



The Texas Union Herald



Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18
Department of Texas
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Volume ii, Issue 11, November 2017

Rattling Sabres

by
Glen E. Zook

I have been not only burning the candle at both ends, but in the middle as well! Unfortunately, getting out this edition of The Texas Union Herald has not been at the top of the list. As such, I definitely have to apologize for the lateness of this November 2017 edition.

Coming up with topics for editorials can be daunting at times. Sometimes subject matters are obvious and there are times when I have to do some searching to find something to write about. This has been one of those times! Looking for a historical tie to the Civil War, I decided on Thanksgiving!

Before 1863, Thanksgiving was a haphazard celebration generally held during the Fall. Although the holiday is commonly thought to have begun with the Pilgrims at Plymouth, such celebrations were held, in the New World, over a century before by both the Spanish and French. In fact, even within the English settlements those held at Plymouth were not the first such celebrations held.

In Virginia, at Jamestowne Colony, Thanksgiving celebrations were held starting in 1610. Obviously, both my wife and I had ancestors who participated in these events! My wife had 2-each ancestors, one who came over with the very first settlers and the second who came over with the second group less than a year later, and I had an ancestor who came over with the third group less than two years after the first group. Our ancestors knew each other almost 350-years before we met, in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1964!

In 1619, a group of settlers came to Virginia to settle at the Berekeley Hundred site and their charter, from the London Company, specified that a yearly celebration of thanksgiving to Almighty God be held. This was 2-years before the Pilgrim Thanksgiving in Plymouth in 1621. After the Indian massacre of 1622, the Berekeley Hundred site was abandoned and what was left of the population moved to Jamestowne where the celebrations continued to be held.

The first Plymouth celebration was described by William Bradford as such:

“They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as

winter approached, of which this place did abound when they can be used (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides, they had about a peck a meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to the proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned but true reports.”

Another description was by Edward Winslow:

“Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruits of our labor. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which we brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.”

Other colonies celebrated Thanksgiving at various times of the year up to the Revolutionary War when, in 1777, the first National Proclamation of Thanksgiving was drafted by Samuel Adams and adopted by Congress.

Until the Civil War, Thanksgiving was held at various times of the year in various states. Then, in 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the following proclamation:

“The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe had enlarged the borders of our

settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years, with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-eighth."

Proclamation of President Abraham Lincoln,
October 3, 1863

Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of November continued until 1939 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed the 4th Thursday to be Thanksgiving. 1939 had 5-Thursdays and Roosevelt wanted to give merchants more time between Thanksgiving and Christmas for handling Christmas sales. There was some opposition to having Thanksgiving on the 4th Thursday but, in December 1941 Congress passed a law stating that the 4th Thursday was to be Thanksgiving.

However, several states still kept Thanksgiving on the last Thursday whenever there were 5-Thursdays in the month. Texas was the last state to finally go with the 4th Thursday no matter if there were 5 Thursdays in November. This happened in 1956.

Getting away from Thanksgiving. I will be presenting the program at the November Camp meeting. The subject will be the United States Army Camel Corps.

Be there or be square!

Until next month

November Meeting

The November 2017 meeting of the
Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18
SUCW

Will be held on
Tuesday 21 November 2017
At the
Heritage Farmstead Museum, Plano, TX.

November Birthdays



A. A. Humphreys
2 November 1810



Benjamin Butler
5 November 1818



William Averell
5 November 1832



Oliver O. Howard
8 November 1830



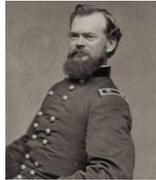
Edward R. S. Canby
9 November 1817



Alfred H. Terry
10 November 1827



Joseph Hooker
13 November 1814



James B. McPherson
14 November 1828



Franz Sigel
18 November 1824



Nathan Kimball
22 November 1822



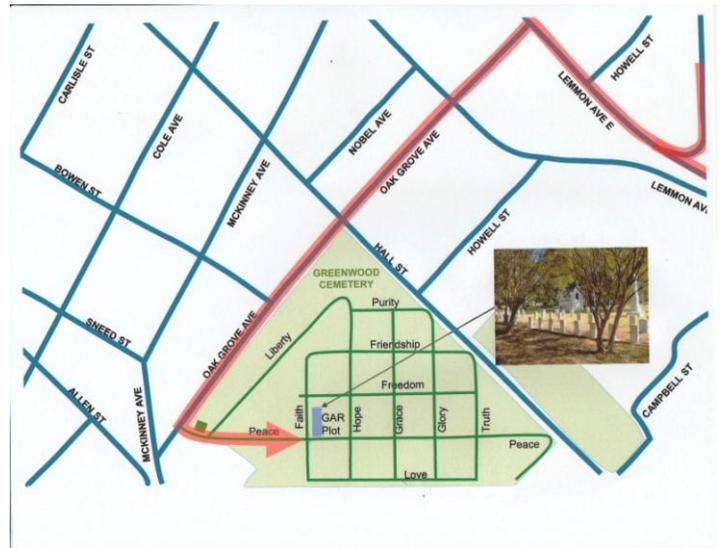
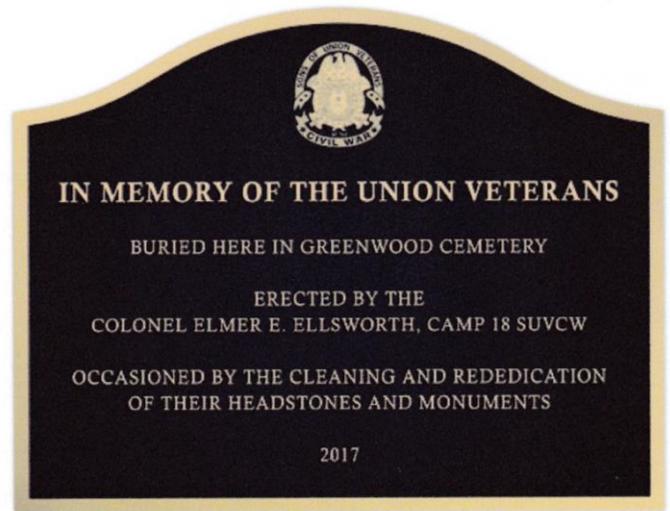
Steven A. Hurlbut
29 November 1815



