age, often proved to be an irritable person and the unstable condition of his garrison did little to improve his explosive temper. In December 1862, Major General John B. Floyd, commanding the Virginia State Line, sent 118 Union prisoners to Richmond. In continuance of the policy that decreed the Public Guard to be jailors, the task of guarding the wretched captives fell to Lieutenant Gay, who did not relish the prospect.<sup>163</sup>

On December 27, 1862, Captain Peter G. Coghlan, superintendent of the State Armory, then under

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<sup>161</sup>The Daily Richmond Whig, July 6, 1868. E.S. Gay, Jr., died in Atlanta, Ga., on November 16, 1918. See the Atlanta Constitution, Nov. 17, 1918.

<sup>162</sup>Miscellaneous Vouchers of the Virginia Ordnance Department, 1861-1863. (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

<sup>163</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1836-1869, Volume XI (Richmond: 1890)., p. 249. J. B. Floyd was a former governor of Virginia and U. S. Secretary of War in Buchanan's administration.

Confederate control, wrote to Governor Letcher, advising him of Gay's harsh treatment of the prisoners. In this report, Coghlan revealed that Gay forced the ill-clad captives to saw firewood, police the Armory grounds and scour the privies and open latrines, a job usually reserved for Negro convicts. Coghlan, who did not wish to "have any difficulty with Gay," nevertheless could not remain silent after five of the prisoners died of exposure in a few weeks.<sup>164</sup>

On February 28, 1863, the General Assembly had the surviving prisoners transferred to Belle Isle, under the guard of the Richmond City Battalion, where they received winter clothing for the first time.<sup>165</sup>

General Dimmock returned to Richmond in July 1863, suffering from debility brought on by overwork, and his health declined rapidly. On October 28, 1863, Governor Letcher convened a joint meeting of both houses of the legislature and issued the following statement:

Gentlemen of the Senate, and House of Delegates; It becomes my painful duty to announce to you the sudden death of Brigadier General Charles Dimmock. He was

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

Lee A. Wallace, Jr., A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, 1861-1865 (Richmond: The Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964), p. 235.

stricken with paralysis, about ten o'clock yesterday morning, and remained speechless and unconscious until his dissolution, which took place at twelve o'clock last night.<sup>166</sup>

In a moving eulogy, Letcher summarized Dimmock's career as a civil engineer and soldier, noting that "although General Dimmock was a Northern man by birth, he yet loved Virginia with the affection of a son...When such men are taken from us, at a time like this, well may the people mourn."<sup>167</sup>

On October 29, Letcher ordered all state offices to close for the day and that the state flag be flown from half-mast. The Public Guard and the available Richmond militia units acted as Dimmock's funeral escort, the procession beginning at twelve o'clock noon.<sup>168</sup>

Such a display of public affection in the midst of a costly war was unusual in 1863, and it indicated the high esteem accorded to Dimmock by the city of Richmond. Although nearly every home in the city was in mourning for relatives who died for the Confederacy, this fact did not diminish the

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<sup>166</sup>Executive Papers, Box 460, October-November 1863 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.) Holograph copy of Letcher's eulogy and message, October 28, 1863.

<sup>167</sup>Ibid.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid.



emotional last respects paid to a man whose last  
military service had occurred thirty years before,  
on a half-forgotten Florida Battlefield.

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### III. BUSINESS VENTURES, 1839-1859.

Besides his military career, Charles Dimmock's activities for the period 1839- 1859, included several forms of business and commercial endeavors. From 1836 through 1837, Dimmock was employed as a surveyor for the Danville and Wytheville and the Wilmington and Raleigh Railroads and he became familiar with the methods by which rail transport was accomplished.<sup>169</sup>

On March 8, 1832, the Virginia General Assembly incorporated the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad, a company that proposed to open service between Tidewater Virginia and the Roanoke River area of North Carolina. The North Carolina legislature chartered the company in November 1832, and Claudius Crozet surveyed the possible route.<sup>170</sup> In 1833, Walter H. Gwynn took over the work from Crozet and surveyed the ten sections, totalling 59 miles, 5,160 feet, that led from Portsmouth to the Roanoke River. Gwynn estimated the cost of grading and

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<sup>169</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, p. 212.

<sup>170</sup>Railroad Manuscripts, Box 38 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Portsmouth & Roanoke R. R. papers, 1833-1847.

laying track at \$475,000.00<sup>171</sup>

Prior to October 1839, after the railroad had been in operation for a few years, Charles Dimmock was hired as engineer and general agent for the company by Andrew Joyner, the company president, and Arthur Emmerson, chairman of the board of directors. Dimmock's salary was set at \$2,000.00 per annum for his valuable services.<sup>172</sup>

Like many of the pioneer railroad companies, the Portsmouth and Roanoke was in financial difficulty from the first and much of its right-of-way was mortgaged heavily. In his first year with the railroad, Dimmock managed to cut expenses while increasing the rolling stock and floating new loans. In August 1840, the board of directors and stockholders voted Andrew Joyner out of office and elected Charles Dimmock president of the company. In a report to James Brown, the second auditor of Virginia, Dimmock revealed that the company was short of personnel:

There has been no Engineer connected with, or in pay of this Co. for the last year, if we except the President who acts as

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<sup>171</sup>Report of Walter Gwynn, Esq. Engineer to the President and Directors of the Portsmouth & Roanoke Rail Road Co. (Norfolk: Shields and Ashburn, 1833)., pp. 6-10.

<sup>172</sup>Railroad Manuscripts, Box 38. Dimmock to Board, October 1, 1839.

such in addition to his other duties  
but for which no compensation is paid.<sup>173</sup>

After much of the right-of-way was sold to pay the company's increasing debts, one of the purchasers, Francis E. Rives, who had bought the Weldon Bridge section in North Carolina, began a series of lawsuits against the company for trespassing on his property.<sup>174</sup> This and other difficulties made the company presidency unattractive to Dimmock and he resigned on December 17, 1841, selling his stock.<sup>175</sup>

After dissolving his connection with the Portsmouth and Roanoke Railroad Company, Dimmock was somewhat disgusted with the railroad business and looked elsewhere for employment. Since his engineering experiences had involved surveying canal routes, he turned his attention to the James River and Kanawha Canal as a source of income. On July 9, 1842, the Norfolk American Beacon had printed an account of experiments, financed by Captain Robert

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<sup>173</sup>Ibid., Box 37, Portsmouth & Roanoke R. R. papers, 1834-1848.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid. Rives was arrested on March 20, 1845, for pulling up the company's track on his land. He was fined \$25.00.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid. After borrowing heavily from the Board of Public Works to fight a lawsuit instituted by the Petersburg Railroad Company in 1845, the Portsmouth and Roanoke went bankrupt and sold out to the Petersburg company in 1848.

Field Stockton of the United States Navy, to test the revolutionary screw propeller principle on canal boats. The screw propeller had been introduced in America by a Swedish engineer named John Ericsson, later to win fame as the inventor of the ironclad "Monitor."<sup>176</sup>

Under Stockton's patronage, Ericsson built five iron hulled canal boats between 1839 and 1842, that were used successfully on the Delaware and Raritan Canal. This engineering triumph appealed to Charles Dimmock, who saw an opportunity for huge profits if he could introduce similar boats into Virginia's canal network. Although Dimmock had little capital to invest in such a scheme, he found backers readily in the persons of Francis B. Deane, Jr., a founder of the Tredegar Company, and Dr. William Spark of Southampton. After incorporating as "Charles Dimmock & Co.," the three promoters commissioned John Ericsson to design and build an iron hulled, screw propelled packet boat, which was completed by the summer of 1843. This pioneer steam-driven canal

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<sup>176</sup>The Norfolk American Beacon, July 9, 1842. Scientific American, April 5, 1862. Stockton and Ericsson collaborated in the construction of the steamship "Princeton," aboard which several U. S. officials were killed in 1844, when a cannon exploded. Ericsson was not at fault, but public hysteria forced him to share the blame.

boat, christened the "Governor McDowell," after Virginia's presiding executive, was launched at the Richmond canal basin on June 17, 1843.<sup>177</sup> The craft measured ninety feet in length by fifteen in width, with an eleven inch draft. An iron "shoe," extending almost three feet below the stern, protected the Ericsson propeller.<sup>178</sup>

On June 19, the Richmond Compiler described the ungainly boat to its readers, calling it an "odd-looking craft...much like a catfish's mouth, or more like that of a shovel-nosed shark..." The reporter suggested that, "if they paint her mouth and teeth and daub it well with red to give it a ferocious look," the people along the canal route would be properly terrified.<sup>179</sup>

To construct the steamboat, the facilities of the Tredegar Company, the Belle Isle Iron Works and the foundry of Burr, Pea and Sampson were hired to forge the necessary iron parts. Ericsson supervised the building of the engine in New York, and his agent, Samuel Risley, visited Richmond to oversee

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<sup>177</sup>Alexander Crosby Brown, "The Canal Boat 'Governor McDowell'," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 74, 3(July, 1955)., p. 339.

<sup>178</sup>The Richmond Compiler, June 19, 1843.

<sup>179</sup>Ibid.

the remainder of the work.<sup>180</sup>

Although the boat was launched on June 17, 1843, the work of adjusting the engine and furnishing the interior delayed its maiden voyage until July 1, when it made its first excursion out of the canal basin. John Ericsson travelled to Richmond for the event and he pronounced the ironwork "excellent" and the boat's lines flawless. To overcome the difficulty of passing under the canal's many foot-bridges, the boat's funnel had been designed to telescope into itself, an improvement over the hinged smokestacks employed on Thames River steamboats. On the "Governor McDowell's" first trip, the new machinery worked stiffly but the boat achieved a startling speed of six miles-per-hour, and "no wave of consequence was produced; thereby removing all the fears entertained as to the injury which the canal might sustain..."<sup>181</sup>

Three months after this test, the "Governor McDowell" and her promoters were ready for a fourteen-mile excursion from Richmond to Tuckahoe and back. On September 6, 1843, the historic voyage began, with Lieutenant Governor John M. Patton, Attorney

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<sup>180</sup>Brown, "The Canal Boat 'Governor McDowell'," p. 340.

<sup>181</sup>The Richmond Enquirer, July 11, 1843.

General Sidney S. Baxter and other state officers aboard as invited guests. These dignitaries were suitably impressed with the handsome accommodations and the promenade deck and were further entertained by a banquet, toasts and songs, and a number of "stirring and enthusiastic speeches," including the "clear and beautiful" remarks of Colonel Dimmock.<sup>182</sup> According to Alexander C. Brown, "all in all, they must have had a rare old time without incurring much hazard should an overlibatious guest fall overboard, for the canal was only three feet deep."<sup>183</sup>

The day after this pleasant excursion, compared by some to the expedition of the "Knights of the Golden Horseshoe" in 1716, the first steamboat to ply the waters of a Virginia canal commenced its scheduled run to Lynchburg, arriving there on September 11, at 5:00, P.M. After the machinery had been "broken in" somewhat more, the little boat often completed the 147-mile journey in under four days, with as many as fifty passengers aboard, paying six dollars apiece each way.<sup>184</sup> Encouraged by her success, the canal shareholders voted on December 19, 1843, to deepen certain parts of the

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<sup>182</sup>Ibid., September 8, 1843.

<sup>183</sup>Brown, "The Canal Boat 'Governor McDowell'," p. 341.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid., pp. 341-342.



waterway to facilitate the "easy passage of the iron steamboats."<sup>185</sup>

From October 23, 1843, to April 27, 1844, the "Governor McDowell" was taken out of service for the winter, but resumed her peregrinations on schedule on the latter date. The owners and crews of the older, horse-drawn canal boats proved themselves generally hostile to this innovation, however, and attempted to race the steamboat on every occasion. The captain of the "McDowell" entered into these impromptu contests with enthusiasm, called for a heavy head of steam and speeded the craft with little regard for the canal bottom. The Tenth Annual Report of the James River and Kanawha Canal Company, printed in 1845, deplored this abuse:

The contest for ascendancy between the rival boats was maintained with considerable heat and earnestness, accompanied by extraordinary exertion...the violent agitation of the water of the canal which took place during the contests of speed between the horse packets and the steam packet during the course of last season... [was the] principal cause of the mischief.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup>Tenth Annual Report of the President to the Stockholders of the James River and Kanawha Company, together with the Proceedings of the Stockholders at their Tenth Annual Meeting in December, 1844, and at their Adjourned Meeting in February, 1845 (Richmond: Shepherd & Colin, Printers, 1845).., pp. 480-481.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid.

Whether or not the damage was caused by turbulence from the screw propeller or by heavy frosts during the winter, many cracks and fissures appeared on the canal's masonry sides and bottom and the canal company threatened to halt Dimmock & Co. in its tracks. On July 18, 1844, Dimmock appealed to the Board of Public Works to save him from ruin:

Having more than one year since, by the consent and encouragement of the James River and Kanawha Co., introduced steam power upon that line of improvement--and having continued to run a boat with that propelling power ever since with occasional intermissions, without the least complaint from any officer or agent of that Co., that we were injuring the banks of that Canal--that having been thereby induced to contract for another boat soon to be delivered here--thus making an outlay of \$22,000.--and now for the first time being informed by the President of the Canal Co. that his agents report to him an injury doing to the Canal "9 inches below the water line" by the steamer, and intimation given that the boats of sd, Dimmock & Co. may be ejected as they enter...<sup>187</sup>

The second steamboat, "soon to be delivered here," was launched in the canal basin on October 3, 1844. This Ericsson steam packet, christened the "Mount Vernon," had been built entirely in the North, and it differed from the "McDowell," being shorter of draught and equipped with less turbulent double screw propellers. This ill-fated boat made only

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<sup>187</sup>Board of Public Works--James River Company, Box 2 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Dimmock to Brown, July 18, 1844.

one trip to Lynchburg before the canal officials found another break in the banks and withdrew its permission to run the boats on October 24, 1844. Unwilling to jeopardize over sixty years' labor and the millions of dollars already invested, the Board of Public Works decided against Dimmock & Co., and the age of steam on Virginia's canals was over after less than two years.<sup>188</sup>

The "Governor McDowell" was sold at auction in Norfolk on January 15, 1847, to P. F. Schliefer, who advertized it for resale in September 1848, after making several alterations. What became of the "Mount Vernon" remains unknown.<sup>189</sup>

Charles Dimmock's position as Captain of the Public Guard enabled him to avoid total ruin, but the loss of his steamboats was a heavy one and his growing family made his new salary inadequate. In 1845, Dimmock conceived of a new money-making scheme, however, made possible through his position in the state service.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>The Richmond Enquirer, October 3-4, 1844.

<sup>189</sup>Brown, "The Canal Boat, 'Governor McDowell'," pp. 344-345.

<sup>190</sup>Kathleen Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era (New York: The Century Co., 1930., pp. 214-223.

In 1808, Virginia had established a cannon foundry and boring mill as an adjunct to its small arms fabrication at the Virginia Manufactory of Arms. To power the overshot wheels in the Manufactory and boring mill, the state agreed to lease 160 inches by 4½ feet of surplus water from the James River Canal Company, in perpetuity, at an annual rent of \$1,280.00. After the War of 1812, Virginia ceased its cannon operations, but continued to rent the same water power, although the main armory did not require as much water. After 1823, only one wheel in the west wing was in use to run the polishing and buffing machines, and the abandoned boring mill fell into dilapidation. Between 1818 and 1834, the foundry and part of the boring mill were leased to Stephen Woodson and John Staples as a flour mill, and on February 10, 1843, the lease was transferred to Joel B. Bragg for the same purposes. Bragg ran the mill for several years and sold his business to Jonathan Leslie, who in turn sold it to the firm of Snell and Dickinson. This concern allowed the lease to expire and did not renew it.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>191</sup>Compiled State Contracts, Vols. 1-3 (Mss. folio volumes in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Vol. 1, 1816-1830, pp. 46, 69, 149. Vol. 2, 1830-1851, pp. 64, 131, 159, 263.

Auditor's Item 104--Rental of Richmond Property (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

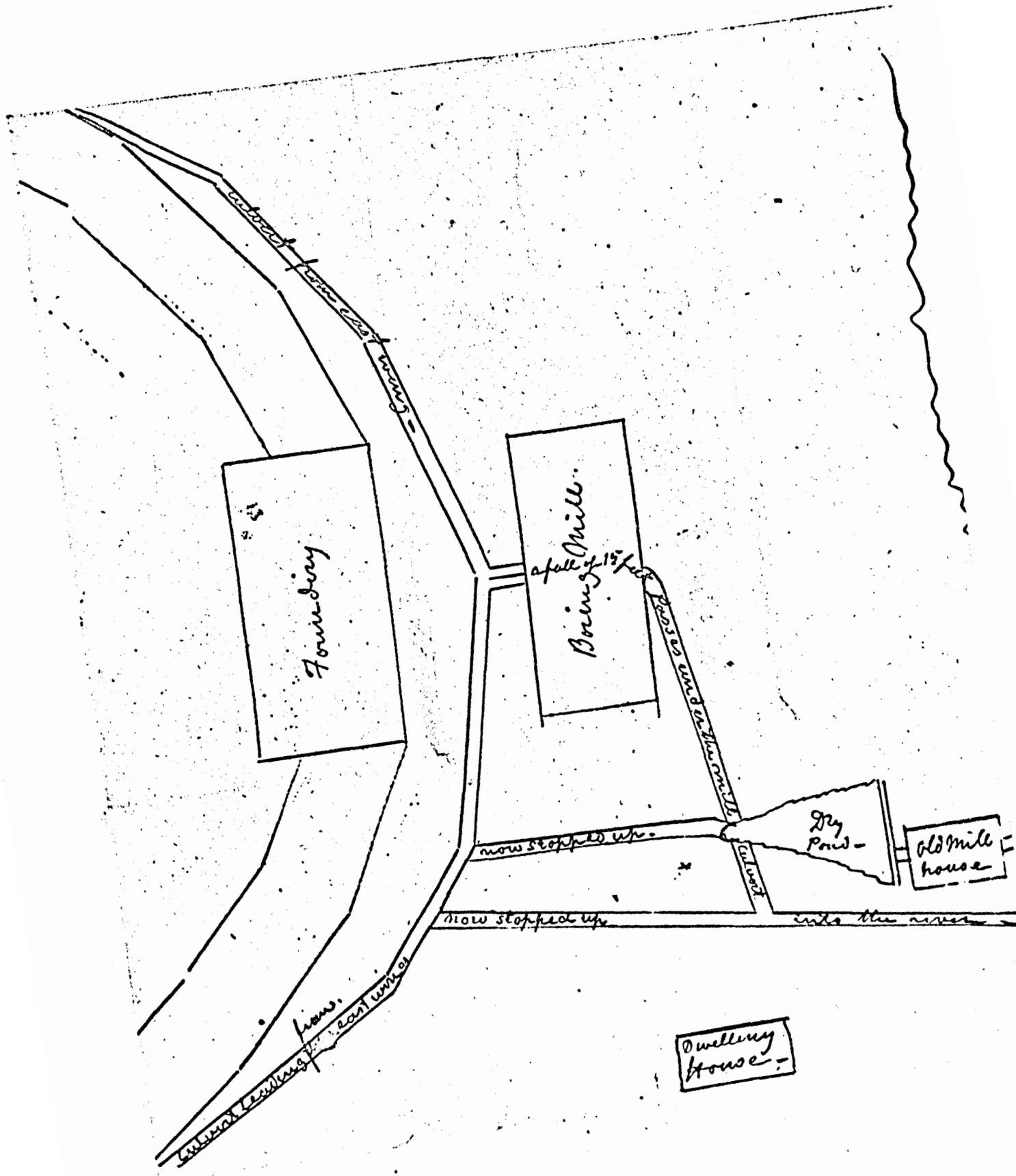
Executive Journal, 1856 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.), pp. 42-44.

