

Captain Samuel Cornelius Means

Part 3: After the War

Taylor M. Chamberlin

Despite the lack of any military training, Waterford miller and businessman Samuel C. Means organized and led the Independent Loudoun Virginia Rangers, a Union fighting force that maintained its loyalty to him throughout the Civil War. Parts 1 and 2 appeared in the LCHS Bulletin's 2010 and 2011 editions, respectively; Part 2 concluded with Means's April 1864 dismissal from the Union Army for insubordination, despite Means's personal appeals to U.S. Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton.

It has been suggested that Stanton's failure to restore Means's commission was to facilitate the latter's employment as a spy. Although the former Ranger captain remained along the border and continued to tout the utility of his contacts in Loudoun for the remainder of the war, there is no evidence that he ever succeeded in getting back on the government payroll. Instead, his association with the Union army was limited to the occasional procurement of horses and forage, in a purely civilian capacity. In early May the ex-captain sent a plaintive letter to the Secretary of War seeking relaxation of the blockade along the Potomac and offering his services as a "guide":

Having just arrived here [Point of Rocks], it grieves me to see my Loyal Friends on the other bank of the Potomac actually begging for something to eat and ware. I can not help but sympathize with them, as I know from experience what it cost to be Loyal in Virginia. If you will only allow them one week's supply and take me for a guide, I will stay here and see that your order is faithfully executed. I suppose you know that in the last month loyal familys had been rob of everything, while rebbles could keep all they had.¹



Capt. Samuel C. Means, Loudoun Rangers.
Briscoe Goodhart.

Although Sam did not get the job, the new commander at Harpers Ferry, Gen. Max Weber, raised the blockade at the end of May to allow loyal citizens to cross into Maryland to buy "family supplies." Records kept by the customs agent at Point of Rocks show that Sam and wife Rachel each made two trips across the border carrying merchandise back to Waterford before the end of June. Sam still had some clout with officials at the Point, as he took back \$84 worth of goods on June 3, well in excess of the \$10 limit that Weber had stipulated.²

The Unionists' joy was short-lived, however, as Col. John Mosby's partisans returned to the Waterford area in early June to commandeer horses and grain. The situation throughout north Loudoun became more perilous on the Fourth of July when Mosby personally led 250 cavalrymen on a raid against Point of Rocks. The attack caught the town's defenders—two infantry companies from the 1st Md. Potomac Home Brigade and the Loudoun Rangers—in the midst of Independence Day celebrations and was timed to divert attention from a large Confederate force under the command of Gen. Jubal A. Early that was about to cross the Potomac above Harpers Ferry. (Incredibly, Early's army had escaped detection to this point and was preparing to swing through Maryland in a desperate raid on Washington.)

¹ Means (PofR) to Sec. Stanton, 9May64, NAMP M221, roll 253, entry M-1351. For speculation that Means was employed as a Union spy, see Evans, "Mosby's Enemy—'Quaker Sam,'" 37.

² Chamberlin and Peshek, *Crossing the Line*, 39; and accompanying CD-ROM.

Sam Means and James Downey (a Unionist friend of Means and owner of Loudoun Mills near Taylorstown; see Part 2) had ventured back into Loudoun two days earlier to spend a quiet Sabbath with their families and were now awaiting the ferry to take them back to the Point to take part in the Independence Day festivities. Hearing a commotion, Means spied part of Mosby's command splashing across the Potomac about 200 yards upstream. The two exiles scrambled up Furnace Mountain before the rest of the partisans arrived at the ferry landing and for the rest of the day watched the drama unfold below. After placing an artillery piece at the base of the mountain, Mosby began lobbing shells across the river at the Federal defenders, who fled before the approach of the horsemen whom Means had seen fording the Potomac above the town. The Point was left to the Southern partisans, who systematically looted the trade stores, including those belonging to Waterford exiles Sam Gover and John Dutton. A clerk working at Sam's brother Noble Means's store returned that evening to find the doors broken open and over \$8,000 in goods missing. So much booty was carried back across the river for transport south that Mosby's men called it the "Great Calico Raid."³

That evening Means and Downey slipped down from their hideout and entered the rear of the home of Thomas Appel, a Union sympathizer residing on the Virginia shore opposite Point of Rocks. Some Rebels, including Colonel Mosby, were on the front porch, but the owner still managed to serve his Unionist guests supper in the garret. Afterwards they borrowed blankets and returned to the safety of the mountain to spend the night. Finding the coast clear the next morning, the exiles returned to enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the Appel house, before Henry S. Williams, another Taylorstown miller, interrupted their repast with word that the Rebels were returning. Borrowing two of the host's workhorses, the men forded the Potomac above Point of Rocks, just as the partisans came into sight.⁴

As Sam crossed to safety in Maryland, his brother Noble headed in the other direction to plead with Mosby for the return of merchandise taken from his store. During the ensuing conversation, the storekeeper persuaded the colonel to have his men bring forward their booty. Despite

³ Goodhart, *Loudoun Rangers*, 132-3; Forsythe, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 17-9; and depositions of John W. Crisswell, 15Jul67&4Aug68, Isaac Hawlings vs. Noble Means, Loudoun Co. misc. court judgments, Aug68.

