

SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES FROM 1861 TO 1865

By: W. H. Wampler

Transcribed and Preamble by Lawrence J. Fleenor, Jr.

PREAMBLE

The most recent datable event referenced in this document is the existence of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which was founded in 1894⁽¹⁾. Given the freshness of the author's memories, including a number of specific dates, I would estimate that this memoir was written about the turn of the century.

We have George Salaita to thank the preservation of this document. George is a Big Stone Gap native, being the son of Mike Salaita, who owned and operated 'Mike's', the largest department store in town. After his father's death, George operated it. George is a VMI graduate. Because of this he relates well to the Battle of New Market, which is described so vividly in this document. George acquired the original manuscript in the 1970's, and has spent the better part of his life researching the Rev. W. H. Wampler, and publishing the results. This author first became acquainted with this document when he heard George give a talk on it to the Big Stone Gap Kiwanis Club in the late 70's. George became a teacher of American History at Mountain Empire Community College. He attended one of my Museum tours of the Wilderness Road this April, and was kind enough to give me a photocopy of the original document, along with some associated newspaper articles.

The Wampler family is a part of the fabric of Southwest Virginia. The family has produced a member of the House of Representatives, and of the Virginia General Assembly⁽²⁾. Like so many other Southwest Virginians, they are of German origin, coming from Alsace (a part of France since World War I). Their immigrant ancestor was Johann Christian Wampfler (1718-1764), who died in York County, Pennsylvania.⁽³⁾ The family bought 612 acres in Montgomery County, Virginia in 1782-83⁽⁴⁾, and got an original land grant for 161 acres in Wythe County in 1854⁽⁵⁾. In 1853 George Wampler (the Rev. Wampler's grandfather) signed the petition to form Wise County⁽⁶⁾.

The Wampler farm was located across the river west of the community of East Stone Gap. The house was a long rectangular affair, facing the river to the east. It was torn down in the late 20th Century. The farm included the bottomland around the house, and the hollow to the west, now containing US 23, and known to this day as 'Wampler Hollow'.

William Henry joined the 51st Infantry Regiment CSA, along with his brother Samuel. After being wounded, and sent home on furlough, he was baptized at the Three Forks Baptist Church in what is now the Town of Big Stone Gap. After his

capture at the Battle of Piedmont (also called the Battle of Waynesboro) he was imprisoned at Fort Delaware. Even though the war was over in April, he remained imprisoned until September. On his release he was baptized into the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and licensed to preach. For the next 62 years, as a circuit riding preacher, he travelled far and wide in the wider region, evidencing no fear of violence coming from the continuing partisan fighting left over from the war, and which was common in that era. He has been called "the Father of Methodism" in Southwest Virginia west of the Holston Valley. For six years he was Superintendent of Wise County Schools, and Trustee of those in the Richmond District. His daughters taught another future Superintendent of Wise Co. Schools, Dr. J. J. Kelly, at the one room school at Kellyview. At age 83 Wampler died of a stroke. Twelve ministers of various denominations presided at his funeral. He is buried to the right of the entrance gate at Riverview Cemetery in East Stone Gap, to the southeast of his home.⁽⁷⁾

In the interests of legibility, and to enable internet search engines to access it, this author has corrected the spelling, and added punctuation, but has otherwise left the syntax as Wampler wrote it. Salaita published his own transcription and background information without spelling corrections, in the "Post" July 24, 1991.

BODY OF THE MANUSCRIPT

William Henry Wampler



GOOGLE IMAGES

The spring of 1861 opened with great excitement, there was nothing but war talked about, the newspapers were full of war news, and everybody could see that the war was coming. It was the conversation in the home, and at all the public gatherings, and when you went to church it was war all the time. The people met and prayed for peace. Yet the rumors grew stronger every day, and finally the states be granted to secede, and then people knew the war was on hand, but thought it would be a short war and soon over with. For they thought the Yankees had been reared up in a city and knew nothing about handling a year's old fight against a southern man who had been raised with a rifle in his hand from a boy up. So this was the way the older people put it before the war. So they

