

David's Dispatch

1st Lt. David Richard Reynolds Camp #2270
Sons of Confederate Veterans
Mount Pleasant, Texas



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WINNER OF THE TEXAS DIVISION BEST NEWSLETTER AWARD, 2017 & 2018
WINNER OF THE SCV NATIONAL BEST NEWSLETTER AWARD, 2016, 2017 & 2018

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NEXT MEETING

Monday, May 18th, 7:00 p.m.
Refreshments at 6:30 p.m.
Old Union Community Center
Hwy 67E, Mount Pleasant, Texas

2020 NATIONAL CONVENTION

July 10th – 13th, 2019
Renaissance Resort
500 Legacy Park
St. Augustine, Florida



DAVIDRREYNOLDS.ORG

This month the following changes have been made to our web site: <http://www.davidrreynolds.org>

- I've updated our Calendar of Events.
- I've updated our Events page to include all known events by the Camp and its members. Please let me know when you do anything for the SCV, this includes attending other camp meeting, public speaking, or even putting flags on graves.

I'm still looking for biographies of your Confederate Ancestor. Please try to come up with a short bio that we can put on-line.

If you have any suggestions, recommendations or comments you can send me an email to: Joe.Reynolds@davidrreynolds.org and I promise to give it my full consideration.

COMMANDER'S CORNER

by Larry "Joe" Reynolds



Well not much to write about this month. As you know, with our Shelter in Place and our Social Distancing Policy, we sort of have our hands tied. I'm truly hoping that we can meet this month. We have received word that the Texas Division Reunion, schooled for June 5th through 7th has been cancelled. At this time we do not know if it is being rescheduled.

At our next meeting we to need to talk about the Highway Clean-Up that we have been approved for. Not sure when they will allow us to do a pickup, but we need to be ready when they do.

In closing, I'll just say, Stay Safe and Stay at Home!



OUR CHARGE...

"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!

*Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, Commander General,
United Confederate Veterans,
New Orleans, Louisiana April 25, 1906*

The Texas Division Officers are working on a solution to schedule an alternative plan for the Constitution change.

Thank you,

Allen Hearrean
TX Division Adjutant
817 821 8805



A BLAST FROM THE PAST

*(Taken from the May 1920 Edition of the
Confederate Veteran - 100 Years Ago)*

SURRENDER OF JOHNSTON'S ARMY.

by M. M. BUFORD, NEWBERRY, S. C.

With the annual recurrence of the day marking the surrender of the most gallant army that ever battled for right and justice, the old Confederate soldier likes to recall his experiences in the great struggle; so I am moved to write of the surrender of the army under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, in the preliminaries of which I was an actor.

I was a member of the 5th South Carolina Cavalry. Our little battle was fought at Bentonville, N. C., where two of our company were killed—D. C. Eison, of Union County, and C. C. Casey, of Laurens County, S. C. On March 24, 1865, Gen. E. M. Law, now living in Florida, had been put in command of that portion of the cavalry including our regiment near Smithfield, N. C. There were Yankee marauders not far away. General Law sent a portion of our regiment, including my company, to stop their depredations. We found several hundred of them in a woody place, and there was a little skirmish, during which I noticed a Yankee jump from his horse and take deliberate aim at someone in my direction. I heard the bullet strike with a dull thud near me and turned to see that Lieut. Berry Richards, my nearest comrade, who was in command of the company, had been hit. He told me that he had been mortally wounded and asked me to take him to his brother,



2020 TEXAS DIVISION REUNION CANCELLED

We regret to inform you the 2020 Texas Division Sons of Confederate Veterans Reunion scheduled June 5 thru June 7 at the hotel Embassy Suites Grapevine has been cancelled.

The Covid-19 Virus Pandemic makes planning for our event impossible. We cannot guarantee our members of this event an absolute date.

Please note that anyone that has made reservations with the hotel will be automatically cancelled. Everyone that has a reservation will be sent a cancellation notice from the hotel.

Please do not contact the hotel to cancel your reservation.

The Gano camp will begin refunding registration payments asap. If you paid online your credit card will be credited the amount you paid. If you paid by check, the Gano camp will send the refund by mail.

John C. Richards, and for his brother to carry his body back home for burial. I put my arm around him and held him on his horse, and we had gone but a short distance when we met his brother. The wounded man died three days later, on March 27, and his brother carried his body home, as requested.

