

Arms for Virginia On the Eve of the Civil War

The Armory Commission Letters of Col. Francis H. Smith

Transcribed & Annotated
by Col. Edwin L. Dooley, Jr.

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See endnotes for details about the names and topics highlighted in **bold type***. Many of the notes also contain links to additional material.

Background:

Following the raid in October 1859 on the Federal Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, by the abolitionist **John Brown***, officials in Virginia were convinced that the state's defense forces, the **militia***, needed to be improved and better armed. In 1860, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation to improve the militia and to arm it appropriately. By law, the U.S. Secretary of War was not authorized to sell U.S. arms to individual states, beyond the issue of their **annual quota***, unless the U.S. arms had been condemned. Consequently, the options open to the state of Virginia for acquiring additional reliable weapons were either to retool and refurbish its supply of flint lock muskets, or to purchase arms from private gun makers in the north, or to purchase arms from abroad (prices were considered excessive), or to manufacture its own arms. To solve this problem, the Virginia General Assembly appropriated funds on 21 January 1860 for the purchase and manufacture of "Arms and Munitions of War" and created a three-member **commission*** to oversee this project. **Governor John Letcher***, newly inaugurated as Governor of Virginia, appointed the following three men to the commission: **Col. Philip St. George Cocke***, **Maj. George W. Randolph***, and **Col. Francis H. Smith***. At the time, Col. Smith was Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute where he had served since its founding in 1839. He was also responsible for the **Lexington Arsenal*** (a state arsenal) located at VMI.

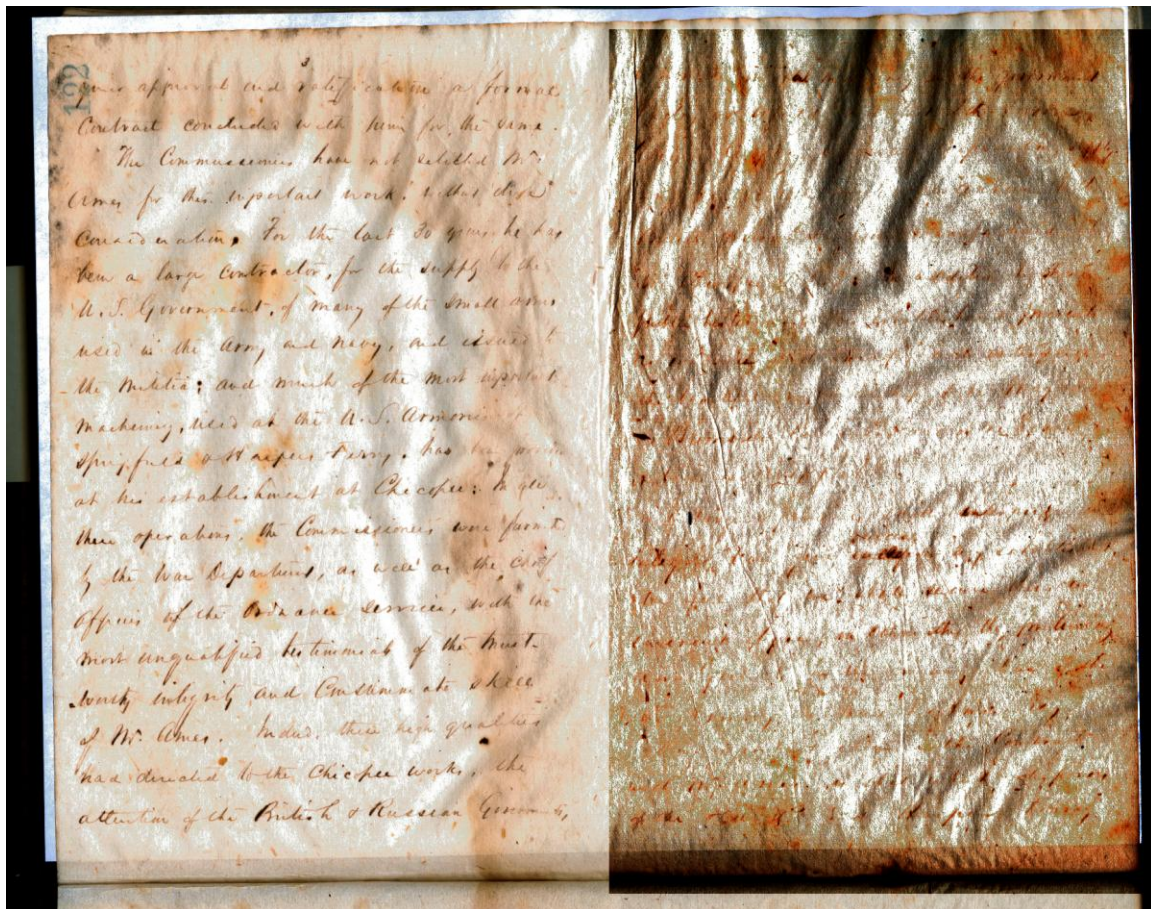
The commission, known as the Armory Commission or the Armory Board, began its work shortly after being appointed. In February-March, 1860, the three commissioners and Governor Letcher visited the **Springfield Arsenal and Armory***, at Springfield, Massachusetts, the **West Point Foundry***, at Cold Spring, New York, and the **Harper's Ferry Arsenal and Armory***, Harper's Ferry, Virginia, to examine weapons and machinery for the manufacture of small arms. Soon thereafter, Colonel Smith contacted **James Tyler Ames***, of the **Massachusetts Arms Company***, Chicopee Falls, Mass., to arrange the purchase by the state of Virginia of machinery to produce small arms. The plan was to transport the machinery to the **Richmond Arsenal and Armory*** where arms could be manufactured for militia companies in the state. In the end, negotiations with Ames were broken off and the commissioners purchased **Enfield muskets*** from private arms merchants England and entered into a contract on 23 August 1860 with **Joseph R. Anderson*** of the **Tredegar Iron Works** in Richmond to manufacture arms there. (See endnote under **proposition made to Mr. Ames*** for an account found in Colonel William Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I. (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1939)*, hereafter cited as Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*

At the same time that the Armory Commission was negotiating the purchase of machinery to manufacture arms, efforts were being made to acquire examples of up-to-date rifles, pistols, and guns (cannons) to be tested at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. The Armory commissioners believed that these tests would furnish them with ideas for improved and inexpensive weapons to be manufactured at the Richmond Arsenal and Armory. Responsibility for carrying out these tests was given to several VMI faculty members, including **Major Raleigh E. Colston*** and **Major Thomas J. Jackson,*** who was then serving on the VMI faculty as professor of natural and experimental philosophy (physics) and instructor in artillery. (See endnote under **Weapons testing at VMI by Maj. Jackson and others.**)

When the war broke out, the Federal Arsenal and Armory at Harper's Ferry was destroyed and abandoned by the retreating Federal guard, but the shops, over 400 machines for the manufacture of muskets and rifles, thousands of tools, and many small arms components were saved and were confiscated by Virginia Militia. This salvaged matériel was sent to the arsenal at Fayetteville, N.C., and to the Richmond Arsenal and Armory. According to Herb Fisher, in "The Virginia Manufactory of Arms," *Notes on Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Winter, 1988), p. 27, "The Richmond Armory, together with the adjacent Tredegar Iron Works, and the Confederate Laboratory, located in the rear of the armory on Brown's Island, produced close to half of the armaments and ammunition used by the Confederate forces."

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The following letters document the efforts of Col. Smith and the Armory Commission to obtain arms-making machinery. They also document efforts to obtain examples of up-to-date small arms and cannon for testing at VMI, and they include occasional correspondence with militia company commanders who were urgently appealing to Col. Smith and the Commission for weapons to arm their units. The correspondence can be found in letterpress form in volumes of the *Outgoing letters of Francis H. Smith, Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute* (located in Archives, Preston Library, VMI, Lexington, VA. No separate reports on weapons testing at VMI have been located at the Institute, nor is there any mention of weapons testing in the *1860 VMI Annual Report* or in the *Minutes of the Board of Visitors* for 1860.



This is an example of the condition of the letters in Smith's letter book. On the left, the letterpress process has produced a fairly legible copy (enhanced here by computer software). On the right, the ink of the letterpress copy has been degraded by moisture damage that occurred many years ago.

[**Note:** The following letter is the first extant from Smith following John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry on 16-18 October 1859. Smith's letter reflects rising concern in Virginia over the state of its defenses and it points to the special role that Smith and VMI would play in the coming year.]

Va Military Institute

Nov 1st 1859

Gen'l Wm H. Richardson*

Adj't Gen'l [Adjutant General of Virginia]

Sir,

I have the honor to submit the enclosed report in obedience to orders rec'd from the Adjutant General's office dated October 29th 1859. I beg leave to state that the muskets on deposit at this arsenal [**the Lexington Arsenal* located at VMI**] are for the most part flint locks and are not to be relied upon for service. I would therefore renew the recommendation which I have made on a former occasion viz that **percussion locks*** be substituted for the flint locks. The deficiency of fixed ammunition at this arsenal has induced me to submit the accompanying

recquisitions. To this I would add 200 of the most approved rifles & a few revolvers. Considering the emergency that may require the (immediate?) use of Artillery as well as Cavalry I would respectfully suggest that from 30 to 40 horses be provided for the Institution, that the Cadets may be instructed in Cavalry & Horse Artillery. With this provision for this important Military school those who are to be the future officers of our Militia will be thoroughly trained in these most important arms & besides at a moment's warning 200 Cadets well disciplined for service in either the Cavalry Artillery or Infantry will be in readiness to meet the call of the state whenever & wherever that shall be made. The horses will thus not only add to the efficiency of the school of a military institution but will afford facilities for a prompt transmission of (unclear) of duty & danger.

/FHS/

*(Note: See **Correspondence of the Fredericksburg News*** from a correspondent who visited Lexington, 7 November 1859 in endnotes.)*

Va Mil: Institute
Nov 22d 1859
His Excellency **Henry A. Wise***
Charleston Va

Dear Sir,

In obedience to the instructions conveyed to me by your telegraphic dispatch, I have kept a detachment of the corps of Cadets, 80 in number, with a battery of Howitzers ready for service at a moment's call, and beg leave to state that the command is provided with all the appliances for taking care of themselves upon the field of duty now claiming their services. The Commissary has his cooking implements in order, & we are thus in a state of preparation much more complete than that attends the ordinary militia command. In addition it gives me pleasure to state, that Messrs Harman & Co have placed their stages & entire stock at Lexington & Staunton at my command, & they will transport my detachment at a moment's call, free of charge. This tender is very creditable to these gentlemen, and I mention it specially to you, as showing the patriotic spirit that actuates them. These facilities will enable me to reach **Winchester*** in 20 hours after notice & you may therefore (rely?) upon dispatch in our movements as soon as ordered. I am at your service for duty in advance of the Corps, should it be required.

/FHS/

Va Mil: Institute
Nov 19th 1859
His Excellency H. A. Wise
Richmond

Dear Sir,

The Adj't Gen'l has shown me your communications to him dated Nov 17th with reference to the propriety & expediency of ordering a detachment of the corps of Cadets to be present at the execution of Brown & the other[s] ---. When I originally tendered to your Excellency the services of the Corps of Cadets for any duty which their military education might qualify them in the emergency now pressing upon the state, it was from the conviction that in all the essential elements of military defense they were better prepared than any other portion of the military of the state, more than this – I believe that the sentiment of any parent would respond to this patriotic duty on behalf of their sons, in giving protection to their own homes & firesides from which the wicked assaults of incendiary & mid-night marauders (unclear) (unclear) (unclear) in the prospect

of the services being required now is (unchanged?). I can readily select so able bodied & well disciplined cadets acquainted with the Artillery drills, who will be ready to obey your Excellency's Order for the duty now claiming their service & I tender you my own services & those of **Maj'r Gilham*** & any other officer for duty in connection. Thanking you for the confidence (you?) have placed in this institution.

/FHS/

(Note: Col. Smith departed VMI for Charles Town on Wednesday, 23 November. Majors Gilham and Jackson and 80 cadets departed VMI on Friday evening, 26 November. They took two howitzers with them. John Brown was hanged on Friday, 2 December.)

Va Mil: Institute
Nov: 26th 1859
Jacob Lynch
Abingdon Va

Dear Sir [*Note: This letter was written by Col. Smith's secretary as Smith was on his way to Charles Town.*]

Your favor of the 21st Inst addressed to Col. Smith is at hand. In obedience to an order from the Gov., Col. Smith left here on Wednesday last for Charlestown & was followed last night by a detachment of 80 Cadets with 2 Howitzers – The dispatch from the Gov was rec'd at 8 o'clock [P.M.], ordering the Cadets to move instantly and they were off before 10 o'clock [P.M.]. Your son was not included in the number....

(Note: After the execution of John Brown on Friday, 2 December, Col. Smith departed Harper's Ferry on Tuesday, 6 December, and went to Richmond. He returned to VMI Saturday morning, 10 December.)

Va Mil: Institute
Dec 12th 1859

Col S. McD Reid*
H[ouse] of Delegates
Richmond Va

Dear Sir,

My stay in Richmond was so limited, that I was unable to converse with you as fully as I desired in reference to the special interests of the Institute, likely to come before the legislature. As one of the immediate representatives, of the county, it is proper that you should be fully advised, of all the points connected with the wants of the Institute; and I have full confidence in your good wishes, that your cooperation will be given so far as may be consistent with your sense of your public duty. The Annual Report of the Board, was prepared with great care by Col. Cocke, will place you in possession of the essential wants of the school at the time. The bill which I have prepared and forwarded to **Paxton*** = by today's mail, covers the main recommendation of the Board. I have added to it a provision for the preparation of munitions of war, the necessity of which will be apparent at once. I have suggested to members of the Legislature, the purchase by the state of the property at **Jordans Point*** for the establishment of an Armory, in connection with the Institute & under its charge, in which the old muskets on deposit in the arsenal may be rifled & small arms made. This is an important suggestion to the county as well as to the state. A

powder mill should also be established – The location could be determined hereafter, but would not the headwaters of the James River present as desirable spot as any within the Commonwealth?

/FHS/

Va Mil: Institute
Dec 12th 1859

J. G. Paxton
Senate of Va
Richmond Va

Dear Sir,

I reached home safely on Saturday morning [10 December], and lose no time in preparing the bill which I showed you – rough when in Richmond. The items of this bill embrace 1. An additional wing to the Barracks and a Superintendent's House, (it be necessary to remove mine for the enlargement of the parade ground, say \$40,000. 2. The sum of \$10,000 for laboratory, magazine & Cavalry stables & drill room. 3. The annuity from the literary fund is the same embraced in the recommendation of the Governor. The laboratory referred to is designed to prepare the ordinary munitions of war & the magazine to store them in when made. These munitions can readily be prepared during the summer season, by the 1st Class, as at West Point – and the State will at all times be in readiness to meet any emergency which sudden invasion might involve. The second bill, in reference to a bond, I prepare at the suggestion of Gov Letcher – and you can think over it at your leisure – I think it all important that you should have the property at Jordan's Point turned over to the state & attached to the Institute, for the purpose of rifle-ing the 30,000 muskets now on deposit here & afterwards of manufacturing arms for the use in the state & in the South. As the State, through the James River & Kanawha Canal Co. has a large interest in it, there would be little comparative expense in the charge, & arms which are now unserviceable might be made of value. The State also need[s] a Powder mills. I do not know of one south of Mason & Dixon's Line. The public defense surely requires attention to this suggestion. Be pleased to show these bills to our friends Col. Reid & Mr. Patterson. As I have not time to copy them today, tho' I will write to them.

/FHS/

Va Mil: Institute
Dec 12th 1859
Andrew Patterson
H[ouse] of Del[egates]
Richmond Va

Dear Sir,

We reached home safely on Saturday morning after a very rough ride from Staunton & found everything well. I had not the time to converse with you specially to the interests of the Institute, likely to come before the Legislature. As one of the representatives of the county, it is proper that you should be put in possession of all the points connected therewith & I have full confidence in your good wishes, that your hardy cooperation will be given to us so far as may be consistent with your view of your public duty. The Report of the Board which will be laid before you covers most of the information which you may require. I have prepared a bill which I have sent to Paxton as he is a member of the Military Committee in the Senate, a copy of which he will give to **Kemper**,* Chairman of the same committee in the House. This bill embraces the

essential wants of the Institute & I think will receive very cordial support. The conversion of the property at Jordan's Point into an Armory is so reasonable a thing that this may be left to its own intrinsic claims to be put through. It has long been a favorite scheme of the Gov. Should you at any time need information on any point connected with the Institute, please advise me at once & it shall be forwarded without delay.

/FHS/

Va Mil: Institute
Dec: 13th 1859
Dr. M J J Evans
Painsville
Amelia Co Va

Dear Sir,

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the rec't of your letter of the 7th Inst & to reply to your inquiries. We have here the Tactics of **Col.: Hardee*** in combination with **Scott's*** & these will suit all your purposes as a Rifle Drill. A work has just been published by **Cap't Wilcox*** of the U.S.A. on the rifle & rifle Drill, which I would also recommend to you.

/FHS/

Va Mil: Institute
Dec: 13th 1859
J. D. Imboden*
Exchange Hotel* Richmond Va

Dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your favor of the 12th Inst and in reply would say that we have no **field Artillery*** here that is not required for the use of the school. All that we have being sent here for that purpose, nor have we sabres. There may be a few **Hall's Carbines*** – but they are very unsafe & I would not recommend them for your service. However, if you wish them, I will issue all we have upon the **Gov's*** order. Would it not be well for you to get the **Navy Howitzers?*** They are light.

Va Mil: Institute
Dec 14th 1859
Mr. F. M. Luddoth
Friar's Point Miss

Dear Sir,

I was pleased to receive on my return from Charlestown, your letter of the 28 Nov: Let the name of your friend be sent on at the proper time for app't & I will lay his application before the Board [of *Visitors*]. I am glad to know that you are doing well, you must hold on to your work. This affair at Harper's Ferry is doing much to bring our graduates into notice & you will soon find yourself in a way to gain promotion & lucrative employment.

/FHS/

14 Dec 1859

Received of Col. F. H. Smith 1 Colt Revolving Carbine with moulds and wrench which I promise and bind myself to return in good order whenever call for by him –

S Crutchfield*
J. Hampsey*
Jno Gibbs*
R E. Colston*

14 Dec 1859

Received of Col. F. H. Smith 1 Colt Pistol which I promise and bind myself to return in good order whenever called for by him.

John L Preston*
R E Colston
D. Truehart Jr.*

Va Mil: Institute
Dec: 15th 1859
C. R. Grandy
Norfolk Va

Dear Sir,

... We have much reason to be proud at the enviable reputation which the Institute enjoys. Its merits had hitherto been chiefly manifested in its scientific character as an educational establishment. The state is now feeling its worth as the main pillar of its military defense -- & as a consequence all its graduates are being pressed into the service of the state at this time.

/FHS/

Va Mil: Institute
Dec 29 1959
Rt Rev'd Leonidas Polk*

Dear Bishop

Your favor of the 11 Inst was rec'd just as I had returned with my command from Charlestown. The next day I was called to Richmond by the Legislature, to aid in devising ways & means for the more effectual armory of the state. The results are, that bills were unanimously reported from the joint Committee on Military Affairs appropriating \$500.000 for arms & munitions of war. They have also reported \$40.000 for additional buildings to us & an increase to our annuity of \$11,500. These things show that correctness exists in the minds of our representatives & I may add they are in no respect in advance of the sentiment of the people. Public meetings in our primary assemblies endorse the action of our Gov: & recommend thorough preparation. I am glad to learn that your labors have satisfactorily closed in Savannah. I had intended writing to you before you entered upon your work, but public duties have absorbed my mind ever since I had the pleasure of seeing you. (*Note: This letter goes on to discuss the establishment of the University of The South.*)

Virginia Military Institute
February 2, 1860
Col. George W. Munford*
Sec. of the Com'[monwealth]

Dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your communication of the 31 January, enclosing a commission from the Governor, constituting me a Commissioner in conformity with an **act*** making an appropriation for the purchase and manufacture of arms and munitions of war, passed January 26 [**Note:** *The correct date is 21 January.*] 1860.

Considering the special relations which I sustained to the state as the Superintendent of its Military Institute, I deem it a duty as well as a high honor to accept the appointment and I will endeavour to discharge its duties to the best of my ability.

Be pleased to convey to the Governor my high appreciation of the honor he has conferred upon me, and for yourself accept the assurances of my high regard and esteem.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Feby 3, 1860
Gen'l W. H. Richardson
Adj Gen

My dear Sir,

I have had a severe struggle in determining the course to pursue in acknowledging the appointment just rec'd from the Governor, making me one of the Commissioners. And I have finally only brought myself to the consent to serve, as a matter of DUTY from which I was not at liberty to shrink. I have not heard who the other commissioners are but I still think the Governor ought to put you upon it & then make it out & out a MILITARY COMMISSION. I have not been informed when & where it meets. Can you inform me. What is doing about your salary? As soon as I come down I will again make it my business to see to it. You will have observed that our bill has passed the Senate. I hope no one able will X it in the House. We are all well here. **Dr. Madison*** has reported for duty bringing with him his wife.

/FHS/

V.M.I.
July 3 [**Note:** *should read February 3*] 1860 J. G. Paxton Esq.

My dear Paxton

I have just rec'd my app't placing me upon the Commission & although the service comes upon me with many drawbacks, I feel constrained from a sense of duty to accept. & have accordingly done so. I am more & more inclined to the opinion that the repairing the old muskets, the manufacture of cartridge boxes & scabbards & accoutrements can be better attended to at Jordans Point property. Think of it & see how the matter may be amended so as to get this.

I have no notion as to the time the Commission will meet & I should be glad to know. I will **go down**,* at a moments call. How comes on our bill in the House? All well here. The **Small Pox*** is disappearing.

With kindest regards,
/FHS/

***NOTE:** Col. Smith, the other members of the Armory Board (Commission), and Governor Letcher traveled north from 7 February to about 9 March 1860 to inspect armories at Springfield, Harper's Ferry, and West Point. See end notes under Commissioner, Armory Board, Armory Commission, and Richmond Arsenal and Armory.**

Va Military Institute
March 10, 1860
Capt. James Kenney*
Harrisonburg Va

My dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 6. I would say that the rifle to which I refer is a **percussion lock rifle*** & one very little inferior to the **Minié rifle**.* It will be satisfactory to your company I am sure.

We have no accoutrements at this arsenal nor are there any at Richmond. The Armory Board will procure them as soon as possible.

It would be well for you to get your order for the Rifles at once. As we have only 150 of them.

I shall be pleased to see you here at my house.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
March 12, 1860
Col. A. M. Barbour*
Harper's Ferry

My dear Colonel,

I have rec'd a proposition from John Mix of Taylor Co made through James K. Smith Esq. the delegate from Taylor to supply us with the musket stocks req'd. He charges 25. cents delivered at the Ferry. Is this the person with whom you contract, and is this the price? Would it be better for you or for us to make the Contract, in the event of effecting an exchange for some of the seasoned stocks?

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
March 12, 1860
Capt. Morton Marye
Alexandria Va

My dear Sir,

As absences for a month on the duties connected with the Armory Board has delayed my reply to your favor of the 18 Feb. which I found on my table upon my return.

It will be impossible for your Company to get any arms or accoutrements until they can be manufactured, unless the bill now pending in Congress authorizes the sale of arms to the state should become a law. In this event, it is possible as many muskets & rifles, of the (unclear) (unclear) style would be purchased (or?) would be demanded by the immediate wants of the state. So that your Company will have to wait with patience. In the mean time, we hope to get the Armory into operation this fall & then turn out some 5.000 to 10.000 minié muskets per annum.

It will afford me personally much pleasure to promote the wishes of your fine Company, as far as my public duty as a Commissioner will allow for I am sure they DESERVE all that they ask in this particular.

/FHS/

Va Mil Institute
March 12, 1860
Capt. Arthur L. Rogers
Leesburg Va

My dear Sir,

Your letter was handed to me just (unclear) I left Richmond, & I have not been able to reply to it before today.

The question of the distribution of the arms will be settled by the Commissioners as soon as we have rec'd from the Adjutant Gen'l a Report which we have requested him to prepare. This Report embraces the number of Volunteer Companies, their description, location & armament.

I am sure you will find in me every disposition to confide in one of my boys the best army the state can provide but it will be impossible to decide now on the subject of your letter altho' it will receive the earliest attention so soon as we get the Report referred to.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
March 15, 1860
Mr. Albert H. Campbell
Washington City

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter rec'd, say that there will be a series of (unclear – tests?) carried on here, already commenced & which will last until the 1 July.