thought it would be short and soon over with. The North was really deceived in the strength of the South. So they soon began to call for volunteers for one year that would end the war but both sides were originally deceived. So they formed companies in all the states and in all the counties. Wise County sent one company early in the spring and then they commenced making a second company. So they appointed a day when they would meet and call for volunteers. They met at Big Stone Gap. Everybody was on hand old and young. Someone made a speech and kindled the martial fire in the boys so they unfurled the flag and floated it in the air a few times and Uncle Rufus Kilgore commenced beating a rally on his old war drum, and someone led the way and shouted "fall in boys" so there was not a young man left but what had marched under the flag and went in with the rest of the boys. We soon organized into a company. John Wolfe was elected captain, and G. W. S. Henderson first Lieutenant, John Snodgrass Second Lieutenant, Milt French Third Lieutenant. No company had better officers than we had at the beginning of the war. Soon we went to the Wise Court House and commenced drilling and preparing for the great struggle of war. From Wise we went to Wytheville and joined over (blurred) to the State of Virginia Regiment. (blurred) and here we stayed and drilled for several weeks. We got our new uniforms and laid aside our old cloths. So we began to look like soldiers. Well, after some weeks we were equipped with some old flintlock muskets and began to learn the manual of arms. Gen. Floyd had gone on ahead with the rest of his brigade and moved into West Virginia and took a position on the east side of Gauley River here to wait for the enemy to come. (blurred) Dickenson with his company of (blurred) served as Floyd's watch dog. So Dickenson informed Floyd the enemy was gathering at Summersville. So Floyd ordered Wharton with his regiment to join him as early as he could. So we went forward as fast as we could to reinforce Floyd. So we got there in good time and rested a few days. So in a few days we heard the death roll on the drums. It was a strange roll to what we had ever heard. So the officers were commanding their men to fall in line the enemy had come. Here we had our first experience at war. The battle commenced about two o'clock and went on till after night. They made several attacks on our lines but were not able to break through. We got a few men wounded but none killed. General Floyd was slightly wounded but not disabled. So the enemy undertook to flank us and to fall in behind and find an easier way to attack, but it was after night when they made the attack, so they started a hornet's nest. We had four pieces of artillery waiting for them and I never heard such moaning (blurred) the whole war. They got back what was left of them. So Rosencrans had brought his twenty thousand men up by this time. So Floyd slipped his few men away during the night. So they got the worst of the fight. We lost a few men wounded. It was reported the enemy lost seventeen hundred. Floyd fell back to Sewell Mountain and joined Wise with his brigade but as the enemy advanced they took a position on Little Sewell and Rosecrans stopped on Big Sewell. Here they were in sight of each other. Rosecrans had the advantage of the ground, but was too slow in making the attack so in a few days (the narrative skips from page 4 to page 6 at this point) Fort Donelson to reinforce Buckner and after we reached there about the first of February 1862. We stayed here for ten or eleven days and the enemy moved on us. We marched into line about two o'clock in the evening on the twelfth day. It was

warm and pleasant. The battle commenced at evening, but they were not able to break our lines so we worked all night making our works stronger. Next day it commenced raining and then it turned into a snow and into a freeze and here we was with (blurred) fire with a constant rattle of guns without one minute but what the crack of a gun was heard. We stayed there for two days and nights. No one was allowed to go to sleep for we expected an assault every minute on the second. I went to the camp for some grub and here I saw (? Teragust ?) bring his (? group ?) of ships up Cumberland River and attack the fort. The battle raged for nearly an hour it was one (blurred) of (blurred). The earth seemed to tremble. I saw ships as they seemed to go under the water and then rise again with (blurred). I could see the fort as it seemed to tremble beneath the awful roar of artillery, but the fort was too strong for the ships. Some of the ships was battered but got away without sinking any of them. So this ended this part of battle and left it for the land forces to fight it out. So the next morning (blurred) and Buckner decided to try an open bold fight so they commenced forming our men for the assault and here I stood in the sun shivering with cold until the peep of day and then we moved them and as soon as we got on the side of the breast works the battle commenced. There was no artillery used on either side it was a battle of small arms. The battle raged for hours men falling on the right and left, and staining the snow with blood. The wounded had to lie helpless in the snow. When some could go to their relief some of them was shot the second time and was killed. (blurred) glanced three times but not seriously hurt. Our color bearer stood like (blurred) monument but was (not) even hurt. The flag was cwt. into (blurred). So we were ordered to move forward. So it looked like it would be a battle of bayonets next, but as good luck would have it the enemy gave way and went on a retreat. So this ended the awful struggle. I went back over the ground. The timber was marked with bullet holes till you could not put your hand on a tree without putting it over a bullet hole. I could not see how any man could escape from being shot. Well, we gathered up our wounded boys (and) carried them back to town and then put them on a boat and sent them away. Some of them died and no one knows where they were buried. So that evening we were ordered back to our breast works. The enemy after retreating a few miles met a reinforcement and turned around and came back and as we had no way to get reinforcement Floyd sent his men over the Cumberland River and they made their way to Nashville. The 51st Regiment was brought out on a boat. Buckner and Biller surrendered the next morning. Forrest with his cavalry refused to surrender and cont. his way out with the loss of only one man. Floyd gathered his men together at Nashville and here rested a few days. They tried to open the stores that belonged to the government and the men was allowed to help themselves to what ever they wanted, but the poor fellows was too near worn out to carry extra baggage. From here we moved to Chattanooga and (as) over (a) year was up that we had enlisted for, so we all reenlisted for three years or during the war, and was furloughed home for thirty day. But we had lost many men of our noble boys and this made our home coming very sad. So we came home and rested for thirty days, and gathered all the recruits we could and went back. We met at Wytheville and reorganized. Wolfe was elected Captain again. Jim Kennedy First Lieutenant! James Gilley Second Lieutenant, Joseph Galloway Third Lieutenant. I was elected Sergeant and held this position to