⁴ Sam Means's testimony in Appel's SCC claim, #21,606, RG 217, NARA.

considerable grumbling in the ranks, Mosby's "iron will" prevailed, and the merchant retrieved what belonged to him—with the proviso that the soldiers could buy back any items they particularly wanted.

Even more surprising, Mosby agreed to help Noble recover goods that had already been sent south by wagon. This was accomplished by providing Goresville storeowner Cornelius W. Paxson with an order from the colonel directing his assistant quartermaster, Walter Frankland, to turn over any goods taken at Point of Rocks with Noble's mark. (Paxson was related by marriage to the Means family; his son Charles had served in Mosby's 43rd Battalion until being killed during a raid on Loudoun Heights the previous January.) Armed with the order, Paxson arrived at the home of Sam and Noble's brother, Lewis D. Means, in Fauquier County on July 6. The two then located Frankland near the village of Paris and got the quartermaster to provide an ambulance to haul properly marked merchandise to Lewis's residence. The goods were then sold to neighbors in the Middleburg area, raising \$3,100 to help defray Noble's losses.

Why Mosby went to such lengths to help a brother of the "renegade" Sam Means remains a mystery, especially when other Southern sympathizers such as Point of Rocks businessman James Besant were not compensated. Noble, to be sure, had done little to hide his Copperhead feelings early in the war, and his brother George had died in the Rebel cause, but even this does not fully account for Noble's preferential treatment. In any case, Mosby recognized that the excessive looting during the "Calico Raid" harmed secessionists and Unionists alike, and when his men raided nearby Adamstown, Maryland, a short time later, they were under "stringent orders against... plundering."⁵

Jubal Early's raid on the Capital was unsuccessful, and his army retreated through Loudoun County in mid-July on its way back to the Shenandoah Valley. In early August, U.S. General Ulysses S. Grant assigned Gen. Philip Sheridan the task of driving the Confederates

⁵ Scott, *Partisan Life*, 244-5; Crawford, *Mosby and his Men*, 126, 131; and depositions by Lewis Means and John W. Crisswell, in *Isaac Hawlings vs. Noble Means*, misc. court judgments, Aug. 1868, LCCR. Lewis Means worked for the Confederate commissary as a livestock trader. He moved to Fauquier after the Federals occupied Fairfax County; and his property was among those confiscated by Judge Underwood (Alex. Gazette, 20Jul64). Noble's store partner at this time was Loudoun exile William H. Adams.

out of the Valley, which apparently prompted the following telegram from Sam Means to the Secretary of War on August 15: "Longstreet, 30,000 strong, and Fitz Lee, 10,000 strong, passed through Warrenton Saturday morning to enforce Early. Reliable. A larger force supposed to be following." Since Confederate General James Longstreet's infantry corps and Gen. Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry division did reinforce Early about this time, Means apparently still had some reliable sources inside Virginia. He was not successful, however, in parlaying this into a renewed relationship with the War Department.⁶

Although unable to return home because of the price on his head, Sam recognized there was money to be made by someone with nerve, contacts in Loudoun and friends in high places. One who believed the former Loudoun Ranger still had clout was Lovettsville cattle dealer Armistead Filler, who asked Means on August 23 to help obtain a permit for him and his wife Lydia to purchase merchandise in Maryland. He justified his lengthy shopping list on the grounds of "having 18 persons in family and almost destitute of clothing and groceries." Although Filler had boasted of making a small fortune smuggling merchandise south, he now wanted to haul wheat, hay and cattle to Berlin, Maryland, before the Rebels could seize them. As a sweetener, he mentioned an additional 300 tons of hay for sale in his neighborhood that Means could buy. At the bottom of the letter, in what appears to be the same hand, is a note purportedly from Means to Maj. Gen. Christopher Augur in Washington vouching for Filler's loyalty and asking that his requests be approved. There is no indication that Augur acted on the petition, which in any case should have gone through to Harpers Ferry.⁷

The lure of financial gain had brought back another former soldier and Berlin provost marshal, the errant James Fillebrown, but the sharp-dealing commodity trader would find it harder to operate under the new commander that Sheridan had installed at Harpers Ferry. Brig. Gen. John D. Stevenson ran a more watchful regime than his predecessors and was particularly strict on all matters related to trade. Back in May, when

⁶ OR, v. 43, part 1, 799.

⁷ A.T.M. Filler (Lovettsville) to Capt. Means (Barry, Md.), 23Aug64, M-345, roll 91, NARA. Means was not the only person making such requests. On 7 September Samuel Janney petitioned Augur for Unionists to sell farm produce at Berlin and Point of Rocks in exchange for sugar and clothing (M-22, roll 114, entry J-751, NARA).

