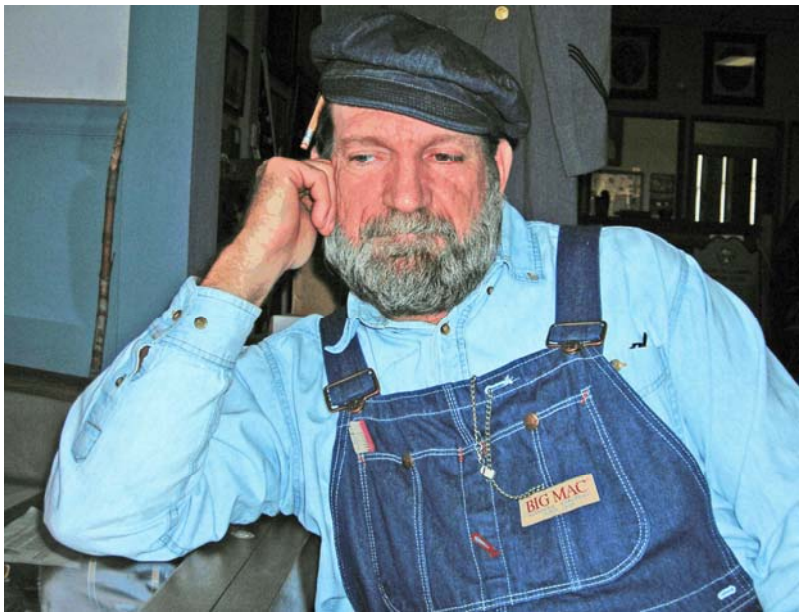
# *D. P.Newton*

***D. P. Newton of White Oak, son of Elizabeth Sullivan Newton and the late Patrick Newton, was told by his parents' generation to save everything that he could and then he would have a comfortable old age. He did that he said, then about 12 years ago he took his savings and put it into founding and establishing the White Oak Civil War Museum and Stafford Research Center.***




***The museum, at the corner of White Oak Road and Newton Road, is not on the map for most one-day tourists to the Fredericksburg area. Mr. Newton says the Fredericksburg historic sites and the battlefields get them; his mother says a lot of the people who visit the museum once come back.***

***The White Oak Civil War Museum, however, is right near the middle of what it's all about: How the men who came to Stafford County with Union armies made encampments for themselves and how they lived off and on for about a year in the White Oak-Southern Stafford area. Mr. Newton visited many of the encampments, patiently drawing detailed sketches of them and enumerating what he found in each campsite. Much of it is in the museum. Before that it was in his mother's back bedroom and then in a cabin behind the Newtons' home.***

***Danny Patrick Newton was born at Mary Washington Hospital July 20, 1953. He grew up in the Paul's Hill Road area of White Oak and went to the White Oak School. The old White Oak School building, renovated and improved by Mr. Newton, who is a carpenter, now houses the White Oak Civil War Museum. The White Oak Primitive Baptist Church is across the road and the White Oak Fire Company is just a little way down Newton Road. Mr. Newton attended the first five grades of school in the White Oak school building–where now he and his mother work five days a week–without salary. His wife, Bonnie Blakely Newton, also volunteers at the museum.***

This is Nancy Bruns from the Oral History Project and today is October 16, 2007. I'm at White Oak talking to Civil War historian D.P. Newton in the entrance room of his Civil War Museum and Resource Center. His mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Sullivan Newton, is minding the store at the front desk while we talk. Elizabeth Daly of the Oral History Project sat in on the second day of the interview.

**Interviewer:** You were born in Mary Washington Hospital but you all lived here? On Belle Plains Road?

**Mr. Newton:** Right off Belle Plains Road– Paul's Hill Road.

**Interviewer:** Was that the family place?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, originally it come off of Daddy's grandmother's land (*Mrs. Virginia Potts Newton Stevens*). What happened is that William B. Newton owned a strip of about 20 acres and Virginia Potts owned the land behind it and they got married so that put it all together.

(***Children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of William B. and Virginia Potts Newton have owned land and lived in this area of White Oak for generations. Earlier Newtons settled in Stafford County in Colonial times.***)

**Interviewer:** Did you spend a lot of time in the woods growing up here?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, I spent my whole life in the woods. I know the woods here better than I know Fredericksburg.

**Interviewer:** I wanted you to talk about how you got started collecting Civil War items. I think you told me your father bought a metal detector. You were about 10, and you found a button?

**Mr. Newton:** It was an eagle button. A Yankee button.

**Interviewer:** And the Yankees were the ones who mostly camped all through here?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, that's right.

**Interviewer:** You were pretty young when you found the button. Had you already begun to study the Civil War?

**Mr. Newton:** That's what the people here talked about all the time about the War and when the Yankees had been here. So I was born into it.

**Interviewer:** So everybody talked about it?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, Daddy, Mama, their brothers and sisters, Granddaddy, everybody.
**Interviewer:** I don't quite picture it– they just camped for acres and acres. Is that what it would have looked like? Just acres and acres?
**Mr. Newton:** The first army was the Confederate Army. They were at Stafford, at Aquia Landing mainly. But they did have some camps at Brooke. They had one camp down here. At one time the Confederate cavalry stayed just a short time at Boscobel (*plantation*). So it was Confederate troops moving in Stafford.
But (*Gen. Irwin*) McDowell's army moved here in April of 1862. He moved in 25,000 to 30,000 troops and he stays here from into April until they leave in late August to first of September. Part of that army occupies Fredericksburg during that time.
But a lot troops were scattered through Stafford. Then when the Army of the Potomac comes under (*Gen. Ambrose P.*) Burnside, they come about mid-November and they stay until June. They pull out about the 15th of June (of 1863). They're here for right many months. That army (*Army of the Potomac*) would cover 20 square miles.
**Interviewer:** Mainly right here.
**Mr. Newton:** Yes. From Fletchers Chapel in King George to Berea Church off of Rt. 17 to Aquia.
**Interviewer:** And would they be tents?
**Mr. Newton:** Maybe huts. Some of them tried to stay in tents. Most of them dug holes in the ground and had huts over them.
**Interviewer:** Like you have in the back of the museum?
**Mr. Newton:** Yes. Some of them built cabins.
They didn't dig holes. They just built everything above ground. And some of them tried to get by by just putting logs on the ground and trying to put a tent over it.
**Interviewer:** Will that work?
**Mr. Newton:** Yes. But it wasn't as good as the other types. Still some soldiers tried it.
**Interviewer:** So thousands and thousands of men were here?
**Mr. Newton:** For the Army of the Potomac there are two sources. One says 148,000 and another one 140,000 or so, but that includes the ninth corps. See when they first move here the 11th and 12th corps aren't with them. So it is around anywhere from around 116,000 to 125,000.
**Interviewer:** This is Gen. Burnside's army? Later on when Gen. Hooker becomes general they add the ninth corps?

