



THE UNIONIST

The Official Newsletter of the
Department of Texas and Louisiana
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR



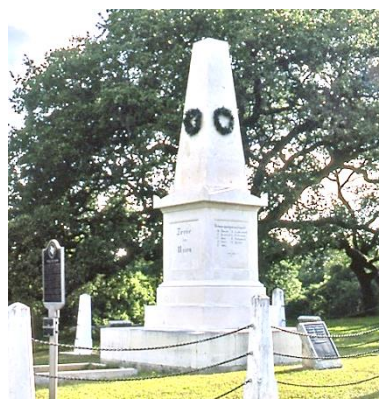
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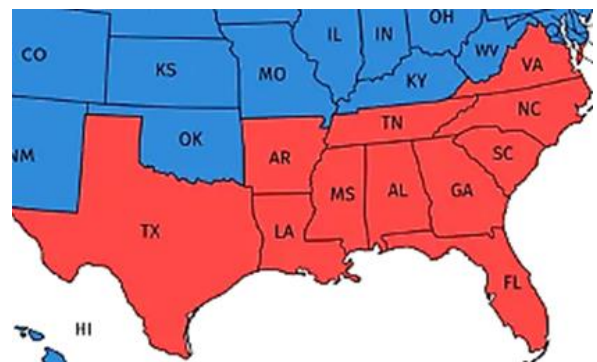
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Cover Image - "*The First Minnesota*" - Gettysburg, Pennsylvania -- July 2, 1863. *Art by Don Troiani*

Department of Texas and Louisiana

Thursday August 1 - Sunday, August 5, 2024 - Lexington, Kentucky

The 143rd National Encampment of the *Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War* was held at the Campbell House in Lexington, Kentucky on August 1 through August 5, 2024. Delegations from twenty-nine Departments from across the country gathered to conduct the business of the Order – *and to have a great time!*

The *Department of Texas and Louisiana* was well represented at the Encampment, as eleven Brothers traveled either by air or auto to Kentucky. Sister Jill Schneider of the *Sarah Emma Seelye Auxiliary No. 1* also attended.



Delegation from Texas and Louisiana poses before the Departmental flags

Back Row L-R: Timothy M. Phillips, Dept. Cmdr. Camp 1; Michael L. Lance, PDC, Camp 2; Robert G. Riley, Camp 2 Webmaster; John E. Schneider, Sr., PDC, Camp 18; and William L. Swafford, Camp 18.

Mid row L-R: Daniel B. Pourreau, SVC Camp 2; Larry Joe Reynolds, Dept. Webmaster Camp 5; Stephen D. Schulze, PDC, Secr./Treas. Camp 2; and John C. Vander Meulen, Dept. JVC, Cmdr. Camp 2.

Kneeling: William M. Elliott, Secr./Treas. Camp 5; and Donald L. Gates, PDC, Dept and Camp 18 Secr./Treas.

The Encampment was successfully hosted by the *Department of Kentucky*, which provided nice accommodations and a smooth-running program for the 208 attending delegates. For the *Department of Texas and Louisiana*, the event was highlighted by the appointment of two of our Delegation to National offices, the unexpected granting of the *Marshall Hope Award* for 'Best Camp Newsletter' to the *Harriet Lane*, the newsletter of Camp 2 (for the 3rd consecutive year); an entertaining Campfire event with live performers; and the election of Kevin L. Martin of the *Dept. of the Chesapeake* as Commander-in-Chief for the 2024-2025 term.

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Department of Texas and Louisiana *(continued)*



Dynamic Duo!

PDC John E. Schneider, Sr., and his wife, Jill. She represented our Department in the *Auxiliary Encampment* meetings as a Sister of the *Sarah Emma Seelye Auxiliary*



Webmasters Gather for a photo!

L-R: Larry Joe Reynolds - Department Webmaster
Robert Payne - National Webmaster
Robert G. Riley - Camp 2 Webmaster



National Officer Appointees

Michael L. Lance as
Ass't Nat'l Secr. (Proceedings) Aide
John C. Vander Meulen as
Ass't Nat'l Secr. (Proceedings)



Another Dynamic Duo!

2024-2025 Commander-in-Chief
Kevin L. Martin, and
2024-2025 Aux. National President
Rosemary Martin, his wife



Marshall Hope Award

Presented to
Michael L. Lance, Editor
by
CinC Peter Hritsko

... report submitted by Michael L. Lance, PDC/PCC – Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp 2 – Houston, Texas

Gen. James J. Byrne Camp #1 – Fort Worth

Saturday, 10 Aug 2024 – Comfort, Texas

Department Camp Organizer Blair Rudy of *Col. Elmer Ellsworth Camp 18* of Dallas, was informed of the Commemoration Ceremony scheduled to take place at the *Treue der Union Monument* in Comfort, Texas. He requested permission to represent the *SUVCW* at the event, and to make some appropriate remarks. He, in turn, put out the word to the Department. But since most of the more active members were just returning from the National Encampment in Kentucky, I was the only one available to attend the event in Comfort with Brother Rudy.

About forty non-*SUVCW* people did attend, with a wide variety of ages represented. A descendant of one of those buried under the monument conducted the ceremony and read the names of those killed in the incident (*see following two stories*).

Right L-R: Timothy M. Phillips, bugler Jay Baker, and Blair Rudy in front of the Treue der Union Monument



I was gratified to see so many people from such a small town in attendance. This was an important event during the Civil War, yet I do not recall it ever being mentioned at any level in my schooling. It is fascinating to see that the war was not fought exclusively around the real or philosophical *Mason-Dixon Line*, but sometimes between neighbors far from active battle fronts.