You will please send by express, to my address, all of the **Burnside guns*** with 500 **Cartridges.***

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Lexington, Va
March 15, 1860
Col. Colt*
Hartford Conn

Dear Sir,

Gen'l Richardson, Adj. Gen'l, has doubtless informed you that I am one of the Commissioners on the part of the state for the purchase of arms, etc. We have 144 of **your revolving Carbine*** or musket at Rich'd in good order & we desire to exchange them for their equivalent in the **Navy Pistol*** & to get in addition as many as will make 500. Upon what terms can we get the Navy Pistol. We will forward the Carbines to your address.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
March 15, 1860
Capt. John Blair Hoge
Martinsburg Va

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your esteemed favor of the 8' Inst & in reply to it beg leave to state, that so far as the Commissioners have acted, their opinion coincides with that which you have expressed in reference to the arming of the Cavalry. We are now making arrangements to purchase a sufficient number of sabers and Navy revolvers to meet the immediate wants of the Cavalry service in the most exposed positions.

I will take pleasure in (filing?) your application for consideration.

/FHS/ Commissioner

Va Military Institute
March 15, 1860
Capt. E. G. (Al...?)

My dear Captain,

Your esteemed favor of the 5 Inst. has been rec'd & I avail myself of the first moment to reply to it.

To enable the Armory Commission to execute the law under which they act, we have called upon the Adj. Gen for a report on the number & description of volunteers in Va with the arms in their hands & their locations.

The state owns some 50 Brass pieces of Artillery, 6 pd/s and if any of these are (assigned?) to any artillery Companies in the state, I presume your Company would present as strong, of not stronger, claims to any. It is all important that these arms, which are very valuable & which we cannot purchase and do not propose to manufacture shall be PRESERVED (unless?) in the time of trial we shall be found wanting.

What arrangements have you for keeping these pieces & ensuring their SAFE keeping.

With regard to (rifles?) and accoutrements the Commissioners are now prosecuting enquiries, looking to as speedy a procurement of them as possible.

We meet again on 15 April.

You may be sure, my dear Captain, that the merits of your Company are well known to the Commission & will be fully considered.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
March 15, 1860
Henry B. DuPont Esq.*
Wilmington Del

My dear Henry,

Your very satisfactory reply to my letter covered the entire ground demanded by the Commissioners & I convey to you the thanks of all for the valuable hints and suggestions presented by you.

We are satisfied that it is useless for us to attempt the manufacture of powder, with the wide field of labor open before us in other ways. We now (unclear) to purchase say \$10.000 worth of your best powder, for artillery, musket, and rifle service, such as is now used in the U.S. Service & put up to last. Can you inform me at once, upon what terms you can furnish us and in what time: delivered free of charge to the state, at Richmond.

We are also anxious to know in what manner you would advise us to keep it and as this is an important matter, the Commissioners propose, if possible, in going North and, the last of April, to call by and have a talk with you.

I have taken the liberty of an old friend to say to them that they would find a hospitable fireside in the House of Harry Dupont.

I am unwell today & am conducting my correspondence in my Chamber, but am as ever,

Your attached friend

/FHS/

*(Note: See item in The Gazette, Lexington, Va., dated March 15, 1860, regarding "**Military Equipments for the South**"* in the endnotes.)*

Va Military Institute
March 16, 1860
Capt. Geo. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

Your favor of the 14th Inst with the enclosed memorandum from Col. Cocke was rec'd last night.

I think the points covered by Col. Cocke's enquiries embrace the essential information needed, unless a paragraph be added as to the specimens of the French Camp equipment which is very complete: with specimens of Infantry & rifle cartridge boxes (unclear).

I would advise you to close a contract at once with Mr. Ames for altering and scabbarding the sabres at the Armory, upon the terms proposed. I would also order the cavalry sabers (1000) and 200 light artillery sabres for they will be needed as soon as they can be procured. I have received several letters from Captains of Cavalry companies, very urgently pressing their destitution and the necessity for speedy action.

I have been an invalid ever since my return, from the effects of a cold contracted in Richmond...

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
March 20, 1860
Capt. R. T. W. Duke*
Charlottesville Va

My dear Sir,

Your letter with the accompanying order from the Adjutant Gen'l has been rec'd & I have forwarded to you by way of Staunton & the Central Rail Road 4 boxes containing 50 percussion Rifles and implements.

I have added to these, at the request of Mr. (Hindman?) 60 Rifle flask & shot (unclear) belts, 60 shot pouches & 60 cap pouches for rifles. These are not included in your order, so that you will have to get an order from the Adj. Gen'l to cover all the accoutrements, otherwise you must return items.

I do not know whether your bond corresponds with the existing law. I will inquire & inform you. The possibility is, it will be necessary to change it to include the accoutrements.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
March 22, 1860
Capt. Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Captain,

I have rec'd this morning the enclosed letter from H. DuPont. Had I not better close an engagement with him for the am't of Powder authorized by our order. It appears time will be required to prepare the am't & I presume by the 1 June, we shall be in funds to pay. Let me know what amount was ordered. \$10.000 or \$20.000.

I made the condition that the powder should be delivered in Richmond at their risk. We could (unclear: decide? determine?) at our next meeting where to store it.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
April 10, 1860
Capt. Geo. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I rec'd through Col. Cocke in today's mail the two letters of Mr. Ames & your reply to them. I concur with you in the arrangement you have proposed as that seems to be the only way of meeting the duty devolving upon us by the law.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
April 11, 1860
Capt. S. B. Gibbons*
Harrisonburg Va

My dear Sir,

In reply to our letter of the 9th I would say that we had only 200 of the Rifles referred to, on deposit here and if Capt. Kenney should get an order for his company we shall have none left.

Our Commissioners meet on the 27th Inst & we shall then see how far (we?) may be able to purchase rifles by purchase & if any can be had, the **Letcher Rifles*** may be provided for. Don't let them disband, therefore.

/FHS/

(Note: Smith departed Lexington for Richmond on Tuesday, 24 April. Major J. T. L. Preston was in command as Acting Superintendent.)

Va Military Institute
April 15. 1860
Henry Dupont Esq
Wilmington Del.

My dear Harry,

I have yours of the 12th. The suggestion you made with regard to the Richmond Magazine had occurred to me, & I will bring it before the Board when we meet on the 26th. One half of the powder will probably be deposited here as we have a depot of arms here. This will require the building of a magazine here. We can very readily do this with the funds at our Command, and I should be glad to receive from you a rough plan with the probable cost of a magazine for 300 Barrels of Powder. Send it to me at Richmond Exchange Hotel.

The Commissioners will take up at that time your proposition in reference to the (unclear).

(Note: The remainder of the letter deals with financial matters and State bonds.)

Va Mil Institute
 April 24, 1860
 J. D. Imboden, Esq.
 Staunton

Dear Sir,

I leave here this morning [*Tuesday*] to attend a meeting of the Commissioners in Richmond on Saturday next.

If Messrs. **Poultney*** will have their arms sent to the V.M.I. they will be tested at the same time the others are & a report made on the result. Will you write to them, as I am now just about to start.

/FHS/

(**Note:** Before Smith met with the Armory Commission on Saturday, 27 April, he attended a meeting of the VMI Board of Visitors on Thursday and Friday. Both meetings were held in Richmond.)

April 26, 1860. *Board of Visitors Minutes*, — ~~O~~dered that in the execution of the militia law of 1860 the following rank of the Supt., Professors, Assistant Professors & other officers of the Institute to be established.

Superintendent	Col. of Engineers	
J. T. L. Preston	Major — —	
Wm Gilham	— — —	
Thos. H. Williamson*	— — —	
Thomas J. Jackson	— — —	
R. E. Colston	— — —	
S. Crutchfield	— — —	
R. S. Madison	— — —	
M. B. Hardin*	Captain —	
J. M. Causland*	Lieut. —	
J. Chenowith*	— —	
S. Ship*		Lieut of Engineers
D. Truehart	— —	
O. C. Henderson*	— —	
To the Surgeon the rank of Major of Engineers		
Quartermaster	Captain —	
Commissary	— —	

(**Note:** April 27 1860. Meeting of the Armory Board. No record found.)

(**Note:** Smith returned to VMI briefly, and then sometime around 4 or 5 May he departed for New York, apparently to meet with Mr. Ames.)

Va Mil Institute

May 8 1860

Merrill Thomas & Co.*

Baltimore

Gent'n,

Col Smith is at this time in New York. He will return about the 15th...

Mr. Merrill might visit Lexington at any time after the 15th and show what his gun can do.

/RHC/

Proposition submitted to Mr. Ames* by Col. F. H. Smith, one of the Armory Commissioners.

(Note: There is no indication when this proposition was formally submitted to Mr. Ames.)

The Commissioners are desirous of getting up, in the very best style, the requisite machinery for the manufacture of the rifled musket, so as to turn out, in the shortest possible time, a musket of which the state and all concerned may have just cause to be proud.

Relying upon the skill and judgment of Mr. Adams and such master workmen and operatives as he may be able to collect around him to put the machinery into successful operation, the Commissioners are desirous of securing the services of Mr. Ames and the establishment which he controls in getting up in concert with Mr. Adams and putting into efficient working order, all the requisite machinery in the manner and time best suited to the object in view.

They would desire so far to enlist the experience of Mr. Ames in this work, as to give his establishment a participation in whatever reputation may result from the successful works of the Virginia Armory. So that should the State think proper to lease out the same at the end of two years or to combine its means with private enterprise for the further manufacture of fire arms, the establishment may be continued with a reputation affording (unclear) of profitable investment.

With these (various controls?) bring (unclear) action I should be prepared to make to Mr. Ames as a single member of the Commission the following proposition.

1. To authorize Mr. Ames to make all the machinery that may be judged necessary for turning out, at the Va Armory, in the best manner, the best rifled musket that can be made, at the rate of prices stipulated in the estimate submitted by Mr. Ames, assuming that the entire machinery for the full and successful working of the Armory shall not exceed \$153,000 exclusive of the Turbine Wheels & the connecting pipes & estimated not to exceed \$3000.

2. In part payment for said machinery to sell to Mr. Ames all the Va and U.S. Muskets of old pattern but in good order on deposit at the Richmond & Lexington Arsenals, estimated at 55,000 to 60,000 at the rate of \$1.50 each. The same to be delivered to Mr. Ames at Richmond, from time to time, as may be required by Mr. Ames:

3. To pay the balance that may be due in Virginia state Bonds at par value for the Bonds.

4. This proposition to be approved by Col. Cocke and Captain Randolph, the other members of the Commission, & if approved by them to be also approved by the Governor before a contract is finally closed.

/FHS/

(**Note:** Smith returned to Lexington from New York, apparently by way of Richmond, on Saturday, 12 May. It appears that he was accompanied to Richmond by Mr. Ames.)

(**Note:** Ames visits VMI with his daughter, Monday 14 to Thursday 17 May.)

Va Military Institute
May 14, 1860 (**Note:** Not sent until the 16th)
Lewis Crenshaw Esq.
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

(**Note:** The first part of this letter concerns erection of a mill at Richmond to manufacture woolen fabrics and gray cloth for cadet uniforms.)

I would submit as an additional item in the proposition which I have made to Mr. Ames, the purchase of 1000 of the **Dean & Adams Pistols*** at \$17.50 each and twenty five thousand of the finest cartridges to correspond at \$2.75 per hundred: provided the arrangement proposed for the exchange of the Va **Harpers Ferry musket*** is carried into effect – and further to let Mr. Ames take all the old muskets in the Richmond Amory which need repair & are repairable, estimated at some 1200...

Virginia Military Institute
May 16, 1860

Va Military Institute
May 17, 1860
Capt Geo. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I avail myself of the return of Mr. Ames to Richmond to submit to you, for the consideration of Col. Cocke and yourself, the proposition which I have made to him, founded as nearly as I could make it, upon the basis of our conversations on the subject while I was in Richmond. I think we had better accept the proposition as modified by Mr. Ames, and that you may understand the points I present herewith an alternate statement showing the money difference between my proposition to Mr. Ames and his reply.

The cost of the machinery for the Armory including all the shop fixtures, shafting &c is estimated not to exceed

	\$153.000
The turbine wheels & connections	3.000
1000 Dean & Adams pistols at 17.50	17,500
2000 cartridges for — at 2.75 per C	687.50

	\$174,187.50

Brought forward	\$174.187.50
-----------------	--------------

which sum proposed to pay as follows.

60.000 muskets at \$1.50	90.000
Balance in Bonds at par	84.187.50

\$174.187.50

The 1200 old muskets needing repairs, which I throw in, are really worth nothing to the state and I do not estimate them.

Mr. Ames accepts this proposition, provided we estimate the bonds at their market value. This makes a difference of 10 pr. cent which I think we may estimate as the minimum rate: making the total amount in cash for the entire contract \$92.606.25: or deducting the cost of the pistols & ammunition as not chargeable to the Armory fund (\$18.187.10) we have \$74.418.75 as the amount to be paid out of the \$320.000 appropriated to the Armory for the purpose of putting it into operation if Mr. Ames' proposition is accepted and \$66.000 if my own proposition stands.

You will observe that either proposition leaves a considerable margin over the estimated expenses of working the Armory for two years. This we made out upon the joint estimates of Mr. Ames & Mr. Adams, as not exceeding \$200.000 for 2 years and these estimates altho' made out upon a different basis from Mr. Ball: correspond very nearly with his. The margin left for contingent expenses & for over hauling the Armory is about \$45.000.

Mr. Ames expects to give his personal attention to the machinery – not only in getting it up but in putting it into successful operation, and while the estimate which he has made embraces some tools & machines (unclear) may be dispensed with. There may be others which the new model musket may make indispensable but in any view of the subject \$153.000 is the judgment of Mr. Ames as well as of Mr. Adams will be (unclear) for putting up a model establishment. I would be glad if you would have a full conversation with Mr. Ames and if you approve of the proposition which I have submitted as modified by Mr. Ames & Col. Cocke concurs, then the Communications to the Governor which I will endeavour to prepare today for your consideration may, when approved by this Commission be at once laid before the Gov.

/FHS/

I will prepare the Communication to the Governor at another time. Perhaps it may be better to hear from you first. You must have in mind that the result of the whole project is 10.000 of the best rifled muskets at \$16 each equal to \$160.000.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
May 18, 1860
Capt. Charles Dimmock*
Richmond Va

My dear Captain,

I am in rec't of your favor of the 15 Inst.

I have (unclear) the Militia Law to which you call my attention, but I do not think it applies to me. It refers to the duplicate bonds when arms are issued to any "Company" and the (contract?) clearly shows that such company is neither the public Guard at Richmond or the Guard of Cadets here. These Sabres are to be placed on deposit in this Arsenal (unclear) & to be used, or a portion of them, as they may be needed by the Cadets & then replaced in the Arsenal. This is my view of the matter, but I am willing to do whatever may be right about it to the (unclear) Ad't Gen'l (unclear) about M. Ames left here yesterday with the hope we may be able soon to conclude a definite agreement with him (unclear).

Va Military Institute
May 18, 1860
Col. P. St. Geo. Cocke
Jefferson PO Va

My dear Sir,

I reached home on Saturday night [12 May]. I left Fanny [Smith's daughter] in Stanton to visit her aunt and she came up on Monday [14 May] with Mr. Ames & his daughter.

I have had a full & free conference with Mr. Ames in relation to the machinery etc. and I have submitted to him a proposition in writing to this effect, viz. to allow him to furnish all the machinery, estimated not to exceed \$153.000 at the specific prices handed to us in Richmond, to take from him 1000 of the Dean & Adams pistols, provided he take in pay't 60.000 of the old muskets at \$1.50 & the balance in State Bonds. This proposition I think he will accept and the papers which I have forwarded to Capt. Randolph will in due time be laid before you. Considering the experience & ability of Mr Ames in the special work in hand, we should consider ourselves fortunate if we can secure his services in the terms proposed...."

Va Military Institute
May 19. 1860
Genl Wm H. Richardson
Adj. Genl
Martinsburg Va

My dear Sir,

I have yours of the 17 & am glad you have started upon your tour. This is one of the most important steps towards a reform of some of the abuses of the Militia (Regulations?).

What do mean about the Powder? You must look out, or you will be classed among the respectable fraternity of Swing Tails.' Five Hundred Barrels of Powder only supply 50.000 lbs, the Barrels only holding 100 lbs each. The service allowance for a Command of 5000 men is 40.000 lbs. We desire to practice our men in firing & 10.000 lbs is a small margin for this & Artillery. The annual consumption at this Institute is nearly 1000 lbs & this is used most economically. We could readily use 2000 lbs a year. Every salute we fire burns 20 lbs. A morning & evening gun would consume 1000 lbs a year. We were thinking what we were doing when we laid in a supply & only doubted about making 1000 barrels instead of 500. Colt's carbines & rifles are to go to him in exchange he is to send Pistols.... (**Note:** *The remainder of the letter concerns fund raising activities at VMI.*)

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
May 22, 1860
Messrs **Poultney & Trimble***
200 Balt[imore]St.
Baltimore

Gentlemen,

I beg leave to acknowledge the rec't of your favor of the 16 & to state that **Smith: Carbine*** & the box of loaded Cartridges have arrived safely.

I will have the Carbine carefully tried & will give you the result of the experiments.

I would thank you to forward me a bill for the Carbine & cartridges.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
May 24, 1860
[No address; probably to Col. Cocke]

My dear Sir,

I am sorry to see you are in the midst of your (Courts?) for I was scarcely ever more busy than I am now. My protracted absences & the near approach of the annual meeting of the B of Visitors give me the fullest employment. To all this, I have a budget of letters every morning from some aspirant in a new patented arms or (unclear) &c. Still, the matter about the machinery is all important & I think it may be well to look into it as soon as you can find time. The more I think of the proposition to Mr. Ames, the more favorably I am impressed with the importance of having his co-operation in the work.

I have a letter from Adams. He writes in a good tone & will accept if Mr. Ames puts up the machinery. He says he has confidence in his judgment, skill, & willingness. He met **Ball*** at Harpers' Ferry & asked him why he did not accept the office of (Master?) Armorer. He replied that he ~~would~~ have accepted, if it had not been for the d-n Commissioners – that he had no idea of letting them or anyone else dominate over him."

I have rec'd the copy of the Har'd D... It seems to be well gotten up. But why did you not put your name to it.

/FHS/

We are commencing our experiments with the Small arms & will have results when you come up in June.

Va Military Institute
May 24, 1860
R. Taylor*
Pri'l Am. Pri & Arms Co
Willard Hotel
Washington City DC

Dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your favor of the 22d Inst.

The gun, pistol & primers have been rec'd & will receive (unclear) attention. We are about commencing a series of experiments with the various arms which have been sent to me in anticipation of the meeting of the Commissioners at this place between the 23d June & 4 July. The arms & primers which you have sent will receive due consideration.

I hardly think it will be necessary for you to attend personally for it is designed to conduct these experiments with great care as we have time to make & the results will be carefully noted &

made the basis of a special report to the General Assembly. The cautions which you have suggested will receive due consideration.

/FHS/

-Belmead**

May 29, 1860

Hon Geo. M. Dallas*

Min. Plen for the U.S. of Am.

London

Sir,

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your very prompt and (unclear) reply to our letter asking to be advised by you how we might procure specimens, as models, of certain small arms used in the English Army, of the most modern and approved construction.

We will avail ourselves of your kind offer to order of the Messrs. **Lancaster*** of London for the State of Virginia the specimens (unclear) announced and what the Messrs L. say they can furnish.

These arms will be useful to us in determining by a (knowledge?) of similar arms proposed to be manufactured in this State and also in (deciding?) between the (unclear) arms now in use upon the best to be found and for the immediate use of the (State?). We expect to procure specimens of similar arms made in France as well as of those made in this country.

The arms may be shipped from Liverpool through (unclear) in New York (or directly?) to Richmond (unclear) rifled muskets and we would be glad to know whether (unclear) Messrs Lancaster (unclear) to furnish us and if they can (unclear) and at what cost?

2 .577 (unclear) Infantry Muskets
2 Lancaster Rifles
2 Rifle (unclear) Rifles
1 Cavalry Carbine
1 Cavalry Pistol
1 Heavy Cavalry Sabre
1 Light Cavalry Sabre
1 Horse Artillery Sabre
1 (unclear) Artillery Sword

List of specimens to be furnished to the Commissioners of Virginia by Messrs Lancaster of London.

Va Military Institute

May 30, 1860

Major Charles B. Ball*

Leesburg, Va

My dear Sir,

Your letter of the 26 Inst. Enclosing testimonials in behalf of Charles R. Norris for State Cadet app't has been rec'd and will be submitted to the Board of Visitors on the 25 June.

I Hope there will be no difficulty in the app't. I have just learned that one of your countrymen R. H. Dulany Esq. will be a member of our Board, vice Wm. C. Rives declined.

We are at the moment experimenting with the Breech Loading guns & I shall be pleased to try Col. (unclear)

See (unclear) it has been sent up by Adams Express Co. We have now some 6 or 8 different patterns before us....

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 1, 1860
Capt. C. Dimmock
Richmond, Va.

My dear Captain,

You may as well keep the Sabres until the belts arrive as we are in no hurry for them. As soon as the Iron rifled Cannon comes to hand from **Parrott*** at the **West Point Foundry*** & sent to your care, forward it without delay if you (please?)

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 1, 1860
Capt. Geo. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your favor of the 27 May and am this morning in rec't of one from Col. Cocke of the same date. Cocke has not sent me your letter concerning the proposal modifications in the proposal (unclear) to Mr. Ames but I infer from his letter the general tenor of it.

Most glad would (I be?) if the Richmond manufacturers were prepared to take (this?) contract for putting up the necessary machinery at the armory: or were so far prepared (that?) they could do a part of it. But we know enough of the business of gun making to know that success in our enterprize can only be ensured by combining skill, experience, & the most enlarged (unclear) in it. In the case of Mr. Ames we have a gentleman who has been working for U.S. Army & Navy since 1832 & with entire satisfaction. He has supplied most of the machinery for the U.S. Armories at Springfield & Harpers Ferry as well as that for the Enfield Armory & the London Armory (unclear). It is rare then that a man could present himself – or rather an establishment be found, combining more of the essential elements to success than the Chicopee Company.

Again – the proposition of Mr. Ames is a most advantageous one, and could be made by few companies. Indeed, the exchange of the old muskets imposing on him a heavy risk, (which?) few men could take, & Mr. Ames could not, but for the advantageous position which his Factory occupies.

I have no doubt he would consent to some of the machinery being made at Richmond, but I would hold him responsible for the entire job and let all other work be done under his advice & sub-contract. We shall be better satisfied that we are on the side of safety.

The proposition submitted to Mr. Ames only calls for so much machinery as may be deemed necessary under the advice of the Master (Armorer?) for turning out at least 5000 muskets. We may have not need (unclear) over \$153,000 worth & whatever is (unclear) we might try & have made at home – but I would not compromise the security of our enterprize by breaking the job with the Chicopee Co.

It may be desirable as Col. Cocke suggests to have a reservation of 10.000 of the best of our old arms: altho' as he (Ames) expects it to take 3 or 4 years before he can work them off, we can readily run the chances of buying them ourselves at the lower figure.

Dr. Graham (once?) of the Board of Public works has been to see me with a proposition from Mr. **Whitney*** of Whitneyville. He is willing to take 30.000 of our old muskets in exchange for pistols etc. I told him I thought our muskets were as good as the arms I saw of Whitney in Richmond.

Mr. Ames said that he would authorize me to sell as many of the muskets as I could in his acc't at \$1.50 if he took the contract, showing his willingness to part with them at cost. I asked Dr. Graham what Whitney would give cash for 5000. He did not make an offer but was willing to receive a proposal from me. I was not prepared to make one. With regard to scabbards & cartridge boxes we had better postpone action until we meet here. We are very much in need of them for the cadets -- & indeed to enable them to appear decently on the 4: I gave Mr. Ames a limited order on my own responsibility for present necessities, in the hope the order would be sanctioned by the Commissioners at their next meeting – otherwise to pay for them from the funds of the Cadets. I think the boxes & scabbards should be made here & they can be manufactured to advantage in connection with our Percussion Cap establishment. When you are at leisure I want you to read Mon's Bellate's letter. It is a curiosity.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 2, 1860
Capt. Geo. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I have this morning yours of the 30th with Col. Cocke's response etc. My letter of yesterday's date covers my reply in reference to the contract with Ames. I will write to Mr. Ames today & make the suggestion referred to as to the modification in his proposition.

I think I could (unclear) let (unclear) make 500 (Cartridge?) boxes, Bayonet scabbard & pouches. As I said in my last, I have been needing them (unclear) & have written for them in vain & have finally (unclear) a small order to Ames. We can compare quality etc. in the two Co's. You had better get a specimen (unclear) of (this?) new pattern from the Ordnance office. You will have to make your arrangements to be here between 24 of June & 4 July.

We are coming to some conclusive results in the guns we are now trying -- & they are accumulating every day. I hear nothing from Parrott.

/FHS/

If an immediate meeting of the Board be necessary & I think it may be. I will meet the Commissioners in Staunton. But this would not supercede the one here between the 24 June & 4 July.

Va. Military Institute
June 2, 1860

James T. Ames Esq.
Chicopee Mass

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your valued favor of the 29 May, and regret to learn that you have been unwell. I hope ere this you are in your usual health.

