

The TEXAS JACK SCOUT

Volume XIV, Number 3

Fall 1999

Sheridan's Raid in Fluvanna County

from *The Sneads of Fluvanna*,
 Second Edition, 1959, (pp.68-72)
 by Virginia Snead Hatcher, edited and with a
 supplement by Virginia DeMott Cox
 published by the Sneads of Fluvanna, Inc., Fork
 Union, Virginia

submitted by Bill Perkins, who included these
 comments:

Oranie Virginia Snead Hatcher was the only daughter and youngest child of George Holman Snead and Oranie Pollard Snead of Fluvanna County, Virginia. She attended the Fluvanna Institute and graduated from the Albemarle Female Institute in Charlottesville. She wrote The Sneads of Fluvanna after the first Snead family reunion at Fork Union, Virginia, in 1909.

Readers of The Scout know that Texas Jack was a native Virginian, born and raised in Fluvanna County, not far from the Rivanna River and the town of Palmyra. His neighbors included many Sneads, who lived in nearby villages and on farms. Toward the end of the Civil War, the Union forces led by General Phil Sheridan moved from the Shenandoah Valley eastward through the heart of Virginia, where Fluvanna lies. Possibly some of Sheridan's soldiers plundered the Omohundro homestead in the manner described in this excerpt.

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General Phil Sheridan

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Well, that's it from here. I hope this finds all of you in good health and I hope to see you in Oklahoma City!

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Fellow TJA Members,

This issue I'd like to address two subjects: the next Roundup, and a new Omohundro website.

Jack and Jane Omohundro along with "Ed" de-la-Houssaye are the point people for the Millennium Roundup and from the early reports, this one will be a winner. The Roundup will be held in Oklahoma City, OK, from Wednesday, June 14th through Sunday, June 18th. Check-in will be on the 14th and check-out on the 18th. There is not yet any set itinerary other than a day at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame on Friday the 16th. Jack and company were responsible for the recent San Antonio Roundup, and I'm sure they will come up with a similar program. He does say that he hopes to have a surprise for everyone there. Registration information will follow in the next issue of *The Scout* and I will post updates on the Texas-Jack site as they come in. So mark your calendars!

That leads me to the next subject. I've mentioned it on the Texas Jack website [www.texas-jack.org] and I'd like to mention it here also. Lorrie Tenos (great granddaughter of Edward Elmer Omohundro) has created an Omohundro Genealogy site located at <http://www.omohundros.com> It is a searchable, online version of what I call "The Big Book." You might know it as *The Omohundro Genealogical Record*, published by Malvern Hill Omohundro in 1950-51. According to Lorrie, this book is once again in print and can be ordered from booksellers such as Barnes and Noble [*it was reprinted in 1998 by Higginson Book Co. of Salem, MA -ed*]. Since it was published in 1951, it is not current. For example, my brother Jack and I are listed, but not our two younger brothers born in '52 and '56. On the web site, Lorrie has thoughtfully included an update feature where one can "fill in the blanks" in the Omohundro family tree. Check it out and I'm sure you'll find it as interesting as I did.

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Chapter VI: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Fluvanna, being one of the middle counties of the State, was not in the enemy's lines. It did have a fearful experience in Sheridan's raid, a few months before the war closed. He was trying to join Grant, and brought his army along this River road, through Fork Union.

Captain C. G. Snead was married in Caroline, a few weeks before the close of the war, to a Miss Sallie Broaddus, and brought his bride to the "Old Homestead" for the "infair," as the reception was called in those days.

Several of his brothers and cousins were at home on a furlough. After a few days of feasting they went, by invitation, to "White Rock," the home of the brother, Dr. G. H.

Snead. After one night of merrymaking, the party was dispersed. Before breakfast the next morning, someone announced that the Yankees were on a nearby hill, that the sabers could be seen flashing in the