I recently learned that many of the German immigrants lying under the stone had come to the Texas hinterland to escape political upheaval in the old country - upheaval due in no small part to a new philosophy promoted by a certain Karl Marx. The pro-Union militias in the Hill Country of Texas were not uniformly quiet political cliques gathering in the local bier keller - some were armed and engaged in occasional harassment of Confederate authorities. The apparent need to totally exterminate the Texas Unionists also seems to point out a strong component of hatred during the American Civil War.

Anyway, those are a few thoughts that rattled around in my head after the event. Those and the fact that I feel strongly that we need a stronger presence at this annual event in the future. Doing so clearly falls under our charge to tell the true story of the Civil War.



... submitted by Timothy M. Phillips, DC/PCC - Gen. James J. Byrne Camp 1 - Fort Worth, Texas.



Ernst Cramer

Three days after the attack on August 10, 1862, Ernst Cramer returned to the battlefield near the Nueces River to search for his wounded friends. Nineteen dead German Americans, bloated, blackened, and putrid in the unrelenting west Texas heat lay naked in a heap near the freshly-dug graves of Confederate soldiers. Entering a nearby cedar brake, Cramer recoiled at another gruesome sight. Nine wounded comrades had been dragged into a line and executed with a shot to the forehead, their bodies subsequently riddled with dozens of bullets. Cramer and a handful of survivors crept away from the macabre scene knowing that their ordeal as fugitives from the Confederacy had only just begun.

... source: Online posting by David T. Dixon at <http://emergingcivilwar.com>, 2021

The Nueces River Massacre

The Texas Hill Country, near the center of the state, was a hotbed of unrest after Texas seceded from the Union in March 1861. The Unionists living there, those loyal to the Union cause, were increasingly at odds with Confederate forces and sympathizers who sought to consolidate control over the state. Among these Union loyalists was a sizable population of German immigrants, many of whom had settled in Texas in the 1840s and 1850s. Most of these immigrants had a strong sense of loyalty to their adopted country, and were anti-slavery - putting them at odds with the Texas Confederate officials.

In August 1862, a group of about sixty of those Hill County Unionists, mostly of German descent, traveled southwest towards Mexico in hopes of escaping unbearable conditions. These men, led by Fritz Tegener, a former Union Army officer, were seeking refuge from Confederate military pressure and conscription drives. After six days of travel, any hopes the group, known as the "Nueces Expedition," had of safely reaching Mexico, came to an abrupt and violent end.

Confederate forces, having received intelligence about the Unionist group's movements, had set out to intercept and confront them. This led to a violent clash at a German campsite along the Nueces River. The Confederates, led by Maj. James Duff, were well-equipped and prepared for battle. When the Unionists were cornered at their campsite, they were heavily outnumbered and quickly overpowered. The brief encounter, initially a small battle, rapidly devolved into a massacre.

The aftermath of the confrontation was grim. The Confederates did not offer quarter to survivors, executing the wounded Unionists. Several others who fled the scene were chased down by the Confederate cavalry and killed near the Rio Grande. The dead were left unburied in the hot Texas sun.

A few Unionists did manage to escape the carnage by hiding, and at least one of them made it to Mexico. He then traveled by ship to New Orleans to join the Union army. After the war, on August 1, 1865, this survivor led a group from Comfort, Texas to the site of the massacre to retrieve the sun-bleached bones of their friends and loved ones. The remains were gathered up, except for those who drowned in the Rio Grande, and transported to Comfort to be buried together in a single grave.

Right: Treüe der Union Monument

On August 10, 1866, the citizens of Comfort erected a German-language limestone monument at the gravesite with the names of all who had been killed during the skirmish, drowned, executed, or hanged afterwards - proclaiming them "Treüe der Union" (*True to the Union*).

The massacre left a deep scar on some Central Texas communities, particularly among the German-American population, who were both shocked and outraged by the brutality of the event. The Nueces River Massacre remains a poignant reminder of the Civil War's harsh realities and the extreme measures sometimes taken during the conflict. It underscores the numerous personal and communal tragedies that were often overshadowed by the grander narratives of the Civil War.



... submitted by Michael L. Lance, PDC/PCC – Lt. Edward Lea Camp 2 - Houston, Texas

Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp #2 - Houston

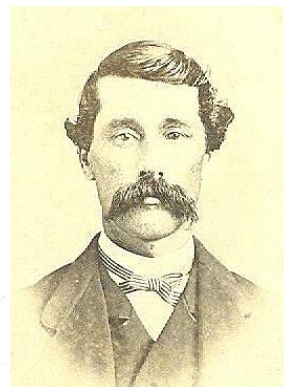
Grave Marker Project - Houston, Texas

Since the name of Civil War veteran, Captain Mahlon E. Davis, is already inscribed on an existing gravestone in Glenwood Cemetery in Houston Heights, a new military-style headstone could not be obtained. In order to recognize Davis's service with the Union Army during the Civil War, the *Lea Camp* joined a project to obtain a separate horizontal marker for his gravesite. Permission to place a new marker was obtained from the cemetery management in May 2023, and the Camp approved the funding needed to procure a descriptive horizontal granite stone - which was ordered from *Schlitzberger and Daughters Monument Company*.

In February 2024, Brother Herb Powers volunteered to coordinate the Camp's efforts on the project. He followed the production and delivery of the new marker, and finally its placement at the Davis gravesite by Glenwood Cemetery staff in August, 2024. So, who was Mahlon E. Davis?

Mahlon E. Davis was born in Walden, Vermont on November 23, 1834, the 5th of 7 children born to Jacob and Sally (Nye) Davis. When the Federal Census was taken in 1850, Mahlon was enumerated as a 15-year-old farmer living in East Montpelier, Vermont - 21 miles due southwest of his birthplace. Ten years later in 1860, he was on his own, employed as a machinist, and recently married. Jane L. Smith became his wife on June 12, 1860 and the couple was living about 65 miles further south in the town of Lebanon, New Hampshire.