**Mr. Newton:** No, the ninth corps is here with Burnside but the 11th and 12th corps haven't moved down yet.

So at the time or right after the Battle of Fredericksburg, the 11th and 12th corps move down so the number goes up. Then about the first of February–February 15 or so the ninth corps moves out so it drops. About the time of Chancellorsville it's about 130,000

**Interviewer:** And then that's the peak. And then they go away.

**Mr. Newton:** There is a time before the ninth corps leaves when it was higher than 130,000 but that is just a short time. For the most part the peak number is around 130,000.

**Interviewer:** So then when you and your father (*Patrick D. Newton*) begin metal detecting what did you find?

**Mr. Newton:** Stuff they throwed away for the most part in these camps. Discarded things.

**Interviewer**: Like buttons?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, anything the military had. What they might have bought from the suttlers (private merchants) and what they took out of people's barns and houses. Anything like that.

**Interviewer:** They did some pillaging?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes to some extent, but not as much to the number of men that were here. When they first moved down–

**Interviewer:** Now we are talking about mid-November of 1862?

**Mr. Newton:** At that time all the fence rails–any dry piece of wood they could get quickly was burned first. They even took siding off peoples' houses. Even burnt or used people's houses to build huts or use for firewood.

**Interviewer:** What about the roads?

**Mr. Newton:** The road system would probably triple. There were just so many camps. They would need roads to short cut across fields and through people's yards. They built a lot of military roads.

Old roads get bad and muddy and stuff. They just build a new corduroy (log) road.

**Interviewer:** And your ancestors were right here when all this was happening. I know you had people away serving with the Confederate Army, but for the most part your family was right here when all of this was taking place. (***Mr. Newton's great-grandfather William B. Newton served in the 30th Virginia Infantry and two great uncles Abraham Franklin Newton and George Washington Newton served in the 47th Virginia Infantry****.)*

Do you remember any of their stories?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, for the most part my family was right here. There were a few stories they would tell. Daddy used to be a commercial fisherman before World War II, then he was a carpenter and then he went back to being a commercial fisherman, and he used to go around selling fish to different people. And he said this old woman who lived in Brooke Station said she'd buried the hatchet and had no hard feelings, but she told Daddy that she knew where she buried it and if she dug it up it would be bright as it was when she buried it.

In other words, she had left it alone but it wouldn't take too much to bring it back up.

Interviewer agrees that people remained bitter for quite a while.

**Mr. Newton:** Mattie Price was telling me about Virginia Ann Potts, Daddy's grandma. They put a guard on the house and they had a guard walking all around the house (*on patro*l). They put guards on people's houses, but then later some higher ranking officers pulled them off.

But they said that one night Virginia Ann Potts was at home and somebody knocked on the door and she run and opened it up and they (the guards) gave her the devil and they said don't you ever open that door again without knowing who is there.

**Interviewer:** Did they put the guard on Virginia Ann Potts' house because they knew she had some property?

**Mr.Newton:** No, they put guards on lots of people. They put one on this man named Bullock. He was poor and someone has described his one-room log house. He had a bed and a table and some chairs and a fireplace. At time, the whole family slept together in the bed at night and the soldier slept on the floor in front of the fireplace when he stayed in the house.

**Interviewer:** The guards were where they could spare a person then?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, but they were taken off. Eventually they took them off. The high ranking officers said they weren't going to protect the people to that extent.

**Interviewer:** I want to back up just a little. When you went to collecting you were about nine or 10 years old?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes. Ten. It was 1963.

**Interviewer:** Where did you find the first button?

**Mr. Newton:** Right across from the house on Paul's Hill. See when they put the street

names, the county called and asked people to give names for the streets. Daddy gave them two. The first one was taken and the second one was Paul's Hill. But evidently Alvin Bandy (county supervisor) misheard him on the telephone and it became Paul Hill.

**Interviewer:** They left the apostrophe off.

**Mr. Newton:** Yes. The name comes from Granddaddy's brother Paul who was shot and killed there when he was eight years. Everybody called it Paul's Hill.

**Interviewer:** Where he died? Paul was shot and killed on the way home from school by a man digging up some dried peas?

**Mr. Newton:** He was working for Daddy's Granddaddy (*who would be William B. Newton, the Confederate veteran from the 30th Virginia*) and I don't think he was more than 15 years old and he killed Paul Newton. His name was Fletche or Flitch or something like that. He shot (Paul) him in the back with a shotgun.

(Interviewer and Mr. Newton discuss an account of the story that says Silas Newton was with his brother Paul when there was a quarrel with someone doing field work. Mr. Newton says he believes that it was another brother Jack Newton.)

**Interviewer:** Let's go back to finding that first button. You must have found a lot when you were a child?

**Mr. Newton** My cousins found some out on Granddaddy's field. But no I would walk down the corn rows in Granddaddy's field out there, but I never found any buttons. I did find pieces of glass and things like that. That was before Daddy bought the metal detector. Daddy had two bullets in the house in the drawer. Daddy did find stuff on his granddaddy's place when they plowed...

**Interviewer:** How many did you find–you were 10 and the collection just grew over the years?

**Mr. Newton:** I found them mostly just one at a time. Sometimes you find a little bunch of them, but mostly everything is found just one at a time.

**Interviewer**: And I think you told me you have about 10,000 buttons.

**Mr. Newton:** Over that. About 11,000.

The camps are full of nails and barrel hoops, pieces of cans, bits and pieces of iron. Some camps a lot of cast iron pots are broke up. You hardly ever find a complete cast iron pot or like a little Dutch oven or iron pot. They had orders to destroy all cooking utensils or stuff they acquired out of houses. So I reckon they took something and broke up the pots.

**Interviewer:** You collected 10 or 15 years before you realized you were putting together a collection for a museum?

**Mr. Newton:** I never had in mind having a museum. Never. Never thought about anything like that.

**Interviewer:** I want you to go into a little more about that. But first, this is a school building isn't it?

You didn't go here to school though, did you?

**Mr. Newton:** I did. Mama went to school here. This was White Oak Elementary School. One through sixth grades. But they moved the sixth grade to Gari Melchers before I could get to it so I only went five years here and then I went to Gari Melchers to the sixth grade.

**Interviewer:** Then you went to Gayle Middle School right there?

**Mr. Newton:** And then to Stafford High School, class of 1971.

**Interviewer:** And then what did you do?

**Mr. Newton:** Worked with Daddy for Russell Sullivan and then I was a commercial fisherman down at the creek.

**Interviewer:** Potomac Creek.

**Mr. Newton:** Yes. That's what I was doing when I got the museum.

**Interviewer:** You had a great deal of things you had collected. Where were you keeping it before you brought it here?

**Mr. Newton:** Originally in Mama's back bedroom and then Daddy and me built a log cabin out in the back and we had it in there and we still have some of it there.

**Interviewer:** So when you opened here it was everything you had found.

**Mr. Newton:** I bought a few things just to add something that people could look at and people gave me things and there are some things on loan. (***Several pictures are cousins, one of whom is a portrait of George Washington Newton who was killed in war. A second George Washington Newton survived the war and was one of Mr. Newton's great uncles***.)

**Interviewer:** Then how did you get the idea for the museum?

**Mr. Newton:** The county had the building and was going to lease it the White Oak fire company for a dollar a year, but it was in too bad shape and the fire company could not use it.