After leaving Raleigh my command fell back toward Greensboro, tired and hungry and depending on their own exertions to get something to eat. As an illustration of the straits to which we were put for food, I will relate this little incident : While out foraging a great big husky fellow and I were chasing the same chicken, and we caught it at the same time. I weighed only about a hundred and twenty, but was holding on to the chicken with all my might, when he said, and he meant it too, "D—n you, if you don't let go, I'll kill you," and I let go and went hungry.

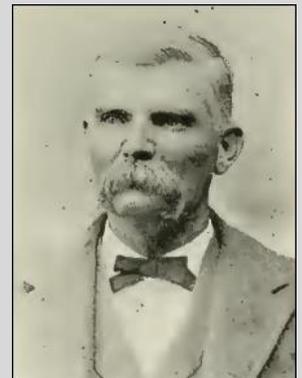
It was about the middle of April, 1865, that the correspondence began between Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and Gen. William T. Sherman in regard to an armistice, Johnston sending 2 communication to Sherman about that time. As Sherman's messengers—a lieutenant and some petty officers with a flag of truce—were on their way to Johnston's headquarters they came to the place where Joe Hargrove and I had been posted. One was to stay there, and the other was to conduct Sherman's messengers to Johnston's headquarters, somewhere between Durham and Hillsboro. Joe had slipped away on a foraging expedition, so I had to escort the messengers. I noticed that one of the Yanks was riding a very fine bay horse that he had captured from Charles Harnett, of our company, only a few days before. I wanted very much to take the horse from him, but of course I couldn't.

On the 17th of April Generals Johnston and Sherman, with their staffs, met in a plain little farmhouse known as the "Bennett House," having only two or three rooms, to discuss terms of the armistice. This was just four miles west of Durham. They did not complete the negotiations that day and met at the same place the next day, April 18. General Johnston's escort was the 5th South Carolina

Cavalry, and with him were Gen. Wade Hampton, of South Carolina, Gen. John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, and Gen. J. H. Reagan, of Texas, as I remember. With General Sherman were General Kilpatrick, of the Yankee cavalry, and, I think, an escort of Minnesotans. While the conference was going on the respective escorts on the outside fraternized and cracked jokes. The Yanks were in splendid and handsome uniforms of blue, the "Johnny Rebs" in torn and sodden suits of gray.

The terms were agreed upon that day, but General Sherman had to submit them to the government at Washington. President Lincoln had been assassinated by John Wilkes Booth the night of the 14th of April, and Vice President Andrew Johnson had succeeded him. He refused to accept the terms and returned them to General Sherman.

On the morning of the 25th of April General Sherman notified General Johnston that the terms had been rejected and demanded a surrender. That night General Johnston sent a dispatch under flag of truce to General Sherman. This dispatch was entrusted to Col. Rawlins Lowndes, of General Hampton's staff.



When asked if he wanted an escort of cavalry. Colonel Lowndes said: "No. One good man will do. I'll take Buford." On our way to Sherman's headquarters we came to the Yankee picket line at one o'clock at night. The vidette on the post could not speak English and seemed at a loss what to do. The vidette on the next post called out to him: "D—u it, make them dismount." We dismounted and awaited the appearance of the officer who had been called to escort us, when we remounted and accompanied him to headquarters. (As indicating the discipline in the Federal army, I afterwards learned the vidette was arrested and punished for permitting us to get so close before he halted us.) When we reached General Sherman's headquarters we were treated very nicely. Soldiers

were sent out to hold our horses. Colonel Lowndes went in, but I stayed out and held my own horse. When Colonel Lowndes had delivered his message and we had started back to our headquarters. He said to me: "Buford. why didn't you let that soldier hold your horse?" My reply was: "I don't let no Yankee hold my horse."

We had come now to the end of things. The war was over, and the Confederate soldiers, conquered by overwhelming numbers, turned their thoughts homeward, and many also turned their faces thither. On the 26th of April I left the almost deserted camp for home, riding my cavalry horse, which was a very good one. With me were Witherspoon, of Sumter, and Sanford Welborn, of Union; perhaps others whom I cannot now recall. As we rode out of Charlotte, N. C, we met Gen. Wade Hampton, who was going in the same direction, and we rode three or four miles together, when he turned off into another road, saying he was going to cross the Catawba River in a bateau, and his horse would swim across. We promised him we would meet him at Due West, S. C, five weeks from that day and go with him to join Gen. Kirby Smith's army beyond the Mississippi, the last remnant of the Confederate armies that had not surrendered. But before the time appointed rolled around everything had gone to pieces. Kirby Smith's army included, and of course we did not meet at Due West. General Hampton had not surrendered, and neither had I; but sometime in the summer of 1865 I went to Columbia and took the oath of allegiance. General Hampton also must have taken the oath at some time, or he could not have taken his seat in the United States Senate, to which he was elected by the South Carolina Legislature and which he held many years, nor the office of national railroad commissioner, to which he was later appointed by President Grover Cleveland.

