



## Funeral of the "Gallant" Pelham, Boy Hero of the Confederacy

By Norman Dasinger, Jr., May 22, 2020  
[blueandgrayeducation.org](http://blueandgrayeducation.org)



Emma Samson guides General Forrest, detail of bronze map on lawn of Alabama Department of Archives and History | [alabama.gov](http://alabama.gov)

On Tuesday, March 31, 1863, the city of Jacksonville, Alabama, and its citizens witnessed the funeral of John Pelham, perhaps the most well-known artillery commander to have served during the Civil War.

Pelham was born September 7, 1838, along Cane Creek in the Alexandria community of northeastern Alabama. He grew up and entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, on July 1, 1856. He did not complete his five-year course of study, but resigned in 1861 just before his class was scheduled to graduate.

He joined the Confederate States Army and served as an artillery officer under the command of famed cavalry Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Mortally wounded at the battle of Kelly's Ford, Virginia, on March 17, 1863, he died early the next morning in Culpeper.

His body arrived at the Pelham home in Alexandria on Saturday, March 28, 1863, having been pulled by four white horses from the Blue Mountain railroad depot near present-day Anniston, Alabama.

After a meeting of community leaders at the Calhoun County Courthouse in Jacksonville on the 30th, it was decided the order of the funeral procession from the Baptist Church to the Jacksonville City Cemetery would be arranged as follows:

1. The body of John Pelham and pallbearers
2. Family/relatives
3. Clergy
4. Attending CSA officers
5. Teachers and Students of the Female Academy
6. Teachers and Students of the Male Academy
7. Ladies
8. Committee for the Arrangement of the Funeral
9. The County Grand Jury
10. Citizens
11. Carriages.



John Pelham in his West Point uniform | Alabama Department of Archives and History

On the morning of the 31st, the body was loaded onto an open wagon and transported from the Pelham home in Alexandria to Jacksonville. It was a bright spring day, and it was stated, "The attendance was at the time the largest body of people ever seen together in Jacksonville." At the Baptist Church, Chancellor Foster delivered the eulogy and then by order of procession, Pelham was delivered to the city cemetery. He was lowered into ground as schoolchildren filled his grave with lilac blossoms before caretakers shoveled dirt upon the casket.

Today, he rests under a large marble statue of the young artillerist with one of his five brothers—all of whom served in the Confederate Army—buried at his side.



Etchings on Pelham monument, Jacksonville, Alabama | Find a Grave

**On September 11-13, 2020, the Blue and Gray Education Society will present "Unlimber the Guns: Key Role of Artillery Leadership from Fredericksburg to Chancellorsville," guided by Greg Mertz, which will include the exploits of John Pelham at the battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia. Go [here](#) to learn more.**



This Civil War Dispatch has been brought to you by the Blue and Gray Education Society, a non-profit 501-3C educational organization. Please visit us at [www.blueandgrayeducation.org](http://www.blueandgrayeducation.org).

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