Fillebrown first reappeared on the border after getting out of prison,⁸ Sam Means had sent a letter to Secretary Stanton calling attention to the former provost marshal's mistreatment of Loudoun farmers. But in September, just four months later, Means teamed up with Fillebrown to co-sponsor a petition to the Secretary of War asking that four civilians seized by the 8th Illinois Cavalry the month before, and now out on parole, be allowed to return to their homes in western Loudoun.⁹

Willingness to lobby for secessionists and their families helped Means and Fillebrown drum up business in Loudoun. By this time, the former Ranger had followed Armistead Filler's earlier advice and obtained an order from the Harpers Ferry quartermaster to purchase hay in Virginia. (Dealing with the same corrupt quartermaster who had been there under Gen. Jeremiah Sullivan's tenure, Means and Fillebrown apparently expected that business would be conducted much as it had been a year earlier.) Later that fall, the customs agent in Berlin, William Krantz, advised the Treasury Department that Sam Means and "Colonel" Fillebrown¹⁰ were collecting hay in Virginia, without paying the required duty when it was brought back into Maryland, or even filling out the necessary paperwork. Krantz had already discussed the matter with General Stevenson, who confirmed that no one was exempt, but the customs agent wanted to make sure his superiors in Washington would also back him in any confrontation with the two ex-military officers.¹¹

Sheridan's "Burning Raid" into the Loudoun Valley in late November 1864 and the subsequent closure of the border put an end to any hope that Means and Fillebrown may have had of profiting from the importation of forage from Virginia. Aware that the customs officers were still under fire by those opposed to the strict enforcement of trade regulations, Sam Means took another stab at getting back on the government payroll in a brief note to their supervisor at the Treasury

⁸ Fillebrown had been arrested for "trade irregularities" in January 1864; see Part 2.

⁹ Registry summary of petition from Means, Fillebrown and others (Berlin) to War Dept., 24Sep64, M-22, roll 125, entry M-2547, NARA. For Means's involvement in a similar petition, see RG 393(2), entry 1170, vol. 1:126, NARA. Back in June Means certified that Taylorstown miller Henry Williams was a "loyal man," despite the fact that he (Means) had guided a Federal raid on the secessionist's mill two years earlier (H.S. Williams (PofR) to Sec. of War Stanton, 9Jun64, M-345, roll 290, NARA).

¹⁰ Fillebrown had served as Lt. Col., Tenth Maine, during the Battle of Antietam in Sept., 1862; he became a Maryland tradesman after mustering out of the U.S. Army in May 1863.

¹¹ William Krantz (Berlin) to Supervising Special Agent Hansen A. Risley (DC), 7Nov64, RG 366, entry 661, NARA.

Department in December. "Understanding that there is to be a vacancy or change in officers at this place [Berlin] and Point of Rocks. Most respectfully make application for this place. Any reference required can be given." It was hardly an impressive job application, especially since the name and position of the recipient were incorrect. Sam did not have a chance anyway, as neither incumbent was removed before the war ended.¹²

Three days later he penned a rambling letter to Secretary Stanton, prompted in part by the blockade that prevented him from spending Christmas with his family.

I most earnestly appeal to you on behalf of the suffering people... in the Loudoun Valley between the Short Hill and the Catoctin Mountain. Their portion of the County is composed of Quakers believing thoroughly in the present Administration. From some unknown cause the burning of General Sheridan's forces fell almost entirely upon their portion of the County leaving them almost destitute of everything, while that portion... east in the vicinity of Leesburg composed entirely of Rebels who harbour and feed Mosby went untouched. The matter must have been misrepresented to Gen. Sheridan, but they did not go on the right rout[e] to harm Mosby. Hoping you will cause the Blockade to be modified so that all Loyal persons can get enough and let the rebel sympathizers go south to get their supplies.¹³

Despite his plea and others, the border remained closed for much of the winter. Subdued by failure to find employment with either the Treasury or War Departments, Sam remained uncharacteristically quiet for the next three months, or at least stopped pestering officials in Washington. In part this was due to having a new focus much closer at hand. At the beginning of 1865, Brig. Gen. Thomas Devin brought his Second Cavalry Brigade from Sheridan's headquarters in the Valley to establish winter quarters around Lovettsville. Devin had spared a swath of north Loudoun along the river during the Burning Raid, and he now returned

¹² Means (Barry P. O., Md.) to F. A. Rizzley[sic], Surveyor[sic] of Customs, 21Dec64. Ibid.

¹³ Means (Barry P. O.) to Sec. Stanton, 24Dec64, NAMP M492, roll 31, entry M-492. There is no indication that there was a response.

there both to protect the Unionists and rest up his command for a spring offensive.