When we reached the Catawba River the ferryman informed us that the charge for ferrying a man on horseback was \$25 or a plug of tobacco. I had a plug or so of tobacco, because I had drawn my share along with the others, though I did not chew; so I gave him a plug of tobacco, and my comrades, Witherspoon

and Welborn, gave him \$25 apiece. My plug of tobacco was worth more than the fifty dollars in Confederate money.

I reached home on the 5th of May, 1865. Forty-five years after that I was going out of Raleigh, N. C, on the train, and as we approached Durham I asked, so all in the coach could hear, if there was any one on board who could point out the Bennett House. An old man stood up and replied that he could, and he pointed out the house to me as we were passing. It looked just about as it did forty-five years before, except that the well sweep in the front yard was gone.

In talking with Gen. Julian S. Carr, of Durham, N. C, at the Confederate Reunion in Tulsa. Okla. in 1918 he told me he owned land around the Bennett House and that I was the only person he had ever seen who was present at the meeting there between Generals Johnston and Sherman. He further said that it became necessary to cover the house completely with corrugated iron in order to keep it from being carried off piecemeal as souvenirs. General Carr urged me to write out my recollections of the Johnston surrender. I might add that General Carr appointed me on his staff as Assistant Quartermaster General, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, when he was first elected Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia Department, U. C. V., and his successor, General Brown, of Virginia, honored me with the same appointment, as did General Carr again when he defeated General Brown at the Washington Reunion in 1917. So, I am entitled to be called "Colonel." The title of "Captain," with which my friends have honored me for several years, grew on me gradually. I was not "a captain in the army"; the highest position I ever reached there was "high private." I appreciate these honors, but I am proudest of having been selected by Col. Rawlins Lowndes as his courier and escort on his visit to the headquarters of Gen. William T. Sherman the night of the 25th of April, 1865, when I was hardly more than a lad.

After that historic ride together to Sherman's headquarters I never saw Colonel Lowndes again until we met in Columbia thirty-seven years later at

General Hampton's funeral, the 13th of April. 1902. Colonel Lowndes died at his home, in Charleston, S. C. December 31. 1919, in the eighty-fifth year of his age.



LAST CAMP MEETING

Our April meeting was cancelled due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. You will be notified as soon as our Monthly Meetings can resume.



BATTLES FOUGHT DURING THE MONTH OF MAY



Battle of Fort Gibson - Fort Gibson Mississippi

1 May 1863 - General John C. Pemberton verses General Ulysses S. Grant. Casualties: 1650 Confederate, 1863 Union!

Battle of Chancellorsville - Chancellorsville Virginia

1-5 May 1863 - General Robert E. Lee verses General Joseph Hooker. Casualties: 12,754 Confederate, 16,792 Union!

Battle of Williamsburg - Williamsburg Virginia

5 May 1862 - General Joseph E. Johnston verses General George B. McClellan. Casualties: 1603 Confederate, 2239 Union!

Battle of The Wilderness - The Wildereness Virginia

5-7 May 1864 - General Robert E. Lee verses General Ulysses S. Grant, General George G. Meade. Casualties: 7750 Confederate, 17,666 Union!

Battle of McDowell - McDowell Virginia

May 1862 - General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson verses General Robert C. Schenck. Casualties: 498 Confederate, 256 Union!

Battle of Spotsylvania Court House - Spotsylvania Court House Virginia

8-20 May 1864 - General Robert E. Lee verses General Ulysses S. Grant. Casualties: 9500 Confederate, 18,399 Union!

Battle of Drewry's Bluff - Drewry's Bluff Virginia

12-16 May 1864 - General P.G.T. Beauregard verses General Benjamin F. Butler. Casualties: 2506 Confederate, 4160 Union!

Battle of Resaca - Resaca Georgia

13-15 May 1864 - General Joseph E. Johnston verses General William T. Sherman. Casualties: 3800 Confederate, 2747 Union!

