

Exeter Plantation during the Civil War: Horatio Trundle's Southern Claims Commission Case File

by Taylor M. Chamberlin

Loudoun County lost an important piece of its architectural and social heritage, when arsonists burnt the plantation house at Exeter on the night of 3 August 1980. The original home was built between 1796 and 1800 by members of Virginia statesman George Mason's family, with significant improvements added over the next half century. Constructed of frame and brick in an unusual vernacular style, the manor house occupied the site on which the Wal-Mart discount store now stands in Leesburg. The original plantation stretched from the Old Carolina Road to Ball's Bluff, continuing eastward along the Potomac River toward Goose Creek and south to the Leesburg Pike. In its heyday, Exeter rivaled the great Tidewater plantations, and Col. John S. Mosby himself called it one of the "finest farms in Virginia."¹

After spending many years with the government overseas, Taylor Chamberlin returned to his native Loudoun to farm and start up an antique business. Following in the steps of his father, Edward M. Chamberlin, who was one of the founding members of the Loudoun County Historical Society, Taylor has developed an interest in local history and is the author of several books on the Civil War period.

1. "Historic Homes File," Thomas Balch Library (TBL), Leesburg, Va.; Thomas Hart Taylor Jr., *Exeter: An 18th Century Plantation in Loudoun County, Virginia* (Univ. of Va. master's thesis in architecture, 1973), photocopy in TBL; Penelope M. Osburn, "Exeter: Its History and Architecture," *The Bulletin of the Loudoun County Historical Society*, v. 2 (1960); Testimony by John S. Mosby, Trundle SCC file (see note 2).

Members of just three families lived in the main house, the longest tenure being that of the Trundles, who resided there for over a century beginning in 1857. When the property finally changed hands in 1962, the new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Lester Carr, allowed Mrs. Elizabeth Bryan Trundle to remain there until her death in 1967. Although Exeter was added to Virginia's Historical Landmark Register in 1973, vandalism and decay had taken their toll on the now empty building by the time the Carrs sold the property to developers in 1976. The burned ruins and remaining dependencies ceased to exist once construction began on the Wal-Mart shopping center in the late 1980s.

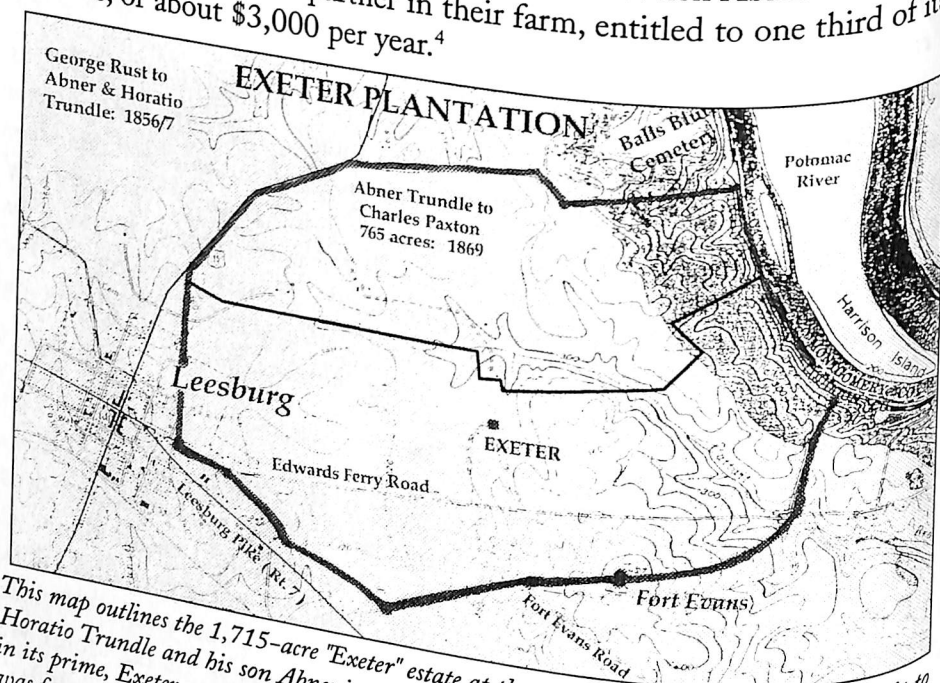
This article describes the Trundles' experiences during the Civil War, as revealed in a claim that Horatio Trundle's widow filed with the Southern Claims Commission (SCC) in 1872 to recover damages caused by Union soldiers. The case file, consisting of approximately 280 pages of testimony and other documents, offers a unique picture of the war's impact, not only on Exeter, but also on the surrounding community. Equally revealing are the petitioner's efforts to establish her husband's loyalty, as strict adherence to the Union cause was a prerequisite for receiving compensation.²

Horatio Trundle (1801-67) was born in the extreme northwest corner of Montgomery County, Maryland. The nearest town was Barnesville, until construction of the C & O Canal resulted in the opening of a post office called Mouth of the Monocacy around 1830. At that time, residents of western Montgomery County enjoyed close commercial and social ties with their counterparts in Loudoun via Noland's, Spinks', Conrad's and Edwards' Ferries. The Trundle homestead lay near the terminus of Spinks' Ferry, which linked Loudoun's so-called "Lost Corner" with the Maryland side of the river, and

2. The claim filed by Elizabeth Trundle, executrix of Horatio Trundle's estate, is available on National Archives Microfilm Publication M-1407 ("Barred and Disallowed Case Files of the Southern Claims Commission"), fiche #2734-2737, hereafter "Trundle SCC file."

Horatio's elder sister married John Spinks, owner of the ferry and a farm in Virginia.³

In 1830 Horatio married Sarah Sinclair Craven (1808-62) of Loudoun County, and the couple settled on his farm at Mouth of the Monocacy, where they would have but one child, Abner Craven Trundle (1832-88). The family prospered during the next two decades, and by the early 1850s Horatio owned \$16,000 in real estate, 22 slaves valued at \$3,810 and over \$4,000 in livestock. When Abner turned 21, his father made him a partner in their farm, entitled to one third of its profits, or about \$3,000 per year.⁴



This map outlines the 1,715-acre "Exeter" estate at the time that Gen. George Rust sold it to Horatio Trundle and his son Abner in 1856. Said to rival the great Tidewater plantations in its prime, Exeter was greatly diminished after the war, most notably when Abner Trundle was forced by bankruptcy to sell his northern half of the property to Charles Paxton in 1869, and it later became the site of the Paxton Home for Convalescent Children.

Dr. Fred Johnson prepared this map with survey data provided by Wynne Saffer.

3. Genealogical data on the Trundle family taken from Richard D. Flinn, *The Trundle (Trunnell) Family of Maryland* (Hillsboro, Ohio: n. p., 2000) and H. N. Hurley, Jr., *Trundle and Allied Families of Montgomery County, Md.* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 2000). For a brief history of Spinks' Ferry see Eugene M. Scheel, *Leesburg & the Old Carolina Road* (Leesburg: Friends of the TBL, 2002), pp. 53-6.
4. Census data and tax records, Montgomery County Historical Society, Rockville, Md.; and deposition by Abner Trundle, chancery suit M-513, Loudoun County Court Records (LCCR).

In the mid-1850s the Trundles decided to move to Loudoun County and began negotiations with Gen. George Rust to purchase Exeter. Abner paid Rust \$36,000 in August 1856 for half of the 1,715-acre estate, with an agreement that his father would purchase the remainder the following year. The total cost of \$48,000 included \$12,000 for Exeter's farm equipment, livestock and a portion of its 25 slaves. Abner's half share was to be paid to Rust in four equal installments between 1858 and 1861. That fall the Trundle son lived on the plantation, which he jointly managed with Rust until January 1857, when his father Horatio purchased the remaining half share. Shortly thereafter, both parents joined Abner at Exeter, and in September 1857 the latter married Elisabeth Ann Hawling (1834-1914), a member of the Loudoun farming family that had originally owned Spinks' Ferry.⁵

The following table, based on personal property tax assessments during Horatio and Abner's joint ownership of Exeter, provides some idea of the scope of their farming operations, although it omits the value of their slaves and income from crops.⁶

Category	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861
White males over 21	1 (Abner)	2 (Horatio and Abner)	2	2	2
Free black males over 16	1	2	2	2	1
Slaves over 12	19	23	25	24	24
Slaves under 12	20	26	26	26	26
Horses/mules	23 (\$2,605)	29 (\$2,700)	39 (\$2,730)	38 (\$2,730)	33 (\$2,310)
Coach/wagons	1 (\$150)	3 (\$300)	3 (\$300)	3 (\$300)	3 (\$300)
Cattle	285 (\$3,770)	330 (\$6,880)	291 (\$5,275)	259 (\$5,275)	120 (\$5,000)
Sheep/hogs	Included above	Included above	Included above	62 (\$225)	65 (\$230)
Watches/clocks	2 (\$95)	5 (\$320)	5 (\$320)	5 (\$320)	5 (\$320)
Gold & silver	\$25	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Furniture, etc.	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Total value	\$7,145	\$11,300	\$9,725	\$9,950	\$9,260

5. Loudoun County Deed Book (LCDB) 2N:203 and 5O:309; and receipt for sale of Rust's slaves and other property to the Trundles, chancery suit M-374, LCCR.
6. Summary of 1857-61 tax assessments, chancery suit M-513, LCCR.

