



Confederate History and Heritage Month in Anderson County

Flag Ceremony Script

Anderson County Texas Courthouse

April 1, 2011, 08:00 AM

Welcome:

My name is Marc Robinson. I am currently the commander of the John H. Reagan Camp #2156, Sons of Confederate Veterans Palestine, Texas. I would first like to welcome all of you here today on this first day of the month and year that marks the onset of the sesquicentennial of the War Between the States. It is a fine Texas Morning and we thank you very much for your attendance. We are here for a very special occasion and that is to honor a group of American veterans that deserve all the honor we can bestow upon them.

Invocation – Reagan Camp Chaplain, Rod Skelton will now give the invocation.

Chaplain Skelton's prayer:

ALMIGHTY GOD, OUR MOST GRACIOUS HEAVENLY FATHER. WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE AND PROVIDENCE IN THE HISTORY OF OUR GREAT NATION. WE ESPECIALLY THANK YOU FOR OUR CONFEDERATE HISTORY. TODAY AS WE RAISE THIS FLAG, WE HONOR THE CONFEDERATE SOLDIER FOR HIS RECORD OF VIRTUE, VALOR, AND SACRIFICE. OUR CONFEDERATE ANCESTORS LEAVE US A STRONG AND GREAT HERITAGE. THEY HAD AN ABUNDANCE OF THINGS THAT REALLY COUNT IN LIFE, THINGS SUCH AS CHARACTER, INTEGRITY, HONESTY, HONOR, COURAGE, AND A GREAT LOVE FOR GOD, FAMILY, AND COUNTRY. THEIR MEMORY IS CHERISHED, AND IS A BLESSING TO US. MAY WE, WITH YOUR HELP, TEACH OUR CHILDREN AND THOSE WHO FOLLOW TO DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THEIR LIVES, AND KEEP THE SACRED MEMORY OF OUR SOUTHERN ANCESTORS WHO FAITHFULLY FOUGHT FOR A JUST CAUSE. GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE SAID, "LET PRAYER BE OUR PASSION, LET PRAYER BE OUR PRACTICE." TODAY WE FOLLOW THAT ADMONITION AS WE ALSO REMEMBER FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

THAT SAYS, " IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND HEAL THEIR LAND." TODAY AS WE HONOR THE GREAT CONFEDERATE SOLDIER, WE ALSO PRAY FOR OUR NATION. IN JESUS NAME, AMEN.

Recognition of Dignitaries and Supporters

Marc Robinson: Before I proceed any further, I must first thank all of the officers and members of the John H. Reagan Camp #2156 Sons of Confederate Veterans and those of the Davis-Reagan Chapter #2292 United Daughters of the Confederacy and their spouses for their diligent efforts to honor the Confederate veteran, protect his true history, and to make sure that these courageous and patriotic men are never forgotten. Thank you Ladies and Gentlemen.

This special day would not have taken place if it was not for those we have already thanked and also many other individuals and several organizations. I would like to introduce and/or mention some of these at this time.

- Anderson County Judge the Honorable Robert Johnston;
- Anderson County Commissioner the Honorable Joe Chaffin;
- Anderson County Commissioner the Honorable Joey Hill;
- Former Anderson County Judges: the Honorable Linda Ray, the Honorable Carrie McKinney, and the Honorable John Ballard McDonald;
- The Anderson County Historical Commission and their current Chairman Jimmy Odom and past Chairman Bonnie Woolverton
- The Museum for East Texas Culture and their director Daniel Dyer;
- The Dogwood Chapter #991 of the Vietnam Veterans of America, President Allan Ayo
- The J. W. Cantrell Chapter #63 Disabled American Veterans, Commander Robert Griffith, Senior Vice-Commander Jerry Waldon.
- The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary and their Senior Vice-Commander Evelyn Cupit.
- The Veterans Historic Education Center and their founder Anne Coleman who will be playing the bugle in just a little while.
- The Citizens for the Constitution based here in Anderson County and their Chairman Marshall Holland
- And the many individuals that reside in Anderson County and who voiced their support by their signature and/or attendance at the commissioners court meeting this past Monday.

Address – by Marc Robinson, Commander of the John H. Reagan Camp #2156

Let us begin by reading a verse from God's Holy Word. It is one of the Ten Commandments and found in Exodus 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."

I am so thankful to God that we live in this country where we have an opportunity to honor all of our fathers and mothers including those who are veterans.