the close of the war. From Wytheville we was ordered to Preston, West Virginia to attack a force of Yankees that were then stationed at Princeton. So as we moved on the company we belonged to was left behind as a wagon guard as the enemy had left Princeton and come in search of us, so they learned that we had started for Princeton so they took a near way and fell in between the wagon train and the army so they captured the wagon train and done very near getting our company, but we made our escape and got back to a place of safety. They killed the wagon drivers and then went on in pursuit of the army. They overtook the army at Princeton and here the battle was fought and the Yankees badly whipped. So they had left their wagon train behind them and so we captured their wagons with all their goods but we did not kill their drivers. We was then ordered to the Narrows of New River in order to toward the passes of the railroad. We stayed here for a few months drilling the new men and getting them ready for duty. In August we were ordered to the Valley of Virginia, so we went by way of the Warm Springs and on by Mills Barons and then into Staunton and then down the Valley as far as to Winchester. Here we stayed a few days and was ordered back to Mt. Jackson and then across the Blue Ridge and on to Liberty Mills and from there back to Charlottesville. From here we was ordered back to West Virginia. We went by way of Red Sulfur Springs and on to Peter's Town. From there we was ordered to East Tennessee. Here we spent the winter moving from Blountville and then on down as far as to Bean's Station and then back in order to protect the railroad from raiding parties (who) were trying to destroy the road in order to prevent supplies going to the eastern army. We had no tents and had to take the weather as it came. The men was thinly clad and some of them barefooted. We suffered terrible from exposure of the hard winter and here witnessed a scene I never want to see any more. Three men had deserted and went home and was caught and brought back and tried by court martial and sentenced to be shot. We was all marched out to witness the awful scene. The poor fellows were marched out and made kneel face foremost and then blindfolded and shot in the breast. They all fell over dead. This seemed to have a bad effect on the army. They thought there was a better way to punish men than to shoot them like a dog. The command was ordered back to Virginia. It was a forced march, so the army marched all night in order to hear off the Yankees at the Salt Works. We was too fast for them, so the enemy did not show up. We went from here to the Narrows of New River. We was ordered from here to Charleston, West Virginia. We went down New River to Pack's Ferry and then on to Fayetteville and here we found the Yankees well fortified and prepared for battle. Wharton with his command was sent around in order to fall in behind them. So he succeeded in getting behind them. So they expected to bag them next morning. We got a few men wounded that evening, so before light they set fire to their commissary and slipped out so we commenced a race with them. They set fire to their magazine where they had all their ammunition stored away, and destroyed it all to keep it from falling into our hands. So they fired their commissary with stores of meal and other provisions so they lost all their supplies, but got (to) safety themselves. So we had a race with them to Charleston, and here they took shelter in some houses. Our men turned their artillery loose on them and soon the town was on fire. One square block burned down, so the Yankees got away and we never saw them anymore. We stayed here for some time feasting