Despite the large amount still owed on Exeter, the Trundles were wealthy by the standards of the day. In the 1860 census, Horatio listed himself as head of a household that included his wife, their son and daughter-in-law, a grandson, and a farm manager. He claimed \$70,000 in real estate and \$41,200 in personal property, totals that evidently included his son's share of Exeter, as well as property that he still owned in Maryland. The slave census that year showed them to be the sixth largest slaveholders in the county.⁷

The acquisition of their own canal boat allowed the Trundles to save \$1,000 annually in transporting grain to the Georgetown markets via the C & O Canal. This enterprise was expanded in 1859, when Abner placed an ad in the local paper stating that he had leased a warehouse at the mouth of Goose Creek and was prepared to pay the highest prices for all types of grain and/or accept grain belonging to others for shipment to D.C. On the return trip, the boat was loaded with plaster (lime), salt, fish and tar, which were kept for sale at the warehouse.⁸

While a good deal can be deduced about Horatio's astuteness as a farmer and businessman from public records, it is difficult to form an opinion about his political leanings, especially with regard to the secession issue. He grew up in a milieu closely tied to eastern Loudoun, and many of his relatives and former neighbors in Montgomery County fought on the Confederate side during the Civil War. Like most Loudouners and many Marylanders before the war, he had also identified with the Whig Party, which promoted economic development and preservation of the Union, while evading the slavery issue. There is no evidence, however, that the move to Exeter was prompted by concerns that slavery might be abolished sooner in Maryland, although father and son were both heavily invested in this "peculiar institution." Above all, Horatio seems to have been an ambitious entrepreneur, who wanted to leave a large legacy to his son.

7. 1860 census data for Loudoun County; and information provided by local historian Wynne Saffer.

8. Testimony in chancery suit M-513; and *Democratic Mirror* (Leesburg), 22Mar59. The previous year the Trundles had placed an announcement that they would prosecute anyone who hunted or discharged firearms on their property.

After Virginia seceded from the Union on 23 May 1861, no one in Loudoun could have felt more on the front line than the Trundles. Their farm occupied the strategic strip of land between the river and county seat, and was bracketed by Conrad's and Edwards' Ferries. Horatio, now 60, had no intention of letting the heir to this vast estate risk service in the Confederate army, so he persuaded his son to slip across the river into Maryland. Aware that the Confederate government had threatened to confiscate the property of any "traitors" who fled north, Abner first took the precaution of selling his half share in Exeter to his father for \$25,000. Leaving his wife and children with his parents at Exeter, the young man evidently did not expect to be away long. His removal to Maryland did allow him to attend to family business interests there, including disposition of "guano" bales worth \$25,000, which had been warehoused in the Capital awaiting transportation via the canal. Abner's abrupt disappearance, however, sparked rumors inside Loudoun that he had gone to join the Union side. Those rumors would prove to be untrue.⁹

The travails that beset the Trundles during the war are described in surprising detail in the SCC case file, despite the obvious bias of some witnesses and the passage of time before their testimony was taken. While the claim itself was limited to property seized by Union forces, the need to demonstrate the claimant's loyalty resulted in accounts of losses caused by Confederate troops as well. Clearly, Exeter's large herd of livestock and abundant stores of grain and forage represented a tempting target for Yank and Reb alike, and according to Mrs. Trundle, not a single animal that had been on the plantation at the start of the war remained by 1865.

Almost everyone agreed that Confederates got the lion's share of this farm produce, although the degree to which Horatio received compensation for these losses would remain in dispute. During the first months of the war, large numbers of wagons, teams, and produce were impressed from Loudoun's farmers to supply the local militia and other fledgling units. All but the most outspoken Unionists got their teams

9. LCDB 5U:17 and 5T:33; and depositions by Abner Trundle in chancery suit M 513 and Trundle SCC file. The transfer from Abner to his father took place on 11 June and did not include a 10-acre parcel previously sold to Arthur L. Rodgers.

back, along with some compensation for the crops taken. Exeter was no exception to this large scale "impressment." One witness reported seeing two wagons from Exeter supplying troops as far away as Germantown in Fairfax County. A shrewd businessman like Horatio was less than pleased with the Confederate scrip offered in return for these services, and he apparently took advantage of his farm's proximity to the river to quietly transfer some livestock into Maryland, which his son sold to the growing Union military presence there. When the tax assessor came in 1861, he found only half the usual number of cattle at Exeter.¹⁰

The 8th Virginia Infantry Regiment was stationed near Leesburg during much of 1861, and its commander, Col. Eppa Hunton, recalled having frequent conversations and business transactions with Horatio Trundle. The colonel regarded the wealthy owner of what he called one of the "finest estates in Loudoun," as being opposed to secession and the Confederate cause. Once, when Horatio refused to sell a large quantity of salt stored in his riverside warehouse, Hunton had the salt "impressed," although he claimed not to remember whether the owner was later reimbursed. After the 8th Virginia was sent south in December 1861, the two had no further contact until right after the war, when Hunton served as Horatio's principal attorney "in a great deal of litigation."¹¹

Concerns over Loudoun's vulnerability to attack in the wake of the First Battle of Manassas prompted Richmond to dispatch Brig. Gen. Nathan G. "Shanks" Evans to assume command of Confederate forces around Leesburg. The following excerpt from a book published in 1864 by an English artillery officer serving in Evans's brigade would later be cited as evidence of Horatio's adherence to the Union cause early in the war:

While our brigade was away from Leesburg [in early October 1861] and pickets were no longer at the river, the negroes crossed the stream and informed the Yankees of our whereabouts. Several Unionists, also, had

10. Testimony by T. Burr Williams, Trundle SCC file.
11. Testimony by Eppa Hunton, *ibid.*

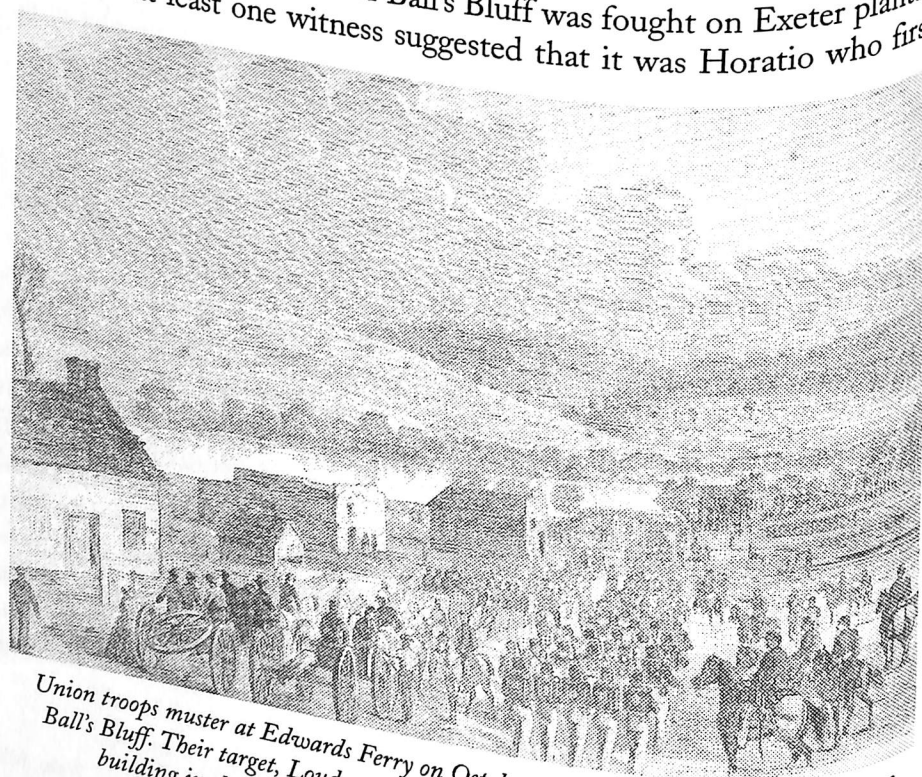
conferred with their friends and every acre of the vicinity had been assiduously mapped out by their engineers. We had long suspected old farmer Trunnell [sic] of treachery. His only son had joined the Northern army and was brigade commissary in it. It was to his knowledge of localities that the Yankees chiefly trusted when placing their batteries, and he had often been seen directing artillerists in their efforts to shell the town. His father was extremely wealthy and had an extensive plantation near the river, adjacent to Ball's Bluff. He had large dealings with our army and was paid thousands of dollars for supplies. His negroes frequently ran away to Maryland, but invariably returned after a few days absence, a circumstance which rendered it highly probable that the old man corresponded with his son. He himself and his whole household were peculiarly insulting to our soldiers, and I myself have frequently seen signal lights at his house answered from the hills of Maryland. Yet he lived undisturbed in his homestead and was neither insulted nor annoyed by anyone.¹²

