

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. IV

August 2026

Issue VIII

Hello everyone and happy dog days of summer. I do hope all are doing well and enduring the heat fairly well. I don't know of any place in the lower 48 that has not been affected by our hot summer to at least some extent. Some a lot more than others.

I have often wondered exactly where the term dog days came from. So I did a little studying on the matter and found a cornucopia of information that dates back as far as the Egyptian Pharaoh dynasties. Long and short of it is, traditionally the "Dog Days of Summer" occur from July 3 to August 11. This is the time that the constellation Canis Major "coincides" with the sun and the bright star in the constellation, Sirius, considered by most astronomers to be our brightest star, was thought to give off additional heat along with sweltering heat of the summer sun and thus, Dog Days. Homer wrote about its effects in *The Iliad*.

Priam saw him first, with his old man's eyes,

A single point of light on Troy's dusty plain.

Sirius rises late in the dark, liquid sky

On summer nights, star of stars,

Orion's Dog they call it, brightest

Of all, but an evil portent, bringing heat

And fevers to suffering humanity.

Achilles' bronze gleamed like this as he ran

Unlike Priam, rather than looking to the horizon to see if Sirius has dawned for the summer, I just glance at the thermometer and grimace.

250th Happenings in Virginia - McKee Big Spring Cemetery Patriot Grave Marking

One of the most special events I have attended in quite some time took place at the McKee Big Spring Cemetery in Kerr's (Pronounced Car's) Creek towards the last part of June. Kerr's Creek is located in the western reaches of Rockbridge County and Pauline McKee has brought that cemetery back from a state of being unknown, unattended, and "unpreserved" to a shining example of just how much can be done to save our cemetery history. She is also a direct descendant of Revolutionary War Patriot Ensign James Logan McKee who is buried there. While the history of the cemetery dates to well before the Revolutionary War with the burial of a number of Kerr's Creek Settlers there after being killed during the Shawnee Indian raids of 1759 and 1763 led by Chief Cornstalk, the special event was for Ensign McKee.

Pauline took upon herself the task of getting his grave officially marked as a Patriot, and what a job she did. I have included the program schedule below along with a few photos just to give

readers a sense of Pauline's dedication to this effort. It was a misty and overcast day, but a perfect day for such an event in my opinion. While the photos do not do the event justice, it was indeed a moving experience for all in attendance. As a side note, this is purported to be the first official marking of a Revolutionary War Patriot Grave in Rockbridge County in fifty years. Thank you Pauline for the work you do to preserve our history.

Frontier-Natural Bridge
Chapter Daughters of the
American Revolution NSDAR
& Virginia SAR Colorguard



Patriot Grave Marking

McKee Big Spring Cemetery
Big Spring Farm
Lexington, VA 24450

June 23, 2026

10 am

Program Schedule

Prelude.....Keenan Slusher
Welcome Garnette Teass *Chapter Regent*
Presentation of Colors Gary L. Hall, *Commander*, Virginia SAR Color Guard
Invocation.....Laura Holt *DAR Chapter Chaplain*
Pledge of Allegiance.....5th and 6th great grandchildren of the Patriot
Posting of the Colors.....Virginia SAR Color Guard

Greetings..... Garnette Teass, *Chapter Regent*
Introduction of guests & dignataries...
Presentation of Patriot Ensign James Logan McKee
Early Year and Life.....Jennifer McKee Cubitt *third great granddaughter*
Military Service..... William Mick 'McKee' Trevey *4th great grandson*
General Daniel Morgan SAR Chapter

Historical Significance of the Marker Robin Bagnall *DAR State Historian*
Marker Dedication-Garnette Teas, ...*Chapter Regent* & Laura Holt, *Chaplain*
Laying the Flowers..... 5TH AND 6TH *Great grandchildren of the Patriot*
God Bless America,.....Keenan Slusher
Musket Salute..... Virginia SAR Color Guard

Pledge of Allegiance

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

God Bless America

God bless America.
Land that I love,
Stand beside her, and guide her
Through the night with a high light above.

From the mountains, to the prairies
To the oceans, white with foam
God Bless America, My homes sweet home
God Bless America, My home sweet home.

