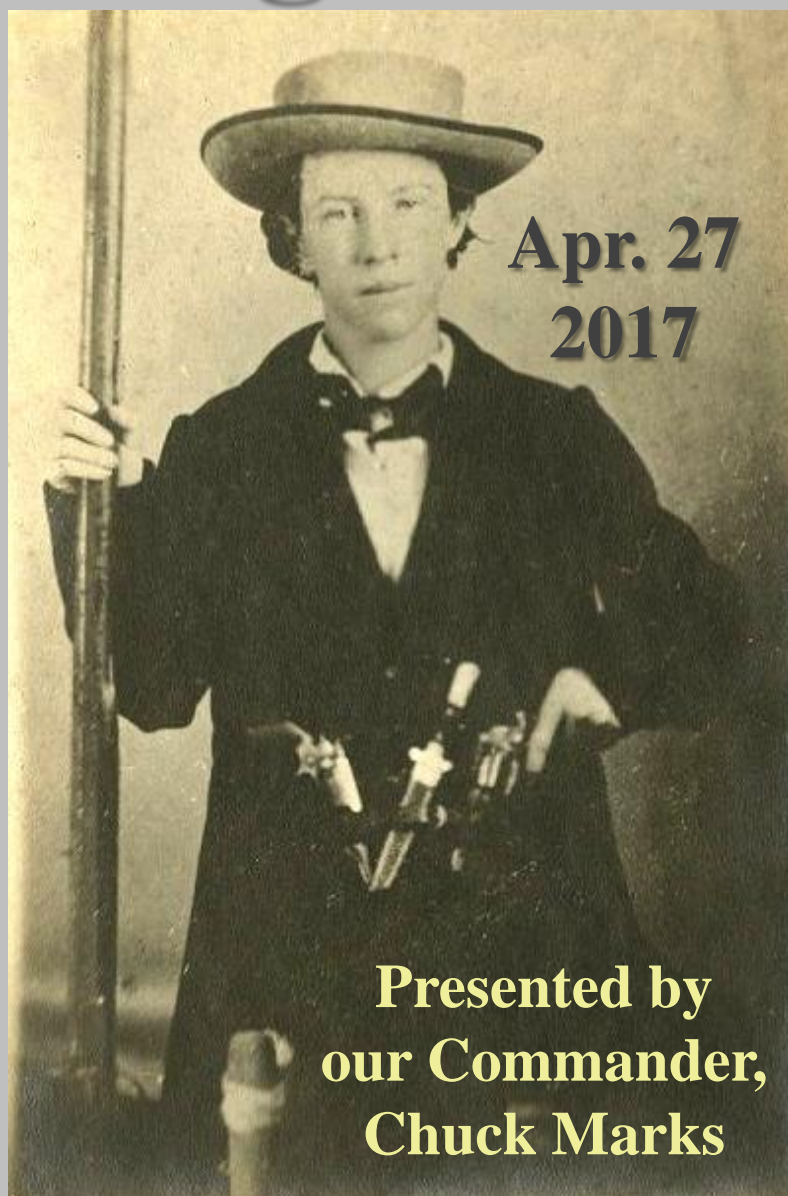
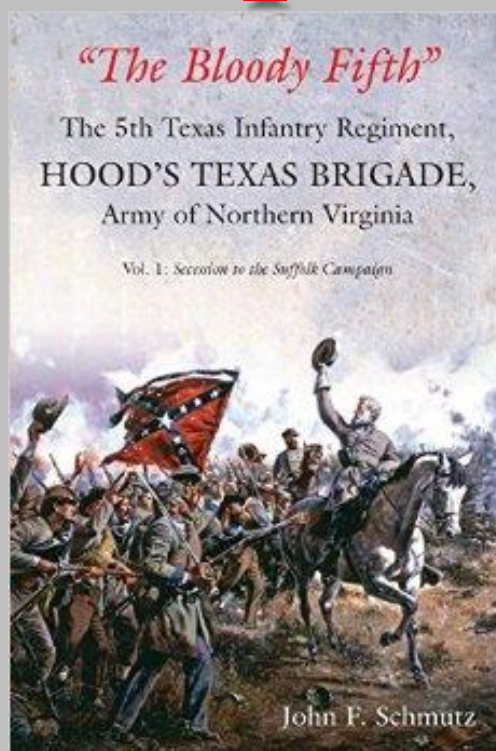




# COL. E. W. TAYLOR CAMP #1777 SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Bedford, Texas.....April 2017

## April Program



Presented by  
our Commander,  
Chuck Marks

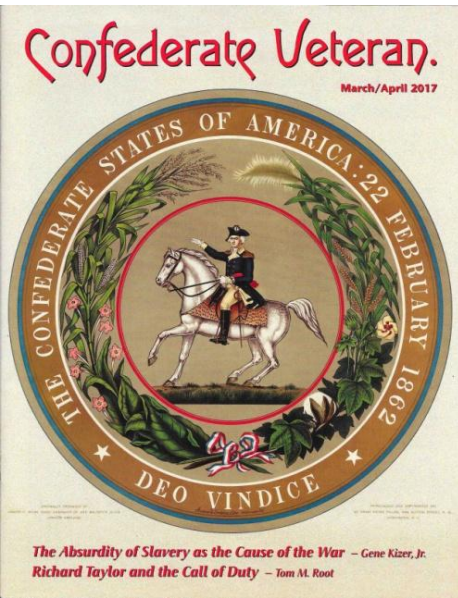


Rescheduled from the March meeting.

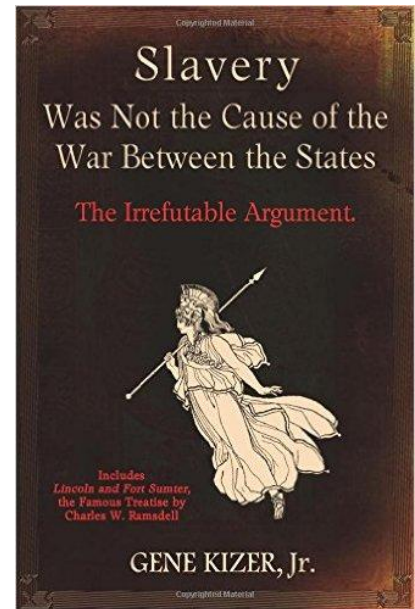
CONFEDERATE LIVES STILL MATTER



# This was the March program.



Gene Kizer, Jr., the author of the article and the book.



## “The Absurdity of Slavery as the Cause of the War”

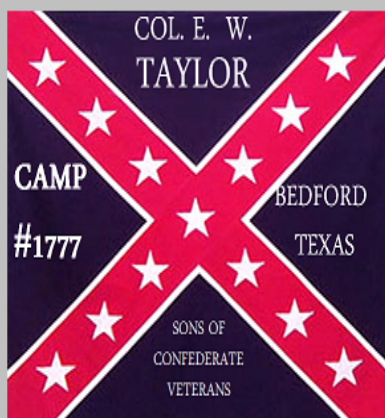
This was one of the two cover articles in the March/April issue of *The Confederate Veteran*. Written by Gene Kizer, Jr., it's a summary of his recent and excellent book, Slavery Was Not the Cause of the War Between the States. We presented an illustrated version of the magazine article.



This was to have been the April program, but things happened which required us to do it in March. The slide on the screen is a quote Lincoln made in his first inaugural address in reference to the Corwin Amendment.

The Corwin Amendment passed both Houses of Congress and was submitted to the states for ratification. It would have placed slavery, where it existed, forever out of reach of the United States government.

The presenter takes no credit for the information in the presentation. It was completely the work of Mr. Gene Kizer, Jr. and was shown to our SCV camp because of the article's excellent content.



## Colonel E. W. Taylor SCV Camp #1777 (Bedford, Texas)

Commander: Chuck Marks (817) 703-6195

Adjutant: James Alderman (817) 605-0538

Meets: Last Thursday of the month Jan - Oct at 7:00 pm

(if planning to eat please arrive by 6:00 pm)

Location: Catfish Company Restaurant @ 900 Airport Fwy, Hurst, TX 76054 (817) 581-3912

0017851

Visitors & Counting!