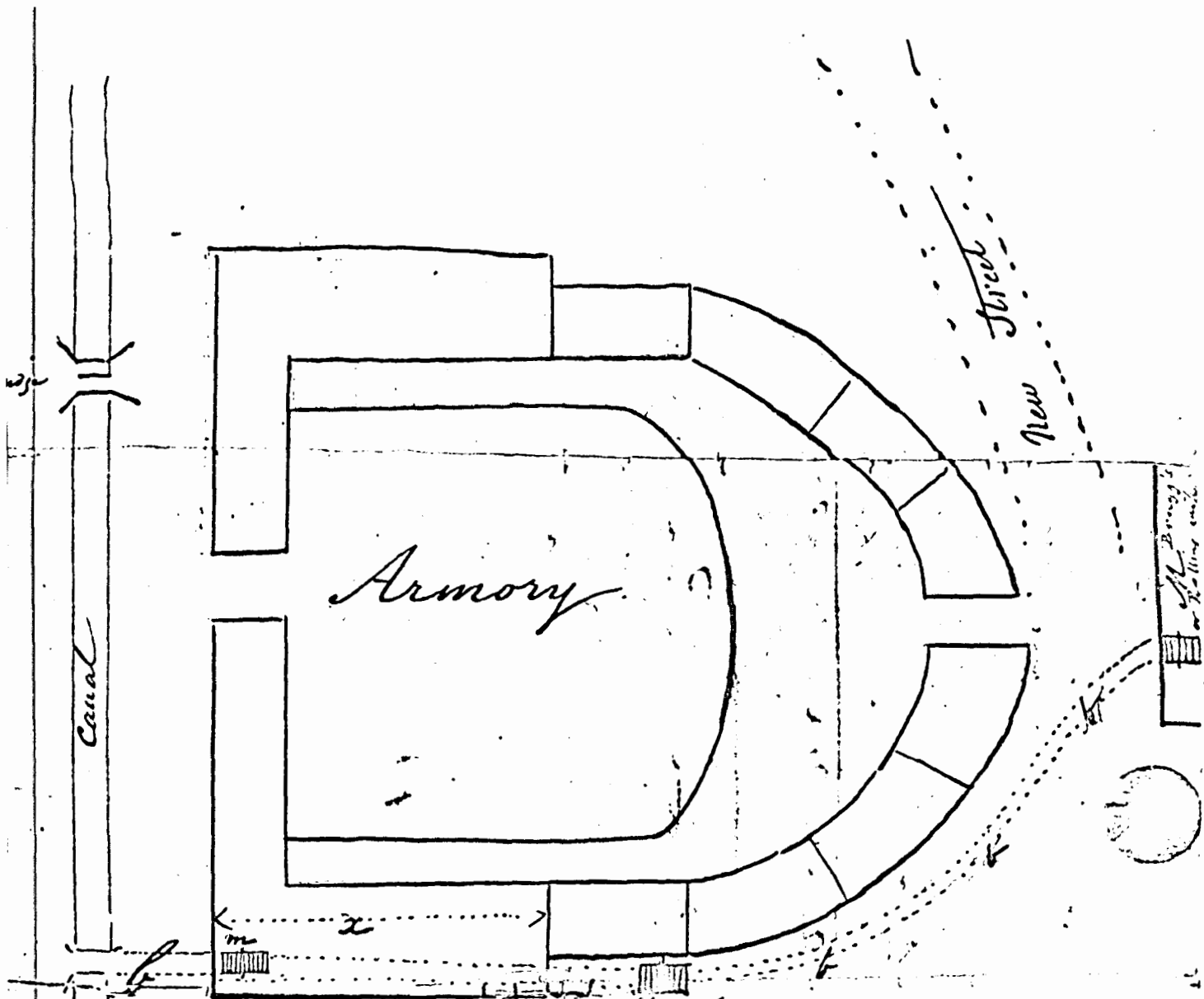
In 1845, Captain Dimmock decided that this wasted facility and water power might be turned to his advantage by introducing a small, nail making business into the disused buildings, providing rent for the state and revenue for the promoter of such an enterprise. To provide the nail-stamping machinery with plate iron, however, a small rolling mill would be necessary. The only available space for a mill was on the one-acre tract, owned by the state, that separated the Armory's west wing from the Tredegar Iron Company's land. Unfortunately, this location would place the mill adjacent to the officers' quarters occupied by Second Lieutenant E. S. Gay and his family. By promising Gay a profitable share in the proposed business, Dimmock obtained his subordinate's assent to the project, despite the inconveniences entailed in having a noisy ironworks beneath his bedroom windows.<sup>192</sup>

Dimmock, who had learned a harsh lesson from his prior business experience, had the wisdom not to invest his own limited funds in any more speculative undertakings, unless there was no other alternative. Since the land he desired was contiguous to the established Tredegar Company, headed by Joseph

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<sup>192</sup>Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, pp. 214-215.





x the space room opening to the front of (a)  
 b.b.b. the water way leading to Briggs (hall  
 y, the proposed point for the new wheels  
 with sufficient ground adjoining it for a  
 shed  
 M. Briggs then

Order line of Armory Ground

Reid Anderson, a former fellow-officer at Fort Monroe, Anderson seemed a likely source of capital and advice. For a variety of reasons, however, Anderson refused to enter into partnership with Dimmock.<sup>193</sup>

Undaunted by this refusal, Dimmock succeeded in obtaining capital from Charles F. Osborne, a New York businessman, who aided the captain in his search for other backers. Osborne, a shrewd capitalist, avoided any definite contract that would assure Dimmock of his place in the projected company and the captain was too preoccupied to insist on his rights as the promoter of the scheme.<sup>194</sup>

Using his influence as Superintendent of Public Edifices to rush the incorporation proceedings through the legislature and the Board of Public Works, Dimmock obtained a charter through an Act of Assembly, dated February 28, 1846. Osborne and his partners, William H. MacFarland and Hardwell Rhodes, authorized Dimmock to commence the erection

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<sup>193</sup>Ibid., p. 215. In September 1839, Anderson, then an engineer on the Valley Turnpike, had applied for the position of captain of the Public Guard. His chagrin at not receiving the appointment may have influenced his attitude toward Dimmock. See Executive Papers, August-November 1839 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Anderson to Campbell, October 7, 1839. Anderson's father-in-law, Dr. R. S. Archer, was the post surgeon at Fort Monroe. See Dimmock's Letter Book, op. cit., May 20, 1834.

<sup>194</sup>Armory Iron Company Papers, 1845-1848 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.); Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, p. 215.



of a rolling mill, promising him verbally with the job of superintendent. The financial men, looking after their own considerable investments, permitted Dimmock to believe that his duties would pay for his share in the business, but they signed no papers to this effect.<sup>195</sup>

Once the necessary capital had been raised and machinery ordered in the spring and summer of 1846, MacFarland, who had been one of the founders of the Tredegar Company, turned to the Tredegar's president, Joseph Reid Anderson, for leadership. Anderson, Virginia's most experienced ironmaster, was persuaded at this point to purchase shares and sign a contract for the necessary iron fixtures.<sup>196</sup>

Between July and October 1846, Anderson was elected chairman of the new company's planning committee, and this body proposed a change in the small-scale business originally envisioned by Dimmock. The "Armory Iron Company in the City of Richmond," chartered on March 13, 1847, was set up with a capital stock of \$42,000.00, divided into floating capital of \$18,500.00, and business capital of \$23,500.00, to finish the rolling mill and

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<sup>195</sup>Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, p. 216.

<sup>196</sup>Ibid.

finance the initial overhead. Instead of producing common nails, the Armory Ironworks would be geared to produce bar iron for the U and T rails urgently needed for Southern railroads.<sup>197</sup>

Since the old Armory boring mill and its choked culvert were inadequate for the enlarged business, the new charter had been prepared to include a lease on all the land between the Armory and the Tredegar lands, plus the use of the Armory's west wing basement. The state-owned water wheel was to be used in common by the artificers and the iron workers.<sup>198</sup>

Once chartered, the company held a stockholders meeting at which Joseph Reid Anderson was elected president and Charles Dimmock secretary, his task being "to perform such duties as may be assigned to him by the President and under his directions superintend the business agents and servants of the company..."<sup>199</sup> This arrangement, far removed from Dimmock's original concept of his own importance, soon led to friction between the insulted captain and his erstwhile partners. Dimmock, "instead of throwing himself heartily into the plans of the

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<sup>197</sup>Ibid., pp. 216-217. "U" and "T" rails derived their name from their resemblance, in cross-section, to those letters of the alphabet.

<sup>198</sup>Armory Iron Company Papers, 1845-1848. Contract dated June 17, 1846.

<sup>199</sup>Ibid. Dimmock to the Board of Public Works (undated).

company or of resigning...nursed his grievance and pursued a course which however sincere on his part could only be judged...to thwart the aims of the company."<sup>200</sup>

After the investment of so much time and capital, Osborne attempted to extend his original lease for more than the stipulated ten years, and the General Assembly had no objections to his request. By the autumn of 1847, the Armory Iron Company was in full operation, but Dimmock persuaded the Board of Public Works to postpone granting any extensions of the lease. This obstructionist tactic indicated the extent of Dimmock's injured pride over losing control of the "tidy little business...to augment in a small way the salaries" of the officers of the Public Guard.<sup>201</sup>

The hapless Lieutenant Gay, who had kept silent about the noisy mill beneath his windows, came forward at this point to complain of the inhuman conditions forced upon his family:

The works being now in full operation,  
I find them to be such an annoyance to  
my family I am compelled to make further

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<sup>200</sup>Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, p. 218.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid.

Armory Iron Company Papers, 1845-1848. Dimmock to the Board of Public works, December 17, 1847.

objections...The noise is extremely annoying at all times but particularly in the summer season, when it is necessary to hoist my windows to admit air. One of the rooms on that side of the building is rendered useless--having a family of 6 in number I am obliged to use the other room on that side as a bed room for my larger children... on many occasions they have become so much alarmed by the noise, and suffocation of the smoke at dead hours of the night that it was with difficulty they could be pacified. I have sometimes had to take them into my own chamber.

My family consisting of females I do not think should be subjected to such indecencies as are frequently presented immediately in front of my windows. I allude chiefly to the hands appearing entirely naked, as low as their pantaloons will hang upon them without suspenders... There are many other indecencies and obscene conduct too numerous and vulgar to mention, but shocking to female delicacy...My best room and furniture which you know are on the interior...are covered with soot and dust...<sup>202</sup>

In the remainder of this statement, written at Dimmock's request, Gay pleaded that he, "a poor man, may not be driven from my office which is the only support I have for a large and growing family to enrich those who are already wallowing in wealth and luxury."<sup>203</sup>

The lieutenant's opinion was echoed by the Public Guard privates and state artificers in a less eloquent fashion and brawls between them and

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<sup>202</sup>Armory Iron Company Papers, 1845-1848. Gay to Dimmock, December 17, 1847.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid.

the ironworkers were commonplace. On January 29, 1848, Dr. Robert Archer, Joseph Reid Anderson's father-in-law, was chosen to be superintendent of the Armory Iron Works, effectively barring Dimmock from the position.<sup>204</sup>

After numerous complaints from the state artificers that the Armory Iron Company's hands prevented their proper attendance of machinery in the Armory basement, Dimmock's temper exploded and he attempted to keep all ironworkers out of the basement. Joseph Reid Anderson ignored the angry captain's warnings and ordered his men to go about their duties as usual. In retaliation, Dimmock instructed the Public Guard to fix bayonets and fire upon any of Anderson's men who approached the state machinery.<sup>205</sup>

On February 1, 1848, Governor William Smith intervened and expressed personal and official displeasure at the childish and irresponsible behavior of two of Virginia's leading citizens. He admonished Dimmock to use the courts as the "only correct tribunal" for redressing his grievances.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup>Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, p. 219.

<sup>205</sup>Armory Iron Company Papers, 1845-1848. William Smith to Dimmock, February 1, 1848.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid: Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, pp. 219-220.

Neither of the two parties involved, however, had the slightest intention of giving way on the matter and Governor Smith was deluged by a flood of appeals, charges, countercharges and threats from Anderson and Dimmock. Anderson, appealing to the governor's wish for peace, begged for an extension of the lease, offering to vacate the Armory basement if it was granted. Dimmock complained that the Armory water wheel was dangerously overloaded and that sparks from the Iron Company's machinery were endangering the state arms stored in the west wing.<sup>207</sup>

The complex wrangle was finally referred to the General Assembly and the Committee on the Armory voted unanimously to disallow the extension of Osborne's original lease.<sup>208</sup> In April 1848, Governor Smith deposited the mass of conflicting letters, injunctions and depositions on the case with Attorney General Sidney S. Baxter. On June 21, Baxter made a vague, preliminary report to the governor, but withheld a final decision until more facts were gathered.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup>Armory Iron Company Papers, 1845-1848. J. R. Knowles to Dimmock, January 29, 1848. Forwarded to Governor Smith on January 30.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid., Report of Armory Committee, March 2, 1848.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., Baxter to Smith, June 21, 1848.

Baxter's official decision has not been preserved, but a letter from First Lieutenant Elijah Brown to Governor Smith, on August 15, 1848, indicated that some sort of compromise had been reached. The elderly Lieutenant Brown, whose irascibility often matched Dimmock's, stated flatly that Baxter had "no right" to determine a compromise.<sup>210</sup>

In 1930, Dr. Kathleen Bruce hypothesized that the sudden cooling of the Armory Iron Company dispute may have resulted from "the depressed state of the American iron industry during 1849 and 1850."<sup>211</sup> Whatever the cause, the State Armory and the ironworks pursued separate and peaceful directions after 1849. In May 1848, superintendent Robert Archer succeeded his son-in-law as president of the Armory Iron Company and the firm passed into wholly private ownership by mid-1850. In January 1852, the ironworks, now called Robert Archer & Co., had become an axe factory.<sup>212</sup> Writing in 1856, Charles Dimmock revealed his ultimate connection with this firm:

Ten years ago I was...interested with C. F. Osborne & Co.--for my services I was to be a stockholder, but difficulties soon occurred and I was thrown out, or withdrew.

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<sup>210</sup>Ibid., Brown to Smith, August 15, 1848.

<sup>211</sup>Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, pp. 221-222.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid.

Some two or three years ago I was offered a trifling interest in the Axe factory of R. Archer & Co.--thus I took a few shares to be paid out of any profits that might accrue. The Books of the concern showing a heavy loss, I could not meet my engagements--could not pay--therefore I withdrew, and have no interest now in said concern.<sup>213</sup>

In 1849, First Lieutenant Elijah Brown retired from the Public Guard and Edward S. Gay was promoted to his position. Gay's former post was filled by A. C. Layne, an ambitious young officer.<sup>214</sup> Layne apparently possessed considerable experience in the corn milling business and Captain Dimmock developed a new scheme to use the Armory basement and boring mill for his own profit, without trusting himself to the whims of New York capitalists. On November 12, 1852, Lieutenant Layne officially requested use of a portion of the Armory basement to establish a mill, after discussing the matter informally with Governor Joseph Johnson. Layne convinced the governor of the advantages, both to the state and to any stockholders, that would accrue by the introduction of "a small mill, understood to be a corn mill."<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup>Executive Papers, Box 369, January-February 1856 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Dimmock to Wise, January 22, 1856.

<sup>214</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. See Chapter 2.

<sup>215</sup>Executive Journal, 1856. (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). p. 44.



Since the General Assembly had recently appropriated funds for a new water wheel, Johnson gave verbal assent to Layne's proposal.<sup>216</sup>

The lieutenant's official request asked for

permission during the will of the governor to make use of the north end of the west wing of the Armory, I paying one half of the cost of a new water wheel now required to be put in, (the old one being used by the state, being now unfit longer to run), provided no part of the machinery belonging to the state be interfered with, no additional water to be used more than is now required to pass; the whole to be subject to the police regulations of the Armory.<sup>217</sup>

Adjutant General William H. Richardson received this communication favorably and transmitted it to the governor, recommending that Layne's petition

be granted without requiring Layne to pay any part of the expense of a new wheel. It will cost the state nothing--will not interfere with the operations of the Armory, and if any advantage can be afforded to a worthy young officer upon small pay I do not see why he should be required to pay anything for it.<sup>218</sup>

After examining Layne's and Richardson's letters, Governor Johnson endorsed both of them, "Lieut. Layne

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<sup>216</sup>Ibid.

<sup>217</sup>Executive Papers, Box 369, January-February 1856. Layne to Richardson, November 12, 1852. This document formed part of a thick collection of papers relating to the flour mill, assembled in 1856 by Henry A. Wise.

<sup>218</sup>Executive Journal, 1856., p. 45.

is authorized to make the improvements within."<sup>219</sup>  
 The governor made another tour of inspection in the Armory basement soon afterwards and agreed that the decayed water wheel needed replacement by the state.<sup>220</sup>

By an Act of Assembly, dated March 31, 1853, Charles Dimmock in the capacity of Superintendent of Public Edificies, was authorized to lease the old Boring Mill, for a period of ten years, to the highest bidder. Since Dimmock and Layne were, themselves, vitally interested in the property, Dimmock turned the job of auctioneer to Wellington Goddin, who had appraised the grounds in 1848, at the request of Joseph Reid Anderson. Dimmock scrupulously avoided all outward interest in the proceedings and he was not present at the auction. After open bidding, the lease was awarded to George F. Maynard on the same terms that Joel B. Bragg had enjoyed ten years earlier. On Dimmock's insistance, no security for the lease was required.<sup>221</sup>

Although the mill itself did not figure in Dimmock and Layne's scheme, the water power that passed from

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<sup>219</sup>Ibid.

<sup>220</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>221</sup>Armory Iron Company Papers, 1845-1848. Goddin to Anderson, January 12, 1848.; Executive Journal, 1856., p. 54.; Executive Papers, Box 369, January-February 1856. Dimmock to Wise, January 22, 1856.

the Armory to the mill was essential to their proposed milling operation. As noted previously, the state paid \$1,280.00, per annum, for 160 inches by 4½ feet of the canal's water overflow to power its wheels. In 1846, while he was still an active officer of the Armory Iron Company, Captain Dimmock had authorized extensive repairs to the culvert which passed the water to the wheels. By the time this water passed over the Armory wheel, only 100 inches of overflow was left to turn the wheel in the boring mill. While Osborne held the lease, however, he constructed an unauthorized culvert, west of the state channel, which led directly to the boring mill and passed 120 inches over its wheel. Thus, when the Armory wheel was not in use, 280 inches of water flowed into the boring mill.<sup>222</sup>

Although the connection was not publicized at the time, George F. Maynard was, in fact, acting as an agent for Dimmock and Layne, and by securing the lease in this manner, Layne could tap as much water power as he pleased, without additional charge, as it passed through the Armory. Less than a year after his first inspection, Governor Johnson again visited Layne's "small mill," and found a "considerable flour

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<sup>222</sup>Executive Journal, 1856., p. 44.

mill, with four pairs of burrs, capable of turning out some 80 or 90 barrels per day."<sup>223</sup>

To accomplish such a tidy operation, Layne had, at his own expense, constructed a new and larger water wheel, taken out the rotten floor above it and installed a new one, and renovated two additional rooms, formerly used for storage. On a small parcel of ground, still leased by Robert Archer and Company, but sublet to Layne, the enterprising lieutenant had erected a handsome grain storehouse.<sup>224</sup>

Governor Johnson, amazed and somewhat shocked by this flagrant abuse of privilege, demanded fair rent for the land and facilities thus occupied by such a thriving business. Layne readily assented to this proposal and suggested the creation of a committee to assess the value of the improvements. On October 23, 1854, William H. Richardson was chosen to be the state's advocate, while Mr. Joseph Mayo represented Layne & Co.<sup>225</sup>

The report submitted by these parties arrived at a number of conclusions, mostly unsatisfactory to the governor, but undebatably in favor of Layne and Dimmock. According to their findings, one-half of

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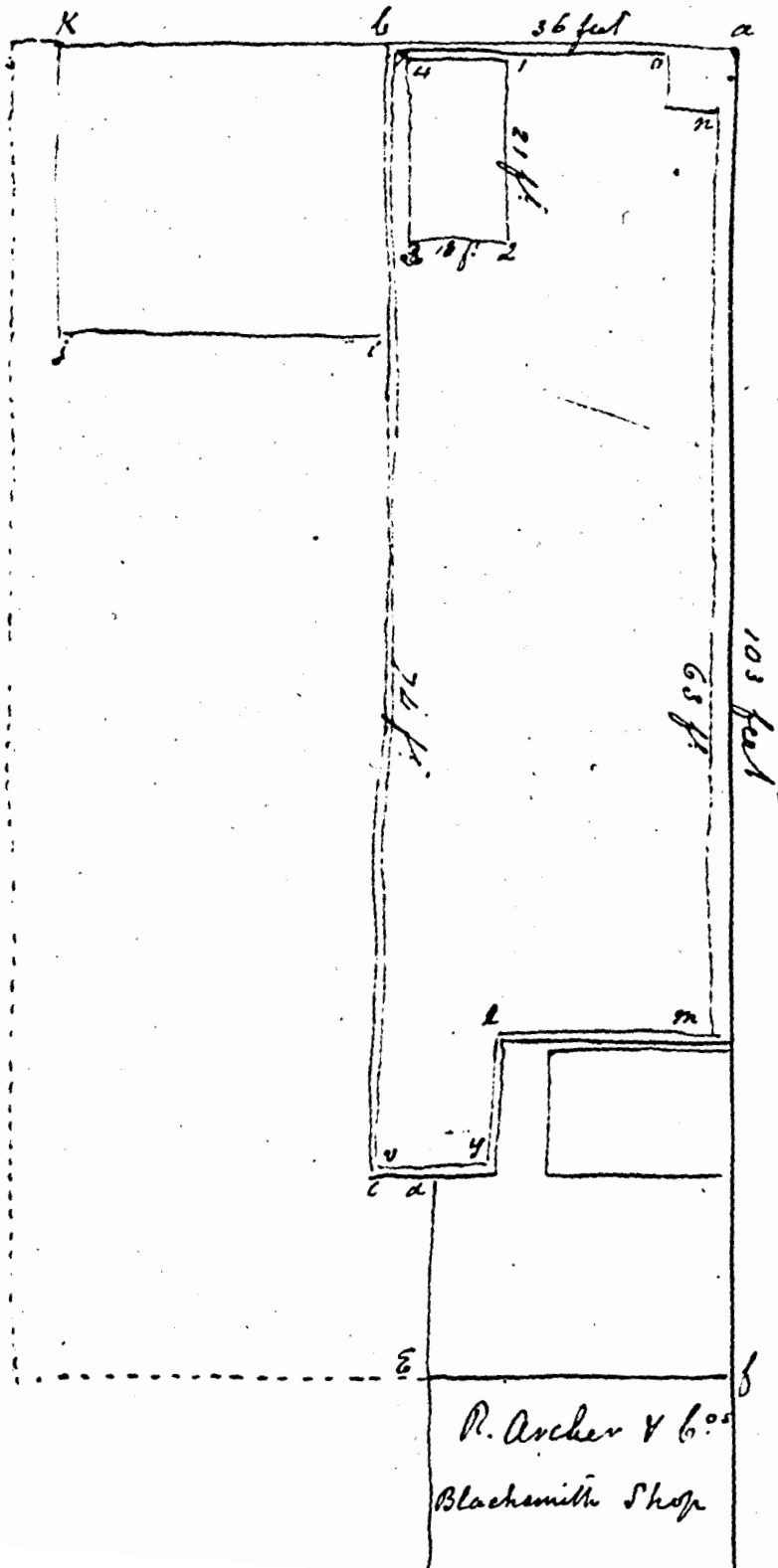
<sup>223</sup>Ibid., pp. 47, 55.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid. Joseph Mayo served as Mayor of Richmond during the Civil War.