Sam wasted no time in getting to know the Federal officers at Lovettsville. Maj. Howard M. Smith of the 1st N.Y. Dragoons recalled a pleasant chat with "Major" Means one evening, describing his guest as a prominent citizen, who had raised two Ranger companies for the Union. Sam was then living in Berlin, but went "over to his home occasionally on the sly to see his wife and children." Soon after the Dragoons' arrival, Rachel Means called on Smith's camp to get a pass to visit her husband across the river. "She is a very smart woman, quite good looking and not afraid of anything, or at least of Rebels." Smith considered the couple an excellent example of strong Union sentiment in that part of the county and later paid a visit to the Means household in Waterford.¹⁴

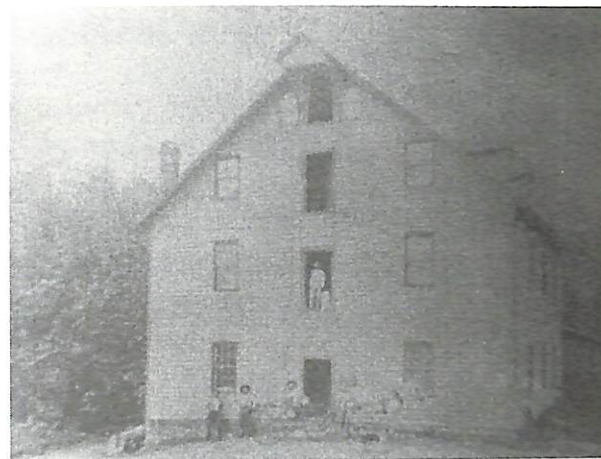
Capt. Jerome B. Wheeler of the 6th N.Y. Cavalry had a different impression of the former Ranger. Although Wheeler used the pseudonym "Captain Brown" in his account, there is little doubt that he was referring to Sam, whom he described as "a good fellow, but very intemperate, and, being away from home most of the time, caused his wife great anxiety." The New York quartermaster had assembled a fleet of boats to bring supplies across the river to Lovettsville, and "Mrs. Brown," whom he described as "a most estimable lady," arranged for him to take her across to locate her husband. As they neared the Maryland shore, Wheeler spotted "Captain Brown" standing on a bank above the river. Helping the wife up the slope, the quartermaster noted that Brown "was comfortably drunk," and just as they reached him, the husband lost his balance and tumbled "head over heels" toward the water. Seeing tears streaming down the mortified woman's cheeks, Wheeler stifled his laughter as the captain laboriously struggled back up the slope and tried to assure them that he had fallen "on purpose."¹⁵

With the end of the war now in sight, the Waterford miller might be excused for finding solace in the bottle as he pondered the future during that unusually cold winter. He had assumed that his role as leader of the

¹⁴ Howard M. Smith papers, 162-3, 168-9, LC.

¹⁵ Recollections of Jerome Wheeler, in Hall, *History of the 6th N.Y. Cavalry*, 394-5; excerpted from *Between Reb and Yank: A Civil War History of Northern Loudoun County, Virginia*, Taylor M. Chamberlin, John M. Souders, 2011.

Loudoun Rangers would translate into a bright future once the war was over. His dismissal, even if patently unjust in his eyes, cast doubts about this, and already he could see signs that the Secessionists might reassert themselves once the fighting stopped. Sam was sufficiently alarmed when Unionist Governor Francis Pierpoint came under attack that he put his name at the top of a list of 60 loyal citizens from the Lovettsville area who signed a petition in early January urging Congress to take no action that might "destroy, or weaken" the Restored Government.¹⁶



Downey's Mill: this image is held by the Thomas Balch Library and while of poor quality is the only known picture of the mill.

On March 20, 1865 the 25th N.Y. Cavalry took over responsibility from Cole's Cavalry for guarding the Potomac border from Harpers Ferry to the Monocacy River. Capt. Simon Elliot Chamberlin, with two companies, was

assigned to Point of Rocks as provost marshal. Although the Loudoun Rangers had moved to Jefferson County, W.Va. earlier in the month, a handful remained at the Point to serve as scouts. Soon after his arrival, Chamberlin authorized four Rangers to cross the river and investigate reports that Mosby planned to destroy the still-house adjoining James Downey's mill in Taylorstown. Laying in wait outside the distillery, the Rangers captured three partisans, including two officers, as they emerged from filling their canteens with liquor and bagged four more prisoners in Waterford. General Stevenson was so pleased that he telegraphed the provost marshal the following day (March 29) and asked him to send Sgt. D.E.B. Hough and three other Rangers, "the same party who captured Rebel Officers, ...to scout in Loudoun for ten days, crossing at Point of Rocks. Capt. Means is to go with the party." The Rangers were

¹⁶ Petition, RG 46, Records of U.S. Senate, 36th Congress, Box 96, NARA.

equally successful the second time, returning via Harpers Ferry with four more prisoners.¹⁷

The reference to Sam in the above order has been cited as another indication that he was working as a spy. Certainly it is possible that he picked up the initial report that Mosby's men were headed to Downey's still house, ostensibly to destroy it, but in fact were probably more interested in slaking their thirst. It is more likely, however, that Means's inclusion in the second party was a personal favor to allow him to take needed supplies to his family in Waterford. According to the ledger kept at Point of Points by customs agent Samuel Steer, the former Ranger had not taken anything across the border (at least at Point of Rocks) since September. However, on March 21 he received permission to take \$69 in merchandise from his brother's store into Virginia. (This was well in excess of the normal limit of \$10.) But the border closed later that day and would not reopen until April 21, leaving Sam with no option than to accompany the next scouting party headed towards Waterford.¹⁸

The war in Loudoun County finally ended on April 21, 1865 when Colonel Mosby disbanded his partisan battalion, prompting Federal authorities in Harpers Ferry to open the border to Secessionists and Unionists alike. Rachel Means traveled to the Point on the 26th to visit her husband and buy supplies, her first recorded trip there since the previous summer. On May 5, Sam Means ventured across the border with more supplies, although he was undoubtedly wary about meeting old enemies on his way to Waterford. All restrictions on travel between Maryland and Virginia, including the payment of customs duties, were lifted soon afterwards.