Bennett H. Young was the Commander-in-Chief of the United Confederate Veterans, when he spoke at the unveiling of the Confederate Memorial on June 4, 1914 at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. where so many of our nation's soldiers and sailors are buried. At that ceremony, President Woodrow Wilson was also one of the speakers, and the crowd included many veterans from both the Confederate Army and the Union Army. I would like to begin by quoting him when he said the following during his speech,

"At this hour I represent the survivors of the Southern army. Though this Confederate monument is erected on Federal ground, which makes it unusual and remarkable, yet the men from whom I hold commission would only have me come without apologies or regrets from the past. Those for whom I speak gave the best they had to their land and country. They spared no sacrifice and no privation to win for the Southland national independence.

I am sure I shall not offend the proprieties of either the hour or the occasion when I say that we still glory in the records of our beloved and immortal dead. The dead, for whom this monument stands... died for what they believed to be right. Their surviving comrades and their children still believe that that for which they suffered and laid down their lives was just; that their premises in the Civil War were according to our Constitution."

The truth of our history is so very important, whatever it may be. It is who we are and to a very large part who we will be as individuals and as a nation as we learn from the past. There are many false teachings out there about the War Between the States and the men who fought in it. I listened to a local Anderson County

Historian speak the other evening at our SCV camp's regular monthly meeting. He reminded us that if we stop telling the story about our history, about our heritage, then someday it may be said that it never even happened. It is very sad that in this day in time, there are many who do not want to even mention the brave soldiers and sailors of the Confederacy let alone honor them for doing the same thing our other honorable veterans have done. They answered the call to arms and duty to protect their families, their county, their state and their nation. If we were to stop honoring our Confederate veterans today, who is to say that 150 years from now, the same thing could happen to our beloved World War II and Vietnam veterans or others? Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very thankful to the citizens of Anderson County Texas that this is not the case here.

Anderson County with its rich patriotic history has proclaimed with the passing of the resolution designating April as Confederate History and Heritage month that all of veterans who have or will in the future serve our citizens will be remembered for their sacrifices. It also says to me that the citizens who supported our veterans from the home front will be remembered too.

For its size, the citizens of Anderson County supplied a very large amount of materials needed by the Confederate States, like ginned cotton, manufactured cloth, ammunition, gun parts, and salt. Women at home sewed uniforms, knitted socks, and made blankets.

In 1862 when Granbury's 10th Texas Infantry was passing through Palestine, they had twenty-five very sick Confederate soldiers. The brigade had to march on and left the sick soldiers to the care of a group of local women and some men who stopped everything they were doing to organize and nurse them back to health. They moved them to the Hunter House or Hunter Hotel where the north wing with four rooms had been made into a hospital. These women would also read to the sick soldiers and write letters for them. Some of the names of those who helped included, Mrs. Joseph Stalcup, Mrs. J. D. Gooch, Mrs. John G. Stuart, Dr. H.H. Link, Dr. E. J. DeBard, Judge Perry and his wife, and Aunt Bee Small as superintendent at the hospital. Out of these twenty-five men, nine of them died and were buried at the old city cemetery the others rejoined their regiment. The identities of these

dead soldiers were lost over time. They have been called the unknown Confederate soldiers and the old John H. Reagan United Confederate Veterans Camp placed concrete markers for them years ago and in more recent years the Davis-Reagan Chapter #2292 of the UDC and the 12th Texas Infantry, a re-enactment group, ordered upright VA markers and placed them at the soldiers grave sites. Also, in recent years, one of our Reagan SCV Camp members, Gary Williams, did some extensive research and was able to identify the unit being the 10th Texas Infantry and also the identity of several of the unknown Confederate soldiers.

Most of the men who wore the gray were from very rural areas, they had not been exposed to very many people and thus common childhood diseases that were found in more heavily populated areas. You put them with several thousand other men and the inevitable happened. More so than in the Union Army, many Southerners died from disease. Confederate medical regulations printed early in the War listed 130 diseases under the main heading of "fevers." The most common ailments for the southern fighting men were measles, malaria, yellow fever, small pox, scarlet fever, pneumonia, consumption or tuberculosis, bronchitis, rheumatism, mumps, and typhoid fever.

I would like to mention here that there were a lot of slaves who accompanied the soldiers to war throughout the South. They were assigned to support duties like cooking, teamster, building defensive positions like breastworks, etc. which were vital to the war effort. Many of them also shouldered muskets. These men were exposed to the same hardships as any other man in the Confederate Army including cold, heat, lack of food, and disease. Also, it has been estimated that a large number of these men as well as free men of color saw the elephant, in other words, fought in battle for the Confederacy.