The Civil War, however, soon interrupted the domestic life of the newlyweds. On October 8, 1861, Mahlon enlisted as a Private in the Union Army. He was assigned to *Co. C, 7th New Hampshire Infantry*. A year later, on October 16, 1862, he was promoted to Corporal. It seems his time with the *7th New Hampshire* was only the first chapter in Mahlon's military career.



Mahlon E. Davis

The following year, on June 5, 1863, Corporal Davis mustered out - but a week later, on June 13, 1863, he was promoted to the rank of Captain. He mustered back into the Army the following day at Hilton Head, South Carolina for a 3-year term. He would now serve as a Captain with *Co. A, 4th South Carolina Infantry*. In March 1864, the *4th South Carolina* was redesignated as the *21st U.S. Colored Infantry*.

Captain Davis was appointed as a Recruiting Officer for the *District of Florida* by Col. Milton S. Littlefield. His initial assignment was in Fernandina, Florida. He pursued this new assignment following a 30-day leave to visit his family in Vermont. By December 1864, Davis was back on duty in Jacksonville, Florida.

On March 17, 1865, Davis was ordered to conclude his Florida operations and board a steamer with all his recruits and return to South Carolina. He would then command *Co. A* of the *21st Infantry, U.S.C.T.* On April 25, 1866, Davis mustered out of the Army at Charleston, South Carolina as a Captain.

Mahlon Davis and his wife, Jane, migrated to Texas and set up housekeeping in Houston's 3rd Ward. They eventually became the parents of at least five children. The 1870 Federal Census found Mahlon serving as a city Marshall in Houston, and the 1880 census listed him as an unemployed farmer.



Left: New horizontal granite grave marker

On December 10, 1885, Mahlon E. Davis passed away in Hockley, Texas at age 51. He was buried in Glenwood Cemetery in Houston. The *Lea Camp* is planning to conduct a graveside ceremony there to honor him in the Fall of 2024.



... submitted by Herbert W. Powers, Jr. - Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp 2 - Houston, Texas

Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey Camp #5 - Shreveport

Headstone Cleaning, 26 Aug 2024 – Marshall, Louisiana

The gravesite of a Union Civil War soldier was recently ‘discovered’ in Greenwood Cemetery in Marshall, Texas. The headstone was badly in need of care – covered with black mold and other stains from the ravages of time.

Members of *Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey Camp 5* of Shreveport took immediate action to correct the situation. They began the cleaning/restoration process by applying a heavy coat of D2 to the headstone on August 26th.

The federal soldier buried beneath the headstone is George W. Rake, a 31-year-old married tailor who enlisted as a Private from Aurora, Kane Co., Illinois in August 1862. He was assigned to *Co. H, 124th Illinois Infantry* for a 3-year term, mustering into service at Camp Douglas, Illinois on September 10, 1862.

Pvt. Rake is described as standing 5’ 5” tall, with black hair, blue eyes and a dark complexion. He was born February 26, 1831 in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, and his wife was Hannah.

During the war, Pvt. Rake was promoted to Corporal and he served until the end of the conflict, mustering out on August 15, 1865. After the war, he married a 2nd time, to Phoebe Ann Gardner-Slater. Rake died March 29, 1890 at age 59.

On November 11, 1890, Rake’s 1st wife, Hannah, applied for a military pension based on his Civil War service. His 2nd wife, Phoebe Ann, is buried beside him in Greenwood Cemetery.



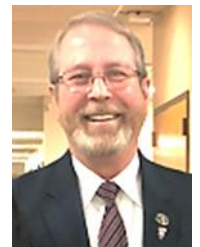
Headstone of Cpl. George W. Rake – before.



Here is a photo from today showing the initial effect of the D2 application. In the next few weeks, I will check on it regularly and spray it down again as necessary.

Left: Headstone of Cpl. George W. Rake – during.

For the next issue of the *Unionist*, I plan to have updated photos showing the progress of the cleaning after the D2 has had time to work. Maintaining the appearance and dignity of the final resting places of our Union veterans is an important aspect of honoring their memory.



... submitted by William 'Bill' Elliott, Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey Camp 5 – Shreveport, Louisiana

Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth Camp #18 - Dallas

Sunday, 28 Jul 2024 – Flower Mound, Texas

I had the pleasure of presenting a *Sons of Union Veterans Eagle Scout Certificate* and patch at the Flower Mound Recreation Center at 3 p.m. on July 28th. The recipient was Eagle Scout Brandon Botyos, Troop 99 of Lantana, Texas. This presentation at his *Court of Honor* was a truly special event for the Scout and his family.

Right: John E. Schneider congratulates Eagle Scout Award recipient Brandon Botyos



"What an honor! Thank you for the wonderful letter, patch, and certificate. I can't thank you enough for making Brandon's day so special. Brandon plans to seek a commission to the Army after college." (Scout's mother, Holly Botyos).



SUVCW Eagle Scout patch

... submitted by John E. Schneider, Sr., PDC/PCC - Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth Camp 18 - Dallas, Texas

SUVCW Eagle Scout Award

One of the many goals and purposes of the *Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War [SUVCW]* is to recognize those who achieved the status of Eagle Scout. By attaining Eagle Scout status, the Scout has demonstrated his attainment of the skills necessary for good citizenship and leadership. The *SUVCW* will present him with a special congratulatory letter and a color *Certificate of Commendation*, suitable for framing. We offer this desirable award with no "strings attached" - other than the recipient must be an Eagle Scout.



Every *Eagle Scout Court of Honor* observes a very proud tradition that the *SUVCW* is pleased to recognize – *Patriotism*. We celebrate *Patriotism* to honor the memory of the men of the *Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)*. The *GAR* consisted of over 400,000 Union Army and Naval Veterans who served to protect the integrity of our nation between 1861 and 1865. Those veterans were living symbols of *Patriotism* when the *Boy Scouts of America* was formed in 1910.