Newsletters	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2017	<a href="#">PDF</a>   <a href="#">ZIP</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a>   <a href="#">ZIP</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a>   <a href="#">ZIP</a>									
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# Who are we? That's easy to see!!!

<http://www.taylorcampscv.org/>

Go to our website and start looking at our newsletters, beginning with the most recent and working back. Contact us at [mfpchat@yahoo.com](mailto:mfpchat@yahoo.com)

**Our meetings** are on the last Thursday of each month, except November and December when we don't meet because it would always conflict with the holidays.

**Each month's program** announcement is always on the first page of this newsletter.

**We meet at the Catfish and Company restaurant in Hurst, Texas,** along the north side of the Airport Freeway and on the access road west of Precinct Line Road.

If you'd like to **eat** with us we'd suggest you be there **at 6 p.m.** We start the **meeting at 7 p.m.** Our goal is to be **finished and out by 8:30 p.m.** **It would be bad manners for a group as large as ours to stay 'til closing time. We appreciate the restaurant's hospitality to the Sons of Confederate Veterans.**



# High Drama at the March Meeting

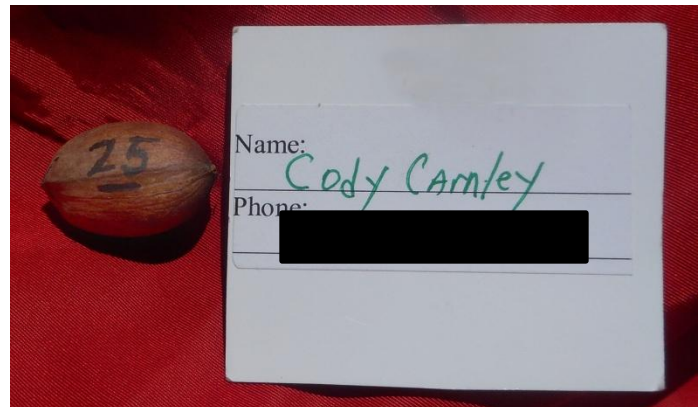
The last item of business at the March meeting was the drawing of the winning ticket for the Henry repeating rifle. Our faithful and hard-working waitress, Julie, drew the winning number for us. The winner was Cody Carnley of Springtown. He bought the winning ticket from our member Nathan Calvery.



For fifty extra points, can you guess which of these folks just turned 65?



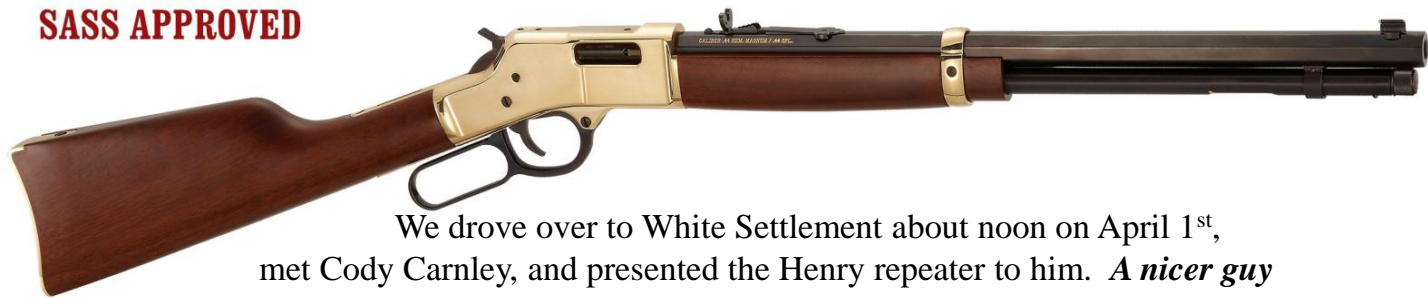
We went to great lengths to make the drawing as random as possible. We noticed that the ticket stubs never really got jumbled up, no matter what container we used. So on Thursday morning we got 100 pecans, as identical in size and weight as we could, and numbered them, 1-100. We put them in a larger container and they shuffled just fine. We're sure Cody Carnley would agree.



# ...AND THE WINNER IS...CODY CARNLEY. CONGRATULATIONS, CODY!!!



## SASS APPROVED



We drove over to White Settlement about noon on April 1<sup>st</sup>, met Cody Carnley, and presented the Henry repeater to him. ***A nicer guy couldn't have won it.*** Cody lives in Springtown and works as an electrician at Lockheed in Fort Worth. He got his ticket from our Compatriot Nathan Calvery.

Cody didn't know if he had any Confederate ancestors. We found him one, his g-g-g gf Robert F. Messer of Baylor's Texas Cavalry. Messer's even buried in Weatherford in Cody's home county...Parker County. We gave Cody a copy of Messer's file from Washington, his extensive pension file from Austin., and a photo of his headstone. Good day!!!

Cody's a winner. ***Last week***, on a raffle ticket he bought from another co-worker at Lockheed for his son's ball team, Cody won a full-size all-weather lockable tool box which spans the bed of his pickup.





# **THIRD BRIGADE MEETING TO BE HELD IN MILLSAP, PARKER COUNTY, SATURDAY, MAY 27.**



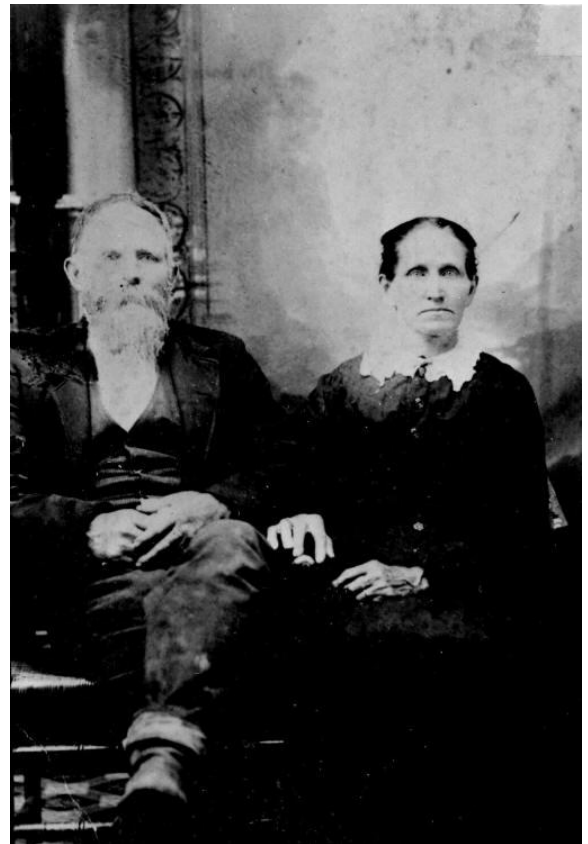
Calvin Allen (left), Commander of the Texas Third Brigade SCV, has announced a meeting of the Third Brigade to be held in Millsap, Texas, on Saturday, May 27. Among other things, we need to discuss some items before the State Reunion which will be held in Fort Worth in early June. More details and a map next month.

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## **FOUNDING MEMBER OF E. W. TAYLOR CAMP, AND FIRST COMMANDER, NEEDS HELP WITH MARKER DEDICATION LATER THIS YEAR**

We were very pleased to see long-time member Tim Pringle at our March meeting. He's had an upright VA stone at his home for a long time, waiting to put it at the grave of his ancestor, Pvt. Farwick Collinsworth (1831-1907) of Co. A, 63rd Tennessee Infantry. His records indicate he was wounded at the Second Battle of Drewry's Bluff. He lies buried in the Collinsworth Cemetery at Plano in Collin County.

We'll keep you posted as plans develop.





# Organizational changes and concerns in the SCV which will affect us all. Please take note.

In March our **Adjutant-in-Chief, Douglas W. Nash, Jr.**, issued the following two statements:

First – As you all know a grace period of 90 days has been afforded to members to renew their dues and not be considered as becoming delinquent on August 1st each year. That period will now change to only 30 days, meaning that a member who fails to renew by September 1st will become delinquent.