Plan of the Rooms in the West Wing of the Armoury leased to A. C. D.



the basement and one room, eighteen feet square, were subject to the state's control in the Armory. The remainder of the property was included in Robert Archer's lease and could be sublet by Archer at will. Layne's "permanent repairs" to the Armory: the new wheel, the floor and the two rooms, had been undertaken at his personal outlay of \$3,500.00. The committee fixed the rent at \$150.00 per year for the half basement and the one room, but agreed that the repairs must be credited towards the rental. On this basis, Layne's repairs entitled him to twenty-three years of free occupancy! Moreover, on the ten-year lease, the Commonwealth would be liable for a considerable sum to reimburse Layne, although most of his "permanent repairs" would be worn out or rotten by that time. Realizing that he had been completely outmaneuvered, Governor Johnson tabled the matter for future consideration.<sup>226</sup>

From 1852 to 1855, Layne officially appeared as the only party concerned in the Armory Flour Mill Company, although his secret associates included Charles Dimmock, George F. Maynard and the firm of Edmunds, Davenport & Co. On July 30, 1855, Layne admitted inadvertently that he was not the sole financier and proprietor. In a letter to Governor Johnson,

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<sup>226</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

who was vacationing in Harrison County, Layne stated that he was "anxious to satisfy the governor on the subject of the two small rooms granted us for milling..."<sup>227</sup> The lieutenant went on to complain that the annual rental for the boring mill had cost Joel B. Bragg only \$570.00, but that he was paying \$1,115.00 for it. Since the lease to George F. Maynard did not mention Layne as being in any way connected with the boring mill, this reference indicated Layne's duplicity in the matter.<sup>228</sup>

On June 16, 1855, Charles Dimmock, as Superintendent of Public Edifices, had authorized \$225.00-worth of repairs to Osborne's illegal culvert, and Governor Johnson refused to issue a treasury warrant on the grounds that the culvert was not state property and that the captain had not bothered to consult him in advance. Layne's letter of complaint, a month later, spurred the governor to select a second committee to determine the relationship between Layne's flour mill and the culvert and to settle the question of rent. Besides Richardson and Mayo, a Mr. Larkin Glazebrook was added to the second committee, but three heads proved no more effective than two and their report was as vague as the first one with respect

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<sup>227</sup>Ibid. The italics were inserted by Governor Wise in 1856.

<sup>228</sup>Ibid., p. 50.



to Layne's, Archer's and Maynard's individual and corporate rights.<sup>229</sup>

Thus matters stood when Henry Alexander Wise succeeded Joseph Johnson to the governorship of Virginia in January 1856. Wise was aghast at his predecessor's lack of firmness in allowing private enterprise to make a mockery of constitutional procedure and he launched a full-scale investigation of all Armory leases since 1816.<sup>230</sup> The financial structure of A. C. Layne & Co. complicated the problem of whether or not to halt the milling operation, due to the death of one of Layne's backers. On January 25, Wise received a letter from Francis B. Deane, Jr., executor of the estate of James M. Boyd, deceased. Prior to his death in 1855, Boyd had purchased a 3/6 interest in the Armory Mill from Edmunds, Davenport & Co. If Wise summarily closed Layne's mill, Boyd's estate, as well as Layne's partners and customers would suffer and this the newly-elected governor did not wish.<sup>231</sup>

During the course of his probe, however, Governor Wise uncovered some flagrant irregularities which

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<sup>229</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>230</sup>Ibid. The copious account of the flour milling operations, recorded in the Executive Journal for 1856, resulted from this investigation.

<sup>231</sup>Executive Papers, Box 369, January-February 1856. Deane to Wise, January 25, 1856. This was the same F. B. Deane who had been associated with Dimmock in the steam packet business in 1843.

cast the stigma of official abuse and mismanagement on Captain Charles Dimmock, Superintendent of Public Edifices. On February 13, 1856, Wise recorded in his Executive Journal that when the boring mill had been leased to George F. Maynard,

the Superintendent of Public Buildings was leasing the premises to himself...; absented himself from the auction because he apprehended if the bid was too low it might be attributed to his present personal influence; executed the lease to Maynard without disclosing to the Executive who Maynard was, that he was his agent in part...And besides all this, Capt. Dimmock has been approving and recommending to be paid by the state accounts for repairs of all these premises, in cases where his private interests directly conflicted with his public duties...His having done so was, as far as he was concerned, an official abuse and in violation of law.<sup>232</sup>

From Governor Wise's clear and copious notes, the true hierarchy of A. C. Layne & Co. may be reconstructed as follows: Of the six shares of stock in the concern, Layne, Dimmock and E. S. Gay held one share each, jointly employing George F. Maynard as agent. Edmunds, Davenport & Co., who supplied the necessary capital for the "permanent improvements," held the remaining three shares and sold them subsequently to James M. Boyd. Had Boyd lived long enough to argue his own case, Governor Wise may have decided the matter somewhat

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<sup>232</sup>Executive Journal, 1856., p. 55.

differently, but he determined to close Layne's mill as soon as possible.<sup>233</sup>

According to Wise, Boyd's interests and estate could not be recognized as a valid objection to closing the mill, since,

he, in his lifetime, entered into the partnership with Layne, Dimmock, Gay & Co., under a transfer from someone else, with his eyes open. Caveat Contractor was staring him in the face from first to last. He knew that Dimmock was a public officer; he knew that the Armory premises were permitted only to be used and occupied at the will of the governor, without authority of law. He took the risk and has unfortunately died. For the sake of his estate I venture to allow reasonable time to wind up the milling operations in the Armory premises. I will grant any other lawful aid and cooperation in my power to ease the adjustment of the whole matter as far as innocent parties are concerned; but the adjustment must be made now and be concluded as promptly as sound reason and justice will allow.<sup>234</sup>

Despite Dimmock's complicity in the extralegal aspects of the case, Wise was unwilling to ruin the career of a loyal public servant but, nevertheless, he issued a dire warning:

I reserve the question of his removal from office; of my power to remove him; and of a court martial to try him on any charge that may be preferred against him as Captain of the Public Guard, united as that office is with that of Superintendent of Public Buildings.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>234</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-56.

<sup>235</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

Dimmock, faced with these serious consequences and believing himself innocent of any attempt to defraud the state, sent Wise an explanation of his beliefs on January 22, 1856, while the investigation was still in progress. "After Govr. Johnson gave permission to Mr. Layne," he wrote,

I with Mr. Gay approached friends to obtain the means to put in a mill... when Mr. Layne first named the plan, I at first opposed... I did not think then nor have I since, that I was doing any wrong; my hesitation in approving Mr. Layne's plan arose from the idea that we could not raise the funds necessary to put in the mill. There was no partnership until after permission was granted.<sup>236</sup>

To extricate himself from his unfortunate predicament, Captain Dimmock tried vainly to dispose of his one-sixth interest in the mill and advertised in the city newspapers. "I am willing to make some sacrifice," he wrote to Secretary of the Commonwealth George Wythe Munford, "but I trust I may not be called upon to lose all."<sup>237</sup>

In an attempt to clear his superior officer and business partner, Lieutenant Layne wrote a soothing letter to Governor Wise, stating that he had

made no effort to conceal from your predecessor, nor any one else, who my associates were, and he certainly knew who

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<sup>236</sup>Executive Papers, Box 369, January-February 1856. Dimmock to Wise, January 22, 1856.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid., Dimmock to Munford, February 14, 1856.

they were when he recognized our action...  
 In the action of Captain Dimmock in all  
 this matter, I never thought that he was  
 doing wrong--or that he intended wrong to  
 the state.<sup>238</sup>

To further placate Governor Wise, Dimmock, seeing that he was not likely to dispose of his stock easily, petitioned the General Assembly to divorce the duties of Superintendent of Public Edifices from those of Captain of the Public Guard and Superintendent of the Armory. Wise, a strict constructionist, stated flatly on February 16, 1856, that he "could not separate the office of Captain of the Public Guard from the duties imposed upon that officer as Superintendent of Public Buildings."<sup>239</sup> In this dictum, however, he reckoned without the influence of Dimmock's supporters in the legislature. A special House Committee examined the various statutes governing the joint offices and discovered that their connection was an artificial one, based upon expediency. By an Act of Assembly passed on March 6, 1821, the posts had been combined to relieve the pressure on the Adjutant General, Bernard Peyton, who had assumed the extra duties in 1816. Since that time, custom had united the jobs until they seemed indissoluble, although the strange marriage had been performed on

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<sup>238</sup>Ibid., Layne to Wise, February 14, 1856.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid., Munford to Dimmock, February 16, 1856.

a temporary basis, subject to legislative renewal. Dimmock's immediate predecessors, Blair Bolling and John B. Richardson, had accepted the extra office, which paid an additional \$500.00 per year, and the customary precedent had been reinforced.<sup>240</sup>

On March 17, 1856, the General Assembly voted to amend the first, seventh, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth sections of Chapter 21 of the Revised Code of 1849, permanently separating the offices. Dimmock promptly resigned as Superintendent of Public Edifices, which enabled him to keep his share of stock, and he continued in his post of Captain of the Public Guard and Superintendent of the Armory. Captain Samuel Freeman succeeded Dimmock as Superintendent of Public Edifices and peace reigned once again.<sup>241</sup>

Besides saving Dimmock's job, the General Assembly passed a resolution that the governor

shall be and is hereby authorized to grant permission to the parties heretofore occupying the north end of the west wing of the armory to continue to use the same for milling purposes, upon such terms and

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<sup>240</sup>Journal of the Senate of Virginia...one thousand eight hundred and Fifty-two (Richmond: John Warrock, Printer to the Senate, 1852). Document 26, pp. 8-10.

<sup>241</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia. Session 1855-1856 (Richmond: William Ritchie, Public Printer, 1856). pp. 96, 506.

for such time as he may prescribe, reserving to the Commonwealth the right to terminate the lease when the public interest may demand the same.<sup>242</sup>

Governor Wise, grumbling no doubt, but unwilling to press the matter further, relented and allowed Layne's mill to continue after settling the question of rent.<sup>243</sup>

On October 8, 1859, Layne wrote to Captain Freeman that "the cog gearing is entirely worn out, or so near it that it is dangerous to attempt to work..."<sup>244</sup> As Governor Johnson had feared, Layne's "permanent repairs" had begun to decay within the decade. Since the gears affected the water wheel that ran both Layne's and the state's machinery, Governor Wise suggested that the cost of repairs be borne at the joint expense of the state and its tenant. At first, Layne was unwilling to pay any part of the cost but he relented on the condition that the state would pay all other incidental expenses of the machinery as breakdowns occurred.<sup>245</sup>

Despite the good relations between Layne & Co. and the state, the damaging report that Wise had

<sup>242</sup>Ibid., p. 472.

<sup>243</sup>See below. The mill was in operation until 1860.

<sup>244</sup>Executive Papers, Box 398, September-October 1859 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Layne to Freeman, October 8, 1859.

<sup>245</sup>Ibid., Layne to Wise, October 10, 1859.

recorded against Dimmock's conduct in 1856 continued to bother the captain. On December 10, 1859, Dimmock reminded Wise that

soon after you entered upon your duties as Gov., you caused to be entered upon the Executive Journal, charges most painfully effecting (sic) my character.

At that time I made a full, and as I thought, most respectful reply which you directed the Secy. of State to return to me, so that those charges remain unanswered, and so far as any record is concerned, acquiesced in by me...<sup>246</sup>

With the aftermath of the Harpers Ferry raid and other pressing matters on his mind, Governor Wise endorsed Dimmock's letter in these words: "I don't comprehend the meaning or purpose of this. My action on the matter was determinate. H. A. Wise Dec<sup>r</sup>. 10th 1859."<sup>247</sup> The governor indicated to Dimmock that he would be pleased to discuss the question in a personal interview, but there is no evidence to prove that such a meeting took place.<sup>248</sup>

During 1860, the State Armory was reactivated as a manufactory of arms and A. C. Layne & Co. was necessarily dissolved. Dimmock engaged in no more private business pursuits for the remainder of his life.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>246</sup>Executive Papers, Box 399, November-December 1859. Dimmock to Wise, December 10, 1859.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid. Wise's endorsement.

<sup>248</sup>Ibid. Munford to Dimmock, December 11, 1859.

<sup>249</sup>See Chapters II and V. Layne died in 1861.



#### IV. PUBLIC LIFE IN RICHMOND, 1844-1861.

Despite the financial misfortunes that plagued the last twenty years of his life, Charles Dimmock achieved considerable fame and success in his public activities in Richmond during his tenure as captain of the Public Guard.

In the era before electronically broadcasted mass entertainments, the Public Guard and the volunteer militia companies of Richmond provided recreation to the citizenry through parades, drills, dances and encampments. The Public Guard was fortunate in being a state-maintained corps, with the backing of the Commonwealth's treasury for its extracurricular activities. Since its creation in 1801, the Public Guard's officers had been responsible for firing artillery salutes and setting off Roman candles on Washington's Birthday, the Fourth of July and other holidays. Virginia's chief magistrates recognized the value of good public relations and the fireworks

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displays became more elaborate each year.<sup>250</sup>

When Charles Dimmock accepted the command of the Public Guard, he also assumed the unofficial duties that accompanied the position, including the supervision of fireworks and state celebrations. More than his predecessors, Dimmock believed in maintaining good relations with Richmonders and he strove to equal the volunteer militia in training and showmanship. Through his efforts to create the Armory Band, to obtain stylish uniforms and a company flag and to improve the physical appearance of the Armory ground, Dimmock soon came to the notice of Richmond's city government.<sup>251</sup>

In April 1846, the Richmond Common Council hired Dimmock to oversee the proposed landscaping of Capitol Square. "He has a carte blanche," reported the Richmond Enquirer,

and being a man of taste, will do the best the means will allow...what with...Governor SMITH'S liberality and Capt. DIMMOCK'S

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<sup>250</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Scattered throughout these papers are vouchers for fireworks and artillery blanks for these celebrations. On February 22, 1819, Colonel William Tatham, a noted engineer and economist, committed suicide by stepping in front of the cannon as it was fired. The heavy powder charge and thick flannel wadding blew him apart at such close range. See The Richmond Enquirer, February 23, 1819. Fireworks were used more frequently than the cannon thereafter.

<sup>251</sup>The Richmond Enquirer, April 25, 1846. See Chapter II.

taste and energy, we now have a fair prospect of seeing the Square greatly improved.<sup>252</sup>

Besides realigning the footpaths on a symmetrical plan and rearranging the trees and shrubbery, Dimmock advertised for bids to demolish the old State Museum building on the Square. The salvaged bricks were then used to construct the new courthouse, then under construction.<sup>253</sup> Finally, Dimmock supervised the grading of the Square's southwest corner, the site of the Public Guard's bell house, the Richmond Fayette Artillery's gun shed and Fire Company No. 9's engine house.<sup>254</sup> Prior to Dimmock's intelligent beautification, the Capitol Square had been Richmond's worst eyesore:

as rugged a piece of ground as many of our hillsides in the country exhibit after a ruinous course of cultivation. Deep ravines furrowed it on either side, and May and Jamestown weeds decorated and perfumed it in undisputed luxuriance. On either side of the Capitol was a long horserack, for the convenience of the public and to diversify the odor...and pigs, poultry and children enlivened the scene.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>252</sup>Ibid.

<sup>253</sup>Ibid., April 14 and April 16, 1846.

<sup>254</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of Public Edifices (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Dimmock to McDowell, December 30, 1845. The bell house had been built for the Public Guard in 1824. See E. M. Saavedra, "Richmond's Old Bell House," Virginia Cavalcade, XIX, 2(Autumn, 1969).., pp. 5-11.

<sup>255</sup>Samuel Mordecai, Richmond in By-Gone Days (Richmond: West and Johnston, 1860).., pp. 71-72.

The captain's success in turning this wasteland into a magnificent park enhanced his reputation as a valuable public officer and he was tendered a nomination for a seat on the Common Council in April 1847. The previous nominee had been Joseph Reid Anderson and Dimmock declined the offer in favor of his superior in the Armory Iron Company, possibly to ease their relationship.<sup>256</sup>

In September 1848, Dimmock was in Lexington on an inspection tour of the arsenal at the Virginia Military Institute. In his absence, the Virginia Whig Party appointed him a delegate to the state nominating convention in Lexington. Advertisements in various newspapers, to this effect, either failed to reach Dimmock or else he chose to ignore them until his return to Richmond. On September 22, 1848, the captain issued the following statement in the Richmond Whig:

Since my return home my attention has been called to the announcement in your paper that I had been honored with the appointment of Whig delegate to the Lexington Convention-- and that it was expected I would attend (as I was supposed to be) somewhere in the neighborhood of that place. Finding myself somewhat conspicuously referred to, I think it becomes me to say, that since I have held my present office under the State, I have not believed it proper in me to take any active part in the conflict of party politics, contenting myself with depositing my vote

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<sup>256</sup>The Richmond Times and Compiler, February 22, 1847. See Chapter III.

on the days of election.<sup>257</sup>

Besides displaying wisdom in refusing to declare any party affiliations, Dimmock's decision was based upon sound, personal reasons. If he absented himself from Richmond at the height of the Armory Iron Company disputes, his enemies in the Tredegar Company might have seriously undermined his position. The question of establishing an Armory school and abolishing the Public Guard was still under discussion in the legislature and, on the whole, Dimmock's interests were best served by declining the nomination.<sup>258</sup>

In the fall of 1850, delegates were elected to attend the state Constitutional Convention and Dimmock was proposed as a candidate by the Whigs. Although he was flattered by this offer, Dimmock adhered to his principles and declined the nomination.<sup>259</sup>

The captain, however, had no aversion to holding political offices, providing that he ran as an independent candidate. In April 1850, he was elected to a seat on the Richmond Common Council after campaigning on the "Citizen's Ticket."<sup>260</sup> Dimmock's

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<sup>257</sup>The Richmond Whig, September 22, 1848.

<sup>258</sup>See chapters II and III. Since Dimmock held office at the pleasure of the incumbent governor, a Democratic governor might have proved hostile if Dimmock declared himself a Whig.

<sup>259</sup>The Richmond Whig, August 26, 1850.