Before the death of the last *GAR* member on August 2, 1956, that organization officially recognized the *Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War* as their Legal Heir. As such, it is our honor to maintain the many traditions of the *GAR*. These traditions include the promotion of good citizenship by teaching not only *Patriotism*, but also our civic duties and the love and honor of our Country's flag - concepts that are also "near and dear" to the *Boy Scouts of America*.

When possible, every effort should be made by a local *SUVCW* Camp member to attend a nearby *Eagle Scout Court of Honor* to personally present the award to an outstanding Scout - preferably while wearing the civilian uniform of our Order or a replica Civil War uniform. Information about ordering an *SUVCW Eagle Scout Recognition Award* can be found on the National website: www.SUVCW.org/eagle-scout-recognition.

Ancestor Profile – Pvt. William Riley Phillips

My membership in the *Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War* was facilitated by my great-grandfather, William Riley Phillips. He was born in Henderson Co., Tennessee on June 27, 1840. His parents were Isaac and Sarah Phillips of Chatham Co., North Carolina. The Phillips family counted three daughters and three sons, with William as the youngest.

Right: Photo of me kneeling by the grave of my great-great-grandfather, Isaac Phillips, near the site of Jack's Creek Baptist Church, Tennessee.

William and his eldest brother, Elias Canada Phillips (b. 1819) made their way to Bethel, Tennessee, where they enrolled in the *1st West Tennessee Cavalry* on August 25, 1862, to serve a 3-year term. The company descriptive book lists him as being 5' 8" tall, with black eyes, dark hair, and a dark complexion. The *1st West Tennessee* was later reorganized as the *6th Tennessee Cavalry*, with both Phillips brothers assigned to *Co. B*. The regimental commander was Col. Fielding Hurst, a vociferous Unionist and slave holder. *Go figure!*

A book, "Hurst's Wurst", has been published about the *6th Tennessee Cavalry*. It seems the regiment was used mostly to disrupt Confederate conscription and foraging, primarily done by Nathan Bedford Forrest. Col. Hurst also reportedly used the regiment to settle scores with the legions he antagonized prior to the war. His execution of prisoners and extortion activities earned him the personal enmity of Forrest, who informed the Feds that any *6th* troopers falling into his hands would not be treated as prisoners of war. The *6th* was described as "raw and undisciplined" by one high-ranking officer and it reached the point where Gen. Grant threatened to disarm them. At length, their horses were taken from them and sent to units that would make good use of them.



Left: William R. Phillips – ca. 1890

Great-grandpa mustered out on July 26, 1865 at Pulaski, Tennessee. His brother, Elias, had already deserted. William married Sarah Louise Veteto later that year and is listed as a farmer living in Civil District 11, Henderson Co., Tennessee. They moved to Texas about 1883, settling in a dugout on a farm they bought northwest of Merkel, roughly 20 miles west of Abilene. He died in the barn on March 5, 1896.



Grave marker of Sarah and William Phillips

An old dude who visited my great-grandma's house in later years recalled running home to tell his mother, "Mrs. Phillips has a picture of old Abe Lincoln on the wall!" He was admonished to keep quiet about it: "They're Yankees."

I had an uncle, Sinclair Phillips, who was born out there in 1894. His mother died in his infancy, and he was raised by his grandmother. He told me that sometime during his years with her he once asked, "Momma, how come you to marry Papa with him being a Yankee?" She answered, "Because he was a good man."

... submitted by great-grandson, Dept. Cmdr. Timothy M. Phillips
Gen. James J. Byrne Camp 1 - Fort Worth, Texas



Department Patriotic Instructor's Message

I spent many years collecting money for the *Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)* during Labor Day weekends. Along with other volunteers from *Local 906* of the *International Association of Fire Fighters*, I spent many long hours conducting *Fill the Boot* duties at our local Wal-Mart and at our local grocery stores in Marshall - often sweating it out in the Sparky suit (see photo below).



Many of our kids and wives also generously helped with the fundraising efforts, with the wives 'manning' the local phone banks. We worked hard to raise money for a great cause, and then delivered the resulting proceeds to Shreveport for presentation.

We all volunteered in order to help do our part to help those in need. This was back in the 'We' days. Unfortunately, we now seem to be in the 'Me' days! Contrary to popular belief, Labor Day is not just the last holiday of the summer to go to the lake. It is a day – *and weekend* – that means much more.

So, what does this have to do with a Patriotic Instructors report, you might ask?

Well, to me it means we all need to spread the word about how blessed we are to live in this great country. We should celebrate our freedoms and the opportunities they provide. After all, this freedom was not free. Thousands upon thousands of our hero Patriots gave their lives to ensure that we have the liberty to enjoy the fruits of our labor.

Right: Vintage photo of yours truly as 'Sparky' – with my wife Karen, and daughters Mandi & Crystal.

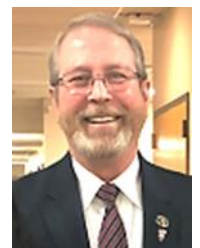
In this confused world we now live in, it becomes even more important to give thanks for our privilege and ability to work hard - and to then enjoy the results of our efforts. And to answer the Good Lord's request that we help the fallen and downtrodden, and to support the needs of his church. We are blessed, and we need to share our blessing with others whenever possible.



As we are now in the countdown to the upcoming National elections, we need to do our part by becoming informed and educated voters. We need to remind ourselves, and our friends, that many heroes died to defend our right to vote. It is too important to our future to not cast your choice this November.

Happy Labor Day!