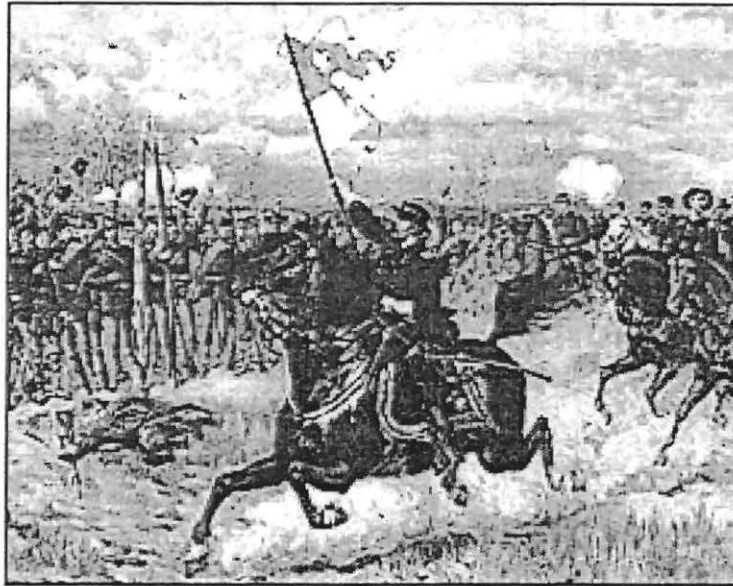
sunlight. Minus coats, cravats or collars, all the masculine contingent mounted horses and took to the woods, taking with them a number of farm horses. That left six ladies in the house worse than unprotected, for there were half a hundred negroes on the plantation, and many left their work and congregated at the gate to see the soldiers come in almost every hour. The meat house was well-nigh emptied, keys being demanded without scruple. Two men of cut-throat appearance, hirelings, no doubt, came up the walkway. We always presented a solid phalanx in the porch. They asked for money; they were told to look in a bureau drawer, where were two dollars and one-half, the negroes at the gate giving them the information, but that did not satisfy them. They said, "We want your watch," speaking to my sister-in-law, "and if you do not give it to us I'll burn your house." She did not have one, but there were three ladies present who did have watches. I took mine, a bridal present from my

husband, and bridal presents were scarce then, and told her to save her house. She gave it to the miscreant and he walked away. Another watch was given by her in place of it, and I had no loss except a sentimental one. But oh, the experience of that hour! The wonder is that our hair was not whitened by it.

One night, during the time that we were in the enemy's lines, when we were worn and troubled from long waking hours, for we kept awake, only one sleeping at a time, an incident occurred at White Rock that to this day needs explanation.

About a dozen soldiers rode up to the house and

soon disarmed our fears, shedding sunshine into our hearts by telling us that they were Colonel Mosby's men. One of them pulled aside his great coat to show us that they had on two uniforms. Somehow we were blinded and believed all that they said. When they asked for something to eat, offering to



pay for it, we said, "No, indeed, we would not have any pay, we are too glad to serve you," and forthwith we ushered them into the dining-room, where each vied with the other to see how many good things could be put on the table. And such a feast it was, for we had scarcely touched the big turkey, ham, shoat, lamb, cakes and jellies that had been prepared for the wedding party. How pleasant they were, and how we talked of how badly "the Yankees" had treated us. They were sympathetic and courteous, and promised to protect us from that time forth from the raiders. We retired and slept sweetly, the first time for five nights. They must have belonged to Sheridan's army, but they were clever men. Deception cannot be justified, but if it ever could be, this incident would be blameless, for they gave us peace and a good night's rest. Who were they? It may be explained somewhere in history.

But how about the old people left at the "Old

Homestead"? That night when the army made its appearance, one man knocked at the door, and he was thought to be one of our soldiers. It was only by a candle light that he was viewed. My father took him to the pantry in the basement to get something to eat, and quickly the room began to fill, when one uttered an oath to him because he was so slow, and then my father perceived that he was in the hands of the enemy. The whole of Sheridan's army passed through the house and yard as they felt disposed. When the children returned, after they had passed along, there was scarcely anything to eat left, the larder was emptied and much desolation was around. The old people were in tears.

An incident had occurred worthy of being remembered. My mother was much excited and almost sick from the presence of so many soldiers. The old gardener, "Uncle Sam," said, "Ole Missus, if you will go in that back room, I'll sit in the door, and they will have to pass over my dead body to get in there." He took his seat there, and not a single soldier dared to cross the threshold.

General Sheridan had his horse shod in the yard of the "Old Homestead," now Captain Snead's. The colored maid, Mary Ann, who waited on me as a young lady, cooked breakfast for him, that he ate in my mother's bed-chamber, a large room with a door opening outside, according to the fashion of that day.

Philip Benjamin, one of the twenty-one, lost his life in reconnoitering a few days before the raid, expecting to obtain the correct information as to where Sheridan's army was. In company with another soldier, he rode some distance from home, and in attempting to cross the James River, much swollen by rains, his boat was upset and both of the young men were drowned.