Special thank you to our event donors;

William McKee Trevey Sr.
William 'Mick' McKee Trevey Jr.
Susan Laird North
Pauline McKee
Kathy McKee Givens

Founded in 1759, the **McKee Big Spring Cemetery** is a Virginia Department of Historic Resources designated historic site. The white crosses mark the burials of the 22 pioneers killed in the Kerrs Creek Indian Raids of 1759 and 1763. Unmarked graves form a diagonal line running North to South from the top of the cemetery to the bottom. The pioneer families killed in the raids and their descendants buried here-McKee, Cunningham, Gilmore, Hamilton and Daughtery had sons and grandsons who fought in the Revolutionary War.

McKee Big Spring Cemetery Association 501 (3) C

The stone restoration for Ensign James Logan McKee and his wife was paid for by descendants William McKee Trevey, Sr., 3rd great grandson, and William McKee Trevey, Jr., 4th great grandson, as well as the Plaque and the luncheon that followed the ceremony. During the luncheon the Virginia DAR initiated William "Mick" McKee Trevey, Jr. into the General Daniel Morgan Chapter of the DAR.



Hearing the bagpipes was a wonderful addition to the ceremony as the clouds to the west hung low on the mountain.



The Virginia SAR Color Guard formed behind the bagpiper and processioned to the graveside.



The salute was impressive, especially the speed with which they reloaded those flintlock rifles. A 21-gun salute like no other!



With James' headstone too damaged to reset upright, this is the preservation that Pauline chose. A beautiful display of history.



The descendants of James Logan McKee that were in attendance from eight states! Pauline is the one in the blue dress.



A few good men. One of them, on the far right, is Paul Parish, colonial surveying history expert and good friend that I have previously written about.

And just what was James Logan McKee's service to the colonists and by extension, us? Below are the remarks delivered by William "Mick" McKee Trevey, Jr. to those in attendance.

- It is an honor to share more about the Revolutionary War service of James Logan McKee.
- To understand his story, it helps to picture Virginia in 1776. Virginia was the oldest, largest, and wealthiest of the rebelling British colonies. Here in Kerr's Creek, however, life was very different. This was a rugged and often dangerous frontier. Settlers lived with uncertainty, facing both the growing conflict with Great Britain and ongoing tensions with Native American tribes along the western frontier.
- It was against that backdrop that James Logan McKee was drafted into the Virginia Militia in the summer of 1776—250 years ago this year—at the age of 24.
- Virginia relied heavily on its county militia system. Each county had a county lieutenant who organized local military service when authorized by the governor and legislature. At the time of McKee's first service, Virginia's governor was Patrick Henry.
- Years later, Governor Thomas Jefferson would describe the Valley and western counties as among Virginia's strongest "rifle counties," where men commonly owned long rifles and were accustomed to frontier service.
- The most complete record of James Logan McKee's military service comes from testimony given in support of his Revolutionary War pension. According to that testimony, he served a total of 17 months and 29 days.
- **His first tour was against the Cherokee in 1776**, serving under Colonel William Christian. The Cherokee War of 1776 was part of a larger frontier conflict involving settlers from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. British officials encouraged Cherokee attacks on frontier settlements in hopes of diverting Patriot resources from the main war effort.
- Colonel Christian led approximately 1,800 Virginia militiamen into Cherokee country during the autumn of 1776. The campaign helped bring about peace agreements with many Cherokee towns. Christian was also the brother-in-law of Governor Patrick Henry.
- **McKee's next tour was a three-month deployment to Greenbrier** during the period of Shawnee attacks on the frontier, including the famous attack on Donnally's Fort.
- **His third tour came in the fall of 1777 at Point Pleasant**, serving under Colonel John Dickenson, Captain Charles Campbell, and Lieutenant Samuel Davidson.
- Point Pleasant, at the site of Fort Randolph on the Ohio River, was one of the most important outposts on Virginia's western frontier. Only a few years earlier it had been the scene of fighting during Dunmore's War. By 1777, the fort served to protect Virginia's northwestern frontier and monitor continuing tensions with Shawnee and other Native nations.
- **McKee's fourth tour began on January 10, 1781**, when he served as an **Ensign** and marched to **Portsmouth**.