On May 13, Waterford staged a flag-raising to mark the town's symbolic return to the Union. Several hundred people attended the ceremonies and potluck dinner, which included the reopening of shops

¹⁷ Keen and Mewborn, 43rd Va. Cavalry, 255; Goodhart, Loudoun Rangers, 182-3; and OR, v. 46(3), 279; Chamberlin and Souders, *Between Reb and Yank*, 328-9.

¹⁸ Evans and Moyer, "Mosby's Enemy—'Quaker Sam,'" 37; and Steer customs ledger, CD-Rom accompanying Chamberlin and Peshek, op. cit.

in the village. Although the Loudoun Rangers were still stationed on the border, their former captain was almost certainly present for the occasion and presumably played some role in the event. Under different circumstances, Sam might have used the occasion to kick off a campaign to run for county sheriff in elections scheduled for the beginning of June, but even he must have realized that his controversial military career had severely eroded his standing in the county.

Sam's Waterford Mills at the lower end of town had been spared the torch during Sheridan's Burning Raid; the flames would have spread to nearby dwellings. Nevertheless, the building showed the effects of Confederate looting at the beginning of the war, followed by four years of abandonment. Despite his various commercial ventures during this period, Sam returned home with insufficient funds to get the mill running again. Instead, he and his brother Noble, who apparently resided in Loudoun for a short time after the war, looked for more immediate ways to earn a living, such as restarting their freight route to Point of Rocks.

Sam's biggest problem was the mountain of debt incurred before the war, which had been accumulating interest ever since. In November 1865, he and Rachel were forced to convey to John M. Orr of Leesburg, in trust for Samuel Elder & Co. of Baltimore, the Waterford Mills property, their home on Bond Street, and two lots on Main Street that Sam had purchased back in 1855. Although this transaction took place in consideration for \$11,500, the Meanses did not receive this amount, as they had

TO Samuel C. Means

You are indebted to me in the sum of \$3000 with interest thereon from the 2^d day of July, 1864, and \$800, due by a judgment rendered at the Aug. Term 1864 of the County Court of Loudoun County, upon which \$3800 was paid on the 1st day of April, 1865.

You are hereby notified that on the first day of the next Term of the Circuit Court of said County of Loudoun, Nov. 1865, the said Court for judgment and award of Execution against you be \$1800, being for the instant equal to one year's interest, on said principal sum, required to be paid under the provisions of the "Stay Law," and the balance of said debt to be paid on the next day of January, 1866, as for the rest of my said notice.

Yours, &c.

Newcomer Stonebraker

Harrison J. J.

STATE OF VIRGINIA
County of Loudoun
This day personally appeared before me, a Justice of the Peace in and for said County, Newcomer Stonebraker, who made oath that he executed the above notice, on the 1st day of April, 1865, by S.
Witness my hand, this 1st day of April, 1865.

Means Court Document: This suit brought before the court in 1866 by Newcomer Stonebraker is representative of the debts which Loudoun citizens tried to collect against Sam Means.
Source: Loudoun County court records.

already borrowed \$4,000 from Orr to purchase the mill in the first place. In addition, Orr held notes worth over \$5,000 for Sanford J. Ramey that were secured by the Meanses' Waterford properties.¹⁹

The quick settlement with Elder and Orr probably represented the only way for Sam to preserve some equity from his other creditors, who were slower to press their claims. The transaction also included an agreement for Sam to take over a mill situated on Bush Creek about two miles north of Waterford, which Samuel Elder purchased from the Bond family in November 1865. The remains of this mill, which included a nearby residence, can still be seen along present-day Clover Hill Road. Sam and Rachel were living at this new location when the following ad appeared in a local newspaper: "The undersigned offers for rent, the Waterford Flouring Mills, situated...on a noble stream of water and in one of the best grain growing regions in the State of Virginia. Possession given August 1st, 1867. Apply to Samuel C. Means, near Waterford. Samuel Elder & Co."²⁰

Although Sam's other creditors had failed to seize his most valuable assets, they did not hesitate to press their own claims in the Leesburg courthouse. A quick survey of Loudoun court records reveals that by 1868 there were at least eleven lawsuits pending against Sam, plus five more naming him and former partners, including Noble Means and Michael Mullen. Sam had no way of paying, and in August 1868 a preliminary hearing was held in Alexandria's Federal Bankruptcy Court. The printed announcement for the hearing listed 48 creditors seeking \$25,000 in compensation. In November the Alexandria court declared Sam bankrupt, and in February 1869 attorney Powell Harrison of Leesburg was appointed "assignee for all the estate real and personal of the said Samuel C. Means bankrupt aforesaid."²¹

19 Deed books 5R:53, 55 and 5U:75, 394. Orr was also working as an attorney for Noble Means and in August had placed an ad in the papers stating that he had been authorized to collect debts due his client. Because of the number of notes involved, Orr could not notify each individual, but warned that legal steps would be taken on any that had not been repaid by the September court session (*Loudoun Democratic Mirror*, 31Aug65).