I have this morning rec'd final responses from Col. Cocke and Capt. Randolph in regard to the proposition for machinery and a single modification is suggested which I will (unclear) submit to you.

You will appreciate the consideration which prompts the authorities of this state to encourage domestic manufactures. Besides the wisdom of the general policy, recent events have added strength to the principle. A large establishment at Richmond, has through its head, called upon the Governor and urged the claims of southern machine ~~shops~~ makers, to have an opportunity of making proposals. The (conditions?) which have induced us to submit the proposition already made to you are such as fully to vindicate the Commissioners and the Governor, for every step has been carefully & most maturely considered. But it may silence (cavilers?) if you would agree to have such part of the machinery as could be satisfactorily made in Richmond, let out there. You could specify parts – (unclear) the character & quality of the work – and inspect and pass it before it is received. We have understood that your expectation is to have some parts of the machinery made in Richmond, and if this be the case, the proposed modification will not materially vary the general character of the proposition which I have submitted to you.

Let me hear from you without delay in reply, and if you consent to the proposed modification, please suggest what machines or what parts of machines, you would consent thus to let out in Richmond, with the value in cash of each.

I will send you by express, a bayonet.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 4, 1860
His Excellency
Governor Moore* of Ala

My dear Sir,

Some time since I addressed a communication to the **H. C. C. Clay*** upon the subject of purchasing arms for the state of Ala. I am one of a commission of three appointed by the Governor of Va under act of the Va Assembly of Jan. 1860 having in charge the same duty for this state.

The Va Commissioners having given the whole subject great labor & attention, may have it in their power to aid you very much in the duty with which you are charged in this particular & at the same time promote the enterprize in which the state of Va is now engaged.

The commissioners will meet here between the 24 June & the 4 July at which time the annual meeting of the Board of Visitors of this Institution will take place. Considering the importance of the whole subject, the opportunity that will be afforded you of witnessing the trial of some of the modern arms, and especially of seeing the operations of the Va Military Institute, it may be of importance to you to visit us at that time, & I would take this occasion in the name of the Institution & of the Commissioners of Va to invite you to be present at the interesting exercises then taking place and it will afford me personally great pleasure to meet you & to extend to you all the attention in my power.

/FHS/ [enclosed] Rept [report] of Sen't [Senate] of Va

Va. Military Institute
June 5, 1860

Col. J. M Wampler,
Belmont, P.O. Loudon Co. Va.

My dear Sir,

I have rec'd by the hand of Major [unclear name] the sketches of your improved breech loading gun. I am now conducting some experiments at this place, with some of the most improved arms of this description, and I should be pleased to have a specimen gun of your model for this purpose.

(Unclear) as a Virginian in any effort in this line by a Virginian, I shall be pleased to give your gun a fair (trial?) that you may receive all the benefits which your genius or skill may deserve.

I will therefore order for the State of Va one of your guns complete, which you will please send to me without delay by (unclear) express.

/FHS/ Supt. V M'y I

Va Military Institute
June 5, 1860

Messrs. Know. (Nees or Neer?) &c Co.
No. 16 No. 4th St. Phil.

My dear Sirs,

I am in rec't of your favor of the 31 May. The Commissioners of Va will meet at this place between the 23rd June & the 4th July and w'd no doubt be pleased to confer more fully with you in reference to your proposed enterprize connected with a location of your business permanently at Lexington.

I am not authorized to act singly in the matter of (unclear) (unclear) the meeting of the Board for any (unclear) in the (premises).

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 5, 1860
Capt Geo. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Captain,

I have duly rec'd your letter with Mr. Dallas' letter & Col. Cocke's response. I have signed the latter and have dispatched it to Mr. Dallas by the mail today.

I agree with you that it may be all important to combine our model as far as practicable to that of the U.S. Gov't so as to admit of the parts interchanging. Yet if we find that the Gov't model may be substantially improved, it might be best for us to act upon the principle of PROGRESS anticipating that the U.S. Gov't may find it best to keep up with the improvements of the age. In my judgment the benefits to be derived from the guns just ordered from England is chiefly to be in the (unclear – example?) they may be offered for improvement and still, it is possible, that these (unclear) may be adopted & the parts be made interchangeable with the U.S. Musket.

By the way, Capt. **Dahlgren*** has been invited by the Board of Visitors to attend our next examination as one of the Bd. of Examiners. I hope he will be here, for his (unclear) will be of immense value to the Com'ers [*Commissioners*] in the duties which will concern us at that time. Can't you write to him to urge (unclear) him to accept. **Davis*** of the U.S. Senate addresses the Cadets.

The enclosed was rec'd today. I have replied that our Bd would meet in the last of this month.

I write in haste but (unclear)

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 6, 1860
Gen. W. H. Richardson

My dear Sir,

I am in r't of yours of the 4' & I am glad to learn of the successful trip you have had. You should devote a month or two each year in the same way, as the surest mode of looking after the public property & stimulating proper military pride.

Both were purchased, I think, with the sabers & I cannot conceive why they have not come to hand. Unless it was that the sabres were sent as some (unclear) they had been inspected by the Ordnance Office & the Belts had not been. I am sure we ordered them. Capt Randolph will advise you on this point.

I think these revolving Carbines are dangerous for our troops & I would return them for what they are worth & get something safer for the men. If they are not revolving, it will not make so much difference.

I cannot understand the conduct of Bennett, the Auditor.

The Attorney Gen'l sanctioned the draft It has been the uniform practice of the government & (unclear) with that of the U.S. Service as illustrated in the Navy Bill just passed, giving back pay to the beginning of fiscal year because annuities are indivisible & date from the beginning of the current fiscal year.

I hope you are much benefitted by your trip & that you will be prepared to inspect and examine the VMI Boys with the spirit of a (unclear)

/FHS/

This is reported that Dr. Leyburn has gone down to Richmond to marry (unclear) (unclear) Wrenn.

Va Military Institute

June 7, 1860

Capt James Kenney*

Harrisonburg Va

My dear Sir,

I yesterday sent to your command upon the order of the Gov 51 Rifles & accoutrements etc complete.

The bond which you have sent is not sufficient under the law. I would refer you to section 31 of Act passed 30 Mar 1860 & you will see that the Commandant of the (unclear) must give triplicate bonds with surety, certified by the Clerk of the County to which the (unclear) belongs etc. Please refer to the act. I have not detained the arms from want of compliance with the act inasmuch as I know you could readily make this right hereafter. Please attend to it, as soon as convenient.

I could not (send?) to you more than the order calls for although if you get an order for Hall's Carbines I can send you down as many as you need.

I have sent you good rifles & I think you will be pleased with them.

Your order nearly exhausts our supply.

/FHS/

The rifles may be estimated at \$16 each. There are no Bayonets (unclear) & they could not easily be supplied.

Va Military Institute

June 9, 1860

Col. Wm J. Green*

Falmouth Va

My dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you & your brother for your contribution to the Bust etc. and I shall place \$10 to the credit of the Alumni.

Our Commissioners have purchased Cavalry sabers & we are now arranging to buy pistols – so that the Cavalry arm will be well provided for – Not so well the Infantry. We cannot buy the Rifle Musket except a virtually CONDEMNED musket made up of CONDEMNED parts of the Gov' musket -- & we are unwilling to put a DEFECTIVE arm in the hands of our soldiers. This being the case we are preparing to manufacture the Rifle musket & as this is necessarily a work of time, our friends in the Militia must wait with patience the results of our labors.

July and August would be the best time for a Militia officer to attend the duties unless he would take May & June. If the officer came with such claims (he?) would enable us to put him into quarters without risk to our discipline, we would give him the privilege, the expense being the same as that of a cadet...

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 13, 1860
Capt. James Kenney
Harrisonburg

My dear Sir,

After writing to you I rec'd a letter from the Adj. General informing me that you had sent the bond to him & that all was right.

I have also rec'd an order to deliver some of the rifles to Capt. Wingfield's (order? company?) but I have only 35 to 38 on hand. If these will (assure?) (unclear) can get them. The **Tactics*** will be out in a month or so.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 13, 1860
Capt. Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Captain,

I am in rec't of your kind favor of the 6' and 10' with the enclosed letters of Mr. King. I delayed a response to that of the 6' until I should hear from Mr. Ames in reply to the one I had addressed to him in reference to Anderson's suggestion. I rec'd Ames reply last night and enclose it to you.

I do not attach much importance to the hints of Mr. King.

I take it for granted that Mr. Ames expects to have remunerative profits – and I think it is reasonable that the margin should be a large one. The state of Va must expect to pay for that experience and skill which the Chicopee Factory enjoys and I think money is well laid out, when we pay well for such essential elements.

More than this, Ames runs great risk... 60,000 old muskets which he takes. The U.S. Government could not sell a much better musket at \$2.50 and yet he takes the Va Musket, which has no market value, because it is not known – at the same price \$1.50 which he pays for the Harpers Ferry Musket.

But we are not leaping in the dark in this contact. Besides having the estimates of Adams which correspond very nearly with those of Ames – an examination of those of Ball, with the allowance of a fair percentage (founded?) upon our present knowledge of the man, will show that he does not fall much below the contract, while he admitted that we should have to get the most of the machinery from Chicopee. He estimated the working machinery at \$70,000 reducing the number of the machines to the very lowest margin, & expected to make some of them do the work of several. Then he added \$40,000 for shop... presumes with a (unclear) annually (in gross?) to some \$120,000 so that I cannot think there can be the differences which Mr. King hints. (Unclear) have had several of the Agents of the patent arms to visit me while I am experimenting with them, and one is now here, and while each is of course interested in securing all he can for his own concern, all agree that the Chicopee establishment is the most reliable one in the Country. You know that it makes the **Maynard gun**,* and the Dean & Adams Pistol.

Your suggestion is a good one, that the hint (about? that?) Mr. King has given should make us cautious and prudent that we be not over-reached by exorbitant charges especially upon (unclear) that the estimate of Mr. Ames is correct.

I think it will be best for Mr. Ames to meet us here on the 28 June. You can be here on the night of the 26th and then have a free conference with Mr. Ames on the 28th. The Governor will also be here at this time so that we may be able to close the matter finally then.

In the meantime, you can endeavor to get something definite from Mr. King if you think it worth the trouble so that we may submit to the Governor what we not only fully approve ourselves – but are prepared to stand by. I will send King letters (unclear).

I sent you some bills, that they may be paid, if you have funds. If not bring them up with you. Of course you will bring **Dr. Mayo**.^{*} Make your arrangements to take soldiers lodgings & fare at the Institute. Let me hear from you as to the propriety of my writing to Ames to meet us there on 28th June.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 15, 1860
Gen'l Wm H. Richardson
Adjutant Gen.

My dear Sir,

I will send down the Rifles as directed & with reference to the ammunition for the Board, you may be sure it will be as good as any "dead shot" in the Magazine of Richmond.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 15, 1860
Capt. James Kenney
Harrisonburg Va

My dear Captain,

Since my last letter to you I have rec'd a letter from the Adj't Gen'l informing me that he can send from the Richmond Armory the number of Harpers Ferry rifles that may be necessary to make up the deficiency in the order for Capt Wingfield's Company. If you please, say to Capt. Wingfield that I will deliver to his order all I have & the balance will be forwarded to him from Richmond.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 16, 1860
Capt John Q. Wingfield
Lacy Springs
Rockingham Co Va

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your favor of the 15 Inst. And send today all the Rifles I have here. The remainder will be forwarded to your company from Richmond by the Adj. Gen'l Richardson.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
June 20, 1860
Capt. G. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I thought the bills I sent gave the localities of the parties to whom they were due. Merrill's establishment is in Balto & I think the agency of the Maynard gun is Washington.

I have also received yours with Maj. (Hayners?) kind hints – which we will talk over when we meet.

The 27th will do very well. I will write to Ames to meet us on 28th or 29th.

/FHS/

(Note: Between 23 June and 4 July, the Board of Visitors and the Armory Commission met at VMI. From Smith's correspondence we learn that Mr. James T. Ames met with the Commission. Also present were Governor Letcher, LTC William J. Hardee, Commandant of Cadets at the USMA, Capt. Parrott, and Professor Dennis Hart Mahan, of the U.S. Naval Academy. The 4th of July was VMI's traditional commencement day. Smith was in the habit of inviting influential guests at this time of the year to witness the final oral examinations of the cadets – and sometimes to participate in examining them – and to attend the commencement ceremony, normally held in the Lexington Presbyterian Church. On this occasion, LTC Hardee was given the opportunity to drill the Corps. This was Smith's way of promoting the work of the Institute.)

Va Military Institute
July 9, 1860
James T. Ames Esq.
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I have this morning forwarded the draft of the Contract to Capt Randolph to be submitted to the Governor and from what I (unclear) from him, I presume there will be no delay in the consummation of it.

I am sorry you could not come down to breakfast with us –but hope to have the pleasure at some future (date?).

Mrs. Smith joins me in kindest remembrances.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
July 9, 1860

Capt G. W. Randolph

My dear Captain,

I send you herewith the (manuscript?) draft of the article of agreement which you can put up in due form and deliver to the Governor. I spoke to him about it and I presume he will be ready to act as soon as it is (unclear).

Also Capt. Parrott; (unclear)

I was sorry you did not remain till the 4th. You would have enjoyed the experiences, particularly the (unclear) L. Col. Hardee.

Va Military Institute
July 10, 1860
Maj. R. Taylor
(unclear)
Richmond

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 3rd Inst. I would state that no conclusions have been arrived at, with reference to the primers. Our Commissioners are anxious to know more on the subject & should be gratified to be able to report something definite on the subject but cannot as yet.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
July 11, 1860
Gen'l Wm H. Richardson
Adj. Gen'l
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 9th Inst. With \$5 enclosed safely to hand.

This matter of arms is a delicate affair. Sharp & Whitney can very well afford to purchase our old arms at \$5 each if we pay them the price they ask for their arms.

We are getting the machinery of Ames at the usual cash sales – having by us the bills for the London Armory Co. as a guide – and we pay \$60.000 in refuse arms. Mr. Staples is (still?) beating the drums. It is melting hot. Dr. Leyburn goes down next week for his wife. I write in great haste & with hands full.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
July (unclear) 1860

Richmond, Va.

His Excellency Jno. Letcher,

Sir,

The Commissioners appointed under the act of 1860 and charged by the terms of the Act and by your instructions with for the organization at the Armory, beg leave to report.

That, as preliminary to this organization, the Commissioners were called upon, in the first phase, to determine what kind of arms should be manufactured at the Armory.

After a careful consideration of the whole subject, looking to the wants of the state and to the means at command, the Commissioners have been brought to the conclusion that the U.S. Rifle-Musket, corresponding in precise character with the English Enfield musket and the French Minié Musket, modified in some minor particulars is the best arm that can be provided for the Infantry of the state, and this is the only arm which it is proposed to be manufactured at this time.
[Page 1]

[NOTE: The lower half of the pages of this letterpress book that contain copies of Smith's original outgoing letters has been severely degraded by moisture damage, rendering the letters on the right side of each page totally unreadable.]

[Page 1, reverse, unreadable]

[Page 2] In this connection the Commissioners have devoted this special attention to the most approved of the patented breech loading guns; and having purchased a sample gun of each of these, have directed a series of experiments to be made at the Va Military Institute. The report of Major Colston, before referred to, contains the results of these experiments, so far as they have been made. Although not completed, they are conclusive of the opinion before expressed, that it would be inexpedient to undertake the manufacture of either of these weapons, and for the reasons assigned by Major Colston, equally so to purchase them. The most approved of them, could only be safely committed to select Corps, and would, in general, be unserviceable for the mass of the volunteer force of the state. They all need the trying tests of long service in the field before conclusive evidence is presented that the ... [the remainder of this page is unclear – faded due to moisture damage]

[Page 2, reverse, unreadable]

[Page 3] ... your approval and notification in a formal contract concluded with him for the same.

The Commissioners have not selected Mr. Ames for this important work without due consideration. For the last 30 years he has been a large contractor for the supply to the U.S. Government of many of the small arms used in the Army and Navy, and issued to the Militia; and much of the most important machinery used at the U.S. Armories of Springfield & Harpers Ferry has been provided at his establishment at Chicopee: In all their operations, the Commissioners were furnished by the War Department, as well as the chief officers of the Ordnance Service, with the most unqualified testimonials of the trustworthy integrity and Consummate skill of Mr. Ames. Indeed, these high qualities had directed to the Chicopee works, the attention of the British and Russian governments...

[Page 3, reverse, unreadable]

[Page 4] ... Muskets on (unclear) in the state arsenals at Lexington & Richmond in part consideration for the machinery and implements furnished by him. These muskets are virtually

Condemned by the Militia law of 1860: and even were they not, the Commissioners could never feel justified before the state, if they should give their official sanction or approval, to the issue of any inferior arms to any soldier of the state, who might be called upon, at any moment, to meet a foe whose fatal advantage would exist in his possessing a superior weapon. The morale of our state services is destroyed, the moment the Va soldier realizes that his own courage and patriotism are powerless, because sacrificed under the deadly fire of an enemy rifle musket, before either could have the opportunity to vindicate itself...

[Page 4, reverse, unreadable]

Va Military Institute
July 13, 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond, Va

My dear Captain,

I have prepared today, under a great pressure of other work, a Report to the Governor, which you can read, & if approved by you, submit to Col. Cocke.

It is open to modification & do not hesitate to apply the knife, and also the pen wherever needed. This paper is an important one, for it is designed to vindicate the (arming?) of the Com [Commonwealth]. I feel my own inability at the time to do (unclear). I am curious to know what Anderson has to say & I am sorry the interview between you should have assumed an unpleasant aspect. The weather has not been favorable to me, cool and I think you both may be excused for being a little hot at such a (unclear) and on such a subject.

I send the schedule of prices which I omitted when I sent the (unclear) the Contract.

Forward the Enfield Musket as soon as it arrives.

I send Colston's Report – Let the Doctor carefully copy it, for the Governor & return the copy sent.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
July 14, 1860

Capt. Geo W. Randolph,

Dear Captain,

I have this morning rec'd the memorandum C.F. Henning sen[ior?]. I think I should by all means entertain his proposition, & if the arms are in —~~perfect~~ order" and at a fair price, should not be (unclear) to trade. especially for the U.S. regulation percussion Rifle. You had better see the gentleman & let specimens of his arms be sent to Rich'd. I should acquiesce in the judgment of yourself and Col Cocke. You will have to (unclear – press?) the C [cartridge] boxes and scabbards. They are much needed - & as soon as they are ready, let them be turned over to Gen Richardson.

/FHS/

Va Mil Institute
July 14, 1860

Gen'l Wm H. Richardson
Adj. Gen'l

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 12 is received this morning. We are now making arrangements for the manufacture of C boxes and Bayonet scabbards - & as soon as they can be made they will be turned over to you. They would have been made long since, but we could not get their pattern. from the War Dept: Squirrels and Partridges would be as good games, as John Brown, so we shall have full use for the Powder.

I am sorry to hear the contents of your (unclear) note. Something must be done to correct the evil. Do try your hand & I will do the same.

/FHS/ (**Note:** *A note was added, but it is unclear.*) Report of the Com [committee] on Discipline)

Va Military Institute
July 14, 1860

Capt. C. Dimmock
Richmond Va

Dear Captain,

I send you the bond of Capt Winfield [Wingfield?] as requested & which you can file.

If you will write to H DuPont Esq Wilmington Del. He will delay the powder until such time as you are ready. I expect you will have to store it all, until we are ready for we have been unavoidably delayed in our Magazine.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
July (17?) 1860

Col P St Geo Cocke
Jefferson P.O. Va

My dear Sir,

I received the enclosed this morning; which you can return to Capt. Randolph, after you have read it. - Anderson desires, that it be confined to the Commission. Did you ever read a more absurd thing, than the concerns of Anderson. This gratuitous effort to throw upon me more than my legitimate share of responsibility has been twice met by Randolph, & he has been made to see that one of the Commissioners is at least a full match for him. I have sent a draft of our Report to Randolph with the request that this would fully (unclear)... and send it to you [*The remainder of the letter is unclear*].

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
July 19, 1860

James T. Ames Esq
Chicopee Mass

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 16 July is rec'd and I hope you will soon receive the notice from Capt Randolph (I procured?) with you (unclear). Our people are getting impatient and even anxious to have some (unclear) (token?).

I am besieged by gun men. I had one with me yesterday -- & two today -- and the latter is an agent for **Wards Primer*** and an accident happened in my office by a piece of the metallic wafer blowing off into the arm of a gentleman who was (unclear), giving him quite a wound. This man (**Bell*** by name) is the patenter of Bell self primer and has exhibited to me quite an ingenious pistol, with his **Sharp's wafer primer*** fixed in a hollow spindle running parallel and below the barrel and operating with apparent satisfaction. Have you [*The rest of the letter has completely disappeared due to moisture damage.*]

(**Note:** Couper states that the Armory Commission met at White Sulphur Springs around 11 August and decided to purchase Enfield muskets and enter into a contract not with Ames but with Joseph R. Anderson of the Richmond Tredegar Iron Works. The contract with Anderson is dated 23 August 1860. See **proposition submitted to Mr. Ames** in endnotes.)

Va Military Institute
Aug 28 1860
[No address]

My dear Sir,

The governor arrived here last night [*Governor Letcher's home was in Lexington*] & I saw him today, but only privately. He says he has not yet made the app't for the vacant Brig. Gen'l. He is looking better than (unclear) to see him & has no doubt (recreated?) at the Baths.

The 100 Artillery sabers had better be sent up to the Institute. (Unclear) (unclear -- uses?) up all we had that were worth anything & we shall need (unclear) some 20 Barrels of the Powder. I shall have our magazine ready in a few weeks. (It takes?) all that VMI has, but we (had?) the (unclear) for trying the Rifle Cannon [*Possibly the Parrott gun*] & other experiments. [*The remainder of the letter is unreadable.*]

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Aug 30 1860

Maj. Larkin Smith
Camp (unclear) Texas

My dear Larkin,

I have this morning rec'd your letter of the 9. August.

The Board of Visitors will meet the 20 January next to appoint 7 Cadets who shall discharge the duties of Instructors of Infantry, Artillery & Cavalry Teachers & be also Professors of Strategy & Military History.

The course of Infantry & Artillery Tactics conforms pretty much with what was taught at West Point in our day. We use both Scott & Hardee & the classes go through all the volumes of (first?). We have not yet commenced Cavalry Tactics & may not for years. The course of Strategy and Military History is (unclear) [*The remainder of the letter is largely unreadable.*]

/FHS/

(Note: According to Lenoir Chambers, Stonewall Jackson and the Virginia Military Institute, pp. 133-134, "Jackson was back in Lexington by September 3. By Institute tradition and general belief (no formal reports are known) the gun was tested by Jackson, with the assistance of cadets, either between September 3 and September 11, or – more likely – after September 11. The fieldpiece was fired at white tent flies set up as targets along a ridge across the North River north of the Institute."

Va Military Institute
Sept 6 1860

T. Ames
Chicopee Mass

My dear Sir,

Your esteemed favor of the 25 Aug has been rec'd. We have all very much worried at the result of the Armory matter & the more so because we were well persuaded that Anderson could do nothing without your aid. I presume the result will be that he will get your (unclear) with our consent to do the (chief?) of the work. I shall have to go on (unclear) (unclear) towards the last of this month to see you about the model musket. I am charged with the part of (unclear). Have you sent on the swords. Send them to us by Express (unclear – by?) Staunton.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Sept 11 1860

Gen'l W Richardson
Adj. Gen'l

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 8. is rec'd this morning. We shall (need?) the Powder (unclear) (soon?) as I am conducting some experiments by way of testing some guns sent here by the Commission. Our Magazine is in progress & will be completed in 2 or 3 weeks.

If any swords come from Mr. Ames of the cadet pattern they are the Institute's having been sent to M. Ames to repair.

Young's testimonial on behalf of Col R is very strong. nothing could be stronger & coming as it does from a man of the character he has, it must have effect. I do not think the Governor had decided upon the matter when he left here. He may (unclear) considering it but I do not think had read the testimonials.

(Mr?) L. was here today.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
[Date is unreadable]

(unclear, unclear) Anderson
Richmond

My dear Sir,

I return the order for the guns duly signed. I have already written to Mr. Ames about the model gun & as you had made some preliminary arrangements toward an agreement [*The remainder of the letter is unreadable*].

p. 375 of the Letter Book: Unclear letter with no date, but references to tendency of a breech-loading rifle to foul.

p. 379 of the Letter Book: Unclear but contains the following –

Commonwealth of Va
Francis H. Smith

(Unclear) plot of land (unclear) to contain 7 acres for creation of a state Arsenal for the use of Commissioners & appointed by a commission [*The rest of the document is unclear.*]

Va Mil Institute
Oct 5 1860

James T. Ames, Esq.
Chicopee, Mass

My dear Sir,

I have duly rec'd your valued favor with the enclosed bill for repairing the cadet swords. I think the swords must have been sent off before you could have seen them. Our Ordnance Sergeant brought one of them to me yesterday to examine. I found the blade unset and gapped and in pretty much the same condition in which they were sent on. They are restored as far as the scabbards & handles are concerned with (bronzing?) etc., but they are not in good order. The price charged is full and would seem to be too high for the work done. I would be glad if you would enquire about them.

The Sergeant has just come in & said he could scarcely pick out as many blades as were fit to issue to the cadets.

I have been delayed by the pressure of my business (from?) (getting?) off. I expect to meet the Coms [*Commissioners*] on the 10th in Richmond and then to go northward. I will.... [*The remainder of the letter is unclear.*]

/FHS/

(*Note: Col. Smith departed VMI around the 7th of October to attend a meeting of the Armory Board in Richmond on the 10th, and then he went to Washington, D.C, Baltimore, MD, and New York. He returned to Lexington by way of Richmond around the 25th of October.*)

Va Military Institute
Oct 13 1860
A.H. Campbell, Esq
Washington DC

Dear Sir,

Col. Smith is not absent on business connected with the purchase of arms for the state. He will probably be absent some two weeks. Upon his return your communication will be laid before him.

Very respectfully
Your Ob't Servant
Wm S. Polk

Private & Confidential

Virginia Military Institute
Lexington Va
Oct 26 1860

Lt. General Winfield Scott
New York

My dear General,

I was so much impressed with the general tenor of your conversation with me, when I had lately the pleasure of meeting you in New York, and of its important bearing upon the course of policy which the state of Virginia should pursue in the present crisis, that I proceeded directly to Richmond and sought an interview with Gov. Letcher. I repeated to him, as nearly as I could, the substance of the views presented by you, and although I felt conscious that I would not do full justice to the clear & conclusive presentation of them, which you made to me orally, yet I was anxious that the Governor should be in possession of the main thoughts, and that I think I have reported correctly.

I have said to him that you cherished an abiding appreciation for, and attachment to, your native state, and that these feelings naturally awaken in our bosom, extreme anxiety as to the course Virginia might take, in the present crisis, that you were not prepared to say that occasion might not occur, when resistance to the aggressions upon the rights of the South would become a duty, but in your judgment, the election of Mr. Lincoln would not, of itself, furnish a justifiable cause for such resistance, nor did you believe that the general policy of his administration would – that his nomination had been made as a concession to the South, and under circumstances that would secure the selection of conservative men in his cabinet: that with evil men controlling

the policy of his administration – an attempt would be made to resist the admission of new slave states from territory in which slavery now existed in law & in fact & Texas might (exercise?) her legal right and claim a subdivision of her territory that a new slave state might be formed, she would be permitted to do so, that he objected would be urged against the admission of **Cuba*** as a state-- & that these views were now publicly advocated by the (leading?) conservative (unclear) of the Republican party.

In the military aspect of the question involved in the secession of the South grave consequences (ever?) impending, which it was proper that Virginia should & carefully consider. Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois would unite with the other N.W. states in one confederacy to which Transalleggheny Virginia would probably attach itself, & with which Kentucky, Missouri & Tennessee would be forced to secure an outlet at Pensacola. Mississippi, Alabama, and West Florida would be conjoined so that the southern confederacy would be composed of East Virginia, N & S Carolina, Georgia, & East Florida, with an unfriendly border stretching throughout its entire northern & western frontiers. But the fervor which would lead the South to take up arms, and which constituted an important element in the formation of a good soldier requires conflict & successes to be sustained. It would die out with the losses & privations and inactivity of a single campaign. The farmers, planters & professional men, upon whom requisitions for military service would be made, would soon retire from an enterprize affording no (cause?) for distinction, when private instincts or personal comfort are the sacrifice. The correspondence of Washington showed that even the favor with which the American colonies made their revolt, was but short lived and if the opposing forces could practice forbearance – give time for consideration and reflection – the southern army would be conquered by the mere might of (unclear) and victory achieved without the shedding of blood. These views were fully enforced by you in a rapid review of the policy (pursued? presented?) in the campaign in S. Carolina in 1832 and it was your earnest hope that moderate counsels would (unclear) direct the southern mind, that time might be allowed to let the administration (unclear) out power.

On the other hand I said to the Governor, and I had represented to you, that the feeling in Virginia, at this time, was opposed to secession, and that a large majority of her people would not regard the election of Mr. Lincoln as a sufficient cause for secession; & that while this sentiment was deeply rooted in the heart of the state, there was another one, even more universally pervading it, and that was, resistance to any hostile or co-ercive act on the part of the General Government toward any state of states that might secede -- & that my (unclear) was, that 4 or 5 of the cotton states would immediately take action towards the formation of a southern confederacy, as soon as it should be known, that a sectional President had been elected by a purely sectional (val___?). The Governor gave to this recital the most respectful consideration, and expressed himself gratified to have the views of one, whom experiences and public services so well entitled him to the respect & confidence of the executive of Va.

I have no certain knowledge of the course Virginians may take. She is now pressing forward with earnestness her military defences, and she will, I think, place herself in the position of armed neutrality. I feel that under that standard the full and united energy of the state will be found, and that it may have by its moderation a power, which may not only operate favorably in modifying the unfriendly (sentiment?) North but temper in some degree the extreme views South.

In the affection and (unclear) a long personal personal attachment to you as my former commander and valued friend, I would say to you, that I put it in your power to do much to avoid the impending crisis. Will the weight of more than three score years & ten – years (unclear) the experience of an eventful life of public service, a more than half a century, whose voice among the knowing could but deserve to be heard than yours? Could you come back to your native state under the impulses which throb so deeply in the breast of every son of this proud old Commonwealth, and say to the country that the moderate and conservative position which Virginia has (unclear) entitled her voice to be heard, when that voice was speaking of the Union as our (fathers?) had formed it. Could you, as a Virginian, sound the alarm if the voice should be unheeded or disregarded, and saying that the union which you had served (as no other man has

served) must be preserved in its integrity, or you would count those as Common enemies of your state & country, who should persist in this sectional strife. I think a keg could be touched which would awaken a response for good. Or if not – with the U S Government virtually abolished – the union of the states gone – you would return to your own mother to render your last (unclear) service to her – when a common country no longer existed to which allegiance was due.

I send to your address by mail a copy of Mr. Edmund Ruffin's late work. He represents the extreme Southern view – or rather one of these views – I have thought you would be interested in reading it as it infolds the policy of the South regarded from his stand point.

With my respectful remembrances to Col. Scott & Mrs. Scott.

I (remain?) most Cordially
Yr. Friend
/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Oct 28 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

Dear Sir,

I send herewith my bills, both of which (include?) 8 ½ pr. ct. on account of the diminished value of Va Bonds. I wrote to James H. Smith & Sons from Richmond & gave him an order for 2000 [cartridge] boxes and scabbards, provided he would make the boxes of (unclear) (leather?) & I have directed him to write to you. The order also includes [cartridge box] plates etc. I find we have complete sets of harness for 16 horses, and we have 4 caissons, 2 for (unclear) pr. brass pieces & 2 for the 12d Howitzers.

/FHS/

Commonwealth of Va

To Francis H. Smith

1860 July 1	To seven acres of land, for the use of a magazine approved by a Commission app'd [appointed] by the Bd of Visitors of Va Mil Institute	\$434.0
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Commonwealth of Va

To Francis H. Smith
Commissioners on Armory

1860 Aug 25	To expenses attending meeting of Bd of Commissioners at White Sulph. Springs	\$43.40
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Oct. 27	To expenses attending meeting of the Board of Commissioners in Richmond & going to Washington, Baltimore & New York on business connected with same	130.00
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\$173.40

F H S

Commissioner

Va Military Institute
Oct 27 1860

Capt R H Simpson*
Front Royal

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of your favor of the 23d. There has been much unreasonableness with impatience shown by the volunteer officers in reference to arms. The Commissioners who have the matter cannot do impossibilities as these demands seem to require.

Now I will say to you that after applying every means at our command, no rifle musket & no minié rifle can be got for time or money until we make them ourselves unless we would be (willing?) to buy an article made up by the Yankee establishments of the condemned parts of the Government's arms. We are unwilling to put into the hands of the militia an inferior arm, and this we shall be compelled to do if we issue any of the (kind?) offered for sale in the northern market.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Oct 30 1860

His Excellency
John Letcher Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

The Commissioners on the Armory are now making arrangements to get in the machinery for the Armory that no delay may (unclear) its fullest & early operation. On this account we shall need the immediate service of **Mr. Adams*** as Master Armorer and desire that he may be put upon regular duty & commissioned as such to date from 1 Nov. 1860

/FHS/ Commissioner

Va Military Institute
Oct 31 1860

Col. J. M. McCue
Mt. Solon Augusta Co. Va.

My dear Sir,

Your valued favor of the 29 Inst was rec'd this morning.

The Commissioners in determining upon a model musket have proceeded step by step with great caution & in their conclusions have adopted the (unclear) of the experiences of all civilized modern nations. That experience attests that for the mass of the infantry breech loading guns will not do. All experience confirms the idea that for an artillery corps, and also for special emergencies, breech loading guns may be most effectively used – and they are thus recommended for use.

With these (unclear) before us confirmed as they are (by?) our own carefully made experiments, we have decided it safest for the present to limit our manufacturer to the U.S. Rifle musket, the Minie Musket and in this decision we are confirmed by the experience of all Europe & America. This will not interfere with our examination of your patent. On the contrary it will give me great pleasure to test it, and should there be any thing in it which we (can?)... [*Remainder of the letter is unclear.*]

Va Military Institute
Oct 31 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I have yours of the 29th this morning. Adams has been with me since yesterday, and after a full conference with Maj. Colston in reference to the model musket we have finally concluded upon the changes allowable in the U.S. Model. They are not internal and will not affect the length of the barrel or bayonet. I have said to him that I would be in favor of getting [500 of Whitney's pistol](#) if he would attach a pin as to keep the hammer from falling upon the cap thus securing the safeguard (unclear, unclear). Adams thinks that Whitney (unclear) do this. The price of \$12. Adams to inspect them all before use.

I (would?) by all means have all the pistols from Ames examined by Adams... [*The remainder of the page is unreadable.*]

[*Next page:*] ... Cavalry equipments which Col. Cocke gets. ...I agree with you that it is right and proper (unclear) and the Law imposes it as a duty upon us. We must consider however that every thousand dollars saved will enable us to do more towards arming and supplying the state.

If it be found advisable to employ an ordnance man to make the fuses (unclear?) you had better let my (unclear) Sergeant take the matter in hand. He is a first rate man & will do it well.

I will send you (unclear) 4 sets of harness – that is – for 8 horses, by express – via Staunton.

Deduct the \$1.75 I owe you from my accounts when you (unclear) and send the harness down to Adams.

I hope Anderson will employ **Burton*** & that he may also secure his services.

/FHS/

(**Note:** The following letter from General Richardson to Secretary of War **John B. Floyd*** and report from H. K. Craig in reply are reprinted in Fuller and Steuart, Firearms, pp. 3-4, and are not a part of the VMI Archives Collection. They are included here to provide a fuller account of efforts to arm the state.)

Adjutant General's Office
Richmond, Va., November 1, 1860

Hon JOHN B. FLOYD,

Secretary of War:

SIR: I am instructed by the Governor of Virginia to inform you that there exists in the State an extended and daily increasing apprehension of insecurity and danger, resulting among other causes, from manifesta... requests that you will authorize an advance to the State immediately of a number of the original army percussion muskets with accouterments, equivalent to the quota of arms which may be due to the State under the act of Congress of 1808 for the year 1861, estimated by the Colonel of Ordnance at about 682 muskets. This would not be asked except under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances. I am further instructed to say that the money value of the arms shall be promptly paid to the United States if Congress shall so require, or the arms returned in kind and of equal value so soon as they can be fabricated at the armory of the State now going into operation.

If this request be ... for the advance upon the next year's quota, I hope, therefore, will arise, and especially as you are personally aware of the urgency of our necessities.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W.H. Richardson,
Adjutant General.

(Note: Secretary Floyd sent General Richardson's request to H. K. Craig, Colonel of Ordnance, and received the following reply.)

Ordnance Office
Washington, November 3, 1860

Hon. JOHN B. FLOYD,

SIR: In answer to the letter of General Richardson of the 1st instant, referred to this office for a report, I have the honor to state that the State of Virginia, as fully communicated to General Richardson in my letter to him of the 15th of September last, is charged with its full quota for 1861 and arms equivalent to 203 muskets on account of the quota for 1862. The ... the letter of General Richardson is herewith returned.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. K. Craig
Colonel of Ordnance

(Note: Fuller and Steuart state in Firearms, p. 1, that "The law of April 23, 1808 provided for the supply of State's arms on a regular quota basis, and the regulation established by President Jackson in 1835 and reconfirmed by President Pierce in 1855 prohibited the issue of these in advance....")

Va Military Institute
Nov 2 1860
Col. Wm H. Payne*
Warrenton, Va

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of yours of the 30. Oct and it gives me great pleasure to reply.

The Commissioners have laid in a good supply of Cavalry arms. We have secured 3,000 good Sabres and 1000 revolvers in the Deans & Adams patent – a self-cocking pistol -- & the same used in the English Service.

The Commissioners are not charged with the distributions of these arms. This is done by the Governor & I have no doubt he will favorably consider the application of the Black Horse Troop.

He demand is very great for the pistols, and (unclear) find the supply (purchase?) is not enough but will get 500 more.

We are also having a supply of Holsters made for the pistols, one for each horseman. We have also laid in (primers?) and some cartridges but it may be well to ask (unclear) about (unclear). If you write to Poultenay Tribble [*Poultney & Trimble*] (unclear) Baltimore Street Balto you can ask them.

[The remainder of the letter is unreadable, except for an occasional word. Mentions trouble getting arms and also mentions Ruffin.]

/FHS/

(Note: The following letter from Geo. W. Randolph to Secretary of War John B. Floyd is reprinted in Fuller and Steuart, Firearms, p. 47, and is not part of the VMI Archives Collection. It is included here to provide a fuller account of efforts to arm the state.)

Richmond, November 3, 1860

Hon. John B. Floyd
Secretary of War

SIR: I am instructed by the armory board of commissioners of Virginia to make the following requests of the War Department:

First. That we shall be allowed to purchase from the Government 5,000 muskets altered from flintlock to percussion, and said to be for sale at \$2.50 apiece. Our necessity for these is immediate, in consequence of the small number of arms in the State and the rumors of insurrection which, whether well- or ill-founded, disturb the public mind and render it necessary for our repose that our military should be armed. Capt. Charles Dimmock will visit Washington immediately to receive these muskets, and we respectfully request that every facility may be afforded to him in forwarding the arms to this place without delay. We shall be prepared to pay for them at such time as the department may indicate.

Second. We are informed that the Government has 130,000 seasoned musket-stocks at Harper's Ferry, and that the consumption does not exceed 12,000 per annum. We suppose, therefore, that 20,000 of these seasoned stocks might be replaced by green ones without injury to the public service, and we ask leave to make such substitution. The green stocks can be purchased by the superintendent at Harper's Ferry and we will pay for them. The seasoned stocks are intended for use a year or two hence, or possibly a little earlier, as the operations of our armory may require, and unless we can get them from the Government we shall have barrels without stocks until the green stocks shall season. We are informed that a stock does not season properly in less than three years.

Third. We are engaged in making a model arm at Springfield, under an order which the War Department was so obliging to give, and we should be greatly aided by permission to use the Government patterns and take drawings of them. We request that our master armorer, Mr.

Solomon Adams, may be allowed to do this at our expense, and so far as it may be done without detriment to the public service.

I have the honor to remain, your most obedient servant

Geo. W. Randolph

[Indorsement.]
War Department
November 6, 1860

The Proposition for the purchase of 5,000 altered muskets, at \$2.50 each, made within, is accepted. The Colonel of Ordnance will take the necessary measures to have them delivered as requested. The arms to be selected by Captain Dimmock.

J. B. Floyd
Secretary of War

(Note: Lincoln was elected President on 6 November 1860, failing to gain any votes from the South.)

V.M.I.
Nov 6 1860
Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

Dear Captain,

I have yours of the 2^d this morning and (I send by?) today's stage 8 harnesses which I direct to be dispatched to you by (unclear). The ... unclear ...) me on Friday.

I will write to Maynadier about the musket but am apprehensive the (charges? changes?) are (unclear, unclear) crotchets.

I have a letter from the Cartridge box man[*ufacturer*] and presume you have heard from him. His (unclear) may justify a fallen order. I send you his letter (... unclear ...) relates to other business. You notice what he says about the pressed Ball. Perhaps you had better order a supply – as well as caps & (unclear).

Gen. Richardson says Dimmock has gone to work in earnest. If he needs a temporary clerk, I would authorize it for he will have a plenty to do.

I have been trying the [*Deane and Adams*] pistols here & I find several of the nipples have (unclear, unclear). I like the pistol better than Colts but I (thought?) it has been in some respects carelessly made.

You can send me a check for my autho'n.

/FHS/

V. M. Institute
Nov. 6 1860

Gen W. H. Richardson
Richmond

My dear Sir,

I have yours of the 4th. If Dimmock needs a temporary clerk I would cheerfully assent to his employing one if Capt Randolph concurs.

I like the D & A [*Deane and Adams*] pistol better than Colts'. It is more handy and more manageable. Some of the nipples are defective. We paid too much for them – but that was a part of our Contract for (unclear). I think I would get 500 of Whitney Pistol at (H.A.?) a good (arm?).

We have some reports of (trouble?) in Amherst. I don't heed them, except to be on the (unclear).

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 6 1860

Mr. P. Clayton Pendleton
Care of Pendleton-Colston
45 S. (Pane?) St. Balto

Dear Sirs,

In reply to our letter of the 2d Inst I would say that the report of the Commissioners was duly submitted to the Governor and is in his possession. I (unclear) order as he may (unclear). I have no copy of the Report and can only refer you to him.

/FHS/

*(Note: Fuller and Steuart state in Firearms, pp. 19-20, that "As early as November 10, 1860, the movement to seize the U.S. forts and arsenals seems to have been underway and while the different State authorities apparently all acted more or less independently, the movement, once started, soon covered all the seceding States." For the seizure of Harper's Ferry Arsenal and Armory, see endnote under **Harper's Ferry Arsenal and Armory.**)*

Va Military Institute
Nov 14 1860

James T. Ames Esq.
Washington City DC

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of yours of the 9th Nov. When I was in New York, I had intended going on to Springfield, but hearing that you had gone to Washington, I concluded that I would postpone my trip, especially as Mr. Adams was not able to join me at Norfolk.

I was disappointed about the swords – 1st in the price -- & 2d in the condition in which they were returned. These swords when new ought not to cost more than the price charged for repair, and I do assure you, the work done upon them (does?) not amount in value to 1.50 each.

I should be willing to send them to Chicopee – but not at the prices stipulated in the bill – and you would greatly oblige me by giving your personal attention to this, for I am sure you have been led into some mistake about it.

I showed the swords to Mr. Adams & asked him to examine them that he might make known to you their condition.

I should be glad to hear from you soon on this subject.

With high regards.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 15 1860

Capt G W Randolph
Richmond

My dear Sir,

I am in rec't of yours of the 12th with enclosure \$670 for which accept my thanks.

I send you enclosed a letter from Capt (**Magnadier?***) – After reading it, enclose it to Adams, that he may have the benefit of the suggestions of the Ordnance Board. You will see that nothing has been done definitively.

I have just received some military works which I bought in New York & among them is a very valuable one in 3 v. — ~~the~~ Memoire, Military Science," by a Board of English Eng's [*engineers*]. It is a complete Encyclopedia in on Military matters eminently practical – By all means get it – from D. Van Nostrand, 192 Broadway, New York.

By the way permit me to suggest to your (unclear) which have united in the new Armory, to club together & purchase some \$200 worth of the recent publications on military art & science. Some of these recent publications are very fine & they can all be had at Van Nostrand.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 15 1860

Capt G W Randolph
Richmond

My dear Sir,

I have read with much interest the suggestion of Mr. Burton & they cover very much the view I had originally taken of the Enfield musket. I (unclear) my own opinion of the judgment of the U.S. (Service?). I will send the paper to Adams, & endorse it as you suggest.

I would not buy the Lancaster gun at the present depreciated condition of our Bonds.

Did you receive the Harnesses in good time. You must send me up an order for them for the Adj. Gen'l & your rec't to me for them.

/FHS/

Has the Gov (unclear) our White Sulphur Report? Must I re-write it? Have you forgotten the one you (unclear)?

Va Military Institute
Nov 16 1860

Mr. Sol[oman] Adams
Springfield Mass

My dear Sir,

I have duly rec'd your letter. Today I send a paper containing some important suggestions from Mr. Burton and it is the wish of Capt Randolph & myself that these suggestions be followed by you as far as practicable and unless it shall appear that there are serious objections to any of them. In this event please advise me. This will cover most of the ground talked over by us.

Mr. Burton will be in Springfield & it may be well for you to see him & freely consult with him. You will observe that his suggestions confirm, in many respects, our own opinions.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 16 1860

W. J. Hubbard Esq
Richmond Va

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 14th is rec'd this morning. You seem not to have been aware that I was one of the —Commissioners— and although we have had credit for —bungling— it was more than we (thought?) we were entitled to.

I will explain matters – in a few words.

After a careful consideration of the whole subject, partly in actual experiments, & partly upon the (unclear) of the nations of Europe & the U.S. Services, we deemed it best, for the present to limit our manufacture of arms, to the Rifle musket – a la minié – and to discard all breech loading guns – as far as our own manufacture was concerned. We are now pressing forward our machinery in this direction, & have made a contract accordingly.

With regard to the breech loading guns & other improvements in ammunition we have directed a specimen of each to be sent to me here, & we try them & report on them.

Now if you will send me a sample of each of your arms, we will try them – and also (unclear) (unclear) & if any be (unclear) advisable to buy or adopt, we will report accordingly.

So let me hear from you.

My brother is in Norfolk.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 20 1860
Richmond Va

Capt G W Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I have a letter from Gen. Richardson this morning about the Harnesses. If I was not explicit enough (unclear) a reference to them, I must be now, for his sake, as he had great trouble in getting them for the cadets & I must not be so ungracious even to equip your good company, as to show a want of appreciation of his kind offer. I mean, you must return an equivalent sett when they are (unclear) & as this may not be in your power, when we are (unclear) (unclear) (unclear) hope you had better have a set made now by (unclear)... My idea originally was to save the (Express?) but I reckon your Company will want them always & ought to have them.

I have no doubt your Company is going to be one of the most efficient in the state.

I notice the article in the Dispatch [*Richmond newspaper*] this morning which I presume is (... unclear). It is very well. I send you the enclosed advertisement. If you think it worth while send it to Van Nostrand and authorize them to buy the muskets if he can get them at a price not exceeding \$2.50. It may be worth while. But I have it (unclear) (unclear)

Adams writes that Whitney has made the modifications in the Pistol, which makes it a superior weapon. I would certainly take 500 of them at \$12 & if you agree, let Adams know.

...

Don't forget about the Report. Let it be full & in detail & present clearly the financial view.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 20 1860

Gen W H Richardson
Adj. Gen'l Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

Your several favors have been received & I send you today an outline of the minute-organization leaving out the change for Depot of Arms.

The artillery Harnesses (designed?) to be allowed to the (unclear) Company until they can be replaced by others made for them. Capt. Randolph needed them (now?) and I was the man willing to let him have them, (because?) there is a liability to (...unclear). Your kind (offers?) in (unclear) them shall not be thrown away. I will write to R[andolph] today on the subject.

I will have an interview with Maj. G[ilham] today in reference to the Hand Book but fear he will not be able to do much toward it, as he leaves for Europe in the Spring....

[Following is a one-page list of proposed companies of minutemen and their locations across the state, not reproduced here.]

[Following is:]

The main features in this body of minute men are the following.

1. The Companies are for the most part within telegraph Communication & convenient to Railway & (unclear) Boat transportation.

He entire Brigade may therefore be promptly assembled at any one point – or parts of it at convenient rendezvous.

2. The arrangement gives time for the secondary force comprizing those volunteer Companies which are organized in the Centres & (outside?) of the telegraph or railway communications, to come up to the position occupied by the 1st class or minute-(lads?) so that – while the secondary force is only called out after the minute-force is in the field – the reason is not that they are less capable but because they are less accessible.

3. The number of Companies in the minute force, & the arrangement of them may be modified at pleasure.

Va Military Institute
Nov 24 1860

W. S. Hubbard Esq
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 20th is duly rec'd. I expected to extort a smile, when the "how at a venture" hit one of the Commissioners. We have had a very laborious, responsible & thankless, duty but we have aimed to do it fearlessly & faithfully – and we have not blamed those who have exercised the liberty of blaming us, because we know they know no better. Had they known facts that examination & experience had made known to us, we felt assured any honest verdict w'd [would] be approved. I am (unclear) a model of the Augusta rifle called the Pacificator, I think & also one from Loudon. Many other specimens of breech loading arms have already been sent to us, tried & reported on. I presume more will continue to come in altho' in as much as we have directed, for the present to limit our manufacture to muzzle loading guns, the applications will not be so frequent as hitherto. We have no arms at present here to report upon -- & we should prefer reporting all new to come in, together.

