

### **Profile: John Peyton deButts**

John Peyton deButts was born November 30, 1837, near Hillsboro, Virginia, in Loudon County. He was the son of Samuel Welby and Julia Ann Dulany deButts. He spent his youth in the Hillsboro area except for frequent visits to his grandfather John Peyton Dulany's estate "Welbourn" near Upperville, Virginia. Those travels helped him obtain great knowledge of the Loudon and Fauquier County countryside which proved valuable during the war.

Much of his youth was spent with his first cousin Richard Welby Carter of "Crednal." When Carter organized a company at Union, Virginia, on April 27, 1861, John P. deButts was one of the first to enlist. This company would be designated Company H, 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry.

This company was on detached service with Turner Ashby throughout the month of May guarding the river crossings between Loudon County and the Maryland shore.

Company H rejoined Colonel J.E.B. Stuart and the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry in time to participate in the first battle at Manassas. When Stuart charged the 11<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry (Fire Zouaves), Grandfather deButts came down wounded. Evidence of his wound is found in the diary of a young lady from near Upperville who wrote "I met Mr. deButts yesterday going home from Manassas, one finger shot to pieces and his right hand otherwise injured."

His service with the regular cavalry was interrupted by sickness in June and July 1862, no doubt with fever contracted during the Peninsular Campaign.

The muster roll for November-December 1862 lists him as 2<sup>nd</sup> Sergeant, which is the last record of his service with the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia. Subsequently he served under Colonel Mosby in Company A.

He was one of the twenty-nine who rode with Mosby on the night of March 8-9, 1863, when they slipped into Fairfax Court House to capture Brig. General E.H. Stoughton in his bed. He again was with Mosby at Miskel's farm where fate and the alertness of Dick Moran saved their hides. By coincidence the home of Mr. Green which Moran had been visiting was later bought by my Grandfather Holsinger from Mr. Green. My mother and father later purchased the property from my mother's family estate and there I spent my childhood.

On April 28, my grandfather, with others, was surprised by Union troops in Leesburg, Virginia, where he was shot, captured and taken to Ft. Delaware via Old Capitol Prison. There he sat out the last eleven months of the war.

He was paroled on April 23, 1865, and returned to his Virginia home where, according to family legend, he did not quickly forget the cause for which he fought and attempted to carry on his own private war by forming raiding parties to harass Union occupying forces.

I can only speculate that it could have been the eleven months stay in prison or envy of his comrades for all he had missed during those months in prison while they led their adventurous life, that compelled him to continue the fight long after the war was over.

After the war, he lived near Hillsboro on the farm left to him by his father. On October 18, 1865, he married Nancy Hunter Dulany who was to bear him 14 children. The sixth one born was my father, Henry Grafton. In 1880, he moved to Anchorage, near Upperville, Virginia, where he was to stay the remainder of his life.

On November 3, 1912, his battle had ended and he was laid to rest at the family cemetery near "Old Welbourn", in the soil he so dearly loved and had fought to protect. Nearby another gallant soldier who had gone before him, his uncle, Colonel Richard Henry Dulany, of 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry fame.

Profile by John Peyton deButts' grandson, Arthur H. deButts, and first appeared in *Southern Cavalry Review*, November 1985. Mr. deButts is a member of the Society.