Second – Currently we prorate dues for both new and delinquent renewing members. Beginning with the 2017-2018 fiscal year proration will apply to only new members. Delinquent renewing members will no longer be able to prorate.

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**ATM Commander Johnny Holley** sent some clarifying comments to the above. They are summarized below:

Headquarters is installing a new business system. Once this new system is in place, you will be able to pay ALL dues directly to National. Each member will be able to log on and check the status of camps and members under your command.

Members will be able to pay all their dues at one time, online, with a credit card. National will send Division dues and Camp dues directly to the appropriate Adjutant. You will still be able to send dues directly by check to National but now you will send Camp, Division, and National dues at one time to one place.

I know this all sounds complicated and it will be confusing to many at first. There will be inevitable growing and learning pains. Director Landree will be sending out more information and scheduling training sessions at the Memphis Reunion. I will also be naming an Army Adjutant ASAP. You will be able to contact him for help and if he cannot solve your problem he will contact National for assistance. With their small staff and heavy workload we need to limit our calls to Elm Springs. Please use your Camp, Brigade, Division, and Army officers to answer questions so we do not overload Elm Springs.



# Texas Division Reunion for 2017 to be in North Fort Worth June 2-4



*It'll never be easier than this for members of Tarrant County camps to attend a state reunion, and to have a full contingent of voting delegates there for the business meeting.*

120TH TEXAS DIVISION REUNION

SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS

**FORT WORTH**

**WELCOME**

Governor Samuel W. T. Lanham  
Camp #586 Weatherford, Texas

Texas Division  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
2017 Annual Reunion  
Radisson Hotel, 2540 Meacham Blvd.  
Fort Worth, TX 76106

June 2, 2017 - June 4, 2017

The Governor Samuel W.T. Lanham Camp #586, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Weatherford, Texas is proud to welcome you to Fort Worth, Texas, and the 2017 Texas Division Reunion Website. This website will be your portal for registration and sign-up. As well as one of your best source for information about the reunion.

**ACTIVITIES** **SCHEDULE** **HOTELS** **REGISTER**

**TOURS** **VENDORS** **ADVERTISING** **CONTACT US**

[Download Delegate Credentials](#)

Copyright (c) 2017, Governor Samuel WT Lanham Camp #586, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Weatherford, Texas

Please visit the Texas Division Reunion website at:  
<http://txdivreunion.com/>

**Our thanks to the Governor Samuel W. T. Lanham Camp #586  
at Weatherford, Texas for agreeing to host this year's reunion.**

*Please go to the website for schedules and other information.  
We'll have more complete information in our May newsletter.*



**The R. E. Lee, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Camp #239  
Invites you to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual  
★Confederate Heritage Banquet★**



**Location: White Settlement's Splash Dayz Banquet Room  
8905 Clifford Street, White Settlement, TX 76108**

**Business Casual Dress or Uniforms Requested**

**Order your tickets today, space is limited!!**

**Ticket Price: \$30.00 for singles or \$50.00 for couples**

**April 22, 2017 at 7:00 PM ~ doors open at 6:00PM**

**♪ Music by Old Time String Band Buttermilk Junction ♪**

**Texas Bar-B-Que, Awards, Silent Auction and Fellowship**

**Special Guest Presentation by author, lecturer Ron Kennedy**

**Deadline to purchase tickets is April 16th**

**Contact Daniel Nation or Barry Turnage for tickets or  
Information, Cash or Check only! Checks Payable to: R E Lee Camp 239**

**Please Send your Admission, Guest Names to:**

**Daniel Nation**

**817-246-4488**

**daniel\_nation@sbcglobal.net**

**Barry Turnage**

**817-297-2987**

**peaceman1969@sbcglobal.net**

**P.O. Box 150610 Fort Worth, TX 76108**



# **Texas bill protecting veterans' memorials moving along in the Texas House**

Good news! HB1359, the Texas Hero Protection Act, that seemed stalled out in Austin has been moved to Committee as of March 22, 2017. Here is a link to the Committee that has our bill.  
<http://www.house.state.tx.us/committees/committee/?committee=C430>

We need all the support we can get for this bill. Please contact your Representatives and Senators and ask them to get behind this effort to support, co-sponsor, and pass this bill. The last thing we need is to have HB1359 die in Committee. This is not just an SCV bill. This bill is designed to protect historic monuments and markers across this great state. Given recent actions of "history haters" to deface, remove or destroy monuments all Texans should stand and fight this type of destructive behavior by insisting this bill become law. Stand firm and never waver! We can win this battle! Watch for more information coming as things develop!

The bill was drafted and sponsored by Compatriot Texas Rep. James White of Woodville TX. The bill is THE TEXAS HEROES PROTECTION ACT (HB 1359).



**Texas SCV  
Commander  
Gary Bray**

**Rep. James  
White**

**Comp. Bill Maddox  
Woodville, TX**



# CONFEDERATE HEROES DAY STILL UNDER ASSAULT IN TEXAS LEGISLATURE

Confederate Heroes Day was first declared a state holiday in 1931 when quite a few of the veterans were still alive. It was signed into law by Governor Ross S. Sterling (right), who was himself a son of Capt. Benjamin Franklin Sterling (1831-1917) of Co. B, Waul's Texas Legion.



The Texas Legislature created the holiday to be observed on January 19, the birthday of Confederate Army Gen. Robert E. Lee. Martin Luther King was two years old in 1931, and was still named Michael King.

In 1986 MLK Day was first observed as a national holiday, to be observed on the third Monday in January. King's birthday was January 15. The two holidays thus are always near each other, and in some years have fallen on the same day.

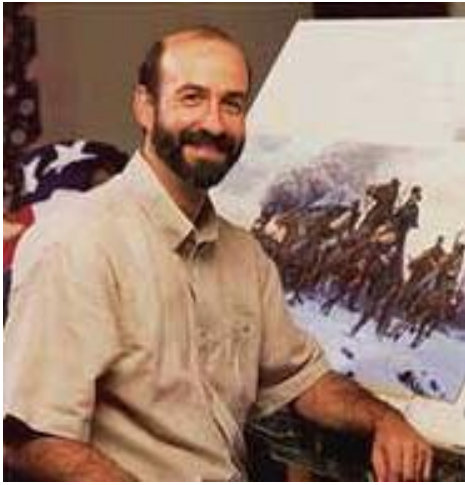
Rep. John Frullo of Lubbock (right) is currently serving as chairman of the Committee on Culture, Recreation, and Tourism in the House. A bill to change the name of the Day is currently in his committee. Please contact him and urge him and the rest of the committee to leave the day's name as it is.

He is Rep. John Frullo, at Room 4N.6, PO Box 2910, Austin, Texas 78768. His Austin phone number is 512-463-0676.

Union veterans of the WBTS who came to Texas already have their days, called Veterans Day and Memorial Day. Confederate Texans who stood up for their Constitutional rights deserve their own day. Please contact him and tell him why, succinctly, directly and respectfully.



# New design in the works for a Texas SCV license plate



John Paul Strain



From Comm. Gary Bray's recent report: *"I have been talking with Civil War artist John Paul Strain who has volunteered to paint art work that we can use on our Texas Division car tags. He has been working on other projects but is now ready to start this work. An exact copy of the Hood's Texas Infantry "Wigfall" flag was produced for a photo shoot of a Texas color bearer with the flag. Soon we should have a tag we can be proud of regardless of the hater crowd..."*

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May 29, 2017

**Please...please make plans to attend this year's Memorial Day Observance in Keller's historic Mount Gilead Cemetery on Monday morning, May 29. We customarily supply a musket line of men in uniform to fire a salute and we need your help.**



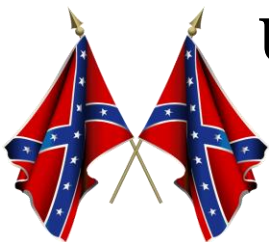
Our adjutant, James Alderman, mailed the membership paperwork to our newest member, Morten Hoines, on February 24.



It arrived at Morten's home in Norway on March 2...and remember that February had only 28 days. Sounds like they may have subcontracted the delivery.

