

SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS, TEXAS DIVISION

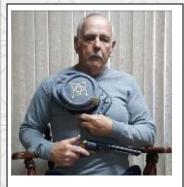
THE JOHN H. REAGAN CAMP NEWS

www.reaganscvcamp.org

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5

MAY 2021

COMMANDER'S DISPATCH



The second program on the Rains brothers was presented by Calvin Nicholson. This program dealt with the story of George Washington Rains. He was responsible for the very successful production of gunpowder in the south during the Civil War. There was no production of powder in the south prior to the war. By the end of the war the production of black powder in the south was of the best quality being produced anywhere in the world. The history of Rains is

astounding and should be read by all.

As usual we had a great meal. We enjoyed chicken fried pork chops, fried chicken, a large pot of peas and other items. We had chocolate brownies for dessert.

We are experiencing problems with the maintenance of the Confederate Plaza. We will be contacting all of you concerning this problem and seeking a way to maintain the Plaza in a way that it will always be presentable to the public.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 15th at 6:30



John H. Reagan About 1863 Oct 8, 1818 – March 6, 1905

Post Master General of the Confederate States of America Secretary of the Treasury CSA U. S. Senator from Texas U. S. Rep. from Texas District Judge Texas State Representative First Chairman - Railroad Commission of Texas A Founder and President of the

Texas State Historical Association

P.M. The program will be presented by Andrew Petty. I will not be in attendance, but Calvin Nicholson will handle the meeting. I do hope that all of you attend. We do have a great time at our camp meetings.

Richard Thornton Commander

CAMP MEETINGS

3rd Tuesday of Each Month
06:30 PM
With a meal served
at each meeting.
Commercial Bank of Texas on the
corner of N. Mallard & E. Lacy Street

The Bank is located just south of the Anderson County Courthouse Annex.

Guests are welcome! Bring the family.

www.reaganscvcamp.org www.reaganscvcamp.or

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Commander's Dispatch	/1
Calendar of Events	2
May Camp Meeting Pictures	3
Remembering Your Ancestor	4
"The Rains Brothers" by Calvin Nicholson	5-7
May Civil War Calendar	8
Tx Civ. War History for May	9
Confederate Plaza Info	10
Reagan Camp Contacts	11

Memorial Plaza Groundskeeping Calendar

May 2020 - David Franklin

June 2020 - Marc Robinson

July 2020 - Dwight Franklin

August 2020 - Need a volunteer

Officers for 2021

Commander - Richard Thornton

1st Lt. - Calvin Nicholson

Adjutant/Treasurer - Dan Dyer

Sgt at Arms - Frank Moore

<u>Quartermaster</u> - Andrew Petty

<u>Chaplains</u> - David Franklin & Dwight Franklin

Prayer List

- Compatriot Forrest Bradberry
- Compatriot J.B. Mason
- Past Reagan Camp Historian Gary Williams
- Rod Skelton (former Camp Chaplain)
- Former Camp Commander Rudy Ray
- United Daughters of the Confederacy
- The Sovereign State of Texas
- The United States of America

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Reagan Camp will have monthly meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Commercial Bank of Texas meeting room

Tuesday June 15 — June Meeting

Tuesday July 22 - July Meeting

Tuesday August 17 - August Meeting

Tuesday September 21 - September Meeting

"Nothing fills me with deeper sadness than to see a Southern man apologizing for the defense we made of our inheritance. Our cause was so just, so sacred, that had I known all that has come to pass, had I known what was to be inflicted upon me, all that my country was to suffer, all that our posterity was to endure, I would do it all over again."

-President Jefferson Davis-



This flag flies in honor and memory of over 1,000 Confederate veterans from Andérson County who marched off to war, one third of whom never returned, and the over 500 Confederate veterans from all across the South who are buried in this county. They fought for liberty and independence from a tyrannical and oppressive government. Proyded by the John H. Reagan Camp # 2156, Sons of Confederate Veterans. www.reaganscvcamp.org

Above: Reagan Camp's battle flag and sign displayed proudly at intersection of FM 315 and Anderson Cty Rd 448, ten miles north of Palestine.

"DUTY IS THE MOST SUBLIME WORD IN OUR LANGUAGE. DO YOUR DUTY IN ALL THINGS. YOU CANNOT DO MORE. YOU SHOULD NEVER WISH TO DO LESS."