20 Deed book 6T:403, 5U:453; and *Washingtonian* (Leesburg), 21Jun67. It is noted that Means's final settlement with Orr and Oliver F. Lantz (who took over after Elder's death) took place in 1883.

21 Court order books 1-2; court minute books 16-19; announcement of Means's bankruptcy hearing, WFA; and deed book 5Y:426.

While existing court records give few details of the above cases and other papers are missing, Sam and Noble Means found the Loudoun court hostile to their interests. To be sure, Sam owed a great deal of money, mostly from before the war, but in most cases, such as the previously mentioned claim by Isaac Hawlings for goods taken by Mosby's partisans, there appears to have been a deliberate attempt to get back at the Loudoun Rangers' captain and his brother. This is even clearer in ten legal suits that the brothers brought against individuals owing them money. In almost all cases, the suits were continued indefinitely, or dismissed on technicalities, until the Means brothers finally abandoned their claims.²²

In January 1869, Sam's younger brother, Burr W. Means, bought the Bush Creek Mill from Oliver F. Lantz, executor for Samuel Elder's estate. The purchase price of \$1,416 included the mill, dwelling house and other improvements, as well as water rights. Burr and Noble Means were running a wholesale liquor business in Baltimore at the time, and the transaction was meant to protect Sam's new milling business, without putting the Bush Creek property into his name where it could be claimed by creditors. After his bankruptcy proceedings were finalized,

Sam purchased the property from Burr for \$1,780 in November 1872. (He had to borrow \$980 to do so.)²³



Rachel and son Thomas Means, in Rachel's parents' yard in Waterford circa 1883.

Source: Waterford Foundation Archives.

Little is known about the decade that Sam and Rachel spent at Bush Creek Mill, other than that their daughter Ellen was born while they were living there in 1869. The new mill did not have the capacity or central location of his old

22 Ibid. Only fellow Waterfordian James M. Walker, administrator for Thomas Phillips's estate, dropped his suit against Samuel Means, although probably realized that the chances of collecting anything were slight. For more information on Hawlings's claim see LCHS Bulletin, 2011 edition, p.29.

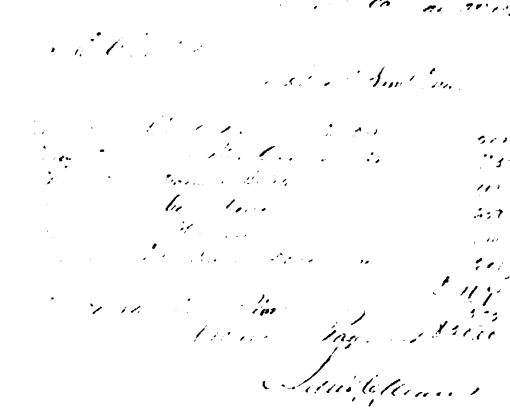
23 Deed books 5Y:398, 6E:9-11; and ad for liquor business, *Washingtonian*, 2Jul69. The latter deed shows that Burr had moved to Chicago.

mill in the village, and the Means family was barely able to get by in the depressed local economy after the war. In 1869 Sam tried to improve access to the mill by bringing suit against the county to reopen an abandoned road that would have provided a more direct route across the Catoctin Mountain.

The case, which had support from his immediate neighbors, dragged on for two years before being dismissed on a technicality, further evidence that the miller's past association with the Union army had not been forgotten. In 1871 he did manage to win appointment as superintendent of roads for his district in Lovettsville's heavily Republican township, presumably enabling him to better maintain the existing road that ran by his mill. It was the only county position that he would ever occupy.²⁴

During the 1870s Sam Means became involved in helping local Unionists file petitions with the Southern Claims Commission (SCC) for losses suffered during the war. He already had personal experience with similar quartermaster claims, having filed at least two such claims after the war. In one, he received reimbursement for a horse furnished to the Loudoun Rangers in November 1864. The other involved two horses that were used by the Rangers while he was still their captain, but which Sam claimed were his own property. This claim was denied.²⁵

Congress established the SCC in March 1871 to consider claims of Southern citizens "who remained loyal...to the government of the United States during the war, for stores or supplies taken or furnished during the rebellion for the use of the army of the United States." Over 400 claims were submitted from residents of Loudoun County by the



Sam Means's receipt: This receipt for the sale of farm equipment in January 1868 to Simon E. Chamberlin (author's great-grandfather) shows efforts by Means to raise cash prior to declaring bankruptcy. From the author's collection.

time the filing period ended in 1873, although investigations of the validity of these and thousands of other claims throughout the South would take another seven years.²⁶

