

# Fort Delaware

HOME

HISTORY

TOURING THE FORT

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

WHERE TO STAY AND EAT

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

*Choose a Story*



## Julia Jefferson - Civilian Sympathiser

Julia Jefferson was a young girl whose family lived in New Castle, Delaware, at the time of the Civil War. Described by the prisoners as an "angel of mercy", Julia was a compassionate woman who was a very active in the effort to assist the captives on Pea Patch Island. Julia, her sister Lydia and others in New Castle County organized donations of foodstuffs, blankets, clothing and other goods to the rebels prisoners, and to the post hospital.

Her father, Elihu Jefferson, was the manager of the Central Hotel in Delaware City, the port town directly across the river from Pea Patch Island. The Jefferson family home was only a few miles from the Fort, and on clear days, Julia could see the giant structure. The newspapers were full of tales of hardships suffered by the Fort's residents and she was moved to sympathetic action.



Julia Jefferson as portrayed in "Waterbound"

Elihu Jefferson was successful in the import/export business. His brother, Samuel, was a popular politician who ran for governor in 1862 and was narrowly defeated by the Republican William Cannon. Given her social standing, Julia could easily have escaped the harsh realities she faced at Fort Delaware. Many believe she put her fears aside out of simple human kindness. Others see a darker motivation. The Jefferson family was believed to be sympathetic to the Rebellion, and some considered Julia's dedication to the prisoners an act of treason. Scholars still dispute whether or not the Jefferson family, including young Julia, were "Copperheads" or Confederate sympathizers. Either way, the written record clearly shows that she was held in high regard with both the prisoners and the commanding officers on Pea Patch Island. She was the only woman who was permitted to come and go "at her pleasure".

Fort Delaware

July 28, 1862

Miss Julie A Jefferson,

I am the recipient of a bucket filled with green and can fruit, box of cigars, cake and catsup etc prepared and sent by you.

It is much pleasure that I have the honor to acknowledge at your hands the delightful treat.

Please accept my most humble and sincere heartfelt thanks.

With remembrance,  
I am Very Respectfully  
R.G. Patterson

Fort Delaware  
July 28<sup>th</sup> 1862

Miss Julie A. Jefferson

I am the recipient of a bucket filled with green and can fruit, box of cigars, cake and catsup &c prepared and sent by you.

It is much pleasure that I have the honor to acknowledge at your hands this delightful treat.

Please accept my most humble and sincere heartfelt thanks

With remembrance  
I am Very Respectfully  
R.G. Patterson

Fort Delaware

July 11, 1863

Miss Jefferson,

Your kind offer yesterday to furnish pillows + c for the hospital was stated to Dr. Sullivan, Surgeon in Charge. He requests me to have you send all you can. Also any delicacies that you may be able to spare. We reviewed our three hundred wounded prisoners last night and we have no place to put them but on the hard boards in the barracks. If you will send them down on the tug today, we will [illegible] a thousand obligations to you. I go to Philadelphia in about an hour to see if I can get beds, blankets and other necessary articles consequently I will be unable to accept your kind invitation to visit you this evening. Present my kind regards to Madam Burton and tell her I will see Mr. Dolby today. The General directs me to say that you have permission to visit the Island at pleasure.

Sincerely Your Friend,  
J.G. MacConnell

Saturday, September 12, 1863

“Had a conversation with three young men, who have been detailed to bury the dead. One of them, named Scott, from Mississippi – a member of Bankhead’s Brigade – handed me an envelope from Miss Julia Jefferson, upon which she had written my name, when visiting the cemetery in Jersey, and stated that she wished me to furnish him with certain articles of clothing, when she next sent a box. This young lady is a true friend of the South, and will be remembered with gratitude by scores of our brave Confederates, who are now suffering imprisonment”

Tuesday, September 15, 1863

“Had the pleasure of receiving two large baskets of vegetables from my wife, and a box of clothing from Miss Julia Jefferson. The latter was intended for the use of our young men from Portsmouth – some of whom are in great need. Saw Capt. Ahl, about my going to the barracks to distribute the articles. He said, that it would be necessary for him to consult with Gen. Schoepf, before making a reply”

Sunday, October 4, 1863

“A box came from Miss Julia Jefferson, with clothing to be distributed among sundry prisoners of the Fourth Texas, and other regiments. The articles are accompanied by a good lot of peaches, and sweet potatoes, for my own comfort. This faithful almoner, and her associates ought ever to be remembered by the boys from ‘Dixie’”

Tuesday, November 17, 1863

“Received a letter from Miss Lydia Jefferson – for which she has my thanks, as one of the few friends who have ventured a word of sympathy in my imprisonment”

Saturday, December 12, 1863

“Had the pleasure of a piece of nice mince pie, the first I have tasted this season. It was sent to Mr. Paddock by Miss Lydia Jefferson, with the request that I be allowed to share it”



JULIA JEFFERSON  
WIFE OF  
JAMES S. DUNCAN  
OCTOBER 8, 1841 - JUNE 30, 1918  
I KNOW THAT MY REDEMPTION LIVETH

JAMES STEWART DUNCAN  
BORN 1847 - NOVEMBER 24, 1928  
ALL SERVANTS SHALL SERVE HIM,  
AND THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE AND HIS  
NAME SHALL BE IN THEIR FOREHEADS  
REV 22:3

ANN JEFFERSON DUNCAN  
FEBRUARY 9, 1851 - MARCH 20, 1900  
I AM NOT ASLEEP, AND THE  
LIFE HE GAVE BELIEVETH IN ME  
THOUGH HE WERE DEAD YET SHALL  
HE LIVE  
AND WHOSEVER LIVETH AND BE-  
LIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE



# Life Under Military Control

Military Police (Provost Marshal) control business, travel, elections, even charity gatherings