**Interviewer:** And then you got the idea for the museum?

**Mr. Newton:** Originally it was me and my cousin but he had to drop out. The county was going to lease it for a dollar a year but then when the firemen didn't want it, we went to the county and the county decided they would sell it. So that's how we got the building we had to buy it.

That was around 1994....

And you had to spend right much money on the building. It had gotten into right rough shape. (*Which was why the fire company couldn't use it*). There was a bad leak in the back room and the floors had to be pulled up because the boards had swelled up. Most of the work was done under the building. To get it straight and all.

**Interviewer**: But being a carpenter you could do that yourself, couldn't you?

**Mr. Newton:** I had plenty of help. Cousins.

**Interviewer:** Newtons?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes and Schenemanns and Williams. Just everybody. I couldn't have done it without them.

They still help. I couldn't stay here if it weren't for them. Dennis Williams mows the grass. And I have to put a furnace in and they'll be helping me with that.

**Interviewer:** Did they help you build the huts in the back? Maybe I'm not calling them the right name.

**Mr. Newton:** No. They're huts. My cousin and I built them. I built the ones out in the yard. The reenactors help keep them (the ones outside) repaired.

**Interviewer**: It must have taken an awful lot effort to get this going and to keep it up. This is a large undertaking for one family.

**Mr. Newton:** We fell back a little last year. There is no profit

It generally pays for itself–you know admission charges and contributions.

**Interviewer:** The admission and donations would cover the museum but it doesn't pay you a salary.

**Mr. Newton:** No, me and Mama never drew a cent in salary. That's the reason I have to work out to make some money. (Mr. Newton works as a carpenter on his days off from the museum.)

The heating bill here has been $275 a month and that's every month. They sent me a notice. I have to pay $500 a month. I think we will be all right this year, but then I don't know exactly what I am going to do. I guess I am going to have to go nonprofit and see if I can get a grant.

But that's going to be around $6,000 a year for the heating bill and that's a lot.

**Interviewer:** And that's just heat. That's not lights or telephone.

**Mr. Newton:** Just the heating and cooling.

**Interviewer:** How many people come a year.

**Mr. Newton:** From two to three thousand.

**Interviewer:** That's a lot of people.

**Mr. Newton:** Yes for it to be three to five miles from Fredericksburg. Fredericksburg gets all the traffic. And most people just come for a day or less, so by the time they spend some time in Fredericksburg they don't have time to come over here. Fredericksburg gets the tourism.

I'm surprised at how many people (tourists) do come.

**Interviewer:** Well I am too. But it has quite a good reputation.

**Mr. Newton:** Some people never do find it. They call for directions and they never do find it.

**Interviewer:** I actually don't see how they can miss it if they are on the White Oak Road.

Do you get a lot of school children?

**Mr. Newton:** No not really. Stafford money is tight for school trips. But we have had a group from Ferry Farm twice and another school from King George. But not what you would think.

**Interviewer:** What about Civil War people– people who are real civil war buffs.

**Mr. Newton:** Mostly we get the reenactors.

**Interviewer:** And what are they interested in?

**Mr. Newton:** They are looking at what they were using in the camps.

It don't have to be anything big. It can as simple a thing as a grommet (metal reinforcement). You know those rubberized ground cloths? See some reenactors want it to be identical to the way it was.

They want things to be exactly the way it was during the Civil War. So they will go back there and see a big grommet and they'll be interested in if it was really found in a Civil War camp.

They didn't use big grommets as much but they did use them. But they did have them when they were camped here in Stafford.

**Interviewer:** When you found something like a grommet did you put down where you found it? I'm sure you didn't start doing that way back when you first began collecting.

**Mr. Newton:** I know where a lot of it was found. At first I didn't. Nobody was doing that when we first started. But a lot of stuff you do know where it comes from because you have your mental record. Your mind is like a tape recorder or a computer... you know where you found stuff.

You might have trouble on something like an eagle button because you have so many thousand, but a state button you'd remember that.

(***After he had been collecting about 10 years, Mr. Newton began to keep records and to map out camps and to note what was found in each camp and in some cases which of the hut holes it was found in. These records he keeps at his home and also at the museum.)***

**Interviewer:** And how many camps did you say there had been?

**Mr. Newton:** Hundreds of them. There are three hundred and some infantry regiments. Then there are the cavalry, the artillery, engineers, ambulance trains, the animals, pioneer soldiers camps. And if each regiment had only had one camp that would be three to four hundred camps. But the problem is that some of these regiments had four or five camps. Let's use the 24th Michigan. When they first moved in they were up around Stafford Courthouse.

So they camp there a week or two and then they move to Brooke station. They camp there and then they move on to Belle Plain and they stay there a long time because that's winter quarters. Then by the Battle of Chancellorville they are over here at Sherwood Forest (Rt. 3 East). Actually they camped on Sherwood Forest. So that's four camps.

Now one would have been more permanent (winter quarters) because they camped there four or five months, but still they would be losing stuff everywhere they went. That's a lot of stuff.

Then you got soldiers moving into an abandoned camp of other soldiers' regiments.

It's very complicated when they are doing that.

Like the Third Corps most of that corps would move around. The 114th Pennsylvania, they were camped over on Deacon Road and they would have to move four miles. See Third Corps is camped in the middle of the Fifth Corps and the Ninth and the Second Corps. And they are going to run out of fire wood. Not all but the large majority are to shift to the Northeast to finish the winter out.

Like the 114th ----they finish the winter four miles from where they started.

I**nterviewer**: But how did you know that?

**Mr. Newton:** Through reading letters and regimentals and stuff.

**Interviewer:** So you went back and did a lot of independent research in order to understand what was happening.

**Mr. Newton:** And we know for the majority where the camps were because we are looking at more camps than there are regiments. Do you know what I mean? The whole place is full of camps.

Then if you read the letters and the regimentals and stuff it becomes clear what is happening because they are moving.

**Interviewer**: So you knew that the whole place (20 square miles) was full of camps because you had grown up hearing your family talking about it.

**Mr. Newton:** And I've been in a lot of them, me and Daddy.

**Interviewer:** And you could tell you were in a camp?

**Mr. Newton:** With the metal detector it is no problem. And a large number of them still exist with the hut holes. We can see lines of holes.

**Interviewer:** What's a hut hole again?

**Mr. Newton:** It's an excavated hole. They dig a hole anywhere from four to six to eight to ten feet. They could also be square.

**Interviewer:** And they are going to put the tent down inside.

**Mr. Newton:** No. They dig anywhere from a foot to two to two and a half to three feet down. Then a built a log hut on top of it. And they are down underneath the earth.

**Interviewer:** And they stick the logs in like this (vertically).

**Mr. Newton:** No it's just like a log cabin. (The logs are placed horizontally on top of each other.) In sandy soil they have to let the logs go all the way down into the hole and they bank it up heavy so when it rains it runs off. But if it is red clay or a real stiff soil, it won't cave in like sand and then they just set the logs on the top of the ground on the outside of the hut hole and come up

Either way it would leak, but you take the dirt that you dig out of the hole and once you get your walls up and you take that dirt and you build it up all around the hut so when it rains it runs the water away from that hole. But the ground is loose and it soaks through the looseness and it runs right through that hole and when you read you find a lot of soldiers would wake up in water when it was heavy rains. When that ground packs so it won't seep through it anymore, it is somewhat better.