However, the above account proved less helpful in establishing Horatio's loyalty than Mrs. Trundle's lawyer had hoped, as the SCC commissioners focused on the English officer's assertion that her husband had sold "thousands of dollars" in supplies to the Rebels. Furthermore, Abner Trundle did not join the Union army as claimed, nor was there any evidence of the son's active assistance to the North beyond selling livestock to the Federal commissary early in the war. Nevertheless, the artilleryman's jaundiced view of the father and son was shared by others, particularly those from outside of the county. Lt. Alexander H. Rogers, a Leesburg resident who owned a farm near Exeter, was then serving as an aide on Evans's staff and, because of his

12. Anonymous ["An English Combatant"], *Battle Fields of the South* (New York: John Bradburn, 1864), p. 94. The author's account of his posting in Loudoun, including a conversation with Elijah White and participation in the Battle of Ball's Bluff, makes for lively reading, despite some inaccuracies.

familiarity with the local residents, routinely handled cases involving loyalty. Once, when General Evans wanted to have Horatio arrested for collaborating with the enemy, Lieutenant Rogers was able to block the order. The aide considered Trundle to be "an old Whig" who had opposed secession before the war, but he knew of no overt act of disloyalty to the Confederacy that warranted putting him in jail. Nevertheless, Rogers felt that Horatio's treatment of Rebel soldiers was inconsistent with what might have been expected of "a man of his fortune and fine estate....The people there generally threw their houses open and took them in and entertained the sick and wounded officers to the utmost of their ability, but Mr. Trundle didn't."¹³

The 21 October Battle of Ball's Bluff was fought on Exeter plantation, and at least one witness suggested that it was Horatio who first



Union troops muster at Edwards Ferry on October 20, 1861, the eve of the Battle of Ball's Bluff. Their target, Loudoun County, can be seen across the river. The square building in the center is thought to be the one leased by Abner Trundle.

13. Testimony by A. H. Rogers, Trundle SCC file.

Illustration courtesy of Loudoun Museum.

came into Leesburg to sound the alarm that the Yankees had crossed the river onto his farm. That afternoon local residents gathered at the Trundles' place to watch the Confederate dead and wounded being brought in from the battlefield. Among those present were several Unionists, one of whom would recall that Horatio's actions that day were those of a strong Southern sympathizer.¹⁴

Brig. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill replaced Evans in December as the commander of Confederate forces in Loudoun. One of his primary goals was to discourage another Union incursion across the Potomac. Work gangs and teams of draft animals were impressed throughout the winter to improve fortifications around the county seat. One of these fortifications, Fort Evans, was located on the south side of Exeter, and Trundle was bitterly opposed to having prime farm land torn up for breastworks and rifle pits. Matters escalated to the point where General Hill sent a letter charging him with doing everything possible to retard construction of fortifications on his property.¹⁵

About this same time, a cavalry captain named Ball had Trundle arrested, possibly for crossing the lines without authorization, and brought before General Hill, who ordered the prisoner taken elsewhere (probably Manassas). Lieutenant Rogers, now working on Hill's staff, recalled that the citizens of Leesburg successfully petitioned for Horatio's release. He was too valuable to the community to remain in prison, and, after all, Exeter was the town's main source of firewood.¹⁶

As previously noted, a number of slaves tried to escape Exeter early in the war by crossing the Potomac River, but since slavery was still legal in Maryland, Horatio was able to use his contacts across the river to have them returned. However, by early 1862 slave owners throughout Loudoun were becoming increasingly alarmed by rumors that the Confederates were about to abandon their positions around Leesburg. Worried that the Union army would soon occupy the county, many sought to protect their investment by selling and leasing slaves to plan-

14. Testimony of T. Burr Williams and William Hough (16 Jun75), *ibid.* (Dates of testimony supplied only when a witness testified more than once.)

15. Testimony of Henry Saunders Jr. (12Mar74) and A. H. Rogers, *ibid.*

16. Testimony by Henry Saunders, Jr.; James F. Divine; and A. H. Rogers, *ibid.* Candidates for the captain who arrested Horatio include Motttron Dulany Ball of Fairfax and Charles H. Ball of Loudoun.

tations further south. This provoked unrest among the slaves themselves, who feared being separated from their families and forced to work under much harsher conditions.

Learning of a "stir" in his own slave-quarters, Horatio called his slaves together to reassure them that he had no plans to send them south. Instead, he declared his intention to stand by "the result of the war" and free them in the event of a Union victory, although he hoped that they would continue to work for wages at Exeter. On the other hand, he warned that, if any slaves attempted to escape before then, he "certainly would take them south." Despite this threat, a "gang" fled down the Leesburg Pike towards the District of Columbia, where slavery was officially abolished in April 1862. Horatio and several other men caught up with the runaways near Pigeon Hill (now Countryside) and brought them back. As a result, at least seven slaves were sent south, although several returned to Exeter after the war.¹⁷

A different picture of Horatio's treatment of his slaves is shown in Union provost marshal documents dating from July 1862. They reveal that four slaves, named Abram Jenkins, George Jenkins, George Noland and Walker Carter, escaped from Exeter in early June of that year and made their way to freedmen's camps outside the Capital. The runaways stated that their master, who liked to exclaim that "old Abe Lincoln cannot stop me doing what I please," had already sent four slaves to Albemarle County and planned to send the remainder after the current harvest was completed. He had also willingly sent slaves to work on the fortification around Leesburg and used his teams to deliver 1,000 barrels of corn to the Rebel army. Despite their having been granted the status of "contrabands of war," Horatio succeeded in getting the military authorities in Washington to arrest the four runaways

17. Testimony of Manly Slack (10Jun75 and 29Mar76) and Thomas W. Birkby (28Mar76), *ibid.* Their accounts differed as to the number of slaves sent south and their fate there. Birkby believed that Horatio, like many other slave-owners in the county, sent most of his slaves south in the spring of 1862. Slack stressed Horatio's relatively humane treatment by contrasting him with a Mrs. Marlow who was planning to send all of her slaves south to prevent them from escaping. Among them was a slave named Henry Johnson, whose wife was owned by Horatio. The latter paid "a big price" for Johnson to prevent the couple from being separated, and they remained at Exeter throughout the war.

under the Fugitive Slave Act and allow him to forcibly take them back to his farm at the end of July.¹⁸

Horatio's ability to travel to Washington in the summer of 1862 and meet with Federal authorities reflected the fact that Loudoun now lay within the Union lines. Col. John W. Geary's 28th Pennsylvania Infantry had been guarding the border around Point of Rocks since the previous summer. After learning of Confederate plans to withdraw their forces from Leesburg, Geary received permission in late February 1862 to invade Loudoun County. Meeting only token resistance in the predominantly Unionist communities of Lovettsville, Wheatland and Waterford, Geary's troops arrived on a hill overlooking Leesburg on the morning of 8 March. There they observed smoke from haystacks and several grain repositories that the retreating Rebels had set on fire to prevent their falling into Yankee hands. There had been a large conflagration at Exeter, yet all the Trundles ever received for the 5,800 bushels of wheat and a barn that were destroyed that day was a scrap of paper, on which Gen. Hill wrote: "I certify that the wheat belonging to Horatio Trundle and that belonging to Sarah Craven was burnt by my order 7th March 1862."¹⁹

Geary's men tarried in Leesburg for a few days, setting up headquarters in Pickett's Hotel. (Manager James Wallace later claimed \$1,000 for providing meals and other services to the Federal troops.) With Loudoun now technically within the Union lines, Abner Trundle rejoined his family and parents at Exeter in early March, bringing 11-15 horses and mules to replace those taken by the Confederates. Except for the death of Sarah Trundle two months later, the farm enjoyed rel-

18. Papers relating to Horatio Trunnell [sic], M-345 (Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Relating to Individual Citizens), roll 270.

19. Hill's receipt quoted in Osburn, *op. cit.*, p. 29. Speaking with Horatio soon after the Confederates burned his property, a Leesburg farmer came away with the impression that the owner of Exeter still supported the Rebel cause (John Brown testimony, *ibid.*) A. H. Rogers, who opposed any destruction of property during the evacuation, recalled that General Hill sought guidance from Gen. Joseph E. Johnston on what property should be burned and received a reply that it was entirely up to him. Rogers thought that the only buildings destroyed around Leesburg were Smart's Mill and the railroad depot (Rogers's testimony, *ibid.*) (However, Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 136, reports that one of Exeter's barns was burned at this time.)

ative peace that summer. Early September, however, brought a dramatic shift in the county, as Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia passed through Leesburg on its way to Antietam. One Confederate soldier recalled helping himself to roasting ears as his regiment passed Exeter's "large, fine fields of corn." A local civilian told the soldiers to take all they wanted, as the owner was a "Union man."²⁰

Loudoun remained in Rebel hands for the next two months, until elements of McClellan's army began to cross back into Virginia in late October. Horatio may have spent this period in Maryland, as he reportedly returned to Loudoun on a pontoon bridge erected by "Burnside's army." While McClellan pushed south into neighboring Fauquier County, a sizable contingent of Union troops remained behind in the Leesburg area. The soldiers must have camped near Exeter, as Horatio later submitted five separate vouchers totaling over \$1,000 for goods and services provided to the Yankees during the month of November. Among the items listed were 1,100 bushels of corn, a ton of hay, and fencing used for firewood. One voucher, authorized by Capt. William B. Reyburn, provost marshal, was for use of a team to remove sick Union soldiers from Leesburg during 12-17 November.²¹

After the Confederacy instituted a draft in April 1862, Abner Trundle had to be constantly on the lookout for conscription officers. He "was the very kind of man [these Rebel officers] would go for. They said he had negroes and they were fighting for them and wanted him to help." Rebel authorities finally caught up with the young man that fall and sent him to Richmond, but he was allowed to return to Loudoun after his father paid \$1,700 to hire a substitute. After being apprehended a second time in early 1863, Abner took his father's advice and relocated to Charlottesville. He took several slaves with him, two

20. Wallace's SCC claim (#11,748), Records Group 217, National Archives Annex, College Park, Md.; and testimony by Abner Trundle and S. F. Chapman, Trundle SCC case.