Many of these men, who served in various capacities, drew Confederate pensions from their respective states and were appreciated dearly by their fellow veterans. This has been documented from records and photographs taken at numerous United Confederate Veterans reunions after the War. These men deserve to be greatly honored.

There is no way I can speak here today without noting some of the contributions of the honorable John H. Reagan from Palestine who had been a local district judge and at the time of secession, a U.S. Representative from East Texas. He accepted a position in the newly formed Confederate States of America, that of Postmaster General in President Davis' Cabinet. The Confederate Postal Service was the only CSA department that did not lose money during the nation's four year existence. After the war, John H. Reagan was elected as a U.S. Senator from Texas and later served as the first Chairman of the Texas Railroad Commission and a founder a president of the Texas State Historical Association. Ben Procter, Professor of History at Texas Christian University and Reagan biographer, included John H. Reagan in his list of the "four greatest Texans of the 19 century", along with Sam Houston, Stephen F. Austin and Jim Stephen Hogg. Reagan County, Texas was named in his honor.

Approximately 1000 of the men who mustered into Confederate military service, marched off to war from the other side of this very county courthouse. They marched off to defend their families and homeland from what they felt was an invasion of an army of Northern aggression. They went off to war to defend States Rights and the Constitution. These men would form up in front of the Old Hunter Hotel, listen to speeches by dignitaries, and receive flag presentations from the ladies of the city and county, before marching eastward on Lacy Street. At that time, Lacy Street was the main road to Rusk and beyond. Many other Texas Confederate units from west of Palestine also marched through this city and down Lacy Street on their way to War. Prior to the day of departing for war these Anderson County soldiers would drill in a field further down Lacey Street that is located just inside the loop and now occupied by railroad tracks. These men were mostly farmers with some being merchants and attorneys, but they were certainly not just any ordinary men. Palestine had only been in existence for thirteen years when the war began and these men as well as their entire families were use to the hardship of the frontier. These men who marched off to fight were either the original settlers or their sons and had grown up fighting the wilderness and the Indians.

Companies G and H of the famous 1st Texas Infantry in General Hood's Brigade, were made up entirely of Anderson County men. Company G was known as the Reagan Guards and Company H as the Texas Guards. Local Historian Bonnie Woolverton has done extensive research on both of these units and you can find her papers which list the Anderson County men who served in these companies on the Internet. One of these men, who attained the rank of Colonel in January 1862, was local attorney, Alexis T. Rainey. He held the rank of captain when he organized and commanded company H of the first Texas Infantry. The men from the 1st Texas Infantry fought under General Longstreet's Corps which was first under General Johnston and later under General Lee in the Army of Northern Virginia and early in the war took part in the battles of Second Manassas, West Point, Seven Pines, Gaines' Mill, Sharpsburg and Fredericksburg.

In June of 1862 at the battle of Gaines' Mill, these Texans achieved immediate fame when they overtook a part of the Federal forces that occupied a very strong position on a hill on the east side of Gaines' Mill Creek losing many men and continuing the fight. Colonel Rainey was seriously wounded at this battle.

According to John H. Reagan, who visited the Texas Brigade at every opportunity when they were near Richmond, Virginia, "the Federals had three lines of infantry; one was stationed about a third of the distance from the foot of the hill, the second about half way up, and the third between that one and the top of the hill, which was probably 300 or 400 feet high. Their lines were protected by fallen trees, with a swamp and abattis one or two hundred yards wide in their front. The crown of the hill was occupied by the field batteries of the enemy. In order to attack this position the Confederate soldiers had to advance through a gradually descending open field. Two assaults had been repulsed, when, in the general movement of the forces, Hood's brigade was brought to its front. General Lee inquired of him whether he thought he could take it. Hood's answer was in the affirmative."

It so happened that the 1st Texas was the regiment launched first. And after taking that hill and having only a captain left alive to lead them, they went on to take out a battery on another hill. But on the way with only a small remainder of troops, was caught in a clearing and charged by a Union Cavalry Brigade. Col. Jerome

Robertson of the 5th Texas had broken through the Union line too and could see the 1st Texas. He said that when he saw General McCook's Union cavalry moving rapidly to the attack of the First Texas Regiment, and saw the small remainder of that regiment, it made his heart ache, as it seemed out of the question for them successfully to resist such a force. But he said the men quickly aligned and patiently awaited the attack, and that when the brigade got within range he never saw saddles emptied so fast. Immediately after the fight with the cavalry and taking the next hill, the First Texas had spotted another battery a mile ahead and were headed that way, when General T. J. Chambers who had been following them galloped to them and got them to stop and turn back before they were captured as they were getting far behind enemy lines.

