

James Montgomery Lawrence, 43rd Virginia Cavalry

James Montgomery Lawrence was born April 12, 1845 in Salem, now Marshall, Virginia. He was the son of William Mason Lawrence and Sarah S. Jeffries.¹ He grew up in Salem where his father was listed as a tavern keeper in the 1850 census.² His father died July 18, 1853 at the age of 30.³ James is listed in the 1860 census as residing in Salem with his mother, 5 sisters and younger brother.⁴

There is no record of James M. Lawrence entering the Confederate Army prior to his association with the 43rd Virginia Cavalry sometime in the early summer of 1863. The only account of his involvement with the 43rd has to do with his death on the main street of Salem on July 21, 1863.⁵ The circumstances of his death were revealed by then nine year old Annie Klipstein in an interview with her son Marvin D. Gore in 1937. She notes: "Once when a Federal force was down about the depot, two of them decided to ride up through the village. Two of Mosby's men, Joe Nelson and Jimmie Lawrence, happened to be in the west end. Joe captured one Federal and Jimmie chased the other back through the village. The Union soldier was bent over his horse riding as hard as he could and Jimmie emptied his pistol at him. Then the Union man just stuck his pistol under his arm and fired and Jimmie fell dead from his horse right in front of Dr. Harry's house. The Federal dismounted and took a ring from Jimmie's finger."⁶

James Montgomery Lawrence was buried in the O'Bannon-Lawrence Cemetery northwest of Marshall, Virginia. No marker exists.⁷

Editors Comments: Dr. Preston R. Harry's house and dentist office were located on the north side of Main Street in the center of Marshall. Both still stand today. Dr. Harry's house is today the Fauquier Realty Company and the dentist office is a part of the L. J. Foley Plumbing and Heating Company.⁸

Let us never forget the sacrifice of James Montgomery Lawrence.

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¹ Lawrence Family Bible (copy), Lawrence File, Fauquier Heritage Society Library, Marshall, Virginia.

² National Archives, 1850 Federal Census, Fauquier County, Virginia, Series M432, Roll 943, page 268B.

³ "Fauquier County, Virginia Birth and Death Registers, 1853-1896." Fauquier County Clerk, page 60, line 18.

⁴ National Archives, 1860 Federal Census, Fauquier County, Virginia, Series M563, Roll 1344, page 23.

⁵ Date of death from Lawrence Family Bible (copy), Lawrence File, Fauquier Heritage Society Library, Marshall, Virginia.

⁶ Interview with Annie Klipstein Gore by Marvin D. Gore, June 1937. "W.P.A. Records, Fauquier County, Virginia." Aurelia M. Jewell. 1955, Book 2, pages 58-9.

⁷ Notes of John K. Gott, Arlington, Virginia.

⁸ Gott, John K. "High in Old Virginia's Piedmont – A History of Marshall (formerly Salem), Fauquier County, Virginia." Marshall, Virginia.: Marshall National Bank & Trust Company, 1987. page 153.