<sup>260</sup>Richmond City Common Council Records, 1850-1853 (Microfilmed copy of Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

record of service for his 1850-1853 term was undistinguished, but although he attended no meetings from September 1852 to April 1853, he was reelected in 1854 and 1857.<sup>261</sup>

In listing the winners of council seats in April 1857, the Richmond Whig inadvertently listed Dimmock among the Democratic candidates. On April 28, 1857, the Whig was forced to print a retraction, and stated that Dimmock had run on the Citizen's Ticket, avowing "that he would not be a party candidate, or if elected, a partizan councilman...We feel confident that Capt. D. will make a good councilman."<sup>262</sup>

Besides commanding the Public Guard, supervising the state's public buildings and serving on the Common Council, Charles Dimmock was active in the fields of education and engineering. From 1844 to 1846, he was a member of the Board of Visitors at the Virginia Military Institute, where he worked with his former colleague at West Point, Claudius Crozet.<sup>263</sup> As mentioned previously, Dimmock conducted private classes in military tactics to Richmond youths

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<sup>261</sup>Cullum, Biographical Register, Vol. 1, p. 212.  
Richmond City Common Council Records, 1854-1860.

<sup>262</sup>The Richmond Whig, April 28, 1857.

<sup>263</sup>Couper, Claudius Crozet, p. 123.

and he considered the possibility of joining the faculty of the proposed Armory School in 1858.<sup>264</sup>

At all times during his captaincy, Dimmock encouraged the participation of the Armory Brass Band at commencement exercises in Virginia colleges. During the 1850's, the band played at graduation ceremonies at Richmond College, Randolph-Macon College and at Chapel Hill, North Carolina.<sup>265</sup>

Charles Dimmock's major contributions to Richmond life, however, were in the field of engineering. As the transformer of Capitol Square from a weed-choked pasture to a gracious park, in the best southern tradition, Dimmock was chosen to be a member of the state's Committee on the Capitol Square. In 1852, the Federal Government sent sets of uniform, sealed weights and measures to the various states and the Capitol Square Committee was authorized to choose a place to store them. The ideal location for such an edifice was the southwest corner of Capitol Square, improved by Dimmock's grading. The captain heartily disliked the "ill-contrived and unsightly Bell House" that occupied the site and he recommended its demolition. The other members of the committee, Thomas T.

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<sup>264</sup>See Chapter II.

<sup>265</sup>The Richmond Daily Dispatch, July 4, 1853.  
The Richmond Whig, June 10, 1856.

Giles and Robert W. Hughes, agreed with Dimmock and submitted their report on March 11, 1852, concluding that,

it is worthy of remark, and perhaps not very creditable to the State of Virginia, that in this age of mechanics, a soldier of the State Guard is constantly kept on duty to perform the unmilitary function of a clock hammer; and is made, during the tedious hours of the night as well as day to strike the advent of each recurring period of time, and announce it by striking upon a bell.<sup>266</sup>

The committee advised that the bell house be torn down and replaced by a building to house the weights and measures, and that the state purchase a striking clock, "such as is found in every town, and to the North in every village..."<sup>267</sup>

This report, however, displeased the governor and legislature, who made other arrangements to store the sealed measures, thus preserving the quaint bell house which still graces the Square.<sup>268</sup>

In his capacity as Superintendent of Public Edifices, Dimmock was also responsible for maintaining the State Capitol building. Prior to 1846, the Jeffersonian building resembled a late Roman temple,

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<sup>266</sup>Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, begun and held at the Capitol, in the city of Richmond, on Monday the twenty-second day of November, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two (Richmond: John Warrock, Printer to the Senate, 1853)., Document 17, p. 3.

<sup>267</sup>Ibid.

<sup>268</sup>Saavedra, "Richmond's Old Bell House," p. 5.



but this similarity did not bear close scrutiny. Its rough, red-brick exterior and slate roof were especially disappointing before the extensive landscaping of 1845-1847, and Jefferson's original vision of classical pillars rising from the Virginia acropolis was badly obscured until its beauty emerged under Dimmock's management. In April 1846, Dimmock advertised for competitive bids to stucco and whitewash the Capitol and to paint its interior. After this intensive treatment, the building assumed the appearance that Jefferson originally intended.<sup>269</sup>

Besides beautifying the building, Dimmock thoroughly investigated its structural defects and obtained the necessary funds to have them remedied. On January 10, 1853, Dimmock reported to Shelton F. Leake, President of the State Senate, that Houdon's famous statue of George Washington, the Capitol's main tourist attraction, was in grave danger. Dimmock cited the open fireplaces, used to heat the Capitol, as one threat and the heavy, glass skylight in the rotunda as another. He recommended the substitution of steam radiators for the open grates and the reconstruction of the skylight, using an iron frame and smaller glass panes. This last measure removed the danger

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<sup>269</sup>The Richmond Enquirer, April 16, 1846. Jefferson's original plaster model of the Capitol is extant. The main inspiration for its design was the "Maison Carre" at Nimes, France, a late Roman temple.

of collapse from heavy accumulations of ice and snow during the winter.<sup>270</sup> A bill to carry these suggestions into effect passed the Senate by a vote of 28 to 5, on February 23, 1853, and the first modern heating system was subsequently installed in the Capitol.<sup>271</sup>

Charles Dimmock's greatest engineering triumph, however, was the erection of another statue of George Washington in Capitol Square, the colossal, equestrian monument by Thomas Crawford that still dominates the area. On February 22, 1849, the Virginia General Assembly passed a bill to erect a suitable monument to Washington on Captiol Square. The monument was to serve a double purpose, incorporating an equestrian statue with a crypt, intended for Washington's tomb. Although the second part of the plan was thwarted by the general's descendants, who had no intention of moving his remains from Mount Vernon, the empty crypt was prepared as planned and it forms a part of the monument at the present time.<sup>272</sup>

The original Act of Assembly provided for commissioners to superintend the work of raising the pedestal

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<sup>270</sup>Journal of the Senate...of Virginia, 1852-1853., p. 111.

<sup>271</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>272</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, February 22, 1858. The empty tomb is on the southwest side of the monument, directly beneath the horse's head.

and for an appropriation of \$100,000.00.<sup>273</sup> The state sponsored an international competition to encourage sculptors to submit models and, out of sixty-four entries, the creation of Thomas Crawford, a New Yorker, was selected. A prize of \$500.00 accompanied the acceptance of Crawford's model.<sup>274</sup>

The final contract between Crawford and Governor John B. Floyd was signed on June 27, 1850. It specified that Crawford was to sculpt

one equestrian group representing General George Washington on Horseback, the portraiture and costume to be similar to that represented by Houdon's Statue of Washington now in the Capitol...the group to be enriched by the proper introduction of gold on such parts of the costume as may require it; the height of said equestrian group when completed to be not less than fifteen English feet...<sup>275</sup>

Besides this main group, Crawford was to create full length, pedestrian statues of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry, each to be twelve feet high, thirteen bronze stars, not less than fifteen inches high, and thirteen bronze wreaths, measuring not less than sixteen inches high. In addition, Crawford was to sculpt two bronze shields, not less than six feet high,

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<sup>273</sup>Ibid.

<sup>274</sup>Ibid.

<sup>275</sup>H. W. Flournoy (ed.), Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from 1850 to 1869, Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond. 11 vols. (Richmond: The Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1890). Vol. XI, pp. 27-31.

representing the obverse and reverse of the Virginia coat-of-arms. All pieces were to be delivered by February 22, 1856.<sup>276</sup>

The three-tiered, hexagonal pedestal for the monument was dedicated and begun on February 22, 1850, with President Zachary Taylor in attendance at the cornerstone laying ceremony. The cornerstone, a 10,000-pound of granite, was donated by the James River and Kanawha Canal Company, while the capstone was presented by the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company.<sup>277</sup>

On August 9, 1856, a second contract was signed by Thomas Crawford and Governor Henry A. Wise for an additional four pedestrian statues to join those of Jefferson and Henry. These were to represent General Andrew Lewis, George Mason, Thomas Nelson and John Marshall, and were to be attired "in the costumes... most commonly worn by each in the performance of his public duties."<sup>278</sup>

By this date, Crawford had moved to Rome, and the actual bronze castings were accomplished by the

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<sup>276</sup>Ibid. The shields were not completed and are not a part of the present monument.

<sup>277</sup>John A. Cutchins, A Famous Command, The Richmond Light Infantry Blues (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1934)., p. 57.

The Richmond Dispatch, February 22, 1858.

<sup>278</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. XI., p. 45.

Royal Bavarian Foundry at Munich.<sup>279</sup> Crawford died on October 10, 1857, after completeing all but the two shields and the statues of Lewis and Nelson, and the state of Virginia negotiated with the sculptor Randolph Rogers (1825-1892) to finish the work. Besides the unfinished statues, Rogers was commissioned to create "six bronze trophies and bas reliefs for the six lower pedestals...to represent emblematically or allegorically the ideas of the epoch in which the person lived."<sup>280</sup>

On November 5, 1857, the Richmond Dispatch announced the safe arrival of the equestrian group in the United States, aboard the "Walborg," a Dutch vessel.<sup>281</sup> The committee in charge of the monument remained undecided about the method by which the 24-ton, crated statue and its dray wagon would be conveyed to Capitol Square, preferring teams of horses to the willing volunteers who offered to pull it by hand. On November 24, however, an attempt to move the ponderous wagon by horse power failed in the sticky mud at the Richmond docks. This accident

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<sup>279</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, February 22, 1858.

Thomas B. Brumbaugh, "The Evolution of Crawford's 'Washington'," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 70, I (January, 1962)., p. 25.

<sup>280</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. XI., pp. 55-56.

<sup>281</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, November 5, 1857.

spurred the crowd of spectators, estimated at 150 men and boys, to detach the teams of horses and pull the load by hand. Their enthusiasm succeeded in moving the mired wagon and within twenty-five minutes the job was completed. In the process, the crowd pulled down sections of the iron fence around Capitol Square and the uprooted several trees but the statue reached the base of the pedestal unharmed.<sup>282</sup>

The engineer chosen by the committee to raise the precious statue was Charles Dimmock. As soon as he heard of the unceremonious manner in which Crawford's masterpiece had reached the Square, he hurried to the site, accompanied by Mayor Joseph Mayo. A detachment of the Young Guard and the Richmond Light Infantry Blues, "hastily rallied without uniforms," fired a salute and Dimmock and Mayo made speeches of gratitude to the muddy volunteer laborers.<sup>283</sup>

In preparation for the herculean job of raising eighteen tons of bronze to the top of the high pedestal, Dimmock had borrowed the necessary "shears," or hoisting masts, from the Gosport Navy yard, and also the blocks, pulleys and cables to rig them. The shears stood eighty-two feet high and weighed fourteen tons,

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<sup>282</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, November 24, 1857.

<sup>283</sup>Ibid., November 25, 1857.

requiring a lifting force of fifty tons to erect them. Under Dimmock's supervision, these pieces of equipment were in readiness by January 20, 1858, and the statue was uncrated and hoisted to the second tier of the pedestal on the following day.<sup>284</sup>

According to the Richmond Dispatch, as the crate was removed, the horse was "subjected to sharp criticism and really seems to have a rather extravagant neck....," but the reporter suspended judgement until the entire piece could be viewed.<sup>285</sup>

By the evening of January 21, 1858, the statue had been lifted as high as the capstone, "but owing to some miscalculations as to the dimensions of some of the holes or fastenings, or the distance between them, it could not be lowered to its place and was left resting on timbers."<sup>286</sup> The major difficulty encountered by Dimmock and his assistant, William J. McCloy, was a lack of space to work on the capstone, which was entirely covered by the statue's plinth. They overcame this problem, however, and succeeded in completing the alterations. On January 22, the equestrian group was lowered into place without

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<sup>284</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, January 20, and January 21, 1858.

<sup>285</sup>Ibid., January 21, 1858.

<sup>286</sup>Ibid., January 22, 1858.

damage. The Richmond Dispatch noted that "to Capt. Dimmock has been intrusted the duty of superintending this important work and the safe and successful manner in which it has been accomplished does him great credit."<sup>287</sup>

Although no serious accidents occurred during this operation, a legend was spread concerning the statue's raising. Walter S. Griggs, Jr., the official historian of the State Capitol Police, recounted a story that some cogs in one of the hoists had become dislodged at a crucial moment, "leaving the statue dangling dangerously above a group of men." At this juncture, Dimmock supposedly drew a pistol and threatened to shoot the first workman to flee.<sup>288</sup>

Although the tale is probably apocryphal, since none of the local newspapers mentioned it, such an action would have been characteristic of Dimmock, upon whose calculations the fate of the statue rested.

On February 22, 1858, the day of the monument's dedication ceremonies, the Richmond Dispatch again

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<sup>287</sup>Ibid., January 23, 1858

Brumbaugh, "Crawford's 'Washington'," p. 21. McCloy was paid \$750.00 and did more of the actual physical work than Dimmock, who received \$500.00 for his services.

<sup>288</sup>Griggs, The Capitol Police, p. 7. This story has been told many times, but no supporting evidence has come to light at the present time.



lauded Charles Dimmock:

The delicate and difficult work of raising this magnificent statue was confided to Capt. Dimmock, of the Public Guard. It was a work of great and painful responsibility. The great eclat of this splendid achievement of genius; the hopes and eyes of the state, we might almost say the Nation, fixed upon it; the fate of the finest equestrian statue in the world committed to his hands, and the many mechanical difficulties involved in the operation must have been trying to even the nerves of a veteran soldier... The heavy statues of Henry and Jefferson have also been removed by Capt. Dimmock, from the porch of the Capitol to their beautiful pedestals of granite. Not a scratch has been given to any of these great works, not an accident has happened to workman or spectator; not a drop of blood has been spilled; not even a rope yarn broken... The accomplished soldier and gentleman, Capt. Dimmock... and his energetic and faithful assistant, Mr. William J. McCloy, have entitled themselves, by their skillful and successful labors, to the admiration and gratitude of the whole community.<sup>289</sup>

With characteristic self effacement, Dimmock's only correspondence concerning his engineering feat was a short note addressed to the commissioners of the Washington Monument on February 27, 1858.

"Gentlemen," he wrote,

I respectfully suggest that the question of compensation due me for services rendered in raising the Statue be decided by practical and disinterested men. This course will relieve you from any doubts and will be entirely fair.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, February 22, 1858.

<sup>290</sup>Executive Papers, Box 384, January-February 1858 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Dimmock to the Commissioners of the Washington Monument, February 27, 1858.

The statue's dedication on February 22, provided Richmond with a military spectacle that was recalled fondly for years afterward. Parade Marshall William B. Taliaferro led two brigades of militia, consisting of eight battalions, followed by an honor guard for General Winfield Scott, and carriages containing numerous dignitaries, down Broad Street to Capitol Square. Speeches and poems were read and the cheers of the huge crowd often drowned out the musketry salutes.<sup>291</sup>

As mentioned previously, the Public Guard had only a small share in the proceedings, since a large number of its members were assigned to police duty. The remaining men marched in the second battalion, first brigade, but were lost in the crowd of volunteer units.<sup>292</sup> In July 1858, however, the Public Guard was awarded a place of honor at the reburial ceremonies for President James Monroe. Although born in Virginia, Monroe spent his declining years in New York, and at his death on July 4, 1831, had been buried in that city. After long negotiations between Virginia and New York, the latter city agreed to exhume the casket and send Monroe's remains to Richmond, where an

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<sup>291</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, February 22, and February 23, 1858.

<sup>292</sup>Ibid. See Chapter II.

elaborate, wrought-iron mausoleum had been built in Hollywood Cemetary to receive it. On June 5, the steamer "Jamestown," carrying the casket under the escort of a honor guard from New York's Seventh Regiment, landed at Rocketts, Richmond's dock.<sup>293</sup>

Charles Dimmock was chosen Parade Marshal for the funeral procession. He and Mayor Joseph Mayo rode in the lead carriage, followed by aides, the Henrico Troop, the staff of the 179th Virginia Regiment, The Young Guard Battalion, the Armory Band, the First Regiment of Virginia Volunteers, the New York Seventh Regiment and staff, the Seventh Regiment Honor Guard, their crepe-shrouded flag, the pallbearers and other dignitaries, both state and federal officers. The procession proceeded along Main Street, amid the tolling of the city's church bells and the firing of minute guns by the artillery regiments. After a eulogy by Governor Wise, the cannon fired salvos as the casket was lowered into the tomb.<sup>294</sup>

The visit by the grey-clad New Yorkers has often been cited as the origin of the grey uniforms adopted by Virginia troops prior to and during the Civil War. The Seventh Regiment's neat appearance contrasted

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<sup>293</sup>The Richmond Dispatch, July 7, 1858.

Lee A. Wallace, Jr., "The First Regiment of Virginia Volunteers," Virginia Cavalcade, XIII, 2(Autumn, 1963)., p. 30.

<sup>294</sup>Ibid.

strongly with the "varied dress and pompous display" of the multihued Virginians.<sup>295</sup>

The rapid sequence of events following the Monroe reburial, culminating in the John Brown raid and Virginia's secession from the Union in 1861, left little time for parades and peaceful displays in Richmond. Charles Dimmock's promotion to Colonel, and later General of Virginia Ordnance, prevented any further contributions to Richmond life.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>295</sup>Lee A. Wallace, Jr., "Virginia Military Forces, 1858-1861, the Volunteers of the Second Brigade, Fourth Division. Part 1.," Military Collector and Historian, X, 3(Fall, 1958).., p. 66.

<sup>296</sup>See Chapter V.

V. CHIEF OF THE VIRGINIA ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT,  
1861-1863.

On the morning of October 17, 1859, Henry Alexander Wise, Governor of Virginia, paced the floor of his office in the State Capitol, growing progressively agitated as messengers delivered a steady stream of telegrams from Jefferson County, in western Virginia. The Commonwealth, basking in a prosperous and peaceful decade and enjoying good relations with both the federal and the neighboring state governments, was unprepared for any form of war or invasion. The stacks of dispatches that soon littered Wise's office, however, indicated that the state was indeed under invasion by an unknown aggressor.<sup>297</sup>

When the "bearded patriarch with Old Testament eyes" and his "army" of nineteen desperadoes captured the United States Armory at Harpers Ferry, the initial reaction in Virginia was one of fear, followed by disbelief and anger. Wildly exaggerated reports of a servile insurrection and bloody fighting between heroic militiamen and the followers of "Old Ossawatimie"

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<sup>297</sup>Executive Papers, John Brown Insurrection Series, October-December 1859 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Thousands of telegrams, newspaper clippings and letters indicate the panic in Virginia.

were still on the telegraph wires when a small force of United States Marines, commanded by a Virginian, Colonel Robert Edward Lee, overwhelmed the invaders and ended the uprising.<sup>298</sup>

After the highly criticized trial and execution of Brown and his surviving followers for treason, most Virginians sighed with relief and prayed that such a "murderous and treasonable attempt by fanatics" would never occur again. Governor Wise, glancing at the thousands of petitions, threats and editorials from northern newspapers that remained to be filed, was not as complacent. At the cost of a half million dollars and several lives, the shaky peace was dearly bought.<sup>299</sup>

In Chapter II of this paper, the activities of the Virginia militia and the State Armory have been described. On paper, at least, the line and volunteer militia were at the zenith of their prosperity and training but John Brown's raid exploded this myth and plunged the state into a flurry of self-recriminations and reappraisals of its military might. In 1859,

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<sup>298</sup>J. C. Furnas, The Road to Harpers Ferry (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1959)., pp. 38-43.

Stephen Vincent Benet, John Brown's Body (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1927)., p. 33.

<sup>299</sup>Executive Papers, John Brown Series, October-December 1859.

Mordecai, Richmond in By-gone Days, p. 273.