- An Ensign was a commissioned officer in an infantry company, roughly comparable to a modern second lieutenant. A typical Virginia militia company contained between 68 and 90 men and generally included a captain, lieutenants, and an ensign.
- Traditionally, an ensign was entrusted with carrying the company's colors, making him one of the most visible officers on the battlefield. Surviving ensigns often retained the title as a mark of respect and standing within their communities long after the war had ended.
- McKee's service at Portsmouth placed him in one of the most important military theaters in Virginia. British forces under Major General William Phillips joined with those of Benedict Arnold in the Portsmouth area. The city occupied a strategic position in the Chesapeake region, directly across from Norfolk.
- His tour ended on April 25, 1781—the same day as the Battle of Petersburg, one of the largest militia actions fought in Virginia during the war.
- **McKee was called out again for two weeks** in June 1781 during the crisis surrounding Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton's raid on Charlottesville.
- Tarleton led a fast-moving cavalry force in an attempt to capture Governor Thomas Jefferson and members of the Virginia legislature. At the time, General Cornwallis commanded the principal British field army operating in Virginia.
- The exact location of McKee's service during those two weeks is unknown. Given his residence in Rockbridge County, he may have been assigned to help guard routes through the Blue Ridge Mountains, including Rockfish Gap, one of the key passages between the Shenandoah Valley and central Virginia.
- **In July 1781, he was drafted once more and marched to headquarters at Westham**, just upstream from Richmond.
- Westham was home to one of Virginia's most important wartime industrial facilities, often called the Westham Manufactory. Arms were stored, repaired, and produced there, making it a vital military supply center for the Commonwealth.
- The facility had been damaged during Benedict Arnold's raid earlier that year. It is possible that McKee's duties included guarding the site or helping restore its operations. Militia units were rarely kept in service without a purpose, and Westham remained critical to Virginia's war effort.
- His final recorded tour came in October 1781, when he marched to Yorktown.
- The Siege of Yorktown was the final major land campaign of the American Revolution. American and French forces trapped the army of Lord Cornwallis on the Virginia Peninsula, creating the conditions that would secure American independence.

- When the siege began on September 28, 1781, the area around Williamsburg and Yorktown held the largest concentration of military forces ever assembled in North America up to that time. Continental troops, French soldiers, Virginia militia, and militia from other states all converged there.
- The British surrendered in October 1781, bringing active combat in the Revolution to an effective end.
- Many of the captured British soldiers were marched inland to prison camps at Charlottesville and Winchester. Virginia militiamen often assisted in escorting and guarding these prisoners during their long journey into the interior.
- James Logan McKee's service followed the Revolution wherever Virginia needed him—from Cherokee country in 1776, to the Ohio frontier, to the defenses of Richmond, and finally to Yorktown, where the war's decisive victory was won.
- That record is remarkable. Many Virginians served in only one theater of the war. McKee's service spanned both the frontier conflicts of the West and the climactic Virginia campaign of 1781.
- Few militia records illustrate so completely the wartime experience of Virginia's frontier settlers, or the many different ways ordinary Virginians contributed to the cause of American independence.

Thanks to Pauline and all those who contributed in so many ways to her efforts, this history is now preserved. Thank you Pauline! Let's all be thankful for those first Americans, many not yet properly recognized and honored in this way, that stopped at nothing to make us a free nation.



250th Happenings in Virginia - Middlebrook 4th of July Parade

While most of the 250th events throughout the United States had more pomp and circumstance, more attendance, and more public awareness than the Middlebrook 4th of July parade, this one was pretty special to me. It is the closest settlement to where I grew up, and it is also the closest to where my 5th great grandfather chose to settle about 1769 and all my grandfathers in between chose to stay. Keeping in mind of course that if you live within five miles or so of Middlebrook you are from Middlebrook! It has been the hometown of a lot of folks we call ancestors even though now it only boasts a population of 202 souls. Our son Adam has always had an interest in his community, its history, and the people that both built it and now make it up. So naturally he is always trying to figure a way to interject a little history into his endeavors. This year's Middlebrook Parade was no exception.

