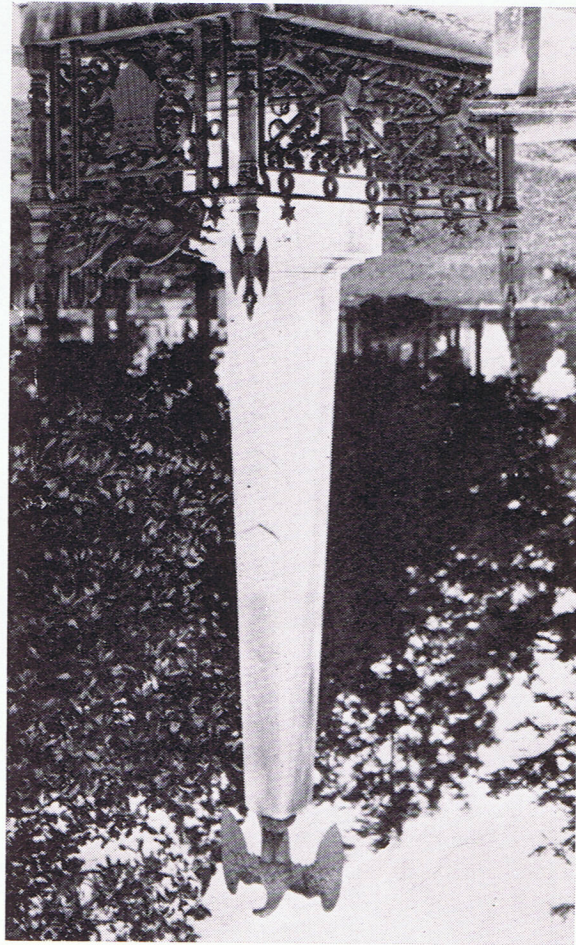


## War of 1812

to be sure, and groundless fears the town again might be invaded and feel a conqueror's heel. On a crisp October day in 1812 the company left the town. By 10 o'clock all Petersburg had gathered at Centre Hill. A hollow square was formed, with ladies in front. A standard they had made was handed to the orator, who with well chosen words made the presentation. Richard McRae, the captain, pledged the lives and honor of the company to defend it.

Through Franklin, Sycamore and Bollingbrook they marched to Pocahtontas Bridge, with other companies serving as an escort, followed by citizens on foot and ladies in their carriages.



The McRae Monument, in Blandford Cemetery, stands over the grave of Captain Richard McRae. It honors both the captain and the company which won for Petersburg its soubriquet.

[seventeen]

"The town of Petersburg, the seed-bed of patriotism, the nursery of heroes."

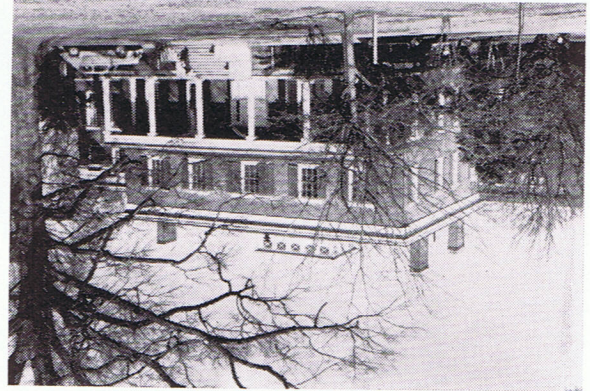
"The pride of Sparta were the heroes of Thermopylae, the pride of Virginia the heroes of Fort Meigs".

These are toasts, sample toasts, and if you do not any longer hear their like, then move's the pity. Noble words and gracious compliments do no harm, and always, in Petersburg there were the Volunteers to toast. That meant the hundred men and more who marched to Canada in the War of 1812 and then marched back again, covered with glory.

The company was a splendid fact, but it was something more. It symbolized the patriotism of the town, the soldiers of its past and soldiers still to come.

Not that the war in which they served has faded so well. Some historians say we should have kept at peace, or that we fought the wrong foe after all. And, truth to tell, we did not win the freedom of the seas or sailor's rights or the territories which the War Hawks wanted. Yet somehow, out of this frustration, the infant nation made some gains—a new unity, a new sense of national pride, and a new respect from others.

For Petersburg there was little doubt—only pride and glory, with some death and suffering



The Petersburg Volunteers in the War of 1812 left from, and returned to, Centre Hill. The above structure, completed in 1823, is now the Centre Hill Mansion Museum.