

THE GRIFFIN MESSENGER

NOVEMBER 2013 VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

COLONEL W.H. GRIFFIN CAMP #2235

ARLINGTON, TEXAS

UNRECONSTRUCTED AND UNAPOLOGETIC ABOUT OUR HERITAGE



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. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is represented to future generations.

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

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Pg. 2: Commander's Report
- Pg. 3: Lt. Commander's Report
- Pg. 4: October Meeting Photos
- Pg. 6: Announcements
- Pg. 7: James Thomas Brannon
- Pg. 8: Photos of events
- Pg. 9: The Collector's Corner
- Pg. 10: Books for Bullets Book Review

OFFICERS AND STAFF

Commander: Jeff Western
Lt. Commander: Jerry Puckett
Adjutant: Don Brannon
Chaplain: Bill Agerton
Communications Officer: Jack Dyess
Editor: Jerry Puckett

All reports, articles, etc. are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of this Camp or the Sons of Confederate Veterans

Our Next Meeting:

Saturday morning meeting, November 2, 8:00 A.M.

Election meeting! We will nominate and vote on officers for 2014.

December 8th, Christmas Party, details on page 6

COMMANDER'S REPORT

Col. W. H. Griffin was well represented at the 117th Texas Division United Daughters of the Confederacy Convention in Houston October 2-6. **Don Brannon** and **Jack Dyess** escorted chapter presidents and dignitaries during President's Evening. Affiliate member **Dorthy Casten** attended her first UDC convention while **Celia Brannon** and **Diane Dyess** served as Convention Pages. **Betty Abdo**, Julia Jackson UDC President, was in attendance and escorted by our Camp during President's evening.

Friday Evening is traditionally Historical Evening and presents the UDC with the opportunity to recognize service members with Military Service Awards. We see Jack wear his medal proudly.

There is an additional medal that is bestowed during this time, the **Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medal**. This medal awarded to UDC members and non members is bestowed through the UDC Historian General for excellence in history, essay writing, declamation and other points of special achievement in keeping with the historical purposes of the UDC. It is considered by UDC members as the most difficult to obtain outside the Military Service Award. Very few of these medals are awarded. The recipient of the award is known to few prior the actual bestowal ceremony. Griffin Camp member **Jack Dyess** is the recipient this year at the Texas Division level. He was recognized for his research and presentations at museums, lineage organizations and schools for his interesting and well researched programs.

The **Stonewall Jackson Award** is designed for nonmembers for outstanding contributions to the UDC that are non-historical in nature. During President's Evening, **Jack** was surprised again as he received this award. The Texas Division First Vice President publicly acknowledged his contributions to the UDC mentioning his organizational skills in providing color guards at the State level and specifically for the Cross of Honor ceremony at Ash Creek Cemetery. Jack has now been bestowed every medal from the UDC a non member is eligible to receive.

We may be a new camp, but after the Texas Division UDC Convention our name and the contributions and service of our members and affiliates are well known in all the Confederate heritage organizations.



Lt. COMMANDER'S REPORT

Worker Bees, Etc.

Greetings Friends and Compatriots,

And in the next breath, goodbye as Lt. Commander! As I stated from the beginning I have no aspirations or desires to be "in charge" of anything other than my meager attempt at a newsletter. I only agreed to serve a short term as Lt. Commander was due to the fact there was absolutely no one else to take the position. I know whoever (whomever?) takes up the position will most likely be a lot more qualified than myself and I will do my best to help and support any way I can. My hat is off to anyone who is willing to or wants to serve as an officer in any volunteer organization. I've often jokingly talked about these "high paying" volunteer jobs!

Having said all that..... it's finally Fall and the SCV seems busier than ever. I see photos in emails and on Facebook of different events and it seems 3rd Brigade Guardian Commander Larry Martin is in a LOT of them. I know he's at enough of our meetings we sometimes forget to introduce him as a guest and I'm sure a lot of other Camps are guilty of the same thing. Great job Larry, we need more members like you.

Speaking of the Guardian program and adopting a cemetery, in last month's issue I think I mentioned the Rehoboth Cemetery near me in south Arlington. I'm surveying it as time permits. So far two for sure Veterans and a very possible third one. Earlier I had placed Battle Flags on the two. A week or so later I drove by and was disheartened when the flag nearest the street was gone. Naturally I assumed it was taken and hoped it was just someone wanting a "Rebel" Flag and not out of hate. One afternoon this past week I had some time so I took my old trusty fat Blue Heeler Hank and to check things out and replace that flag. Good news is the flag had just blown over and not taken! The ground was extremely hard and dry when I placed them. This time I was better equipped and properly re-set it.