-GENERAL Robert E. Lee-



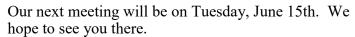
John H. Reagan Camp Monthly Meeting May 18, 2021



We had 18 in attendance at the May meeting. Of the 18, eight were visitors from the nearby town of Oakwood. The night started off with a meal of fried pork loin, fried chicken, pinto beans with ham, stewed squash, potato salad, cornbread, strawberry angel food cake, oatmeal cranberry cookies, pound cake, and sweet tea. The meal was delicious. We would like to thank Richard Thornton, Martin Lawrence, Marc Robinson, and Dwight Franklin for providing the meal.

















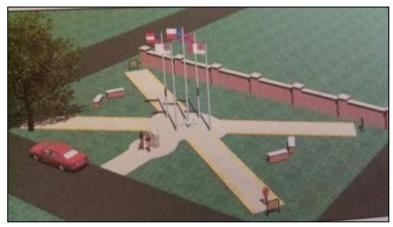


A GREAT WAY TO ENSURE THAT YOUR ANCESTOR'S SERVICE AND HONOR IS NOT FORGOTTEN



Many Americans have forgotten that freedom isn't free at all. There have been hundreds of thousands of Americans who have willingly given their life for their country so that we could continue to have the rights of free men. But there is a group of people in our country who have decided that they have the right to take away the rights of others, especially if those others do not agree with their agenda. These people have no respect for the true history of anything that goes against what they want. Although they cannot change true history, they are changing the history books and in so doing are changing what people are taught about the history of our country. These people don't care if they are dishonoring our Confederate ancestors. They care nothing about our ancestor's service. Do you care about preserving your ancestor's service? If so, you can do so by having his service noted in the Confederate Veteran's Memorial Plaza with a paver that will include his name and service information on it for only \$50. It will last for years and years to come and will let countless people see his name and information. It is a wonderful way to give him the recognition that he deserves.





SAMUEL R. CORN	PVT. DAVID A. BRAY	O. M ROBERTS	UPSHUR COUNTY	PRIMUS KELLY
CO B 33RD ALA, INF	CO H 34TH GA. INF.	CAMP 178 - SCV	PATRIOTS CAMP 2109	BODY SERVANT
CSA	CSA	WAXAHACHIE TEXAS	GILMER, TEXAS	GRIMES COUNTY
GEN. HORACE RANDEL	ERASTUS W DAVIS	WILLIAM A LOYD	IST LT	ROGER O. MILLS
CAMP # 1533	31ST MISS INFANTRY	30TH TEXAS CAVALRY	LEWIS P BROOKS	CHAPTER 2466
CARTHAGE, TEXAS	1825-1862	COMPANY F PRIVATE	CO. B / TH GA REG!	UDC
PVT. JOHN LAND	IST LT	PVT THOMAS M. LORO	CPL J RILEY PATTY	MARY WEST #25
54TH GA. INF CO H	LEWIS P BROOKS	CO L MARTIN-HOWELL	59TH TN MTD INF.	UBC
RUSSELL GUARDS	CO. B 7TH GA REGT	GR LT ART, CSA	CO. A	WACO, TEXAS
PVT 1. JEFF PARKS	TERRY LEE HULSEY	JAMES HALL BENDY	ICHN A. BUCHANAN	JOEL S WALTERS
22ND TX INFANTRY	FOR 24 GA CO I PVT	PVT CO. A	SERGEANT CO H	
CO K	JOHN MCAFGE HULSEY	25 TEXAS CAV. CSA	27TH MISS INFANTRY	
PVT W.C. HERRING	JOHN PINKNEY MANN	WILLIAM H L WELLS	WILLIAM L. WALTERS	JESSIE C. ROBERTS
12TH TX INFANTRY	PVT. CO. K	VA LIGHT ARTILLERY	PRIVATE CO K	IST LIEUTENANT
CO K	13 TEXAS CAV CSA	WELLS CLAN PLANO	37TH MISS INF REGT	20TH TEXAS CAVALRY



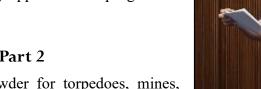
May 2021 Historical Program by Calvin Nicholson



PAGE 5

The Rains Brothers - Part 2

Reagan Camp 1st Lt. Commander, Calvin Nicholson, presented part 2 of his historical program, "The Rains Brothers". He had started the program last month as he told about General Gabriel J. Rains who was an expert with making bombs and torpedoes. This month's program was about Gabriel's younger brother, George Rains. It is amazing what George was about to do in the 1860s. Calvin has allowed us to print his notes from his program for those who were unable to attend the meeting. We really appreciate the program. It was very informative and interesting.



