**The Boone’s Lick Trail**

Augmenting the earlier settlement of Frants, Williamsburg (est. ca. 1833) became the eastern gateway to both Callaway County and its broad, fertile Nine Mile Prairie. It was a key stop along the Boone’s Lick Trail (or Road) from St. Charles to the salt lick established by Daniel Boone’s sons on the Missouri River west of Columbia. Part of the original Trail is parallel to Old US Hwy. 40, east-west Main Street (Co. Rd. 184) running one block north of here. An unpaved portion of the Trail enters Williamsburg from the east to Main Street then about 1½ miles west of the street’s end, one can see where two of these branches of the old road diverged.

Because the country east of here was quite rough, Williamsburg became a popular provisioning center for settlers moving west. The original wagon road (“alpha” on the map) passed through here, angling north-west and then west across Callaway’s northern prairie, followed later by a more wooded route (“beta”) taking it by Old Aurora Presbyterian Church. This is often called the Old St. Charles Road, well traveled by troops during the Civil War.

Another, more wooded route (“gamma”) ran slightly southwest through Moore’s Mill (now Calwood) through Fulton (Callaway County seat), Milburnburg and Columbia. The earliest route bypassed Columbia but the other two converged there before ending at Franklin Old Main Street.

During the war, Williamsburg was a place where Confederates or their partisans could find food, shelter or other assistance. Still a hospitable stop for travelers — now from Interstate 70 instead of the old Boone’s Lick Road — Williamsburg retains evidence of its 19th-century heritage. Four homes on Main Street were built before the Civil War.

**The Devil Knows Soldiers, Secesh and Civilians,** December 1993. Mark K. Douglas, funded through a donation by the Crane Family. Copyright © 2011 Missouri’s Civil War Heritage Foundation Inc.

---

**Williamsburg and its rural neighborhood, including the Kuat River valley to the east, were home to several famous, even notorious Southern guerrillas.**

One such was Capt. Alvin Cobb, of “Cobbtown,” in western Montgomery County, Mo. A large, bearded man, Cobb wore a book where his firearm had been accidentally shot off. Brothers Frank and Ike also were guerrillas.

After the July 17, 1861, fight at Overton Run near Fulton, Cobb and some of his men sped to the Whetstone Hills north of Williamsburg, then trailed, rode down and killed Major Benjamin Sharp and Lt. Anthony Jaeger, of Lt. Col. Adam Hamer’s command, near Martinsburg. A Virginia-born Danville resident, Sharp was headed to Mexico, Mo., to make a speech and recruit Union soldiers. Riding in a buggy, neither man was killed outright when they were ambushed but were pursued and executed.

Cobb also led guerrillas in battles at Mt. Zion Church and at Moore’s Mill (Calwood), July 28, 1862. He was reported as having gone to the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in 1864 and surviving until at least 1885 in California.

Fond of plumed hats and gaudy dress, guerrilla Joe Cole and his men were the bane of local Unionist “Dutch” (Germans). He was killed by Wellsville-based soldiers at a bridge near Portland, S.E. Callaway County, December 1, 1863. Dick, Ike and Jim Berry were sons of early Callaway County settler Caleb Berry, who operated a farm distillery on Whetstone Creek. All three sided with Capt. William T. “Bloody Bill” Anderson. It seems likely all were with him at the September 27, 1864, massacre and battle at Cen- tralia.

After the war, Dick Berry was a deputy sheriff in Mont- tana, dying after a few years. Ike Berry operated liquor businesses in Williamsburg and Montgomery County and a restaurant in Fulton, dying about 1928. Riding with outlaw Sam Bass, Jim Berry was a bank and train robber after the war. He was mortally shot by Audrain County Sheriff Glascok in Callaway County, dying October 15, 1877.

It was said guerrilla chieftain Anderson sojourned in William- burg before his October 14, 1864, burning of Danville and destruction of the rail depots at Florence and High Hill in Montgomery County to the east. Anderson led fifty of the “most desper- ate bushwhackers in Missouri,” all heavily armed with revolvers and mounted on thoroughbreds.

Occurring during General Sterling Price’s ex- pedition, the Danville raid was ordered by Price. The mission was to destroy the North Missouri Railroad. It was said that guerrillas Dick and Ike Berry persuaded Anderson to fire Danville, a Unionist town, because of indignities suffered there by two Berry sisters. A town of almost 1,000, Danville was practically erased from the map of Missouri.

---

**Col. Upton Hays (1832–1862) was the youngest son of Boone Hays, an early pioneer of Nine Mile Prairie and a grandson of Daniel Boone. Born in Nine Mile Township, Upton grew up in Jackson County, Missouri, where he later outfitted wagon trains bound west.**

As a Confederate recruiting colonel, he collaborated with guerrilla chieftain William Clarke Quantrill to enlist about 800 soldiers in western Missouri in late June 1862. Quantrill’s rangers destroyed many Union forces; Hays also benefited from a Federal order requiring able-bodied men to join its militia to exterminate “the guerrillas that infest our states.” Hays distinguished himself at the Battles of Independence and Lone Jack, where Cole Younger said he was Hays’ counter. Hays was killed in action at Newton, Missouri, Sept. 12, 1862.

Hays’ widow, Margaret, and her four children moved to Williamsburg after Hays’ death. She remained here during the balance of the war, supported by friends and relatives.

---

**Musings:**

The Gateway to the Boone’s Lick Trail is parallel to Old US Hwy. 40, east-west Main Street (Co. Rd. 184) running one block north of here. An unpaved portion of the Trail enters Williamsburg from the east to Main Street then about 1½ miles west of the street’s end, one can see where two of these branches of the old road diverged.

Because the country east of here was quite rough, Williamsburg became a popular provisioning center for settlers moving west. The original wagon road (“alpha” on the map) passed through here, angling north-west and then west across Callaway’s northern prairie, followed later by a more wooded route (“beta”) taking it by Old Aurora Presbyterian Church. This is often called the Old St. Charles Road, well traveled by troops during the Civil War.

Another, more wooded route (“gamma”) ran slightly southwest through Moore’s Mill (now Calwood) through Fulton (Callaway County seat), Milburnburg and Columbia. The earliest route bypassed Columbia but the other two converged there before ending at Franklin Old Main Street.

During the war, Williamsburg was a place where Confederates or their partisans could find food, shelter or other assistance. Still a hospitable stop for travelers — now from Interstate 70 instead of the old Boone’s Lick Road — Williamsburg retains evidence of its 19th-century heritage. Four homes on Main Street were built before the Civil War.