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**“To tar the sacrifices of the Confederate soldier as simple acts of racism, and reduce the battle flag under which he fought to nothing more than the symbol of a racist heritage, is one of the great blasphemies of our modern age.”**



**U. S. Senator James Webb  
(D-Virginia)  
2007-2013**



# Local Confederate cavalry veteran dead 92 years got a stone March 18

*See last month's issue for a short bio of Mr. Hoffman.*



Perfect weather, an easy drive down, a short pull to get the stone to the site, heavy shade in which to work, loose soft sand in which to dig, and two of your editor's favorite people with whom to work.

The cemetery's not visible on Google Earth, but it's right beside the Pollard residence at 3808 Lakeview Court. We appreciate the Pollards' kindness in letting us park on their place.



Thanks to Compatriot Clay Fitzhugh who came down to help with the heavy lifting. He also brought two sacks of sand to use.





## Francis M. Hoffman, cont.



We were able to park very close to the gate of Old Cahill Cemetery, and the ground to it was level and mowed. Mrs. Cahill's stone from 1887 (above right) is now broken but was a very expensive stone in its day. Please email the editor and say "I did" if you read this sentence.

The most striking thing in the cemetery is a large red-sandstone, burial "cairn," the largest and most complicated one this author has ever seen in Texas. It is directly beside the original Cahill settlers in that part of Johnson County. There is no readable inscription anywhere on it.

At the head of the cairn there is a huge old eastern red cedar tree. In the south fence of the cemetery there is a gigantic, ancient post oak which could easily be the Johnson County champion post oak, and maybe even a contender for state champion.

# Local Confederate vet dead since 1909 will get first-ever stone on April 15

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## John D. Armstrong.

John D. Armstrong, 71 years old, died at the home of his son, Jake Armstrong, in Waco last Wednesday, and was buried here Thursday afternoon. Mr. Armstrong had been a resident of Fort Worth for the past fifteen years, coming here in the early nineties from Alabama. He was a Confederate veteran and was well known here. He is survived by two sons and a daughter—Jake Armstrong of Waco, at whose home he died, Ed Armstrong of Oklahoma and Mrs. J. H. Mulkey of this city, where he made his home here.

The funeral was held from the Mulkey Memorial church, Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock, Rev. W. H. Matthews officiating. Interment was made in East Oakwood cemetery.

The above obituary appeared in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* on Friday, May 14, 1909.



## John D. Armstrong, cont.

*We learned of the existence of John D. Armstrong while browsing through online issues of the old Fort Worth newspapers. Since he died out of the county, was not a member of the R. E. Lee UCV camp here, and did not have a headstone, it's something of an accident that we know of him at all.*

John D. Armstrong was born about 1840 in Alabama to two North Carolinian parents. He enlisted in Livingston, Sumter Co., Alabama on April 26, 1861, and eventually became a part of Co. E, Fifth Alabama Infantry. He was hospitalized for a time in September and October, 1862 at Charlottesville with typhoid fever. He was wounded at Chancellorsville, Virginia on May 2 or 3, 1863 and was sent home to recover.



One of the 5<sup>th</sup> Alabama Infantry's surviving flags

He was surrendered at Citronelle, Alabama by General Richard Taylor on May 4, 1865 and was paroled at Meridian, Mississippi thirteen days later. The roll made by the federals at the end of the War for his regiment shows that he lived in Greensboro, (at that time a part of Greene County), Alabama.

About 1865, probably in Greene County, Mr. Armstrong was married to Alice A. Travis, the daughter of a wealthy planter and slave owner named Benjamin T. Travis (1813-1876). When Hale County, Alabama was formed in 1867, both the Armstrongs and the Traveses were included in it.

**Confederate**

A 5 Ala

John D. Armstrong

Co. E 5 Regt Ala

Residence Greensboro Ala

Appears on a

**Roll of Prisoners of War**

of divers companies and regiments (detached) of the Confederate States Army, commanded by Lt. Col. H. C. Greer, surrendered at Citronelle, Ala., by Lieut. Gen. R. Taylor, U. S. A., to Maj. Gen. E. R. S. Canby, U. S. A., May 4, 1865, and paroled at Meridian, Miss., May 17, 1865.

Roll dated Meridian, Miss., May 17, 1865.

*Lots of folks don't realize that the census takers in the 1800's made other lists in addition to the lists of people living in the counties. Many had to do with agriculture and manufacturing. Not all the extra lists have survived, but if you're researching an ancestor who appears in one they can be mighty interesting. The federal agricultural censuses for both 1870 and 1880 for Hale County, Alabama have survived, and they give us an insight into the Armstrongs' lives while they lived there.*

# John D. Armstrong, cont.

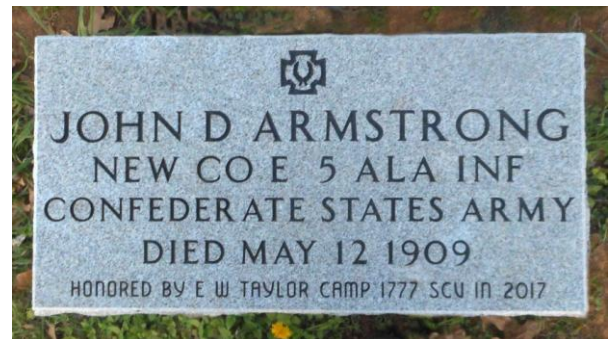
The 1870 agricultural census tells us that Mr. Armstrong owned a farm of 160 cultivated acres and 500 acres of woodland. He estimated that in the last year he and his family had made 17 bales of cotton, 20 bushels of peas and beans, and 50 bushels of sweet potatoes. He also had horses, mules, cattle, and hogs. All in all, the family seems to have survived the War in good shape.

When the 1880 census was taken, John D. and Alice A. (Travis) Armstrong and their children were living at Havana, Hale County, Alabama. The family still worked as farmers, but they did not seem to be as prosperous as they had ten years before. In 1880 their farm consisted of only 70 acres of cultivated ground and 180 acres of woods. They owned one horse, two mules, eight cattle, 35 hogs, and 15 chickens.

In 1880 they raised corn, oats, cow peas, Irish and sweet potatoes, and cotton. Their 15-acre cotton patch had produced 7 bales in the past year.

Mr. Armstrong and his sons had cut 35 cords of wood off their place in the past year...quite a feat in the days before chain saws.

Mr. Armstrong brought his family to Fort Worth from Alabama about 1894. When the census was taken in 1900 he lived as a widower with two of his unmarried daughters at 1006 South Rusk Street. The census describes him as a "capitalist," and he was living in a rented house. He was dead before the 1910 census was taken.