on the good of the country. Finally in the fall we were ordered back to Virginia. We marched six or seven days and reached Carnifex's Ferry on New River. The boys was foot sore and worn out, so the next morning we was ordered to go back to Charleston. The boys got out of humor and used bad words, but it did no good. We had to go back after six or seven days hard marching we reached Charleston and here we stayed for several weeks and winter was on so we was ordered back to the Narrows of New River. Here we went into winter quarters. We built shacks and made them very comfortable, but we had to live on one-third rations. We stayed here till spring. General Breckenridge was ordered to take charge of the army in West Virginia. So he moved in at once and pitched his tent near our camps, as we saw him everyday as he was moving about his quarters. He was above the average sized man with every mark of intelligence you could see that he was a born leader of men. The army was proud to know that they were commanded by a man that had once been Vice President of the United States, and had the honor of running for President against Abe Lincoln. Well, we remained here until about the tenth of May 1864. Breckenridge received orders from General Lee to collect all the troops he could find and march down in the Valley of Virginia and drive General Sigel out of the Valley. Sigel was camping at New Market. This was Breckenridge's opportunity to win his spurs. He had overall command of all the troops. If he was successful in driving Siegel out of the Valley he would get all the glory himself. So we was ordered to be ready and made by daylight. We was glad to get on the road again. We went by way of Millsborough and on to Stanton. Here Breckenridge collected all the troops he could find and started down the Valley. The cadets from the military school fell in with us. They were boys about fifteen or sixteen years old. They numbered 280. They were boys from the best families of the country. Well, we all moved on as fast as we could. Nature had sprouts on her beautiful green robe decorated with flowers here and there. The boys was full of life and kept up a roar of laughter as we marched and many of the poor fellows moved to death. On the night of the fourteenth we camped in about five miles of New Market. Near morning the fifteenth day of May we moved out of camp at daylight. The 51st Regiment led the way and soon we came in sight of the Yankees. It was an open country. You could see for a mile about. We could see the enemy formed in line across the Valley waiting for us. They opened fire with their artillery on us but did no harm. Breckenridge stopped his men a few minutes and took in Sigel's position with his glasses. The key of Sigel's position was on his right (but our left as we moved on him.) Breckenridge sat on his fine Kentucky horse undaunted while the shells flew over him. He soon took in the situation and prepared his men for the battle. Wharton's Brigade formed on the left of the road, Imboden's on the right of the road. Then we was ordered forward. We had to march for a mile or more through open ground (with) nothing to protect us. They played on us all the way with their artillery, but did no great harm. We marched about half way the distance and was ordered to halt and straighten our lines. We was ordered to lay off our baggage, and put on our bayonets. Then we knew what we had to face. So the command was "forward march". We moved forward with a quick step. The roar of artillery was awful. Here we entered a wheat field. The Ground was soft and miry. We was now coming in close contact with the enemy. Alf Lee lost his shoe in the mud, and

stopped to get it amidst the awful carnage that was going on. We charged in about fifty yards of them, while the six batteries of artillery raining canister on over our lines. I saw our line on over right commence wavering like a cloth line on a windy day. So the whole line fell back a few steps. It looked like the battle was lost. Breckenridge saw his lines wavering and dashed along the line. They stopped and wheeled around and made a second charge, but our lines was crumbling fast. This time they all knew this meant victory or death. The Yankees lowered the range of their artillery and the canister fell among us like hail stones, but we washed on them to use our bayonets. But they could not stand the bayonet, so they left their artillery standing and took to their heels. So there was no one got in bayonet reach of them. During the fight after they had run a short distance they turned and fired a volley back at us, and I fell mortally wounded with a minie ball through my body. But we had won the day before I was shot. I was taken into a house nearby and here the awful sick commenced. I didn't know whether it meant death or not. Well, the battle was over. We captured their six guns with some prisoners, but we suffered badly. Edgar's Battalion went in with the fight with 441 men. They got 24 killed and wounded. The Fifty First Regiment went in with five hundred and eighty eight. They lost fifty-seven killed and wounded. (The) Sixty Second on the right of the Corp with five hundred they lost two hundred and forty-one. I don't know the number of the other forces the 22nd Regiment and Derrick's Battalion. Well, the enemy suffered badly. (In) the AM (blurred) was detailed to bury the dead and he says about five hundred Yanks was buried besides their wounded. Well, I remained in the house where I was taken for a short time. There was some Yankees in the house when I went in they were awful kind and did every thing they could for me. One of them gave me a large linen handkerchief to swing my arm in, and though it was a great pity that such noble young men must be butchered up for nothing. Well by luck and pluck I made my way back to town. Here I had my wound dressed and we was informed we would have to take care of our selves, as they had no room for us. I then had a man to take care of me. I went a short distance and I got lodging for the night. I was suffering terrible. I had bled till I was very weak. My clothes was full of blood. I took the ague and shook all night. It was awful to suffer and have no one to care for you. Next morning I had to move and nowhere to go, so I undertook to go to Harrisonburg, which was about fifteen miles away. I would march a few hundred yards and stop and rest. I was two days in making the trip, but I suffered awful on the way. Well, I reached Harrisonburg on the seventeenth day of May. I went in to a house prepared for the wounded. There was many of them there. I was furnished with a good meal and very well cared for. The wounded was dying nearly every day and that kept me uneasy. Well, Breckenridge was ordered to move as fast as he could and join Lee at Cold Harbor where Lee was hard pressed with the enemy. So he reached Cold Harbor and here was engaged in the awful struggle for several days and then was ordered to Lynchburg to meet Hunter, who was trying to destroy the railroad. So Breckenridge was on hand in due time and sent Hunter back down the Valley. Hunter had fought W. E. Jones at Piedmont twelve miles from Staunton. So in the act of victory W. E. Jones was killed (a brave and noble man). Charley Hamblen of Big Stone Gap was in the battle, so when Jones was killed they had no general, and had to fall back to Lynchburg. So, this gave Hunter an open

