

The Williamsburg Line

Smith Lot UPDATE

We really had hoped to lead with news that the WBA is now the owner of the Smith Lot at the center of the Williamsburg battlefield. The transfer was anticipated at the end of September. Some documentary discrepancies delayed the transfer, but these have now been reconciled. We will notify you when the great event finally happens. So, to lead this newsletter, we are introducing **Faces of the Fight**, a new section that will reoccur and spotlight the stories of participants in the Battle of Williamsburg. We begin with Jack ...

Faces of the Fight

The firemen of the Niagara Fire Engine Company in Pittsburgh were not the only volunteers to serve with Co. F of the 102nd PA Infantry. Jack was a stray, brown-and-white bull terrier that wandered into the fire house before the war. At first, the firemen paid little attention to him, and some even mistreated him. Jack continued to hang around and eventually beat another fire company's dog in a fight. In so doing, Jack finally won the favor of the Niagara Company and was adopted as its mascot.

When the firemen marched off to war in August 1861, Jack went with them. He was reportedly very smart and learned to differentiate bugle calls and to take orders only from his regiment. During battles, he stood on the firing line, barking furiously at the enemy. After battles, he searched the field for his comrades and, while on the march, scouted for water and food.

Jack was with the 102nd on May 5, 1862 as it marched west on the Yorktown Road towards Williamsburg and slammed into Confederate forces about 100 yards from the present-day intersection of Penniman Road and Oak Drive (Smith Lot!). A month later, Jack was captured at Savage's Station near Richmond. After being detained about six hours, he escaped. At Malvern Hill, Jack was badly wounded, shot through the shoulder and back. "For many days, he hovered between life and death and

his suffering brought tears to his sorrowing comrades," wrote Pvt. John Scott. Jack recovered, and when he returned just before the Battle of Fredericksburg, "he was greeted by the hearty cheers of the regiment." Jack was captured again in May 1863. His second tenure as a POW was at Belle Isle in Richmond where his "presence and popularity cheered the Union prisoners." After six months, Jack was exchanged for a Confederate soldier!

While the 102nd was on furlough in August 1864, the regiment hosted a ball and raised \$75 to buy Jack a silver collar and medal. The *Reading Daily Times* (of Pittsburgh) reported that Jack was present at the Battle of Cedar Creek in October 1864 and "now runs on three legs, but in other respects he seems as agile as ever, and wears his honors as meekly as becometh a good dog." Sadly, Jack disappeared that December while the regiment was near Frederick, MD. Pvt. Scott believed that some unscrupulous person stole or slew Jack for his silver collar.

After the war, the Niagara Fire Engine Company had a portrait of Jack painted and hung in the fire house. Jack remains the only fire dog in U.S. history to go to war and to participate in a prisoner exchange like any other soldier.



Jack in 1864 wearing his silver collar

"The battle of Williamsburg has received less importance in history than it has merited."

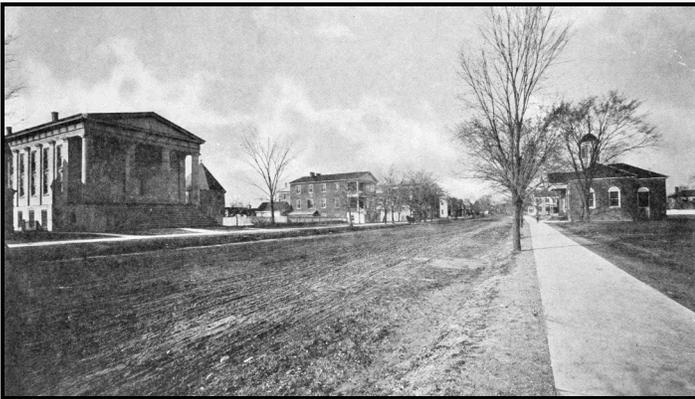
Edwin Brown- 1st Mass Vol Infantry



Education & Preservation

New Webpages Launched

Last month, we added two new pages to the **History** menu on our new website. **The Town** describes Williamsburg visually, demographically, and politically on the eve of the Civil War and at the outbreak of hostilities. **The Occupation** tells what the town and citizens endured during three years of Federal occupation after the May 5, 1862 battle. Take a moment to read the new pages which also include pre-restoration photos of Williamsburg like the circa 1900 one below of Market Square (*courtesy Special Collections, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*). Can you find the Powder Magazine? If these new pages wet your appetite to know more, then visit our **Further Reading** page also under the **History** menu to view some books.



Winter Cleanup

The WBA is planning to have a winter cleanup day on the Smith Lot. We still have a lot of debris on the site left from Park Day this past April. We would like to get this debris removed and do some further trimming and cutting of undergrowth, broken limbs, and fallen tree trunks. **We have not set the date for the cleanup, yet, but it will be sometime in January 2018. Once we know the date, we will announce it via email and Facebook.**



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