Battle of Jackson - Jackson Mississippi

14 May 1863 - General Joseph E. Johnston verses General William T. Sherman. Casualties: 1339 Confederate, 1000 Union!

Battle of New Market - New Market Virginia

15 May 1864 - General John C. Breckinridge verses General Franz Sigel. Casualties: 577 Confederate, 831 Union!

Battle of Chamberlin Hill - Edward's Station Mississippi

16-17 May 1863 - General John C. Pemberton verses General Ulysses S. Grant. Casualties: 3851 Confederate, 2441 Union!

Siege of Vicksburg - Vicksburg Mississippi

18 May - 4 July 1863 - General John C. Pemberton versus General Ulysses S. Grant. Casualties: 39,491 Confederate, 8,873 Union!

Battle of Front Royal - Front Royal Virginia

23 May 1862 - General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson versus Colonel J. R. Kenly. Casualties: 50 Confederate, 904 Union!

First Battle of Winchester - Winchester Virginia

23-25 May 1862 - General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson versus General Nathaniel P. Banks. Casualties: 400 Confederate, 2769 Union!

Battle of North Anna River - North Anna River Virginia

23-26 May 1864 - General Robert E. Lee versus General Ulysses S. Grant. Casualties: 2000 Confederate, 1973 Union!

Battle of New Hope Church - New Hope Church Georgia

25-29 May 1864 - General Joseph E. Johnston versus General William T. Sherman. Casualties: 3000 Confederate, 2400 Union!

Siege of Port Hudson - Port Hudson Louisiana

26 May - 9 July 1863 - General Franklin Gardner versus General Nathaniel P. Banks. Casualties: 7200 Confederate, 3600 Union!

Battle of Seven Pines - Seven Pines Virginia

31 May - 1 June 1862 - General Joseph E. Johnston versus General George B. McClellan. Casualties: 6134 Confederate, 5031 Union!



BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS

BY I. G. BRADWELL, BRANTLEY, ALA.

Gordon's Brigade, afterwards commanded by Gen. Clement A. Evans, spent the winter of 1863-64 at Clark's Mountain, not far from where the fighting began in May, and we did not have far to march to

reach the battlefield when the campaign opened in the spring. Our brigade consisted of the 13th, 26th, 31st, 38th, 60th, and 61st Georgia Regiments. Later on, the 12th Battalion was sent to us from Charleston, S. C, all volunteer units, but now sadly reduced in numbers by long service. I suppose there were less than twenty-five hundred effectives in the entire command. During the winter we suffered very much from lack of proper food and want of clothing, and we knew from reports that came to us that we would be called on in the spring to make greater sacrifices than ever before. We were told that General Grant had assumed command of the mighty army under Meade, whom we did not fear, and had brought from the West, where he had been operating, corps of victorious troops who boasted that they had never turned their backs on the Rebels, and when the campaign opened they would show us and their comrades of the Army of the Potomac how to fight. We knew that without these we were already overmatched in numbers, equipment, and everything to make an army efficient ; but we consoled ourselves with the reflection that we could die if necessary for our country and that Divine Providence was on our side, while we had a leader in General Lee who, we felt, would be equal to the occasion. The Federal army, though north of the Rapidan, was as near Richmond as the Confederate army, which was scattered along the south side as far as Culpeper C. H., thus giving Grant opportunity to cross that stream and place his forces between us and our base at Richmond. It seemed strange to me at the time that General Lee would so dispose his forces in the face of the great odds against us, but he knew Grant and what his plans were, and he wanted him to do the very thing he had in his mind, intending to fall on him in this wilderness, where he least expected it and where his superior numbers and numerous artillery could do him little good. General Grant had made every preparation for the coming contest but waited until the ground had sufficiently hardened from the winter rains so he could maneuver his heavy artillery trains without difficulty. Accordingly, on the 4th of May he crossed the river and set out for Richmond. So far everything was lovely for him; but A. P. Hill, with a part of his corps, and Gen. R. E. Rodes, with his division of our corps, fell on his long lines passing through this thickly wooded country with