Adjutant General William Harvie Richardson scornfully described the line militia as being in "the customary state of confusion and inefficiency," but he praised the Public Guard as a model of preparedness.<sup>300</sup>

Although well-disciplined troops were desirable, efficient weapons were even more so, and in this respect the Public Guard was as badly equipped as the rest of the Virginia militia. The key to the problem lay in the state's proudest possession: the State Armory.<sup>301</sup>

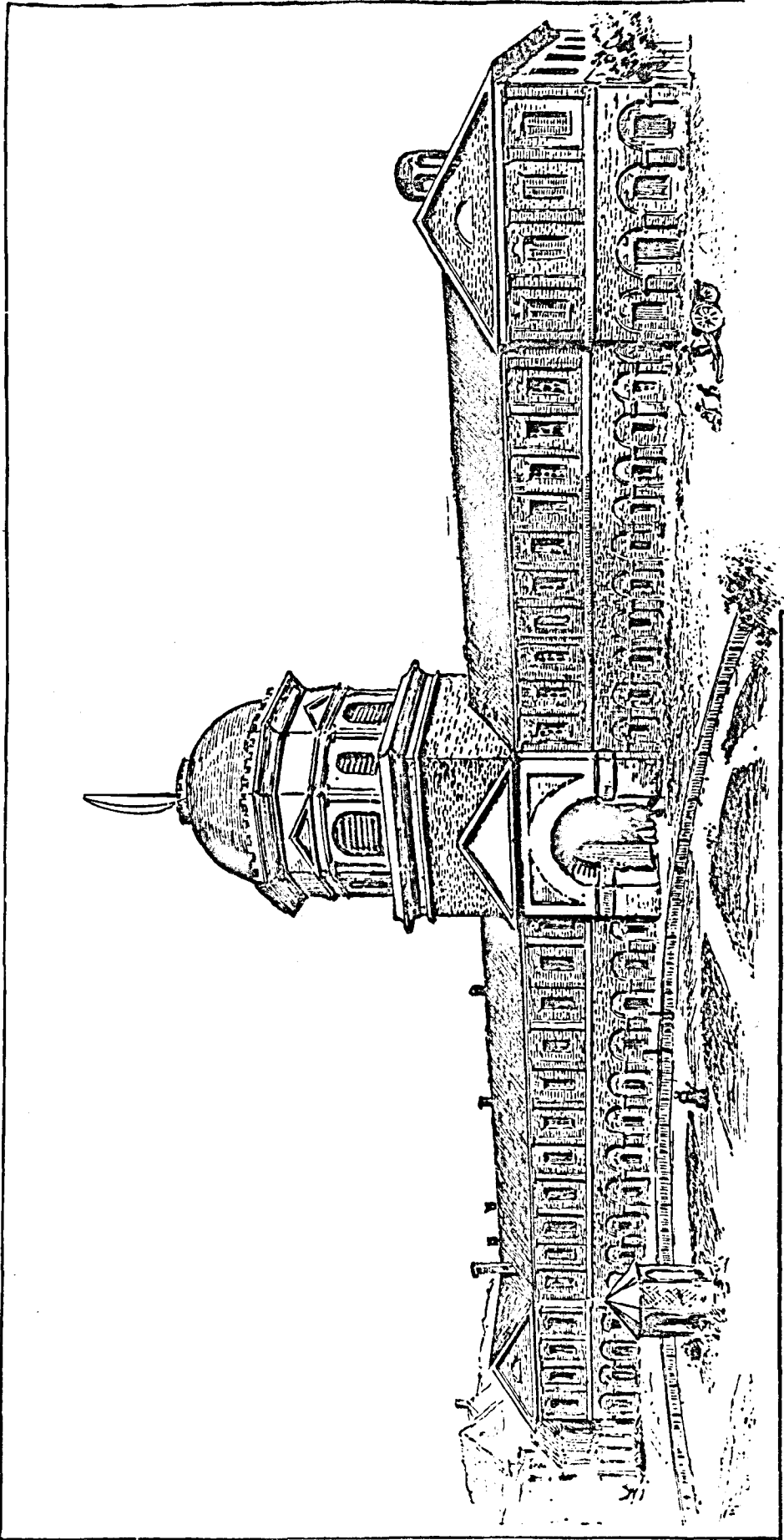
During the War of 1812, the Virginia Manufactory of Arms was compared favorably with the two United States Armories at Springfield, Massachusetts, and at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Although the federal manufactories were completed nine years before the first Virginia Manufactory musket was produced, in 1803, the total output of the U. S. armories remained small and most of the federal arms of this period were produced by private contractors.<sup>302</sup> Fully

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<sup>300</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia. Session 1859-1860. (Richmond: William F. Ritchie, Public Printer, 1859). Document 10, p. 3.

<sup>301</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. During the period 1801-1835, the Public Guard was armed with French muskets imported in 1787. Afterwards, they received reconditioned Virginia Manufactory flintlocks.

<sup>302</sup>William B. Edwards, Civil War Guns (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Stackpole Co., 1962)., pp. 11-13. The major contractors were Asa Waters and Lemuel Pomeroy, of Massachusetts, Simeon North, Nathan Starr and Eli Whitney, of Connecticut, and Henry Deringer of Philadelphia.





interchangeable parts were virtually unknown and no two hand-fitted muskets matched each other in every particular.<sup>303</sup>

Under an Act of Congress, passed in 1808, the various states received allotted quotas of U. S. arms, based upon the number of militiamen enrolled in each state. Thus, by 1859, hundreds of thousands of miscellaneous flintlock weapons were scattered throughout the thirty-three states, although the bulk of them remained in the Atlantic coastal region, north and south.<sup>304</sup>

Twenty years before the United States finally stopped producing them, flintlock muskets had been rendered obsolete and somewhat archaic by the invention of the percussion cap, developed by a Scottish clergyman, John Forsyth, in 1805.<sup>305</sup>

In 1842, the United States armories began production of the Model 1842 series of percussion rifles and smoothbore muskets, although quantities were small at first. Few troops in the Mexican War received these new arms and most of the battles were fought with

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<sup>303</sup>The author has proved this personally.

<sup>304</sup>Edwards, Civil War Guns, pp. 11-13

<sup>305</sup>Howard Ricketts, Firearms (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1962)., p. 101. Forsyth's invention did not become popular until the 1830's.

flintlocks.<sup>306</sup>

Five years later, however, under the capable, if erratic, leadership of Mississippian, Jefferson Davis, the United States War Department boldly experimented with everything from Prussian "needle-guns" to camels for desert transportation. During the Mexican War, Davis' company, the "Mississippi Rifles," had been issued the Model 1842 U. S. short rifle and Davis was convinced that the smoothbore musket should be abolished. In 1855, the Springfield and Harpers Ferry armorers developed the prototype rifle-musket, short rifle, carbine and pistol that would remain standard until 1873. All these weapons were muzzle-loaders but their rifled bores made them accurate at 300 yards, as opposed to the 25-yard accuracy of smoothbore muskets.<sup>307</sup>

As the regular army troops were issued the new Model 1855 small arms, the old flintlock and percussion smoothbores were made available to the state militias, who accepted them gladly but yearned for the newer patterns. In a communication to the governor and legislature of Virginia, in late 1860, one of the

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<sup>306</sup>Harold L. Peterson, The Treasury of the Gun (New York: Ridge Press, 1962)., p. 173.

<sup>307</sup>Edwards, Civil War Guns, p. 22.

Stuart E. Brown, Jr., The Guns of Harpers Ferry (Berryville, Va.: The Virginia Book Co., 1968)., p. 93.

state's commissioners for the procurement of arms  
summed up the situation:

Until within the last ten years the sixty thousand flintlock muskets on hand were about as good and effective as those to be found in any military service in the world... But the vast improvements that have been effected in the last ten years in greatly increasing the range and accuracy of projectiles from small arms have rendered the old smooth bore musket utterly useless...when brought into conflict with the improved rifle-musket... We in Virginia and other Southern States find ourselves in a condition utterly unarmed and defenceless, our old muskets of no more use than so many corn stalks, and the rest of the world arming and armed to the teeth with the most deadly weapons.<sup>308</sup>

Under Acts of Assembly in 1853 and 1858, the old Virginia line militia had been disbanded and reorganized on a slightly different plan, with the gaudy volunteer companies forming the "trained" nucleus around which the line companies could act as support troops. This disbandment, however, occasioned the loss to the state of a great many weapons, which were carried off for personal defense and sporting use.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>308</sup>Records of the Board on the Purchase and Manufacture of Arms and Ammunition; February 10, 1860-December 7, 1861 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.), pp. 32-33.

<sup>309</sup>Moreau B. C. Chambers, "The Militia Crisis," Virginia Cavalcade, XVI, 4 (Spring, 1967), p. 13. This explains, in part, the extreme rarity of Virginia militia rifles today. After fifty years of hard usage, most of them fell apart. The muskets, as then, are not quite as valuable, and may be found in nearly new condition. Except when used as shotguns, muskets are not as desirable for hunting purposes.

As events proved, during the succeeding decade, this loss became a blessing, freeing the state from its complacent dependence upon worthless, rusty smoothbores and spurring the acquisition of newer arms.<sup>310</sup>

On January 21, 1860, the Virginia General Assembly voted to appropriate \$320,000.00 for repairs to the decaying State Armory and to create a "Board on the Purchase and Manufacture of Arms and Ammunition." Under Charles Dimmock's expert supervision, the floors and joists in both the Armory's wings were replaced, the windows enlarged and the old water wheel reconstructed. The abandoned east wing received a modern, turbine wheel and the necessary sluices, spillways and forebays received overhauling. The impressive, central cupola was partially dismantled, giving it a truncated appearance but improving its safety.<sup>311</sup>

Philip St. George Cocke, George Wythe Randolph and Francis H. Smith were chosen to be the "Board on the Purchase and Manufacture of Arms and Ammunition," whose purpose was to reactivate the Armory's operations. Both Colonel Cocke and Colonel Smith were West Pointers; Smith serving as Superintendent of V.M.I. in the

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<sup>310</sup>Ibid.

<sup>311</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, for the extra session, 1861 (Richmond: William F. Ritchie, Public Printer, 1861). Document 1, p. 3.

1850's. Randolph was captain of the Richmond Howitzers and an artillery expert.<sup>312</sup>

Before the State Armory could produce arms of any sort, after half a century of inactivity, the three commissioners had to tour the leading U.S. installations to determine the type of weapons to be made and what machinery would be necessary. On February 15, 1860, they boarded a train for Washington, D. C., but Colonel Cocke became ill and was forced to leave the others at Ashland, promising to rejoin them as soon as he was able. The next morning, Randolph and Smith began their work at the War Department, under the guidance of Colonel Henry Knox Craig and Captain William Maynadier.<sup>313</sup> Craig, the leading designer and exponent of the Model 1855 series of arms, during Jefferson Davis' term as Secretary of War, was perhaps the nation's most ardent champion of muzzleloading weapons. His theories on the subject had a profound influence on the development of martial arms in the United States, primarily on the decision of whether or not to adopt breechloading rifles. According to the Virginia commissioners,

Col. Craig's opinion was ascertained to be very decided in opposition to the breech-

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<sup>312</sup>Records of the Board on Purchase...p. 1.; W.H. Powell, List of Officers of the U.S. Army, 1776-1900 (New York: L.R. Hammersly Co., 1900).pp. 250 and 594.; Revised Code of Virginia, 1860 (Richmond: Ritchie, Dunnivant & Co., 1860). Chapter 33, Section 25, p. 181.

<sup>313</sup>Records of the Board on Purchase..., p. 3.

loading arms; as very liable to get out of order, and that nothing could be relied upon for general purposes equal to the muzzle-loading guns. This remark was qualified by an exception in favor of the breech-loading gun for cavalry--as occasionally serviceable.<sup>314</sup>

Craig's line of reasoning, based on the premise that the more shots a soldier can fire per minute, the more ammunition he will waste, determined that the U. S. Infantryman was destined to struggle with clumsy muzzleloaders, while the cavalry, who relied on sabers and pistols, were armed with the superior breechloading carbines. During the Civil War, the cavalry carbines were to be subjected to the roughest treatment, belying Craig's opinion that they were too fragile to be reliable. Nevertheless, Randolph and Smith agreed with Craig's prejudice against breechloaders.<sup>315</sup>

The two commissioners next toured the Washington Navy Yard, where their guide was Captain John Adolphus Dahlgren, later to win fame as an admiral. Dahlgren, inventor of a rifled cannon that bore his name, and of the so-called "Whitneyville-Plymouth" rifle, using a Bowie knife bayonet, was the nation's foremost expert on naval ordnance. After he conducted them

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<sup>314</sup>Ibid.  
Edwards, Civil War Guns, p. 50.

<sup>315</sup>Ibid. Many varieties of breechloaders were used in the Civil War and most of them performed well.

around the installation, Dahlgren promised the commissioners to assist them in purchasing cannon.<sup>316</sup>

On February 17, Randolph and Smith travelled westward to Harpers Ferry to interview Superintendent Alfred M. Barbour about the kinds of tools, gauges and machinery needed for the State Armory. Besides obtaining descriptions and estimates for the machinery, the Virginians had hoped to secure permission to purchase quantities of the latest U. S. rifle-muskets, but they failed on this point. Due to the relatively small output of the new weapons, only arms classed as "unservicable" could be sold, chiefly the old 1816-1835 series of smoothbores, converted to percussion.<sup>317</sup>

After this disappointment, the commissioners returned to Washington on February 20, 1860, to conclude negotiations with Dahlgren over the authorized purchase of six naval howitzers. That afternoon, a certain Mr. Penfield, general agent for the Christian Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company of Hartford, Connecticut, approached Smith and Randolph with a tempting offer: a complete set of rifle-musket machinery.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup>Ibid. Dahlgren's son, Ulric, who lost a leg at Gettysburg, was killed in an abortive raid on Richmond in 1864. The "Whitneyville-Plymouth" rifle was made by the Eli Whitney Co. and first tested aboard the "U.S. Plymouth," Dahlgren's ship.

<sup>317</sup>Records of the Board on Purchase..., p. 5.

<sup>318</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

In 1853, the British government had purchased this machinery, tooled for the Enfield rifle-musket, from the firm of Robbins and Lawrence, to supplement the new Royal Small Arms Factory's small output. Richard S. Lawrence had since entered into partnership with Christian Sharps, in the breechloading carbine business, and the Enfield machinery, which had produced 75,000 rifles, was now idle and cluttering the Sharps manufactory storerooms.<sup>319</sup>

Although the Enfield was a fine rifle, the cost and transportation difficulties in moving the cumbersome equipment from Hartford to Richmond proved prohibitive and the commissioners refused the offer.<sup>320</sup> On the same day, Randolph and Smith received a letter from James T. Ames, who, with his son Nathaniel P. Ames, operated the finest manufactory of U. S. military swords, located in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts. In reply to circulars and newspaper advertisements requesting competitive bids, circulated by the Virginia commissioners, Ames submitted an estimate for producing five hundred cavalry sabers and two hundred artillery sabers. More importantly, Ames offered to supply a set of machinery capable of producing 5,000 rifles annually.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>319</sup>Ibid.; Edwards, Civil War Guns, p. 293

<sup>320</sup>Records of the Board on Purchase..., p. 8.

<sup>321</sup>Ibid.



While considering this and other offers, the two commissioners arranged, during the next few days, for the purchase of sample arms from the War Department for testing at V.M.I. Although Colonel Craig's opinions carried considerable force, the Virginians nevertheless obtained several breechloaders: the Joslyn, Burnside, Maynard, Smith and Sharps carbines, in addition to a miscellaneous lot of foreign and domestic muzzleloaders.<sup>322</sup>

On February 23, they requisitioned the War Department for sample accoutrements, to be used as patterns. These included infantry, cavalry and rifleman's cartridge boxes, bayonet scabbards, cap pouches, haversacks, waist and breast plates, cavalry and light artillery horse equipments, dragoon holsters and valises, waistbelts for infantry and sword belts for cavalry. All were to be of the "latest and most approved pattern."<sup>323</sup>

After returning to Richmond with the samples, the commissioners turned them over to Major Raleigh E. Colston for testing. The results of these experiments, conducted on the rifle range at V.M.I., determined the weapons that would be produced by Virginia, for

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<sup>322</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>323</sup>Ibid. Although the Union Army continued to burden itself with such impedimenta, southern troops in the Civil War discarded all but the necessary cartridge boxes, waist belts, cap pouches and bayonet scabbards. Some infantrymen abandoned even these and carried ammunition in their pockets.

her own defence, and later, to arm the Confederacy.

Colston, using a target measuring eight feet by eight feet, eight inches, and firing at a range of 500 yards, achieved the following results: the long and short pattern rifles from Harpers Ferry and the Burnside Carbine (breechloading) were the most accurate, scoring 90, 81, and 93 hits out of 100 shots fired, respectively. The Enfield rifle ranked fourth and the Maynard carbine, fifth. Besides performing poorly, the other carbines confirmed Colonel Craig's statement that their breechloading mechanisms were too likely to get out of order under hard usage. After sixty shots without cleaning, the Smith and Poultney carbine became so fouled with black powder residue that Colston could not open it to insert a fresh cartridge. Despite its superior accuracy, the Burnside carbine, invented by Ambrose E. Burnside, a future Union general, was too complicated and expensive to trust in the hands of a raw recruit. Most of these patented carbines required special cartridges and could not be fired with loose powder and shot.<sup>324</sup>

After the failure of the breechloaders and foreign weapons to meet the criteria of durability, simplicity,

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<sup>324</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia, for the extra session, 1861., Document 10, p. 16. Facsimiles of the targets were engraved for the report. Colston also tested a Virginia Manufactory smoothbore and hit the target once in fifty shots!

lightness, overall length and effective range, Virginia's choice was divided between the British and American patterns of long and short rifles. Major Colston, however, indicated his dissatisfaction with the weak springs and rough workmanship of the Enfield. Based upon his recommendations, the Board decided upon a compromised design, combining the best features of the Enfield and Harpers Ferry long rifles.<sup>325</sup>

To design and fabricate a pattern "model musket," two men were chosen for this important work: James Henry Burton and Solomon Adams. Burton, the mastermind of the Enfield Royal Small Arms Factory, was born in Shenondale Springs, Virginia, in 1823. After serving an apprenticeship in the rifle works of John H. Hall at Harpers Ferry, he rose to the position of Master Armorer within ten years. Burton's major contribution to the science of ballistics was his invention of the hollow-based, conical rifle bullet with grease grooves. This projectile, erroneously called the "Minié ball," after a French officer, Colonel Claude Minié, only vaguely resembled Minié's bullet and was far more accurate. Under the direction of Colonel H. K. Craig, Burton tooled the armory for the 1855 series of U. S. arms, which were designed to fire the "Burton Bullet." In the same year, he resigned his position

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<sup>325</sup>Ibid., pp. 5, 6, 14.

to become chief engineer in charge of the Enfield factory, north of London, where he introduced American mass-production methods into the traditional craft of English gunmaking.<sup>326</sup>

Since the Enfield establishment was located on bottom land on the Lea River, subject to continual "foggs" and damp weather, Burton's health suffered and he considered returning to America. In 1860, Joseph Reid Anderson offered Burton a salary equal to the \$5,000.00 per annum paid him by the English Government. In August of that year, after working for Anderson for a short time, Burton applied for the position of Master Armorer of Virginia. Although he was not chosen, Governor Wise retained him to serve as assistant to Solomon Adams, the man who became the state's Master Armorer.<sup>327</sup>

Solomon Adams, a man whose "antecedents were such as rendered him entirely fit to serve a Southern State," was a former principal armorer at Springfield. After Colonel Cocke's recovery from his sudden illness, he and the other Virginia commissioners had travelled to the West Point foundry and to Springfield, Massachusetts,

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<sup>326</sup>William B. Edwards, "One-Man Armory: Colonel J. H. Burton," Virginia Cavalcade, XII, 2(Autumn, 1962)., p. 30. John H. Hall invented the first breechloading rifle used in the U. S. Army in 1815.

<sup>327</sup>Executive Papers, August 1860 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). George Mauzy to Henry A. Wise, August 29, 1860.

to study the methods and equipment. While in Springfield, they induced Adams to resign his position and take charge of operations at the Virginia State Armory.<sup>328</sup>

The combined talents of the two men produced an admirable design for a "model musket." Burton's paternal feelings for the Enfield, modified by Major Colston's guidelines, and Adams' knowledge of the Springfield-Harpers Ferry pattern resulted in an Enfield-style arm, incorporating the Springfield's best features. Instead of a low-combed stock and flat buttplate, the high comb and gracefully curved Springfield buttplate were adopted. The English practice of using brass mountings, buttplate, trigger guard, side-screw washers and nose cap, was adopted. The 40-inch barrel was shaped like the Enfield's, but thickened to conform to Springfield specifications. The internal lock mechanism was stronger than either pattern and the lockplate resembled the Enfield model. The English long-range sliding sight was abandoned in favor of the simpler, three-leaf Springfield rear sight. Instead of flat, spring-retained barrel bands, the more sensible screw-adjusted English bands were used. The arm was rifled in .58 caliber, which was standard for the other two guns.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, for the extra session, 1861., Document 1, p. 4.

<sup>329</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

On November 3, 1860, Commissioner Randolph wrote to Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd, requesting authorization to purchase 5,000 converted flintlock muskets at \$2.50 each, and to be allowed to exchange 20,000 unseasoned musket stocks for a like number of seasoned ones at Harpers Ferry. Most importantly, Randolph requested permission to send Solomon Adams to Springfield to make copies of all pattern drawings for gauges and parts of the 1855 rifle-musket.<sup>330</sup>

On November 6, Floyd sent his authorization for a Virginia representative to select 5,000 converted muskets, but pointedly ignored the other requests. Charles Dimmock was appointed to travel to Washington and select the arms to be purchased.<sup>331</sup>

Chafing at the delay in his task, Solomon Adams personally wrote to Floyd on November 24:

Having been engaged in the Springfield Armory for fifteen years, and knowing that assistance has been rendered and privileges granted to foreign governments and to some of our own states, as well as to private individuals, I desire the same favors granted to the state of Virginia.