nearly to Lynchburg. Well, all the wounded soldiers from the Battle of New Market was carried back to Staunton, so we was informed that we would have to take care of our selves or fall in to the hands of the Yankees. So we got furloughs for sixty days and started on (to) relocate to get away from the Yankees. It was an awful sight (with) many of the poor fellows on crutches, some with arms in a swing. They were shot in every form one could think of. There was five or six hundred of us, so we rested in a grove of timber that night. The next morning we thought it best to separate, as we could get supplies better by being in smaller gangs. So, I left the wounded battalion and crossed the Blue Ridge, so I never saw them any more. I guess a number of them died in trying to get away. I had one boy with me. He was wounded in the arm, but not so badly hurt as I was. So he did all he could for me. We wondered about for four or five days, and finally reached the railroad somewhere between Charlottesville and Lynchburg. We suffered badly on the way. We took the train, and went to Lynchburg. From here, I went to Emory and Henry College, and stopped for a few days in order to rest and have my wound cared for. The house had been converted into a hospital and was filled with wounded Yankees, so I did not like the company I was surrounded with. So I left to try and make my way home. It was a long road to travel over. I had no one with me to dress my wound, so I had to take care of myself. I was animated by the thought of getting home, so I would march a while and stop and rest, but my wound was giving me great pain. But still I moved on as I had nowhere to stop. After a week or so I reached home here to stay till I got well or died. Breckenridge was made Secretary of War under Jeff Davis, and Jubal Early was put in command of his division. So Early followed Hunter as far as to Kernstown in the Valley of Virginia, and here Hunter stopped and gave battle, but it was soon over with, for our boys had their fighting clothes on and handled Hunter pretty rough. They captured a lot of his men and put him to flight. He stopped again at Winchester and gave battle again. Here they charged his works at (?Swndon) and routed him again, but we lost some of our brave boys: Renfro French our Orderly Sergeant, an excellent young man, was killed. From here they followed Hunter as far as to Fredrick City and then came back to Virginia. So Lee was hard pressed around Richmond and in order to draw away some forces from his front Lee ordered Early to move down the Valley and threaten Washington City. So in carrying out Lee's order Early was met at Lee Town by Sheridan with his cavalry. Early sent the 51st Regiment ahead as a skirmish line. So they ventured too far and was surrounded by Sheridan's men, and many of the boys were killed or captured. This was the worst defeat the Regiment suffered during the war. Colonel Wolfe, our first Captain was killed. Arch Lee, one of our Sergeants, was killed. Lieutenant Gilley was wounded and a number of privates were wounded. R. M. Lee and others were captured from our company. So Early brought his forces up and gave Sheridan a good licking. Sheridan lost many of his men in the battle. So the way was open for Early to Washington City. So Early moved forward as fast as he could. The men waded the Potomac River and moved on to Washington. They were met at Frederick City by Lew Wallace with his command, but the battle did not last long. Wallis soon gave way and the way was open for Early to move on with his command. They went in sight of the city and stopped. They did not make any attack on Washington. They rested for a day or so