**Interviewer:** Then they would cook inside the hut?

**Mr. Newton:** Some of them did. They had regimental cooks and they had places outside where you cooked. But a lot of regiments the men cooked for themselves right in the huts

or if was good weather, they could cook outside.
They did it both ways. They would have cooks or cook for themselves.
**Interviewer:** And you would look that up as you got more and more into this, you would research it?
**Mr. Newton:** We never had books when Daddy first started this stuff.
(***But gradually the research center has developed a library. A volunteer at the center said Mr. Newton can just walk over to a folder of materials or stack of books and pull out material relevant to a visitor's questions*.)**
**Interviewer:** Your father must have been very interested in it to do this and to take so much time on it.
**Mr. Newton:** He liked it. (*Mr. Newton said he and his father devoted weekends and early summer evenings to metal detecting when they first started*.)
**Mr. Newton:** This is not exactly the book–this book was done by a soldier and it pretty well has anything you want to know about a soldier and what they are doing .
**Interviewer:** *Hard Tack and Coffee* by John D. Billingsly from the Collectors' Library of the Civil War.
**Mr. Newton:** Then there's the Official Records and lots of other books. There is nothing that you can't find out what they are doing. It's the most well documented, most wrote about war in the United States.
**Interviewer:** And there's good access to the ORs too, isn't there. And now with the computers there isn't anything you can't find?
**Mr. Newton:** Some of the regimentals they tell you exactly how big the holes are. Some will tell you what they ate and what they are doing.
**Interviewer:** So you can be pretty sure about everything?
**Mr. Newton:** Right at first when I went into the camps and I never really done research (on them) and then when the museum opened up years ago then I started putting the regiments to the camps that we had here.
**Interviewer:** And your memory must have served you well.
**Mr. Newton:** Well every camp where we were at, I got it mapped.
**Interviewer:** You have it mentally or on paper?
**Mr. Newton:** I have it on paper.
**Interviewer:** Can you tell something individual about the people who have been in the camps.
Do you know something about the people who had been in the camps from what they

discarded or lost?

**Mr. Newton:** No not really. Unless it was a state camp and they left a lot of state stuff. You see the Civil War was fought with state militia.

There were very few regular army regiments. I think maybe I read somewhere that the regular army had about 15,000 men when the war started.

So it was mostly state troops and each state had the state seal mostly on the buttons. Some of them like the 114th Pennsylvania had the little cartridge boxes that had 114th on them. You could find some things with stenciled information. Like maybe minie balls.

But that's tricky because you first had McDowell's troops coming in.

Then you had the Army of the Potomac coming in November and some of the regiments that is with the Army of the Potomac has been with McDowell. So like the 22nd New York was camped with McDowell on a farm on the road up here and the camp was called Rufus King after the commanding officer of the division. Well the 22nd New York comes back with the Army of the Potomac. They camp in King George for the winter...

So you can find their stuff up here from when they camped earlier. Early in the war the 22nd New York had a thin buckle with the company letters on it and then when they come back they have a different buckle with U.S. on it. When their buckle was reissued it was regular army. (It said U.S. on it).

And that's what happened at the time of Fredericksburg, a lot of the state troops are in regular army uniforms not in the militia.

So in some of the early camps you find a lot of state stuff, but as the war goes on you see less of that because they are switching to regular army. You got two armies overlapping and here at different times and some times the camps are used by different company.

And to make matters worse, the armies had collectors.

My cousin in King George found a wire up here at a camp and it had 12 different buttons. There were Confederate buttons and different state Yankee buttons.

I saw a letter in which a soldier says he "got me a Georgia button last night" and he goes on to say that he is going down to a Pennsylvania regiment to get a Rhode Island button. He wasn't going to Rhode Island camp to get it. He'd heard that these Pennsylvania boys had Rhode Island buttons. So he was going to trade.

You could go into a camp and find three or four Rhode Island buttons and think was a Rhode Island camp, but you could be misled. It could be New York or Pennsylvania.

It's rare to find a Pennsylvania button in Stafford. New Jersey button is very rare. They

(the militia from New Jersey) are in regular army uniforms when they are here. So probably you're going to find the eagle button.
But you can find some Pennsylvania buttons because the officers kept their uniforms.
**Interviewer:** I never realized how complicated it was.
**Mr. Newton:** It's even trickier than that. There are the weapons they would have. In this one camp up here Daddy found a 12th Rhode Island identification disc and a 12th Rhode Island stencil, but the ammunition was the 69th calibre round balls.
And the Rhode Island doesn't have round balls — they don't use that kind of weapons. So I had been hoping they would be the 12th Rhode lsland. It looked like they went in and dug hut holes and lost some things and throwed away the ammunition. I haven't figured that one out yet. But there's a lot more to this. It's trickier than it seems.
**Interviewer:** It's like a giant detective story here right before us, isn't it? There's just so much more to it than I had ever realized.
(Pause for tape to be turned)
**Interviewer:** You really have got to be a detective to work with this. Do you have a favorite among the state units that you like – that it pleases you to find evidence of?
**Mr. Newton:** No. Well Virginia.
**Interviewer:** But they weren't really here. Except your Great Grandfather William B. Newton was here with the 30th. The 30th was at Aquia. Did he join up here?
**Mr. Newton:** Well I have to look it up again. But there were three brothers –my great grandfather and his two brothers-- two of them join at Falmouth and one of them joins at Fredericksburg. So his two brothers were in the 47th company and he was in company I of the 47th which was one of the Stafford companies and then that company was taken and reassigned to the 30th.
It's very complicated. I think there might have been three company I's. I think the 30th might have been here up around Aquia and the 47th was at Mathias Landing.
**Interviewer:** Then where was he during the Battle of Fredericksburg.
**Mr. Newton:** Sitting over there on the trench line over... never got into the fight.
That's where Pickett's division was. If you know where Pickett's trench is.
**Interviewer:** Was the 47th there too?
**Mr. Newton:** They were at Hamilton's Crossing. They were in some of the thickest of the fighting. (Hamilton's Crossing was a railroad crossing southeast of Fredericksburg.) Drive all the way in to where the cannons are? That's Hamilton's Crossing.

**Interviewer:** That was where General Jackson was? And that's where the heavy fighting was.

**Mr. Newton:** At one point there the Yankees broke through the Confederate lines, I think the 47th was there on counter attack. They might have been out in front.

It will be in the regimentals on the 47th.

**Interviewer:** But they held didn't they?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes. The Union withdrew but they had broke through the lines.

But the Union did pretty good on that end for a while, the Union Army did. They didn"t do too good at Fredericksburg at the Sunken Road. And there was some misunderstanding in the orders too. General Franklin could have used more troops.

**Interviewer:** But it was in the orders wasn't it? They were not clear.

**Mr. Newton:** I have never studied anything on the battles. Everything has been on the camps.

I don't know what Burnside had in mind.