21. Testimony by Birkby (10Jun75); and claims registry book vol. 12, entry # 871-4, RG 92 (Records of the Quarter Master General), NARA. The vouchers were submitted to the Q.M. General's Office on 20 February 1863, but were returned two weeks later with a notation that they must be settled by the officers making the purchase. Since they were not included in the SCC claim, Horatio presumably received compensation at some point. (See OR, ser. I, v. 19 (1), pp. 556, 568, for other communications from Reyburn, who reported on 8 November that he had 125 soldiers in Leesburg, plus another 500 in the hospital.)

of whom he sold in Saltville, and would spent over a year "merchandizing" in the Charlottesville area. According to some, this mainly involved "speculating" in livestock for the Confederate Government and the sale of a large number of his father's cattle.²²

Leesburg resident Manly Slack provided a different version of what happened to Exeter's livestock. In the spring of 1863 Horatio approached Slack and offered him \$2.00 per day to drive his remaining cattle, about 50 head, to Georgetown. Slack and Horatio's "black man Henry" planned to start out the following morning with a wagon full of corn to feed the cattle. To avoid Rebel soldiers, they were instructed to proceed via Edwards' Ferry Road, crossing Goose Creek at the Kephart's Mill ferry and then keeping off the Leesburg Pike as long as possible. Horatio planned to meet them in Georgetown to conduct the sale. That same night, however, a squad of Rebel cavalymen entered Exeter and drove off the cattle before they could be sent to market. Slack reported hearing their sabers as they passed his house on their way south. The next morning Horatio set off to get the cattle back, but returned home that evening empty-handed.²³

Another curious incident occurred about this time, when Horatio's brother, Hezekiah W. Trundle, came across the river to retrieve a horse that members of Elijah White's command had stolen from his farm near Mouth of the Monocacy. (Since Hezekiah died in April 1863, the loss probably occurred during a raid to Poolesville, Md., which White's Comanches carried out in December 1862 to procure fresh mounts.) Believing that his horse was at White's camp in Mt. Gilead, Hezekiah wanted his brother to accompany him there. Horatio, however, was worried about his reputation as a Union sympathizer and persuaded Aldie farmer Christian T. Hempstone, who had grown up with the

22. Testimony by John Randolph White, Birkby (10Jun75 and 28 Mar76), Abner Trundle, and T. Burr Williams, *ibid.* There are inconsistencies in the testimony about Abner's wartime activities after he returned to Virginia, including when and where he was apprehended, the degree to which he was involved in taking slaves and livestock from Exeter down south, and what he was actually doing there. (Abner himself admitted to selling two slaves in Saltville, a town in southwest Virginia.)

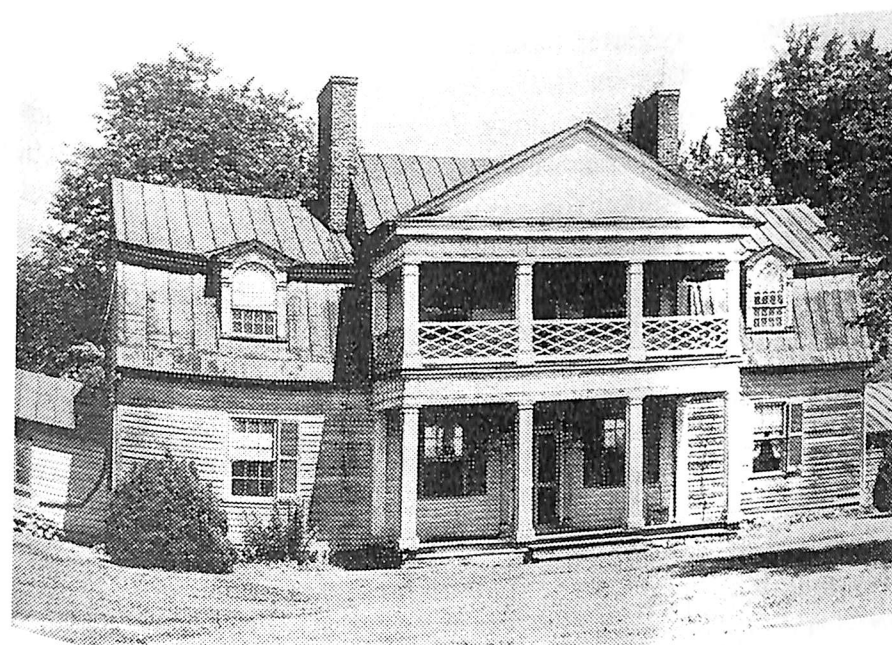
23. Testimony by T. Burr Williams and Manly Slack (10Jun75 and 29 Mar76), *ibid.* Assuming Slack's version is correct, the Confederates probably had foreknowledge of Horatio's plans.

Trundles in Montgomery County and was an ardent secessionist, to join them on what turned out to be a futile attempt to find the animal.²⁴

The first claim for property seized by Union soldiers to be cited in the SCC petition involved members of Brig. Gen. John Geary's brigade, then part of Gen. Henry W. Slocum's XII Army Corps. For eight days in late June 1863, large numbers of Union soldiers camped between Exeter's main house and the river. Fearful of an attack during the Confederate advance preceding the Battle of Gettysburg, the Yankees were kept busy cutting trees and commandeering fence rails to construct defensive positions. Twelve horses, worth over \$2,000, were also taken at this time. Colonel Hopkins, quartermaster general for Slocum's command, authorized the seizures and, while he offered no compensation, recommended that Exeter's owner document his losses for eventual reimbursement. The following year Horatio had three local citizens write up an appraisal for the loss of 96 acres of timber cut down by Slocum's men. This was later converted to 530 cords of wood, valued at \$2,650, in an unsuccessful quartermaster claim filed by Horatio in 1865. The same figure was subsequently used by his widow in the SCC claim.²⁵

The Northern victory at Gettysburg and the return of Federal troops to Loudoun in late July coincided with the county's official inclusion in the Restored (Unionist) Government of Virginia, which moved from Wheeling to Alexandria after West Virginia was admitted to the Union. That fall trade policies were formulated to enable Loudoun Unionists to cross the border at Harpers Ferry, Berlin and Point of Rocks to purchase "family supplies" at designated trade stores. Eligibility for this privilege may have been a factor in a loyalty oath that Horatio signed in the District of Columbia on 6 October 1863. In any case, records kept by the customs agent at Point of Rocks show that

24. Testimony by Hempstone, *ibid.* Like their commander, a number of White's men came from Maryland, including some related to the Trundles.
25. Appraisal for fencing/timber (5Sep64); quartermaster claims (14Aug63 and 1Sep65); Mrs. Trundle's original SCC petition (1May72); and testimony by James Wallace, Henry Saunders, Jr., and Harrison Mills, *ibid.* On 23 June, General-in-Chief Henry Halleck ordered Hooker's Army of the Potomac to seize horses in Loudoun (OR, Ser. I, v. 27(1), p. 57).



Exeter in 1972, eight years before it was destroyed by fire.

Photo courtesy of Thomas Balch Library.

Horatio made at least eight trips to purchase supplies at "the Point." The total value of the goods taken back into Virginia—more than \$1,000—was one of the largest by any single individual in the county.²⁶

Elizabeth Henry Fechtig (nee Travers) (1825-1914) was a young widow with two daughters, Mary Ida and Alcinda, when she met Horatio. Born in Somerset County, Md., she had lived in D.C. at the start of the war, but moved to Frederick County, Md., in September 1862 to teach school. After a short courtship, the two were married on 5 January 1864 at the home of one of Horatio's cousins, Richard H. Jones, who owned a farm near Mouth of the Monocacy. A number of officers from the 10th Vermont Infantry boarded at Jones's place and attended the ceremony, including colonels Albert B. Jewett and

26. Oath of allegiance (6Oct63), Trundle SCC file; and Taylor M. Chamberlin and James D. Peshek, *Crossing the Line: Civilian Trade and Travel between Loudoun County, Virginia, and Maryland during the Civil War* (Waterford, Va.: The Waterford Foundation, 2002). Rather than make the long trek to Point of Rocks, the Trundle household would have also used the Edwards' Ferry crossing, where a customs house was briefly in operation during the winter of 1863-4.