Worker Bees, Etc. I guess what I was thinking when I came up with that title is this: Any successful organization always has great leadership for sure, but it sure seems it's the "worker bees" that keeps things moving. I prefer to be a Worker Bee. Maybe that's due to having been a supervisor at my job for several years. Now that I'm just a Worker Bee there I find myself much happier. If you want to be a Leader that's great, but remember, there's always plenty of that Worker Bee stuff that needs to be done. I've always found that I only get BACK as much as I PUT INTO just about anything I'm involved with. This includes the SCV, my job, my hobbies, and life in general.

Get out there and get involved with Life. You'll be amazed at what you'll discover! Get involved with your Camp. You'll meet some great folks with similar interests plus you'll be amazed at what you can learn about our Forefathers who fought for our freedom.

Sincerely,
Jerry Puckett

OCTOBER'S MEETING



Division Commander Johnnie Holley presenting Camp Commander Jeff Western with the W.H. Griffin Charter.



Michael Brazell (center) was presented with the National SCV Commendation Medal.



New member Don Cowley and his wife Jan who also joined as an auxiliary member



Camp members and guests showing off our new flag



W. H. Griffin member Jack Dyess gave his great program on the battle of Sabine Pass.



Jack Dyess received his OCR membership



We were greatly honored to have so many distinguished guests at our Charter Meeting. Many of you drove a long distance to be there with us. Among the dignitaries was:

Division Commander Johnnie Holley,

Calvin Allen, 3rd Brigade Commander and member of the W.T. Lanham Camp in Weatherford.

Larry Martin, 3rd Brigade Guardian and member of the W.T. Lanham Camp in Weatherford.

Reta and Dennis Brand, Commander of the Captain James P. Douglas Camp #124, Tyler and 1st Lt. Commander 8th Brigade.

Mary June (UDC,OCR) and Cooper Goodson, Adjutant, Texas Division SCV.

Sue Ann Kinsley, UDC, OCR



UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 2: W.H. Griffin meeting. This will be a Saturday morning meeting AND we will nominate and vote on officers for 2014. Be there to cast your vote!

Nov. 2: Statewide Mech Cav gathering at the Little River Cemetery, 421 FM 979 "Jones Prairie", in Milam County. Cemetery sets off of Hwy. 979 between Belmena and Cross Roads. This is to honor Confederate Veteran Manon S. Jolly. "Manse" rode with JEB Stuart's Cavalry under Wade Hampton. He was the epitome of the Unreconstructed Rebel. Because he was wanted in his home State of S. Carolina he relocated to Central Texas. Unfortunately, at the age of 29, he and his beloved horse Dixie drowned in the flooded waters of the Little River. All SCV members and friends are invited.

Nov. 16: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Johnson County 150th Anniversary, Cleburne Courthouse.

Dec. 8: W.H. Griffin's Christmas Party. This will be a pot luck lunch. It will be held at the home of Don and Celia Brannon, 8609 Chelan Way, Ft. Worth Tx. 2 to 4 P.M.

AREA CAMP MEETING DATES

Patrick R. Cleburne Camp #436 meets 1st Monday, 7:00 PM at the United Co-operative Service Building, 3309 N. Main, Cleburne.

Gen. W. R. Scurry Camp #606 meets 2nd Monday, 6:30 PM at the China Star Restaurant, 1024 Central Fwy, Wichita Falls.

Albert Sidney Johnson Camp #983 meets 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM at the Wesley Center, 201 E. Main St., Decatur.

Middleton Tate Johnson Camp #1648 meets 2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM at the Division St. Diner, 1800 W. Division, Arlington.

R. E. Lee Camp #239 meets 3rd Monday, 7:00 PM at the Ol' South Pancake House 1509 S. University Dr., Ft Worth.

Gov. W. T. Lanham Camp #586 meets 4th Monday, 7:00 PM at Granny's Kitchen, 1802 S. Santa Fe, Weatherford.

Col. E. W. Taylor Camp #1777 meets 4th Thursday, 7:00 PM at Catfish Co. Restaurant, 900 Airport Fwy, N. Richland Hills

James Thomas Brannan
Great, Great Grandfather of
Col. W. H. Griffin Camp member Freddie Wells.



James T Brannan, age 43, was 2nd Sergeant in Captain Samuel H Terral's Company, "*The Clarke County Rescuers*" 37th Regiment, Brigade of Mississippi Volunteers commanded by Colonel Robert McLain. His brother, David L. Brannan, age 35, was 2nd Lieutenant and their nephews were Privates James H. Hurst, age 22, Isaac L. Hurst and Philip A Hurst, age 18. They were mustered in during March of 1862 for a term of three years.

