

February 2009

# The Cannon Report

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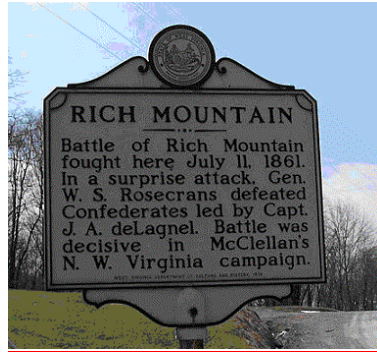
**Stuart Townes**  
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## The Powhatan Troop, SCV Camp 1382



**First in War, The “Powhatan Rifles”, assembled under the command of Capt. William M. Skipwith, entered service as Company D of the 20<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry Regiment Rich Mountain Battlefield is several miles west of Beverly, West Virginia. Beverly is just south of Elkins on US Route 219/250.**

The headstone of Capt. William Skipwith at GRACE CHURCH CEMETERY in Powhatan reads,

“Here lie the remains of Capt. William M. Skipwith of the Powhatan Rifles. A man and a soldier without fear and without reproach. He fell at Rich Mountain, July 11, 1861 Aged 48 years and 8 months Gallantly Leading His command and with His last breath calling to his men, "Don't Turn Your Backs to the Enemy.”

### Commanders Comment:

This month seems as though it has flown by. Our Camp meeting is upon us again. We had a very good turnout for the January meeting and I appreciate and thank those who did make it. For those that were unable to attend, you missed a very informative lecture by Compatriot Henry Kidd on the importance of Petersburg, Virginia before and during the war and the Battle of the Crater. I hope to see more in attendance this coming Sunday.

*Paul M. Houser*  
Commander

**DEO  
VINDICE**

### The Cannon Report

The February meeting will be on the 22nd at the Village Garden Café; luncheon at 1:00 and meeting at 2:00. The cost of the lunch will be \$10.00, plus, please feel free to tip our Hostess.



Our guest speaker at this month's meeting will be Dr. William E. Thompson, PCWRT member and recently retired chaplain of Hampden-Sydney College. He will retrace the steps of the "Powhatan Rifles," Company D of the 20<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry in their engagement at the Battle of Rich Mountain. Dr. Thompson recently presented his lecture to the Powhatan Civil War Roundtable and has graciously offered to speak at our Camp meeting. This is a very important element of the history of Powhatan County during the War, and I am looking forward to Dr. William's lecture. Once again I ask that Camp members make every effort to attend. Family and guests are always welcome.

*Paul M. Houser*  
*Cannon Report Editor*

### **The Staunton - Parkersburg Turnpike**

After decades of inaction on the part of the Virginia government in Richmond, the state finally acceded to demands from its western citizens and began to construct a turnpike into the interior. The road was initially authorized in 1826, and planned and laid out by the state engineer of Virginia, Claudius Crozet. It was not actually built until the 1840's, with completion of the main roadway in 1848. This road, traveling over the high mountains near the birthplace of rivers, was an engineering marvel, and opened up large sections of western Virginia to settlement and commerce. One of the earliest campaigns of the War of Northern Aggression was fought for control of this turnpike, and to the access it provided to the B&O Railroad. The Battle Of Rich Mountain gave the Federals control of the turnpike, of the Tygarts Valley, and of all of the territory of western Virginia to the north and west, including the railroad. Among the young laborers on this turnpike was a 13-year-old engineering assistant named Thomas Jackson, who became known to the world as "Stonewall" during the War of Northern Aggression.