I have no hoped of any favors from Colonel Craig, for in a conversation with him a few months since, I found him deadly opposed to the Virginia Armory.

We wish to use some of the Armory patterns for the Richmond machinery, and the

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<sup>330</sup>War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 vols. in 127 and Index (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901). Series III, Vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

<sup>331</sup>Ibid.

privileges of taking drawings of fixtures, tools, &c....I desire to get all the assistance we can from the national armories before our much-honored and esteemed Secretary of War vacates his office, for I have no hopes of any assistance after a Black Republican takes possession of the War Department.<sup>332</sup>

This combination of logical arguments and high flattery accomplished its mission and on December 1, George Wythe Randolph wrote to Floyd, requesting that Burton be granted the same privileges as Adams.<sup>333</sup>

To equip the renovated Armory with machinery capable of turning out at least 5,000 rifles annually, the Virginia commissioners considered the bid submitted by Ames & Co. favorably and recommended it to the governor and legislature. The editor of the Richmond Enquirer, however, believing that southern concerns should produce this equipment, published an open appeal to local ironmasters. Some weeks later, the New York Times, "still bitter over John Brown's martyrdom," used the Enquirer's editorial as a basis for one of its own: a sarcastic attack on the inferiority of southern mechanics. In an article headlined "New York Times! Attention!" the Enquirer reprinted the Times' article in full on August 27, 1860. The Tredegar Company rose to the challenge and submitted

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<sup>332</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>333</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

Claud E. Fuller and Richard D. Steuart, Firearms of the Confederacy, (Huntington, W. Va.: Standard Publications, 1944)., pp. 46-50.

a bid that undercut Ames' figure.<sup>334</sup>

While Ames did not obtain a contract for machinery, his offer to produce seven hundred sabers had been accepted and his company was already at work on them. In March 1860, when the commissioners were still debating the machinery contract, James T. Ames visited Richmond personally, to inspect the available facilities, in case he was awarded the contract. Besides muskets, rifles and pistols, the Virginia Manufactory of Arms had produced several thousand dragoon sabers between 1803 and 1821. These unwieldy weapons, the largest ever produced in America, took a giant arm to withdraw their 42-inch blades from the scabbard at one motion and were rather unpopular with the militia.<sup>335</sup>

After some bargaining with Captain Dimmock and the commissioners, Ames received a further contract to cut down one thousand of these massive sabers to a more manageable thirty-six inches and to make new scabbards for the shortened blades.<sup>336</sup>

In the midst of these final preparations in Virginia, South Carolina seceded from the Union. Following the

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<sup>334</sup>Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture, p. 328.

<sup>335</sup>William A. Albaugh and Edward Simmons, Confederate Arms (New York: Bonanza Books, 1957).., pp. 117-118.  
Records of the Board..., p. 13.

<sup>336</sup>Records of the Board on Purchase..., p. 13.



announcement, Virginia's military leaders, especially Adjutant General W. H. Richardson, realized that, if war developed, the state needed a unified ordnance department to coordinate the State Armory with the other aspects of preparedness. On January 31, 1861, General Richardson nominated Charles Dimmock for the position of Colonel of Virginia Ordnance. Stressing Dimmock's qualifications and his seventeen years of devoted service to the state, Richardson pointed out the folly of hiring some fourth-rate army officer, spoiled by the high pay and benefits of the U. S. service, when a man such as Dimmock was available. Besides his West Point training and experience as an artillery instructor, the Captain was especially valuable for his intimate knowledge of the State Armory.<sup>337</sup>

Dimmock was officially recommended on March 15, and was appointed Colonel of Virginia Ordnance on March 26, 1861. He commenced his new duties on April 14, three days before Virginia seceded from the Union.<sup>338</sup>

Dimmock's first action was to dispatch Solomon Adams, the master armorer, to the North, with bills

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<sup>337</sup>Executive Papers, January-February 1861 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Richardson to Laurence McKenzie, January 31, 1861.

<sup>338</sup>Senate Journal and House Documents, Extra Session, 1861 (Richmond: J. E. Goode, 1861)., Document 32, p. 2.

of credit to purchase a percussion cap machine, a bullet press and any other kindred items. By the time of his departure, however, Sumter had fallen and Lincoln's call for volunteers reached Governor John Letcher the day after Adams left. On April 16, Letcher officially refused to "subjugate the Southern States," by sending troops, and the State Convention, called by the General Assembly to debate secession, voted to withdraw from the Union on April 17, 1861.<sup>339</sup>

In a disheartening report on Adams' efforts at procurement, Colonel Dimmock reported that

the announcement of the state's secession, following so soon after his leaving here, caused him to fail in obtaining even one single article, and that he was only enabled to return here by disguising himself and making his way as a common laborer seeking work.<sup>340</sup>

Without the necessary machinery, still under construction at the Tredegar works, the Virginia "model musket" was destined to remain only a prototype.

A small quantity of old flintlock muskets were converted to percussion on machinery purchased by Dimmock for the purpose, but this time-consuming work proceeded slowly.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>339</sup>Official Records, Series III, Vol. 1, p. 76.  
Virginia Ordinance of Secession, April 17, 1861  
(Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

<sup>340</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1836-1869, Vol. XI, p. 164.

<sup>341</sup>Senate Journal and House Documents, 1861. Document 23, p. 5.

On April 16, 1861, the evening before Virginia's secession, ex-Governor Henry A. Wise, John D. Imboden, Professor Thomas J. Jackson of V.M.I., and a small group of the state's political and military leaders met at the Exchange Hotel in Richmond to plan a raid on the Harpers Ferry Armory: the closest source of war materiel. Colonel Dimmock, still in command of the Public Guard, used his men to transport arms and supplies from the Armory to the railroad station, for use by the Martinsburg Light Infantry who would carry out the attack.<sup>342</sup>

In complete secrecy, the Virginia militiamen, led by Colonel T. J. Jackson, converged on Harpers Ferry without alerting the U. S. Army detachment there. On April 19, First Lieutenant Roger Jones, U. S. Mounted Rifles, commanding the guards at the armory, found his position nearly surrounded by an estimated force of 2,500 hostile troops. In a desperate attempt to keep the arms out of enemy hands, Jones gave orders to devastate the armory complex by fire. "Shortly after 10 o'clock last night," reported Jones to General Winfield Scott,

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<sup>342</sup>Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 4 vols. (New York: The Century Co., 1887). Vol. 1, pp. 112-113. The irony of the situation was probably not lost on Wise, who had condemned John Brown to death for the same act in 1859.

I destroyed the arsenal, containing 15,000 stand of arms, and burned the armory building proper.<sup>343</sup>

The stacks of new arms, waxed and varnished for protection, created an inferno that collapsed the main arsenal building and sent tons of semi-molten steel crashing through the ground floor into the basement. Jones' hurried evacuation, however, allowed him no time to ascertain that the destruction was complete. The townspeople, largely secessionists, aided by Jackson's troops, saved the precious machinery, tools, gunstocks and unfinished arms from the blaze. Lieutenant Jones received a citation for "judicious conduct," but Virginia had triumphed and secured a complete set of rifle-musket machinery.<sup>344</sup>

Under the supervision of Colonel Jackson, Colonel Joseph E. Johnston and Master Armorer Burkhart, most of the original workmen at the rifle factory remained on the payroll to produce 1,500 Model 1855 rifle-muskets out of the loose parts and partially-burned arms on hand after the fire.<sup>345</sup> To save time and expense, these guns were not fitted with the automatic Maynard Primer arrangement, peculiar to the 1855 series.

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<sup>343</sup>Official Records, Series I, Vol. 2, pp. 4-5.

<sup>344</sup>Ibid., p. 5. President Lincoln sent Jones his thanks.

<sup>345</sup>Payrolls of Workmen at Harpers Ferry, April-June 1861 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

This omission gave the lockplates a distinctive "humped" appearance but it simplified the lock mechanism. Between May and September 1861, while arms were being assembled in this manner, the machinery was packed and transported to Richmond. This work often proceeded under fire from U. S. troops on the Maryland shore.<sup>346</sup>

Since the available space in the Richmond Armory was allocated to the unfinished Tredegar equipment, the captured machinery was set up in a row of tobacco warehouses on Cary Street, where the fledgling Confederate Ordnance Bureau had established its temporary headquarters.<sup>347</sup>

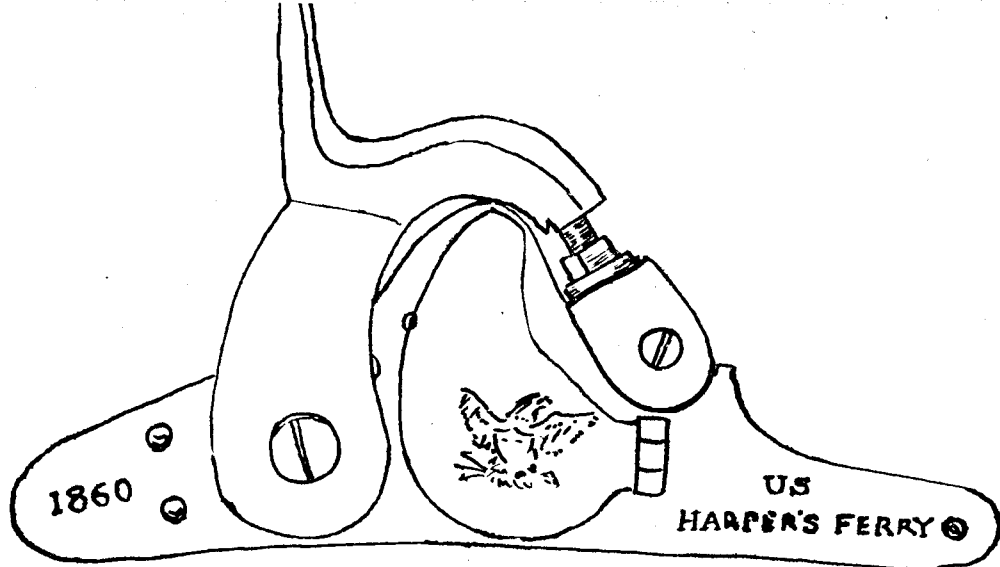
On June 2, 1861, Josiah Gorgas, the newly-appointed Confederate chief of ordnance, arrived in Richmond, where he found James H. Burton and workmen from the Tredegar Company and the State Armory setting up the captured Harpers Ferry machinery. Between June and August, a large number of rifles were produced in the warehouse complex, marked simply "Richmond, Va. 1861."<sup>348</sup>

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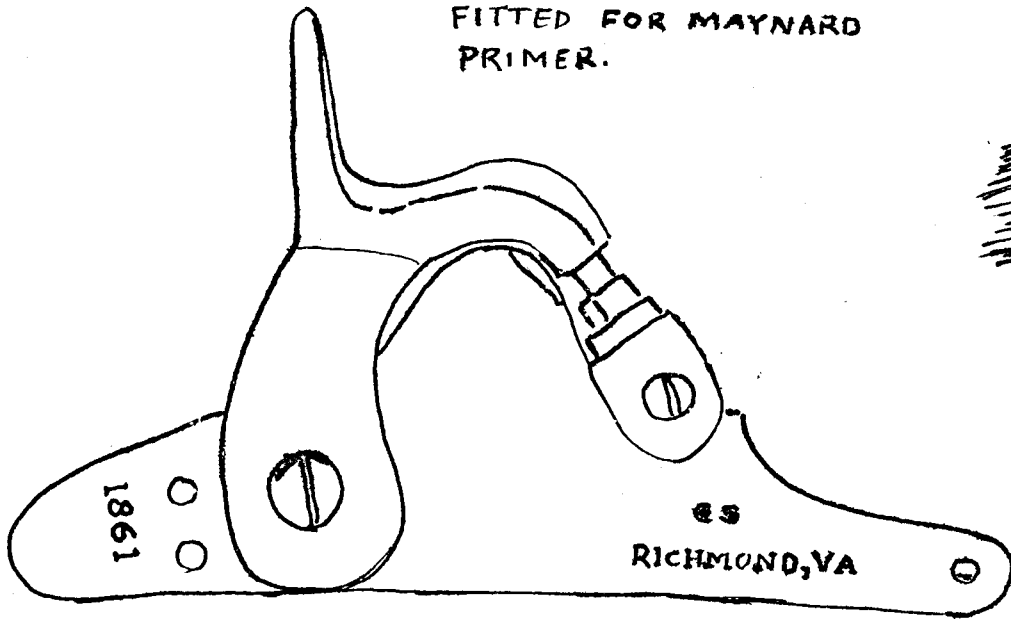
<sup>346</sup>Ibid., Associated documents. The "Maynard Primer," invented by Dr. Edward Maynard, resembled a child's roll of caps for a cap gun.

<sup>347</sup>Frank E. Vandiver, Ploughshares into Swords; Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1952)., p. 67.

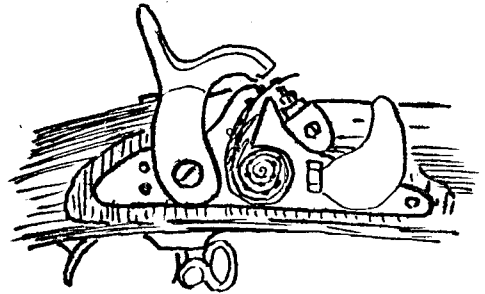
<sup>348</sup>Ibid., pp. 66-67.



HARPERS FERRY LOCK-  
 FITTED FOR MAYNARD  
 PRIMER.



THE RICHMOND RIFLE-MUSKET LOCK-  
 UNMILLED FOR PRIMER.  
 CAPTURED FROM HARPERS FERRY  
 STOCKS.



VIEW OF THE MAYNARD PRIMER  
 SYSTEM WITH THE COVER OPEN.

SMYEDRA

Gorgas rightly believed that Richmond's close proximity to the northern lines made it an undesirable place for extensive arms and munitions production, preferring Fayetteville, North Carolina, or Tallasee, Alabama, to the Virginia capitol. The north was not likely to part with the Harpers Ferry machinery without a fight and if it remained in Richmond, Gorgas feared that the Union Army would invade the city sooner. Gorgas, however, did not calculate the extent to which Colonel Dimmock, Virginia's loudest champion, was prepared to fight to keep the machinery in the Old Dominion. Since Gorgas' military rank was only that of a major, Dimmock, proud of his new status, tended to treat him as a subordinate.<sup>349</sup>

Had not their respective superiors calmed the wrangle, temporarily, the Confederacy may well have foundered for lack of arms in 1861. To Gorgas, national considerations, affecting the Confederacy as a whole, were uppermost. Dimmock, on the other hand, believed that state rights and property were the main reasons for secession and that the new government had no authority to dispose of Virginia's property.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>349</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>350</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

Master Armorers Adams and Burton were caught in the middle of the dispute. Since the individual, yet overlapping, spheres of influence controlled by the Confederate and Virginia Ordnance Departments had never been clearly defined, the two armorers were often issued conflicting orders simultaneously. In June 1861, Burton was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel of Virginia Ordnance, placing him under Dimmock's authority. In December, however, however, President Jefferson Davis commissioned him Lieutenant Colonel of the Confederate Ordnance, with the rank of Superintendent of Armories. In September 1861, Solomon Adams was made Master Armorer of the Confederate Army but he was stationed at the Virginia State Armory.<sup>351</sup>

Governor Letcher and the State Convention, anxious to promote the Confederacy, yet unwilling to yield to all its demands upon Virginia, agreed to a compromise. On July 12, 1861, the Harpers Ferry machinery was transferred to the Confederate Government, with the proviso that Virginia still reserved "the right of property therein," and that it would remain in Richmond.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>351</sup>Edwards, "H. H. Burton," p. 30.  
Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1836-1869.  
 Vol. XI, p. 194.

<sup>352</sup>Official Records, Series IV, Vol. 1, p. 468.



On June 15, 1861, Colonel Dimmock reported that the ordnance laboratory on Brown's Island, with all its fixtures, had been surrendered to Gorgas the day before. The state, however, retained control of the Armory buildings and over the making of artillery carriages.<sup>353</sup> As for the disposition of portions of the Harpers Ferry machinery, Armorer Burton, faced with the bleak prospect of dismantling all his work, persuaded Gorgas to allow it to remain in the warehouses for the time being. The Virginia legislature had no use for the equipment to make the Model 1842 smoothbore and the Model 1855 short rifle and allowed Gorgas to ship it to Fayetteville.<sup>354</sup>

By a resolution of the Virginia Convention, however, the captured parts and machinery had to be inventoried to prevent further disputes. The final catalogue and assessment included all items from Harpers Ferry, those remaining in Richmond and those already sent to Fayetteville. The report, submitted in September 1861, was countersigned by Solomon Adams, who compiled the inventory, by Charles Dimmock and by Josiah Gorgas. It showed that \$38,514.00 worth of parts, tools and

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<sup>353</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. XI, pp. 164-166.

<sup>354</sup>Edwards, Civil War Guns, p. 385

fixtures had been shipped to Fayetteville.<sup>355</sup> Full production of the modified Model 1855 rifle-musket in Richmond did not begin until January 25, 1862, when the Advisory Council of the Virginia Convention authorized Colonel Dimmock to finish tooling the Armory.<sup>356</sup>

During the interim between the Harpers Ferry capture and January 1862, the Confederate Ordnance Bureau offered a bounty for all serviceable firearms that were delivered to its headquarters. As newer arms were issued to the Confederate troops in the field, the 50,000 Virginia flintlock muskets that had been issued in the early weeks of the war were gradually returned. Some militia officers, lured by the bounty, did not return these arms to the State Armory but gave them to Gorgas' agents, who had no time to debate the ownership of individual muskets. The Confederate armorers and private contractors who converted these weapons from flint to percussion were also too busy to sort the tons of miscellaneous arms. Thus, many Virginia-owned muskets were issued a second time, but not to

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<sup>355</sup>Miscellaneous Confederate Papers (Mss. in Virginia state Library, Richmond, Va.) Accession No. 23476, ad-ag. "List of Ordnance Stores from Harpers Ferry, to Sept. 1, 1861." The inventory is in Solomon Adams' holograph.

<sup>356</sup>Albaugh and Simmons, Confederate Arms, p. 83.

Virginia soldiers.<sup>357</sup>

Dimmock, who had lost the first skirmish in his private war with Gorgas, was determined not to yield on the question of the Virginia muskets. On November 2, 1861, the irate colonel complained to Governor Letcher that,

as there is to be a final settlement between all the states of the south...if Virginia arms are to be issued by the Confederate authorities, the state not only is deprived of the credit due her, but the issue thus made will become in part a charge against her in the final settlement.<sup>358</sup>

In an attempt to placate the Virginians, Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin interrogated Gorgas and forwarded the Ordnance Chief's explanation of his actions to Governor Letcher. According to Gorgas, "The state of Virginia would be of course the gainer...since Virginia arms, altered at the expense of the Confederacy, will revert to her at the close of the war, without charge."<sup>359</sup>

This logical argument did not suit Dimmock who had, with the governor's approval, contracted privately with two companies for altering the flintlocks.

"These parties," recorded Dimmock,

have, after great expense, obtained and put up this machinery, and are now fulfilling their contract in good faith; but if flintlock arms are withheld by the Confederate authorities,

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<sup>357</sup>Senate Journal and Documents, 1861-1862. Document 23, p. 5.

<sup>358</sup>Ibid.