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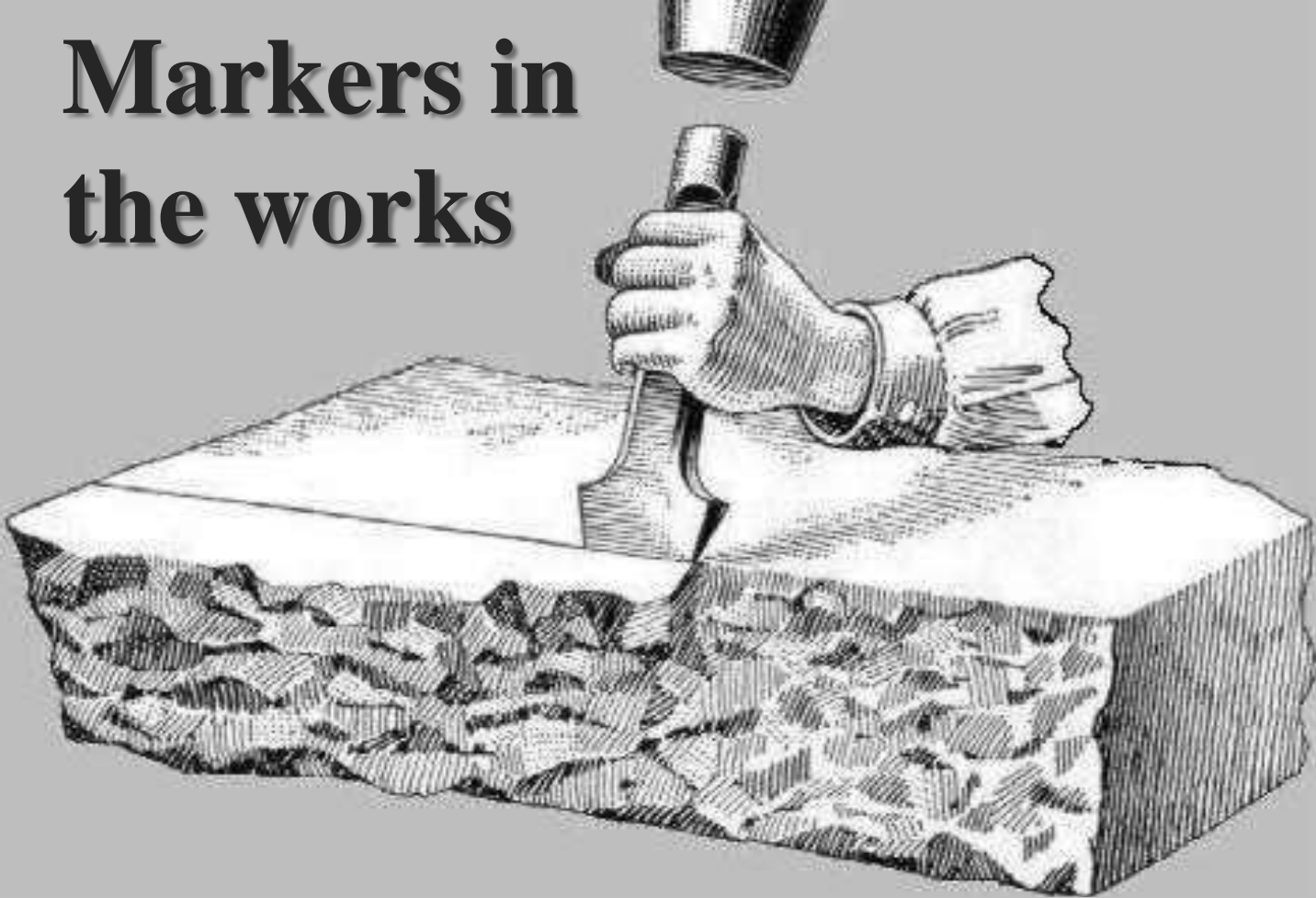
## From Commander Gary Bray:

We have exchanged ideas with the Texas Historical Commission on a new exhibit panel to be installed at Fort Lancaster, TX explaining the history of the Confederate grave marker at the post cemetery. We hope this exhibit will be ready soon and everyone will be happy with the outcome of this effort and partnership between the SCV and the Texas Historical Commission. Also, we have an ongoing search for a lost Confederate battlefield near Fort Lancaster known as the midnight battle of Fort Lancaster.





# Markers in the works



**John H. Youngblood, Co. B, Wise County, 1<sup>st</sup> Frontier Regiment, Texas State Troops, CSA, 1844-1870. Buried in Lonesome Dove Cemetery in Southlake, his old handmade stone is almost unreadable. He'll get a new granite one beside it some time in mid-May.**

**William R. Matthews, Co. A, 5<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry, 1841-1922. Buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Fort Worth with an old, inexpensive UCV marker with incomplete information and his name misspelled. Probably will happen in mid-June.**

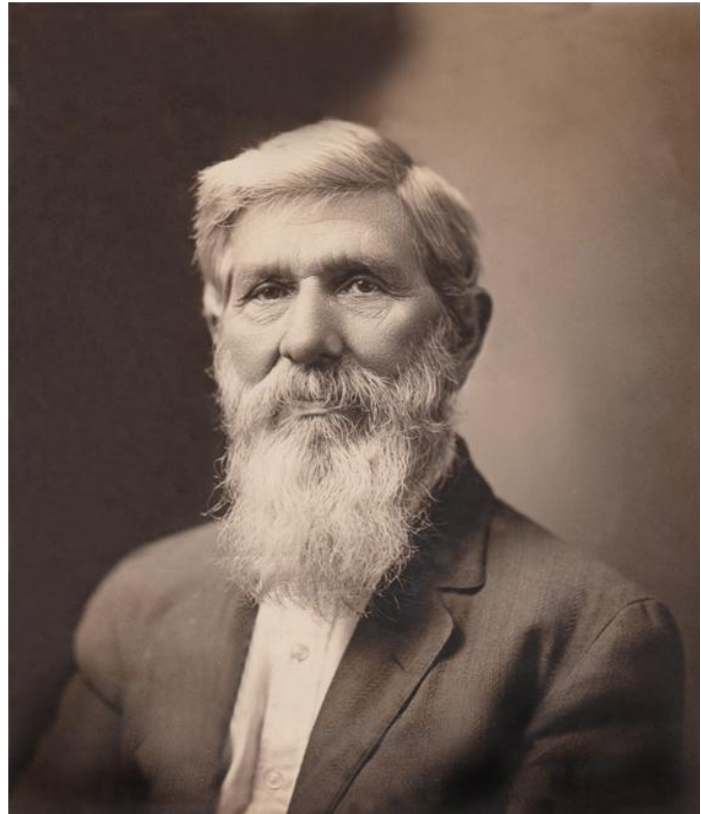
# Solomon Thomas Blessing left a remarkable record

*One of three very talented brothers realized those coming after him would want to know about the life he had lived, and he did something about it.*

Solomon Thomas Blessing was born in Frederick County, Maryland on January 27, 1839 and died in Dallas, Texas on March 9, 1928. Part of his life he spent here in Fort Worth, and for many of our local Confederate veterans that's sometimes about all we'd be able to learn about them. Not so for Mr. Blessing.

We've gotten to where we use words like "unique" so often that they have lost their meaning. Mr. Blessing did something during the WBTS which was actually unique, and people today are still reaping the rewards from it.

A lady named Mamie Yeary (1876-1922) published a very useful and interesting series of soldiers' stories in 1912 called *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*. This 904-page book comprised memoirs submitted to her by Confederate Army veterans living in Texas at the time it was



*S. T. Blessing, original at S.M. U.*

written. Born and reared at Farmersville in Collin County, Texas, she knew many of the old veterans personally. One of the more-lengthy accounts was written by her father, James Knox Polk Yeary, a veteran of Co. F, Fifth Texas Partisan Rangers of Martin's Regiment. But back to Mr. Blessing:

Getting to know our local Confederates



## S. T. Blessing, cont.



*Solomon Thomas Blessing*

Mr. Blessing was a member of one of the most famous units in all of the Confederate Army...the First Texas Infantry in Hood's Texas Brigade. His account of his service in Mrs. Yeary's book is lengthy, and while we don't usually have long bodies of text in this newsletter we think you'll agree it's worth the time. Among other experiences, he talks about being in the cornfield at Sharpsburg (above right). His account is reproduced on the next three pages.