"The Rains Brothers" - Part 2

Brother George Rains provided most of the powder for torpedoes, mines, shells, and virtually all other Confederate munitions. George had attended the West Point class of 1842 in scientific studies and served as professor of chemistry, geology and mineralogy, but when he was assigned to make gunpowder for the Confederate armies, he had not so much as seen a powder mill.



Rains had operated ironworks in Newburgh, New York but otherwise had no obvious qualifications as a munitions maker. Even so, Chief of Ordinance, Josiah Gorgas gave him free hand.

As Jefferson Davis said, hardly a round of ammunition had been made in the South for fifty years, except during the Mexican War. By the most optimistic estimate there was powder enough for one month of war, providing there was light fighting.

The gunpowder of the day, as George Rains knew well, was made of three-quarters potassium nitrate (known as saltpeter of niter) and small amounts of Sulphur and charcoal. It seemed hopeless to find enough of the first two ingredients in the Confederacy, and if they were found, they would be quite impure, making faulty gunpowder inevitable.

Rains went like a prospector into the limestone caves of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Arkansas, and found earth so rich in nitrate that he put crews to digging it, and later formed a niter and mining bureau. By a simple chemical process-saturation with lye made from wood ashes-he rendered this earth into saltpeter. An idle mill near Nashville, Tennessee, was soon making powder and a stamping mill furnished it's ingredients. Rains began on July 19, 1861, and by late October was turning out 3000 pounds a day at Nashville; since there were no experts, Rains was forced to act as overseer.

He wrote a booklet on collecting saltpeter, gathered a force of newly trained men, and with them at work returned to Richmond. He sent agents to Europe for more nitrate, and eventually smuggled 2,700,000 pounds through the blockade. Most singular of all, he divided the South into districts, each with crews to dig the earth from privies and latrines and even collect the contents of chamber pots-all to be dumped into niter beds for processing.

Some of the war's most entertaining bawdy songs came for this practice, on both sides of the lines.

George made progress. By November of '61 he was producing another 1,500 pounds of powder daily in Richmond. He then made an important find-an English pamphlet describing the world's most modern powder plant, the Waltham Abbey Works. Though it contained no drawings, the booklet was so complete that Rains, with the help of C. Shaler Smith, a young architect and engineer, built the finest gunpowder mill of the day. He erected a giant complex which lay for two miles along a canal at Augusta, Georgia, a place chosen for its safety from Union raiders, and as a central bas of supply. The factory was built with materials from every part of the Confederacy.

- Continued on the next page -



May 2021 Historical Program by Calvin Nicholson The Rains Brothers - Part 2





George Washington Rains

The huge Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond built for Rains twelve circular iron plates and twenty-four 5-ton rollers-some 250 tons of machinery. He got four more rollers from Macon, Georgia, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. He ordered from another Tennessee plant an iron shaft almost 300 feet long, a foot thick at the center—an engineering marvel at the time. A gear wheel 16 feet in diameter was fixed to the center of the shaft, giving it motion. This piece of skilled metal work was cast in Atlanta.

Rains found in a cotton mill a steam engine of 130 horse-power with five boilers and a 14-ton flywheel, all made in the North before the war; he took the power system apart and hauled it across the South to its new home. He ordered a dozen iron evaporating pans from works on the Cumberland River, Tennessee, and big retorts and iron slip cylinders from an Augusta shop. Copper boilers were made from converted turpentine and whiskey stills brought from seaports and backwoods. Tin and Zinc for roofing came from Mobile. Iron and coal came from North Carolina and north Alabama and raw copper from Duckworth, Tennessee.

By the end of 1861 the price of powder coming through the blockade had climbed to three dollars a poundand since Rains made a million pounds that year, he calculated that he saved the Confederacy almost two million dollars. After spending heavily on his factories, he showed an immense "profit", his Augusta plant cost the Confederacy about \$385,000.