During the initial submission period, Sam collaborated with Waterford justice of the peace Edwin A. Atlee to help local residents fill out the application forms, many involving horses and forage taken during the war by the Loudoun Rangers. By 1875 SCC commissioners had become aware of discrepancies in these claims, which suggested that Sam and Atlee had been promised a percentage of whatever was awarded in return for inflating the loss, or falsely validating the claimant's loyalty. In at least one case they had increased losses without the claimant's knowledge, with the intention of keeping the difference. Reading through comments of the commissioners, one finds statements such as "We are reliably informed that Means is not a reliable witness," or "Means, the main witness is said not to be truthful. He is also said to have an interest in claims in that vicinity." The SCC asked the Army's Quartermaster General to undertake a full investigation, and by 1877 the Secret Service was also investigating Sam and Atlee for making false claims against the government.²⁷

Suspect claims are easy to spot. Most were filed in April 1871, and the claimant's signature was usually witnessed by one or more of the following individuals: William Means (probably Sam's father), Edwin Atlee, and less frequently, Frank M. Myers. In his capacity as justice of the peace, Atlee usually notarized the signatures, and Sam Means was generally named as a reference who could verify the loss and/or the claimant's loyalty. The claimant almost always identified G.W.Z. Black of Frederick, Md., or J.T. & L.H. Stevens of Washington, D. C., to serve as his agent and receive any payment. (Atlee is believed to have had ties to both law firms.) While many claimants would not otherwise have been able to prove loyalty throughout the war, some had legitimate reasons to expect reimbursement, and all must have been angered to learn that their use of Sam and his cronies had prejudiced their chances of getting compensation.

²⁴ For a complete listing of Loudoun SCC claims, see Chamberlin, *Where Did They Stand*, chap. 5.
²⁵ Quotes are from Henson Young SCC case #173 and Griffith W. Paxson SCC case #21,558, NAMP M1407, files 1838 and 4001. Secret Service documents related to Means can be found in RG 87, NARA.

²⁴ Court minute books 19:387 and 20:30, 176, 245, 373, 580; and *Washingtonian*, 24Feb71.
²⁵ RG 92, Q. M. Claims Registry Book 68, case 304, and Book 79, case 133.

The economic depression that began in 1872 and persisted throughout the decade placed a heavy burden on Loudoun's farmers, and by extension those who depended on them for their livelihood. In May 1875 Sam was forced to sell the Bush Creek Mill to Noah Cooper for \$1,200. This was \$580 less than he had paid several years earlier and reflected the depressed real estate market. After the sale he and his family moved back into Waterford, where he took over running his old mill. Having to return as an employee to a property that he had formerly owned cannot have been easy for the once-proud Union officer. He and Rachel's fifth and last child, Thomas H. Means, was born in Waterford the following November.²⁸

In the District Court of the U. S. for the Dist. of Virginia....IN BANKRUPTCY.

in the county of _____, of _____,
of _____, and State of _____ Credit

Shk. — You are hereby notified that a Warrant in Bankruptcy has just been issued out of the District Court of the United States, for the District of Virginia, against the estate of Samuel C. Meade, adjudged a Bankrupt upon his own Petition: that the payment of any Debts and the delivery of any Property belonging to said Bankrupt to him or for his use, and the transfer of any Property by him are forbidden by law — That a meeting of the Creditors of said Bankrupt, to wit

[illegible]

to prove their Debts, and choose one or more Assignees of his estate, will be held at a Court of Bankruptcy, to be holden at the U. S. District Court Room, Alexandria, Va., before LANSING HULL Esq., Register, on the 13th day of August A. D. 1868, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

B. W. GILLIS,
Deputy Marshal and Messenger

Sam Means Bankruptcy statement. Source: Loudoun County Court records.

in Waterford (value \$200), a mare and colt (\$60), cow (\$40), 13 hogs (\$100), wheat, corn and any other stocks in the mill that he then occupied (\$1,000), and debts owed him by note or otherwise (\$700).²⁹

29 Deed book 61:311.

The proceeds from the sale of the Bush Creek Mill and his new job were not enough to ease the family's economic difficulties, and in October 1876 Sam claimed a "homestead exemption," which permitted him to set aside a portion of his possessions to be "exempt from sales for debt."

He included the household and kitchen furnishings at their residence

It is unclear whether filing a homestead exemption signaled a decision to leave Waterford, but it came at the same time that his involvement in the SCC claims was coming under scrutiny. By 1880, Sam and Rachel were living in the Mt. Gilead district, where she ran a boarding house. In addition to two servants and boarder Bernard Taylor, their four youngest children were still living with them. The oldest son, "Willie" Means, resided elsewhere and the following year moved to Lebanon City, Indiana, where he would become the proprietor of the Lebanon Roller Mills. He married Ida Spencer in 1883 and had four children.³⁰

A decline in Sam's health may have led to the family's decision to leave Loudoun County for good in mid-1883 and open a boarding house in Brookland, a pleasant residential neighborhood in the northern part of Washington, D.C. Sam was in his 57th year when he died at their new home on March 2 1884. Among those in attendance at his death were his brother Lewis, as well as Rachel and their younger children. The primary cause listed on the death certificate was cancer of the stomach and liver, a condition that had persisted for over a year. (His p state that he also suffered from c in Washington D.C.'s Rock Cre of two adjoining lots that had be marking the spot was recently u owner of the Means House in V



Sam Means's grave stone, Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C. Full inscription: "Samuel Means, died March 2, 1884. Aged 57." Photo: Ann Belland.