Mr. Blessing and his wife, Callie, were married in Galveston in 1868. They lived at several places in Texas during the forty-two years they were married. In 1910 they lived at 315 Houston Street in Fort Worth. Callie



*Painting by Don Troiani*

Blessing died in 1920 at their home at 906 Taylor Street, also in Fort Worth. She was buried in Fort Worth's Greenwood Cemetery, where her husband was buried beside her in 1928. **That's not the whole story on Solomon Thomas Blessing. You'll have to wait until May to find out more.**



*One surviving First Texas Infantry flag in the State Archives in Austin, Texas*

SOLOMON THOMAS BLESSING, Fort Worth, Tex.—Born Jan. 27, 1840, near Jefferson, Frederick County, Maryland, and enlisted in the Confederate Army on Aug. 1, 1861, at Galveston, Tex., in an independent company, and as such went to Virginia. I was 21 years old when I enlisted as private in Company L, First Texas Infantry, Gen. Hood's brigade, Gen. Longstreet's corps, Army of Northern Virginia. My first Captain was A. C. McKeen and first Colonel was Louis T. Wigfall. Was wounded in the hand and leg at Sharpsburg, Md., and near Spottsylvania in the hand, and was shot in the side and both legs at Darbytown. Was left in the hospital after the battle of Sharpsburg, taken to Fort McHenry, Baltimore, and exchanged in June, 1863. Was again left on the field where I was wounded at Darbytown, Oct. 7, 1864, and sent to Point Lookout, Md. Was promoted to Corporal. Was in the battles of Eltham's Landing, Gaines' Mill and others of the seven days' fight around Richmond, second Manassas, Boonsboro, Gap, Sharpsburg, Wilderness and others of the "On to Richmond" campaign, Siege of Vicksburg, attack on Richmond, Sept. 29, 1864. During the war I participated in twenty-eight battles besides being in a number of skirmishes and under fire many times. Our company was called the Lone Star Rifles and was organized at Galveston by A. C. McKeen for the purpose of going to Virginia and offering our services to the Confederate Government. All arrangements having been completed we were marched to the court house on Aug. 1, 1861, where the ladies presented each man with a well-filled haversack and other necessary articles, and in some instances, mementos and keepsakes. I remember that Lieut. J. C. S. Thompson, Wm. Leach and I, all received a neatly bound copy of the New Testament inscribed with the names of three young ladies of the Methodist Church. My pastor, T. W. Wesson, gave me a handsomely bound copy of the Bible, both of which I carried all the way and brought them home with me; the Testament had one corner shot off at the battle of Darbytown Road. On arriving at Richmond we were sent to Camp Wigfall, where we were mustered into service and became Company L of the First Texas Infantry. The other ten companies had gone from Texas independently and the regiment was formed in Virginia and formed a part of Hood's Texas Brigade. We were the best drilled company in the regiment and the other boys would, half in derision and half in approval, join in the song, "Oh, the Lone Star Rifles are not afraid of trifles, with Capt. McKeen to lead 'em. They turn upon their backs to give the Yanks a whack, they'll be there when you need them." We wintered at Quantico and in the spring of 1862 were sent to the Yorktown and back to Richmond, and were then sent to the Valley of Virginia to join Jackson, who led us back to the series of battles below Richmond, then around through Thoroughfare Gap to the second battle of Manassas; then on to the Maryland campaign. When Gen. Lee crossed the Potomac into Maryland I was within ten or twelve miles of my mother's and sister's home in Brownsville. I took "French leave" and as I knew the country well, went through the enemy's lines and visited my homefolks. It soon became known to the "Union" neighbors that I was there and they informed the Federals, and next morning when they came to search the house for me I was not there, and the second morning before daylight I was on my way to join my command. At Frederick I learned that my brigade had gone towards Hagerstown, and I overtook them that night and camped near Middletown. On Sept. 17 we fought the battle of Sharpsburg, or as the Federals call it, Antietam. I was in the charge in the cornfield and was near our regimental flag when I saw the bearer fall. My first impulse was to pick it up, but then thought I could do more good shooting. This flag was made from the wedding dresses of Mrs. Jefferson Davis and Mrs. Louis T. Wigfall, and presented



to the regiment at Camp Wigfall. Very shortly I fell, shot through the leg and a buckshot in the hand, which I carry yet. I managed to hobble back to the woods and was carried back to the field hospital. When Lee crossed the Potomac at Shepherdstown he was unable to carry all his wounded and I was among those left. We were paroled only six miles from mother's home. My sister and her husband, Mr. A. C. Castle, came for me, and as I had been paroled was allowed to be taken home, where I remained till the next June, when I went to Baltimore and gave myself up and was sent to Fort McHenry, shortly after was sent to James River and exchanged. Having been exchanged I was sent to join my command at Gordonsville. On my way I was riding on a load of sacked oats and the wagon turned over and I was hurt so that I was unable to travel and so missed the memorable campaign into Pennsylvania. On account of the wound in my hand I was not able to carry a gun and was detached to the Quartermaster's Department. While on parole I made a visit to my old home in Maryland with some of my family, and when it was found I was a Rebel soldier I was nearly mobbed. When Longstreet's corps was sent to assist in the Georgia campaign I was instructed to drive our beeves to Richmond and was given transportation to the command in Georgia, where I arrived two days after the battle of Chickamauga. I was now able to carry a gun and took my place in the ranks and took part in the battles of Chattanooga and Lookout Mountain, which were strenuous times, as we were almost continually under fire. Later we were sent towards Knoxville and were in a number of small engagements. We spent the winter of 1863-64 in East Tennessee, and in the spring returned to Virginia.

I fell behind to do some visiting and did not catch up with the command till they had made the memorable charge at the Wilderness, where Gen. Lee, seeing them coming, asked who they were, and on being told that it was Hood's Texas Brigade, said: "I have confidence in them," and started to lead them, but was prevented by the boys crying, "Go back, Daddy, we will go without you." Thus I missed that bloody charge, but was under fire for the most part of the remainder of the day. During the day a bullet struck me squarely in the back, but was rendered harmless by my blanket, which I wore in folds across my shoulder. Next day I was in the detail to bury the dead, and in passing amongst the trees and bushes I could not find a thing which was not bullet scarred, and how any human being could escape in such a shower of lead is hard to realize. In the flank movements of Grant's "On to Richmond" campaign, after the battle we were in self-constructed breastworks dug with our bayonets. We were charged upon and some of our men were killed by bayonet thrusts. I received a bayonet wound in the hand. I had fired and re-loaded and was capping my gun when a Federal mounted the works and aimed directly at me, but his gun failed to fire. I succeeded in capping my gun and aimed at him and mine failed to fire. By this time he had picked up a big rock and hurled it at me. Just then two Yanks came at me with fixed bayonets. I dropped my gun and by God's favor, got hold of both their bayonets and called, "I surrender;" "Get out of the works then," which I gladly did, and laid with my face close to the ground. Our men from both flanks opened an enfilading fire which soon caused them to retreat, but they stopped between the lines in a ravine where they were somewhat protected.

We remained at this point some days, both armies continuing their movements towards Richmond, but with no great battles till Grant confronted Petersburg. While besieging Petersburg Grant crossed 40,000 men to the north side and attacked Richmond. The Texas Brigade, with other troops were taken from the south side to intercept this movement. We were

## S. T. Blessing, cont.

put in one on the lines of fortifications, and the First Texas, two or three paces apart, stretched across a hollow through a creek. On the morning of Sept. 29, 1864, our pickets were driven in and when the advancing army made its appearance they seemed to be six or eight columns deep. They were delayed somewhat by the abatis, but some, however, came through the gap left for the creek and got into our works. We opened fire and drove them back and our boys went out and gathered up as many guns as they could carry, loaded them and had them ready for another attack. I had seven guns. The ground was strewn with the dead and wounded, most of them negroes. Afterwards, when a prisoner, I learned there had been about 1,700 killed and wounded at that point. The number of our men engaged at this point could not have exceeded 100, a battery on a hill played on them, also. Our men fell fast from the murderous fire of the enemy who were armed with repeating rifles. I was wounded in the side, but continued to advance till pierced through both legs just above the knees by the small ball. It lodged in my pants leg and I have it now. When I fell I looked around for a shelter and saw a big tree, but found it occupied, I lay with my face close to the ground. I thought I would use my knapsack for some protection and raised my head to get at my knife to cut the straps, when a ball passed under my face and down my breast, leaving a red streak, but not breaking the skin. I succeeded in placing the knapsack in front of my head and several bullets hit it. It was in this battle that the Testament which I carried had the corner shot off. Prison life cured me of the tobacco habit, because there was none to chew. I was taken to the hospital camp at Yorktown, and when my wounds had healed was sent to Fortress Monroe, and from there, in January, 1865, to Point Lookout, where I remained until the "Break-up." I was fortunate in being put in hospital camp with two of my company, Smith D. Simms and Sidney B. Smith. Sidneys mother lived in Iowa and visited him clandestinely, slipping him money which he used for the benefit of his messmates. I had a brother who lived in New Orleans, who sent me money which was placed to my credit on the sutler's books, and which I used to pay for extras. The rations issued the prisoners was sufficient in quantity, but two or three times a week we had salt fish and water was very scarce. The twelve wells inside the dead line yielded only about a quart each twenty-four hours to the man, and salt cod was freely offered in exchange for water. When President Lincoln was assassinated the boys had to be on their P's and Q's, no matter what their feelings, but most of them sincerely regretted the act of Wilkes Booth, and no doubt the South was more harshly dealt with than if Lincoln had lived. After I had been discharged from prison at the end of the war, I remained a few months with Mr. Newell, the photographer, and then went to visit some of my kinsfolk and arrived in Houston in November, 1865. In the following January my old wound in the leg gave me trouble on account of a piece of loose bone. The war being over I went back to my old business, that of photography.