The maze of buildings concealed many miracles worked by Rains and his men. Impurities in saltpeter ruined powder by absorbing moisture, thus it must be crystallized and washed over and over. The plant consumed from 8,000 to 10,000 pounds daily; the vital spot was the refinery room.

Rains had cleverly arranged evaporating pans in this room with canal water flowing under them for cooling, and hot air from separate furnaces heating others. The room was thus free of ashes and smoke. When it was found that the volume was too great for his working force, Rains devised machinery which filled the pans, pouring boiling liquid into drains and crystallizing vats on schedule. One refinement was a vat which agitated during evaporations, so as to produce tiny particles. Soon Rains boasted, he could run the process three times daily with only two or three workmen. His saltpeter he though "unmatched anywhere".

A Sulphur refinery taxed Rains ingenuity, for he had to remove all traces of acid, and his supply was by no means pure. Most of the Sulphur came from Louisiana planters who had imported it before the war to refine their sugar crops. The Sulphur must be treated until, when powdered and evaporated on glass, it would leave no stain. Distillation was the key Rains used. The Sulphur was melted, poured into wooden boxes 5 feet tall and 10 inches square at the bottom, tapering upwards. As it cooled, impurities trickled down and the relatively pure upper portion went into kettles, was vaporized, condensed in water cooled coils, then collected in its purity. Rains bolted and pulverized it like flour before it was done, using iron wheels five feet in diameter which revolved on a bed of iron. Rains used silk to bolt his Sulphur so long as it lasted, but the South's silk supply was soon gone. He devised a better scheme.

As the pulverized Sulphur was revolved in barrels fasted on hollow axles, hot air was blown through, depositing the finest Sulphur dust in an adjoining room.

Charcoal was the net problem. Willow was said to make the best, but this was soon exhausted, and Rains tested cottonwood, which he found to be equally good. He had the wood split into sticks less than two inches square, and packed into iron cylinders 6 feet long. Retorts were dropped over the cylinders, covers sealed with clay, and the bottoms perforated to permit the escape of gases-which in turn supplied most of the furnace heat necessary for the process.

- continued on the next page -



May 2021 Historical Program by Calvin Nicholson

The Rains Brothers - Part 2



Sibley Mill and Confederate Powder Works Chimney Rebecca Rogers Augusta Canal National Heritage Area

https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/augusta/sibleymill.html

The wood burned to charcoal within two hours, was lowered into the canal below for cooling, then went into the pulverizing barrels where it was beaten into a powder by tumbling bronze balls. After bolting, it went to the weighing room to be combined with other ingredients. Rains made charges of 45 pounds of saltpeter, 9 pounds of charcoal, and 6 pounds of Sulphur.

The mixture was moistened and heated by steam until it became slush, it was then cooled into a cake, a product Rains though the finest ever processed. He had used his microscope to improve on his British predecessors.

He saw the carbon particles, even when finely ground, were pitted with tine holes. Since saltpeter was the active ingredient of gunpowder, it should be made to fill these pores. Thus, Rains developed the method of reducing the powder to slush, allowing the niter to crystallize partially within the charred carbon. This step also reduced the final rolling process from four hours to one.

Rains had a dozen rolling mills, separated for safety, stretching some 300 feet along the canal. Their walls were ten feet thick in places, with glass fronts in case of explosion. Workmen operated long levers by a friction gear built under the floors, in order to control the dangerous rollers. Above each roller was a thirty-gallon water tank which was connected with each of the other rollers in the mill, rigged to spill its contents at any given moment. In short, any explosion would bring instant drowning of all the caked gunpowder. Rains had but three explosions inside the plant and only one causing injury. But before safety precautions were taken, an accident outside the main plant blew three tons of gunpowder, sending up a 500-foot column of smoke and flame, killing seven men, a boy and a mule-all the result of a workman smoking in violation of orders.

Bronze wheels, vibrating screens, and sieves finished the powder process, grading the final product. Big guns on the battlefield especially seaports, used powder in pieces an inch square, weighing about an ounce per cube; but small weapons must have the most finely ground powder. Rains also designed a superior powder box to replace kegs for shipment, and reported that there were no explosions in delivery.

He developed an "electro-ballistic" machine to test arms fired with his powder, and duplicated an apparatus for determining the pressure in gun barrels.