Burnside was pretty slick though. He sent engineers down to Skinkers Neck and he sent wagons to make it look like he was going to cross at Skinkers Neck.

I never will live long enough to figure everything out about Stafford. So everything here (meaning at the museum) is centered on the encampments.

What I know about the battles has come from the Park Service or other sources, not from my own research .

**Interviewer:** But that's what you know and what you grew up with. I think it's been pretty successful.

I want to change the subject here and ask you about the Indians. When I was here once you were telling me that your father (Patrick) was sure he was an Indian.

**Mr. Newton:** The only thing I know is that when I was little the old timey people told them they were kin to Indians. And I never asked no questions about. You just accepted it. You didn't ask questions.

**Interviewer:** But you told me that your father was dark complected.

**Mr. Newton:** If he got out in the sun, liked when he crabbed. he would get very dark.

**Interviewer:** Did you tell me one time that Indians around here would rub something on their skin to darken their skins up?

**Mr. Newton:** I heard Gary Cooke (a tribal historian) talking about that–something they rubbed on and it would make their skins red. The Indians here weren't real dark. But this

stuff was put on to make their skins.
I just never questioned it (about the Indian heritage). If Daddy said it was most likely true anyway so why would I question it. No use to question to it.
**Interviewer:** No I don't doubt it. I don't question it now. It makes sense to me.
**Mr. Newton:** I have heard from cousins that they had heard the same thing from their Mommas. That's all they knew too.
**Interviewer:** What Indian words have you heard people around here use or have you heard any.
**Mr. Newton:** Well I don't know. It's hard to tell what might be an Indian word and what might be another word....
I have heard the word *carn* and my wife's sister visited Indians in the southwest and said they used the same word pronounced curon for rotten or foul smelling. But I don't really know.
People don't talk like they used to. This newer generation doesn't talk like the older generation did. The last person who talked like that was Levi Newton. They used a lot of expressions and stuff that we don't use today. You have heard how Jed Clampett in the Beverly Hillbillies talked and that's how Levi Newton talked. They could be insulting you and you wouldn't know you were being insulted.
I think they had a lot of words from England, Ireland and Scotland and that was being mingled in.
They didn't say forehead they would say "frhead". For forked stick would they say a fork-ed stick. Frmost for foremost.
The wind "cammed" off they would say.
Daddy pronounced his grandma's name Poats. Virginia Ann Poats.
**Interviewer:** Poats oh for Potts. Virginia Ann Potts.
**Mr. Newton:** And there were three different spellings: Poats, Potts, Potes. This Poats woman married a Lee and when she died, Granddaddy got the largest amount.
...When Daddy mentioned her name he always said "Poats, Ginny Ann Poats."
**Interviewer:** Was she Horace Potts' daughter?
Was Horace Potts the man who knifed the man?
**Mr. Newton:** Yes. I think the last I heard from Gary (Cooke) was that they had lunacy hearings and he disappears from around here.
**Interviewer:** Now I have it right. She was the Virginia Ann Potts who married William

B. Newton.
Then after they had their family, Mr. Newton died and she married Ashton Stevens.
She must have been quite a personality.
**Mr. Newton:** I think she was kind of strict. Not in the real bad way.
**Interviewer:** She started that church up here.
**Mr. Newton:** I think Daddy thought Mr. Isaac Silver started that church. But it's gone now. The only thing that remains is the little cemetery there on Paul's Hill Road. Granddaddy (Willie T. Newton) tore that church down and built a garage.
**Interviewer:** He had quite a job because he took care of their family and minded all the children when Birdie Newton went out to be a midwife.
**Mr. Newton:** I was one year old when Grandma died. I do remember Granddaddy. I saw him when they brought him up to the old home place...
*******
This is Nancy Bruns. Today is Oct. 25, 2007. Beth Daly from the oral history project and I are back today with D.P. Newton to talk just a little more about the founding of the White Oak Museum.
The museum was established about 1994?
**Mr. Newton:** That's when I got the building. Then it didn't open until 1998.
**Interviewer:** I am interested in what happened then–you had a lot to do to the building and a lot to do to get the museum established.
I wanted to ask about the repairs. You said you did most of the repairs yourself with help from your family.
**Mr. Newton:** I couldn't have done it by myself. A lot of people helped.
**Interviewer:** But you put your savings into it?
**Mr. Newton:** It took all my savings.
**Interviewer:** And you worked full time to repair the building and to get the museum established.
**Mr. Newton:** Yes, a few times I had to go out and do some work to get some money. But yes I worked on it most of the time. But mostly that four years was spent on remodeling or getting the exhibits ready.
**Interviewer:** So we're coming up on a 10th anniversary next year. When you got it, what sort of plan did you have for it.
**Mr. Newton:** It was bought to be a museum.

**Interviewer:** Did you get any sort of tax bracket break for it? You paid full price for it.
**Mr. Newton:** No, being that it was going to be used as a museum, the Stafford County Board of Supervisors they set a price and it couldn't be lower than that price. It was bought as that price. The only restriction was that Mr. Ferris Belman (a Stafford County supervisor) wanted to see the building kept pretty much like it was when it was a school and I could build back the porch that it originally had.
**Interviewer:** Did it have as many rooms when it was a school?
**Mr. Newton:** It is just like is was when I went to school here.
**Interviewer:** Is it mainly four big rooms? I got a little turned around when I toured it.
**Mr. Newton:** Four rooms–six grades. It changed some times. The fourth and fifth grade was in this room and the first grade was in the southeast corner. Second and third in the room toward Newton Corner. There was a cafeteria.
**Interviewer:** No furniture?
**Mr. Newton:** Yes it had been used for storage. Metal office desks were stacked on the old stage. Metal fireproof doors were stacked right here where we are setting. They run way up to the ceiling.
There was a partition in the sixth grade room. And there were some other little rooms partitioned off. There was a little office cubicle.
**Interviewer:** Now you saw it as a long term commitment. I mean did you plan to stay with it for a long time?
**Mr. Newton:** It'll be here as long as I can be here. After that I don't know. I won't be around when it ceases to be a museum.
Once you get into something like that, you have to stay with it.
**Interviewer:** How about your family? Did your mother see it that way?
**Mr. Newton:** There's no other way to see it. Once you get into an endeavor like that. It's like fishing. Once you put your net out, you've got to fish it every day.
**Interviewer:** Very well said. Well do you know how many items you have here. More than 100,000 items?
**Mr. Newton:** More than that. I never counted every item. There's about 90,000 bullets, 11,000 buttons, 800 buckles and breast plates and 400 bottles–so that puts you over 100,000.

**Interviewer:** What about what you built here to display items. I am thinking mainly of the huts in the back. We are really talking about what you might have built or brought in to make the museum tell the story it did. (*We're looking at a picture of a hut.*) You built the huts?

**Mr. Newton:** We built the huts.

**Interviewer:** Did you know how to build a hut because you had studied how the huts were built originally?

**Mr. Newton:** Photographs.

**Interviewer:** And you cut the trees?

**Mr. Newton:** I cut the trees.

Of course you have got a canvas and ground cloths.