The First Texas Regiment went into the battle of Gaines' Mill with more than eight hundred men; but came out of it, after their brilliant demonstration of courage and determination, with a roll call of a little over two hundred. After that on different occasions, John H. Reagan said General Lee urged him to assist in getting a whole division of Texans for his command, remarking that with such a force he would engage to break any line of battle on earth in an open field.

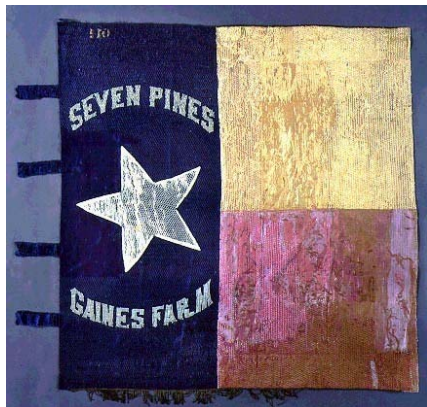
The Texas Brigade was the only Texas troops that fought under Robert E. Lee in the Army of Northern Virginia. The Texas Brigade, which consisted of the 1st Texas, 4th Texas, 5th Texas and the 3rd Arkansas Regiments continuously lost troops during the war, more men were recruited at various times from Texas including Anderson County.

The Texas Brigade was admired for having some of the best riflemen in the Army and they experienced an almost matchless and unsurpassed march across the pages of history. The First Texas Infantry, nicknamed the "Ragged Old First," experience its day of glory in the cornfield at Sharpsburg, Maryland. At the battle of Sharpsburg and early on the morning of September 17, 1862, the Texas Brigade was at Miller's Cornfield and helped blunt the attack of elements of Mansfield's Union Corps. Almost alone during this powerful Federal onslaught the Texas Brigade sealed a threatening gap in the Confederate line. In so doing the First Texas

Infantry Regiment suffered a casualty rate of 82.3 percent, the greatest loss suffered by any infantry regiment, North or South, during the war. They lost 8 flag bearers that day.

< Show the audience the replica of the Texas Brigade's Battle Flag. >

The Texas Brigade's original battle flag which was made by their first Colonel's wife, Mrs. Louis T. Wigfall by using some material from her wedding dress, was lost at the battle of Sharpsburg and returned to Texas in 1905 by President Theodore Roosevelt. Notice the Lone Texas star on the flag and how it is slightly tilted or leaning toward the fly end of the flag. That implied that the regiment would move, "always forward." This flag is now located in the State of Texas Library in Austin. It is one of many Confederate battle flags.



On May 20, 1863, Private West penned a letter to his wife in Texas and remarked, "We cannot be whipped, though they may kill us all."

Remember that many of the men in the First Texas were from Anderson County.

It is no surprise why General Lee responded to a criticism by British Colonel Fremantle on the way to Gettysburg concerning how the Texans were uniformed. General Lee said, "Never mind their raggedness, Colonel. The enemy never sees the back of my Texans." They were definitely some of General Lee's favorite troops.

The Texas brigade's most famous action probably took place on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, during its fight for Devil's Den. Though the Confederacy

ultimately lost that battle, the 1st Texas, 4th Texas, 5th Texas, and 3rd Arkansas distinguished themselves in taking Devil's Den despite being greatly outnumbered and suffering heavy casualties. This was where Pvt. William H. Foster from Anderson County, who had been with the 1st Texas Brigade since mustering in at Palestine early in the war, was captured and later died in a POW camp called Fort Delaware. Pvt. Foster's Great Great Grandson is standing right here with us. In fact Ronnie Hatfield has five Confederate ancestors who marched away from in front of the Hunter Hotel. Only three of them returned.

By the war's end, the Texas Brigade had fought in all the battles engaged in by the Army of Northern Virginia except Chancellorsville. They later fought with the Army of Tennessee at Chickamauga and during the Knoxville Campaign, as well as with Longstreet at Suffolk. Of the estimated 5,353 men who enlisted in the three Texas and one Arkansas regiments, only 617 remained to surrender at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. At sunrise on April 12, 1865 near Appomattox only 149 men of the 1st Texas Infantry Regiment remained to surrender their well-used Enfield's and bullet riddled flag to the Union troops. One Company had no survivors at all.

I know there are many of you here today that have the blood of some of these men or other brave Confederate soldiers running through your veins. You should be very, very proud of that.