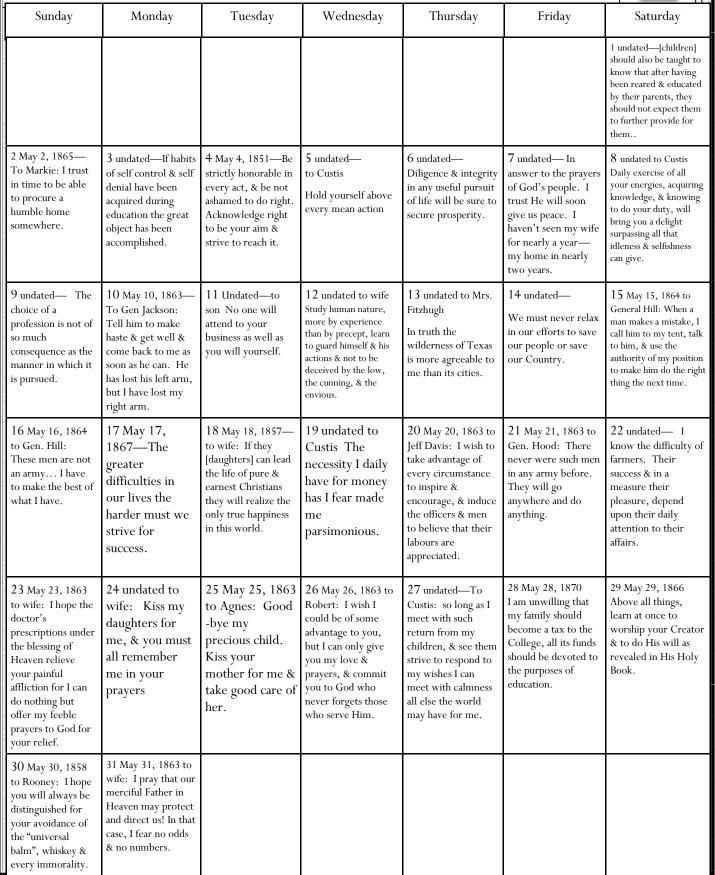
Rains produced 2,750,000 pounds of gunpowder at Augusta in three years, furnishing most of the fired by Confederates east of the Mississippi. The plant never worked to capacity, and even when a rush order for 22,000 pounds of powder cam from Charleston, it took only two days production. Powder captured here was used after the war by the United States School of Artillery Practice at Fortress Monroe, and pronounced superior. President Davis said sadly that if such fine powder had been in the magazines of the cruiser Alabama, she would have sunk the USS Kearsarge, and would have been saved for further deadly raids in enemy shipping.

Today, despite the work of these brother geniuses in munitions readers can find references to them only by arduous digging. Records of the Confederate Torpedo Bureau are lost presumed destroyed. The only full account of the Confederate powder factories, written by General George Rains, is one of the rarer Civil War pamphlets, seldom seen except by scholars straying from the beaten path.



ROBERT E. LEE CALENDAR







TEXAS CIVIL WAR HISTORY IN MAY



From the Texas State Historical Association

May 6th, 1864: On this day in one of the most moving incidents of the Civil War, Confederate General Robert E. Lee ordered the celebrated Hood's Texas Brigade to the front, and they in turn ordered him to the rear. During a critical moment of the fierce Battle of the Wilderness, as the Southern battle line was crumbling, Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, was heartened to see the Texas Brigade, under the command of John Gregg, arrive on the field as reinforcements. With a cry of "Hurrah for Texas!" Lee ordered them forward against the Union Army and, carried away by his enthusiasm, began to lead them into the charge. The Texans unwilling to risk their idol in battle, stopped and gathered around him, yelling "Lee to the rear!" and held onto his horse until he withdrew. The Texas Brigade suffered severe losses, but the Union army was once more fought to a standstill.

May 9th, 1865: On this day near Abbeville, Georgia, Jefferson Davis, former Texas governor Francis R. Lubbock, and Confederate postmaster and temporary treasurer John H. Reagan were captured by Union forces. Davis had been forced to flee Richmond with his cabinet on April 2, and the Confederate government had eluded Union patrols in both North and South Carolina. After his capture, Texan John Reagan was imprisoned until December.