Adam is very much involved in the horse-drawn era of America and so most everything he does revolves around that. He has three Belgian horses and this year they were all three in the parade. Prince, the gelding was ridden by Adam who was attired in a military style garb. Bonnie pulled a fringe-top wagon with me, my Mother-in-law Mary, and Otis, our noble canine aboard. Jasmine, Adam's wife, led Cimmarron, Bonnie's fourteen-month-old daughter as a riderless horse with the American flag draped over her. She was in harness but not for working. Adam has just started introducing her to what adulthood will feel like, so he had an old set of buggy harness on her with no bridle. She did well in the parade.

My wife Laurin and the neighbor boy Luke, a fine young man, finished out our part of the parade with an old hand-drawn fire extinguisher from the Middlebrook Volunteer Fire Department. It is an interesting but simple contraption that was perfected in the mid-to late 1800s. Middlebrook's was probably from the early to mid-1900s. It consists of a tank mounted on wooden wheels with a hose and nozzle attached to the tank. The tank is filled with water and the lid is sealed. Attached to the inside of the lid is a chamber containing bicarbonate of soda and a second container of sulfuric acid. When the extinguisher was pulled or hauled to the scene of the fire the lid end was lowered to the ground. This caused the container of sulfuric acid to mix with the sodium bicarbonate and create carbon dioxide gas which pressurized the tank of water thus allowing the hose and nozzle to direct the water onto the flames. It was empty during the parade but in the 90 plus degree heat that day, it was still a tough task for Laurin and Luke to pull it the mile or so from the parade staging area through town and to the ball field at the firehouse. But they got the job done and they wore firemen's caps that were part of the first uniforms that the volunteers of the Middlebrook Fire Department ever had while doing it. A fitting tribute.

After the parade everyone that participated AND everyone that attended got all the free chocolate or vanilla ice cream they could eat so that made enduring the hot day worthwhile. Once everyone was wearing an ice cream smiley face Adam gave free wagon rides about town for anyone that wanted one and all seemed to both appreciate and enjoy that. In the faces of the young kids you could see the excitement of a new experience and in the older folks who rode, the reminiscences of a life once lived. Both scenes stirred the emotions of some onlookers, very much so for me. I won't go so far as to say I am living in the past, but I sure do enjoy remembering it. Below are a few photos of our part of the event and a link to a short video.

Double-click the icon to watch the video.



Middlebrook
Parade-Short Video.r



Luke and Laurin. They had the toughest job of all!



Luke & Laurin pulling the fire extinguisher - Almost at the "finish line"!



The staging area prior to the parade starting at Trotwood Farm at the north end of town - Everything and everyone for our part except Laurin, Luke, and the fire extinguisher. The wagon being pulled by Bonnie, with me, and Mary holding on tight to Otis with the American and Christian Flags displayed, Adam on Prince, and Jasmine leading Cimarron as the Riderless Horse.



Adam and Jasmine getting everything ready to pull out of the staging area.



The last wagon ride of the day. All but a few had called it a day but Bonnie was still pulling well considering the heat.



If you have done any research at all on ancestors from Augusta County you should recognize this church name regardless of where you are in America.

Augusta County Genealogical Society Upcoming Programs

Time & Location

Aug 19, 2026, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Augusta County Library-Lower Level Room, 1759
Jefferson Hwy, Fishersville, VA 22939, USA

About the event

"Cemetery Survey and Grave Marker Motifs in the Shenandoah Valley," presented by Bob Jolley, Archaeologist, Virginia Department of Historic Resources



Website Updates: Members Section

LIFE MEMBERS

Al Wilkerson 2025 Glenn Hanger 2025 Crim Lotts 2025

Michael Clinebell 2025 Ted Harrison 2026 Mary Ellen Kutas 2026

<u>Some of the Website Records</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Added Since July 1st</u>
Death Records	1,286	25
Burial Records	212	0
Marriage Records	276	47
Miscellaneous Documents, & Photos	1,342	3
Schoolhouses	264	161
Ship Passenger Lists	20	1
Auctions & Estate Settlements	17	5
Chancery Suits	13	3

Until next month, Blessings and Happy Trails,

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery