

Jan 13, 1995

## COMMENTARY

## Lee's Gen. D.H. Hill hailed from York County

York County has produced numerous military heroes. Among the most decorated is one who has no statue or plaque in the county to mark his achievements.

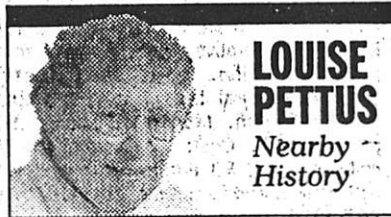
Few are aware that the Civil War Gen. D.H. Hill was born and raised in York County.

Daniel Harvey Hill (July 16, 1821-Sept. 24, 1889) was the grandson of Col. William "Billy" Hill whose Iron Works on Allison Creek played such a large role in the upcountry resistance during the Revolutionary War.

Daniel Harvey Hill's parents were Solomon Hill and Nancy Cabeen, both Presbyterians. Solomon Hill died in 1825 leaving his widow with five small children. Daniel was 4 years old.

Nancy Cabeen Hill was known for her "piety, culture and common sense." Each morning the boys knew not to come to breakfast unless they had prepared to read a selection from the Bible.

Young Daniel Harvey Hill managed to get an appointment to West Point in 1838. His health was frail and, under today's standards, he would surely have been rejected. His West Point class was famed for producing a dozen generals for the Civil War.



**LOUISE  
PETTUS**  
Nearby  
History

Hill, like most of his classmates, participated in the War with Mexico. He acquitted himself with honor. After the battle of Churubusco, Hill was advanced to captain; after Chapultepec, he became a major. A grateful legislature awarded three S.C. officers an ornate sword with a hilt of gold and silver inlaid with valuable stones. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston said that Hill was the bravest of all the army in Mexico.

After the Mexican war ended, Hill decided not to make a permanent career of the military. He resigned on Feb. 28, 1849, to take a position as professor of mathematics at Washington College in Lexington, Va. The college was later renamed Washington and Lee in honor of Robert E. Lee, who served as its president after the Civil War.

In 1852 Hill married Isabella Morrison, the daughter of a former

president of Davidson College. Two years later, D.H. Hill was teaching mathematics at Davidson. In 1857, Hill's textbook, "Elements of Algebra," was published. Hill stayed at the small Mecklenburg County Presbyterian college until 1859, when he decided to set up a military school of his own.

With some financial support from interested patrons, Hill set up his school in Charlotte and named it the North Carolina Military Institute. The school had hardly begun its operation when the Civil War broke out.

Hill immediately volunteered his services to the state of North Carolina. Using his military cadets as drillmasters, Hill organized the first boot camp in North Carolina at Charlotte. Hill was given the rank of colonel of the First North Carolina Regiment.

During the Civil War, Hill's school property became a Confederate hospital. Later the building came into the hands of the Charlotte public schools and was named D.H. Hill Elementary School.

Hill spent most of the war in Virginia. After the battle of Big Bethel, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. He be-

came something of a hero in the battle of Seven Pines and was highly praised by General Lee for his role in the Seven Days Battle. Hill's forces were also involved in the last desperate defense of the Confederate capital of Richmond.

When the war was over, Hill cast about for something to do. Instead of trying to re-establish his military school, he started a magazine. The magazine was titled *The Land We Love*. Three years later, Hill inaugurated a weekly newspaper he called *The Southern Home*.

An examination of the content of Hill's publication shows that he was a very early proponent of what has become known as the "New South" movement, with the hope that industrial training and scientific agriculture would raise the South out of its economic malaise. The writings attracted enough attention for Hill to be invited to serve as president of the University of Arkansas, a post he held from 1877 through 1884.

Daniel Harvey Hill died in Charlotte in 1889 and is buried at Davidson, N.C.

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