



# Sons of Confederate Veterans

## The Hunley Torpedo



The Lt. Dixon-CSS Hunley Camp # 2016 of Sparks, Nevada

Number Five

Website: [www.dixon-hunley.org](http://www.dixon-hunley.org)

May 2008

### Camp Report

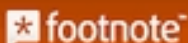
The Lt. Dixon-CSS Hunley Camp welcomes its newest members. They are:

Robert Griggs  
Christopher Haak

During the months of July and August, we won't have meetings in accord with an amendment to our camp constitution. Too many are on vacation during this period. For the first time, I will suspend publication of this newsletter during those months for this same reason. After our next newsletter in June, there won't be another or a meeting until September. In late July, dues notices will be mailed or sent via email. These dues will not affect those of you who joined in 2008.

Those signing up for genealogical services through the link below will generate a donation from Footnote to the SCV.

[www.footnote.com/scv.php?kbid=1162&xid=68](http://www.footnote.com/scv.php?kbid=1162&xid=68)



### Our June Flag Raising

Compatriots, in June of 1861 the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy was raised in Virginia City above Johnny Newman's saloon. This Nevada singularity produced a great uproar in Virginia City. In commemoration of this event we will raise it again as we have twice before. The two photos shown on this first page are from last year. **This will take place on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at about 11:30 a.m.** We have permission from the Delta Saloon to raise it mid-day for about two hours.

It is suggested that all attendees who want to see it raised be there by 11:30 a.m. This is a social and family event. Bring your wives, children, friends, even curious neighbors. As we did last year, we will have lunch together and there is plenty of refreshment available nearby or at the Delta Saloon. We'll make this a photo-op and an opportunity to interact with the public about this event and the SCV. **This will also be our June Meeting; there will not be a separate one on the second Saturday**, our usual day. We will also observe Jefferson Davis' birthday—June 3<sup>rd</sup> on this day.

**Y'all Come**



## The Comstock Re-enactors (CCWR)

Many of our men are re-enactors in both the Comstock Civil War Re-enactors and other groups. Our own Rodney Clifton is their Confederate Infantry Commander. Vic Genovese is the Confederate Brigade and Cavalry Commander, and David Morris is a former commander.

The CCWR and other such groups are a great source of family fun. They also serve to educate the public. Women as well as men can join and our youth can participate in some capacity at very young ages. In addition, many visitors who wish to be in the events can rent equipment and join the ranks.



These pictures are from the “Dog Island,” an event our Comstock Re-enactors participated in along with other groups. Some of the Johnnies in these photographs look mighty young—which is not too far off the reality of that war. Shown below: members of the CCWR and RACW Confederate Brigade salute the crowd after a battle during the “Dog Island State Park” re-enactment.

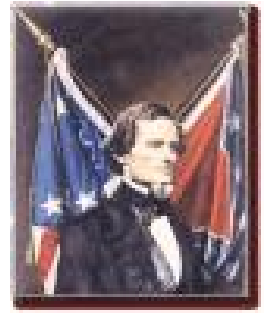


I recommend that anyone interested in pursuing this as a hobby or who would like information about future events contact Rodney Clifton at [longhorn1968@charter.net](mailto:longhorn1968@charter.net).

## Happy Birthday Mr. President

June 3<sup>rd</sup> was the birthday of Jefferson Davis, first and only President of the Confederate States of America. A West Point graduate, he was a hero of the Mexican-American War, planter, U.S. Senator from the State of Mississippi, and the best Secretary of War the U.S. ever had.

**We will raise a toast to him on June 7<sup>th</sup> at the flag raising.**



## The First White House of the Confederacy

Located in Montgomery, Alabama, this structure still exists and is very close to the State Capitol. It was the first official home of Jefferson Davis and his family until the capitol was moved to Richmond. In modern times this building was moved from its original location a few blocks away.