Enjoy and be thankful for the fruits of your hard labor - *while remembering the blessing you have received as a citizen of this great country!*



... submitted by Dept. PI, William M. 'Bill' Elliott - Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey Camp 5 - Shreveport, Louisiana

Department Chaplain's Corner

I saw the following quote on Facebook. National Chaplain Jerry had commented on it. I have been unable to identify the author (Uplift Me) on the internet so that I could give him/her the proper attribution. It seems a lot of people use "uplift me" for a lot of different reasons, from bible verses to travel agents.

*Faith doesn't always take you out
of the problem, Faith takes you
through the problem.*

*Faith doesn't always take away
the pain, Faith gives you the
ability to handle the pain.*

*Faith doesn't always take
you out of the storm, Faith calms
you in the midst of the storm.*

Amen!

Uplift Me

Anyway, I found the message to be thought provoking. I hope you do too!

*... submitted by Dept. Chaplain Stephen D. Schulze
Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp 2 – Houston, Texas*

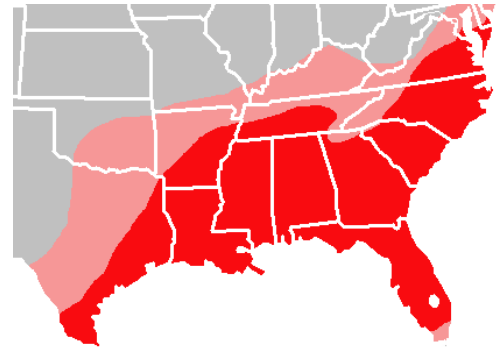


Texas – A Border State?

In 1860, discord and dissension, both political and physical, were rampant across the nation. This unbridled discontent also infected the young state of Texas, which had entered the Union only fifteen years earlier. Deep in the south, the Lone Star state anchored the western flank of the emerging Confederacy. Settled largely by immigrants from other southern states, the Texas economy was largely driven by 'King Cotton' and, as a consequence, slave labor.

The Cotton Belt (in red) reaches Texas

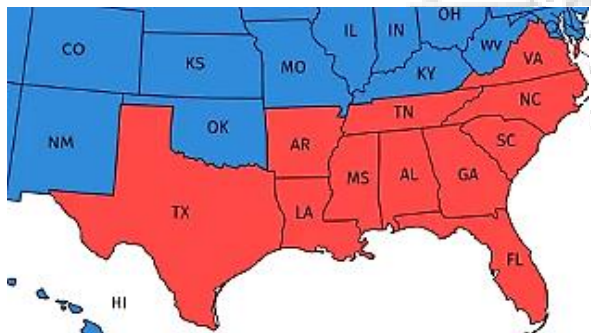
In the years leading up to the Civil War, migrants arriving in North Texas came mostly from the upper Southern states and the states of the old Northwest, such as Illinois and Iowa. Further south, the Gulf Coast ports at Galveston and Indianola were the primary entry points for settlers arriving from the lower southern states. In addition, a large number of foreigners - especially Germans, seeking freedom and opportunity, also entered the state during the late 1840s and 1850s.



As the pioneering settlers migrated westward into the Hill Country of central Texas, their progress was impeded by the real and constant threat of attack by Comanche and Kiowa raiders. That danger, along with the lack of wood and reliable water sources on the western Texas plains, caused migration to halt near the center of the state. To protect the new western-most settlements, the U.S. Army erected over a dozen forts on a north-to-south line through the heart of Texas. This line basically marked the 'boundary of civilization' in the Lone Star state - which remained static during the 1850's.

By 1860, approximately one in four families in Texas owned slaves, mostly in the eastern section of the state. But even though the slave-holders were in the minority, most Texans perceived that slavery was vital for their prosperity.

On March 2, 1861, Texas formally seceded from the Union to become the 7th of the eleven *Confederate States of America*. But not all Texans supported the decision to secede, including Governor Sam Houston. He refused to take an *Oath of Allegiance* to the new Confederate government, a decision which drove him from office.

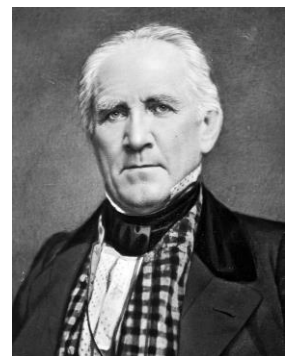


Left: Confederate States of America (in red)

The Governor was not alone in his opposition to leaving the Union. A large segment of the German population who had settled thriving towns in rugged Central Texas, such as Comfort, Fredericksburg, and Boerne, were also strongly opposed to separation from the Union. They wanted no part with fighting against their adopted country – and many risked life and limb to avoid conscription into the Confederate army.

Gov. Sam Houston

Nearly 2,000 men from Texas eventually felt compelled to join the Union forces during the Civil War - risking reprisals and animosity from friends and neighbors. Many others were coerced, intimidated, or physically forced into enlisting with the Confederate army, while quietly harboring plans to desert at the first opportunity - *to join up with the Union forces*.



The Lone Star state contributed two regiments of Cavalry to the Union cause. The larger of the two was the 1st Texas

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Texas – A Border State? *(continued)*

Cavalry Regiment (not to be confused with the Confederate 1st Texas Cavalry, also known as McCulloch's Texas Cavalry, which was mustered into service in April 1861.) The 1st Texas Cavalry, U.S. consisted of a high percentage of Spanish-speaking Texans and first-generation immigrants, primarily German Unionists from the Hill Country. They were led by mostly mainstream southern officers. The regiment was organized at New Orleans, Louisiana in November 1862 and consisted of 8 companies. In command was Gen. Edmund J. Davis, a strong supporter of Gov. Sam Houston's stand against secession.

Brig. Gen. Edmund J. Davis

The *First Texas Cavalry (U.S.)* was assigned to the defense of New Orleans until September 1863. Months earlier, two companies of the regiment had been sent to Galveston, but they were not able to land due to the Confederate re-capture of that Island city during the *Battle of Galveston* on New Year's Day 1863. In May 1863, the regiment saw its first battle action on the Amite River and participated in operations around Morgan City in far south Louisiana.