We have the usual field Howitzer – for shells – which I think a 12 pounder. The same as those at the Richmond Armory. We shall, of course, have a suitable (screen? cover?) for the shells, but as the weather is now getting bad, but little can be done this way before Spring.

You complain of my calligraphy. Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. I had to take off my spectacles to read your letter – but I made it out. I send you a copy of our report for 1859. That for 1860 is just sent to press.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 23 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I am this morning in rec't of yours of the 21st. I think the claims of Ames just and I should by all means allow it. It would not be right to have the benefit of a rise without submitting to the loss in the fall of state securities.

You are also right in postponing further contracts for the present unless they can be made without the serious sacrifice to us, which the present depreciated condition of state bonds would cause. It is possible those who are making accoutrements etc. would prefer to bear the loss, rather than lose or suspend the job. I take it from (unclear...) the general suspension of the Bank will make money more plenty, & that all (unclear) will rise. But things look squally.

I have a letter from Hubard, the Artist, calling my attention to some model of a breech loading rifle he has: also some improved shell, and saying that he writes to me, because after the great ~~bungling~~ of the Commission, etc., etc. it was no use to say any thing to them, & I replied, by informing him that his sword was double edged. He seems to be worried that (... hit me?) but explains by saying that so many rumors were rife in Richmond, of the bungling of the Com[missioners] that he presumed there was some foundation for it. I write to him again today, & say that we do not blame those who blame us because they do it ignorantly. (Thus?) we are satisfied when betters (unclear) others (prevail?) all will be right.

Don't you think it will be well to have all of our separate reports with (unclear) printed in a pamphlet form as a part of the general Report you are going to prepare.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Nov 27 1860

Mr S. Adams
Springfield Mass

My dear Sir,

I am this morning in rec't of your letter of the 23 Nov.

Our design was to adopt Mr. Burton's suggestions as far as was practicable to be modified if necessary, by your own suggestions. Mr. Burton himself expected to be in Springfield, & we were anxious you should have a full & free conference with him.

Do what you think best about the sight & the stock. I think there is much reason in what you say about the sight.

We are expecting to get 25,000 stocks from Harper's Ferry, & if their form will not correspond to the Enfield we must modify the Enfield. Do the best you can, to carrying out the views of Mr. Burton & those of the Commissioners.

/FHS/ Superintendent

Va Military Institute
Nov 30 1860

Col. P. S. Geo Cocke
Mobile Ala

My dear Sir,

[Note: A long letter, a portion of which is transcribed here.]

... What now has to be done? Prepare for the issue. In Virg'a we have made fair preparation. We secured 5000 of the smooth bore altered percussion musket – and the troops are taking them rapidly & with satisfaction. The accoutrements are being rapidly issued – The ammunition is now stored – my magazine being built -- & the powder stored in it, and we are now making arrangements for balls, caps, friction primers etc. so that I think we may be said to be in a very good condition for any emergency that may turn up.

I have reflected very much upon the suggestion you make of the African corps. It had occurred to me before, altho' I had given no thought to the shape in which we could (mould?) up this element of our strength. Your views are not only sound, but they are practical.

For teamsters, grooms, cooks, musicians, (unclear) & post riding etc. we could not have a more efficient body of men, and they will add very materially to our physical strength. We could also organize Corps of Pontoneers, miners – sappers – and ordnance men of a very high grade of efficiency with them: while for Express riders – they would be unequalled. If we go to the Marine could we have better sailors for our ships of war? Better coal heavers – engineers – firemen etc. We may, in this way, estimate 10 per cent of the [African] population & make up a total equal to the (average?) population of them draughted from non-slave holding states, in time of war especially when we add to these the organization of select corps of infantry and artillery African soldiers, and this body of efficient force may be brought out without interfering with the ordinary agricultural or mechanical interests of the South. The subject is one of Comm[ission] (unclear....). ... removes the chief difficulty with which the South would have to contend in the event of a Civil War. For myself – I give my services without reserve to Virginia, and am ready for any duty to which I may be called.

[Note: the letter continues with subjects ref. VMI.]

Va Military Institute
Nov 30 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I have yours of the 28th this morning, and will prepare the White Sulphur Report in a few days. I am glad you have closed engagements for the Caps, balls etc and would not be surprized if it may no be necessary for you to double this order. I have no percussion caps here at all & I feel very much the want of them & must beg of you to send me a supply as soon as they are in hand.

Whitney seems to be very anxious to sell us his pistol. I have sent to him a reply, that if he will estimate our bonds at 92 & charge no exchange on Va Money, we might (take?) 500 of

them at \$12. My expectation is he will accept & if so I would by all means take them. It is a very fine pistol.

The powder is rec'd & I have it stored away in our new Magazine which was completed the day it arrived. I have rec'd no invoice of the quantity sent, but have received some 254 Barrels.

I have a letter from Col Cocke today dated New Orleans Nov 24. He says the 8 cotton States will certainly go out & Va should be prepared to act with them. The sentiment here is much short of my own feeling in this Crisis & unless the (unclear) additional Constitutional guarantees are given us, we have no alternative than to go out also.

You were fortunate in the Contract for accoutrements.

/FHS/

Col. Cocke will be home by 25 Dec. I would increase the order for 5 lb shot to 3000.

Va Military Institute
Dec. 6 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph Dec. 6 1860
Richmond Va

My dear Captain,

I return your today my approval of the application of Anderson etc to sublet so much of this contract as is embraced in the schedule which they have submitted.

I also very cordially approve of the allowance to Capt. Dimmock for \$1000 a year for extra services. I think the allowance is just & proper and we shall receive more than an equivalent in his superintendence.

Do impress upon Anderson the importance of dispatch in executing the Contract.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Dec 5 1860

Wm E Taylor Esq.*
Norfolk Va

My dear Sir,

I am this morning in rec't of your esteemed favor of the 1st and thank you for it & for its suggestions. I shall not despair of securing the am't required, altho' from the pressure of the times, it is like hoping, against hope, with respect to the guns. I will say that after making every effort possible to purchase the minié musket, we found it was impossible. This musket is only made by the U.S. Gov't & they cannot sell without the authority of law. A man by the name of Whitney makes some – but they are made, for the most part, of the Condemned parts of the Minié musket of the U.S. Armories & we (have?) tried to get them abroad, but have been equally unsuccessful. We have tried to purchase an original percussion of the U.S. Gov't (altered) musket. This is all that we could do for this (unclear) – until we make the Minié musket ourselves, & this we hope to have in operation in Dec. 1861, & then to turn out 10,000 a year.

The crisis is awful in its alarming aspect. It is no time to consider whether S.C. be acting selfishly – or in hot-haste. When one is pressed to the wall, the law of self defense demands an effort to vindicate what is due to natural right. We have a common grievance in the South – and we should stand – shoulder to shoulder in seeking that redress which we have a right to demand -- & if we don't get it, we must have recourse to the ultimate resort.

In the language of Judge Pringle, I say –I confess I (unclear) a regret over the ruin of the Cons't – over the dismemberment of a great empire – over the memory of common (unclear) – over the undoubted check in the sacrificing of free institutions. But to every appeal the answer comes – the Union is destroyed because the spirit of Union is gone."

This is the great question the solution of which constitutes the difficulty. It is not –personal liberty bills" – or other overt acts of aggression upon the constitutional rights – but it is the (unclear) (spread?) prevalence of a spirit, which is unfriendly to our institutions – and destructive to our constitutional liberties – Free suffrage cannot exist with free government – unless slavery occupy the place of that class, that will forever clamor for agrarian equality: universal suffrage is an universal curse to any country that has not some such restraining check.

My destiny is with Virginia. I follow her lead & I pray that wisdom may be given from on High to her statesmen to do that which shall be best.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Dec 6 1860

Captain Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va.

My dear Sir,

I send you enclosed here with a copy of our Report to the Governor from the White Sulphur. It is a literal copy from the original Ms. [*manuscript*] which I had retained.

It strikes me that when I copied it for manumission to the Governor, a short, but not very important paragraph was added. I forgot what this was, altho' I think it had reference to the removal of the Offices from the Armory, & allowing their (unclear) for (quarters?) – As this was not material to the subject matter of the Report I am not particular to request it.

Major Colston has had two (serviceable?) Virginia Rifles of the date 1806 altered so as to attach to them the modern improvements & the result is truly wonderful. He has had them reduced in length from 42 in. to 36 in., a percussion lock added & the –sight" of a Minié musket attached. The result is that at 500 yards, while the deviation is slightly greater than for the Minié musket – yet it is so slight that for all practical purposes, it is as effective an arm as the U.S. rifle musket. He advises therefore that we have these rifles at once reduced & altered & that bayonets & **barrel bands*** be put upon them.

We have 1000 of good rifles on (unclear) here. I would advise that these, together with such as may be in the Rich'd Armory be forthwith sent to Harpers Ferry (unclear) can get the authority to do so, & that they be fixed up accordingly to this recommendation. We can take the bayonets from the reserved muskets as well as (unclear) but (unclear) work will be requ'd (unclear) the alterations. The (unclear, unclear) a percussion lock attached. This (... unclear) the Minié ball, and is really a light and handy arm and our Corps would be glad to get these.

/FHS/

White Sulphur Springs
Greenbriar County Va

August 17 1860 [**Note:** *The date of the meeting at White Sulphur Springs*]

His Excellency John Letcher
Governor of Va.

The commissioners charged with the organization of the Virginia Arms have met at the call of your Excellency, to receive and consider such additional proposals as might be submitted to them, for furnishing the requisite machinery, tools and implements for the same, and beg leave to report –

That an additional proposition to that of Mr Ames having been presented by Messrs J. R. Anderson & Co. of Richmond, Va, and upon terms and conditions so well entitled to the respectful consideration of the State, that the Commissioners deemed it their duty, not only to entertain this proposition but to Examine with great care the ability of this establishment to execute a Contract which they propose to undertake; and the result of this examination is the unanimous recommendation of the Commissioners, that the Contract with Messrs. J. R. Anderson & Co. herewith submitted be ratified by your Excellency.

The motives which have influenced the Commissioners to recal the recommendation previously made in favor of J. T. Ames Esq., and to award the Contract to Messrs. J. R. Anderson & Co., are founded on those considerations of state policy, by (which) regard is had to the encouragement of our own artisans and machinists; when the fullest guarantee is given that the pubic interests will not be sacrificed thereby:

The Commissioners feel constrained to state and they do so with great pleasure, that nothing has come to their knowledge, in the slightest degree calculated to (refute?) their confidence in the ability or integrity of the respectable gentleman recommended to your Excellency for this important work. Indeed, the more they have examined the subject; the more satisfied they have been, that for skill, experience and integrity no man in this and perhaps in any other country, possesses in so marked a degree the peculiar qualities demanded for the successful execution of such a contract as Mr. Ames, and they cherish the hope and believe, that the state may be able still to secure his valuable cooperation in much of this work contemplated to be executed by Messrs. Anderson & Co.

But it is due to our own people, and especially too, in the midst of strong and opposing difficulties, to build up industrial establishments within our own limits; that we should foster their worthy efforts, by aiding, as far as we may, in educating that class of artisans by whom, in a great degree, the wealth and independence of our state may be preserved and advanced.

The Messrs. Anderson present peculiar claims to the consideration of the state in their (regard?). They (unclear) inaugurated the extensive manufacture of Cannon for the General Government, upon a scale and with a success, that are the surest guarantees of their skill and enterprize. They have undertaken large contracts for building the machinery for two of our largest ships of war – and they have executed these several contracts in a manner, not only creditable to themselves, but to the state; and they are now executing work to the extent of over one million of dollars per annum. With such palpable evidences of the ability, skill and enterprize of the Messrs. Anderson & Co. combined as they are with the most satisfactory pecuniary obligations to the faithful performance of the covenants with which they have entered, the Commissioners feel well assured that the best interests of the state will be promoted by authorizing (this?) establishment to put into operation the important state work contemplated by the act of Assembly of January

1860, and that a (unclear) of skill or (unclear) will be fully guarded (agreement by the instructions?) and conditions of the contract submitted.

We have the honor to be

Very Respectfully

Yr Obe't Servants
Signed P. St. Geo Cocke Commissioners
Francis H. Smith
Geo W. Randolph

Va Military Institute
Dec 10 1860

Capt G. W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Captain,

I had my attention repeatedly called by the Adj. Gen'l to the complaints made against the Commissioners by officers etc. of the Militia. Enclosed is a copy of a letter he has just addressed to one of them. It may be well in your next report to keep distinctly before the public the difficulties with which we have had to contend, that high minded men may know we are not to blame.

The Governor spent last evening with me.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Dec 10 1860

Gen Wm H Richardson
Adj Gen'l Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I have yours of the 7'. You are a good Judge Advocate General & have used your cudgels well for the Capt. I shall send your letter of Col. _____ to Capt. Randolph that he may notice in our own Report these matter fully.

[Note. The remainder of this letter concerns Agricultural Hall at VMI.]

Va Military Institute
Dec 11 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Captain,

I have yours of the 8' with the draft of a supplemental Report which I sign & return today. Col. Cocke expects to be in Richmond by the 15. I have a letter today from him (dated?) Mobile.

You are right to secure the ammunition, and I feel quite safe in taking the Governor now to our new Magazine on Monday & showing him how snugly I had packed away 254 Barrels of Powder.

I should be afraid to rifle the Iron cannon and would not attempt it – unless we could strengthen them by the (Chemasette?) of Parrott. The brass guns may be rifled.

Let me hear from you about the rifles. Colston suggests that they be also re-rifled -- & thus have the same bore & groove of the rifle musket. They are thick enough for it. Times look squally. But the old ship of state must fasten down the hatches and face the tempest. The time for inaction has passed. Now the voice of Virginia should be sounded & to my mind – she has no choice but to strike for Southern rights & Southern Independence.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Dec 18 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph

My dear Sir,

I have given the General Report which you seem to have prepared with great care & accuracy two careful readings, and I do not know that I have any material suggestions to make to it.

I think the whole number of muskets in the two Arsenals is 60,000 instead of 50,000 so that Anderson & Co. would get \$75,000 in these arms instead of \$60,000.

Would it not be well to let a detailed financial statement accompany the General Report? Or will this go along with the report of the Board of Public Works or of the 2d Auditor. It makes a document complete to make these statements accompany the General Report.

I think it would be well to refer, by a special paragraph to our separate reports as more fully explaining the operation of the Commissioners, & let them accompany the General Report as supplement. The document will be a useful one for future reference & I have had so much demand upon me for Colston's reports, that I am afraid these will never see the light, unless brought out in this way.

I would advise you to let Dr. Mayo copy each of these reports carefully in our Record Book & to copy your General Report before it goes to the Governor. You write generally a legible hand, but like myself you sometimes write so as to make it puzzling to one to decipher. I have had some difficulty in reading it.

I think Col. Cocke will be in Richmond by the time this reaches you & I would like himself to examine the Report before it goes in. If you miss him, a line dropped to him at his Post Office will either receive his authority to sign his name, or take him to Richmond. I have signed this Report – but you can sign my name to the report, if copied or amended.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute

Dec 18 1860

Gen'l W. H Richardson
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

Capt Randolph has just prepared our General Report & I send it back today duly signed. It needs the signature of Col. Cocke so that if you see him, would you please ask him to see Capt Randolph & sign it before it goes into the Gov.

I have been very ill with cold for several days.

/FHS/

(Note: On 20 December, a state convention in South Carolina voted an ordinance declaring the immediate secession of the state from the Union.)

Va Military Institute
Dec 20 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph
Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

I have yours of the 18th this morning and I hasten to reply to it by return mail.

I had certainly understood that the barrel rolling machine was embraced in the estimate, and that the price charged by Ames was the consideration that induced (Sheet? Steel?) firm in New York to make a friendly hint to us on the subject. This led to an explanation with Mr. Ames, the result of which was satisfactory to the Commissioners. Could I be mistaken in this? If I am, & it should clearly appear that Anderson's contract does not embrace it, we shall have to get it upon the best terms we may. Do the best you can – I will stand up to your action. I would by all means get the 500 pistols & the 400 rifles, if the Colts are warranted but not otherwise. Dr. Graham of Lexington has been acting as a sort of Agent for Whitney, & when I suggested to him that Whitney might sell his pistols to us at \$12, if he would take our stock at \$90 & knock off Exchange, I thought he was inclined to accept. You will find a readiness on the part of Whitney to make some compromise in this way. Do the best you can.

I send you a letter of Ames. I have omitted such parts of it as do not come under the head of the usual implements supplied to the School by the state. We are actually reduced to nothing & could not have paraded the cadets so destitute were we of them.

/FHS/

Va Military Institute
Dec. 20 1860

Capt M. D. Corse
Cmdr Old Dominion Riflemen

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|
}
|
Alexandria Va

Capt Morten Morgan
Cmdr Alex. Riflemen

|
|

Gent'n

I am this morning in rec't of your valued favor of the 18th Inst and I lose not a moment in replying to it.

The Commissioners appointed under the bill for arming the state, have not been insensible of the urgency of the need for arms: and it has been a source of painful regret to them, that their best efforts to procure suitable arms for the infantry of the line and the riflemen, have been so (unclear – fruitless?).

The rifle musket is not manufactured by any private company in the U.S. nor is the Minié rifle, and no such Company was prepared to undertake any contract with the state, & supply the arms at an earlier day than our own Armory could accomplish. We found parties who were offering both of this description of arms for sale, but an examination of them demonstrated, that they were, for the most part, put together from the Condemned parts of the U.S. Armories. We could not feel justified to put such arms into the hands of our Va troops.

We then tried the European armories through our ministers at London & Paris, but the cost was so excessive that we could have accomplished but little with the means at our Command.

The law did not authorize the Secy of War to sell us any of the U.S. arms, except those which were condemned, & which (unclear -- conform?) in general description with the altered musket, now in the hands of one of our companies.

We have today heard of 400 Minié rifles in the hands of a party in Connecticut, that we are trying to secure, and if we get them, we shall be able to Equip with them (unclear) 6 or 8 companies. I would advise your application to the Governor for them, upon the contingent expectation of our getting them.

Add to our other embarrassments, we have to negotiate our state bonds at a sacrifice varying from 10 to 25 per. cent & now have to add to this, heavy rates of exchange, thus greatly reducing the amount of means at our Command. Cavalry & artillery arms had to be supplied -- & the state had not one pound of powder -- & no accoutrements. We have finally succeeded in meeting all (the?) demands, and our only draw back has been, as I have stated, the musket & rifles.

From some experiments made here by Maj. Colston, we find that we have 1000 or 1500 Harpers Ferry rifles, old pattern – 42 inches long, & that if these are cut down to 36 inches, percussion locks & Bayonets added, and a leaf sight affixed we can secure an arm very little inferior to the rifle musket. We are now asking proposals to make these alterations, and as soon as they can be executed, we shall have a very good arm for rifle or light infantry Companies. It is proposed to use the Minié ball (elongated) & it will fire well 500 yards. We have altered two here with this result.

I will only add that if you will advise me where we can purchase a suitable rifle we should be pleased to hear.

/FHS/

(**Note:** From 9 January to 1 February, following South Carolina, the other ten states that would make up the Confederate States of America seceded from the Union. On the 9th, the Star of the West was fired upon in Charleston Harbor before it could reach Fort Sumter.)

Va Military Institute

Jan 10 1860

Capt Geo W. Randolph

Richmond Va

My dear Sir,

No time should be lost in having a full supply of cartridges & other fixed ammunition made & it would be well for Dimmock to put his men at work at it without delay. I would also secure as much lead as may be needed for bullets etc. Our examinations are just over & I am going to put the senior class at once at practical lessons in all that relates to the art of war. For this purpose and because it is necessary, do send me without delay, a supply of percussion caps (we have none), some of the minie balls – some (unclear) (unclear) in the bullet caliber 59. If you have none of these send the lead. I would like to have some grape & if you have none, Anderson ought to make a supply. Send them by Express via Staunton. You may judge from this letter that I (count?) the matter as (unclear). At any moment we may be called upon to take up arms. Let us be fully prepared. I like your Richmond (unclear) might have gone further myself. My own letter was in advance of public sentiment, when it was written, nearly a month ago. It is far behind it (unclear) by my own opinions now. I see no alternative left but in immediate secession & in my judgment not a moment should be lost in securing Harpers Ferry.

I cannot tell you the pain I felt at reading the Governor's message. But the legislature seems to be up to the (unclear).

I have been laid up for two weeks & am still confined to my room.

/FHS/

Note: Smith's letters continue from here, but the work of the Armory Commission was substantially completed by this time.

On 13 February, the Convention of 1861 convened in Richmond, dominated by moderate Unionists and conservatives. The Convention and Governor Letcher, who supported a moderate policy, came under increasing criticism from secessionists. On 12 April, shore batteries in Charleston, S.C., opened fire on Fort Sumter. President Lincoln's call for state troops to put down these "combinations" brought affairs to a climax. Governor Letcher refused to provide troops, and the Virginia General Assembly moved rapidly toward secession, which was voted on 17 April (followed by a referendum in May).

On 17 April, Governor Letcher ordered Col. Smith to report to Richmond "to aid, counsel and advise" him "in the exercise of his executive authority, in the emergency upon the state." Letcher then appointed an advisory council composed of Judge John J. Allen, president, Col. Francis H. Smith, Matthew Fontaine Maury, Robert L. Montague, and Thomas S. Haymond. The council served for sixty days and adjourned on 19 June 1861. See James I. Robertson, Jr. (ed.), Proceedings of the Advisory Council of the State of Virginia, April 21 – June 19, 1861 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1977).

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NOTES

*Act of 21 January 1860. *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, passed in 1859-60, in the Eighty-Fourth Year of the Commonwealth. Richmond: William F. Ritchie, Public Printer, 1860, pp. 126-129.*

CHAP. 26.—An ACT making an Appropriation for the purchase and manufacture of Arms and Munitions of War.

Passed January 21, 1860

Public armory to be put in condition for manufacturing arms.	1. Be it enacted by the general assembly, that the governor be and he is hereby directed to have the buildings of the public armory at Richmond forthwith put in such condition, by the introduction of suitable machinery and otherwise, as shall fit them for the manufacture and repair of arms for the use of the militia of the state, upon a plan to be proposed by a commission of three persons,
Commissioners To be appointed.	and approved by the governor: the members of which commission shall be appointed by the governor, and removable at his pleasure.

Master armorer. Salary	2. That the governor be and he is hereby authorized and directed to employ a master armorer, at an annual/page 126.
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salary not exceeding twenty-five hundred dollars, and quarters, whose duty it shall be to direct the operations in the manufacture and repair of arms; and under the direction of the superintendent to employ such operatives as may insure the effective working of the armory.

Machinery to be purchased.	3. That the governor be and he is hereby authorized and directed to purchase, or cause to be purchased all such machinery, implements and materials, and the patent rights of any newly invented arms, as may be necessary for the successful operation of the armory, for the purposes herein specified.
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Arms to be purchased.	4. That the commission provided by the first section of this act be further authorized and directed to purchase such arms, equipments, and munitions as may be required for the immediate use of the state: provided no arms shall be purchased except of the most
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Must be of approved quality.	approved quality and description, and at reasonable prices: and provided further, that not more than one hundred and eighty
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Where to be distributed	thousand dollars shall be expended in the purchase of arms, equipments and munitions: and provided further, that a due proportion of said arms shall be distributed in the most exposed parts of the state. Said commission are also required to provide for the manufacture of equipments and munitions of war within the state.
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Parts of chapter 33 of Code re-	5. So much and such parts of chapter thirty-three of the Code of Virginia, relating to the public guard and armory as may be in conflict with the provisions of this act shall be so construed as to suspend the present operations at the armory in the repair of arms, until such time as the occupation of said armory may be necessary under the provisions of this act.
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Amount appro- 6. For the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this
 priated. act, the sum of five hundred thousand dollars is hereby
 appropriated; which amount shall be raised by loans in the manner
 How raised. prescribed by existing laws, or such laws as may hereafter be
 passed for raising funds by loan for works of internal improvement.

Commencement 7. This act shall be in force from its passage./ page127

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The following report of Governor Letcher to the Constitutional Convention, 17 June 1861, is found on pp. 157-163 of *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from January 1, 1836 to April 15, 1869*; Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond, Arranged, Edited, and Printed Under the Authority and Direction of H.W. Flournoy, Secretary of the Commonwealth and State Librarian, Vol. XI, Richmond, 1893.

—In my inaugural message I embraced the opportunity to advise the General Assembly that it was their duty to place the State in such a condition that she will be prepared at all times and upon the shortest notice to protect the honor, and defend her rights, and maintain her institutions against all assaults of her enemies. With this view I recommend a careful revision of the militia laws, and in this connection I suggest that munitions of war be procured and provision be made for the organization of an efficient military staff. I recommend at the same time the passage of a bill for the organization of a brigade of minute men, and furnished the draft of a bill for the accomplishment of this object.