William W. Henry. Afterwards, Elizabeth took up residence at Exeter with her husband.²⁷

Jones's subsequent testimony, designed to show his cousin's loyalty to the Union cause, is quite revealing. Once, when Union soldiers broke into Exeter and brought some of Horatio's clothing back with them to Maryland, Jones was able to use his influence within the 10th Vermont to have the items returned. On another occasion, Yankees took a black stallion belonging to Horatio, which was also brought over to Maryland. This time Jones had to approach General Slocum, who had his headquarters at a nearby farm belonging to Jones's sister. After consulting with General Mead, Slocum reluctantly agreed to turn the animal over to Jones, who sent it back to Exeter after the soldiers left the area. Like many other witnesses, Jones commented on the ease with which his cousin was able to cross the river at Point of Rocks and Edwards' Ferry to visit friends and relatives on the Maryland side, as well as attend to business related to his farm, including cattle that he often sent to graze across the river.²⁸

In early 1864 Mosby's quartermaster appeared at Exeter to "impress" stores of corn, along with a wagon to haul the grain back to the Rangers' camp. This time, Horatio approached Levin W. S. Hough, one of Leesburg's leading merchants, for assistance in getting his team back. At the beginning of the war the county court had appointed Hough to oversee supplying provisions to needy families with members serving in the Confederate army. In fulfillment of this role, Hough had in turn relied heavily on Horatio, who proved:

...very kind in letting him have supplies for these families and was using this very team to haul wood to these families, and would accept very poor money in payment—Confederate money. He [Hough] found great difficulty in getting supplies to these families on account of the money he was supplied with, and on account of the great scarcity of teams left in the County. Trundle

27. Testimony of Elizabeth Trundle and Richard H. Jones, Trundle SCC file.

28. Testimony of Jones, *ibid.* At the time, Slocum told Jones that Horatio had "acted very clever to him while he was there [in Leesburg?]."

had very kindly furnished wood and other supplies and taken their money, when some loud-mouthed secessionists would not do it.

Hough agreed to accompany his friend to the partisans' camp, where he finally was able to persuade first Mosby and then his quartermaster, both of whom considered Horatio to be a Union supporter, that the poor would suffer greatly if the horses and wagon were not returned to their owner. After an overnight stay, the two men were allowed to return to Leesburg with the team.²⁹

Col. John S. Mosby later confirmed most of Hough's statement, recalling that the visit to his camp took place in January/February 1864. The former partisan commander was not sure of the name of the man who had accompanied Horatio, but thought that he was a Quaker named Janney. This prompted a heated exchange with the SCC commissioner over whether Mosby was in the habit of letting Unionists and Quakers spend the night at his camp (rather than having them arrested), and whether all Quakers were Unionists (a pointed allusion to Leesburg's John Janney). Mosby refused to rise to the bait, and closed his testimony with the simple statement: "I know I impressed a large amount of corn from Mr. Trundle."³⁰

Levin Hough's assertion that Horatio would accept "Confederate money" is at variance with other testimony. Several witnesses spoke of his reluctance to take any Confederate scrip, especially after 1863, and his practice of discounting Virginia bank money by 50 percent. However, this was not unusual in border areas such as Loudoun County, where both Unionists and Secessionists showed a strong preference for greenbacks in their business dealings.³¹

29. Testimony by L. W. S. Hough, *ibid.* Hough declined to sign the statement, possibly an indication that he was a Quaker. Although not mentioned in the SCC hearing, much of the firewood sold to the poor came from timber cut by the Yankees in June 1863 that was being claimed as a total loss (see statement by Abner Trundle, chancery suit M-513, LCCR).

30. Testimony by Mosby, *ibid.*

31. A. H. Rogers recalled first becoming aware of Horatio's refusal to take Confederate money in 1863, after he received a discharge from the army for curvature of the spine and returned to Leesburg, prompting the SCC commissioner to observe that Exeter's owner was only particular about money when Loudoun was behind Union lines (Rogers's testimony, *ibid.*).

The next loss cited in the SCC claim took place in April 1864, when members of Lt. Col. Caspar Crowninshield's 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry seized a mule and two horses from Exeter. (The Massachusetts regiment was part of a small brigade in western Fairfax County that was headed by Col. Charles R. Lowell and used primarily to run operations against Mosby's partisans.) Horatio estimated the animals' value at \$590 in an unsuccessful quartermaster claim filed at the end of the war. In her initial SCC petition, Elizabeth Trundle erroneously identified Maj. Henry A. Cole's 1st [Potomac Home Brigade] Maryland Cavalry as having taken the four animals, now claimed at \$625. Mrs. Trundle later clarified that she and her late husband had served dinner to some Union officers, who suddenly informed their hosts of their intention to confiscate a mule and two horses from the farm. Her husband got them to write out a receipt, but as the couple watched the men depart, they discovered a third horse being led away as well, a fact that Horatio recorded on the back of the receipt. Dated 28 April, this paper states that the mule and horses were taken by order of Colonel Lowell and is signed by Lt. Henry E. Alvord, 2nd Mass. Cav., Provost Marshal, Cavalry Brigade, 3rd Div., 22nd Corps. The officers had undoubtedly been celebrating their success earlier in the day, when they surprised eleven of Mosby's Rangers at the bar inside Pickett's Hotel in downtown Leesburg. In the ensuing fray, one partisan was killed, and seven others captured.³²

However, neither Mrs. Trundle nor any other witness mentioned that the Massachusetts troopers had another, more serious purpose to visit Exeter that day—namely the destruction of the farm's remaining barn in retaliation for Mosby's having used it to replenish his forage supplies. A letter from a resident of Leesburg, written two days later, describes the rout of Mosby's Rangers in the town, including the killing of [Thomas] Flack, "a Lt. sent by Mosby to Superintend the hauling of corn from Trundle's.... The Yankees next went to Mr. Trundle's, burned

32. QM claim, petition, testimony by Mrs. Trundle and receipt, Trundle SCC file; and Wert, Jeffrey D., *Mosby's Rangers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), pp. 155-6. It appears that several incidents involving Union soldiers occurred at Exeter that spring, which may account for discrepancies in the various accounts.

the barn (the stone one) containing 200 barrels of corn, farming implements, etc., also a quantity of hay. They carried off 11 prisoners, a mule and 3 of Trundle's horses."³³

Since SCC claims could only be filed for property seized for use by Union troops, not property that was destroyed, there was little reason to raise an issue that might lead to unwanted questions about why Lowell's men had felt it necessary to take such retaliatory action. The reference to Lieutenant Flack's presence in Leesburg to supervise hauling off corn from Exeter confirms that the earlier seizure by Mosby's men was not a one-time occurrence and raises the possibility that Lowell's raid was deliberately timed to put an end to this practice.³⁴

Abner Trundle had evidently returned from Charlottesville by March 1864, when he purchased a 500-acre estate on the Loudoun/Prince William border called Tecumseh. According to the deed, Abner agreed to pay the owner, Samuel J. Tebbs, \$67,500 for the property. The reasons for this purchase are unclear, although Abner may have wanted to distance himself from Exeter now that his father had remarried. On the other hand, several SCC witnesses would later claim that the Trundles removed livestock to more secure property that they owned "further south," a possible reference to Tecumseh.³⁵

Things quieted down until early July, when a Confederate army under Gen. Jubal Early's command crossed into Maryland west of Harper's Ferry in a daring bid to attack the poorly defended Capital from the north. Fortunately for the North, Ulysses S. Grant managed to ship part of his veteran VI Corps from Richmond to Washington in time to stop Early's forces on the outskirts of the Capital, during the Battle of Fort Stevens on 11-12 July. Afterwards the Rebels hastily

33. Thomas Washington Edwards (Leesburg) to Capt. H. O. Claggett, 30 Jun 64, quoted in its entirety in Osburn, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

34. For another account of the barn burning, see sworn statement by Elizabeth Trundle in a legal dispute with her stepson Abner, chancery suit M-513, LCCR.

35. LCDB 5U:174. The clerk of the court received the deed on 6 June. Abner subsequently purchased an adjoining 425-acre tract that Tebbs had inherited from his deceased son (Lt. Col. Charles B. Tebbs of the 8th Va. Inf.). This and two other transactions by the Trundles are among just a handful of deeds recorded by Loudoun's clerk of the court, George K. Fox, between the closure of the county court after Geary's invasion in early 1862 and the end of the war.

withdrew, crossing into Loudoun County at White's Ford (north of present-day White's Ferry). The exhausted Confederates rested for the next two days at Leesburg, where General Early commandeered Exeter for his headquarters. According to family tradition, one of Mrs. Trundle's daughters, acting on a dare, snipped off a lock of Early's hair for a souvenir, while the general was taking a nap on their living room sofa. The farm was allegedly "cleaned out" of food and forage to feed the hungry Rebels and their horses, and the SCC would later find evidence that Horatio received two payments totaling \$420 for corn taken by Early's quartermaster.³⁶