In September 1863, the *First Texas Cavalry* sailed from New Orleans as part of the *Sabine Pass* expedition along the border between Louisiana and Texas. They saw no action during that encounter due to the humiliating repulse of the Union warships and troop transports by a miniscule Confederate defense force.

Returning to Louisiana, the regiment was then engaged in the *Western Louisiana Campaign* from October 3 through October 17, 1863. After that deployment ended, the regiment was moved back to New Orleans - but then was redeployed less than a week later. On Oct. 23, they were sent by ship to participate in the *Rio Grande expedition* in south Texas.

Left: Pvt. Herman Jonas, Co. C, 1st Texas Cavalry, (U.S.)

Sixteen officers and 205 enlisted men of the 1st Texas Cavalry (U.S.) at landed Brazos Santiago on the south Texas coast on November 2 and managed to occupy Brownsville 4 days later. The force's strength grew during the following month at Brownsville, leading to the formation of a second regiment – the 2nd Texas Cavalry Regiment (U.S.). In July 1864, both regiments left Texas for Louisiana, leaving 2 companies of the 1st Texas Cavalry behind at Brownsville.

Unidentified Union officer of the 1st Texas Cavalry, U.S. - with thigh-high riding boots and cavalry saber.

In September 1864 the 1st Texas Cavalry was involved in some minor actions near Morganza, Louisiana – about 40 miles northwest of Baton Rouge. Then, on November 1, 1864, the two Texas Cavalry regiments were merged into one oversized 12-company regiment – the 1st Texas Vol. Cavalry (U.S.). The 1st Texas Volunteers were deployed to Baton Rouge on November 19, 1864, and were engaged in patrolling and reconnaissance duties until the end of the war. On June 29, 1865, the regiment was ordered back to Texas and mustered out on November 4, 1865.

... submitted by Michael L. Lance, PDC/PCC – Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea Camp 2, Houston, Texas



Civil War Medal of Honor Recipients - U.S. Army (Part 11)

The *Medal of Honor* is the USA's highest military honor, awarded for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty. It was first awarded during the Civil War after President Lincoln signed a bill on December 21, 1861, containing a provision for the medal for the Navy. It was "to be bestowed upon such petty officers, seamen, landsmen, and Marines as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry and other seamanlike qualities during the present war."

Right - U.S. Army version of the Medal of Honor

This issue of the *Unionist* presents Part 11 of a comprehensive review of recipients of the *Medal of Honor* who served with the U.S. Army during the Civil War – with a brief description of their heroic actions and the wording of their citation.



- **Terrence Begley - Sgt.** - Terrence Begley was born in Ireland in 1844 and later emigrated to the United States, settling in New York. In February 1864, at age 20, he enlisted with the Union Army from Albany, New York, serving as a Private with *Co. D, 7th Reg't New York Heavy Artillery* - eventually attaining the rank of Sergeant. Civil War records describe Begley as 5' 7" tall with grey eyes and reddish hair. His occupation was listed as 'clerk'.

In August 1864, Begley was killed in action during the *Second Battle of Ream's Station* at Reams Station, Virginia - just two months after his actions that led to his *Medal of Honor* award. In 2021, a cenotaph was placed in his honor at Albany Rural Cemetery in Menands, New York. His *Medal of Honor* citation states:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pride in presenting the Medal of Honor (Posthumously) to Sergeant Terrence Begley, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 3 June 1864, while serving with Company D, 7th New York Heavy Artillery, in action at Cold Harbor, Virginia. Sergeant Begley shot a Confederate Color Bearer, rushed forward and seized his colors, and although exposed to heavy fire, regained the lines in safety.



- **Thomas Belcher - Pvt.** – Thomas Belcher was born in 1834 in Bangor, Maine. In October 1863, during the Civil War, he was 26 years old when he enlisted with the Union Army at Bangor, serving as a Private in *Co. I, 9th Reg't Maine Volunteer Infantry*. In September 1864, he was wounded and taken prisoner during battle at Chapin's Farm, Virginia. However, he was later paroled and his actions during the fighting at Chapin's Farm led to him being awarded the *Medal of Honor*. Belcher died in May 1898 at age 64 in Augusta, Maine. His *Medal of Honor* citation states:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Private Thomas Belcher, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 29 September 1864, while serving with Company I, 9th Maine Infantry, in action at Chapin's Farm, Virginia. Private Belcher took a guidon from the hands of the bearer, mortally wounded, and advanced with it nearer to the battery than any other man.

... continued on next page

Civil War Medal of Honor Recipients - U.S. Army (Part 11 continued)

- **James B. Bell - Sgt.** – James Bennett Bell was born in Branot, Ohio in August 1835. During the Civil War, he served with *Co. H, 11th Reg't Ohio Volunteer Infantry*. Bell was a recipient of the U.S. military's highest decoration, the *Medal of Honor*, for his actions during the *Battle of Missionary Ridge* at Chattanooga, Tennessee in November 1863.

In 1865, Bell married Sarah E. Vandever (*b. 1840 – d. 1896*) and they eventually became the parents of at least 5 children. James Bell died in Elkhart, Indiana in June 1910 at age 74. He was buried at Gettysburg Cemetery in Gettysburg, Ohio. His *Medal of Honor* citation states:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Sergeant James Bennett Bell, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 25 November 1863, while serving with Company H, 11th Ohio Infantry, in action at Missionary Ridge, Tennessee. Though severely wounded, Sergeant Bell was first of his regiment on the summit of the ridge, planted his colors inside the enemy's works, and did not leave the field until after he had been wounded five times.