As I call our camp's sergeant Ronnie Hatfield to the podium for him to read the Anderson County Resolution that declares April as Confederate History and Heritage Month and then raise the First National Flag, I humbly encourage you to be thinking about your Confederate ancestor and the 1000 who left this county to fight, the one third who never returned, and the 500 from across the Confederacy who rest here in cemeteries under our watchful eyes. The Confederate soldier was on the average, a very young man when he left, had most likely never been more than 20 or so miles from home, and strongly believed in God, Family, and Country. He was European-American, African-American, Hispanic-American, and Native-American. He was not white, black, brown or red... he was Confederate gray. All stood shoulder to shoulder

on the field of battle and all have more than earned the right to be honored and truthfully remembered in our history by this and future generations. It is that gray-clad warrior that we seek to honor with this resolution and along with their families and fellow citizens who supported them.

Reagan Camp's Sergeant-at-Arms Ronnie Hatfield will now come forward and read the resolution.

Reading of the Resolution

ANDERSON COUNTY RESOLUTION R-7-2011

Whereas, the Senate of the State of Texas, 76th Legislature, adopted Senate Resolution 526 on March 30th, 1999, recognizing the month of April as Confederate History and Heritage Month; and

Whereas, that resolution encouraged the schools and citizens of the State of Texas to join in efforts to become more knowledgeable of the role of the Confederate States of America in the history of our country; and

Whereas, April 2011 commemorates the sesquicentennial of the onset of the War Between the States; and

Whereas, Anderson County voters voiced their support of secession by a margin of 865 to 14; and

Whereas, almost 1,000 men from Anderson County elected to serve in the Confederate armed forces, filling out the ranks of 10 companies of Infantry and Cavalry; and

Whereas, Companies G and H of the 1st Texas Infantry Regiment were made up of men solely from Anderson County, and by written accounts were among General Robert E. Lee's favorites; and

Whereas, almost a third of Anderson County's finest gave their lives on battlefields and in POW camps while serving in the defense of Texas, Anderson County, and their families; and

Whereas, the cemeteries of Anderson County hold the remains of almost 500 Confederate veterans; and

Whereas, many of the descendants of those 1,000 Anderson County Confederates still reside in the county today, and are still proud of the heritage bequeathed to them from their ancestors; and

Whereas, Anderson County contributed not only her civilian soldiers, but material goods as well, in the form of the Iron Works near Plentitude, the Salt Works, west of Palestine, and the arms and munitions factory near Mound Prairie; and

Whereas, the Honorable John H. Reagan served as Postmaster General in the Confederate Cabinet, and U.S. Senator post-war, and called Palestine his home; now therefore be it

Resolved, that the Commissioner's Court, of and for the County of Anderson, State of Texas, henceforth recognizes the month of April as Confederate History and Heritage Month, and pays honor to its Confederate veterans and their legacy by adding the 1st National flag of the Confederacy, below and along with the U.S. and Texas flags, at the county courthouse during and throughout the month of April. The Court encourages the citizens of Anderson County to honor and remember those veterans, their sacrifices, and their contributions to the rich and colorful history of Anderson County and the State of Texas.

Flag Ceremony

Marc Robinson: I will now turn the flag ceremony over to Sergeant Ronnie Hatfield of the Reagan Guards.

*Before the bugle is signaled to play and as the color guard is attaching it to the halyards, Marc will **dedicate the flag**:

Marc Robinson: **This is the First National Flag of the Confederacy, also known as the Stars and Bars. We respectfully dedicate this flag for the use of the citizens of Anderson County.**

*Sgt. Ronnie Hatfield will signal Anne Coleman to begin playing the bugle as the U.S. and Texas flags are lowered and again as all three flags including the Confederate First National flag are raised.

Sgt. Ronnie Hatfield: As a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans, I would like to speak for the Confederate soldiers who are no longer with us, but who are waiting on us in heaven.... thank you for remembering us.

Benediction – Reagan Camp Chaplain Ed Furman

Chaplain Furman's prayer:

Most Heavenly Father, as this flag ceremony comes to an end, we would ask that you watch over all who participated and provide a safe passage home. Dear Lord, help us understand the importance of our heritage and the sacrifices of each armed conflict. Help us remember that it is how we deal with each conflict that determines our destiny as a nation and how we honor our warriors that makes us a nation of patriots. Dear Lord, go with us, guide, guard and direct us. Let honor be our purpose in life and truth be our standard.

In Jesus name, Amen

Marc Robinson: That concludes our ceremony. Thank you for sharing this moment with us.