such vigor that the advance was checked. Fighting of the severest character now began, and Hill and Rodes had a little more than they could do to hold their own. In all the previous battles in which we had taken part we were warned by a heavy cannonade and skirmish fire, but in this instance we broke camp and marched leisurely from our winter quarters, without hearing the sound of a gun, to a place four or five miles from where we were thrown into battle. We marched leisurely from where we bivouacked that night, and about eleven o'clock, while marching along a public road leading into the thick woods, I saw the regiments ahead deploying to the left and right. Rodes was at this time having a hot time of it some distance in front and to our right, and many of his wounded were coming out. General Lee and General Gordon, who knew the critical situation, had had an interview in which Lee told Gordon that everything depended upon the success of the fight our brigade was to make; that if we failed he would have to retreat, a thing he could not afford to do. And as the line stood there a moment, formed and only waiting for word to move forward. Gordon rode along the entire front of the brigade, seeming as one inspired with burning words of eloquence. With hat in hand he passed along, his face fairly radiant as he spoke to his men in these words: "Soldiers, we have always driven the enemy before us, but this day we are going to scatter them like the leaves of the forest." With these words and many others which I did not hear he raised the fighting spirit in his men to the highest pitch, and as he rode around our right and behind the line he cautioned us not to crowd to the right or left, but to maintain our line as we advanced and not to fire or raise the Rebel yell, a thing for which we were noted and at this time were on the point of doing, but to reserve our fire until we struck the enemy and then to rush on them and not let them rest a moment until we had driven them off and won for General Lee the ground he was so anxious to hold. And did we? Let us see.

The word was now given and repeated by every officer and private. We swept forward through the thick undergrowth, slowly at first, until we struck the enemy, only a hundred yards or so away, when pandemonium broke loose. Their line crumbled immediately under our first volley as our men rushed over them, and I could see them to the right, left, and

in front throwing up their hands and surrendering by scores. We were now somewhat disorganized but moved on as if nothing had happened and were soon on another line, reinforced by fugitives from the first; but this offered little resistance, as we rushed over them and scattered them also. Without allowing them to stop and take breath, we pressed them back on other lines, every one of which seemed demoralized by our rapid advance and the multitude of fugitives coming to them.

The fighting began about noon, and in the great excitement incident to the occasion time passed so rapidly that it seemed but an hour when we struck their last reserves just as night was coming on. Just how many of these lines we encountered and broke that evening I cannot say. By this time our regiment was advancing in detached squads, with a man here and there, having veered to the right of the brigade some distance and out of touch with them. As we approached these reserves tiny openings on us with a startling volley that did us no harm but made every one of us seek cover. This was the hottest fire we had experienced the whole afternoon. Looking to the left, I could see no one. On the right there was a squad, but I could not see any of our men.

I was now in a dilemma as I stopped behind a tree. Here I was alone in the face of a strong line of Yankees, under a heavy and continuous shower of balls, and not a comrade in sight. The little tree offered very little protection, and I did not want to be killed here by myself, where no one could ever know what became of me. Glancing to the right, I saw a gray-clad figure rise up as if out of the earth and dart toward the enemy and disappear just in front of them. Then two more did the same thing, and others followed them until perhaps thirty or forty had gone. It occurred to me that they had found some place of safety there, and I resolved to go too. Holding my head low, it took me less time than it takes to tell it to pass over the intervening space. There I found my comrades lying in a gully only a few feet from the enemy, secure from all harm. The ground between us was level, and our fire, from what we saw afterwards, was very effective. Lieutenant Colonel Pride was the last man to jump into the Bully, and as he did so he ordered us to rise and charge them; but we knew better than to undertake to do tin-, as the enemy outnumbered us twenty to one. Only one man

responded, and he was shot down immediately. Standing by the side of the colonel, loading my gun. I heard the sound of a ball striking him in the stomach. This ball passed through his body and came out at his hack between the buttons of his military coat. His ruddy face became pale immediately, and he reeled and fell. Some of our men grabbed him and ran out with him. Strange to say, he recovered, but was nevermore fit for military duty.

Soon after this the firing of the enemy suddenly ceased all jumped up and ran out to the front. There a sight long to he remembered met our eyes. It seemed that shot we fired took effect. One of them dead lay there, and the pine straw was sprinkled with the blot gone away wounded. They left in their retreat the drums and instruments of a fine silver cornet band; the heads of the drums having burnt out.