- **George G. Benedict - Sgt.** – George Grenville Benedict was born December 10, 1826 in Burlington, Vermont. He attended the University of Vermont and graduated with honors in 1847. He went on to earn a *Master of Arts* degree in 1850. While a student, he became a member of both the *Sigma Phi Society* and *Phi Beta Kappa* honor society. On October 27, 1853, Benedict married Mary Anne Kellogg, the daughter of Edward and Abigail Frances Kellogg of New Canaan, New York.

Professionally, Benedict was editor and publisher of *The Burlington Daily Free Press* and also served as president of the *Vermont & Boston Telegraph Company* from 1859 to 1863. He also served two terms as Burlington's postmaster - 1861-1864 during the Civil War - and after the war from 1871 to 1874.

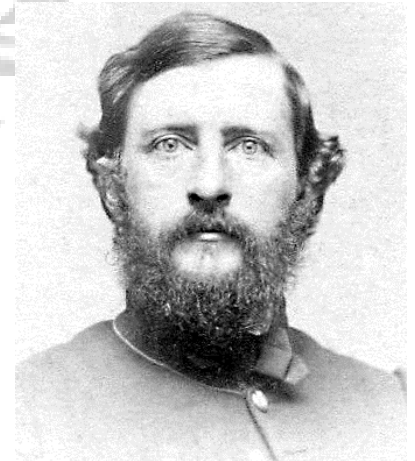
In August 1862, George Benedict enlisted as a Private with *Co. E, 12th Reg't Vermont Volunteer Infantry* at Burlington. On the 3rd day of the *Battle of Gettysburg*, he was among a group of men involved in the successful flank attack on *Pickett's Charge*, for which he gained the *Medal of Honor*.

George Grenville Benedict as a Private in the 12th Vermont Infantry

In 1863, Benedict was promoted to Lieutenant, and later appointed Aid-de-Camp on the staff of Gen. George J. Standard, commanding the *2nd Brigade of Vermont Volunteers*. By 1865, Benedict held the office of Assistant Inspector General with the rank of Major.

During his 9-month stint in the Army, Benedict wrote letters back to the newspaper, *The Burlington Daily Free Press*, for publishing. In 1866, he compiled those letters into a 2-volume work entitled: *Vermont in the Civil War: A History of the Part Taken by the Vermont Soldiers and Sailors in the War for the Union 1861-1865*.

In 1866, after the war, Benedict was appointed Aide-de-Camp to Governor Paul Dillingham with the rank of Colonel. He was also elected to serve as a member of the Vermont Senate from 1869 to 1871, and served as the Secretary of the *Corporation of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College* from 1865 to 1879. Also in 1879, he was appointed to be Military Historian of the State of Vermont by Governor Redfield Proctor.



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Civil War Medal of Honor Recipients - U.S. Army (Part 11 continued)

In 1880, George Benedict was selected as a Delegate to the Republican National Convention and was also elected to the University of Vermont Board of Trustees that year. In 1895 he published another book, entitled: *Army Life in Virginia: Letters from the Twelfth Vermont Regiment and Personal Experiences of Volunteer Service in the War for the Union 1862-1863*.



George Grenville Benedict - later in life

Benedict was a member of the *Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS)*, and the *Vermont Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR)*. In 1899, he was elected as a member of the *American Antiquarian Society*.

Colonel Benedict died April 8, 1907 in Burlington, Vermont at age 80. He is buried in Greenmount Cemetery in that city. His *Medal of Honor* citation states:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Second Lieutenant George Grenville Benedict, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 3 July 1863, while serving with Company C (Howard Guards), 12th Vermont Infantry, in action at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Second Lieutenant Benedict passed through a murderous fire of grape and canister in delivering orders and reformed the crowded lines.



- **John F. Benjamin - Cpl.** – John Francis Benjamin was born in Orange Co., New York in 1843. During the Civil War, he enlisted with the Union forces at Newburgh, New York. He served as a Corporal with Co. M, 2nd Reg't New York Volunteer Cavalry. He was awarded the *Medal of Honor* for bravery during action in the *Battle of Saylor's Creek* in Virginia on April 6, 1864.

John Benjamin died May 29, 1866 at age 22 or 23. He was buried in Saint George's Cemetery in Newburgh, New York. His *Medal of Honor* citation states:

The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Corporal John Francis Benjamin, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism on 6 April 1865, while serving with Company M, 2d New York Cavalry, in action at Deatonville (Saylor's Creek), Virginia, for capture of battle flag of 9th Virginia Infantry (Confederate States of America).



(Editor's note: the headstone shown above is copied from a Find a Grave entry for John Francis Benjamin. The inscription shows his name as 'Francis Benjamin' and Company 'A' instead of Company 'M'. An entry in the National Park Service's 'Soldiers and Sailors Database' shows John F. Benjamin served in both Companies A and M as a Corporal, with a note: 'Alternate Name: Franklin Benjamin; Francis Benjamin').

... series to be continued next issue with part 12

2024-2025 Department Officers and Media Links

Elected Officers

Department Commander	Timothy M. Phillips
Department Sr. Vice-Commander	Brook J. Thomas
Department Jr. Vice-Commander	John C. Vander Meulen (for membership info)
Department Secretary/Treasurer	Donald L. Gates
Department Council Member	Charles W. Sprague
Department Council Member	Dr. Stevenson T. Holmes
Department Council Member	Tony L. 'Bo' Vets II

Staff Officers

Dept. Patriotic Instructor	William M. 'Bill' Elliott	Dept. Organizer	Blair G. Rudy
Dept. Chaplain	Stephen D. Schulze	Dept. Signals Officer	John C. Vander Meulen
Dept. Historian	Michael L. Lance	Dept. Eagle Scout Coordinator	John E. Schneider Sr.
Dept. Civil War Mem. Off.	Charles W. Sprague	Dept. Assistant Signals Officer	Larry Joe Reynolds
Dept. Graves Registr. Off.	Terry T. Sutton	Dept. Newsletter Editor	Michael L. Lance
Dept. Counselor	John E. Schneider Sr.	Dept. Registrar	Daniel B. Pourreau