In December, 1862, the 37th Infantry was ordered to march from Corinth to Vicksburg to reinforce the garrison assigned to defend northwest Mississippi. On May 17, 1863, the Federal Artillery began firing on the Confederate positions and continued a steady fire for forty eight days and nights. After the long period of shelling, the Union Forces launched a determined attack along the Graveyard Road, where the Thirty Seventh was one of the front line regiments. The attack was repulsed several times and the troops stayed in the trenches without relief. More than one fourth of the 37th was killed or wounded. The Confederate Forces at Vicksburg capitulated to General Ulysses S. Grant on July 4, 1863. The captured "Grey" soldiers were paroled as "unexchanged" prisoners, signing documents stating they would not bear arms nor serve in any capacity against the Union Army.

However, SGT Brannan continued to fight and was captured by forces under Major General Thomas on December 15, 1864, near Nashville, Tennessee, and transferred soon after to the infamous Union prison camp in Chicago, Illinois: Camp Douglas where it is estimated that from 1862–1865, more than 6,000 Confederate prisoners died from disease, starvation, and the bitter cold winters.

Sergeant James Thomas Brannon died January 22, 1865 at Camp Douglas. His remains lie in a mass Confederate grave site known as Confederate Mound, which is the largest mass grave in the western hemisphere. It is marked by a tall spire with a statue of a Confederate Infantryman on its peak and at the base contains four bronze plaques with the names of those interred.

WE'VE BEEN BUSY THE PAST MONTH OR SO..



Back in September 3rd Brigade Guardian Larry Martin gave us pointers on finding and marking Veteran's graves.



Members Jim McDaniel and Jerry Puckett helped at Oakwood Cemetery for a dedication.



Member Jack Dyess was awarded the two highest State Level UDC awards, Jefferson Davis Gold and Stonewall Jackson.



Jack Dyess (back row left) and Don Brannon (back row right) helped at the UDC State Convention with the Color Guard

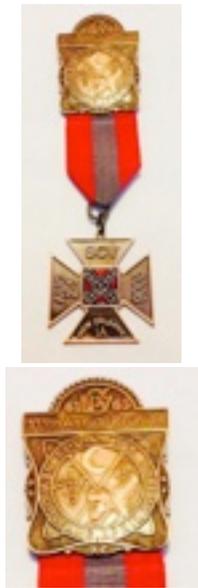
THE COLLECTOR'S CORNER

By Don Brannon

In this issue we will take a look at the New Orleans 2006 Reunion medal, and the original United Confederate Veterans (UCV) 1906 medal that it was modeled after. The 2006 medal incorporates a reproduction of the original UCV medal at the top of the ribbon, thus commemorating the 100th anniversary of the original convention that was also held in New Orleans. Though it represents the 100th anniversary of the original reunion in New Orleans, it was the SCV's 111th, annual reunion.



Front and back side of the original UCV Reunion medal.



The 2006 SCV Reunion Medal

The 2006 Reunion medal is inexpensive and can normally be found on E-bay. The original UCV Reunion medal is extremely rare, and is at this time being listed on E-bay at \$295.00. The face of the medal has a crescent moon the symbol of the City of New Orleans, and the bust of General Robert E. Lee surrounded by the Confederate battle flag and 3rd National Flag. On the 2006 medal, the word "VETERAN" has been replaced with "111th Annual Reunion". This is an outstanding medal and a great addition for any collection, especially if you are fortunate enough to obtain both. This is also an excellent example of how the SCV is trying to retain our history and traditions, and preserve them for future generations.

BOOKS FOR BULLETS

(Reviewed by Thaddeus Hulsey)

2 Years a Slave by Solomon Northup
Kindle Edition, ASIN B00BQQ86VW

Brad Pitt, better known for his acting, has produced a new movie, 12 Years a Slave, directed by Steve McQueen, which is coming out this month. From looking at the trailer on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIqodUJ-UfM>), which is all that I have seen, it seems to me very worthwhile. In the scenes there, the production is faithful to the book, even taking some of the dialog word for word.

The material for the movie comes from a book written in 1853 by the free black man Solomon Northup just after his release from captivity, after being abducted from New York and “sold down the river” — a phrase that originated at this time, referring to the Mississippi. It is a wonder of the Internet that this book and five others, including Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave; The Life of Josiah Henson; Uncle Tom's Cabin; and Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl and Up From Slavery can all be had in one Kindle edition for a mere 99 cents. (Search Amazon for the ASIN number B00BQQ86VW.) If you don't have a Kindle device you can download one for your PC absolutely free. Or, if you've a mind to, you can pay over \$45 for a hardcover of 12 Years a Slave alone, if you really want to read a historian's preface. — But that too can be had for free on Wikipedia.