<sup>359</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

the state will have to take the machinery, and as it is fit for nothing else than altering muskets, she will have a useless property.<sup>360</sup>

Lieutenant Briscoe Gerard Baldwin, C.S.A., Gorgas' second-in-command, further inflamed matters on November 28, when he reported to his superior that all flintlock arms, altered to date, had been reissued to Confederate troops and that six hundred more were in the process of alteration. In his zeal to support Gorgas, Baldwin made the ill-advised statement that it was impossible to identify a purely Virginian musket, since a "lock marked Virginia may be on a Springfield stock with a Harpers Ferry barrel and a Georgia ramrod."<sup>361</sup>

On the same day, however, Baldwin had assured Dimmock that he would return all Virginia arms to the State Armory immediately, also requesting that Dimmock return all non-Virginia arms to the Confederate depot. Colonel Dimmock, aware of Baldwin's duplicity, was in no mood to equivocate and he complained to Governor Letcher:

If, as I understand Lt. Baldwin, he is unable to distinguish Virginia flint lock muskets. because a Virginia flint lock may be put to a Springfield stock and have a Georgia ramrod--if he is thus unable to make any distinction heretofore or now, how can he

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<sup>360</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>361</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

hereafter, and then when is Virginia to get her arms at all:<sup>362</sup>

Gorgas, however, ignored the incensed Virginia colonel and continued his policy of commandeering necessities for his bureau. His growing impatience with Dimmock became more apparent when the Virginia State Armory requested two percussion caps per musket, for use in testing newly-percussioned gun barrels. At the bottom of his authorization for the caps, Gorgas appended the following note: "Captain Baldwin, please issue the least useful. These demands seem to come very often. J.G."<sup>363</sup>

On December 10, 1861, Governor Letcher presented Secretary Benjamin with a list of grievances, outlining the excessive policies by which Gorgas ran his bureau; the Confederate ordnance chief had appropriated 1,200 powder kegs from Lynchburg, and an additional 60,000 pounds of powder from Petersburg, two gun carriages from the State Armory and four cannon from a Richmond foundry, without either permission or receipts. Besides these outrages, the state could not obtain needed percussion caps (made on Virginia machinery) without "sarcastic remarks."<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>362</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>363</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>364</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

In regard to Lieutenant Baldwin's excuses for the indiscriminate alteration of muskets, Letcher invited the Secretary of War to visit his office to see that "a lock marked Virginia will not fit a Springfield stock, and that a Harpers Ferry barrel and a Georgia ramrod will not fit a Virginia stock."<sup>365</sup>

"In the old United States government," concluded Letcher,

the rights of the states were ignored. In the organization of a new government the great object was to secure states rights. If a yankee officer had offered these sneers and offences to the government of Virginia, it would not have been surprising. But coming as they did from an official of a Southern Government, they have excited my astonishment.<sup>366</sup>

Letcher's vaporings went largely unheeded and Gorgas continued to do whatever was necessary to keep Confederate munitions in production. On December 26, 1861, Peter G. Coghlan, Superintendent of Virginia Ordnance, reported to Dimmock that he had seen quantities of Virginia Manufactory muskets at Francis Perpignon's factory, on Mayo's Bridge, sent there by Gorgas to be percussioned. According to Perpignon, a private armorer, the muskets had been "recently brought

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<sup>365</sup>Ibid.

<sup>366</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-31.

there."<sup>367</sup> In addition, George W. Duesberry, another Virginia ordnance officer, had journeyed to King George Court House to collect two hundred muskets. Duesberry arrived there a day behind Gorgas' agents, however, and he was able to collect only seventeen worthless pieces, rejected by the Confederates.<sup>368</sup>

Although Dimmock and the state of Virginia gradually lost all control of the State Armory in this manner, the Virginia Ordnance Department had more success in other areas, however, and Dimmock's energies rarely remained idle. In 1860, the state possessed an oddly mixed collection of artillery pieces, ranging from seventeenth-century French 32-pounders to Napoleon pattern field guns, some manufactured at the Armory's foundry and boring mill. The

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<sup>367</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

Despite the logic of the Virginians' arguments, Gorgas was correct in his theories; Richmond was the worst possible location for the valuable machinery and war industries. The "state rights" advocates, versus the Confederacy as a whole, often impeded the new government and Dimmock's stubbornness seriously endangered southern arms production in 1861. As an individual, however, Dimmock cannot be blamed for his views, which were initiated and supported by Governor Letcher and a significant number of other southern officials. This self-defeating attitude was, perhaps, one of the main reasons for the Confederacy's failure in 1865. At the very least, it worsened an already bad situation.

<sup>368</sup>Ibid.

Tredegar Company and the Bellona Arsenal in Chesterfield County supplied the state with newer cannon during the 1850's, and some were captured during the Mexican War. In 1860, the Virginia commissioners obtained twelve Parrott guns from the West Point foundry and six naval howitzers from Captain J. A. Dahlgren.<sup>369</sup>

A list of heavy coastal and naval ordnance, prepared by Dimmock in June 1861, and sent to Governor Letcher, catalogued the armament mounted and mounting at twenty-four water batteries and on three steamers. According to this report, the strategic river, harbor and coastal batteries had 181 pieces of naval ordnance: Columbiads, howitzers, eight- and nine-inch guns and a large number of obsolete 32-pounders. The land artillery companies shared 165 cannon of all descriptions, mostly unmounted pieces in storage at the Armory. This fact made Gorgas's unauthorized taking of the two new carriages all the more serious.<sup>370</sup>

Besides overseeing the conversion of arms, superintending the State Armory and cataloguing ordnance, Charles Dimmock collaborated with state and Confederate drill instructors in training raw recruits. In 1861, Ludwig von Buckholtz, a former Principal Engineer

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<sup>369</sup>Record of the Board on Purchase..., p. 13. See above, Chapter V.

<sup>370</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1836-1869.  
Vol. 11, p. 167.



of Virginia, compiled a textbook of military tactics for officers while he was assigned to the superintendency of "Infantry Camp Duty, Field Fortifications and Coast Defense."<sup>371</sup> On January 8, 1861, Dimmock wrote a high recommendation for Buckholtz' book, stating that it contained "information most essential to success, and without which, no matter how personally brave troops may be, they are exposed to almost certain disaster..."<sup>372</sup>

Throughout 1861 and early 1862, Dimmock managed to keep pace with the Confederate Ordnance Bureau and his task was simplified by the purchase of a percussion cap machine from S. H. DeBow for \$1,500.00, and \$1,400.00 worth of ready-made caps from Mitchell and Tyler in Richmond.<sup>373</sup> Seven 24-pounders and thirteen 8-inch Columbiads, ordered in 1857 from Junius L. Archer at Bellona Arsenal, were finally delivered in 1861, and tested by Colonel Benjamin Huger. Powder horns and flasks were ordered from Samuel Sutherland, a Richmond gunsmith who altered many weapons for

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<sup>371</sup>L. V. Buckholtz, Tactics for Officers of Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1861). In 1859, Buckholtz prepared the "9-sheet" map of Virginia, the best map since 1827.

<sup>372</sup>Ibid. Dimmock's endorsement faces the title page.

<sup>373</sup>Virginia Ordnance Department Vouchers, Box 1, 1861 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Abstract of Expenditures...1861.

both Virginia and Gorgas' department.<sup>374</sup>

On May 15, 1862, the Virginia General Assembly created a new military organization, officially styled "The Virginia State Line," but popularly called "Floyd's Army." This command, led by Major General J. B. Floyd, ex-governor and former U. S. Secretary of war, was to consist of several brigades, recruited from men not liable to Confederate conscription. These included individuals age 35 to 45 years of age and boys under 18. Their purpose was to recover western Virginia from the Federal Army and to protect the vital salt mines in that region. Recruiting offices were established at Richmond, Petersburg, Lynchburg, Staunton, Charlottesville, Fincastle, Farmville, Hillsville, in Carroll County, and Union, in Monroe County. By September 20, 1862, however, only about 2,000 men had enlisted.<sup>375</sup>

To handle the new "army" and its needs, while avoiding further conflict with the Confederate ordnance officers, both the Virginia Ordnance Department and

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<sup>374</sup>Ibid. Samuel Sutherland, 132 Main St., Richmond, Va., operated a gunmaking and sporting goods business prior to the Civil War. In this author's collection is an Archibald Rutherford rifle, made in 1812, for the 13th Regiment, Shenandoah Co. militia, altered by Sutherland to percussion. The lock is marked "S. Sutherland Richmond Va." The barrel has been shortened from 42 to 36 inches, but the stock is uncut.

<sup>375</sup>Wallace, A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, pp. 240-242.

the Virginia Quartermaster-General's office were removed from Richmond and reestablished in Lynchburg. The new laboratory was established in buildings rented from Mrs. Mary A. Kinnier of Lynchburg.<sup>376</sup>

When it finally took to the field, Floyd's Army consisted of five numbered regiments, totalling 52 companies, plus four other units. These were Fontaine's Regiment and Jackson's Battalion of Light Artillery, Captain August's Howitzer Battery and Captain Balfour's Mounted Riflemen.<sup>377</sup> Unlike the Army of Northern Virginia, composed of Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery regiments, each regiment in Floyd's Army was arranged on the Legion concept, combining all three branches into "combat teams." Without the Richmond facilities, however, arming Floyd's men became a haphazard proposition, since the State Armory's output was now devoted exclusively to the regular Confederate troops. A large number of vouchers, signed by Dimmock, for double-barrelled sporting shotguns, give an indication of the crude weaponry of the Virginia State Line.<sup>378</sup>

One voucher deserves special notice, however. This

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<sup>376</sup>Virginia Ordnance Department Vouchers, Box 1.

<sup>377</sup>Wallace, A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, pp. 240-242.

<sup>378</sup>Virginia Ordnance Department Vouchers, Box 2, 1862.

document authorized payment for "fifty new Harpers Ferry rifles, at thirty dollars each," personally countersigned by General Floyd. These were probably assembled from a secret cache of captured parts, unknown to Gorgas.<sup>379</sup>

Captured weapons and battlefield salvage were also readily accepted by Dimmock's agents, as demonstrated by a voucher dated March 11, 1862, which authorized payment to William H. Drewry for "one Springfield musket and Bayonet--\$12.00."<sup>380</sup>

Despite the state's support and its volunteer spirit, Floyd's Army scarcely justified the expense of its upkeep. By the winter of 1862-1863, the Union Army was firmly entrenched in the Western counties and all Floyd's men had to show for six months' campaigning were 118 prisoners, who were sent to the Richmond Armory in December 1862.<sup>381</sup>

On February 28, 1863, the Virginia General Assembly abolished the State Line and transferred all personnel liable to conscription into the regular army. Brigadier General William W. Loring, commanding the Confederate Department of Western Virginia, had stated to the Secretary of War that:

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<sup>379</sup>Ibid.

<sup>380</sup>Ibid.

<sup>381</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 1836-1869, Vol. 11, p. 249.

the State Line was very mischievous in their efforts to absorb the troops belonging to my army...I think the officers of the State Line resort to the allurements of one year's service in contrast with the service of three years in our army to induce men belonging to us by law to join the former.<sup>382</sup>

This disbandment left the state Ordnance and Quartermaster departments stranded in Lynchburg, which had become a strategic depot for war matériel. Charles Dimmock's sole consolation was his promotion; on April 4, 1862, Governor Letcher commissioned him a Brevet Brigadier General in the Virginia Ordnance Department.<sup>383</sup>

During the last seven or eight months of its existence, the Virginia Ordnance Department served as the western clearing house and custodian of state arms and equipment. Canal boats, such as the "Otis Allen," were often commandeered to transport needed supplies to and from Richmond. Occasionally, these boats performed the sad office of transporting the dead. A voucher, dated September 25, 1862, authorized payment of \$10.00 to Master Armorer G. W. Mahone, Sr., for his "expenses of trip to Richmond in attendance on the corpse of T. Trowers who fell dead while at work in the Virginia Armory at Lynchburg."<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>382</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

Wallace, A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, p. 235.

<sup>383</sup>Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, p. 249.

<sup>384</sup>Virginia Ordnance Department Vouchers, Box 3, 1863.

Dimmock's agents, including Joseph Grimes, A. H. Greener, Captain R. B. Wortham and Sergeant L. E. LeTulle, were employed in gathering civilian arms and those belonging to Floyd's defunct "army" for repair and reissue.<sup>385</sup>

On July 1, 1863, the series of extant Lynchburg vouchers ends and further references to Dimmock indicate that he and his assistants returned to Richmond in August. On October 27, 1863, Charles Dimmock died from the effects of a stroke and the Virginia Ordnance Department died with him. Josiah Gorgas assumed full control of all southern ordnance until 1865, assisted by James Henry Burton.<sup>386</sup>

Despite the unflagging efforts of Gorgas, Burton and the Confederate war machine, the Union Army gradually encircled Richmond in 1864, and tightened its coils until Jefferson Davis and his men evacuated the city on April 2, 1865. Although it is not from a Virginia Armory ledger, the Final entry in an account book of the Macon Arsenal sums up the fate of all Confederate munitions plants:

June 15, 1865. Played out. Done gone, quit.  
Turned over to U. S. forces and taken an  
everlasting receipt.<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>385</sup>Ibid.

<sup>386</sup>Vandiver, Ploughshares into Swords. See Chapter II of this paper for an account of Dimmock's death.

<sup>387</sup>Quoted in Edwards, Civil War Guns, p. 393.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:  
HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE RICHMOND  
PUBLIC GUARD,  
1781-1844

During the last year of the Revolutionary War, the state of Virginia established a central arsenal and supply depot for property belonging to the Continental Army and the Virginia state troops. This complex, built at Point of Fork, Fluvanna County, in January 1781, was the scene of a joint attack by Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's cavalry and John Graves Simcoe's Queen's Rangers in June of that year. Although their mission was to capture Baron von Steuben, stationed there to train recruits, and to destroy Virginia's war effort, both objectives failed; Steuben escaped and most of the supplies were recovered from the James River bottom.<sup>1</sup>

After Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in October 1781, a Virginia State Legion was organized under Colonel Charles Dabney in January 1782, to guard the

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<sup>1</sup>E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra, "Point of Fork Revisited: An Exercise in Armchair Salvage Archeology," Military Collector and Historian, XIX, 4 (Winter, 1969).



state against future British incursions.<sup>2</sup> The legionaries, organized from the remnants of Marshall's State Artillery Regiment, Nelson's Cavalry, Rogers' Dismounted Illinois Dragoons, Roane's Artillery and the Third Virginia Infantry Regiment of Continental Establishment, were responsible for protecting such strategic posts as Point of Fork.<sup>3</sup> A special detachment of Dabney's Legion, commanded by Lieutenant David Mann and known as the "State Guards," became Point of Fork's permanent garrison from 1783 to 1802. A similar detachment, commanded by Lieutenant Pratt Hughes, guarded the Public Store and Gaol in Richmond.<sup>4</sup>

While the Richmond Guard was disbanded on December 6, 1784, the State Guards at Point of Fork continued in service until the new Virginia Manufactory of Arms was completed in 1802.<sup>5</sup> By an Act of Assembly, dated January 22, 1801, all stores at the Point of Fork were transferred to Richmond, and the guardsmen were given an opportunity to enlist in a new company, styled the "Public Guard."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Letterbook of the Virginia War Office, 1782-1786 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.), p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. III, pp. 274, 540.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 209.

<sup>6</sup>Acts of the Virginia Assembly, 1801 (Richmond: 1801), January 1801.

During the Whiskey Rebellion of 1793-1794, an earlier guard, composed of an ensign, a sergeant, a corporal and twenty privates, had been created by Lieutenant Colonel John Marshall of the Richmond militia. This company, commanded by Ensign William Nice, was in existence at state expense until 1794.<sup>7</sup>

One of the companies raised during the Whiskey Rebellion and the threatened slave uprising in Powhatan County, was Captain Alexander Quarrier's Volunteer Artillery. Quarrier (1746-1829), a Scottish immigrant who followed the coachmaker's trade, had served in the Pennsylvania Continental Line as a cavalry lieutenant during the Revolution.<sup>8</sup> After moving to Richmond, he gained considerable wealth by his profession and through land speculation. Quarrier became the first captain of the Public Guard and served until 1807.<sup>9</sup>

Illustrating that private enterprise and the military seldom mix, Quarrier and his lieutenant, Thomas Underwood (d. 1815), attended more to their private land speculations than to their commands and discipline was nonexistent in the Public Guard.

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<sup>7</sup>Executive Letter Book, 1792-1794 (Microfilm of Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.), pp. 235, 236, 261.

<sup>8</sup>Saavedra, "An Undisciplined Set of Vagabonds," p. 41.

<sup>9</sup>Executive Letter Book, 1800-1803 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.), p. 155.

On February 4, 1807, Guard Private William Nash reported for sentry duty in Capitol Square while intoxicated and killed John McCredie, a prominent merchant. This incident caused a severe public reaction to the Guard and resulted in Quarrier's and Underwood's resignations.<sup>10</sup> The General Assembly repealed the act of January 22, 1801, and abolished the Public Guard, but a threat of a slave uprising brought the corps a reprieve in January 1808.<sup>11</sup>

The Guard's next commander, Lieutenant Peter Crutchfield, served until 1818, when he resigned, possibly from ill-health. Under his command, the Public Guard shrank from 68 privates to 28.<sup>12</sup>

In July 1818, Elijah Brown, a former artificer at the Virginia Manufactory of Arms, was appointed lieutenant in the Public Guard. Instead of commanding the unit, as he fondly hoped, he became a subordinate to Blair Bolling (1792-1839), the Public Guard's first captain in eleven years.<sup>13</sup>

By a system of harsh punishments, Bolling literally

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<sup>10</sup>Saavedra, "An Undisciplined Set of Vagabonds," p. 41.

<sup>11</sup>Revised Code of Virginia, 1814 (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants, 1814)., p. xii.

<sup>12</sup>Executive Papers, Box 241, September-November 1817 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).  
Muster Roll of the Public Guard, September 1817.

<sup>13</sup>Executive Papers, Box 247, July 1818 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.).

whipped the "turbulent and refractory band" into a semblance of discipline, although he often received censure from the General Assembly for his severity.<sup>14</sup>

On December 15, 1821, the Governor's Council ordered the Public Guard to vacate its rickety barracks on Capitol Square and move into the abandoned Manufactory of Arms, thereafter known as the "State Armory."<sup>15</sup> In these new quarters, the Guard's duties were to supervise a small force of artificers and to prevent vandalism. By an Act of Assembly, passed March 6, 1821, Captain Bolling had been given the additional jobs of Superintendent of the Armory and Superintendent of Public Buildings, a thankless position which Adjutant General Bernard Peyton gladly transferred to his subordinate.<sup>16</sup>

On August 6, 1823, one wing of the State Penitentiary caught fire and the convicts were transferred to the Armory for safekeeping until the damage could be repaired. To assist the Public Guard, a company of volunteers from Henrico County's 33rd Regiment of

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<sup>14</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia. Session 1832-1833 (Richmond: Samuel Shepard, 1833). Document 31, pp. 1-19.

<sup>15</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Bolling to Randolph, December 17, 1821.

<sup>16</sup>Journal of the Senate of Virginia, 1852. op. cit., Document 25.

Executive Papers, February-April, 1821 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.) Order to Capt. Bolling, March 12, 1821.

militia, commanded by Captain Samuel Cary, was raised for the purpose. A portion of these troops, incited by Lieutenant William Mosby, mutinied against Captain Bolling's discipline. Mosby attempted to ruin Bolling's career by accusing him of theft and misconduct with a female convict. Bolling successfully defended himself against these charges and caused the dissolution of Cary's company, but allowed the loyal members to enlist in the Public Guard.<sup>17</sup>

Until his death in 1839, Captain Bolling proved to be an intelligent, able and self-sacrificing civil servant, personally inspecting all contract work on Public Edifices. He was responsible for the removal of the old Capitol Square barracks and its replacement by the quaint bell tower that still remains on the southwest corner.<sup>18</sup>

During the epidemic of cholera morbus that struck Richmond in 1832, Bolling helped nurse the guardsmen that had contracted the plague and won loyal support from his men for this action. After 1832, punishments grew less severe, and better men enlisted.<sup>19</sup>

After Bolling died at his farm in Powhatan County

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<sup>17</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850. Folder for 1823.

<sup>18</sup>Saavedra, "Richmond's Old Bell House," p. 6.

<sup>19</sup>Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory... Folder for 1832.

on August 3, 1839, Adjutant General William Harvie Richardson's brother, John B. Richardson (1799-1843), took the command. An artistic person, Captain Richardson had been the Governor's Copying Clerk, noted for his excellent calligraphy. In his previous military post, he had been the collector of militia fines for Richmond's 19th Regiment and Captain of the Richmond Fayette Artillery, formed in 1824. Like Bolling, Richardson took a great interest in the duties of Superintendent of Public Edifices, and he proposed many ways to beautify the Capitol building and Square.<sup>20</sup>

After his death in 1843, Richardson was succeeded by Charles Dimmock, as discussed in Chapter II.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Folders for 1839-1843.  
Saavedra, "Richmond's Old Bell House," p. 6.

## APPENDIX B:

## PERSONNEL OF THE PUBLIC GUARD, 1844-1865.

Captain

Dimmock, Charles, 1844-1863.

Lieutenants

Brown, Elijah, 1818-1849.

Gay, Edward Scott, 1841-1863; Captain, 1863-1869.

Layne, A. C., 1849-1860.

Ker, Heber, 1860-1865.

Henley, Peyton, Brevet 3rd Lt., 1843-1844.

Sergeants

Berry, P. F., 1863.

Blankinship, W. E., 1862.

Childress, Joseph T., 1858.

Deacon, George, 1848-1858. Volunteered for Mexico, 1847.