Department Website

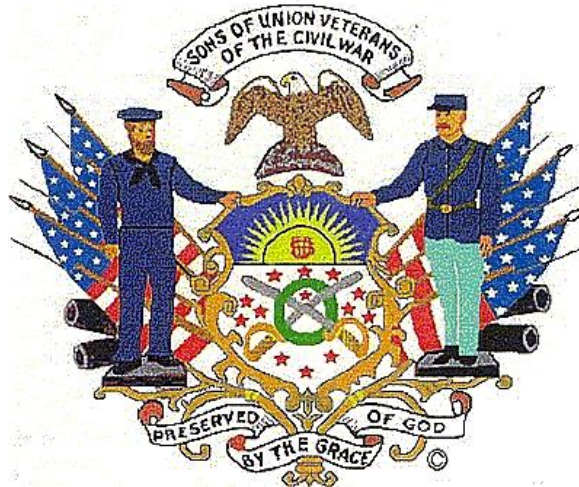
Department Facebook Page

Department Newsletter:

The Unionist newsletter is published quarterly (Feb, May, Aug, and Nov).

Send comments, articles, or photos to the Editor at:

mlance387@gmail.com



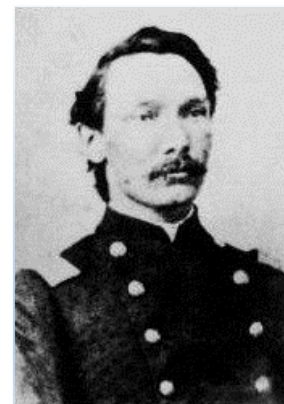
2024 Camp Officers and Media Links

Gen. James J. Byrne Camp 1 - Fort Worth, Texas

Camp Commander	Clifford F. 'Butch' Durham
Camp Sr. Vice-Commander	Michael E. Belcher
Camp Jr. Vice-Commander	vacant
Camp Treasurer	David B. Appleton
Camp Secretary	Ky W. White

[Byrne Camp 1 Website](#)

Gen. James J. Byrne
Namesake of Camp 1



Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea, USN Camp 2 - Houston, Texas

Camp Commander	John C. Vander Meulen
Camp Sr. Vice-Commander	Daniel B. Pourreau
Camp Jr. Vice-Commander	Vincent T. Trovato
Camp Secretary/Treasurer	Stephen D. Schulze

[Lea Camp Website](#)
[Lea Camp Facebook](#)



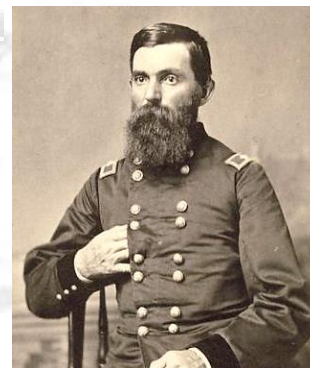
Lt. Cmdr. Edward Lea
Namesake of Camp 2
Killed in Action on the *USS Harriet Lane*
1 Jan 1863

Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey Camp 5 - Shreveport, Louisiana

Camp Commander	Michael A. Heller
Camp Sr. Vice-Commander	John A. Prime
Camp Jr. Vice-Commander	Ralph L. Diamond
Camp Secretary/Treasurer	William M. 'Bill' Elliott

[Bailey Camp Website](#)

Brig. Gen. Joseph Bailey
Namesake of Camp 5

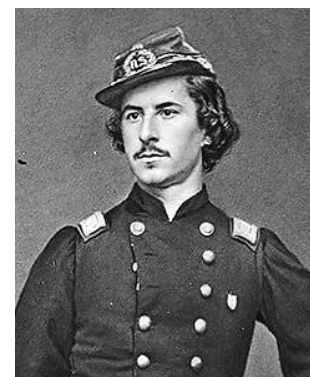


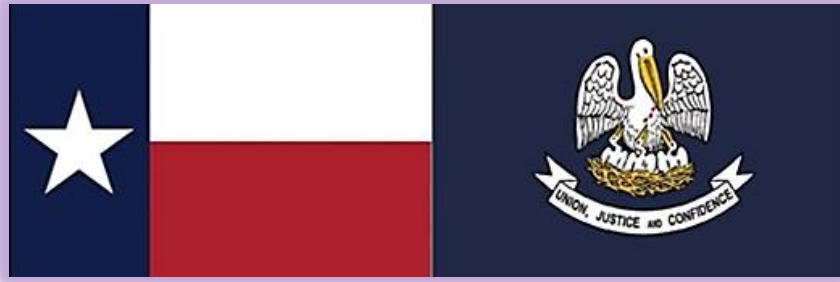
Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth Camp 18 - Dallas, Texas

Camp Commander	Michael K. Schneider
Camp Sr. Vice-Commander	David M. Rediger
Camp Jr. Vice-Commander	Kevin J. Ennis
Camp Secretary/Treasurer	Donald L. Gates

[Ellsworth Camp Website](#)
[Ellsworth Camp Facebook](#)

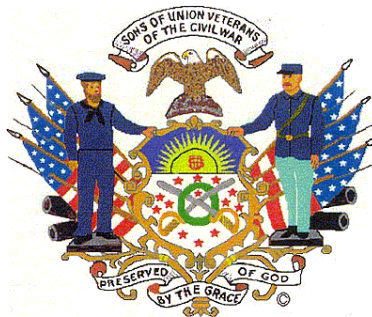
Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth
Namesake of Camp 18





DEPARTMENT
OF
TEXAS
AND
LOUISIANA

Honoring Our Union Ancestors by Keeping their Legacy Alive



Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War