The reenactors gave me a lot of stuff— like the cartridge box, canteens and other things– That's a reproduction anyway or the huts are so it seems appropriate to use reproductions in the scene.

Either you would have to purchase original things which cost a lot of money or use reproductions. You couldn't use "dug" stuff there because it wouldn't look good.

**Interviewer:** So the back room for the most part consists of the three huts which you built following pictures of the original huts and then the things in it are mainly reproductions which the reenactors contributed in an effort to show how it could have looked in an encampment?

**Mr. Newton:** There are some originals. The bottles probably all came out of the ground and the rifle is a real rifle.

**Interviewer:** Let's talk just a little about the reenactors. They've been very important here. Who comes?

**Mr. Newton:** I can't really remember all the different regiments, but the Second Maryland comes every year, the 47th Virginia, the 30th Virginia Artillery, the 13th Virginia.

**Interviewer:** Are they all southern regiments?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes. We have had northern groups.

**Interviewer:** So what happens is that the reenactors come in and look around and then they can verify what their outfits should be?

**Mr. Newton:** You have reenactors who want to be exact. They want exact copies of what the soldiers were using. They will look at original equipment. They go to museums. I've heard them say that they will even count the stitches in the original uniform... they are real particular.

**Interviewer:** And they coming here since you originally opened. Were some maybe members of your own family?

**Mr. Newton:** Two I know are my cousins... one is from below Richmond and one is from Stafford.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever do any reenacting?

**Mr. Newton:** No, I never had any time for it.

**Interviewer:** So this keeps you busy eight or 10 hours a day.

**Mr. Newton:** Mama runs it more than I do. I have to go off and work some times.

**Interviewer:** And this is totally nonprofit.

**Mr. Newton:** Not yet. It has never made a profit, but it might be more nonprofit than the nonprofits. It generally breaks even. Last year was a little under. It generally pays for itself.

**Interviewer:** You've never had to go out and raise money for it.

**Mr. Newton:** People have made gifts and those and the admissions have kept it going.

**Interviewer:** Do you foresee the day when you will have to seek "nonprofit" tax status?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes I am going to have to do that, but it's tricky because you are going to have to get a board and if you get a board that might want to take it off in a particular direction.

You have to be particular of the board.

**Interviewer:** What do you see as the direction you want to go?

**Mr. Newton:** I wouldn't mind just keeping it like it is. But utilities are just going up so fast...

I can fix most things myself and if I really need help I have enough cousins to help. So you see I don't have the cost of ongoing upkeep and maintenance. It's utilities that are the rising costs. The electricity and the fuel oil are the main things...

But so far the people have kept it open.

**Interviewer:** Main clients then are reenactors and the semi-professional Civil War historians and Civil War descendants.

**Mr. Newton:** Most the people are from out of state. Most of them are just interested in the Civil War.

**********

**Interviewer:** I was interested in that place where you found the most plates according to the display in the back. I don't quite understand what a plate is. They look like belt buckles to me. How many did you find?

**Mr. Newton:** Forty four and most of them was cartridge box plates. They are oval, brass, stamped U.S., solder filled, and they got loops and they go on the flap of your cartridge box. The eagle plates goes on your cartridge box strip. They are called a breast plate. They are round.

**Interviewer:** So they are not buckles like are used on a belt?

**Mr. Newton:** No. From the front a U.S. plate looks like it. But it doesn't have the buckle hooks on the back. Looking at from the front, you can't tell the difference.

You'd have to look at it from the back. I think there were six or seven buckles and the rest was plates.

**Interviewer:** And that was nearby?

**Mr. Newton:** About a mile through the woods. Daddy had retired so it was in the early 80's.

**Interviewer:** That must have been exciting.

**Mr. Newton:** Yes, but not more than any of it. It was in the camp of the 119th Pennsylvania.

**Interviewer:** But didn't you say it was rare to find Pennsylvania buttons?

**Mr. Newton:** State stuff like the buttons or anything with the state seal on them.

**Interviewer:** Oh and you said these said U.S.

**Mr. Newton:** Mostly the 119th Pennsylvania was under the regular army issue when they were here.

**Interviewer:** So it's rare to find a Pennsylvania button.

**Mr. Newton:** You can find them, but it's not like New York buttons.

New York had more troops any other state in Stafford. Pennsylvania was close. But you

can find a New York button anywhere.

Most buttons if you were to find a state button would be from New York state.

**Interviewer:** What would be the least likely?

**Mr. Newton:** You won't find a Delaware button. I don't know if they had one or not. Pennsylvania button is scarce. New Jersey button is scarce. Illinois button – I have never known one to be found in Stafford. Indiana button. Ohio is a rare button to find. Most state buttons you find are Rhode Island, Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont (but not many). New York is the one you are most likely to find.

**Interviewer:** Now when people come in here, are they hoping to be directed to where they could find a button or are they hoping to see where their ancestor was?

**Mr. Newton:** Most of them would like to ride by the area where the ancestor was camped.

**Interviewer:** Would it work to have signs like that one (pointing to road sign that is at the museum) around?

**Mr. Newton:** They need signs. It's complicated. I do believe the majority of the people do want signs. There are people who don't. There are preservationists who don't like monuments. I talked to one here one day. I like markers and stone monuments myself. Gettysburg probably has the most monuments and some people don't like them. But you have to ask the question: who put the monuments there. The soldiers themselves put them there so I can't question having monuments when the people who fought and died – their survivors– put them there. Who are we to say monuments don't belong on the battlefield. These soldiers earned the right to put what they want there. There are some preservationists who don't want to see the monuments. They want to see it like it was during the battle. That's all right but for regular people like us—you need to put one simple little marker or sign. You'd be driving into a state you have never been into and there

could be cornfields on the left and the right side of the road. One little simple marker or stone marker could be put there... If you want to know what happened on a site you have to put a marker or a monument there. If you don't, to most of us it's just a cornfield. There are a few people who have studied it and they will know, but the majority won't know what happened there unless there's something there to draw attention then people can learn from it what the soldiers did at a certain spot. It's like a book. If a person doesn't write at book and put it where people can see it, it leaves us unaware of anything. I have heard people say they don't want to see just a tombstone put there. But people put stones for their pets–there cats and dogs. If a dog or cat deserves a stone, how can you refuse a stone for a soldier? A human being responds to what he sees or hears. If you have nothing out here to see or hear, how can you respond. A piece of ground no matter how hallowed– people just won't know what went on there if you don't have something there. You need something for people to look at.

**Mr. Newton:** You see I belong to the group Friends of Stafford County Civil War Sites and we started to place signs– but there are people in this county who don't want you putting up signs to honor the soldiers.

There is some that wouldn't want that sign. (*Gesturing at the sign in the entrance room*.)

**Interviewer:** Where would that sign be placed?

**Mr. Newton:** That goes to a camp over here in Aquia Landing. It's one of the last camps of that size of the 12th corps in that area that still exists. Second division of the 12th corps.

**Interviewer:** Well is that sign going to go up?

**Mr. Newton:** Yes as soon as they pave the road. They have the street cut and they're waiting for the road to get paved.

The Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites approached the developer and he paid for the sign.