Please mark your calendars and make plans to attend the rededication of the Monument and Headstones at Greenwood Cemetery. We will be celebrating their recent cleaning and have installed a plaque to commemorate the occasion. We are planning a brief ceremony and plan to have a uniformed SVR detail to fire three volleys. We will be meeting at **2 PM, Saturday November 18, 2017** at the GAR Plot in Greenwood Cemetery in Dallas. Please see the attached map, the red line shows how to get to the cemetery from the Lemmon Ave exit on US Highway 75, Central Expressway. I have also attached a picture of the plaque. If you are interested in participating in the ceremony please contact me for additional information. I look forward to seeing you there.

In Fraternity, Charity and Loyalty,

Don Gates, PDC



By The President of the United States

A Proclamation

Respecting Soldiers absent without leave.

Executive Mansion,
March 10, 1863

In pursuance of the twenty-sixth section of the act of Congress, entitled "An act for enrolling and calling out the National Forces, and for other purposes," approved on the third day of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, do hereby order and command, that all soldiers enlisted or drafted in the service of the United States, now absent from their regiments without leave, shall forthwith return to their respective regiments.

And I do hereby declare and proclaim, that all soldiers now absent from their respective regiments without leave, who shall, on or before the first day of April, 1863, report themselves at any rendezvous designated by the General Orders of the War Department number fifty-eight, hereto annexed, may be restored to their respective regiments without punishment, except the forfeiture of pay and allowances during their absence; and all who do not return within the time above specified shall be arrested as deserters, and punished as the law provides.

And whereas evil-disposed and disloyal persons at sundry places have enticed and procured soldiers to desert and absent themselves from their regiments, thereby weakening the strength of the armies and prolonging the war, giving aid and comfort to the enemy, and cruelly exposing the gallant and faithful soldiers remaining in the ranks to increased hardships and danger, I do therefore call upon all patriotic and faithful citizens to oppose and resist the aforementioned dangerous and treasonable crimes, and to aid in restoring to their regiments all soldiers absent without leave, and to assist in the execution of the act of Congress "for enrolling and calling out the National Forces, and for other purposes," and to support the proper authorities in the prosecution and punishment of offenders against said act, and in suppressing the insurrection and rebellion.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand.

Done at the city of Washington, this tenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By the President:
Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

Being the incident, adventure and
wayside exploit of the
Bivouac and Battle Field
As related by
Veteran Soldiers Themselves

By
Washington, Davis

A. B. Gehman & Co.
1888

We arrived in the vicinity of the prisoners' camp on the 15th of April, having marched about 125 miles in seven days. The camp was situated about three miles east of Tyler, in Smith county, Texas, and called Camp Ford. It was inclosed by a stockade made of heavy timbers split in halves and firmly set in the ground on end. Originally it contained only three acres, but had been enlarged recently to about seven, in order to accommodate the new arrival. We remained where we camped for the night, until the afternoon of the next day, when we were moved inside the stockade. We had not expected a paradise, but we felt that after such accommodations as we had on the march – no shelter or blankets, except such as we bought or traded for – it would be a relief to get some place in which to lie down in shelter at night. Imagine our surprise when we came in sight of the camp. Inside the pen there were a few log-cabins and dug-outs, crowded together promiscuously in one corner. On the tops of these, and on the highest points, were gathered a motley crew of about six hundred, in very ragged clothing, to get a glimpse of the new-comers, about whom big tales had been told them. The remainder of the inclosure was a newly cleared piece of woodland, with nothing on it but stumps, a few brush heaps, and some old logs. Our hearts almost sank within us. But into the stockade we went, and on the unoccupied part were drawn up in parallel lines about twenty feet apart. Here we were counted and delivered to the commandant of the prison, one Colonel Allen, who addressed us in a few words, telling what he expected us to do, and closing with: "Now, gentlemen, these are your quarters – make yourself as comfortable as possible." With nothing but the blue heavens for a covering and the naked earth for a bed, and nothing within reach but a few brush heaps, to be told to make ourselves comfortable, we thought was decidedly cool.