In advancing through the thick forest our regiment (31st) became separated far to the right, and night was now preceding a mantle over the scene. Colonel I Vans hunted us up and found us there, while firing was going on far to our rear on the right and left. Kept winding about there for some time, he took a straight course which led us to where the other regiments had collected As we came up to them they were on their tiptoes shouting to us, saying: "Boys, this beats Gettysburg [which we had always considered our greatest Victory]. We've captured twenty-live hundred Yankees, including a full Pennsylvania regiment, with their colonel." I can't vouch for the numbers, as we came to the rallying place last and did not see the prisoners ; but General Lee had been there and, taking off his glove, shook hands with General Gordon, congratulating him and making him a major general to date from that day. He had ordered rations to be brought up and issued to our men. but in this our regiment did no! participate, for in a few minutes after our arrival we were ordered away to help our "Louisiana Tigers" hold their par 1 of the line. Sometime during the night we were relieved and rejoined the brigade.

Thus ended the events of the ever-memorable first battle of the Wilderness. In another article I will tell about our experience in the second day's fighting, which was not less exciting and was equally successful and which should have resulted in cutting General Grant's army off from the for 1 of the Rapidan, by which he brought up his supplies and

reserves. Had our superior officers allowed General Gordon to make the fight earlier in the day, as Gordon begged to do, seeing that he had all the advantage, there is no telling what the consequences might have been.



LIBERTY, A TEXAS TRADITION

by Christian Lee



March is Texas Independence month. We celebrate immigrant settlers. Settlers whose rights were infringed upon by their government and their nation invaded by an authoritarian dictator. The slaughter at the Alamo is as legendary as the men who fought and died during the siege. Some consider it Texas' Thermopile.

One of my favorite Alamo defenders was none other than the 'King of the Wild Frontier', Davy Crockett. His Grandson was a CSA Colonel for Company H, 1st Arkansas Infantry also known as Crockett's Rifles. According to the legend he was likely promoted to General by the end of the war.

Imagine that, liberty courses the veins of generations upon generations of heroes. The blood of heroes like Davy Crockett and the Spartan King Leonidas runs within all of our veins and it is up to us to stand in defense of our ancestor's good names.



BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES & OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

May 19th – Rex McGee

May 6th – This day in 1861 Arkansas secedes from the union.

May 10th – This day in 1863 General Thomas J. Jackson died and is buried in Lexington, Virginia. Confederate Memorial Day in North and South Carolina.

May 20th – This day in 1861 North Carolina secedes from the union.

May 23rd – This day in 1861 Virginia secedes from the union.

May 30th – Confederate Memorial Day in Virginia.



GUARDIAN NEWS

by Past Commander Rex McGee

Oakwood Cemetery Final resting place of 300 Confederate Soldiers



Oakwood Cemetery in Tyler Texas consists of 20 acres and has more than 2,000 inscribed tombstones. There are 231 graves of the unknown confederate soldiers, plus 70 marked Confederate graves, as well as one Union soldier's grave. This cemetery was originally known as Lollar's Cemetery and City Cemetery. Several years ago, a fire destroyed all the burial records as well as the ownership documents.

Written by an Oakwood Committee Member.

Oakwood cemetery is situated on land initially gifted to Isaac Lollar by a Board of Land Commissioners of the County of Bastrop grant on July 5, 1841. On August 12, 1844, James C. Hill, a surveyor from Nacogdoches, did a survey for Isaac Lollar of 640 acres of land, on which later the public square was laid out.

Smith county, with Tyler as the county seat, was created by the First Legislature of the State of Texas on April 11, 1846. On October 2, 1846, Isaac Lollar sold to his brother, John Lollar of Smith County, the 640 acres of land. On September 22, 1849, John Lollar conveyed to John Madison Patterson 345 acres. It was stipulated that five acres in the southwest corner be reserved for a cemetery. The cemetery was first called "Lollar's Cemetery."

As time went on, the cemetery was later known as "City Cemetery." No further expansions were made until the late 1930s. Today the cemetery contains 19.5 acres and has over 2,000 marked graves. Many grave markers have been lost over the years.

During the War Between the States, when several thousand men were in training near Tyler, many soldiers died from measles, pneumonia and other diseases. In order to have a burial place for the soldiers, the City set aside a 300 square feet plot. This plot became known as the Soldiers' Plot. There are 231 unknown Confederate Soldiers buried in the Soldiers' Plot.

After first securing the deed for the Soldiers' Plot, the Mollie Moore Davis Chapter 217 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy began caring for the sacred spot. Decoration Day (later to become Memorial Day) was always observed. Members, their families and friends met at the cemetery for a memorial service and children scattered flowers on all the soldiers' graves.