On the morning of 16 July, General Early started his men up the Snicker's Gap Pike just as Gen. Horatio G. Wright's VI Corps began to cross the Potomac near Leesburg in pursuit of the Rebels. Among those arriving was Col. William Henry of the 10th Vermont Infantry, who had attended the Trundles' wedding earlier in the year. Hoping to learn something about Early's intentions, the colonel immediately paid a call on Exeter, where he found the owners visibly upset by their recent experiences and seemingly eager to have the Yankees finish "old Jube" off. Horatio had overheard the Confederate general say that his army had lost over 500 killed during the Battle of the Monocacy on 9 July and that 500 more had to be left in Frederick hospitals because they were too severely wounded to be moved. Another 3000 injured during this battle had recovered sufficiently to cross the river back into Virginia with Early's retreating army in ambulances, wagons, or on foot. (Colonel Henry was undoubtedly gratified to learn of the high number of Confederate casualties on the Monocacy battlefield, as his regiment had played a key role that day in delaying the Rebels' march on Washington.) According to Horatio, Early's army now planned a forced march to Winchester, but would retreat still farther up the Shenandoah Valley if pursued, as the men were in no condition to withstand the VI Corps. Despite this welcome news that their oppo-

36. Osburn, op. cit., p. 29; testimony by Col. William W. Henry; and two memos from the War Department's Archive Office, Trundle SCC file. The SCC routinely asked the War Dept. to review captured Confederate records for references to claimants. The couch on which Early slept remained in the Trundles' living room through the mid-20th century.

nents were in no position to resist, Wright failed to press his advantage and halted the pursuit of Early at Loudoun's western border.³⁷

Horatio's only reward for providing this intelligence was the loss of three more horses. The animals, valued at \$475, were confiscated on 17 July by members of Battery C, 1st New York Artillery, which had crossed the Potomac with the XIX Corps at Edwards' Ferry to reinforce the pursuit of Early's army. Mrs. Trundle recalled that her husband went into Leesburg to complain to General Wright about the loss, but the latter had already departed. The Confederates had evidently not "cleaned out" Exeter entirely, as Horatio later produced two vouchers for over four tons of corn that were allegedly taken by Union quartermasters on 17 July.³⁸

On 5 August Horatio and his wife Elizabeth signed a deed returning the northern half of Exeter, a 765-acre tract that did not include the manor house, to his son Abner. The following day Abner signed a bond, with Levin Hough named as trustee, in which he agreed to pay his father \$12,000 in gold or silver (or its equivalent), plus six-percent interest, by January 1870. With this action, Horatio conveyed the share in Exeter that Abner had signed over to his father at the beginning of the war. According to a later deposition by Elizabeth Trundle, the two documents constituted a final settlement of the previously existing partnership between her husband and stepson. On 17 August, Horatio made out a will leaving his entire estate to his new wife, with a pointed reminder that he had already provided for Abner through several "large advancements." In taking this action, Horatio demonstrated both concern for Elizabeth (who was now pregnant) and his two young stepdaughters (whom he reportedly doted on), and growing exaspera-

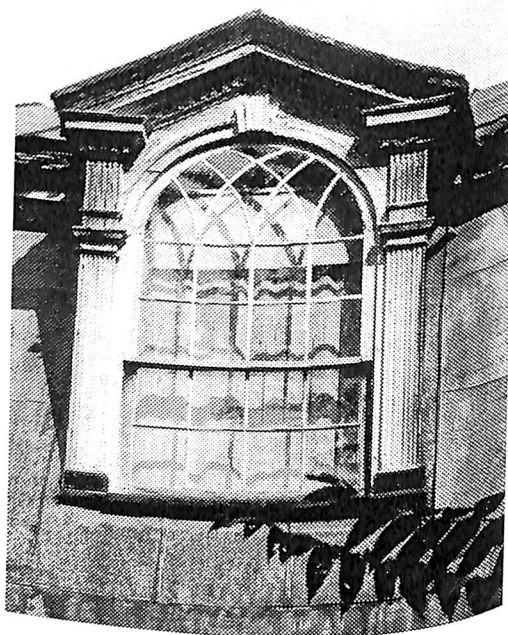
37. Henry testimony, *ibid.* At the end of their conversation, Horatio went down into his basement and brought up a ham that Early's men had overlooked. Insisting that Henry accept the present, Trundle reminded the colonel that he owed him a favor for once vouching for his loyalty in Baltimore when he could not get a pass to return home to Virginia.

38. QM claim, SCC petition and testimony by Mrs. Trundle, *ibid.*; and claims register book 19, entry 863, and book 54, entry 38, RG 92, NARA. Horatio personally submitted the vouchers for the corn to the QM General office on 10Sep64 and presumably received reimbursement, as he did not include them in his post-war claim. (That Mosby's and Early's quartermasters had overlooked so much corn is surprising.)

tion with Abner's spendthrift ways, a trait that would become more apparent after the war.³⁹

Most of the losses claimed in Mrs. Trundle's SCC petition simply repeated information contained in four unpaid quartermaster claims that she had found among her husband's papers. However, she added one new claim of her own—for wood, hay and corn, worth a total of \$2,650, that were allegedly taken from Exeter in November 1864 by order of Capt. Jerome B. Wheeler, acting quartermaster for the 2nd Cavalry Division, 1st Brigade, Middle Military Department. This addition brought the total amount claimed by Horatio Trundle's estate to \$8,482.50.⁴⁰

In later testimony, Mrs. Trundle recalled that some of these losses occurred when 800 soldiers from Crowninshield's command camped overnight on their farm. The Trundles had already retired for the evening, when a Lieutenant Tuck came with several wagons and asked for a light so that he could search the cornhouse and stable for forage. Her husband watched him load their remaining corn, with the result that they had to grind wheat for their horses that winter. The soldiers used the grain and hay to feed their horses, as well as a large number of cattle that was being driven with



Detail of upper story window of Exeter mansion house.

39. LCDB 5U:175 and 177; and testimony and supporting documents provided by Mrs. Trundle, chancery suits M-374 and M-513, LCCR..
40. Initial petition, Trundle SCC file. (Capt. Wheeler of the 6th N. Y. Cavalry served as quartermaster in Gen. Thomas C. Devin's cavalry brigade that fall.)

them. Her recollection of a herd of cattle suggests a connection with Gen. Wesley Merritt's "burning raid" into nearby Loudoun Valley at the end of November, although most animals seized during this operation were driven back into the Shenandoah Valley. Other parts of her testimony, however, indicate the losses involved several different Union units that visited the farm that fall.⁴¹

William Hough was a Leesburg carpenter who joined Capt. Samuel C. Means's Independent Loudoun Rangers (Union) and was subsequently assigned to Point of Rocks to help prevent disloyal persons from crossing the river. In his first statement to an SCC official, Hough declared that he had never considered Horatio a loyal Unionist. Initially, he had been unable to stop him at the border, because the wealthy planter carried a special pass from Gen. Christopher Augur, commander of the Department of Washington. However, in the fall of 1864 the provost marshal at "the Point," Capt. Baldin Spence of the 1st Pa. Light Artillery, ordered Hough to keep Horatio from crossing the river in the future. Spence's action was prompted by a report that the elder Trundle had taken a Confederate uniform into Loudoun for Col. Elijah White. The Loudoun Ranger subsequently modified his story, claiming that he had challenged Captain Spence's authority to override a pass provided by Augur on the basis of an unsupported allegation. Furthermore, Hough resumed letting Trundle cross the lines after Spence was replaced.⁴²

41. Testimony by Elizabeth Trundle, *ibid.* Although she described Caspar Crowninshield's command as being stationed in Vienna, Va., the 2nd Mass. Cavalry was attached to Gen. Philip Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah.
42. Testimony by William Hough, 23 Nov74 & 16 Jun75. Prior to the uniform incident, Unionists asked Hough why he allowed secessionists such as Trundle cross the river.

Hough explained that he had no option given Gen. Augur's pass and noted that Mrs. Betsy Mason, whom Hough described as "one of the strongest kinds of rebel with three sons in the rebel army," had similar authority to cross the border. An entry in the ledger kept by the customs agent at Point of Rocks confirms that Trundle crossed on 24 September 1864 with a pass from Gen. Augur that was approved by Capt. Spence. (Trundle took across \$305 in goods on this occasion, far in excess of the normal limit of \$10 then in effect.) (Chamberlin and Peshek, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-3.) As noted in f. n. 38, *supra*, Horatio visited Washington on 10 September and probably used this opportunity to secure a pass from Augur.

The remainder of the war seems to have been relatively uneventful at Exeter, with the exception of the arrival in March of Horatio and Elizabeth's first child, Ernest Travers Trundle (1865-67). The unofficial end to hostilities in Loudoun came on 21 April with the dissolution of Mosby's Rangers, an event that prompted Federal authorities to open the Potomac border to all citizens the following day. A flag-raising ceremony in Leesburg on 31 May marked the symbolic return of Loudoun to the Union and a prelude to the election of county officials on 1 June.