It looked as if the words of the poet, "Misfortunes never come singly, but always in battalions," were being verified, for a few days afterward, the sister of Captain Snead's wife, Jeannette Broaddus, was returning from the wedding, and was drowned in a river near her home. The writer, returning to her home in Richmond, Manchester side, about this time, reached there in time to see a pageant the world has seldom equalled—that of Lee's Army of Miserables going south to their surrender, with Richmond in flames, and a few days later, Grant's army, also Sherman's, coming in with their gaily caparisoned steeds, soldiers with glittering uniforms, bands playing wildly all

the airs of conquering heroes, that, if one had been in sympathy with it, would have sent the blood a-tingling with rapture unspeakable; but instead, the Southerner, who had not dreamed of defeat or dared to mention it, was face to face with the sorrowful moment. Never can the picture presented in the days after the Surrender, of General Lee's return to Richmond be effaced from memory. The rain was falling; some one called that General Lee was coming. A rush to the door, and there, sure enough was General Lee, the great, good man, on "Traveller" with an aide on either side. He wore a waterproof cape. It was the only sight of General Lee ever given the writer. The Richmond Dispatch, in writing of this return to his home, says that "A small group of horsemen appeared in the morning on the further side of the Richmond pontoon across the James. By some strange intuition, it became known General Lee was of the party, and, silent and uncovered, a crowd of Virginians all gathered along the route the horsemen would take. There was no excitement, no hurraing; but as the great chief passed, a deep, loving murmur greater than these rose from the very hearts of the crowd. Taking off his hat, and simply bowing his head, the man, great in adversity, passed silently to his own door; it closed upon him, and his people had seen him for the last time in battle harness."

Some of the soldiers from Sheridan's Army rode up to Uncle Benjamin's home and began to catch the fowls in the yard, when one of them asked his name. "Snead? Snead? I went to the University with Burwell Snead. Was he a relative of yours?" "He was my nephew," said he. "Then I will not take but one hen."

Mrs. Cornelius Snead owned a pretty grey pony—the soldiers found him in the woods, where an old colored man was hiding him. They took him, and the old man said, "Oh, master, Missus will be so sorry. She loved this horse; she thought so much of him she called him Abraham Lincoln. Please don't take him, she thought so much of him." Whereupon the pony was given back to the man. A similar thing occurred with the colored man, Samuel, Mr. William Snead's carriage driver, whose picture is on the corner of the group of the reunion (an honorable old man is he). The soldiers were going off with all of William Snead's horses, when Sam begged for his old master's fine riding horse, and saved it for him.

* * *

Richard the Fourth: Texas Jack's Great-Grandfather

by Susan S. Omohundro

In 1997, Ginny Davis, a student in history at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote an honors thesis entitled "A Social Historical Study of the Elizabeth and Richard Omohundro IV Family - Eighteenth Century Middle Class Farmers." Richard IV (fourth descending generation from the first Richard Omohundro) was the great-grandfather of Texas Jack and was responsible for establishing the Omohundro family in Fluvanna County.

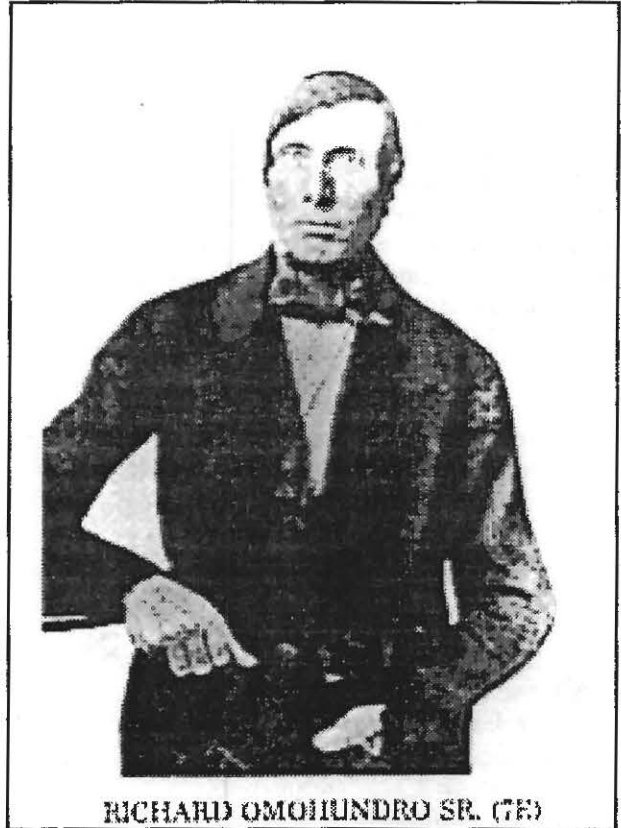
In Ginny's own words:

"My Omohundro research project began in the Spring of 1996 when I started to look for a new American history topic to research. Two of my dearest friends, Kathy and Bill Marshall, helped me by sharing stories about their ancestors in Virginia. Bill believed that the life of "Texas Jack" Omohundro would be a fascinating topic to research. He then loaned me his mother's Omohundro family "scrapbook." It was here in Virginia Marshall's collection of family stories that I discovered my new research topic . . ."