—On the 21st of January, 1861 [**NOTE: This is a mistake. The date was 21 January 1860**], the General Assembly passed an act making an appropriation of one hundred and eighty thousand dollars to purchase such arms, equipment and munitions as may be required for the immediate use of the State. This sum was to be expended under the direction of a commission to be appointed by the Executive, and consisted of Col. P. St. Geo. Cocke, Major Geo. W. Randolph and Col. F. H. Smith, who were appointed immediately after the passage of the act and entered upon the discharge of their duties. No men were ever more prompt and faithful in the performance of a public duty, and their action received the approval of the General Assembly.

—Out of this appropriation, thirteen rifle cannon, five thousand percussion muskets, revolvers, cavalry sabers, fifty thousand pounds of powder and other articles were purchased; the entire sum was expended as will fully appear from the report of Major Randolph made to the General Assembly on the 1st day of April last, and herewith transmitted.

—By an act passed January 29th; 1861, it was made the duty of the Colonel of ordnance, under the direction of the Governor, to procure the necessary arms, equipments and munitions, and to buy materials therefor and to contract for altering and improving cannon and small arms, and to purchase machinery and materials therefor. The act appropriates \$800,000 to accomplish these purposes. Col. Charles Dimmock was nominated to the Senate and confirmed as a Col of ordnance, and immediately entered upon the discharge of his duties. His report herewith transmitted (Appendix B,) will shew what was done under this act.

—By the same act the Governor is authorized to employ an Engineer to plan and construct coast, harbor and river defences, and to execute the same if approved by the Governor. For this position Col. Talcott was selected, and he has been most industriously and energetically employed in the discharge of his important duties. The act also provided for the construction of three arsenals in different sections of the State, and for the purposes mentioned in this paragraph the sum of \$200,000 was appropriated. Under this act the amount appropriated could not be

raised in the usual mode by the sale of State bonds, the bonds having depreciated twenty per cent. or more and our law prohibiting the sale at less than their par value.

—Hence an act was passed on the 14th day of March thereafter authorizing the issue of one million of dollars of Treasury notes. This act authorizing the Governor to direct the Auditor to borrow from the State from time to time the sum aforesaid, and to issue treasury notes therefor. Under the act the banks were authorized to discount or purchase such treasury notes.

—The convention subsequently, by an ordinance passed April 30th, 1861, authorized the Governor to raise for the defence of the State, by treasury notes, a sum not exceeding two millions of dollars. These notes are made payable to bearer, and are redeemable one year after their dates, and when paid are to be cancelled, and reissues are authorized for a like amount.

—Provisional Army. — Appointments in the higher grades were confined to retired officers of the army who had left the service of the United States. To carry into immediate effect the provisions for recruiting, appointments were made for a number of first and second Lieutenants, nearly one-half of whom are graduates of the Virginia Military Institute, and they have been distributed throughout the State on recruiting service. It is now satisfactorily ascertained that while the volunteer organization is so actively pressed, as it now is in our State, it is impossible to raise the ten thousand men proposed by the ordinance. One Regiment, perhaps, may be raised.

—To give employment to the young officers, the commanding General has made good use of them in organizing and drilling the volunteers as they were received at the various camps of instruction. As many of them as may be required for this and the Engineer service may be retained with advantage until their services shall be no longer necessary — the remainder might be disbanded after organizing the companies already recruited.

—The report of Major-General Lee is herewith transmitted, and I commend it to the attention of the Convention. It presents information that cannot fail to be interesting and instructive, as it shews the progress of our military matters since the ordinance of secession was passed (Appendix D.)

—The Harper's Ferry machinery and the disposition made of it, was the subject of a previous communication, and to that and the accompanying papers I refer.

—transmit a copy of the proclamation turning over the military power of the State to the Confederate States. The terms are satisfactory, so far as I know or believe, to both sides. (Appendix F.)

 *annual quota of arms — According to Fuller and Steuart in *Firearms*, p. 1, —“the law of April 23, 1808 provided for the supply of State's arms on a regular quota basis, and the regulation established by President Jackson in 1835 and reconfirmed by President Pierce in 1855 prohibited the issue of these in advance....”

*Adams, Solomon — Originally from Massachusetts. He became Master Armorer of the Virginia Armory in 1860. When this armory was taken over by the C.S.A., its name was changed to “Confederate States Armory, Richmond,” or “C.S. Armory Richmond” or “Richmond Armory,” for short, and Adams became Master Armorer of Confederate Ordnance. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, p. 195; and multiple citations in Davies, *C.S. Armory Richmond*.

*Ames -- James Tyler Ames, Massachusetts Arms Company, Chicopee Falls, Mass. Couper, in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, p. 49 (footnote) writes, —James Tyler Ames (1810-1883)

established with his brother, near Chicopee Falls (not far from Springfield), Massachusetts, the first sword factory in the United States. They made swords for the United States Government as early as 1830; in 1836 they began casting brass cannon and later military accoutrements. In their plant many famous statues, doors, etc. were cast in bronze. During the war in 1861-65 this was one of the largest munitions factories in the North and it manufactured sabers, Springfield rifles, and a thousand cannon for the Federal Government." See also endnote on Maynard Carbine.

*Anderson, Joseph Reid – See **Tredegar Iron Works**.

*Armory Commission – Armory Commission or Armory Board – The Virginia General Assembly passed an **act on 31 January 1860*** making an appropriation of one hundred and eighty thousand dollars to purchase such arms, equipments and munitions as may be required for the immediate use of the State." The Governor appointed the following three men to the Armory Commission: Col. Philip St. George Cocke, Maj. George W. Randolph, and Col. Francis H. Smith.

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See Col. Smith's 24 December 1859 letter to **Bishop C. P. McIlvaine**,* of Cincinnati, Ohio, under endnote **John Brown**."

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For more on the Armory Commission/Armory Board, see Francis H. Smith, *History of the Virginia Military Institute*, edited by Francis H. Smith, Jr., 1912, pp. 172-173: —The lawless invasion of John Brown admonished the people of the State of the duty of preparation for war, and a law was passed by the General Assembly in 1860 appropriating \$500,000 for the armament of the State. The Act placed the disbursement of the appropriation in the hands of three commissioners to be appointed by the Governor. Governor John Letcher, who had been inaugurated on the 1st of January, 1860, appointed Col. P. St. Geo. Cocke, Capt. George W. Randolph, and Col. F. H. Smith commissioners, and they were instructed to proceed without delay to the execution of the duty assigned to them. Colonel Cocke was chosen as chairman, and it was determined to visit at once the various arsenals of the United States. Upon the invitation of the commission, Governor Letcher accompanied them on this important tour. The commission visited Springfield, the West Point Foundry, and Harper's Ferry. While at West Point, a kind invitation was extended to them, by my old Army friend, Capt. R. P. Parrott, one of the proprietors of the West Point Foundry, to visit it, and to witness some experiments he was making with a new *rifled gun*. The commission visited the foundry, and witnessed the experiments behind an epaulement, and, as the Ordnance Department of the Army was slow to take hold of this new gun, I was instructed by the commission to say to Captain Parrott that if he would send to the Virginia Military Institute one of these guns, with 100 shells, orders would be given to the Instructor of Artillery at the Institute, Maj. T. J. Jackson, to give this gun a fair trial, and if the result proved satisfactory, the commission would order some for the State of Virginia. The experiments were duly made by Major Jackson, were satisfactory, and twelve of these guns, with a complement of shells, were ordered for the State. These guns were first used, and with great effect, at the Battle of Bethel, and the reputation founded upon this use of them led to the general introduction of the Parrott Gun into the artillery of the U.S. and C.S." [**Note:** *This documentation, not contemporary to the events, is the only report known to the present editor that states explicitly that the testing of weapons at VMI was conducted by Maj. T. J. Jackson.*] See also endnote **proposition submitted to Mr. Ames**" and **Parrott**" for detailed accounts by Col. William Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*

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For an 1861 report on what the Armory Commissioned accomplished, see ~~Message~~ from the Executive of the Commonwealth... Showing the Military and Naval Preparations for the Defence of the State of Virginia," Electronic Edition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Call

number 2258 pt. 35 Conf (Rare Book Collection, UNC-CH),
(<http://docsouth.unc.edu/imps/message/message.html>).

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In a footnote in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, p. 52, Couper reports on the work accomplished by the Armory Commission: —*Lexington Gazette* of January 27, 1864. A complete report made by Governor Letcher to the Constitutional Convention on June 17, 1861 is recorded in the Calendar of Virginia State Papers, XI-157. The commissioners purchased 13 rifled cannon; 5,000 percussion muskets; 50,000 rounds of powder, etc. — they had functioned under Act of Jan. 21, 1860 which provided \$180,000. Under an Act dated January 29, 1861 an ordnance department was established and authorized to expend \$800,000 for arms, etc. Then followed an engineer department, under Colonel Talcott, which had \$200,000. On April 30, 1861 a note issue of \$2,000,000 was authorized to provide for the defense of the State, etc.”

*Ball, Armistead M. -- Master Armorer at Harper's Ferry, 1860; Appointed Master Armorer of the Virginia State Armory. See *Lexington Gazette*, 15 March 1860, p. 2. A source to start with is William A. Albaugh, III, and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Arms* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1957), p. 200, hereafter cited as Albaugh and Simmons, *Confederate Arms*.

*Ball, Major Charles B. -- Leesburg, Loudoun Col, Va.; Virginia House of Delegates, 1849-52, 1857-61; Virginia Senate, 1861-1865.

*Barbour, A. M. -- Superintendent of Harper's Ferry Arsenal in 1861. See Albaugh and Simmons, *Confederate Arms*, p.200.

*barrel bands -- Strips of metal that fasten the barrel to the stock

*Bell -- Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, p. 193, writes, —“Here is a notation of a Washington contract of January 25, 1859, with W. B. Bell for application of his primer to 3,000 arms at compensation of \$2000. No data is available and it is not believed that the system was adopted.”

*[Belmead](#)” -- Tudor Gothic villa of Philip St. George Cocke on “Belmead” Plantation in Powhatan County, Va. This house was designed by the New York architect [Alexander Jackson Davis](#), who also designed the 1850 VMI Barracks and the 1860 Superintendent's Quarters at VMI.

*Brockenbrough, Judge John White -- (1806-1877) Lawyer in Lexington; Democrat; Co-publisher in 1841 of *The Valley Star*; VMI Board of Visitors, 1843-46; Federal Judge for the Western District of Virginia, 1846- ; Strongly pro-slavery; Opened a private law school in Lexington, 1849; Member, Confederate Provisional Congress, 1861.

*[Brown, John](#) -- Abolitionist whose attacks on pro-slave groups in Osawatimie, Kansas, made him known nationally. On 16-18 October, 1859, he and 21 followers seized the U.S. Armory at Harper's Ferry in anticipation of instigating a slave insurrection in Virginia. The local militia blocked his escape and a company of U.S. Marines commanded by Robert E. Lee killed 10 and captured Brown. He was hanged on 2 December 1859 in Charles Town. Major Thomas J.

Jackson commanded a VMI cadet artillery detachment at the trial and execution. [The VMI Corps of Cadets served as guards at the hanging.](#)

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On the VMI presence at the hanging of John Brown and reactions to the Brown raid on Harper's Ferry, see the following letter from Francis H. Smith to Bishop C. P. McIlvaine:

Va Mil: Institute
Dec 24th 1859
Rt. Rev'd C P McIlvane
Cincinnati Ohio
Dear Bishop [*Episcopal Bishop*]

You will be sure that I opened your letter with real pleasure this morning, I immediately recognized your familiar hand.... By its side, on my table, rests one, I have just rec'd from Bishop [*Leonidas*] Polk and both letters were upon the same subject. It was made a part of my duty to com'd [command] the military arrangements at Charleston on the occasion of the execution of that wicked man John Brown. It was a most solemn scene. Not one word was said by way of taunt or indignation. It was the silent witnessing, on the part of 2000 persons of the just sentence of the law of the land. But there was deep feeling in the midst of it all and that was founded upon the conviction, that the public peace and the public security so far as they were designed to be maintained by our Federal Union, had been invaded in a way to make every friend to that Union in the South, regard its dissolution as not possibly simple – but probable –perhaps inevitable. My views on these questions are not extreme. Educated as I was at the National School [*USMA at West Point, Class of 1833*] and above all nurtured in the bosom of our conservative Church. I have always been a moderate man on these questions – but my dear Bishop, let me assure you, that imminent danger threatens our beloved country. You have no conception of the deep feeling that pervades our people. It pervades all classes and conditions of our society and the view of each one is, that if we can't have peace & security in the union it ceases to afford us what we desire and expected to obtain. What is then the real danger? Not the noisy banterings of members of Congress. O – No – There's something deeper than that. Our people feel insecure at their homes & by their firesides lest the torch of the incendiary, or the knife or revolver of the assassin shall be used by one coming among us as a friend and a brother, universal distrust, in consequence pervades our people, so that if dear brother Mcl or his son should be on his way to pay me the cherished visit, and it were known that either was from Ohio, suspicion would be awakened in the breast of some who have not the same cause to love you as I have. Thus the neighbourly and brotherly feelings which should characterize one people are invaded – and the dividing wedge has entered to disturb our peace and destroy our union. If I could only make our bretheren at the North realize the danger as I see it & know it to exist perhaps there might be some movement in earnest to crush out those daring & wicked men who fear neither God nor man and who would sympathize with those coming among us to invade our peace & destroy our lives. Surely this can be done and unless it is done all the sad results of a divided country are before us – as realities. My own conviction is – that the secret spring of all this wickedness is to be found in the spirit of Anti-Christ – which pervades so much of the religious fanaticism of the New England peoples. And here is the real power of our church in promoting the conservative sentiment to which I have referred – that it does preach Christ crucified – King of kings & Lord of lords – very God – with us. So that on this Christmas eve & tomorrow's Christmas Day, we do rejoice that ~~unto~~ unto us was born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." I had scarcely reached home from Charlestown, when I rec'd an order from the joint committee on military affairs in our legislature, to go to Richmond that my aid might be given to them in providing suitable defenses for the State. For two days I was with them -- & hence I speak knowingly when I convey to you the extent of the apprehension I feel. A bill was unanimously reported from the joint committee appropriating \$500,000 for use in immediate preparation for defense. Alas. Has it come to this? Preparing for war? Civil War? War against our bretheren & friends. Do you think Dear Bishop that I could ever raise a hand to touch a lock of your venerable

and venerated hair? And yet wicked men are driving the country to such an issue. May God in his mercy avert such a calamity.

/FHS/

*[Burnside guns](#) – Burnside Breech-Loading Percussion Carbine, .54-caliber. This weapon was invented [by Ambrose Everett Burnside](#) (later Major General) while he was still a cadet at USMA. In 1855, he organized the Bristol Firearms Company at Bristol, Rhode Island, to manufacture his rifle which he patented in 1856. Sources to start with are William B. Edwards, *Civil War Guns* (Harrisonburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1962), p. 114-119, hereafter cited as Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, and Arcadi Gluckman, *Identifying Old U.S. Muskets, Rifles & Carbines* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1965), pp. 325-329, hereafter cited as Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*.

*Burnside cartridge – The .54-caliber, metallic cartridge had a unique shape with a large metal ring around the top of the cartridge that served as a gas seal between the chamber and the bore. This reverse taper, gas seal ring cartridge was unique to the Burnside gun and could not be used in any other weapon. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, p. 114, and Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, p. 327.

*Burton, LTC James H. – Born in England. He went to work at Harpers Ferry Arsenal and Armory in 1844, later becoming Master Armorer until 1854. In 1855, he went to England where he was chief engineer of the royal small arms factory at Enfield until 1860. He returned to Virginia and was appointed LTC, Va. Ordnance Department, in charge of the Virginia State Armory. He oversaw the moving of equipment captured at Harper's Ferry to Richmond. In 1861, he was commissioned LTC, C.S. Ordnance, and was placed in command of the Richmond Armory. He was named Superintendent of Armories in 1862. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, p. 206.

*[Chenoweth, Joseph Hart](#) -- 23 years old in 1860. VMI Class of 1859. LT, assistant professor of math and assistant instructor in artillery tactics. Artillery instructor with GEN Jackson; KIA Port Republic.

*Clay, Honorable Clement Claiborne – (1816-1882) U.S. Senator from Alabama; Confederate Senator. He was sent to Canada in 1864 to negotiate peace. Because of his trip to Canada, he mistakenly suspected of being involved in the plot to assassinate President Lincoln.

*Cocke, Col. Philip St. George (1809 - d. Dec 1861); USMA, 1832; artillery office, US, 1832-1834; B.G, CSA; Pres., Virginia State Agricultural Society, 1853-1856; Member of the VMI Board of Visitors, 1846-52, 1858-61; President of the VMI Board of Visitors, 1850-52, 1858-61; Virginia businessman, planter, educator; Committed suicide, Dec. 1861.

*[Colston, Raleigh Edward](#) – 34 years old in 1860, born in France. VMI professor of French, military history, modern history, political economy, 1846-1860; BG C.S.A.; later Colonel in Egyptian Army, 1873-1879. Died in Richmond, 1896.

*Colt, Col. Samuel – (1814-1862) U.S. firearms manufacturer. In 1835-36 he patented a breech-loading repeating pistol that featuring a revolving cylinder system. He began unsuccessfully in Paterson, New Jersey. Later he moved to Hartford, Connecticut where he established the Colt Firearms Manufacturing Company (a.k.a. Colt's Patent Fire Arms Company and Colt's Arms

Manufacturing Company) to produce revolving pistols, rifles, and carbines. His pistols, the Colt Model 1851 Navy Pistol, .36-caliber, and the Model 1860 Army Revolver, .44-caliber, were very popular with Union (mostly cavalry arm) and Confederates. Several sources to start with are Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*; R. Q. Sutherland and R. L. Wilson, *The Book of Colt Firearms* (Kansas City: Robert Q. Sutherland, 1971); and Edwards, "Golt's Goes to War," in *Civil War Guns*, pp. 304-335

*[Colt Navy Pistol](#) – Model 1851 —Navy" Pistol was .36-caliber and at two pounds weighed half of what the standard Colt Army Revolver weighed. Albaugh and Simmons state that the Navy Pistol was the prototype of nearly all Confederate-made revolvers. It was the favorite of Confederate cavalry. See Albaugh and Simmons, *Confederate Arms*, p. 9.

[Colt Revolving Carbine](#) – Probably the Colt Percussion Repeating Carbine, Model 1855, manufactured in .44- and .56-caliber. It was a breech-loading, rifled carbine and used the principle of his six-shot pistol: a revolving cylinder, 5 and 6 shot. This weapon was dangerous because of gas and flame leakage and because of the occasional accidental discharge of multiple chambers simultaneously. See Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, pp. 219-24 and 329-331.

*Correspondence of the Fredericksburg News, Lexington House, Lexington, Va. Nov 7th 1859. Letter to the editor from a correspondent who visited Lexington." The correspondence appears in *The Gazette*, Lexington, Va., Thursday, Nov. 24, 1859, vol. 7, no. 14, p. 2:

—We have arrived in Lexington and seen the sights. Our respects have been paid to the Governor elect, Hon. John Letcher, a dignified old Virginia gentleman. The Institute, as one of the curiosities, claims a visit. Cadets with loaded muskets, received and politely showed us around.

—Heavy cannon are planted on the hill overlooking the town, and by them are piled large quantities of shells. If invaders come, the soil of Virginia shall drink their blood and foil them in their mad and unholy purpose. Washington College comes in for a passing glance. Some ninety five students, fine, intelligent looking youths, are assembled at this fountain of learning, ready to drink in the rich pure draughts of classic and scientific lore which is dealt out to them by their well trained preceptors. The building itself gives signs of decay. It needs renovating.

—At the hotel there seems unusual bustle. On enquiry, the gentlemanly landlord, Mr. Johnson, tells us that **Judge Brockenbrough's*** Law Lectures begin on Monday, and this explains the influx of so many good looking and apparently intelligent young men. About 30 are here and more are coming. Lexington is regularly incorporated. It has five churches, about 20 stores, two newspapers, and one first class hotel, the Lexington House. The Presbyterian church is being repaired just at this time and considerably enlarged. Its pastor is well known to you, being none other than the well known **Dr. White**.* More anon."

*[Crutchfield, Stapleton, Jr.](#) – 23 years old in 1860. Professor of mathematics and instructor in tactics at VMI. He was appointed Jackson's Chief of Artillery, 2nd Corps, ANV, BG, wounded at Chancellorsville, KIA April 1865 at Saylor's Creek on retreat to Appomattox.

*Cuba – Southern legislators had urged for a number of years the acquisition of Cuba, as a slave state.

*[Dahlgren, John Adolph](#) – (1809-70) Ordnance officer in U.S. Navy; invented the Dahlgren Gun, a rifled cannon. He took command of the Washington Naval Yard in April 1861.

*Dallas, George M. – (1792-1864) Vice President (1845-1849) under President James K. Polk, during the Mexican War. U.S. Minister to Britain (1856-1861). The City of Dallas, Texas, is named for him.

*[Davis, Jefferson – \(1808-1889\)](#) At the time he was serving in the U.S. Senate after having served as Secretary of War in the Pierce Administration. He became President of the C.S.A.

*[Deane and Adams Pistol](#) – This revolver – an Adams pistol -- was first made by the London Armory Company of England. The Adams revolver was a double-action, five-shot percussion revolver most commonly manufactured in .44-caliber or .36 caliber. In the United States, it was manufactured by the Massachusetts Arms Company of Chicopee Falls for the Adams Revolving Arms Company of New York. According to Edwards, some versions of the pistol were unsafe as several chambers could fire simultaneously. The US did not adopt them for wartime use. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, pp. 96-98. See Smith letters of 71 and 18 to Randolph and Cocke. According to Couper, quoting Col. W. H. Payne, a member of the VMI Board of Visitors, the state purchased “4,000 revolvers of the Deane & Adams patent, a self cocking pistol and the same as is used in the English service....” See Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, p. 50. According to Fuller and Steuart, “The English Adams revolver, a .44caliber, double-action weapon, patented by John Adams, of Dalston, England, in 1857, ranked next to the Colt in the estimation of Southern ordnance officers. On January 21, 1861, the Virginia State Ordnance Department received 999 ‘new Adams revolvers’ to equip its militia.” See Claud E. Fuller and Richard D. Steuart, *Firearms of the Confederacy* (Lawrence, Mass: Quaterman Publications, Inc., 1944), p. 246, hereafter cited as Steuart, *Firearms*, p. 246. Weapons of this sort usually came in by blockade runners from various ports, including Havana, Cuba.

*Dimmock, Captain Charles -- (1800-1863) Native of Massachusetts; USMA; instructor in the ordnance department at Fort Monroe; one of the directors of the James River and Kanawha Canal Company; Captain, commanding the Public Guard, Richmond, 1844-1861; Superintendent, Virginia State Armory; Colonel, Virginia Ordnance Department, 1861-1863; Brevet Brigadier General, 4 April 1862. Died 1863. See E. M Sanchez-Saavedra, “Richmond’s Old Bell House,” *Virginia Cavalcade*, Autumn 1969, pp. 5-11.

*Duke, Capt. Richard Thomas Walker – VMI 1845, Stony Point, Va., 3 years at VMI, Graduated #2; VMI Faculty 1843-44, assistant professor of math; LL.B., U. of Virginia; Author; Col., 46th Va., Infantry, C.S.A.; Member, U.S. Congress; Lawyer; Died 2 July 1898. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*DuPont, Henry (–Harry”) B. – (1812-1889) Henry DuPont headed the family firm, E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Company, a gunpowder mill on the Brandywine River in Delaware, from 1850 until his death in 1889. He was a close friend of VMI’s Superintendent Francis H. Smith (1812-1890) as they were classmates at the United States Military Academy from 1829 to 1833. They graduated in 1833 with the rank of brevet second lieutenant. Both of them served in the Creek Indian War and both resigned from the Army. DuPont returned to Delaware to assist his father in the family business and Smith went on to Hampden-Sydney College to teach mathematics before being appointed Superintendent of VMI in 1839.

*[Enfield Musket](#) – Model 1853 and Model 1858 Enfield Rifle Musket, manufactured at the London Armory, Co., and elsewhere, in England. It was one of the best foreign imports. Both sides imported around a half million of these muskets. It was the most popular gun in the Confederate service because of its accuracy. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, for extensive treatment of this rifle, as well as Fuller and Steuart, *Firearms*, p. 224.

*Exchange Hotel – Built in 1840-41, the Exchange Hotel was located in Richmond, Va., at the Southeast corner of Franklin and Fourteenth streets. It was demolished in 1900-01.

*Field Artillery at VMI – VMI received four six-pounder bronze guns and two twelve-pounder howitzers in 1848. These were made lighter than standard guns and were intended mainly for drill and not for target practice. Each of the four six-pounders bore the seal of the State of Virginia. [The guns were called the Cadet Battery.](#) Over time, the pieces came to be known as –Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.” See William Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, 1: 166-168. The four six-pounders are currently located in front of Jackson Arch, and one of the howitzers is located in front of Crozet Hall.