With the return to normalcy, a number of Loudoun residents took the opportunity to file so-called "quartermaster claims" for losses suffered during the war. Congress had passed an act on July 4th, 1864, to compensate loyal citizens living in states *not* in rebellion for property seized for use by Union troops. Loudoun's Unionists considered themselves eligible to file such claims by virtue of the county's inclusion in the Restored Government of Virginia since the summer of 1863. Horatio submitted four claims in August/September 1865. The signatures on these documents, attesting to the claimant's veracity and loyalty, represented some of the principal figures in the county seat during the immediate post-war period: Charles P. Janney, clerk of the court; William H. Gray, justice of the peace; James McDonough, Leesburg's new postmaster; William B. Downey, commonwealth's attorney; hotel manager James M. Wallace; and William B. Lynch, editor of the *Washingtonian* newspaper. Other witnesses included local farmers Henry Saunders Jr., Edgar Jarvis and Harrison Mills; J. L. Hawling, probably a relative of Abner Trundle's wife; and Leesburg tailor John M. Athey.⁴³

In December Horatio retired from farming and auctioned off his remaining livestock and equipment. His half of Exeter was then rented out, although he and Elizabeth continued to live in the manor house. The arrival of their second son, Horatio Hartley Trundle (1866-1960), exacerbated tensions with Abner, whose ill-advised purchase of Tecumseh had driven him deeper into debt. Matters escalated to the

43. For further details on locating quartermaster claims, see Taylor M. Chamberlin, *Where Did They Stand?: The May 1861 Vote on Secession in Loudoun County, Virginia, and Post-War Claims against the Government*, (Waterford, Va.: Waterford Foundation, Inc., 2003), p. 32.

point where Horatio retained the legal services of Eppa Hunton to collect money owed by his son. On 3 August 1867 Abner was summoned to his father's deathbed to try and settle their affairs one last time. Horatio was in the process of revising his will and had Abner sign a deed relinquishing half of the Tecumseh property. No price was given and Abner's deed stated that the transfer to his father and stepmother was being done out of "necessity."⁴⁴

When Horatio Trundle died two days later, he left only a half interest in a timber tract on Sugarloaf Mountain to his first son, who was specifically barred in the will from receiving anything else from the estate. Horatio's stepdaughters received \$1,000 each, while the rest was to be divided between his second wife and their two sons, Ernest and Horatio Jr. Sadly, Ernest succumbed to illness three days after his father.⁴⁵

Horatio named Elizabeth Trundle executrix of his estate and directed her to sell whatever land necessary to pay his debts, including money owed on the Tecumseh property. Over the next several years, Elizabeth sold at public auction two tracts totaling 445 acres from the half of Exeter that she and her surviving son had inherited. During this same period, she was also embroiled in various legal proceedings over debts owed to and by her late husband. She eventually sued her stepson Abner to reclaim money that he allegedly still owed, and Abner counter-sued, arguing that he was never fully compensated when the partnership with his father was dissolved—a claim that his stepmother contested and eventually won.⁴⁶

Despite owning large tracts of land, Abner's financial situation continued to deteriorate, and in 1869 he was forced to sell his half shares in both Tecumseh and Exeter. Although Charles R. Paxton bought the latter for \$50,000, Abner still could not keep up with his debts. In 1871, his estranged wife entered a suit to prevent him from taking custody of their children, or removing anything more from their residence.

44. LCDB 5X:286.

45. Loudoun County Will Book 2T:49, a copy of which is in the Trundle SCC file.

46. *Ibid.*; Taylor, op. cit., p. 91; and chancery suits M-374 and M-513, LCCR.

She charged that Abner had owned property worth \$50,000 at the close of the war, but that almost everything had since been "squandered, misspent, or lost through inability to manage his affairs."⁴⁷



The Southern Claims Commission was created by Congress in March 1871 to give loyal residents of Southern states the same opportunity to file claims for property confiscated by Union troops that had been awarded Northern citizens in 1864. As executrix of her late husband's estate, Elizabeth Trundle entered a petition with the SCC in May 1872 for over \$8,000 in losses. Edwin A. Atlee and Edgar Jarvis witnessed her signature before notary public John W. Nixon, and James Wallace, Edgar Jarvis, Henry Saunders and Harrison Mills were named as potential witnesses in the case. Washington lawyer J. C. Bundy submitted her petition to the SCC that fall and would serve as her attorney for the duration of the case.⁴⁸

Due to the overwhelming number of applicants, cases moved slowly through the hearing process, and it was not until March 1874 that Bundy brought a group of witnesses from Leesburg to testify before SCC special commissioner A. W. Chilton in Alexandria. James M. Wallace, described as a 68-year old retired merchant, identified an appraisal for timber cut down by Federal troops at Exeter that he, Edgar Jarvis (recently deceased) and Isaac M. Rice (then living in West Virginia) had prepared in 1864. Wallace gave few specific examples to substantiate Horatio's loyalty, however, and was unable to confirm how the claimant had voted in the May 1861 referendum on secession. (Wallace, who was among only 22 Leesburg residents who voted

47. LCDB 5Z:76 and 350; and chancery suit M-1443, LCCR.

48. See Chamberlin, op. cit., chap. 5, for a complete listing of the more than 400 Loudoun SCC cases and how to locate them. The signature of Waterford justice of the peace Edwin A. Atlee on the original petition raises questions, as he and Samuel Means were subsequently accused of submitting fraudulent claims to the SCC. Mrs. Trundle may have sensed trouble, as she switched from the law firm J. T. and L. H. Stevens to Bundy and Webster after filling out the petition. (This may also explain the discrepancies in the losses occurring in the fall of 1864, which were first attributed to Cole's Cavalry, and then to other military units.)

against secession, described the great "excitement" in town that day, adding that it was mostly elderly men who dared to oppose the ordinance.)

Henry Saunders Jr., a 48-year old farmer who lived about a mile from Exeter and was a close friend of the Trundle family, provided corroborating evidence on most of the claimed losses. He described the claimant as a Union man, pointing out that Horatio and James Wallace were among the few Leesburg residents allowed by Federal authorities to cross into Maryland. Saunders, who claimed to have only reluctantly gone along with secession, once declined Horatio's request to drive cattle across the Potomac, out of fear that the Confederates might catch him. Another time, after the Rebels had taken cattle from Exeter and offered Confederate bonds in compensation, Saunders recalled Horatio saying that he would not get off his horse to pick up such worthless pieces of paper.

Harrison Mills, a 54-year old farmer, provided details on losses occurring during his tenure as manager of Exeter from early 1862 until mid-1863, but made no statement about the claimant's loyalty. Alfred Wright, a 73-year old grocer and feed store merchant, testified that both he and Horatio were Unionists, although "we had to keep might quiet, as we did not want to go to Richmond."

Mrs. Trundle was the last to be deposed and began with a brief account of her background and marriage to Horatio. She described herself as opposed to secession, and recounted how she and her husband willingly provided food and forage whenever Union soldiers stopped at Exeter. She could add little to events that occurred before her marriage, however, and even her statements about losses in 1864 seemed vague and contradictory.

In June Dr. William G. H. Harrison, a Washington physician and first president of the Unconditional Union Party in the District of Columbia, appeared before special commissioner Chilton to vouch for the loyalty of his cousin, Mrs. Trundle. A few days later, John Lewis Trundle Jones, a farmer from Montgomery County, also came before Chilton to give similar testimony about his cousin, Horatio Trundle. That fall Mrs. Trundle's lawyer submitted an excerpt from a book

describing early Confederate suspicions about Horatio and Abner. At this point, Mrs. Trundle's case was proceeding smoothly, and there appeared to be a good chance that the hard-pressed widow might receive some compensation, especially for the well-documented loss of wood.

Simon Elliot Chamberlin was a Union soldier who settled in Waterford after marrying a local Quaker girl. In the spring of 1874 he began to supplement income from his in-laws' farm by working part time as a special agent investigating SCC cases throughout northern Virginia. (Special agents had more investigatory powers than special commissioners, who were normally limited to taking testimony.) Although Chamberlin was never formally assigned to the Trundle case, he filed a report in late October 1874 that raised doubts about Horatio's loyalty. The special agent felt that the main reason local inhabitants assumed Horatio was a Union supporter was his ability to cross into Maryland, yet he had similar authority to pass Rebel lines.

To back up his suspicions, Chamberlin enclosed a signed statement from T. Burr Williams, described as a 50-year old farmer, but probably identical to a "huckster" with a similar name appearing in the 1870 Waterford census. Although Williams did not know Horatio Trundle personally, he had overheard the claimant boasting of Confederate victories and mentioned the Trundles' propensity to send their cattle and slaves south, as well as Abner's alleged role in obtaining cattle for the Confederates.

A month later Chamberlin sent another report to the SCC repeating his suspicions about Horatio, whom he felt manifested loyalty to the North only when it suited his "pecuniary interests." To support his allegations, the special agent attached statements from four more local residents. John Brown, a 61-year old farmer who had lived near Leesburg during the war, recalled that the claimant had only made statements favoring the south. While confirming James Wallace's loyalty, Brown thought that this witness's views were colored by the fact that he had done a "great deal of business" with the Trundles. William Hough's statement about Horatio's involvement in taking a Confederate uniform across the Union lines has already been discussed.

A third deponent, a 59-year old farmer named John Randolph White, had encountered Horatio in Maryland on several occasions during the war, yet even there had never heard him say anything supporting the Union cause. White, who himself was a livestock speculator, also knew Abner quite well and denied that the younger Trundle had had any direct involvement with the Union army. Instead, Abner had been busy throughout the war taking cattle to a farm that he and his father owned farther south. Finally, Fenelon Slack, a 61-year old wheelwright who had worked for the Trundles during the war, described overhearing a discussion in front of his Leesburg shop during June 1863, when Horatio had declared himself "a southern man" to some Union officers. Slack also pointed out that the owner of Exeter frequently went into Maryland to buy supplies, but sold his own produce and livestock down south.