30 1880 Loudoun census, 4-56-21-A; and *Loudoun Telephone*, 3June & 30Sep81 and 20Apr83; and genealogical research done by Ann Belland. William, his wife and four children (Paul, Helen, Leslie and Spencer) and spouses are buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery in Lebanon.

31 Evans, "Mosby's Enemy—Quaker Sam," 38-9; and copy of death certificate provided by Alan Tischler.

Then in her 50s, Rachel continued to run a boarding house in Washington for many years. Her daughter, Mary Alice, died in 1889 after a prolonged illness and was buried next to her father. It is not known whether the oldest daughter Lizzie ever married, although she was living in D.C. at the time of her father's death. Ellen Means married William T. Hackett in Baltimore in 1889. The youngest child, Thomas, relocated to California in the early 1890s, although he paid a visit to his ancestral home in Waterford many years later.

In 1889, Rachel applied for a widow's pension, claiming that her husband's death was caused by a "disease the result of his service." She likely blamed her husband's heavy drinking on his military service, and there is little doubt that the rigors of the war must have contributed to his early demise. The Pension Bureau denied her claim, however, on the basis that he had shown no evidence of cancer or dyspepsia while in the army. Encouraged by changes in the pension laws in 1890, Rachel reapplied, only to be told that Sam's dismissal for disobedience made his widow ineligible for a pension.

After several more unsuccessful attempts, she tried to get the U.S. Congress to pass a bill to "correct" her husband's military record by revoking the Secretary of War's 1864 dismissal and granting him an honorable discharge. Virginia Representative James A. Walker introduced the bill (H.R. 9996) into the House in January 1897. The congressman attached several orders issued right after the dismissal,



Rachel Means's grave stone, Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C. Photo: Ann Belland.

which upheld the former captain's position that the Loudoun Rangers should not have been directed to leave the border. Unfortunately for Rachel, it did not pass. Undaunted, she continued to press her claim with the Pension Bureau through 1908, yet despite testimony of others that she had no means of

support, she never received compensation. Rachel died in Washington on January 4, 1916 and is buried in Rock Creek Cemetery. Her grave site is in a different section from that of her husband, presumably because their daughter Mary Alice was already buried in the plot beside Sam.³²

As we close this biography of Samuel C. Means on such a melancholy note, one is struck that we still have only superficial knowledge of the man, who despite his imperfections, remains Waterford's best known citizen. Seemingly destined to have been a successful pillar of his community, he, like the town, was ill-prepared for the turmoil and strife that the Civil War produced. Instead, he along with everyone around him was caught between competing pressures, loyalties and values, from which they would for the most part never fully escape.

When Thomas Evans penned his biography of Means³³, there was no monument to honor the Loudoun Rangers, or their captain. Furthermore, as Evans noted, the surviving Rangers had to suffer the indignity of seeing "their former enemies hailed as heroes and returned to power in the state and local governments." Had veterans of Means's command been able to erect a monument, Evans felt sure they would have reflected the sentiments of their chronicler Briscoe Goodhart: "As they saw their duty, they were not lacking in moral courage to perform that duty and with no lapse of years shall we ever fail to insist that the principles for which the Rangers contended were eternally right, and that their opponents were eternally wrong."³⁴

Even without statues and monuments, the story of the Loudoun Rangers and their tragically flawed commander did not die, due in no small part to Goodhart's account of that unit. After being dismissed as "Damned Virginia Yankees" by Confederate-oriented historians for so long, there was a revival of interest in the Rangers during the Civil War's centennial, sparked in large part by the writing and influence of local historian John

32 Samuel Means's pension file, NARA; and draft version of H.R. 9996, 54th Congress, 2nd session, available in Congressional Branch, NARA. The bill cited orders found in *OR*, 33:912, 974 and 989 as justification for overturning Means's dismissal. Ironical, the bill's sponsor had been a former Confederate general. Obituary, *Wash Post*, 5 Jan 1916.

cemetery records found by Ann Belland.

33 Thomas J. Evans, "'Quaker Sam' Means and the Loudoun Rangers," *Northern Virginia Heritage* (Oct., 1984).

34 Briscoe Goodhart, *History of the Independent Loudoun Virginia Rangers* (reprinted, Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1985).

Divine. And we can now report that, as part of Loudoun's observance of the 150th anniversary of the war, signs honoring the Loudoun Rangers have been erected in Lovettsville and Waterford.³⁵

Since returning to his native Waterford, Taylor Chamberlin has written several books on local history and is co-author of the recently published Between Reb and Yank: A Civil War History of Northern Loudoun County, Virginia. He is a past editor of this bulletin and board member of the Waterford Foundation and the LCHS.

³⁵ Evans, *op. cit.*, 39-40; and quote from preface to Goodhart, *History of the Loudoun Rangers*.