



PULASKI COUNTY *The* PATRIOT

Cloyd's Mtn. battle re enactment planned

Special to The Patriot

Virginia Governor Robert McDonnell has proclaimed April as Confederate History Month in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The proclamation states during the four year period of the Civil War is a “defining chapter in Virginia’s history and should not be forgotten, but instead should be studied, understood and remembered by all Virginians, both in the context of the time in which it took place, but also in the context of the time in which we live, and this study and remembrance takes on particular importance as the Commonwealth prepares to welcome the nation and the world to visit Virginia for the Sesquicentennial Anniversary of the Civil War, a four-year period in which the exploration of our history can benefit all.”

Locally, the Pulaski County Sesquicentennial Committee members are in the planning stages of a re-enactment of the Battle of Cloyd’s Mountain in 2014, which will commemorate the battle’s 150th anniversary.

In the book *Battle of Cloyd’s Farm* written by Lloyd Mathews, he describes the battle as one of the “most fierce and bloody battles in the entire Civil War, in which “brother fought against brother” and neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, north against south “and they say that Back Creek flowed red. The swirling swift water of Back Creek brought about an inseparable union of northern and southern blood as it moved through the lush green meadow of Cloyd’s Farm.”

On the morning of May 9, 1864, residents of the Cloyd’s Mountain area were awakened by cannon fire. The Union military leaders sent an army consisting of 3 brigades, an estimate of 6,155 men, and twelve pieces of artillery across the summit of Cloyd’s Mountain. At the foot of the mountain in the rolling fields of Joseph Cloyd’s Farm, three regiments and one battalion of Confederates numbering about 3,000 men, two batteries of artillery with their ten cannons, and a group of Home Guards waited behind hastily prepared breast-works made of rails.

Commanding the southern army was Brigadier General Albert Jenkins. During the battle Jenkins was mortally wounded and captured, twelve days later he died. He was replaced by Colonel John McCausland.

The commander of the northern troops was Brigadier General George Crook; his objective was to destroy the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad, which was a critical segment of the Southern transportation system. The railroad carried most of the supplies to the Confederate Army. In April of 1864 Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant had ordered Crook to attack the railroad.

The Battle of Cloyd’s Mountain lasted a little over an hour with much of that being hand to hand combat. Those sixty minutes were described as “hell on earth” for the combatants when dry leaves ignited from gunfire setting off a chain reaction; the fire line advanced and burned everything in its path, including

wounded and dead soldiers. Casualties were high for both sides. The Confederates lost approximately 538 soldiers and the Union Army about 688.

The battle is considered a Union Victory because Crook was able to continue on and destroy the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad. This was the last railroad connecting the two states Virginia and Tennessee.

The Battle of Cloyd's Mountain is the only battle fought on Pulaski County soil.

The Pulaski County Sesquicentennial Committee was formed in July 2009. The group's mission statement is "to educate and ignite interests in all aspects of life during the Civil War and its effects on Pulaski County and all citizenry." While April is dedicated to Confederate history, the committee members think it is important to showcase both Confederate and Union history, focusing specifically on Pulaski County's involvement in the Civil War, and how the war affected this community.

Numerous events and projects, such as a burial registry, driving tour, Civil War archive day, educational programs and more are planned for the four year sesquicentennial.

For more information, visit www.virginiacivilwar.org.