A brief summary of her paper on some of Texas Jack's ancestors follows:

Richard IV was born in 1733. Around 1740 his father, Richard III and grandfather, Richard II moved from the family's original location in Westmoreland County to Fairfax County, where they owned a farm. A few years later, after the death of his father, Richard III moved again, to King and Queen County, his final home.

While living in Fairfax County with his father Richard IV met Elizabeth Muse. He married her in 1763. They continued to live in Fairfax County for nine years, during which time they had five children, all of whom survived infancy. They had five more children after they moved to the Piedmont in 1772. Probably they moved because they needed new land. New land was needed because the most important crop, tobacco, depleted soil fertility after a few years. Also, the



RICHARD OMOHUNDRO SR. (7E)

from Malvern Hill Omohundro, Sr., *The Omohundro Genealogical Record*. This is Richard's son Richard V, Texas Jack's grandfather, born at Brems Bluff in 1777.

Piedmont had a healthier climate than the Tidewater.

Richard used an inheritance to buy 150 acres in Goochland County, adjoining Colonel Cocke. In 1775, perhaps influenced by a connection to the Cokes, Richard bought another farm next to Cocke property, this one in Fluvanna County near Brems Bluff.

Tobacco farmers liked to be on navigable waters in order to speed the shipping of their product. Both of the Omohundro Piedmont farms were near, but not on, the James River. Presumably, as a small farmer, Omohundro could not afford James River waterfront.

In May 1775 Richard and Elizabeth moved to

The editor of the next *Scout* is Julie Greene, P O Box 7587, Carmel, CA 93921; jdgreene@mail.redshift.com
Deadline for the first issue of Volume XV is December 15.

POSTSCRIPT

Gloria Palmer sent us a copy of Uncommon Sense, the newsletter of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, wherein the director, Ron Hoffman, remembered Malvern H. Omohundro, Jr., recently deceased Chairman of the Texas Jack Association, with these graceful words:

“Mr. Omohundro was keenly interested in the early American past, especially the history of Virginia, his native state, and for many years he expressed this interest by being a generous benefactor of the Institute. . . In 1996 this continuing interest and generosity led Mr. and Mrs. Omohundro to make the Institute the primary beneficiary of their estate, and, in recognition of their gift and the more secure future it promised, the Institute’s sponsors, the College of William and Mary and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, agreed that the Institute would henceforth be known as the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

I first met M.H. in 1992. Lean and alert at eighty-six, he impressed me with the strength of his handshake, the intensity of his interest in history,

and his passion for the College of William and Mary. As I came to know him better, I learned of his enthusiasm for travel and spent many delightful hours vicariously traversing the continents with him and his wife Libby. . .

An avid reader, M.H. always wrote me a gracious note thanking me for sending him the latest Institute books. Although he occasionally told me a little wistfully that he wished the Institute would extend its time period to the Civil War, his only real complaint concerned the size of the type in the *William and Mary Quarterly* - he let me know on numerous occasions that he thought we ought to “make the print larger.” He persisted in this suggestion until I appealed to his legendary frugality by telling him how increasing the size of the type would affect the bottom line of the budget. Putting it that way left him no recourse, but as more and more readers not yet in their ninth decade began to express a similar point of view, the Institute decided to explore some modest changes in the *Quarterly*’s format to improve its readability. I had looked forward to presenting these changes to M.H. and receiving his lively comments upon them, and I regret that I am now denied that pleasure.”

* * *

IN MEMORIAM

Margaret Sullivan, wife of TJA founder Frank Sullivan, passed away on November 20, 1998. Her daughter, Martha Sullivan, generously made a contribution to the Association in memory of M.H. Omohundro, Jr., and Virginia Van Leu Omohundro.

Charles Albert Burgess of Monson, Mass., passed away on 27 June 1999 at the age of 99. He was the grandson of Arabella Adalaide Omohundro. He is survived by his wife Annis (Joy) Burgess, two sons, John F. Burgess and David W. Burgess, a daughter Sylvia Valentine, a stepson Gerald Ravelin, 13 grandchildren, and 26 great-grandchildren.

