

April 13, 2007

NEWSLETTER APRIL, 2007

New Members

Bobby Horton and his wife Mary Elizabeth have joined our association from Dickerson, MD. He descends from a soldier who fought with Co. I, 41st Georgia Infantry. Bobby is a land surveyor and relic hunter. We look forward to meeting you soon and we hope that can be at the Congress in Danville, Kentucky this year. The 41st Georgia was part of the main attack against the Yankee left flank in the battle of Perryville.

Camp Van Dorn Sign

Founder and First President Gary Goodson Sr reports that the metal sign at Camp Van Dorn's location in Knoxville has been placed. The marker was officially placed at 11 : 00 AM on March 28, exactly 145 years from the date the 40th Georgia and 52nd Georgia arrived. During the ceremony, Gary had the honor of reading over 200 names of our Confederate Georgia ancestors who died there. They have not been forgotten.

The placement of the sign also marked the end of a quest which took over 10 years for Gary to research and prove the location of Camp Van Dorn. There were many steps in the process in working with state officials, historians, newspaper editors and others with various interest in the camp. Also, before the sign could be placed the money to make the sign had to be obtained from donors by a certain deadline. Nothing "just happens". Gary kept after this project until it was completed and because of that , what was found will not be lost. To the donors and Gary, Thank You !

Directions to Camp Van Dorn

In downtown Knoxville on I-40, take the Western Avenue Exit (West) and go about two miles. At the *Knoxville Sentinel* newspaper complex, go Left at the street by the same name. The marker is on the corner.

Civil War Battlefields Saved

The Civil War Preservation Trust has reported that 1,255 acres of battlefields were saved in 2006. Of those acres some were located on battlefields that our ancestors fought on. The saved acres included 54 acres at Perryville, Kentucky ; 58.12 acres at Champion Hill, Mississippi; 299.45 acres at Bentonville, North Carolina .

To put this into some perspective, 40 acres would be a piece of land that was 1/4 mile on each side,if the piece was a perfect square. 320 acres would be a rectangle that was one mile on the long side and 1/2 mile on the short side.

Ten Most Dangered Sites

The Civil War Preservation Trust has also announced their 10 most endangered sites for 2007. The sites are in danger of becoming shopping centers, housing developments, parking lots, condos and other development.

Making the list were Marietta, Georgia and Spring Hill, Tennessee. Last year we saw some of the land in danger at Spring Hill. The land would be north of Rippavilla Plantation and southeast of Spring Hill. A shopping center where two highways intersect is planned. It is also the location of fighting in the battle of Spring Hill in 1864.

Confederate Month Proposal

Member Kay Borden sent many of our members an e-mail which reported that a Confederate heritage month has been proposed in the Georgia Senate. The bill would make April the Confederate History and Heritage Month to honor the memory of the southern Confederacy.

The Senate Rules Committee moved the plan on to the full Senate for consideration by unanimous vote. This came at the same time legislative leaders were cool to a push by some to apologize for the state's role in slavery.

Some Things Never Change

One of my mother's half brothers sent me a quote which he found. He is a former Navy fighter pilot and somehow he came upon it. I thought you might like to read it and ponder.

"It appears we have appointed our worst generals to command forces, and our most gifted and brilliant to edit newspapers ! In fact, I discovered by reading newspapers that these editors/geniuses plainly saw all my strategic defects from the start, yet failed to inform me until it was too late. Accordingly, I'm readily willing to yield my command to these obviously superior intellects, and I'll, in turn, do my best for the Cause by writing editorials - after the fact."

Robert E. Lee, 1863

Family Connections

Just this month our members Ed Combs, Forest Park, Georgia ,and David Richardson of Haworth , Oklahoma have discovered that they are cousins of some sort. I am not qualified to sort all this out as to the genealogy that is involved. I can give you the fragments of how this came together, though our association with the General Barton and Stovall's History/Heritage Association.

Ed and I discovered that his grandfather, Thomas Jackson Combs (Pvt Co. F, 40th Georgia) and my grandfather, son of Robert C. Griggs (Pvt Co.B, 41st Georgia) are buried in the same rural cemetery in Hopkins County, Texas. I found a picture of my grandmother seated next to a Combs woman in a group picture that was taken in Texas about 1908, in Hopkins County, Texas. Both families had moved to the same county from Alabama. We think they must have known each other.

David Richardson has an ancestor John T. Banister, (CSA Veteran) who was a blacksmith in Saltillo, Hopkins County, Texas. He died in Mt. Vernon which is a few miles down the road.

Thomas J. Combs (Pvt CoF, 40th Georgia) and Seaborn House (Pvt Co. F, 40th Georgia) served together in the same company and regiment. Seaborn House had a daughter who married Thomas J. Combs on June 6, 1870. Seaborn House is buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Hopkins Co. Texas near the Griggs plot. His daughter was married in Paulding Co, Georgia, the same county where my great grandfather located after the Civil War.

