

Private James A. Wood

Company D “Fincastle Rifles” – 11th Virginia Infantry

James A. enlisted in Company D on April 23, 1864 in Fincastle, Virginia. He was 17 years of age, 5’ 7”, with fair complexion, light hair and green eyes.

Rather than being drafted he enlists as a recruit for his friend Private Geo. Carper who gets a furlough and bonus money for getting a recruit. They share the bonus money. James gets \$275.

James A. joins the 11th Virginia just before Cold Harbor in June, 1864. Following Cold Harbor the 11th is moved to Bermuda Hundred (The Howlett Line) and also saw service at Chaffin’s Farm, Chester Station, Nine Mile Road, Dinwiddie Court House, Five Forks and Saylor’s Creek.

On February 26, 1865 from camp near Bermuda Hundred James wrote his mother, “. . . *“There was right smart excitement in camp the other day about the negro question. Every man in camp but 4 or 5 voted for putting them in [the army as soldiers]. I think that looks rather strange for us to do something that we were so much against at the first of the war. It looks like a drowning man catching at a straw.”*

James is captured April 6, 1865 in the melee at Saylor’s Creek. On April 9 James arrives at prison camp in Newport News, Virginia and his father mails a letter speaking of the evacuation of Richmond. He understands Lee’s strategy and has no idea that on the day he is writing Lee is surrendering at Appomattox. Davis wrote, *“We have heard of the evacuation of Richmond. This is no doubt a stroke of policy on the part of Genl. Lee for the purpose of concentrating his forces and drawing the Yankees farther from their base of supplies. The Campaign is now about to be an active one . . .”*

James takes the Oath of Allegiance on July 1 and is released from prison on July 3, 1865.

He returns to Glen Wilton, marries a few years later, has 10 children and farms in the James river valley for the rest of his life.

James is an active member of the Allegheny Rough Camp 118 of the UCV. He attends Confederate reunions in Richmond (1907), Birmingham (1926), Tampa (1927), Charlotte (1928), Montgomery (1931), and Gettysburg (1938).

James died March 2, 1940 at the age of 92. He was the last surviving member of the Fincastle Rifles and of UCV Camp 118.

(11th Virginia Infantry, Robert T. Bell, Lynchburg, 1985; No Soap, No Pay, Diarrhea, Dysentery & Desertion, Toalson, Lincoln, 2006, p333, 368, 409; Microfilm service records 11th Virginia, United Daughters of Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.)