## A Memo from Jefferson Davis' Inauguration

*The whole city is agog on account of the arrival of President Jefferson Davis who reached here last night about eleven o'clock. The parlor of the Hotel was crowded with ladies and the passages and streets with men, I mingled with neither. Mr. Davis made a speech from the balcony of which I heard only a part. Mr. Yancey followed him in a few words well put up. Davis has remained in his room all day and is supposed to be preparing his inaugural. I learn that he avowed himself bitterly opposed to reconstruction [returning to the Union] in several speeches on the way and I hope he will put the question at rest in his inaugural. Crowds are pouring in from every direction . . .*

At right: Photo of Jeff Davis' inauguration, February 18, 1861 at the first Confederate Capitol in Montgomery, Ala.  
Below: The first Confederate Capitol as it looks today.



## Battle of Laredo March 19, 1864

The stage for this battle was actually set on November 2, 1863 when a force of nearly 7,000 Union troops landed at Brazos Island, off the Texas coast, after a stormy passage from New Orleans, LA. This troop movement was part of the Union plan, led by Major General Nathaniel Banks to cut off the flow of cotton and seize Texas for the Union. Three days later, the Union force landed at the mouth of the Rio Grande River and began to march on Brownsville, 30 miles away. Confederate defenders, led by Brigadier General Hamilton P. Bee, numbering about 100, had no choice but to evacuate the town. Forty-five wagons carried supplies toward the Nueces River as troops destroyed Fort Brown and as much cotton as they could. The fire soon went out of control and destroyed an entire block along the riverfront. Adding to the destruction was an explosion involving 8,000 pounds of gunpowder.

At 10:00 a.m. on November 6, 1863, the 94<sup>th</sup> Illinois Regiment entered Brownsville, facing light resistance. At 3:00 p.m., with assistance from the 1<sup>st</sup> Missouri Light Artillery and the 13<sup>th</sup> Maine Regiment, the town was secured. Brownsville would be used as a base for expeditions up the Rio Grande in order to cut off a route for goods that entered the Confederacy from Mexico.

Late in November, a force of 1500, consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Texas (Union) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas (Union) Cavalry regiments, under the command of Brigadier General Edmund Jackson Davis, a Unionist Texan. The 1<sup>st</sup> was a unit that came over from New Orleans while the 2<sup>nd</sup> was formed in Brownsville and composed of Unionist Hispanics. The force went up the Rio Grande aboard the steamer Mustang and seized Ringgold Barracks and the town of Roma with no resistance. As word of the advance spread up the river to the town of Laredo, a local leader, Santos Benavides, who was a local merchant and political leader, became concerned. As leader of Laredo's Hispanic population, and one time mayor in 1856, he had thrown in his lot with the Confederacy as other Hispanics became pro-Unionists. This was the condition along the river as various factions vied for supremacy. With the withdrawal of General Bee's troops, Benavides, a Confederate Colonel, had the only creditable force in South Texas, and that wasn't much. Fortunately, the Federals halted for the winter, allowing the Rebels to gather supplies for the fight that was surely coming.

Early in 1864, a reconnaissance force of 25 led by Lieutenant Martin Gonzales left Laredo and rode 200 miles into deep South Texas and managed to track Federal movements, revealing that Davis' troops were on the move and heading for Laredo. On March 17, 1864, Confederate troops under Colonel John "Rip" Ford left San Antonio on what was called the "Rio Grande Expedition" hoping to take back the lower Rio Grande Valley. The lead elements were ambushed by Union guerrillas under Cecilio Valerio, a pro-Union Hispanic attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas (Union), and stopped. This left Benavides with only a total of 72 militiamen in order to defend Laredo.

March 19, 1864: a relative of Benavides named Cayetano de la Garze rode into Laredo and reported that a force of 1000 was approaching the town. Benavides ordered bales of cotton, at the time being stacked for shipment into Mexico, be used as barricades in case of street to street fighting. He also ordered the cotton burned if things went against the Confederates. As citizen volunteers lined the roofs of Laredo, Benavides, also ailing, led his small force out to face the enemy.