and marched back to Virginia. Soon after their return to Virginia the Second Battle at Winchester was fought. This was fought all day. There was great loss of men on both sides. The Yankees kept reinforcing till late in the evening. Early gave up the struggle and moved his men up the Valley. He fell back to Fisher's Hill and stopped. Sheridan followed him to Cedar Creek. They were about three miles apart. Here, Early played one of the completest tricks of strategy of the war. Sheridan left his command and went to Winchester for some purpose thinking Early was too near worn out to make any attack. Early sent someone to the top of Blue Ridge and saw the situation of Sheridan's army, and then prepared to surprise Sheridan, so he sent General Gordon with his command around to strike Sheridan at day light. So Gordon marched all night and captured the pickets on the out posts, then marched his men down the Valley Road and captured all the Yankees. Afterwards there was nothing to do but pounce on the Yankees. They struck at daylight and took them on surprise. The Yankees were in their tents thinking they were safe from danger. So there was a general stampede. The Yankees left their tents and their artillery and tried to save themselves by flight. Early captured their tents and their artillery with a large number of prisoners and had lost nothing himself. This is where Sheridan made his famous ride. He was twenty miles away when he heard the roar of artillery and knew the battle was on. So he made this long ride and met his men in full retreat. He commanded him men to stop and form in line, so Early did not order his men on, and Sheridan had time to collect his army and wait for Early. Early did not follow up the pursuit. So Sheridan came back on Early in the evening. Early fell back to Fisher's Hill rejoicing over his trick of strategy he had played on Sheridan. This about ended the campaign for the season. Sheridan moved back to Winchester and went into winter quarters. Early moved up the Valley and went in to quarters at Waynesboro. Well, during this summer campaign I was at home. After some weeks confined in the house I began to improve. I mended slowly but after five of six months I decided to go back to the army. I went back in November but the company I found had but a few of the boys alive. They had nearly all been killed or wounded. There was not a sergeant in the company. I acted as Orderly Sergeant. There was but few to answer to their names at role call. We remained at Waynesboro for two or three months preparing for the spring campaign. Sheridan at Winchester was recruiting his army. He could get all the men he wanted, so by spring Sheridan had an army of twenty-two thousand. Early had no resources to draw from, so he could not recruit his army. When spring opened Early had only twelve hundred men to meet Sheridan with twenty-two thousand. The first day of March 1865 Sheridan was ordered to move up the Valley and attack Early at Waynesboro. So he moved up the Valley burning barns and fences, haystacks and everything of any value to the women and children. They entered the houses and took whatever they could find to eat. So Sheridan made his boast that a crow would have to carry his rations if he went up the valley. Well, he struck Early on the fourth of March. Early put his few men in line in open ground. Sheridan saw his few men stretched across the field, and sent Cruester around and fall in behind them in order to capture the whole army. Early saw Cruester coming in behind him and put spurs to his horse (and) swam the river and got away leaving his men to take care of themselves. So there was nothing to do but surrender. Every company got one poor fellow killed in the

action. Well, we was now prisoners of war, and subject to what ever they put on us. Sheridan put one brigade over us to take us to prison. The roads was in an awful condition. The mud was from knee deep to waist deep in places. We had to march through this mud for twelve miles, and then we would strike the Valley Road. Men would fall in he mud and have to be helped out by their comrades. The men were exhausted and looked like they could not go any further after two days marching in the mud we reached Staunton and got on the Turnpike, but this was but little better than the mud. Our shoes was (the bottom line on page 28 did not get copied) They had been starved to death. Well, it did not take us long to get use to the far-(blurred). The Yankees took pride in punishing the Rebels. They would kick them in the seat of their britches and slap them in the face with their hand and sometimes tie them up by their thumbs till they would turn black in the face. Some times they would ride them on wooden horses with weights to their feet till they would be almost dead. Then they would come and hack us all out in the cold or rain and keep us out for hours, shivering in the wind or rain. They would come into our barracks at all times in the night and take men out and punish them. They would find men out walking around and would force them to jump a ditch eight or ten feet across. They would make you jump until you jumped in the mud and water knee deep or more. Then they would go on laughing at you. Well, the men had endured this kind of fare till they were dying by scores, seven or eight a day, was the common toll of the prison. Well, they would not exchange prisoners with the South. They could starve us to death quicker than they could kill us on the battlefield. Many of the boys endured all this and died after the war ended. John Lipps, a captain of the first company from Wise lived till in May after the war was over and died of starvation. Well, Lee surrendered on the ninth of April. We expected to be released at once, but, alas, the worst had not hit us yet. We got up one morning and way all the flags standing at half mast. We knew there was something hard before us. So, we soon learned the President had been shot. So, they were harder on us than ever. They kept up in prison till the middle of June. They then offered us the privilege of taking the oath of allegiance to the government of the United States so there was nothing else to do. We all took the oath, and was set free. We had gone down in defeat, but not in despair. We yet had our ambitions, and our Southern manhood. So we was all made citizens of the government again. We was several hundred miles from home. We had neither purse or script. We was turned loose to take care of our selves. I left the prison the twenty second day of June eighteen hundred and sixty five. We had to make our way home the best way we could. They brought us to Baltimore. From here we went on a boat and we was carried to City Point, and here we was dumped off into Dixie and then had to make our way home the best way we could. The railroads was torn up, so we had to walk a good deal of the way. The country was stripped of every thing that was of any value. The Carpet Baggers had followed the Yankees and what was left by the Yankees the Carpet Baggers got. But the Southern people still had their generous hearts in them, and would divide with us so we never suffered for something to eat after we got into Virginia. (page 33 is missing) round the neck their slaves (corner of page 34 is torn off) down to their hands their shirts the top of their shoes there was no person as opposed as girls were and healthy their cheeks was re beautiful they were the finest lo

