

Reenactment

Like Captain Farinholt's 1864 urgent plea to defend the Staunton River Bridge, we too send out our urgent plea today for Union and Confederate Reenactors alike to participate in the Reenactment of the Battle of Staunton River Bridge on Sat. & Sun. June 21-22, 2014.



Will you
answer
the plea?

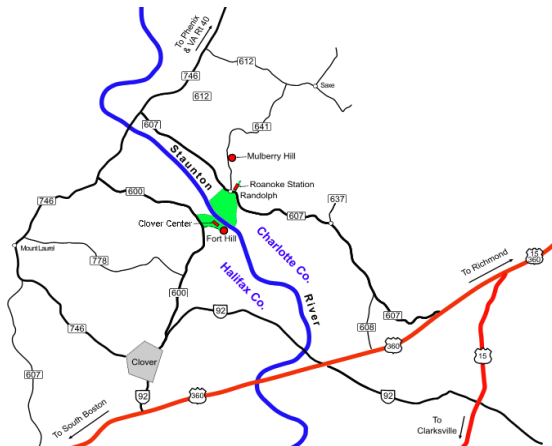
Mark your
calendars for
June 21-22, 2014.

Visit our website!

Location & Directions

For complete driving directions, please visit
<http://historicstauntonriverfoundation.org/directions.html>.

The Staunton River Battlefield State Park is a 300+ acre park located in serene Southside Virginia along the historic Staunton River that straddles Charlotte and Halifax Counties. The Park is conveniently located near Highway 360, the 4-lane corridor running between the cities of Richmond and Danville.



Historic Staunton River Foundation

The **Historic Staunton River Foundation**, a volunteer, not-for-profit private, 501(c)3 organization, was formed on December 2, 1994 with the scope and purpose of promoting, developing, and preserving the 1864 Battlefield at the Staunton River Bridge, the Staunton River Battlefield State Park, and the Staunton River and its historical areas. The Foundation also collects artifacts and historical memorabilia for display and works to preserve the integrity of the Staunton River environs and archaeological sites. In addition, the Foundation provides historical, environmental, wildlife, and wetlands education as well as assists in developing programs and events for the general public.

The scope and purpose of the Foundation is to promote, develop, and preserve the following:

- ◆ the 1864 Battlefield at the Staunton River;
- ◆ the Staunton River Bridge;
- ◆ the Staunton River historical areas & environs;
- ◆ Roanoke Station;
- ◆ Mulberry Hill, the ancestral home of the Carringtons;
- ◆ 44CH62, the Randy K. Wade Archaeological Site; and
- ◆ the Sappony Indian Nation.

The Foundation is financially supported through its membership. Membership runs the calendar year and is only \$15.00/annum. Benefits include knowing that the scope and purpose of the Foundation is being fulfilled, invitations to special lectures, program, and presentations hosted by the Foundation, and a 20% discount in the Gift Shop at the Clover Visitor's Center.

Staunton River Battlefield State Park

1033 Fort Hill Trail
Randolph, Virginia 23962
434.454.4312

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/stb.shtml

Historic Staunton River Foundation

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Reenactment of

The Battle

of

Staunton River

Bridge

June 25, 1864

**Saturday & Sunday
June 21-22, 2014**

**Staunton River
Battlefield State Park
Randolph, Virginia**

June

25,

1864

On Saturday & Sunday, June 21-22,

2014, in commemoration of the 150th

Anniversary of the Battle of Staunton

River Bridge, the Historic Staunton River

Foundation in conjunction with the

Staunton River Battlefield State Park will

be hosting a reenactment of the Battle of

Staunton River Bridge.



Historic Staunton River Foundation



Battle History

The hot summer day of June 25, 1864, would forever change the lives of 492 "Old Men & Young Boys" from Southside Virginia. When an urgent plea came from Captain Benjamin Farinholt to come and assist his 296 Confederate reserves in defense of the Staunton River railroad bridge against an approaching Union cavalry force of over 5000 men, they came from every direction and all walks of life. This is their story . . .