Denton, James B., 1862.

Drew, E. W., 1863.

Evans, William, 1st Sgt., 1862.

Ford, John, 1862.

Gregory, Gallatin, 2nd Sgt., 1858-1862.

Gourley, James, 1858.

Hill, William V., 1844.

King, David, 1858.

Mahone, George W., 1844.

Riley, James, 1858.

Roff(?), James, 1844.

Schwartz, Hugo, 1865.

Sizer, P., 1844.

Taylor, William L., 1858.

Wellesford, Joseph T., 1848.

Wilton, Richard, 1862.

Corporals

Andrews, William B., 1858.

Barfoot, Thomas, 1844.

Blackburn, James, 1848.

Berry, Peter F., 1862.

Corporals, (cont.)

Childress, J. T., 1863.  
 Curry, Samuel, 1858.  
 Denton, James B., 1858.  
 Drew, E. W., 1862.  
 Eggers, William, 1862.  
 Ford, John, 1848.  
 Fouche, John G., 1858.  
 Garbar, N., 1844. Promoted to Sgt., 1848.  
 Gouldin, William, 1844.  
 Guyer, W. H., Drill Instructor, 1862.  
 Hartz, John, 1844.  
 Johnson, Charles, 1863.  
 Kulp, M. C., 1858.  
 Le Roy, Eugene, 1862.  
 Mallory, J. L., 1864.  
 Parrater, Francis, 1862.  
 Schwartz, Hugo, 1863.  
 Scott, William H., 1848.  
 Snead, J. L., 1864.  
 Terry, William, 1864.  
 Thomas, Archibald, 1865.  
 Thomas, Patrick, 1844.  
 Wyatt, John, 1863.

Musicians

Edwards, James, Fifer, 1844. Edwards was blind.  
 Fox, Frederick, 1858.  
 Hefferson, Alexander, 1858.  
 Pepe, Nicholas, Drummer, 1844.  
 Pulling, T., Drummer, 1862.

Bandsmen

Smith, James B., Bandleader, 1844-1859. Bugle.  
 Bauman, J., 1862.  
 Beir, Jacob, 1862.  
 Bonsack, G., 1862.  
 Boucher, John, 1859. First tuba.  
 Cardona, M., 1859.  
 Cardonia, F., 1848.  
 Ellig, John, 1859.  
 Emerson, Richard, 1859. Baritone horn.  
 Felvey, E., 1848. Side drum.  
 Ferguson, Vincent, 1862.  
 Fox, Frederick, 1848. Alto horn.  
 Frank, William, 1863.  
 Green, G., 1848.



Bandsmen, (cont.)

Harding, William H., 1848.  
 Hayes, E. W., 1848.  
 Hefferson, Alexander, 1848. Bass drum.  
 Knop, J. H., 1862. Second tuba.  
 Krause, B., 1862.  
 Loebman, Edmund, 1862.  
 Melton, James M., 1859. First cornet.  
 Meyering, Frank, 1862.  
 Muller, A., 1859.  
 Rittenhouse, J. C., 1859.  
 Steine, E., 1862.  
 Tremmer, William, 1848. Second cornet.  
 Vollandt, C., 1862.  
 Volker, F., 1863.  
 Wirth, J., 1862.

Governor's Orderly

Murphy, Lawrence

Hospital Matrons

Gourley, Sarah, 1858.  
 Rouse, Elizabeth, 1862.  
 Jackson, Anne M., 1864.

Hospital Stewards

Janley (Ganley), Peter, 1863.  
 Rouse, John, 1858.

Assistant Cook

Silvia, Manuel, 1862.

Assistant Baker

Wymock, Charles, 1862.

Bucket Carrier

Silvia, Antonio, 1862.

Privates

Acree, William J., 1844.  
 Adams, A., 1862.  
 Adams, William, 1848.  
 Anderson, Richard, 1844.  
 Andrews, V., 1848.  
 Andrews, William B., 1848.  
 Applegate, John C., 1847.  
 Archer, Benjamin, 1848.  
 Archer, Branch O., 1862.  
 Arnold, Richard, 1862.  
 Bach, Johon, 1844.  
 Bailey, William, 1844-1863.  
 Baker, Joseph H., 1847.  
 Barnum, Zeriah, 1844.  
 Bastin, Richard, 1848-1862.  
 Baswell, J. J., 1865.  
 Baugh, John, 1864.  
 Beach, J., 1848.  
 Beach, Richard, 1844.  
 Beard, J. S., Cook, 1862.  
 Bell, Solomon, 1848.  
 Bennett, F. K., 1858.  
 Berg, Maurice, 1862.  
 Blackburn, Nathaniel, 1847.  
 Bladley, Damascus L., 1847.  
 Blaney, Charles, 1858.  
 Blankinship, C., 1848.  
 Blankinship, Chast., 1862.  
 Blankinship, Chris., 1862.  
 Blankinship, Q. M., 1862.  
 Blankinship, W., 1858.  
 Blaylock, Jeremiah, 1848-1862.  
 Blaylock, John, 1863.  
 Bogile, J. P., 1864.  
 Bohannon, G. W., 1865.  
 Boler, M., 1864.  
 Boltz, W. H., 1864.  
 Boon, M., 1862.  
 Bottom, Pleasant; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Bottom, Thomas, 1863.  
 Bottom, T. L., 1864.  
 Boucher, John, 1858.  
 Boulware, Corbin, 1863.  
 Bowen, Alexander; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Boze, William, 1844.  
 Branch, John W., 1847.  
 Britton, James, 1862.  
 Broadus, Henry F., 1847.  
 Brockwell, James, 1848.  
 Brooks, E. J., 1863.  
 Brooks, W., 1862.

Privates, (cont.)

Brown, W., 1862.  
 Butler, Nathan, 1844.  
 Butte, Richard, 1844.  
 Butts, Thomas, 1844.  
 Canaday, L., 1848.  
 Cardonia, F., 1848.  
 Childress, Joseph, 1862  
 Childress, Joseph H., 1858-1862.  
 Clark, G. W., 1864.  
 Clark, Henry, 1844. Promoted to Corporal, 1848.  
 Clark, James, 1844.  
 Clark, James L., 1844. Volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Clark, John, 1864.  
 Clark, Josiah, 1865.  
 Clarke, Daniel, 1858.  
 Clarke, S., 1848.  
 Clay, Sidney C., 1847.  
 Claytor, Reuben, 1858.  
 Cocke, R. F., 1858.  
 Coleman, J. L., 1865.  
 Coleman, Thomas E., 1848.  
 Conghlin, Jeremiah, 1848.  
 Cook, Washington, 1844.  
 Cordona, Michael, 1858.  
 Cousins, William, 1848.  
 Crafts, Jacob, 1844.  
 Crook, Henry, 1844.  
 Dance, Edward P., 1847.  
 Dawson, Richard P., 1858.  
 Day, A. M., 1862.  
 Delong, Jacob, 1847.  
 Dickenson, Elisha C., 1847.  
 Dickerson, Benjamin, 1848.  
 Dickerson, James, 1858.  
 Dickman, F., 1864.  
 Drake, William, 1844.  
 Drury, Edward, 1858.  
 Duffy, Felix, 1858.  
 Dugan, John E., 1858.  
 Edwards, Robert D., 1847.  
 Emerson, Richard, 1858.  
 Eubank, James H., 1844.  
 Eubank, John L., 1844.  
 Evans, William, 1844.  
 Eylers, Henry, 1863.  
 Falker, G., 1862.  
 Farmer, James, 1863.  
 Farmer, T., 1863.  
 Farmer, William B., 1863.  
 Fergusson, A., 1862.  
 Fergusson, Benjamin, 1862.

Privates, (cont.)

Fernald, Henry A., 1858.  
 Fitzgerald, Nicholas, 1858.  
 Fitzpatrick, Patrick, 1844.  
 Flagg, R. F., 1864.  
 Florissey, Jeremiah, 1862.  
 Ford, Garland, 1844.  
 Ford, John, 1858.  
 Ford, John M., 1864.  
 Fowler, William, 1844.  
 Francis, William T.; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Franklin, Jacob, 1844.  
 Franklin, William, 1844.  
 Frawner, J., 1848.  
 Frawner, L., 1848.  
 Frazer, P., 1848.  
 Freeman, David G., 1847.  
 Gadsey, William A., 1865.  
 Gahring, Gottlieb, 1858.  
 Galloway, F. H., 1865.  
 Garnett, Andrew S., 1858.  
 Garnett, James, 1848.  
 Gill, James P., 1848.  
 Gill, Jesse, G., 1863.  
 Goldsmith, G., 1865.  
 Goen, Richard, 1858.  
 Goosby, Thomas, 1847.  
 Gosmith, E., 1864.  
 Grant, George W., 1858.  
 Green, G., 1848.  
 Gregory, Robert, 1847.  
 Grimes, William, 1862.  
 Guthrow, William; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Hackett, W. L., 1865.  
 Hall, William H., 1865.  
 Hamilton, Bedell, 1844.  
 Happe, Harman; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Hardiman, Thomas, 1844.  
 Harding, William H., 1848.  
 Harlow, Lewis, 1862.  
 Harris, James, 1847.  
 Harris, William, 1848.  
 Hatchell, Thomas A., 1865.  
 Hatcher, George, 1863.  
 Hayes, E. W., 1848.  
 Heath, S., 1848.  
 Hicks, Thomas, 1844.  
 Hislop, Rice B., 1844.  
 Hockman, Joseph, 1844.  
 Holton, William C., 1865.  
 Hope, B. J., 1844.  
 Hope, Oliver, 1844.  
 Horner, O., 1864.  
 Hoy, P., 1848.

Privates, (cont.)

Hubbard, George W.; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Hunley, William J., 1848.  
 Irwin (Irving), W. A., 1844. Promoted to Sergeant, 1848.  
 Jackson, John, 1848.  
 Jackson, Peter, 1858.  
 Johnson, Charles, 1862.  
 Jones, Charles, 1863.  
 Jones, C. R., 1858.  
 Jones, C. V., 1858.  
 Jones, William, 1858.  
 Jordon, Andrew, 1862.  
 Joynes, C., 1864.  
 Joynes, W., 1862.  
 Kelly, John F., 1858.  
 Kelly, P., 1862.  
 Kennedy, Thomas, 1858.  
 Kent, John; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Kersey, Thomas, 1848.  
 Kesnick, J., 1863.  
 Kidd, S., 1848.  
 Kidd, William; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Kidd, W. W., 1848.  
 Kindervater, George, 1858.  
 Kinker, George, 1864.  
 Kulp, M. C., 1864. Listed as Corporal in 1858.  
 Lawson, Lewis, 1858.  
 Lee, Arthur, 1858.  
 Leonard, James T., 1847.  
 Lipscomb, Thomas D., 1844-1858.  
 Littleford, John S. S., 1847.  
 Livingston, P., 1862.  
 Long, George, 1862.  
 Long, Michael, 1858.  
 Longest, H., 1848.  
 Longest, Robert D., 1844.  
 Lord, Samuel, 1844.  
 Loving, William, 1844.  
 M'Adams, James, 1847.  
 M'Culloch, Cleborne, 1844.  
 M'Cullum, John, 1847.  
 McNamara, Thomas, 1858.  
 Mannion, James, 1858.  
 Marks, Samuel, 1858.  
 Marshall, Andrew, 1844.  
 Marshall, James, 1844.  
 Martin, Henry, 1844.  
 Martin, James, 1862.  
 Martin, John, 1844.  
 Martin, William, 1844.

Privates, (cont.)

Matthews, John, 1844.  
 Melton, James M., 1858.  
 Michaelson, Shamus, 1844.  
 Miller, Andrew, 1858.  
 Miller, J. H., 1862.  
 Miller, William M., 1858.  
 Mills, John; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Milton, J. W., 1862.  
 Minter, George, 1858.  
 Mitchel, T. A., 1862.  
 Mitchell, G. W., 1848.  
 Morgan, Calvin, 1847.  
 Moore, Joseph, 1848.  
 Moxley, Rolandes, 1858.  
 Murphy, Dennis, 1862.  
 Murphy, James, 1858.  
 Murphy, Lawrence, 1858.  
 Newman, James F., 1848.  
 North, D., 1848.  
 Nuckels, William B., 1847.  
 O'Hare, Peter, 1858.  
 Osborn, John T., 1848.  
 Owens, J., 1863.  
 Parker, John, 1848.  
 Parkinson, William, 1844.  
 Parrater, J. F., 1862.  
 Parrater, J. L., 1862.  
 Parsons, William, 1847.  
 Pavo, John, 1844.  
 Pemberton, John, 1862.  
 Peters, William, 1862.  
 Pitcher, Moses, 1858.  
 Pitts, Alexander, 1862.  
 Pomire, William, 1858.  
 Powers, Edward, 1858.  
 Pulling, John, 1844.  
 Puryear, Joseph, 1844.  
 Reily, John, 1844.  
 Riecke, Lewis, 1858.  
 Rice, William, 1847.  
 Rodd, Francis, 1844.  
 Rollison, John, 1847.  
 Rouse, John, 1848.  
 Rouse, Tazewell A., 1847.  
 Russel, Ellyson; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Ryan, P. T., 1858.  
 Salmon, John T., 1848.  
 Schmauber, Christian, 1858.  
 Self, Frank, 1863.  
 Shey, Thomas, 1858.

Privates, (cont.)

Shinault, Gray, 1863.  
 Shinault, M. W., 1862.  
 Shinault, Robert, 1862.  
 Shinault, Temple, 1863.  
 Shinault, William, 1844.  
 Simmons, Wesley C., 1848-1859. Imprisoned for abolitionist sentiments.  
 Sizer, James, 1848.  
 Smart, H. W., 1862.  
 Smith, John L., 1858.  
 Smithers, Robert, 1844.  
 Snead, B. R., 1848.  
 Snead, J. L., 1862.  
 Stark, Richard; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Straus, M. L., 1864.  
 Sullivan, Dennis, 1858.  
 Sutlip, James, 1863.  
 Tate, Elijah, 1844.  
 Tate, M., 1848.  
 Taylor, William L., 1844.  
 Taylor, William S.; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Terry, William M., 1862.  
 Thacker, William, 1844.  
 Thomas, P., 1864.  
 Vaughan, Henry, 1844.  
 Vest, Joseph L., 1862.  
 Vest, T. W., 1862.  
 Waddle, Robert, 1858.  
 Wadkins, W. W., 1858.  
 Wagner, C., 1863.  
 Webb, James, 1848.  
 Webber, Frank, 1863.  
 Weeks, Wesley, 1830's-1848. Promoted to Corporal in 1848.  
 Wells, Edwin, 1844.  
 Wells, James, 1858.  
 Westcott, C. D., 1862.  
 Wharton, Festus, 1862.  
 Wharton, Lewis, 1862.  
 White, Denis, 1858.  
 White, M., 1848.  
 Whitney, George, 1858.  
 Wicks, C., 1848.  
 Wigglesworth, James H., 1844.  
 Wilford, John T., 1844.  
 Williams, John, 1848-1862.  
 Wilson, J. L., 1863.  
 Wilson, Robert; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.  
 Wilson, Thomas, 1858.  
 Wilson, W. H., 1862.  
 Winfree, R., 1848.  
 Wingo, Henry, 1860.  
 Winn, James; volunteered for Mexico, 1847.

Privates, (cont.)

Winston, G., 1848.  
 Wood, Benjamin, 1844.  
 Wright, Alfred P., 1858.  
 Wright, John, 1848.  
 Wyatt, J. R., 1862.  
 Wycoff, Abram A., 1847.  
 Yarborough, N., 1862.  
 Zehle, Adolph, 1858.

Servants

Charles  
 Joseph  
 Henry  
 Lawson, M.

Contractors for Provisions, Stationary, etc.

Jones, Burwell, 1850's.  
 Baker, Samuel M., 1850's.  
 Cottrell, J. F., 1850's.  
 Griffin, Mrs. Jane A., 1860's.  
 Jones, Sampson, Sr., 1860's.

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Since the Public Guard was a state-maintained organization, its payrolls had to pass through the State Auditor's office before the money could be authorized. Consequently, more pay- and muster-rolls for the Public Guard are extant than for any other militia unit in Virginia. The vicissitudes of time, fire and careless handling, however, have diminished even these well preserved documents and several hundred rolls are missing for the years 1802-1859.

The foregoing, composite muster roll of the Public Guard during Dimmock's captaincy is in no way intended as a complete list of all officers, "non-coms" and privates, but it is substantially correct and comprises roughly eighty per cent of the Guard's personnel.

The extant muster rolls used in the listing are preserved in Auditor's Item 141 (Mss. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.). Additional sources of names were:

1.) a petition dated February 1, 1844, found in the "Reports of the Superintendent of the Armory and Commandant of the Public Guard, 1801-1850," also in the Virginia State Library, containing seventy-six signatures;



2.) a "size-roll" for the autumn of 1848, in the same collection;

3.) a petition of the members of the Armory Band, found in the "Executive Papers," Box 399, November-December 1859;

4.) a list of men who resigned to enlist in the Mexican War in 1847, found in the printed Governor's Message and Annual Reports...1847, Document 13, pp. 4-5.

5.) Finally, the Richmond newspapers occasionally printed names not found in the above sources, in connection with crimes, pageants, sword-presentations, etc.

The date following each individual's name refers to the earliest muster roll or other document on which the name appears.

## APPENDIX C:

THE CASE OF THE ESCAPED SLAVE, GEORGE LATIMER,  
1842-1843.

Eight years before the passage of the "Fugitive Slave Act," one George Latimer, the property of James B. Gray, of Norfolk, Virginia, had escaped to the north on October 4, 1842, reaching Boston, Massachusetts, on October 7. William R. Carpenter, a former employee of Gray's, recognized Latimer in Boston and notified Gray, who arrived there on October 18. Gray obtained the services of a Boston lawyer, E. G. Austin, and had Latimer arrested on charges of theft from Gray's store in Norfolk,

Throughout the preliminary court hearing, upwards of three hundred Negroes rioted outside the Boston City Jail. Through the efforts of Latimer's legal counsel, the firm of Ellis, Sewell and Merrill, the charges of unlawful flight were dropped, but Latimer was bound over for trial on the larceny charge. Latimer's lawyers, recognizing the value of turning the matter into a test case, persuaded Latimer to sue his master for libel, since the theft charge had been made in Boston.

Despite the patent absurdity of the countersuit, Gray was obliged to post bail of \$700.00. Attorney Austin, however, obtained a writ of replevin, to keep Latimer incarcerated until Gray's proofs of ownership could be forwarded from Norfolk. Gray had, in the mean time, offered City Jailor Nathaniel Coolidge money to pay for Latimer's board while in prison. When they learned of this, Latimer's lawyers advised Coolidge to attempt to purchase Latimer for the \$800.00 that he had cost Gray in 1839.

Gray, however, vowed that he preferred keeping Latimer, to any amount of money, and viewed the whole matter as an attempt by yankee abolitionists to deprive him of his property. After further legal delays and threats of violence to his person, Gray finally surrendered and sold Latimer to Dr. H. I. Bowditch for \$400.00 on November 17, 1843. Besides losing half of his slave's market value, Gray had to slip quietly out of Boston on a stormy night to avoid mayhem from the angry mob around the city jail. Latimer was manumitted by Dr. Bowditch and walked out of prison a free man.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, Session 1843-1844. (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, Public Printer, 1843)., Document 41, pp. 1-16. After a lengthy investigation, Governor James McDowell of Virginia ordered the entire collection of documents on this affair printed in the above journal. Dimmock, knowing the governor's strong position on the matter, wrote the letter to his brother, as outlined in Chapter II, and sent the printed version to McDowell.

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begun and held at the capitol, in the city of Richmond,  
on Monday the twenty-second of November, in the year  
one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two. Richmond:  
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Commonwealth of Virginia, begun and held at the  
capitol, in the city of Richmond, on Monday, the  
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## VITA

Eugene Michael Sanchez-Saavedra was born in 1946. He attended the McBurney School for Boys in New York City and graduated in June 1963. From 1963 to 1967, he attended the University of Richmond, Virginia, and graduated from Richmond College in August 1967, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in History.

He lives in Richmond, at present, with his wife, the former Miss Susan Aylor of Brandy Station, Virginia, and two Siamese cats. From 1967 to 1970, he worked as an Archival Assistant in the Archives Division, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia, and was in charge of the Map Collection.

Since 1967, he has been a member of the Archeological Society of Virginia, the Confederate Memorial Literary Society and the Company of Military Historians, and has published articles in Virginia Cavalcade, The Archeological Society of Virginia Quarterly Bulletin, and Military Collector and Historian.

The present thesis will form a portion of a projected book on the Richmond Public Guard, 1781-1870.