The Federal force approaching Laredo actually consisted of 200 men, half under Valerio and the other half under Jim Fisk, another guerilla. In order to get to Laredo, the Federals crossed into Mexico and rode up the south bank until they were within a few miles of their objective, then they crossed the river again and soon was within a half mile of the town. Benavides placed his 42 men into a corral east of town and sent the remainder

## **Battle of Laredo continued:**

into Laredo as a final defensive line. As the Union troops approached the corral, they split into groups of 40 and began to launch their attack. Through three hours of fighting, Benavides' men held off the Federals with no Rebel casualties, but managed to inflict substantial losses on them. After three heavy assaults and with night falling, the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Texas (Union) had to retreat to the southeast and make camp three miles away. In the early morning hours of March 20, Confederate cavalry, who were in a camp 25 miles to the north, arrived to reinforce Benavides, with the added effect of forcing the Union force to break camp and retreat further away. On March 21, a scouting party sent from Laredo and commanded by Benavides' brother Refugio found a trail of abandoned equipment, some of it bloody, and spotting several groups of Federals who were running back toward Brownsville. The Federal force had totally broken.

Benavides' illness caught up with him and he collapsed while checking out a report on another force of Union troops approaching Laredo (this turned out to be one of his own scouting parties). Soon, help arrived in the form of Colonel Ford's troops from San Antonio, the ambush only delaying them. Laredo became the staging area for a new Confederate offensive to drive the Federals from South Texas. Benavides had to sit out the first stages of the offensive due to his illness, but recovered in time to participate in driving the Federals from Brownsville and ending Edmund Davis' dream to reconquer Texas for the Union.

Following the end of the Civil War, Benavides would return to his businesses and Davis returned to Texas as Governor (one of the worst ever), both would become friends.



## **Efficiency of the Confederate Postal Service**

Unknown to most Americans is that the Confederate Postal Service under Postmaster John H. Reagan of Texas, operated in the green and paid for itself throughout the war. Reagan managed to keep postage rates relatively cheap and affordable. Nor was its service easily interrupted as you can read from the excerpt below:

The Confederate postal service did operate in West Virginia, and continued in operation as an organized service at various places after statehood was achieved, and on down until very shortly before the final scene at Appomattox. Official records are lacking—the story of the Confederate post offices west of the mountains must be patched together from little scraps and mentions in letters, diaries, newspapers, and the recollections of persons who had first-hand knowledge of the events of the wartime years. The only official evidence of Confederate operation of post offices west of the mountains is found in the postmarked envelopes (covers, as termed by collectors) which are treasured in a great many outstanding Confederate philatelic collections. These covers are exceedingly scarce and when offered on the market usually command a premium over items of like date bearing the postmarks of offices east of the mountains. A minimum estimate of the post offices in West Virginia that were operated by the Confederacy would number well over fifty, but only a few of the major offices can be certainly identified as having once served under the Stars and Bars. But starting with Harpers Ferry, at the tip of the Eastern Panhandle, the line of known Confederate post offices runs to the south and south-west through Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, Charles Town, Rippon, Moorefield, Franklin, Romney, Travellers Repose (now Bartow), Huntersville, White Sulphur Springs, Frankford, Lewisburg, Red Sulphur Springs, Salt Sulphur Springs, Union and Peterstown -- the last five offices named are in Monroe County. Reaching into the interior there are several covers bearing the Beverly manuscript postal markings, and on to the south Fayetteville and Kanawha Court House (now Charleston) served briefly under the Confederates.