The Mollie Moore Davis Chapter of the UDC saved money and bought the Confederate Monument. It was unveiled on July 9, 1909. All records state that it was a gala day in Tyler. Stores closed and the UDC

sponsored a public lunch on the east side of the square. At 2 p.m., a parade to the cemetery began. Approximately 5,000 people gathered in the cemetery for this important occasion. Choirs from the churches in Tyler sang and after the program, children dressed in white once again scattered flowers over the soldiers' graves.

There is no knowledge of when the first Jewish settlers came to Tyler. But we do know that in the 1880s, there were enough numbers to begin holding worship services. In 1887 the Congregation Beth-El was chartered and shortly after bought a large plot in the cemetery to bury their dead. This plot is fenced off from the rest of Oakwood, as Jewish custom requires separation of Jewish and non-Jewish graves.

In the 1930s, Works Progress Administration labor was used to erect the stone fence around Oakwood and pave the driveways. The strip adjacent to North Palace Avenue was filled and leveled. For many years this section was used as a Black Cemetery. In 1997, a marker was erected to mark approximately 100 Black graves, the majority of which were most likely slaves.

In 1997, the Oakwood Cemetery Restoration Committee made up of members of the Mollie Moore Davis Chapter, plus interested residents of Tyler was formed and began working to restore Oakwood Cemetery. The Mayor of Tyler turned the Committee into a City Committee, and they have worked with the Tyler Parks and Recreation Department ever since, meeting every month.

The City started a Perpetual Care Trust Fund for the cemetery. Since 1997, this fund has been used for multiple projects. Some projects include a new fence along the railroad tracks, new gates (donated by Rodeick Metal Service, Inc.), resurfacing all driveways, installing an irrigation system and flower beds, installing a new Oakwood sign by the gate on Palace Avenue, installing a new flag pole with lighting and planting 36 new trees.

Oakwood Cemetery has been designated a Historic Texas Cemetery by the Texas Historical Commission in Austin with visible plaques in every entrance to the cemetery.

There are hundreds of broken markers in the cemetery. To restore these, the Oakwood Cemetery Restoration Committee created Spirits of Oakwood, an annual walking history tour through the cemetery. Money raised during this event is used to repair the markers.



From left to right, flags at Oakwood Cemetery: A Confederate flag, the city of Tyler flag, and a pole bearing the American and Texas state flags.



Inscription on a memorial to Confederate soldiers at Oakwood cemetery.

As usual, I'll leave you with the question that Phil Davis, Chairman of both the National and Texas Division Guardian Program always asks,

“Are you a Guardian?”

If not, why not?”



Camp Leadership

1st Lt. David Richard Reynolds
Camp #2270
Mount Pleasant, Texas

Commander

Larry "Joe" Reynolds
 (903) 575-8791

Joe.Reynolds@davidreynolds.org

1st Lt. Commander

Danny "Kid" Tillery
 (903) 717-1593

dkidtillery@gmail.com

2nd Lt. Commander

David Alan "Dave" Davey
 (903) 817-3702

captdave1943@gmail.com

Adjutant

Alvin "Rex" McGee
 (903) 577-3233

AlvinRexMcGee@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Larry "Joe" Reynolds
 (903) 575-8791

Treasurer@davidreynolds.org

Judge Advocate

William "Bill" Guy
 (903) 434-3759
 roosterioof@yahoo.com

Quartermaster

O. M. Adams
 (903) 577-2627

1toshman@gmail.com

Surgeon

Jerry Dean Lester
 (702) 806-4191

jlester747@aol.com

Chaplain

Shawn Tully
 (903) 563-1097

marie6925@outlook.com

Color Sergeant

Charles "Richard" Hess
 (903) 434-9839

No E-Mail

Historian

Rodney Glen Love
 (903) 756-7264

snakemon@aol.com

Web Master / Newsletter Editor

Joe Reynolds
 (903) 575-8791

Joe.Reynolds@DavidRReynolds.org

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Larry "Joe" Reynolds
 1007 Stone Shore Street
 Mount Pleasant, TX 75455-7487
 (903) 575-8791

Joe.Reynolds@DavidRReynolds.org



Opinions expressed by individual writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect official positions of the 1st Lt. David Richard Reynolds Camp #2270. Letters and articles may be submitted to: Joe.Reynolds@davidreynolds.org (Cutoff for articles is 20th of the month)