When Mrs. Trundle's lawyer reviewed the reports submitted by Chamberlin, he requested permission to take rebuttal testimony and subsequently arranged for special commissioner Chilton to come to Leesburg in June 1875 to hear witnesses. Thomas W. Birkby, a 50-year old coach-maker, reported that Horatio was widely regarded as a "d__d Yankee," but could give no specific instances of assistance that Exeter's owner might have given the Union side. Birkby did, however, recall Abner's role in procuring cattle for the Union commissary early in the war and the son's subsequent difficulties with Confederate conscription officers.

Christian T. Hempstone, a 64-year old farmer who had lived in Loudoun for the previous thirty years, had grown up with Horatio in Maryland and considered himself the Trundles' closest friend in the area. His most effective testimony concerned the unlikelyhood that a wealthy planter like Horatio would have confided his true "sentiments" on a sensitive subject such as loyalty to the mechanics and farmers cited in Chamberlin's two reports. The next witness, Fenelon Slack, clarified his earlier statement by adding that Horatio's declaration of being a "southern man" had taken place during a heated argument with officers over the destruction of property at Exeter.

Next to be called was Manly Slack, a 57-year old carpenter who had lived on the Leesburg Pike just south of Exeter during the war, and his version of the cattle and slaves being sent south differed significantly from that collected by special agent Chamberlin. William Hough was then questioned about his previous testimony and now claimed to have "somewhat" changed his mind on Horatio's loyalty, after further reflection and talking to others. He also claimed that the special agent had pressured him into making his earlier statement.

The final rebuttal testimony involved a deposition taken from Col. William W. Henry in Burlington, Vermont. His first meeting with the claimant occurred in early 1862 at the home of Hezekiah Trundle (Horatio's brother) in Maryland, and Henry recalled him saying that he had voted against secession. They had several encounters thereafter, including the last time they met at Exeter after General Early's departure. Henry felt that the Rebels' persistence in trying to conscript Horatio's son and the way they had "cleaned out" Exeter were proof of the man's loyalty. Henry also acknowledged having previously stated in public that Horatio Trundle and John Minor Botts (a noted Unionist) were the only truly loyal Virginians that he knew.

Bundy then took the unusual step of having a nine-page printed summary of the rebuttal testimony made, which was submitted to the SCC in October 1875. After digesting this document and Chamberlin's earlier reports, the Commissioners issued orders in early 1876 for a full inquiry into the case. One of their top investigators, special agent George Tucker, was dispatched to Leesburg in late March to resolve the conflicting accounts. Tucker began with rebuttal witness Birkby, a secessionist who claimed to have always considered Horatio to be a Union man, although they never actually discussed the subject. He felt that the only reason that the Rebels allowed Horatio to travel south was because he had hired out so many slaves down there. The special agent then questioned Manly Slack closely about the theft of a herd of cattle from Exeter by the Rebels, eliciting the comment that Trundle "had sometimes to be any side to save himself and much more his property." Levin Hough, a 40-year old Leesburg merchant, declined to sign a statement, but talked freely about the time he accompanied

Horatio to Mosby's headquarters, as well as the claimant's role in providing wood and other produce to needy families in Leesburg. James F. Divine, a 58-year old retired saddler who was now lecturing on temperance, provided a limited explanation about why he considered Horatio to be a Union man.

The most significant account came from Abner Trundle, who, when asked by special agent Tucker whether he had any interest in the claim, stated that legally he did not, but according to a prior agreement with his father he should receive half of any settlement. Much of his statement generally confirmed that he and his father had initially been opposed to the war, although both felt that slave-owners should have been reimbursed for their slaves. Abner then dropped a bombshell by revealing that his father had voted for secession, allegedly due to a belief that Virginia's departure from the Union would hasten a negotiated settlement between the North and South.

In his written summary to the SCC, Tucker described how he rushed to the courthouse in Leesburg to confirm that Horatio had indeed voted for the secession ordinance. (After returning to Washington, the special agent discovered that the SCC's index to the Loudoun vote had erroneously listed Horatio's last name as "Trimble.") In his view, the Trundles' contention that they had to support a rebellion to bring about a settlement that was favorable to them (i.e., compensation for slaves) could hardly be considered loyalty to the Union. The special agent then noted that Fenelon Slack had refused to make a third deposition, although he continued to stand by his original statement to Chamberlin. The special agent had also learned that Mrs. Trundle supposedly supported the Confederate cause, but he saw little need to pursue this angle in light of the "proof" already uncovered of her husband's disloyalty.

Realizing that his client's case was now in serious jeopardy, attorney Bundy adopted a risky strategy of calling ex-members of the Confederate army to testify directly before Commissioner Orange Ferris, one of three judges who headed the SCC. U.S. Congressman Eppa Hunton was the first to give a statement in mid April 1876. The Confederate general and former lawyer for the Trundles spoke elo-

quently of his own career and the fine estate at Exeter, but did little to clarify the loyalty issue. Two weeks later, John S. Mosby appeared before Ferris and spoke about Horatio's wartime visit to his camp. This ended in a heated exchange between Mosby and the judge that was certainly not helpful to Bundy's client.

The next witness, S. F. Chapman, described himself only as a former Rebel soldier from Page Co., Va., then living in D.C., and his testimony about taking some ears of corn from Exeter did little to aid the defense. However, this seemingly irrelevant witness was almost certainly one of Mosby's most valiant subordinates during the war—Capt. Samuel Forrer Chapman. Presumably, after observing Commissioner Ferris's hostility to Mosby, Bundy instructed Chapman to make no reference to his role in the 43rd Va. Cavalry.⁴⁹

The last witness to appear that day was Richard H. Jones, a Montgomery County farmer who had known Horatio since childhood. At first, his statements appeared to confirm assistance given by the Trundles to the Union side, but soon Jones's own loyalties were brought into question, when he admitted visiting his wife and daughter in Charlottesville, where they had spent at least part of the war. He even claimed to have forgotten the names of friends or neighbors who fought for the Confederacy (even though several of his relatives served in Elijah White's command). Finally, he spoke at length about Dr. Alfred Belt, a mutual relative of both Jones and Horatio, who had allegedly been the first person to vote for secession in Loudoun and was later arrested by Union troops.

Over a year passed before Alexander H. Rogers testified before the SCC in late October 1877. The former aide to Generals Evans and Hill gave convincing testimony about the troubles that Horatio had had with the Confederate military early in the war, including his arrest. Had Rogers been called upon earlier, he might have made a difference, but by this time all three commissioners had already made up their minds. At the end of the testimony, Bundy answered affirmatively when asked whether he was ready to submit his case.

49. The author is indebted to Mosby scholar Horace Mewborn for identifying Chapman.

The final verdict to deny the entire claim is contained in the following report, which was forwarded to Congress in December 1877. Readers can draw their own conclusions about whether justice was served, but one is left with the impression that much about the Trundles' wartime activities remains unknown, including the reasons why so many prominent Confederates agreed to testify on their behalf.

Horatio Trundle, decd., was a man of prominence and wealth in Loudoun Co. at the outbreak of the rebellion. There is considerable evidence in support of his loyalty; and after the Union troops occupied that section of the country permanently, there was no disloyal conduct developed by the evidence; but prior to that there are disloyal acts and manifestations proved against the deceased. He had passes at various times both by the Confederate and the Union officers in command, and there are witnesses who testify that he furnished supplies both to the Confederate and the Union army; and the documents on file from the Archive Office and other departments of the government confirm the furnishing of these supplies.

Much stress is paid by the attorney upon a paragraph in a printed book, the author of which purports to be an Englishman serving in the Confed. Army. [Here follows a long quote.] If this is anything more than mere rumor and hearsay, it proves too much. Trundle had been a friend to the Confederate army, and had been paid thousands of dollars for supplies, but now he was guilty of treachery and turned against his friends, is the charge made in the book and it is probably true that in the early part of the war he was in sympathy with the Confederates and in the latter part of the war through policy made pretensions of adhering to the Union. But in addition to the unfavorable evidence indicated above, in the progress of the investigation the fatal fact was disclosed that the deceased voted for the adoption

of the ordinance of secession, and apparently freely and without coercion in any manner. Voting for the dissolution of the union is regarded by the Commission as inconsistent with loyal adherence to the Union and the cause and Government of the United States.

In view of all the evidence we therefore reject the claim.

Signed by Aldis, Howell and Ferris.



Built about 1796 for Dr. Wilson Cary Selden, Exeter was considered an architectural gem among old houses in Virginia. The mansion was an extraordinary blend of late-18th century forms and details, including the two-level Doric portico with its lattice railings, the elaborate dormers with interlacing "Gothic" tracery and the pedimented frontispiece. It was owned and occupied by the Trundle family from 1857 until 1962. Following years of sitting empty and being a target for vandals, the house was destroyed by fire on Aug. 3, 1980. Several years later, the land was sold and the Leesburg Wal-Mart was built on the site. This drawing depicts the mansion when it was still one of Virginia's finest showplaces.

Sketch courtesy of Thomas Balch Library.