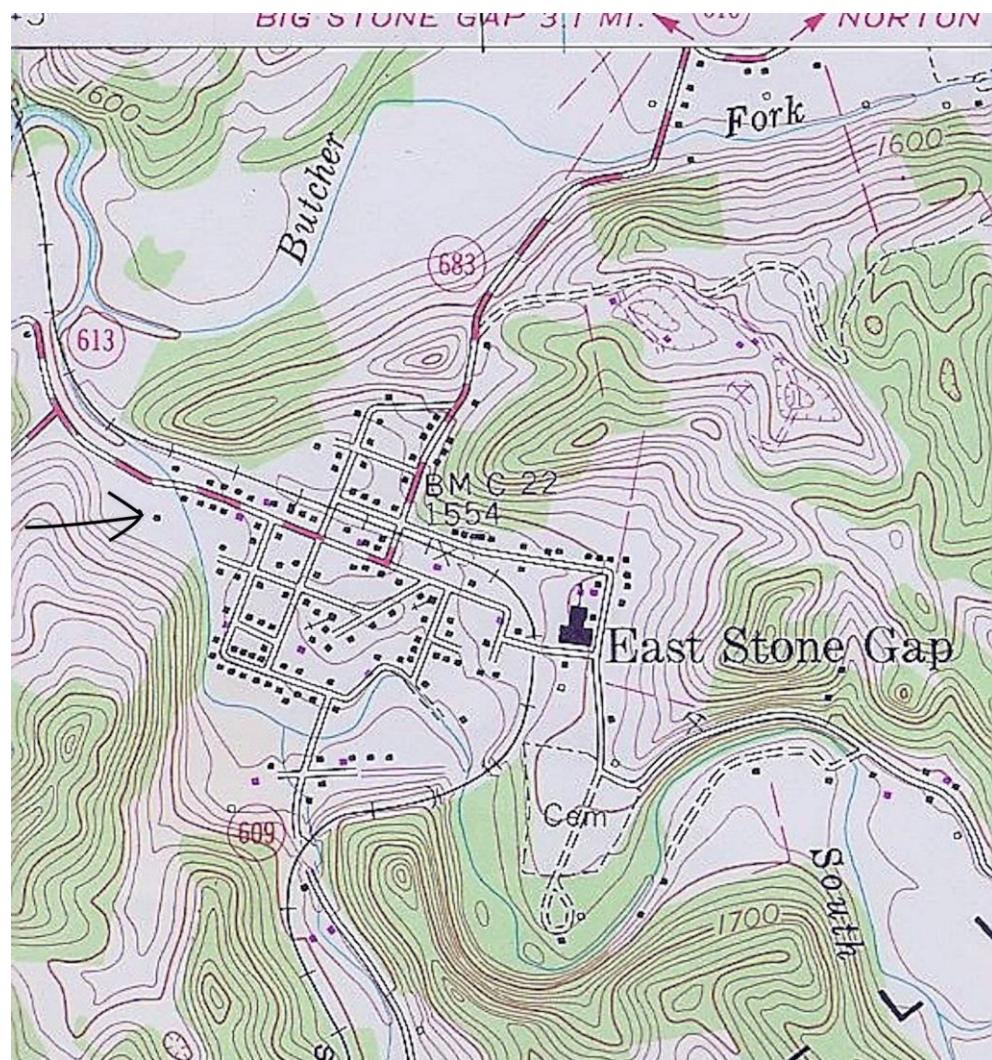
.... girls in the world, at least I thin So, well many of these beautiful girls became the mothers of the noble Daughters of the Confederacy that are striving to keep alive the deeds of gallantry done by their grandfathers during the Civil War and there could be no better example before the rising generation than to see before them the deeds and patriotism of the Southern soldier – men who sacrificed their lives and all they had for the good of their country. Well, the men and boys all worked hard and wore their homemade goods and thought they were well dressed with their jeans coat and pants with a rough pair of shoes made by some cobbler. The people were all kind and generous toward each other. When Sunday came most everybody went to church – old and young – they would walk four or five miles to church and back home feeling that they had spent the Sabbath in right way. (this is the last existing page of the manuscript, and the syntax seems to suggest that it was the end of the document, though there is no comment saying so.)