May 13, 1865: On this day, more than a month after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee, the last land action of the Civil War took place at Palmito Ranch near Brownsville. The battle lasted four hours. Confederate casualties were a few dozen wounded. The federals lost 111 men and four officers, captured, and thirty men wounded or killed. Ironically, at the same time, the Confederate governors of Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Texas were authorizing Confederate commander Kirby Smith to disband his armies and end the war.

May 17th, 1865: On this day, the last 1,200 Federal prisoners left Camp Ford, a Confederate prison camp located four miles northeast of Tyler, Texas. The Camp, named in honor of Col. John S. (Rip) Ford, originally opened in 1862 as a facility for training Confederate conscripts, but the Trans-Mississippi Department ordered the establishment of a prison camp there in July 1863; the notorious John Pelham Border became commandant in May 1864. About 6,000 prisoners were confined at Camp Ford over the two years of its existence, making it the largest Confederate prison camp west of the Mississippi River. Of this number 286 died there. The remains of the prison compound were destroyed in July 1865 by a detail of the Tenth Illinois Cavalry.

May 25, 1896: On this day, the Texas Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy met for the first time in Victoria. The United Daughters of the Confederacy was established in 1894 by the merger of state groups in Georgia, Missouri, and Tennessee. The Texas Division was organized by Kate Cabell Muse, who had earlier organized a local chapter in her hometown, Dallas. The Texas Division has been active in marking historic locations and holds annual memorial observances to remember not only Confederate Veterans, but veterans of all wars. The division formerly sponsored the Texas Confederate Home and the Confederate Woman's Home and each year awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to descendants of Confederate veterans. It also maintains the Texas Confederate Museum.

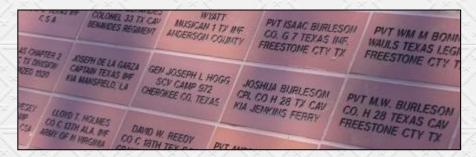


CONFEDERATE VETERANS MEMORIAL PLAZA INFORMATION





The Confederate Veterans Memorial Plaza had the official opening and dedication on April 13,2013. It is a beautiful Memorial to the Confederate Veterans. Although it is open for visitors, there is still room along the sidewalks for you to purchase a brick paver in the name of your confederate ancestor. This will ensure that your ancestor's service to the confederacy will not be forgotten, but will be remembered for years to come. If you would like to make a donation for a paver, please contact Dan Dyer at E-mail: danieldyer497@yahoo.com or Phone: (903) 391-2224



Would you like to honor you ancestor? There is still room in the plaza for you to have a paver with your ancestor's name and military information. You can also acquire a paver in the name of your SCV Camp.

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 5 PAGE 11



JOHN H. REAGAN CAMP #2156

c/o Dan Dyer, Adjutant/Treasurer Palestine, Texas 75802 E-mail: danieldyer497@yahoo.com Phone: (903) 391-2224

Richard Thornton
Palestine, Texas
E-mail: tx_tsar@hotmail.com
Phone: 903-729-3864

Dwight Franklin, Chaplain/Newsletter Editor: dwightfranklin1@yahoo.com

Please visit our website @

www.reaganscvcamp.org

The citizen-soldiers who fought for the Confederacy personified the best qualities of America. The preservation of liberty and freedom was the motivating factor in the South's decision to fight the *Second American Revolution*. The tenacity with which Confederate soldiers fought underscored their belief in the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. These attributes are the underpinning of our democratic society and represent the foundation on which this nation was built.

Today, the **Sons of Confederate Veterans** is preserving the history and legacy of these heroes, so future generations can understand the motives that animated the Southern Cause.

The SCV is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans, and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Organized at Richmond, Virginia in 1896, the SCV continues to serve as a historical, patriotic, and non-political organization dedicated to ensuring that a true history of the 1861-1865 period is preserved.

Membership in the **Sons of Confederate Veterans** is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate armed forces. Membership can be obtained through either **lineal or collateral** family lines and kinship to a veteran must be **documented genealogically**. The minimum age for full membership is 12, but there is no minimum for Cadet membership. **Friends of the SCV** memberships are available as well to those who are committed to upholding our charge, but do not have the Confederate ancestry.

THE CHARGE TO THE SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS

"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."

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



Camp meetings: 3rd Tuesday Each Month - 06:30 PM Snacks served at each meeting.

Commercial Bank of Texas on the corner of N. Mallard & E. Lacy Street

The Bank is located just south of the Anderson County Courthouse Annex.