## **S. T. Blessing, cont.**

*So...what exactly did Mr. Blessing do during the WBTS which was truly unique? You'll just have to tune in to the May newsletter to find out. You will be surprised and amazed.*

**S. T. Blessing at his wife's gravestone in Fort Worth's Greenwood Cemetery.**



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You can read Mamie Yeary's wonderful book online. It's entitled Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865. Lots of locals are in it. You may find it at:

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph29786/m1/1/>



# The “Other” WBTS Commemorative Half Dollar



*More than a dozen years before the Gettysburg half-dollar was produced, the Stone Mountain half was minted to help raise money for the carving to be done of the side of the quartz/granite dome in Georgia.*

*Decades of planning, work, bickering, court suits, public meetings, fits of ego, and every other activity known to man have given us the landmark we visit today.*

*Stone Mountain's story is an amazing one, worthy of book-length treatment. Like the Gettysburg half dollar minted to help fund the memorial in Pennsylvania, the Stone Mountain half was not particularly popular with the public, although lots of examples survive which showed some people just considered it another half dollar to be spent. Two circulated examples are shown below.*





## Stone Mountain, cont.

Randy Golden has written a very interesting piece about the mountain in *About North Georgia*. You can read it online at: [http://www.aboutnorthgeorgia.com/ang/Stone\\_Mountain\\_Carving](http://www.aboutnorthgeorgia.com/ang/Stone_Mountain_Carving) You may enjoy reading the article and looking at some of these illustrations which refer to it.

Helen Plane, at right, is the first person on record who suggested a memorial carving honoring General Lee be made on Stone Mountain. While serving in General Lee's Army, her husband, Capt. William F. Plane, commanded Co. H. of the 6<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry. He was severely wounded at Sharpsburg on the bloodiest day of the War, September 17, 1862. He died there in the Stone House Hospital. Mrs. Plane made the trip from Georgia to Maryland and had her husband's body brought back for burial in Rose Hill Cemetery in Macon, Bibb County, Georgia. She was laid to rest beside him in 1925.

During her active life, she served as the first President of the Georgia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

She contacted nationally-famous sculptor Gutzon Borglum in June 1915, and about two months later he visited Stone Mountain to take a look. Mrs. Plane was a consummate Southerner and Borglum in many ways typified what everyone thought of as a Yankee at that time. They didn't get along particularly well.

Mrs. Plane had some very definite ideas about how the monumental carvings should look. They were too "over the top" for many 1925 Georgian sensibilities, and would have given the drizzles to even the most conservative politicians and citizens today. Borglum finally convinced her that a procession of Southern heroes would look best.



# Stone Mountain, cont.

Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941), below right, was himself a fascinating man. Any person who has an interest in this sort of thing won't live long enough to investigate all the side-stories.

He was the son of a Danish Mormon who married both Gutzon's mother and her sister. Gutzon was born and grew up in Idaho.

Mr. Borglum was a man of stupendous vision. He suggested that the Stone Mountain carving include a cavalcade of officers including General Lee and four other generals, along with sixty-five staff officers. He suggested each of the thirteen Confederate states choose five to represent their state. He also mentioned J. E. Johnson and N. B. Forrest in his correspondence.

Borglum suggested a fee of eight million dollars for the total project, but later agreed to carve the central figures for \$250,000. In 1916 he moved to Georgia and began planning the project he estimated would take eight years. Not much was done other than getting a set of steps built to the rock face before the United States became involved in WWI.

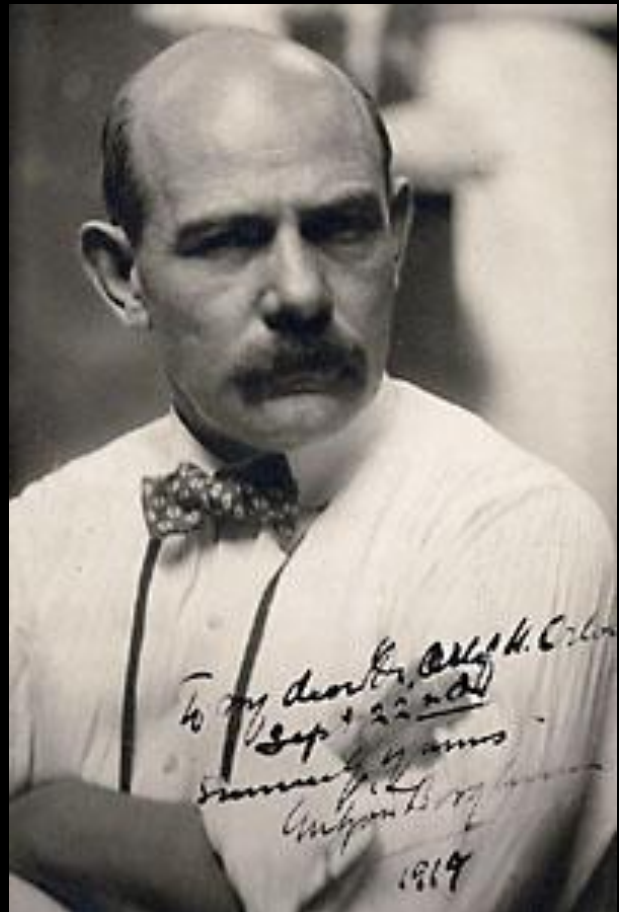
It's generally agreed that real work began in 1923. Raising funds soon emerged as one of the main problems. During the early 1920's the UDC formed the Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial Association [SMCMA] to help raise money and to keep an eye on daily operations there.

It was becoming public knowledge that the family who owned that side of the

mountain and Mr. Borglum were good friends with several influential members of the local KKK. As always happens whenever a complicated project involves more than one person and their donated funds, things began to go haywire.

A crack became apparent in the rock face, which caused a significant delay. The leader of the SMCMA tried to use the organization for political reasons, including getting many KKK members into the association. The UDC ladies began to have questions about how some of the funds were being spent.

Like everyone, Borglum needed a steady source of income he could depend on, and he started looking around for





## Stone Mountain, cont.

another project on which to work part-time. He became involved in the carving of Mount Rushmore out West, for which he is mostly remembered today.

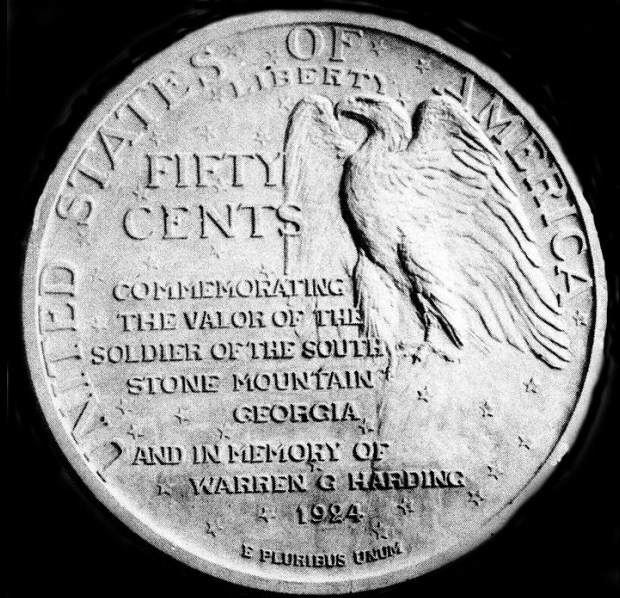
Mrs. Plane and others were unhappy over his attention to something other than Stone Mountain. In 1925 the Association dismissed him. Borglum promptly destroyed the significant amount of work he had done on the mountain, and Georgia filed a suit against him for malicious mischief. He fled the state.