THE ARROW ON THE
LEFT OF THE MAP
POINTS TO THE
WAMPLER HOUSE – THE
BOTTOMLAND AROUND
IT IS THE FARM. THE
HOLLOW WEST OF THE
BOTTOM AND HOUSE
EXTENDING TO THE
SOUTHWEST IS
WAMPLER HOLLOW

THE CEMETERY AT THE
SOUTHEASTERN
CORNER OF EAST STONE
GAP IS RIVERVIEW;
WAMPLER IS BURIED
JUST INSIDE THE GATE
TO THE WEST

THIS CEMETERY HAS
THE LARGEST
CONCENTRATION OF
GRAVES OF
CONFEDERATE
VETERANS OF ANY IN
THE COUNTY (40)

AN ESTIMATED 900
CONFEDERATES ARE
BURIED IN WISE CO.
(8)



USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP; EAST STONE GAP, VA, 1957 REVISED 1969

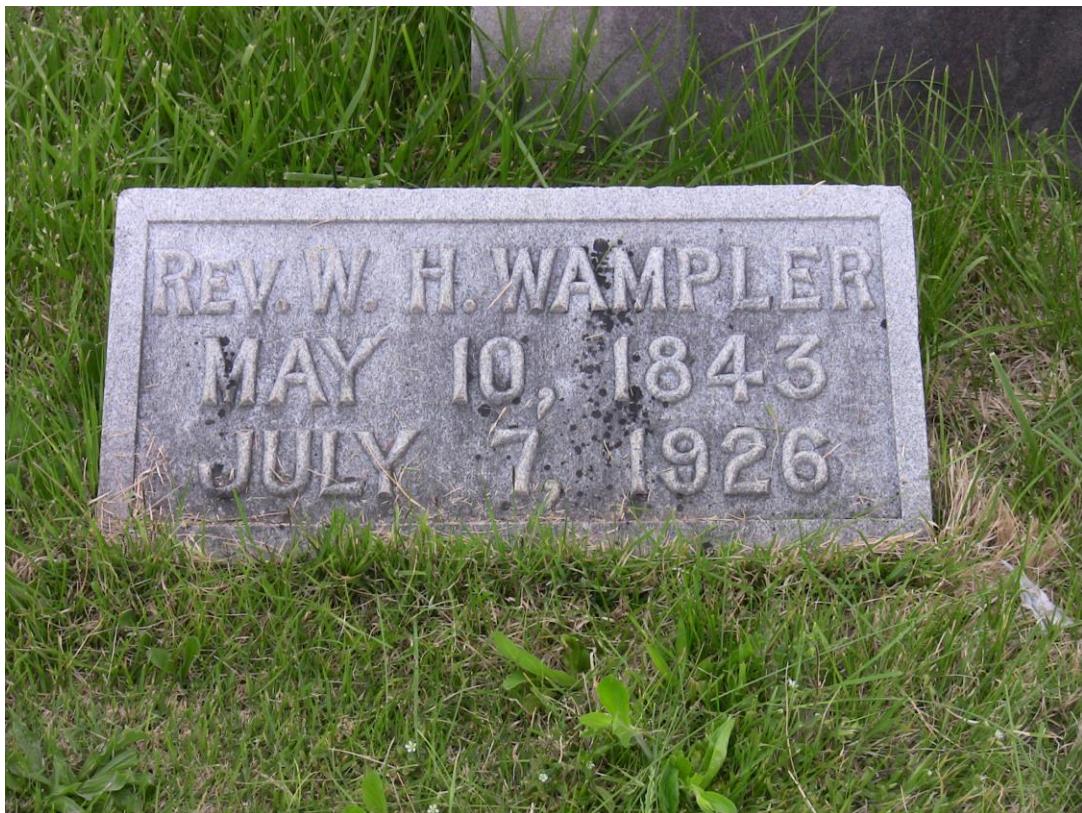


WAMPLER PLOTS
IN THE RIVER
VIEW CEMETERY,
EAST STONE GAP,
VIRGINIA

JAMES M.
WAMPLER,
BROTHER

REV. WILLIAM
HENRY WAMPLER

LYDIA JANE
SKEEN,
WIFE



FINAL RESTING
PLACE, ONE
MILE FROM
HOME, AND SIX
MILES FROM
WHERE HE
ENLISTED

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