*Floyd, John Buchanan – Lawyer and cotton planter in Arkansas. Served as President’s Buchanan’s Secretary of War from 1857 to 1860. He was accused of complicity with the seizure of arsenals by Southerners. He raised a brigade and was appointed Brigadier General, C.S.A. 23 May 1861.

*Gibbons, Capt. Simeon Beauford –VMI, 1852, Luray, 3 years at VMI; Civil Engineer; Teacher; Merchant; VMI Board of Visitors, 1859-60; Capt. Va. Volunteers; Col. 10th Va. Infantry, C.S.A.; Killed in battle 8 May 1862 at McDowell, Va. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*Gibbs, John Tracy – 40 years old in 1860, born in England. Commissary and Steward at VMI. Captain, later Major, VMI Commissary; VMI Quartermaster.

*[Gilham, William – 40 years old in 1860](#). USMA, 1840; served in the Mexican War. At VMI, professor of natural and experimental philosophy (physics), chemistry, geology, agriculture, 1846-1872; instructor in tactics and Commandant of Cadets, 1846-1859, known to cadets as –Old Gil”; Commanded Camp Lee (named in honor of Gen. Light Horse Harry Lee) at the Richmond Fair Grounds. Gilham was the author of a manual on tactics (1861) -- see **Tactics** endnote.

*–go down” – Smith’s reference to going from Lexington to Richmond.

*[Governor John Letcher](#) -- (1813-1884) Wartime Governor of Virginia, 1860-1864. See F. N. Boney, *John Letcher of Virginia* (Alabama: U. of Alabama Press, 1966).

*Green, Col. William James – VMI 1846, Falmouth, Va., 3 years at VMI; Merchant and Farmer; Lt. Col. 47th Va. Infantry, C.S.A.; Killed 27 June 1862 in battle at Cold Harbor. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*Hall's Carbine – Possibly the Model 1843 Hall's percussion carbine smooth-bore, .52-caliber, with a rising breech block. According to the National Park Service, "the Halls' carbine has a couple of flaws. One was that in the rigors of battle, it experienced mechanical failure. Another is that the breech of the gun had a gap that tended to widen over time, causing smoke to pour out the rear of the gun." Federal and Confederate cavalry used this carbine.

See www.nps.gov/archive/fosc/weapons_info1.htm.

John H. Hall -- (died 1841) He was granted patents by the U.S. government under which he manufactured arms at Harper's Ferry. Fuller and Steuart state that "... the Hall [was] the first arm to be manufactured on a production basis that was completely interchangeable...." Fuller and Steuart also state that "[S.] North ... [of Middletown, Connecticut] was the only contractor to manufacture guns of the Hall pattern for the Government. He was the first official pistol maker ... and [manufactured] Hall carbines"

For detailed information on Hall's breech-loading arms, see Fuller and Steuart, *Firearms*.

*[Hampsey, John](#) – 39 years old in 1860, born in Ireland. Ordnance Sgt. at VMI. Came to VMI in 1858; went with F. H. Smith to Craney Island; served under Magruder; did not return to VMI after the war.

*Hardee, William Joseph – (1815-1873) USMA Class of 1838. Fought in the Seminole War; studied at cavalry school in Saumur, France; fought in Mexican War; Commandant of Cadets at USMA; Commissioned Col., C.S.A., January 1861. Author of *Hardee's Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* (1855). Hardee's tactics "was the result of the realization of the value of skirmishers and rapidity of movement by American military thinkers in the early 1850s." See "A Brief History of U.S. Infantry Tactics (1855-1865)," http://www.usregulars.com/drill_history.html Also, from the same article, "Officers trained at West Point since 1855 were intimately familiar with Hardee's methods, as his new drill manual was first tested there in 1854. Hardee himself was Commandant of Cadets from 1856-1860, during which period his manual was the primary infantry drill instruction."

*[Hardin, Mark Bernard](#) – 22 years old in 1860. VMI Class of 1858. Professor of chemistry and assistant instructor in tactics, assistant professor of Latin, Assistant Commandant, 1859-1869. MAJ, 9th Va., 1861; MAJ, 18th Bn. Heavy Artillery, 1862; captured Saylor's Creek, April 1865. Taught chemistry at VMI, 1867-1889 and at Clemson from 1890-1910.

*Harper's Ferry Arsenal and Armory – This was one of several major arsenals and armories serving the U.S. government before the Civil War. Harper's Ferry, a Federal facility, was begun in 1799 and continued in operation until its destruction at the start of the war. Muskets, rifles, and pistols were manufactured, and according to the National Park Service, which administers this historic site today, "By 1810, annual production of arms averaged about 10,000." The Armory was significantly expanded and modernized after 1844 and came to be known as the "U.S. Musket Factory."

Harper's Ferry was the target of [John Brown's Raid in October, 1859](#). The Armory was torched by the retreating Federal guard when several companies of Virginia Militia advanced on it in April 1861, but the Jefferson Battalion and the Fauquier Cavalry, led by Capt. Turner Ashby, captured the rifle musket machinery, a large supply of arms, and tools and equipment before this material could be destroyed by fire. The machinery for making the U.S. Rifle Model 1841 was sent to the arsenal at Fayetteville, N.C., and the machinery for making the U.S. Rifle Musket, Model 1855, was sent to the Richmond Armory and Arsenal. See NPS website for Harper's Ferry:

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/hafe/armory.htm>

Fuller and Steuart, in *Firearms*, pp.2- 3, reproduce the following correspondence of H. K. Craig, Colonel of Ordnance to:

ORDNANCE OFFICE

Washington, November 12, 1859

Hon. JOHN B. FLOYD

Secretary of War.

SIR: In compliance with your orders of the 10th instant, I transmit the inclosed tabular statement of the muskets and rifles on hand at each of the armories and arsenals. It does not include the 23,894 flintlock muskets and 652 flintlock rifles still remaining unaltered.

I am, sir, with much respect, your obedient servant

H.K. CRAIG

Colonel of Ordnance

The enclosure is titled *Statement of the number of serviceable muskets and rifles on hand at each armory and arsenal.* As of November 1859, For Harper's Ferry Armory, the number of ~~Altered~~ to percussion, cal. .69" was 149; The number ~~Altered~~ to Maynard lock, cal. .69" was 2; the number ~~Made as~~ percussion, cal. .69" was 4,569; the number of ~~Percussion~~, since rifled, cal. .69" was 737; the number of ~~Rifled~~ musket, cal. .58" was 8,599; the ~~Total~~ muskets" shown was 14,056; the number of ~~Altered~~ to percussion, cal. .54" was none; the number ~~Made as~~ percussion, cal. .54" was 696; the number of ~~New model~~ rifle, cal. .58" was 3,570; and the ~~Total~~ rifles" was 4,266.

On the seizure of Harper's Ferry, see Fuller and Steuart, *Firearms*, p. 20:

~~At~~ this late date the capture of Harper's Ferry on April 18, 1861 by a body of State troops is indeed hard to explain, as this property was nearer Washington than Richmond, and troops for its protection could have been sent there without passing them through hostile territory.

~~The~~ call for the first 75,000 volunteers was made April 15, 1861, which indicated that the Government had abandoned the idea of a peaceful settlement ... but there seems to have been no effort made to reinforce the small body of troops guarding that place, thereby permitting the Confederates to acquire property that was of immense value to them at the time."

 *[Harper's Ferry Musket](#) – The Model 1816 U.S. Flintlock Musket, .69-caliber, smoothbore, was produced at the Harper's Ferry Armory and the Springfield Armory from 1816 to 1840. Many were converted to percussion lock muskets and used in the early years of the Civil War. From 1844-1855, Harper's Ferry and Springfield also made the .69-caliber Model 1842 *Springfield* Musket, a percussion lock musket, and it was used by volunteer regiments in the North and South for a good part of the war. See Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, pp. 118-122.

 *Henderson, Octavius Cazenove – 21 years old in 1860. VMI Class of 1859. At VMI, LT, assistant professor of French and assistant instructor in infantry tactics, 1859-60; CAPT, assistant professor of French and tactics. CAPT, 1st Va Battalion, Infantry, C.S.A.; CAPT, assistant professor of French, 1868-69; CAPT, 1871; MAJ, adjunct professor of modern languages, 1873-75; resigned 1876. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

 *[Imboden, John Daniel](#) -- (1823-1895) Staunton, Va. Graduate of Washington College; lawyer; legislator; organized Staunton Artillery, General, C.S.A.

*Jackson, Major Thomas Jonathan – (1824-1863) USMA Class of 1846. He served in the Mexican War. Resigned from the Army to teach at VMI as professor of natural and experimental philosophy (physics) and instructor in artillery tactics. He commanded the detachment of VMI cadets at the hanging of John Brown. A source to begin with is James I. Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson* (NY: MacMillan, 1997).

*Jordan's Point property – an area along the North River (now the Maury River) and on a small island on the north outskirts of Lexington, Virginia, where a number of manufactories, warehouses, and mills were located. VMI is located just above this area. Canal boats and packet boats could reach this far up the river.

*Kemper, James Lawson – (1823-1895) According to Boatner, *The Civil War Dictionary*, p. 452, Kemper attended Washington College and VMI, but there is no record of his attending VMI. Lawyer. Fought in Mexican War. Speaker of the House of Delegates, resigning in May 1861 to serve as Colonel of the 7th Regiment, Virginia Infantry. Promoted to Brigadier General, 1862; Major General, 1864. Governor of Virginia, 1874-1878. See also Wallace, *Va Mil Organizations*, p. 162.

*Kenney, Capt. James – VMI 1843, Harrisonburg, Va. 1 year 5 ½ months at VMI; Lawyer; Capt., Co. B, 10th Va. Infantry, C.S.A.; Later Major of C.S. Reserves; Judge, County Court; Member Va. Legislature; Died Oct. 13, 1894 at Harrisonburg. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*Lancaster, Charles William – (1820-1878) Charles Lancaster was a gun maker, mainly of sporting guns, in London. For the most part he improved the rifles of others, including Enfield. In 1846 he patented a model of a rifle of a highly unusual design. His new system featured a smooth bore that was oval and elliptical. There were no grooves as the bore itself was elliptical, turning to give the necessary spin to the projectile. In 1855, the Lancaster Carbine, or Lancaster Elliptical Rifle, was adopted as the arm of the Royal Engineers and was used by them until it was superseded by the Martini-Henry rifle in 1869. See Charles William Lancaster, *Dictionary of National Biography*.

*Letcher, John – (1813-1884) From Rockbridge County. Served in U.S. Congress, 1851-1859; Governor of Virginia, 1860-1864; Member, Virginia House of Delegates, 1875-1877. See F. N. Boney, *John Letcher of Virginia* (U. of Alabama: U of Alabama Press, 1966).

*Letcher Rifles -- See Lee A. Wallace, Jr., *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations, 1861-1865* (Lynchburg, Va: H. E. Howard, Inc, 1986), p. 94, hereafter cited as Wallace, *Va. Mil. Organizations*. Wallace states that the core of the 10th Regiment, Virginia Volunteers, commanded by S. B Gibbons, was the 4th Regt. Va. Vols. formed in Rockingham County before the war as a volunteer militia regiment. The regiment was organized with these companies:

Harrison Valley Guards, Capt. Simeon B. Gibbons; organized about July 1859
Rockingham Rifles; organized November 28, 1859
Chrisman's Infantry: Capt. George Chrisman; organized about 1859
Bridgewater Grays: Capt. John S. Brown; organized about 1860
Letcher Brock's Gap rifles: Capt. John Quincy Winfield; organized January 1860
Peaked Mountain Grays; Capt. William Yancey

Riverton Invincibles; Capt. W. D. C. Covington.

*Lexington Arsenal – The Lexington Arsenal was established by act of the Virginia General Assembly in 1816. A local commission, appointed by the Governor, selected a site for the Arsenal on the northern outskirts of the town, overlooking the North Branch of the James River (now called the Maury River), and on the crest of a hill above the Great Road (now Route 11). The following description of the Arsenal is found in Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 1, pp.7-9:

–Major Staples specified that the walls were to be two feet thick in the first and second stories and eighteen inches thick in the third story. Partition walls were to be one foot thick and the building was expected to contain two hundred thousand bricks. The windows were to contain twenty panes, each eight by ten inches – which would indicate that the openings were about three by five feet. Covering this box-like structure was a hip roof with the ridge running east and west – it was a storehouse and was usually referred to as the Arsenal Building.

–Surrounding the Arsenal Building was a wall ten feet high and one foot thick. It enclosed an area one hundred and twenty feet square, and it was estimated that the wall would contain eighty-six thousand four hundred brick.

–South of this walled enclosure and parallel to it along the crest of the ridge there was a range of buildings designed for use as quarters for the officers and barracks for the soldiers who were to guard the arsenal. It was proposed that the two rooms nearest each corner would be used for barracks, one story high, and that the two compartments adjoining the entrance would be two stories high with another room on the second floor over the arch which constituted the entrance. The upper rooms were assigned for use as officers' quarters and one of the lower rooms, adjoining the entrance, was to be used as a guard room and the other as a repair shop.

–The specifications called for brick paving on the ground floors and provided that sleepers, or joists, were to be twelve by four inches spaced eighteen inches apart. 'The roof of the building ought to be slated.' All told the commissioners found that the value of the entire contract was \$12,680.16 and the report showing the work done was signed by James McDowell and J. Leyburn."

–. The buildings were used to store and preserve about 30,000 stand of arms and the annual cost to the State was about \$6,000 a year."

In 1839, by act of the General Assembly, the Lexington Arsenal was converted into a "literary institution for the education of youth" and was renamed the Virginia Military Institute.

*Madison, Dr. Robert L. – Surgeon and professor of natural history at VMI; great nephew of President Madison.

*Massachusetts Arms Company – Located at Chicopee Falls, near Springfield, Massachusetts, it was chartered by the Massachusetts legislature in 1850 to manufacture arms and machinery. It was operated by James T. Ames and others. This company manufactured arms of many inventors, including Maynard guns, Smith carbines, Greene carbines, and Wesson and Leavitt revolvers. There were a number of gun making companies in Chicopee Falls, including the Chicopee Falls Manufacturing Company and the Ames Manufacturing Company. See detailed account in Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, pp. 101-109 and in Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbine*, p. 336..

*Maynadier, Captain William (likely) – Later Lieutenant Colonel. Chief of the Ordnance Bureau, Washington, D.C., December 1860. See Fuller and Steuart, *Firearms*, pp. 20 & 26.

*Maynard Carbine – A tipping barrel, single-shot, breech-loading percussion carbine invented by Dr. Edward Maynard, a dentist. There were a number of models, different calibers but usually .50-caliber, produced for the Maynard Arms Co., Washington, by the Massachusetts Arms Company of Chicopee Falls. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, pp. 102-103.

*Mayo, Dr. – Probably Richmond Mayor Joseph Mayo. Secretary in Richmond to the Armory Commission.

*McCausland, John – 22 years old in 1860. VMI Class of 1857. At VMI, assistant professor of math and assistant instructor in tactics. COL, 36th Va; BG 1864, Western Department commander; burned Chambersburg, PA, 30 July 1864; Paroled, went to Mexico and Europe. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*McCue, John M. – Patented a weapon with Lorenzo Sibert, of Mt. Solon, Va., May 1861. According to Fuller and Steuart, *Firearms*, p. 204, it was never manufactured. It was designed to be a continuous fire, breech-loading gun with a single barrel fed continuously by a series of tubes revolving around the barrel.

*McIlvaine, Bishop Charles Pettit -- (1799-1873) Professor of ethics and Chaplain to the USMA Corps of Cadets, 1824-1826. Bishop, Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Ohio. As president of the American Tract Society, he began the tradition of presenting Bibles to cadets at West Point in 1869. Later became Chaplain of the U.S. Senate.

*Merrill – Merrill, Thomas & Co., gun works, of Baltimore, Maryland. Previously, the Merrill, Thomas, & Latrobe Company. Merrill manufactured the Merrill Breech-Loading Percussion Carbine, .54-caliber in 1858. He also converted or remanufactured Harper's Ferry rifle muskets to breech-loaders. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, pp. 119-121, and Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, pp. 346-347.

*"Military Equipments for the South," *The Gazette*, Lexington, Va., Thursday, March 15 1860, vol. 7, no. 30, p. 2:

—Since the John Brown raid, the Southern people have bestirred themselves to augment and improve their militia.

—One firm in this city [New York] has been obliged to put on 300 extra hands lately to meet the demand for knap-sacks, belts, cartridge boxes, priming wires, and other military appliances. Gun and pistol dealers in this city and elsewhere in the North, also derive large benefits from the Southern martial excitement." – N.Y. Journal of Commerce

*militia, improvement – Couper, in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, p.41 writes, —"troubled conditions after the John Brown raid dictated the necessity of an improved militia system and General Kemper, the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Delegates, devoted much study to this important legislation. Under the Militia Bill (the Virginia code of 1860),

offices of the Virginia Military Institute were recognized as part of the military establishment of the State, and the governor was authorized to issue commissions to them in accordance with the regulations of the Institute – but the commissions conferred no rank in the active militia.”

See also W. Asbury Christian, *Richmond Her Past and Present* (Richmond: Jenkins, 19120, p. 206-209, “At the beginning of the year [1860] January 10th, a convention of the officers of the State militia was held at the Ballard House. Maj.-Gen. W. B. Tailiaferro was elected president. For several days they discussed plans and adopted methods for improving the militia. Upon their recommendation the Legislature, then in session, appropriated money for purchasing suitable arms, and also provided for a plant to manufacture arms, or rather to fit up the Armory and equip it with improved machinery.”

Minié Rifle” – Various rifles were developed after 1849 following the invention of the Minié ball in 1847 by the French Army captains Claude Etienne Minié and Henri-Gustave Delvigne. These rifles were designed for rapid muzzle loading. The minié ball was a conical-cylindrical soft lead bullet with a conical hollow in its base that expanded to provide a tight seal when it was fired. See Allan W. Howey, “Weaponry: The Rifle-Musket and the Minie Ball,” at www.historynet.com/wars_conflicts/weaponry/3036371.html

*Moore, Thomas Overton – (1803-1876) Governor of Alabama (elected 1860)

*Munford, Col. George Wythe – Secretary of the Commonwealth. His son was G. W. Munford, Jr., of the VMI Class of 1856.

*Navy Howitzer – Also known as the boat howitzer. Col. Smith was probably referring to the Dahlgren-designed 12-pounder bronze light smoothbore boat howitzer intended for launches or sloops-of-war, cutters, and for amphibious operations. According to “Oil War Guns in Trophy Park,” of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, “483 howitzers of this light model were produced at Washington Navy Yard from 1848 to 1870.” See www.nnsy1.navy.mil/History/CWG.HMT. The USNLP Handbook for Civil War Naval Reenactors cites Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren as saying, “The boat howitzer and its field carriage is so light that it can be drawn by its crew when no other artillery can be taken, over broken ground, among woods, up steep ascents, seeking cover where a tree or a bush, ditch, fence, or dwelling offers it. The ammunition is carried in pouches, so that no obstacle exists on this account.... In other words, the piece is designed to bear the relation to other artillery as the light infantry does to infantry of the line.” See <http://www.usnlp.org>.

*Parrott, Robert Parker – (1804-77) USMA, 1824. Captain, Artillery and Ordnance. Inventor of the Parrott Gun; Superintendent of the West Point Iron and Cannon Foundry, 1836-67.

Parrott Gun – A rifled, muzzle-loading cannon, from 3-inch shells to 10-inch shells. [Parrott guns](#) were manufactured in 10-, 20-, 30-, 60-, 100-, 200-, and 300-pounder calibers. The gun was distinctive by the wrought-iron jacket that reinforced the breech to strengthen it against pressure on firing. The gun had greater range and accuracy than any other cannon at the time. See Albert Manucy, *Artillery Through the Ages: A short Illustrated History of Cannon, Emphasizing Types Used in America* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1962 reprint). Couper, in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, writes in a footnote in vol. 2, page 46, “This gun came into the hands of General Richardson in 1862 and he asked General Smith, on September 11 and October 2, 1862, for a suitable inscription to be placed on a bronze plate affixed to the gun. On October 7, 1862, the following was suggested: The first Parrott gun ever used in service. It was purchased of Capt. Parrott, at the West Point Foundry, by Messrs. P. St. Geo. Cocke, Francis H. Smith and Geo. W.

Randolph in the spring of 1860. Was tried at the Virginia Military Institute by Col. F. H. Smith in July and August. It was taken into service by the cadets in April, 1861, was transferred soon after to Major Geo. W. Randolph for the use of his battalion of Artillery and did admirable (execution?) in the first battle of the war at Bethel.' The inscription was lost by Richardson... and so far as is known no plate was made and the eventual disposition of the gun is unknown. Gen. Smith in writing the inscription made no mention of tests made after August or of Jackson's connection with them, nor has a contemporary report or account confirming this connection been located."

*Paxton, James Gardner – VMI, 1843, Rockbridge County, Va. 1 year at VMI; Lawyer; Member VMI Board of Visitors 1845-46; Member, Virginia House and Senate, from Lexington; Chairman of the Military Committee in the Senate; Major, C.S.A.; Killed in wreck on C. & O. Railway, Aug. 6, 1870. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*. Paxton served on the Board of Directors of the North River Navigation Company in 1850 whose objective was to build a canal from the James River and Kanawha Canal to Jordan's Point, Lexington. See Catharine M. Gilliam, "Jordan's Point," *Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society* (Lexington, Virginia), IX.

*[Payne, William Henry Fitzhugh](#) – According to Wallace, *Va. Mil. Organizations*, p. 43, Payne was elected Captain of Company H, Black Hose Troop (Warrenton County) in April 1861.

*percussion lock rifle – Percussion rifles, pistols, and caps were invented in the early 1830s, and by 1835 were generally available. The percussion lock rifle used a small copper "cap," containing fulminate of mercury, that was placed on a hollow nipple screwed into the barrel of the rifle. When the trigger was pulled, the hammer hit and crushed the cap, exploding the fulminate and producing a flame that ignited the powder in the rifle. The advantage of this over the flint lock was that it was virtually rain-proof and more reliable. Flint lock weapons were routinely and easily converted to percussion lock.

*[Polk, Bishop Leonidas](#) – (1806-1864) USMA, Class of 1827. Classmate of Jefferson Davis. Ordained, became Bishop of Louisiana in 1841. Active in the establishment of the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee. Appointed MG, C.S.A., June 1861. Killed during the Atlanta campaign on 14 June 1864.

*Poultney -- Thomas Poultney & D. B. Trimble, of Baltimore, MD. Agents for the Smith patent carbine, a breech-loading percussion carbine. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, p. 121.

*[Preston, John Thomas Lewis](#) -- 49 years old in 1860. Professor of Latin; one of the founders of VMI. For biographical information, see Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, 4 volumes.

*proposition submitted to Mr. Ames – Couper, in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, pp. 46-47, writes: "While on the tour of inspection in May, 1860, a conference was held with James T. Ames, of Chicopee, Massachusetts. He had been working with the U.S. Army and Navy since 1832 and supplied most of the machinery at the Springfield and Harper's Ferry armories, and also at the Enfield and London armories. It was clear that provision must be made to manufacture arms if they were to be obtained with surety and this led to the preparation of a proposal by Colonel Smith which was transmitted to Ames, conditioned upon ratification by the other commissioners....

On the same day this proposition was mailed the question of muskets and ammunition was discussed. "The quidnuncs sometimes go off half cocked," wrote Colonel Smith. "An infantry

soldier carries 60 rounds in his cartridge box and 60 rounds in his knapsack. The first reserve has 150 rounds and the second reserve, 230. In all the usual estimate for service is 500 rounds per man, or about 8 pounds of powder. A command of 5,000 infantry would, therefore, require 40,000 pounds of powder. We have contracted for 50,000... the whole project is 10,000 or the best rifled muskets at \$16 each, equal to \$160,000.' And such was the status at the time of the acquisition of arms and the provision for manufacturing them.

—There was some dissent about buying so much powder. Fiddlesticks, explained Colonel Smith. 50,000 pounds, or 500 barrels, amounted to nothing — a morning and evening gun would consume 1,000 lbs. a year.'

—Governors of other Southern States, hearing of the activities in Virginia for the defense of the State, began making inquiries. The information desired was furnished and they were invited to attend meetings of the commission at the Institute between June 24th and July 4th, but in the meantime machinery manufacturers were urging the claims of Southern manufacturers on the governor. This led to further negotiations with Ames to find out what machines, or what parts of machines, you would consent to let out in Richmond, with the value in cash of each.'