We just asked the question, "Would you be willing to pay to have a Civil War Site sign put up?" and he agreed.

{Glenn Trimmer founded the Friends of Stafford Civil War Sites and he is director. (Col. Trimmer did the research on finding a firm to make the sign.)}

**Interviewer:** There would a lot of places where signs could be placed, wouldn't there?

**Mr. Newton:** Of all the questions that people who come in ask when they are looking for a relative is "Is there a sign?"

I just have to say no, there are very few... but just a simple marker is very important.

**Interviewer:** That's a nice marker down at the Town and Country Shopping Center to the ninth corps.

...

**Mr. Newton:** If people come and ask, I could also point out on a road map where the camp area is to people and they can ride out and look at it. When the owner allows me I have taken people to see actual campsites. Most people only come once a year or maybe they only come once. They would like to see the site (where a relative camped.)

**Interviewer:** Then there are some campsites left on tracts that have not been developed.

**Mr. Newton:** Yes. Right after the war, the large majority of the camps were covered up or plowed over by the farmers so you wouldn't be able to see the physical camp. Visitors could see the general area they were camped on.

I added them up (number of existing camps) some months ago and I believe there are still over half that were here in 1963 are still here.

The storm that came through last year knocked down several big trees in two campsites and huge clumps of dirt came out and took the holes with them and then when they were removed the owner had the sawmill operator to straighten out the ground up.... So it might be safer to say that half of them that existed in 1963 are still here.

**Interviewer:** Are we saying that were about 400 camps here in 1862-63?

**Mr. Newton:** The reason so many camps still exist is that some of the regiments actually dug two winter camps— in other words if you had 300 and some infantry regiments, it could be you could have 500 camps. In some cases it could even be more. In the 11th corps one regiment they built a camp near Falmouth. I don't think they stayed in it but once and they were ordered to move... A lot more holes were dug than there were men to occupy them because they were moving and building camps elsewhere....

The ninth corps is almost completely gone. There is one little section of holes left of the ninth corps... might be some scattered holes between houses in a subdivision. Isolated holes. The sixth corps is gone. One regimental site is left.
(Pause)
**Interviewer:** The Friends of the Stafford Civil War Sites was actually formed about three years ago after the redoubt built by the 12th corps was bulldozed one weekend?
**Mr. Newton:** Yes, that's when it was formed.
**Interviewer:** Now the developer has put a monument up there.
**Mr. Newton:** Yes that's right.


{***The site is located near Aquia Landing. The redoubt was an actual fortification–an earthen fort with a moat. They can be square or different shapes. The one at Aquia Landing had a moot and one entrance (a sallyport). They could have cannons. This was not a place where soldiers slept. Not many of the redoubts have been preserved***.}
**Mr. Newton:** Preservationists mostly have concentrated on saving battlefields. Not to take anything away from battlefields because that is very intense on soldiers. Battles only last a few days and of course many are killed or wounded within those few days, but they don't stop there. They have to come back to these winter encampments and then they have another battle to contend with and that's disease. And for every man killed in battle they will lose two to disease.
If you read the soldiers' letters they can understand the great loss in battle but they have a harder time accepting death from disease.
And it seems to be that the type of person who would get sick the fastest was the not the skinny and frail looking. The big healthy men seems like is the first to go (according to

what some of the soldiers say.) That's hard for them to accept. In battle, you have a chance to do something. They accomplish nothing laying around dying in these camps and they had come from isolated areas and have not been exposed to diseases like mumps, measles, chicken pox.

**Interviewer:** I hadn't thought of that. But it makes a museum like this even more important.

**Mr. Newton:** And they don't have much faith in doctors. So many people go to the hospital and they never return to the camps... if you read the diaries and letters they are scared to go to the hospital. So if you get sick, you don't go to the hospital and that makes it worse. They get sicker all the time and then it's too late when they do go to the hospital. This one soldier from the 11th corps called them human tormenters.

**Interviewer:** Did they send them to Washington to the hospital?

**Mr. Newton:** They had regimental hospitals. Each regiment had its own hospital. Most of them seem to have two tents... then the brigade hospital which was a little larger and then you had the division hospitals. And they had a hospital there at Marlborough Point that could hold 5,000 patients.

That was a big general hospital and then there was cases where they sent them to Alexandria or Washington.

**Mr. Newton:** When you read about what they did everyday, they are like ants. Everyday they are doing something. Drills, inspections, duties. They're getting wood back to these camps everyday.

They're digging latrines, graves. There are funerals going on. Cutting logs to pave roads. They are building roads. They have animals, herds to look after.

One of the soldiers said by the time they go to bed they are exhausted.

You have to keep the army busy.

They go about digging up little saplings. They decorate the camps. Build the arches. Rainy days, they might be doing nothing, but mainly they are busy.

You don't read too much about the fights and what might be taking place between the soldiers themselves.

You take 130,000 men you they got to maintain discipline.

What's not talked about and you never see... a lot of these regiments the time is running out.

**Interviewer:** They just want to go home?

**Mr. Newton:** A lot of these regiments are refusing to fight. And they may take some of the regiments and have them stack their rifles and put them under guard.

(***Mr. Newton recounts one story of a regiment guarded by another regiment and told by the general that it will fight or be buried right where it is under guard. They have to make a decision to either go into battle or be fired on by another regiment. Mr. Newton says there are several cases of regiments whose enlistment period is nearly up refusing to fight. In at least one case regiments fought each other because officers had a bet on which of their soldiers could cut a tree down faster, and a fight between the regiments broke out apparently only ending when a nearby artilleryman hollered out "Load canisters."*** )

**Interviewer:** I am curious. Were there women here with the camp? You hear about camp followers, but did they exist?

**Mr. Newton:** Officers would have had wives with them. But women were scarce. Some of these men never saw a woman around. Civilians tended to move out to Spotsylvania. If a man was serving with the Confederate Army, his wife and children would probably move out to her momma's or his. And leave the house abandoned. You read a lot of letters and they don't see women.

**Interviewer:** But how about a well off lady like Miss Virginia Ann Potts? What about her?

**Mr. Newton:** Well they did guard her and one soldier was going to come back and marry her. They say she was going to marry a Union soldier. I don't think she would go out much. She'd stay around home.

They would have some marriages in the camps, but it made some of the soldiers nervous. Ladies would come from the North and they would have these weddings. But it scared these unmarried soldiers to death. One said that was why he left home, so he wouldn't have to get married. I think they could see all these women coming down wanting to get married in these camps, so they petitioned to have the weddings stopped. It pretty much dropped off.

**Interviewer:** Let me ask you about food? They would have bought a lot of food with them and then they cooked in these camps or they had cooks.

What would they eat?