Ed Combs has a first cousin once removed, who married a Lewis Valton Banister in Hopkins County, Texas. (A first cousin once removed is the son or daughter of a first cousin) This marriage connected the Combs family to the Banister family that is in David Richardson's ancestry.

Ed reports that Ruby Combs Banister is the granddaughter of Thomas Jackson Combs (Pvt C.F 40th Georgia) and g-granddaughter of Seaborn House (Pvt Co F, 40th Georgia).

The general trace of the family movement is from Paulding, Co. Georgia to Alabama, near Winston, Alabama to Hopkins County, Texas.

Another relationship is that David Richardson's ancestor in Co. B, 41st Georgia wrote letters on behalf of William Green Griggs, Co.B, 41st Georgia, in 1912 so he could receive his Confederate Pension paid by the state of Louisiana. The pension was finally awarded in 1926.

I do think it is amazing that the sons of the 40th and 41st Georgia veterans moved to Alabama and then the families moved on to the same county in East Texas. Also, it is amazing to me that 145 years later the descendants are piecing together the connections trying to understand what happened through the years.

143rd Anniversary Battle of Resaca

A re-enactment will be held on May 18-20, 2007 on the site of the Battle of Resaca. Recall that the 42nd Georgia and 43rd Georgia suffered heavy losses in the main attack on the CSA right flank. The battle begins at 2:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday. Adults \$5.00. For more details go to www.georgiadivision.org. If you go, remember that the real battle was largely fought in thick woods and it was more confused than forces facing each other in grassy fields.

Officer Nomination

Through this medium, I want to announce that I will run for reelection as President for the coming three year term of 2008-2010. It has been my pleasure and honor to serve you during the past three years and I look forward to the opportunity to do so again.

I have several agendas in mind , and one of them is on paper in draft form, for tours we might take in the next three year period. In a sense I believe we are all blazing the trail for other generations and other descendants to follow. I would like to lead the effort and

coordinate our energies between the actual tours at our Congress locations. Seeing the ground in person, with others who care about the same thing, is a powerful experience because we have shared roots in history.

South Carolina Bridges

Our ancestors fought three battles in South Carolina. In a future Congress I would like to visit Edisto Railroad Bridge (Feb 7, 1865); Binnaker's Bridge (Feb 9, 1865) and Orangeburg (Feb 12, 1865). I know where the bridge is in Orangeburg that they defended. I do not know the exact locations of the other two bridges. It is believed that they are downstream from Orangeburg on the Edisto River.

This month I have written to four South Carolina agencies that might have more details on the bridge locations and what happened there. I wrote the same letter to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, the Department of History at The Citadel, The Confederate Relic Room and Museum and the South Carolina Department of Transportation, District 7.

The idea involving the Department of Transportation was that all highway departments keep an inventory of bridges for inspection and replacement. The name might still be attached to the bridge even if the bridge has been replaced. On April 10 I got an e-mail answer from the District Engineering Administrator of District 7, which includes Orangeburg. She pointed out that history details was not what she did, but she would forward my inquiry to another in state government that might know. Great ! She could have let the matter drop. I learned that bridges in South Carolina are assigned a number and records of names are not kept.

As many of you know research has many frustrations and some moments of joy. Other research about the bridges tells that the Yankee army , commanded by General Sherman, was marching for Columbia. Heavy rains had flooded the rivers and the rivers could only be crossed at bridge locations. The CSA forces were trying to keep the Union forces on the south side of the Edisto River. If the Union troops tried to cross to the north side, the bridges were defended. A number of bridge names appear in Union records, but not the exact location. One really needs an 1865 map showing the bridges and their names to follow the action.

Bridges were prepared for destruction by placing large bundles of dry wood under the wooden bridges. When the enemy approached, a few men would light the dry wood on fire to burn the bridge while the other soldiers covered the bridge approaches by cannon and rifle fire. The defending CSA forces had the advantage and could hold off larger enemy forces from crossing the river. As it turned out, the Yankees were unable to cross and they had to go to Columbia using limited roads on the south side of the Edisto River.

They made 12 miles of road per day by cutting trees and laying the trunks crossways on the road bed to prevent wagons and cannon from sinking in the mud. That is a lot of chopping on trees and dragging them to the road. It was a tremendous effort to get the

men and wagons to Columbia.

I'll certainly let you know if anything turns up. If any of you out there know the locations of the bridges, please tell me. Once the locations are known local historical societies and libraries can be contacted to see if they have local details on the battle.

That is it for this month. The next Newsletter will be out about May 15.

Mike Griggs
President