## Echoes from the Past

### Black Mississippi Legislator Defends Confederate Monument

In Mississippi on February 1, 1890, an appropriation for a monument to the Confederate dead was being considered. A delegate had just spoken against the bill, when John F. Harris, a Black Republican delegate from Washington, county, rose to speak:

"Mr. Speaker! I have risen in my place to offer a few words on the bill. I have come from a sick bed. Perhaps it was not prudent for me to come. But sir, I could not rest quietly in my room without contributing a few remarks of my own. I was sorry to hear the speech of the young gentlemen from Marshall County. I am sorry that any son of a soldier would go on record as opposed to the erections of a monument in honor of the brave dead. And, Sir, I am convinced that had he seen what I saw at Seven Pines, and in the Seven Day's fighting around Richmond, the battlefield covered with mangled forms of those who fought for this country and their country's honor, he would not have made the speech. When the news came that the South had been invaded, those men went forth to fight for what they believed, and they made not requests for monuments. But they died, and their virtues should be remembered. Sir, I went with them. I, too, wore the gray, the same color my master wore. We stayed for four long years, and if that war had gone on till now I would have been there yet. I want to honor those brave men who died for their convictions. When my Mother died I was a boy. Who, Sir, then acted the part of Mother to the orphaned slave boy, but my old Missus! Were she living now, or could speak to me from those high realms where are gathered the sainted dead, she would tell me to vote for this bill. And, Sir, I shall vote for it. I want it known to all the world that my vote is given in favor of the bill to erect a monument in HONOR OF THE CONFEDERATE DEAD."

When the applause died down, the measure passed overwhelmingly, and every Black member voted "AYE."  
(Source: War For What?)



### A Major Victory Attributed to the Confederate Railroads

The bloodiest two-day battle of the war and the biggest battle fought in the West, the Battle of Chickamauga—was a Confederate victory. The movement of Longstreet's troops was crucial. It was his men who broke the Yankee line at Chickamauga. I recommend for those able, to visit the National Park at Chickamauga. The point where Longstreet's men penetrated the enemy line is clearly marked.

The Confederate railroad troop movement was intended to relieve Confederate General Bragg in what George Edgar Turner called "the outstanding operational feat of the Confederate railroads during the war." Longstreet's two divisions of infantry and a battalion of artillery were transported over 1,000 miles and on ten different railroads from northern Virginia to Ringgold, Georgia, 22 miles south of Chattanooga. Trains began to move September 9, 1863. However, the Confederacy's lack of connecting east-west railroads and their different track gauges greatly complicated the move. As a result, Longstreet and only five of his brigades were all that made it in time to assist Bragg in the Battle of Chickamauga on September 20. The trains with the artillery arrived five days after the battle was over. Nonetheless, Bragg was able to defeat the Union army under General Rosecrans at Chickamauga. Rosecrans then retreated into Chattanooga where he was besieged by Bragg.

# The Heritage Page

**BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC** – The Southern Legal Resource Center has demanded that a Blount County high school drop its ban on the display of Confederate symbols by its students, or face a lawsuit similar to one now under way against the other high school in the county.

In a letter sent Friday to Heritage High School Principal Patty Mandigo, the SLRC said it is acting on behalf of Heritage High student Spencer Stinnett, who has been subjected to several instances of disciplinary action for displaying the Confederate flag in various forms. The letter says the school's anti-Confederate symbols policy is based on regulations that are legally flawed and selectively enforced. It further states that if the school does not remove its ban voluntarily, the SLRC “will be forced to take sterner measures to vindicate our clients' rights.” According to the letter, in addition to violation of his free speech rights, the flag ban also subjects Stinnett to religious discrimination because the Confederate battle flag features St. Andrew's Cross, and also to racial discrimination because it institutionalizes the idea that Confederate symbols represent slavery and white supremacy, an idea which the SLRC says schools could help overcome through dialogue and proper education. “By banning Confederate symbols without a proper explanation of the meaning of the symbol, or, worse, by deliberately equating these symbols with ‘racism’ as an excuse for banning them, the school partakes of precisely the same bigotry it claims to denounce,” the letter states.