I was astonished to read this book — astonished before I left chapter one. The first astonishment is the style. It is perfect English — no doubt polished by the editor David Wilson, who transcribed what Northup spoke — but strange to someone reading the book a century and a half after it was written. It is strange not just for its outdated expressions but for its carefulness, an almost labored care that the story was put down right, with no “artfulness” to exaggerate any part of it, as I'll show in a minute. The second astonishment is Solomon's free outlook, of a special kind that very few of us have today. By his “free outlook” I mean his alertness of mind to opportunities for himself and his young wife and two children. As a child he learns the violin, and becomes skillful enough to be paid for his services at weddings and dances. He works repairing a canal in New York, but he sees that if he had horses to haul barges from the shore he can make money. So he saves, buys the horses, and does well for himself in contract hauling. There are periods of inactivity between fiddling gigs and hauling jobs, but he doesn't have a worry: In the course of doing odd jobs, he learns several trades. The “down time” comes to him as an opportunity to breathe deep of his freedom, and of what the future holds for him. —And there is no thought of looking for “unemployment benefits,” which don't even exist. Compare that with the number of folks today who live paycheck-to-paycheck, working a strict eight hours a day, in fear of losing their jobs and going on the dole. Of those who have this outlook all their adult lives, can it really be said that they are free?

Even after Solomon is lured to Baltimore (on the promise of playing violin a while for the circus), drugged, enslaved, and forced to deny his free identity on pain of being beaten to death, still he maintains his dignity. Even while enslaved he makes the best of every situation and becomes an asset to his several masters. After injury in running from one violent master, another puts him to lighter work in his garden, where he delights in “[t]hat little paradise in the Great Pine Woods.”

It's said that slavery corrupts the slave master as much as the slave. Solomon's story provides honest evidence of both gentle, patronizing masters and insanely cruel masters. But I say here that both kinds are equally detestable. The gentle, patronizing master tries to paint a self-righteous moral halo on himself when he tries to offer humane treatment as a privilege. Humane treatment is not a privilege but a right that any man will claim and take without anybody's by-your-leave.

A perfect example of “halo painting” and exaggerated sentimentality is found in Chapter 26 of Uncle Tom's Cabin, included in this collection of six books. The chapter describes the death of the little girl Eva, which transforms everyone around her into perfect Christians. At one point during her deathbed scene Eva murmurs:

“You must remember that each one of you can become angels, and be angels forever.... If you want to be Christians, Jesus will help you. You must pray to him; you must read—” The child checked herself, looked piteously at them, and said, sorrowfully, “O dear! you can't read— poor souls!” and she hid her face in the pillow and sobbed, while many a smothered sob from those she was addressing, who were kneeling on the floor, aroused her. “Never mind,” she said, raising her face and smiling brightly through her tears, “I have prayed for you; and I know Jesus will help you, even if you can't read.”

Right: Heaven's got a back door, too, it looks like. Slip us ignernt cusses in thataway so's we don't embarrass nobody.

Compare that passage with Solomon Northup's Chapter 18, which describes how the slave owner Edwin Epps breaks the spirit of the slave girl Patsey. The girl is stripped of all her clothes, staked face down, and given a savage whipping.

The lash was wet with blood, which flowed down her sides and dropped upon the ground. At length [Patsey] ceased struggling. Her head sank listlessly on the ground. Her screams and supplications gradually decreased and died away into a low moan. She no longer writhed and shrank beneath the lash when it bit out small pieces of her flesh. I thought that she was dying!

It was the Sabbath of the Lord. The fields smiled in the warm sunlight— the birds chirped merrily amidst the foliage of the trees— peace and happiness seemed to reign everywhere, save in the bosoms of Epps and his panting victim and the silent witnesses around him. [...]

[F]rom that time forward she was not what she had been. The burden of a deep melancholy weighed heavily on her spirits. She no longer moved with that buoyant and elastic step— there was not that mirthful sparkle in her eyes that formerly distinguished her. The bounding vigor— the sprightly, laughter-loving spirit of her youth, were gone. She fell into a mournful and desponding mood, and often times would start up in her sleep, and with raised hands, plead for mercy. She became more silent than she was, toiling all day in our midst, not uttering a word. A care-worn, pitiful expression settled on her face, and it was her humor now to weep, rather than rejoice. If ever there was a broken heart— one crushed and blighted by the rude grasp of suffering misfortune— it was Patsey's.

No sentimentality there. Just the sad facts. The facts that put away the myth of the happy Southern darky forever.

New Members

We would like to welcome new member Don Cowley who transferred from another Camp. His wife Jan, along with Betty Abdo and Jennifer Schnell joined as auxiliary members.