They found him in North Carolina but couldn't get him extradited on a misdemeanor charge, so they created a felony charge of larceny and filed it. Still, North Carolina refused to extradite him. After a while, the charge was simply dropped.

By this time efforts were far along to fund the project using the commemorative half dollar, which was to be purchased from the mint at face value and resold at a premium by the various interested groups. A famous American sculptor had already been chosen to be the coin's designer...none other than Gutzon Borglum.

Northern opposition to the coin in Congress was eventually overcome in exchange for agreeing to mention recently-deceased President Warren G. Harding on the coin...an absurdity not unlike adding an unrelated amendment to a bill in Congress today. Borglum's designs were repeatedly turned down by the National Commission of Fine Arts.

When President Calvin Coolidge saw the pattern which included the "tribute" to the



not-long-gone Harding (above), he told the mint to lose the Harding reference. It stayed lost.

People who have studied Borglum's life say he was a temperamental artist who managed to offend nearly everyone with whom he ever worked. In all, he made nine different plaster models of the design before he got one everyone would accept.

Even the Grand Army of the Republic got into the fray, arguing that the coin honored treason against the country.

The subsequent issue and distribution of the coins was also full of trouble and hard feelings. The mint was authorized to produce five million of the halves, but actual production was closer to 1.3 million.

The relatively-high number of pieces produced make this a fairly-easy coin to acquire at a reasonable price. An uncirculated example can usually be had for under \$100.

## Stone Mountain, cont.

Read Randy Golden's excellent article referenced three pages ago. The last ninety years of the memorial's history have been interesting if not always harmonious. Being the world's largest bas-relief carving, and being near Atlanta, Georgia, both work to keep it in the public mind.

It was declared officially finished on March 3, 1972. President Richard Nixon was scheduled to speak at the later dedication ceremony, but he felt he should stay in Washington amid the furor over the Kent State University shootings on May 4 of students demonstrating against the Viet Nam War.

The memorial's streak of luck held, and in Nixon's place the ceremony was presided over by the only American Vice-President in history ever to resign the office under criminal charges... Spiro T. Agnew. Agnew, of course, served under the only U. S. President ever who resigned from office.

A photograph of Agnew at the ceremony at Stone Mountain is one of the few things you can't Google up online these days. Once again, it's good our ancestors did two things we'd never have gotten done today...the coin and the carvings on the mountain.

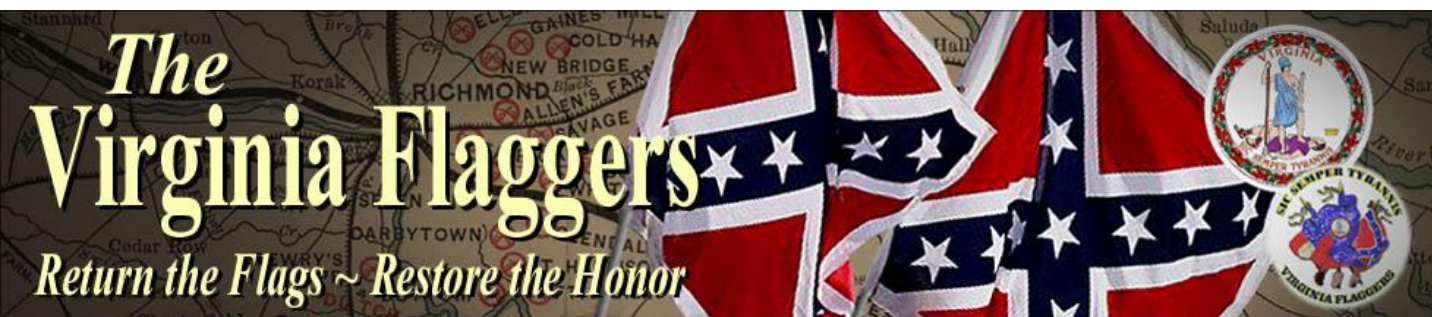






The sketch above was Gutzon Borglum's original grand idea for the carvings on the face of Stone Mountain. For many reasons it was not considered by many of the decision makers. You have to look really closely to even figure out what it is.

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<http://vaflaggers.blogspot.com/>

Remember to check the URL above often to see what is happening in Virginia. The Virginia flaggers need and deserve our help with regular monthly contributions. Paypal makes it quick and easy.

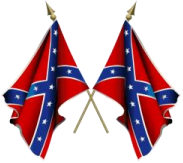
# We appreciate...



...our new commander, Chuck Marks, for representing us at the March 4 flagging event to Palo Pinto.



...our compatriot Allen Hearrean in the M. T. Johnson Camp in Arlington for organizing the March 4 flagging event and for taking the 18 signs we made for it.



...Kristen Giesecke, Dan Shaw, Shawn Clark, and Matt Worthington of Worthington Monuments who helped us get five CSA headstones done before 11 a.m. on March 9.



...Tammy Patterson for taking your editor to Worthington's very early on the mornings of March 9 and 10 and for helping prep stones on the 9<sup>th</sup>.



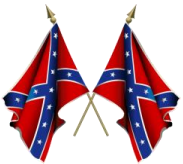
...James Alderman for coming to Rendon on the morning of March 9, helping finish the stones, and hauling four of them and your editor back to Colleyville.



...everyone, in and out of the camp, who made our 100 raffle tickets for the Henry Rifle disappear in less than four weeks.



...Clay Fitzhugh for coming to help with the Hoffman rock, and Marilyn Patterson for hauling your editor and all the stuff to Johnson County to install it.



...Tammy Patterson for taking your editor to Fort Worth on April 1 to give Cody Carnley his new Henry repeating rifle.





**When you meet someone new, there are inevitable pauses in the conversation. You're both scanning...scanning... reviewing what little you know about each other, and looking for something you may have in common.**

**Try to find out something about where your new friend grew up, and if it's in the South see if he knows anything about his family background. Tell him about your interest in the WBTS and your membership in the SCV. Tell him if he's interested we'll check to see if he has any Confederate ancestors. Email your editor at [mfpchat@yahoo.com](mailto:mfpchat@yahoo.com) and give him some basic information.**

**Whether he becomes a member or not, your new friend will see the PC protestors on TV and the internet differently if he personally knows someone who's proud of his Confederate ancestors...or has some of his own!!**



## This month's puzzle.

<http://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=306e9e60b58a>

We're lucky to have a friend named Ervin Hauk in the Tarrant County Historical Commission who's also a very accomplished photographer. He often comes to our events and takes pictures for us. While we were at Oakwood on February 18 he took this photo of the granite soldier there in Soldier's Row.

Go to the URL shown above. You'll find the puzzle in the shape the last person there left it.

Click on "Play As" near the top of the page then moved the slider down to 180. Click on "Start a New Game." It seems to help this puzzler to change the background color from time to time. Taking a break helps, too.

If you have any trouble getting these puzzles to work please email

[mfpchat@yahoo.com](mailto:mfpchat@yahoo.com)

Click on the icon at lower right and take it to full-screen. It'll give you more room and will make the pieces bigger.



# Coming soon...

Keep an eye out for Confederates in this area who have no markers or whose stones are becoming unreadable or vandalized.

April 15  
Meet us at Oakwood in Fort Worth at 9 a.m. to install a marker for John D. Armstrong

April 22  
Robert E. Lee Camp's Confederate Heritage Banquet in Fort Worth.  
See the flyer in this newsletter.

April 27  
Regular monthly meeting of the Taylor Camp. Eat at 6, meet at 7, out by 8:30.

Adapted from a FarSide  
cartoon by Gary Larson.



*Distraught over Gen. McClellan's defeat at the polls in the Election of 1864, all nine of the Democrats in the New Mexico Territory cancelled their fireworks show, vowed to see Lincoln impeached, and rioted in the street.*





Gen. S. D. Lee

*To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the Cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.*