**Mr. Newton:** Dried vegetables, hard tack, fresh meat–the army would have cattle herds.

Some of the meat was salted, came in barrels.
When they first arrived here they were ahead of their supply lines and they were living off the land. They would go to people's house and they might buy it, but in some cases they just took it...
**Interviewer:** Aren't there people who go around selling things to the soldiers. Who were they?
**Mr. Newton:** They were suttlers and they would sell things–whiskey, canned goods. Things that wouldn't be available. Some times, whiskey. I haven't gone too much into detail on the suttlers. Their prices were high and a lot of them had these tokens... you spend your money and your change would be in tokens. You would have to come back to him.
**Interviewer:** I saw pickle and mustard jars in the museum. The army wouldn't issue those would they?
**Mr. Newton:** The army wouldn't issue stuff like that. Whatever the army issued at the time was what you'd get.
**Interviewer:** What about water. You couldn't drink water out of the Potomac River.
**Mr. Newton:** It depends on the season. It's brackish. Daddy would drink water out of the Potomac River. You could drink it. Daddy drank a lot of water out of Potomac Creek. On Potomac Run you could get good water. You could drink out of streams and springs. At that time there were very few wells.
And some regiments actually dug a well. And I have seen a spring... where they set a barrel in the ground and got water.
What happened with the water was it got contaminated. A lot of typhoid fever came from drinking contaminated water.
(*The soldiers did not understand sanitation, Mr. Newton said.)*
One regiment would be camped at the head of spring and their garbage and bath water would be going down the bank into the stream and rains would wash that water right on down and the next regiment would be getting contaminated water. You could have three or four regiments actually using the same stream and the water can become foul.
...
**Interviewer:** Animals would be adding to the contamination.
**Mr. Newton:** Then you have hundreds maybe thousands of dead horses off to the side of the road. Their (the army's) intentions were not to stay here. There is correspondence

telling about how these horses died in the mud march and were not buried. They were just left. And this would be draining off and into the streams.
Belle Plains Road was said to be one of the worst. All these dead horses were along the road...
There is a story of a soldier getting water for the coffee and seeing two dead mules in the water and getting the coffee water just the same.
... Then finally the sanitary commission went around and made them start getting straightened up. The commission made them start burying the remains of animals and garbage and they made them dig latrines. Of course this is not a story you hear talked about. Down here to Camp Bayard they were just using the ground as a bathroom because that was what the animals did.
**Interviewer:** But this is a very dramatic story especially since we are right here. You have done such a fine research job you must have spent years with this.
Not just in walking around in visiting the sites, but in other research.
Mr. Newton once again points out the complexity of searching the sites and in researching the movement of the regiments within the years that the Union army was here. He says that the number of artifacts is not necessarily an adequate indicator of who was there and how long the regiment might have stayed since many regiments might dig a camp and move on within a night or a few days. Other camps were closed out very tidily due to the officers. In others many items were discarded.
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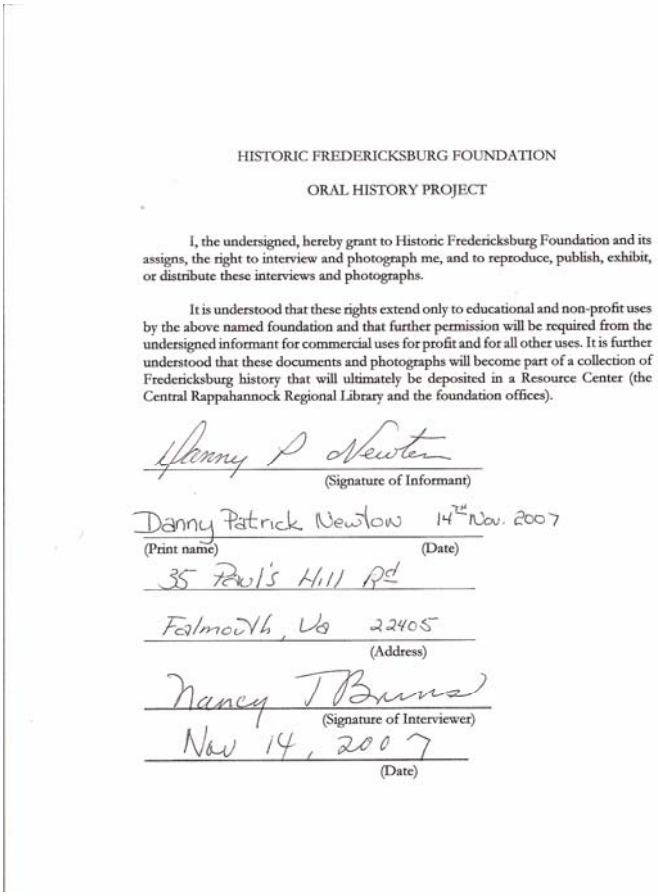
Interviewers return to discussing the White Oak area and handwriting and speech.
**Mr. Newton:** When I was little I could go the mail box and get a letter for Mama and I would look at the handwriting and I could tell it was from somebody local. I didn't have to look at the return address. Most everybody in the White Oak area had the same teachers when they were little and you could tell especially by the way they made the "r" that it was from somebody in the community. You could tell from the handwriting if it was somebody who wasn't from the area.
**Interviewer:** And that has changed completely today.
**Mr.Newton:** Yes.
**Interviewer:** What about words and expressions?
...
**Mr. Newton:** You don't hear it much any more, but up to a certain time there were

expressions they used around– like you're as bad as Duff Grady's old mule. Or you are as bad as Tom Pole.
Nobody would know what that means, but someone from White Oak would know what. Duff Grady was a horse trader. He lived here and he traded and sold horses and mules. He sold a blind mule to a man and when the man came back and questioned why he had been sold the blind mule Duff Grady said that mule ain't blind he just doesn't give a durn.
So every household would know, but you (as an outsider) wouldn't know. You could be being insulted and you wouldn't never know it. You'd be laughing at the expression.
Tom Pole told old windy tales. There might have some truth to it. But he'd take a lot of liberties with the facts.
So to say, "Get away from here Tom Pole" would mean you were blowing something out of proportion.
**Interviewer:** Was Tom Pole a real person?
**Mr. Newton:** Tom Pole was a Sullivan.
**Interviewer:** Oh, he had two names.
**Mr. Newton:** They had handles. In a large family, especially Sullivans, there were so many of them with the same first name that they went by handles. A handle places a person in a certain family. Like Bob Martin. I thought he was a Martin all these years. He was really Bob Sullivan. There were three or four or five Robert Sullivans, but you put a handle on it. The grandfather was Martin Sullivan. Bob Martin came from the Martin Luther Sullivan tribe.
Tom Pole was a handle. He was Tom Sullivan. The handle separated him from the others with the same name and you would know who he was.
**Interviewer:** You would know from the handle who that was, but I wouldn't know.
A handle is nothing like a nickname.
**Mr. Newton:** No. A handle identifies a person's family relationship. (Nicknames were assigned to identify individuals and did not relate to family relationship.)

***The Wednesday volunteer at the museum tells of the salesman who knocked on the door and said he was looking for Bob Newton and they told him to continue on down road– everyone on one side was a Sullivan and everybody on the other side was a Newton. And the salesman said how far does that go? And the person said as far as the county line***.

The museum is beginning to have people coming in at this point and the interviewers thank Mr. Newton and depart.



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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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Danny P Newton
(Signature of Informant)

Danny Patrick Newton 14th Nov. 2007
(Print name) (Date)

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Nancy T Burns
(Signature of Interviewer)

Nov 14, 2007
(Date)

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