In June of 1864, Confederate General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia were engaged in a desperate defense of the city of Petersburg, Virginia. Victory for Lee depended upon a steady flow of supplies from the west and south, via the South Side and Richmond & Danville railroads. Union General Ulysses S. Grant knew that if these supply lines could be destroyed, Lee would have to abandon Petersburg. To accomplish this, Grant planned a cavalry raid to tear up the tracks of both lines and destroy the Richmond & Danville railroad bridge over the Staunton River. The raid began on June 22, and was led by Brigadier General James H. Wilson and Brigadier General August V. Kautz. They left Petersburg with over 5,000 cavalry troops and 16 pieces of artillery.

Just south of Roanoke Station (present-day Randolph) was a long, covered railroad bridge over the Staunton River, Wilson's final objective. The bridge was defended by a battalion of 296 Confederate reserves under the leadership of Captain Benjamin Farinholt. On June 23rd, at 10 p.m., Farinholt received word from General Lee that a large detachment of enemy cavalry was moving his direction to destroy the bridge and that he should "make every possible preparation immediately." Farinholt sent out an urgent plea to the surrounding counties of Charlotte, Halifax, and Mecklenburg to answer the call and defend the bridge. Though his numbers had been bolstered by volunteers, Farinholt's force of 296 reserves and 492 "Old Men & Young Boys" was still badly outnumbered. He had only 6 pieces of artillery: 4 in the earthwork fort on the hill just east of the bridge, and 2 in a small fortification west of the bridge. Between these artillery positions and the river was a line of trenches, and across the bridge lay a semicircular line of hastily constructed but well-concealed rifle trenches.

Farinholt knew that his activities at the bridge were being watched by Union scouts who had arrived ahead of the main body of troops. To make them think that he was receiving reinforcements, Farinholt ordered an empty train to run back and forth between Clover Depot and the bridge, giving the appearance that fresh troops were arriving constantly. Mulberry Hill plantation was located on a commanding hill near the battlefield and the grounds of the house served as the Union headquarters and field hospital during the battle. It is said that Mrs. McPhail, the lady of the house, told the Federals that 10,000 Confederates lay in wait for them beyond the breastworks and that every train was bringing more.

Having finally reached a shallow drainage ditch some 150 yards north of the bridge, the Union troops organized for what was to be the first of four separate charges, all of them repulsed by the badly outnumbered Confederate forces. When the Union forces left the drainage ditch for their first assault on the bridge, they were met by intense fire from the "Old Men & Young Boys" and the regulars who had been hidden from view in their shallow trenches around the bridge. Capt. Benjamin Farinholt: "At daylight, I advanced my line of skirmishers half a mile, and discovered that the enemy had left quite a number of their dead on the field. In this advance 8 prisoners were captured ... Of the dead left on the field I buried 42, among them several officers. My loss, 10 killed & 24 wounded. -

For the 492 local citizens that made up the "Old Men and Young Boys" Brigade, the fight was over, and an important supply line had been protected for General Robert E. Lee and his army in Petersburg. They had proudly answered the call to arms and, in the face of overwhelming odds, distinguished themselves on the field of battle. Over the years, the stories about their victory on that hot summer afternoon at the bridge have been retold countless times and have become an important part of the proud history and heritage of Southside Virginia.

Staunton River Battlefield State Park

In 1994, with leading efforts from the surrounding communities, the Historic Staunton River Foundation, the Commonwealth of Virginia, Norfolk & Southern Railway, and the Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, a 300 acre park was established to preserve the earthen fortifications known as Fort Hill, the battlefield, the Staunton River Bridge, and the Staunton River environs. A Visitors Center on the Halifax County side was constructed and the old railbed was transformed in a beautiful trail and walkway. The Park continues to promote, preserve, and develop the unique story of the "Old Men & Young Boys." Since that time, the Park has grown to include the Roanoke Station Visitors Center and Mulberry Hill, both in Charlotte County. The Park is operated by the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation and owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Numerous events and activities are planned throughout the year.



STAUNTON RIVER BATTLEFIELD
State Park