

A Guide to the Battle at Waterford Baptist Church, 1862

Battle at Waterford Baptist Church "

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Descriptive Summary

Collection number

SC 00031

Language

English

Abstract

John Divine's speech "The Battle at Waterford Baptist Church" recounts both the events of the battle and the background of the people involved. It is a photocopy with an inscription and signature by John Divine on the last page, and is in good condition.

Creator

John Divine

Extent

10 pages

Repository

Thomas Balch Library

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection open for research

Use Restrictions

No physical characteristics affect use of this material.

Acquisition Information

John Divine, Waterford, Virginia

Processing Information

Processed by Emily Hershman, 29 January 2008

Preferred Citation

Battle at Waterford Baptist Church (SC 0031), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Accruals

1995.0055

Alternative Form Available

None

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

None

Bibliography

Ancestry Library, Social Security Death Index, <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com> Battle at Waterford Baptist Church (SC 0031), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA Elijah V. White's Ball's Bluff Address (SC 0023), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA History of the Independent Loudoun Virginia Rangers History of Loudoun County, Virginia, <http://www.loudounhistory.org>. Fluharty, Linda Cunningham. The Linda Pages, <http://www.lindapages.com/cwar/loudoun.htm>. Miskel's Farm (SC 0032), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA

Other Finding Aid

None

Historical Information

John Divine (1911-1996) was a local historian who provided considerable insight into Loudoun County's role

in the Civil War. This speech, given on June 29, 1962 to the Waterford Foundation, discusses events of the Battle at Waterford Baptist Church, a skirmish between two independent cavalry units representative of split sympathies within the town of Waterford.

The Independent Loudoun Rangers was a cavalry unit consisting of Waterford citizens who opposed secession, most of whom were of German, Quaker, or Scotch-Irish lineage. Commanded by Samuel C. Means (1828-1889), a Waterford grist miller exiled for his refusal to support the Confederate cause, the unit's goal was to capture Confederate scouts. Though they engaged in few battles, animosity persisted between the Rangers and Elijah Viers White's (1832-1907) 35th Virginia Battalion, leading to numerous encounters between the two troops. The Battle at Waterford Baptist Church, which took place on August 27, 1862, was a result of a Confederate ambush on the Church, where the Rangers were encamped. Both units remained active throughout the Civil War.

Scope and Content

John Divine's speech "The Battle at Waterford Baptist Church" recounts both the events of the battle and the background of the people involved. It is a photocopy with an inscription and signature by John Divine on the last page, and is in good condition.

The speech begins by noting the battle's origins as stemming from Waterford's unique and diverse history. Founded mainly by Quakers, the community was sharply divided on the issue of secession, so much so that less than half of Waterford's standing militia signed up for state service. Divine also mentions Waterford's role as an outpost and headquarters for Confederate defense. The developing antagonism between Samuel Means, commissioned captain of the new Loudoun Rangers Company, and Elijah White, a prosperous farmer who organized the 35th Battalion Virginia Cavalry after distinguishing himself during the Battle of Ball's Bluff, is also discussed. Determined to "whip Means" and "traitors" to the Confederate cause, White marched north towards Leesburg on August 25, 1862 and sent scouts to Waterford. The Loudoun Rangers were encamped in Waterford Baptist Church with Lieutenant Luther Slater (1891-1909) in command, as Means had retired to his former home in the lower end of town. White's men surrounded the church in order to ambush and capture the Rangers. However, one of his men prematurely opened fire, causing the Ranger scouts to return fire, starting the battle. Slater was severely wounded and placed Charles A. Webster (ca.1838-1863; aka Charles Brown), the Rangers' controversial drill sergeant, in charge. Divine notes the battle's casualties, as well as the fact that the battle was hardly mentioned in official records, as it had no major effect on either army. He concludes the speech by discussing the preservation of the church itself in the years succeeding the battle.

"The Battle at Waterford Baptist Church" is the only item in this collection.

Contents List

**Folder1: "Battle at Waterford Baptist Church" (SC 0031) ,
August 27, 1862; speech given on June 29, 1962**