—In reorganizing the State Armory it was determined that the best type of arms to manufacture there was the U.S. Rifle-musket, corresponding in general character with the English Enfield muskets and the French Minie musket, modified in some minor particulars, (it) is the best arm that can be provided for the Infantry of the State, and this is the only arm which it is proposed to manufacture at this time.' In recounting these decisions to the governor Colonel Smith told of tests which had been conducted by Major Colston with various samples of patented breech loading guns, all of which the commissioners felt were unserviceable for most of the volunteer forces until subjected to the trying tests of long service.' One thing was certain — the Act of 1860 had virtually condemned all the old muskets in the Lexington and Richmond arsenals and it was considered fatal to try to use inferior arms since the moment the Virginia soldier realizes that his own courage and patriotism are powerless, because sacrificed under the deadly fire of an enemy rifle musket' of great superiority, his morale must suffer.

—The old muskets, however, were there, and they presented a problem. Mr. Ames, who had done much business with the British and Russian governments in equipping their armories, felt that it would take three or four years to work the old muskets off and that \$1.50 was a liberal allowance unless the unit price were counterbalanced by excessive machinery costs. Meantime Lexington was besieged by inventors and patentees of guns, primers, and such and while in Colonel Smith's office a piece of metal blew off and wounded Mr. Bell, patentee of the Bell self-primer, in the arm. New cadets who were coming in at this time fell under the magnetic strain which everywhere pervaded the air and eagerly watched their more experienced companions assist in carrying out the various tests.

—Negotiations with Ames continued with respect to the manufacture of a model musket, but a decided change in plan took place following a meeting of the commissioners at the White Sulphur Springs about August 11th when the commissioners ordered 1,000 Enfield muskets at 68 shs Sterling' and proceeded to enter into a contract with Joseph R. Anderson, of Richmond, for equipping the armory and thereby effectively ditching Ames. The proposition recommended by the commissioners on August 17th was altered in some respects by the governor and another meeting was held to determine what parts Anderson can have made out of the State.'

—In recommending the contract with Anderson the commissioners did so with some misgivings. He had been slow in coming forward with a proposition and later had had a stormy interview with Captain Randolph. Why did not Anderson put in for this job?' asked Smith. It is a Southern gun, and Southern manufacturers would have an additional puff in the fact that a Richmond establishment had turned it out.' And to Ames he said, We were all very much worried at the result of the Armory matter and the more so because we were well persuaded that

Anderson could do nothing without your aid....' But things were tempered some when swords furnished by Ames proved to be of poor quality.'

—Leaving the Institute on October 10th [1860], Colonel Smith attended a meeting of the commission in Richmond and then spent two weeks in visiting Washington, Baltimore and New York. While in New York he called on General Winfield Scott and the substance of their remarkable interview will be given later, but the trip did enable him to inform the governor that substantial progress was being made in procuring machinery to equip the armory and that it would be advisable to commission S. Adams, master armorer as of November 1st. (Adams resigned this position with the State on September 12, 1861, and took the same position with the Confederate States.)

—Arms were much in demand. All over the State militia companies were being formed and they were storming the authorities for arms.... The Commissioners had succeeded in getting cavalry and artillery arms, accoutrements and powder, of which the State had not one pound.' Furthermore, they had acquired about 1,000 to 1,500 Harper's Ferry rifles and Major Colston's experiments had indicated that if the barrel were reduced from 42 to 38 inches; percussion locks and bayonets added; and leaf sights affixed — that the result is very little inferior to the rifle musket... It is proposed to use the Minie ball (elongated) and it will fire 500 yards.' And so the frantic effort of a State to place itself in a state of defense will be left for the time, for on the day the letter just quoted was written South Carolina withdrew from the United States and the problem of defense began to take on a larger aspect."

There follows this footnote by Couper:

—In commenting on the final report of the commissioners on December 18th, Colonel Smith said, I think the whole number of muskets in the two Arsenal is 60,000 instead of 50,000, so that Anderson & co. would get \$75,000 in these arms, instead of \$60,000.' A slight discrepancy in unit prices appears here.

—The contract between the commissioners and Joseph R. Anderson and Company, is dated August 23, 1860, and calls for rifled muskets similar to the Springfield or Enfield rifles — 5,000 per annum. Old rifles to be taken in for \$1.50 each. This contract... is printed in the *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, XI-186...."

*[Randolph, Capt. \(later Major\) George Wythe](#) — (1818-1867), lawyer, Confederate Secretary of War, born at Monticello." See *Dictionary of American Biography* and Wallace, *Va Mil Organizations* (several entries). After John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, Randolph used his military knowledge to organize an artillery company in 1859, the "Richmond Howitzers" and was elected Captain. He served as one of the peace commissioners from Virginia to the United States government early in 1861. Commanded the 1st Regiment, Virginia Artillery as Colonel, 1861-1862. He was appointed chief of artillery under Magruder. At Big Bethel, June (1861), he was cited for skill and gallantry.' Promoted to Brigadier General, Feb. 12, 1862. On Mar. 22, 1862, he was appointed Secretary of War, the first Confederate military official to hold this position.

*Reid, Col. Samuel McDowell — 69 years old in 1860. Educated at Washington College, Lexington. Colonel, War of 1812. Tobacco farmer. Clerk of Rockbridge County Court, Justice of the Peace. Ran the North River Navigation Company. Member of the Virginia General Assembly in 1860.

*[Richardson, General William Harvie \(1795-1876\)](#) — Adjutant General of Virginia (20 March 1841-1 September 1876). Extensive correspondence with Col. F. H. Smith (see Smith correspondence

in VMI Archives). Known to VMI cadets as "Old Frederick." Also known in Virginia as "Friend of the Farmer." See Charles W. Turner, "William H. Richardson, Friend of the Farmer," *Virginia Cavalcade*, Winter 1971, pp. 15-20.

*Richmond Arsenal and Armory – The following news item from the Friday, 11 October 1861 *Richmond Enquirer* details these efforts to obtain arms-manufacturing machinery for the Richmond Armory and Arsenal. The item is reproduced in Paul J. Davies, *C.S. Armory Richmond* (Privately Published, n.d.), hereafter cited as Davies, *C.S. Armory*.

"City Intelligence" (*The Richmond Enquirer*, 11 October 1861): THE STATE ARMORY. – This valuable establishment, which, from its importance to the cause of Southern independence, may, with more propriety, be termed a national than a State institution, is situated at the foot of 7th street, upon the banks of James river, from whence it draws its abundant supply of water, for the propelling of the machinery required in the manufacture of small arms. The building itself had for many years been used rather for the receptacle than for the manufacture of arms, until shortly after the "John Brown raid," when the attention of the people of the State having been thus called to the threatening aspect of Yankee radicalism and to the wisdom of being prepared for any emergency, the Legislature, in deference to the popular will, appropriated a large sum of money for the establishment of a Virginia State Armory, and shortly afterwards a Board of Commissioners, to whom was entrusted the duty of carrying out the purposes of the Legislature contracted with the proprietors of the Tredegar Works in this city to provide the establishment with all the requisite machinery, tools &c, for the manufacture of 5,000 rifle muskets a year, at a cost of \$156,590. Before, however, the Messrs. Anderson could enter fully upon their contract, the National difficulties had culminated in the disruption of the Union, and the enforcement, by the mobs of the North, of a practical embargo upon the exportation of their manufactures to the South.

Under these circumstances, little, if any doubt can be entertained, that but for the timely acquisition of the works at Harper's Ferry, very much of delay and of difficulty would have been encountered before the South could have supplied herself with the required machinery, even for the repairing of disabled muskets, &c. Providence, however, appeared to exert itself upon the side of the patriots, and the same controlling power which subsequently supplied us with necessary cannon from the Gosport Navy Yard, and with powder to render them effective from Fort Norfolk, also secured to us, despite the vindictive spirit of our enemies, the invaluable works of the national armory, at Harper's Ferry. Machinery of the best description, worth in the aggregate upwards of two hundred thousand dollars, and which, under the most favorable circumstances, of ordinary methods of supply, could only have been furnished us after years of delay.

... It is, of course, impossible for us to enumerate, in so hurried and brief a sketch, as this is intended to be, the number or specific performances of the machinery, which was resulted. It will be satisfactory to our readers, however, we are sure, to learn that all the important works were saved, and that our Armory can now turn out as perfect a musket as ever emanated from Harper's Ferry. Made – lock, stock, barrel and mounting – entirely by means of machinery formerly employed by the old Government for the same purpose. We include, our category of manufactures, the stock: for it may not be generally known that some 20,000 musket and rifle stocks, of the best black walnut, were secured at Harper's Ferry, and are now in this city. The transfer of the machinery from Harper's Ferry to this city, and to Fayetteville, N.C., where a considerable portion of it was conveyed, and where it is now in working order – was performed under proper superintendence; and it is a notable fact, that, notwithstanding the delicate nature of much of the machinery, and the severe tests of fire and water to which it was subjected by foe and friend, no portion of it was materially injured. On the contrary, it was found upon its arrival here to be available, after slight repair, for immediate use.

Among the most valuable of the rescued machinery is a set of five separate pieces used in cutting upon the stock the grooves for the reception of the lock plates, &c., and which are marvels

of mechanical ingenuity and skill. They cost about \$27,000 in the aggregate, and were made at the American Works, Springfield, Massachusetts. 'A determined, but fortunately fruitless effort was made by the Hessians to destroy these machines. For that purpose they erected beneath them strong fires, which were, however, discovered and extinguished, before they could effect any injury, by George Mauzy, then an employee in the armory, and now engaged, we are pleased in being able to add, at our Armory.

There is no portion of the musket, from the fashioning of the stock out of the rough material to the polishing of its screws and mountings, which is not performed by machinery, and which, though most complicated in their arrangements, yet work with a perfection of movement and completeness of detail absolutely wonderful. Each portion of the gun, being made separately and upon the same model, admits of which is technically called indiscriminate fitting – the perfect adaptability of any portion of the work to others of more recent or of anterior make (**Note: this was later known as "interchangeable parts"**).

(**Note:** The article goes on to present a tour of the Richmond Armory, cited in full in Davies' book. See also "The Virginia Manufactory of Arms," Notes on Virginia (Richmond: Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, Winter 1988), pp. 25-30.)

See also W. Asbury Christian, *Richmond Her Past and Present* (Richmond: Jenkins, 19120, p. 206-209, "At the beginning of the year [1860] January 10th, a convention of the officers of the State militia was held at the Ballard House. Maj.-Gen. W. B. Tailiaferro was elected president. For several days they discussed plans and adopted methods for improving the militia. Upon their recommendation the Legislature, then in session, appropriated money for purchasing suitable arms, and also provided for a plant to manufacture arms, or rather to fit up the Armory and equip it with improved machinery. The old Armory, which had been idle a long time, was fitted up and new machinery placed in it so as to begin at an early day the manufacture of muskets and other arms for the State troops."

(**Note:** From 1820 until 1860, no arms were manufactured at the Richmond Armory. It was used, instead, for storage. In 1860, Virginia's newly appointed master armorer, Solomon Adams, went to Springfield, Mass., to begin work to design and manufacture a model arm in the Richmond Armory. In 1861, part of the machinery captured at Harper's Ferry was transferred to the Richmond Armory, under the direction of Col. Dimmock, Colonel of Ordnance.)

*Rogers, Arthur Lee – VMI 1852, Middleburg, Va., 1 ½ months at VMI; LL.B., U. of Va., Lawyer in Loudon County, Virginia; Major, Artillery, C.S.A.; Designer of Confederate flag; Died Sept. 13 1871 from effects of wound received at Chancellorsville. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*Scott, Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott – (1786-1866) Hero of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. General in Chief in 1841. Author of *Infantry Tactics or Rules for the Exercise and Manoeuvres of the United States Infantry* (1835). –Scott's tactics emphasized massed infantry concentrated on the march and on the battlefield, to maximize the effect of relatively inaccurate musket fire. Revision to U.S. infantry tactics were needed to respond to the move from muskets to longer-range, more accurate rifles." See "A Brief History of U.S. Infantry Tactics (1855-1865)," http://www.usregulars.com/drill_history.html

*Sharp's Wafer Primer – The reference is probably to the "Sharp's primes" or "Sharp's primers." The Sharp's Rifle used a combustible cartridge made of linen or paper treated with nitrate. It was ignited by a standard percussion cap on a nipple in the rifle's breech. See Edwards, **Civil War Guns**, p. 300. The Sharps rifle was used by the 1st and 2nd Regiments of the U.S. Sharp-

shooters. It was a .52-caliber, breech-loading, single-shot rifle. See Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, pp. 230 & 268.

*[Ship \(later Shipp\), Scott](#) – 20 years old in 1860. VMI Class of 1859. At VMI, assistant professor of math, Latin, and tactics, 1859-1860; MAJ, 21st Va., 1861; commanded Cadet Battalion at New Market, wounded; VMI faculty 1865-1890 as COL and Professor of Military History and Commandant of Cadets; BG, second Superintendent of VMI, 1890-1907. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*Simpson, Robert Henry – VMI Class of 1845. Front Royal, Va., 3 years at VMI. Teacher. Major, 17th Va. Infantry, C.S.A., died 9 June 1864 from wounds at Drewry's Bluff. See *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*Small Pox – Couper, in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, p. 24, writes: —Immediately after the return of the cadets smallpox was reported in Lexington and to guard against this scourge Dr. R. L. Madison was at once called to duty, since the regular surgeon, Dr. Graham, was attending cases in the neighborhood. Fortunately, no case of the disease developed at the Institute ... and at the end of about six weeks the quarantine was lifted."

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Va Mil: Institute
Dec: 15th 1859
C. R. Grandy
Norfolk Va

Dear Sir,

...We have some reports of some cases of Small pox in the town of Lexington. Occasional cases are from time to time introduced into the Town. I always make it the occasion to re=vaccinate the Cadets & had this done for all hands yesterday. At the same time I have interdicted any Cadet from going to town. Thus keeping all here removed nearly a mile from the places at which the disease is said to exist. The measures taken by the Town authorities to vaccinate & isolate have arrested all progress – in the disease & we are going on in our duties as usual. We have much reason to be proud at the enviable reputation which the Institute enjoys. Its merits had hitherto been chiefly manifested in its scientific character as an educational establishment. The state is now feeling its worth as the main pillar of its military defense -- & as a consequence all its graduates are being pressed into the service of the state at this time.

/FHS/

*[Smith Carbine](#) -- Smith Breech-Loading Percussion Carbine .50-caliber. Agents: Thomas Poultney & D. B. Trimble, Baltimore, MD. Manufactured at (a) American Machine Works, Springfield, Mass., (b) American Arms Company, Chicopee Falls, Mass., (c) Massachusetts Arms Company, Chicopee Falls, Mass. See Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, pp. 352-353.

*[Smith, Col. \(later General\) Francis H.](#) – (1812-1890) USMA Class of 1833. Served in the Creek Indian Wars. Taught mathematics at Hampden-Sydney College, Va. He served as Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute from 1839, the date of its founding, until 1889: 50 years of uninterrupted service. See Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, 4 volumes.

*Smith, Larkin – Francis Smith's roommate at USMA for 4 years.

*Springfield Arsenal and Armory – Located at Springfield, Massachusetts, overlooking the Connecticut River, the Armory was created by act of Congress in April 1794. The Armory produced many models of muskets, transitioning from flint lock muskets to percussion lock, and from smooth-bore to rifled. It produced about 40,000 of the 1855 Maynard Primer Model, a favorite of the Army in frontier engagements. At the start of the Civil War, production was up to about 1,000 guns a month and increased to 1,000 every twenty-four hours, according to present-day historians at the Armory. The Arsenal and Armory continued in operation until 1968, when it was closed by the Department of Defense. See <http://members.tripod.com/~FeatreWriter/armory1.html>

*[Tactics – Smith no doubt was referring to Major William Gilham's manual on tactics: *Manual of Instruction for the Volunteers and Militia of the United States: With Numerous Illustrations by Major William Gilham, Instructor in Tactics, and Commandant of Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute* \(Philadelphia: Charles Desilver, 1861\).](#)

*Taylor, Maj. R. -- Principal of the American Primer & Arms Co.

*Taylor, William Eyre – Norfolk. VMI Class of 1861, 3 years at VMI. Farmer. Sgt. Light Artillery Blues. The Norfolk Light Artillery Blues was organized into the 3rd Battalion, Virginia Volunteers (militia) under Major William E. Taylor, 2 May 1860. Unit was accepted into C.S.A. in 1861. Capitalist. Died 26 Nov., 1918. See Wallace, *Va Mil Organizations*, several citations, and *Register of Former Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute*.

*[Tredegar Iron Works – Located in Richmond, Va., west of the Richmond Arsenal and Armory](#) and situated next to the James River and Kanawah Canal, the Tredegar Iron Works was the only rolling mill in the South when the war began and one of its most important foundries and machine shops. Before the war, it manufactured locomotives and other machinery. During the war, Tredegar – under the direction of Joseph Reid Anderson – made cannon and machinery. No rifles or revolvers were manufactured at Tredegar until after 1861. According to Albaugh and Simmons, *Confederate Arms*, p. 269, —“The firm [*Tredegar*] was commissioned by the State of Virginia to restore and refurbish the old Virginia Armory, and employed James H. Burton ... for this purpose. Also is believed to have made machinery for the manufacture of the 1842 model arms. Throughout the war made cannon and machinery for the Confederacy... and was generally considered the largest gun foundry in the South.”

*Truehart, Daniel, Jr. – 28 years old in 1860. Professor of mathematics at VMI.

*Ward's Primer – Patented by LT J.N. Ward, 1856. Gluckman, *Old Muskets, Rifles & Carbines*, p. 193, writes, —“The Ward system of mechanical primer feed, like the Maynard, used the roll of tape primers. The tape of detonators was housed in a covered magazine in a special wide faced hammer and fed to the cone by operation of a spur or ratchet, housed in the left side of the hammer.”

*Weapons testing at VMI by Maj. Jackson and others:

In Francis H. Smith, *History of the Virginia Military Institute*, edited by Francis H. Smith, Jr., 1912, pp. 172-173, we find the following: "The [Armory] commission visited Springfield, the West Point Foundry, and Harper's Ferry. While at West Point, a kind invitation was extended to them, by my old Army friend, Capt. R. P. Parrott, one of the proprietors of the West Point Foundry, to visit it, and to witness some experiments he was making with a new *rifled gun*. The commission visited the foundry, and witnessed the experiments behind an epaulement, and, as the Ordnance Department of the Army was slow to take hold of this new gun, I was instructed by the commission to say to Captain Parrott that if he would send to the Virginia Military Institute one of these guns, with 100 shells, orders would be given to the Instructor of Artillery at the Institute, Maj. T. J. Jackson, to give this gun a fair trial, and if the result proved satisfactory, the commission would order some for the State of Virginia. The experiments were duly made by Major Jackson, were satisfactory, and twelve of these guns, with a complement of shells, were ordered for the State. These guns were first used, and with great effect, at the Battle of Bethel, and the reputation founded upon this use of them led to the general introduction of the Parrott Gun into the artillery of the U.S. and C.S."

Couper, in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, pp. 44-45, writes: "The tests were conducted under the supervision of the officers of the Institute, chiefly under Major T. J. Jackson, the Instructor in Artillery, and Majors Gilham and Colston, who cared for the other types of equipment. But the cadets had much to do with these tests.... Major Jackson [who had traveled to Brattleboro, Vermont in July] ... returned to the Institute on September 3rd [1860] and the artillery test began in earnest. ... Jackson's artillery class trained this gun [a Parrott gun received from the West Point Foundry] on a number of tent flies which were ranged as targets along the ridge across the river, north of the Institute. As a result of these tests, Jackson, the master artilleryman, at once sensed their superiority and his report led to the immediate purchase by the commission of additional rifled field pieces."

Couper, in *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, vol. 2, p. 46, published in 1939, writes in a footnote, "This gun [the Parrott gun] came into the hands of General Richardson in 1862 and he asked General Smith, on September 11 and October 2, 1862, for a suitable inscription to be placed on a bronze plate affixed to the gun. On October 7, 1862, the following was suggested: 'The first Parrott gun ever used in service. It was purchased of Capt. Parrott, at the West Point Foundry, by Messrs. P. St. Geo. Cocke, Francis H. Smith and Geo. W. Randolph in the spring of 1860. Was tried at the Virginia Military Institute by Col. F. H. Smith in July and August. It was taken into service by the cadets in April, 1861, was transferred soon after to Major Geo. W. Randolph for the use of his battalion of Artillery and did admirable (execution?) in the first battle of the war at Bethel.' The inscription was lost by Richardson... and so far as is known no plate was made and the eventual disposition of the gun is unknown. Gen. Smith in writing the inscription made no mention of tests made after August or of Jackson's connection with them, nor has a contemporary report or account confirming this connection been located."

Lenoir Chambers, in *Stonewall Jackson and the Virginia Military Institute: The Lexington Years* (Lexington, Va: Historic Lexington Foundation, 1959), pp. 133-134, excerpted from Lenoir Chamber's 2 volume *Stonewall Jackson*, recounts the testing of the Parrott gun. His source for this is Couper's *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.* Chambers writes:

"The gun [Parrott gun] arrived at Lexington on July 18, shortly after the class of 1860 had graduated and after Jackson had gone to Vermont and Massachusetts for health treatments. Apparently some testing shots were fired during the summer, perhaps under the direction of Colonel Smith. He wrote a preliminary report for Parrott on September 11 which showed dissatisfaction with the conditions: 'My powder was very indifferent ... so that no reliance can be placed on the results ... I will report more fully.'

"Jackson was back in Lexington by September 3. By Institute tradition and general belief (no formal reports are known) the gun was tested by Jackson, with the assistance of cadets,

either between September 3 and September 11, or – more likely – after September 11. The fieldpiece was fired at white tent flies set up as targets along a ridge across the North River north of the Institute.

–The results were convincing. Jackson had no doubt that the rifled piece was superior to the old smooth bores, which were notoriously inaccurate at 1,000 yards and had a maximum range of hardly double that distance. His report was so strong that the commissioners ordered 12 other pieces and a supply of shells. Jackson was not the only pioneer with the piece that ultimately became the best-known on both sides in the Civil War, but his influence was definite and telling.”

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That testing was taking place at VMI appears to be confirmed by a number of entries recorded in the Statements and Vouchers for 1860 in the records of the VMI Treasurer (VMI Archives Collection, Preston Library):

Quarter M[aster] V[irginia] M[ilitary] Institute			
1860 in act [account] J. Compton & Sons [a Lexington merchant]			
May 20	1 Keg Canon Powder	5.50	
—	1 — —		5.50
June	182 Kegs Canon Powder	11.00	
19	1 —		5.50
20	2 —		11.00
25	3 Kegs Canon Powder		18.00
29	1 Keg III G[un] Powder	8.00”	

No contemporary reports of this testing, either from Maj. Jackson, from VMI, or from the Armory Commission have been discovered at VMI.

 *West Point Foundry – The foundry was an ironworks in Cold Spring, New York, that operated from 1817-1911. It became famous during the Civil War for its production of Parrott Guns and shells. Capt. Robert Parker Parrott, USMA Class of 1824, was appointed Superintendent of the foundry in 1836. For photographs of the remaining buildings, see www.hudsonvalleyruins.org/yasinsac/foundry/foundry.html

 *White, Rev. William Spotswood -- (1800-1878) Moved to Lexington from Charlottesville, Va., in 1848 to become the minister of the Lexington Presbyterian Church. T. J. Jackson was a member of this church.

 *Whitney, Eli, Jr. – Whitney Arms Company, of Whitneyville, CT (on the outskirts of New Haven, CT). The [Whitney Navy Pistol was a .36-caliber, six-shot, single-action percussion revolver](#). This revolver was a favorite of cavalry troops. See Edwards, *Civil War Guns*, p. 287.

 *Wilcox, Cadmus Marcellus – (1824-1890) USMA Class of 1846, with George McClellan, Thomas Jonathan Jackson, and George Pickett. Served in the Mexican War. Taught at USMA and studied in Europe. He wrote *Rifle and Infantry Tactics* (1859) and translated an Austrian manual on infantry tactics. Resigned from U.S. Army in June 1861 and was appointed Colonel of 9th Alabama. Promoted to General October 1861.

Col. Smith had available to him Wilcox's two works. This is known because among the Statements and Vouchers of the VMI Treasurer's Office for 1860 is the following entry: Col. F. H. Smith, Supt. Va Military Institute
Bot [*bought*] of D. Van Nostrand [*booksellers*]

1 Wilcox <i>Austrian Tactics</i>	1.00
2 Wilcox <i>Rifles & Rifle Practice</i>	1.50

In the same order one finds:

1 Darwins *Origin of Species*

*[Williamson, Thomas Hoomes](#) – 46 years old in 1860. USMA, 1833, did not graduate, roommate of F. H. Smith and Larkin Smith. At VMI, taught engineering, architecture, industrial drawing, and topography, 1841-1887, was Commandant of Cadets, 1841-47, was known as “Old Tom” to cadets; MAJ Va Militia in 1860, served later with Jackson.

*Winchester – The distance between Lexington and Winchester was about 160 miles.

*[Wise, Henry Alexander](#) – (1806-1876) Member, U.S. Congress, 1833-1844; Minister to Brazil, 1844-1847; Governor of Virginia, 1856-1860; Brigadier General, 5 June 1861-1865.