In March of 2006 the SLRC and Knoxville Attorney Van Irion sued Blount County schools in similar circumstances, on behalf of two minor students. That case is now scheduled to be heard by the U. S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in early June. The case is based in part on the precedent set by another SLRC case, *Castorina v. Madison County Schools*, in which a Kentucky school board's ban on Confederate symbols was overturned. The *Castorina* decision is thus established law in the Sixth Circuit, which includes Tennessee .

In February of this year a Knoxville television station reported that taxpayer costs of the first lawsuit, including wrangling over a preliminary injunction requested by the SLRC, already exceeded \$53,000.

## The Ringgold Depot



**Pictured Above:** *The Ringgold Depot, showing the Confederate Battle Flag in place before it was removed in the spring of 2005. The City of Ringgold replaced the Battle Flag with a Hardee/Cleburne pattern corps flag after local NAACP leaders protested the Battle Flag's presence. Acting for the Georgia Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the local Ringgold SCV Camp, the SLRC attempted to explain to Ringgold City Council why the Battle Flag was the one that should be displayed at the depot, but the council ignored both that letter and a subsequent demand, thus inviting legal action to compel them to restore the original flag.*



# Good People to Do Business With



**LARRY M. HEUER**  
PRESIDENT



**HEUER INSURANCE AGENCY**

POST OFFICE BOX 50850  
5050 VISTA BLVD.  
SUITE 101  
SPARKS, NEVADA 89435-0850  
TEL: (775) 358-5554 X222  
FAX: (775) 358-5596  
EMAIL: Lheuer@heuerinsurance.com



The oldest independent insurance agency in the valley. With personalized service the Heuer Agency offers coverage for all your needs. Family owned; see Larry, Adam or Dustin.



**J. Michael Libke, DDS**  
GENERAL DENTISTRY

775.322.1388  
1100 California Avenue  
Reno NV 89509  
jmlibkedds@sbcbglobal.net

Second generation dentist in this area, Dr. Libke has over two dozen years experience in his field. Highly recommended professional care!

**SID'S AUTO CARE**  
foreign & domestic auto repair

**SID HAMM**  
OWNER-40+years Experience

1730 Shaber Ave#c  
sparks, nv. 89431  
@ CORNER OF ROCK&SHABER  
(775)358-4488



Sid has provided expert service for many of our members for engine and related problems. He is a mechanic you can trust.



**Bruce or Diane Bowyer**  
Referring Travel Agent

Vacation Packages Flights Cars and More...  
Book Travel: [www.gotraveleverywhere.com](http://www.gotraveleverywhere.com)

Phone: 775-781-4770  
Email: [gotravelverywhere@msn.com](mailto:gotravelverywhere@msn.com)  
Your Travel Store [www.gotraveleverywhere.info](http://www.gotraveleverywhere.info)

Are you planning a trip? The Bowyers, Bruce and Diane offer fully competitive service and rates for the full range of your needs.



**AMVETS**  
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA  
SERVICE AND REHABILITATION  
DEPARTMENT



**JOSEPH R. SCAMIHORN**  
SUPERVISOR/SERVICE OFFICER

V.A. REGIONAL OFFICE (775) 329-9833  
5460 RENO CORPORATE DR. RM 151 (775) 321-4890  
Reno, NV 89511 FAX (775) 329-6054

*SERVING WITH PRIDE*

30 Years Service in the U.S. Navy [WWII, Korea and Vietnam]; Joe has assisted hundreds of veterans to obtain their benefits. Contact him for any service connected injury.

## Virginia City Publishing Company



**Lee Cross,** Author

Phone: 775-359-8453

Email: [vcpubco@yahoo.com](mailto:vcpubco@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.bookimagineer.com](http://www.bookimagineer.com)

Our new website is up and running at [www.bookimagineer.com](http://www.bookimagineer.com). Author / Publisher Lee Cross' works can be viewed and ordered.