The old prisoners gathered around us, anxious to hear the news from the outside world, and the remainder of the evening was spent in chatting and partaking of what the older inhabitants could spare from their scanty fare. The officers of our party were taken into the cabins of the officers already there, who shared with us their limited quarters; but the privates could only set fire to some of the brush heaps and logs, and huddle around them as best they could for the night. Many following nights were passed in the same way before shelter of any kind could be had. The officers were first permitted to go out to the woods under guard, and cut and carry in timbers to build themselves quarters, which was accomplished in a few days. Then the men were allowed to go out in small parties, but the process

The Alligator

was so slow that the best that could be done was to get poles and brush with leaves to make arbors for the shelter from the sun by day and the dews by night. Some of the more energetic and persistent ones succeeded in getting a clapboard roof, but a great many spent most of the summer with nothing but brush roofs. Some made dug-outs, and covered with earth a place just large enough for two or three to sleep in. As winter approached we were allowed to go out in greater numbers, under a strong guard, and carry timbers for more than half a mile. By Christmas most of the inmates had pretty fair quarters, and the camp assumed a better appearance.

Our rations were delivered in bulk to persons designated by ourselves to receive and distribute them, and consisted of corn meal, fresh beef and salt. A pint of corn meal and a pound of beef was our daily allowance per man, with sufficient salt to season them. Occasionally during the earlier part of our stay, rye was issued for coffee. Twice the corn meal failed for several days at a time, and whole corn shelled was issued instead. Some amusement was created during its delivery. When the wagon would make its appearance, the boys would start from different parts of the camp toward the delivery place, calling "Whoo-e-e! Whoo-e-e!" as though calling hogs to their feed. The corn, however, answered a good purpose, as it was a change, the boys making it into hominy. Our beef during the summer was passable, but late in the fall it got so poor that it scarcely tasted like beef. A detail of our men butchered the beeves and quartered them, then the rebel guard picked out the best of the hind quarters, and the remainder was brought into the stockade. When the beef got so poor the guard complained to their officer, but no attention was paid to them. Finally, one day after drawing their portions, they carried it in procession to the woods, dug a hole, put it in, fired three rounds of musketry over it, then buried it. After that they got bacon, and in two weeks afterward bacon was issued to us regularly, a quarter of a pound being the allowance per man for a day, and we were rejoiced at the change.

No clothing was issued to us by the Confederate authorities during our imprisonment, except a few very coarse hats and shoes. I saw men go for months without a shirt to their back, and no covering but a pair of ragged pants or drawers. Lieut.-Colonel Leake, of Iowa, with about four hundred men, had spent the previous winter in the stockade, and were forwarded for exchange in July. When they arrived at Shreveport the authorities became ashamed of their naked appearance, and offered to issue them clothing, but the brave Colonel promptly refused the offer, saying:

"We will go into our lines in the same condition that we have been prisoners."

Although the C.S.S. Hunley is well known, the Union also undertook the design and building of a submarine. This vessel was known as the U.S.S. Alligator.

Since the Union had far greater naval resources than did the Confederacy, it had less interest - and much less need - in developing a submersible warship. As with Confederate efforts, the first experiments were conducted by private interests, but the Federal government became involved in the process much earlier than the Confederate government. Despite this Union efforts were even less successful than were the Confederate ones. Union efforts to build a submarine were inextricably linked to Brutus de Villeroi.

Villeroi had considerable experience in submarine design, having conducted numerous experiments in his native France: in 1835 he spent two hours under water in a vessel of his own design, in an experiment witnessed by seven-year old Jules Verne.

Villeroi was in the United States at the beginning of the war, working on a number of ideas. He built and tested an experimental submarine, which had been refitted and somewhat redesigned. As was the case with a number of technical innovations - machines guns, balloons - Lincoln was impressed. He ordered the Navy to conduct tests, and was impressed even more.

As a result, the Navy ordered a submarine. This vessel, named Alligator, caused a great deal of dispute between the designer and the builder and the Navy over many technical questions. As completed, she emerged with a kind of oared propulsion system, despite the fact that Villeroi's original design was screw driven. Alligator made an exploratory cruise in Hampton Roads in mid-1862, which proved somewhat satisfactory, but she was shortly thereafter lost while under tow off Cape Hatteras. This ended Union interest in submarines.

This edition of
The Texas **Union** Herald
is a bit thin!

However, next month's edition should
be a lot "thicker" with articles
provided by past National
Commander in chief
Donald E. Darby
Among others.



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Glen E. Zook
The Texas **Union** Herald
410 Lawndale Drive
Richardson, Texas 75080

E-Mail: texasunionherald@sbcglobal.net

Telephone: (972) 231-3987
(972) 231-5011

Articles, news items, features, and the like are welcomed for publication in **The Texas Union Herald**. Deadline is normally the 1st of the month of the cover date of publication. Submissions may be handwritten, typewritten, or submitted in any of the popular computer formats (Microsoft Word, Open Office, Word Perfect, and ASCII). Please contact the editor for details.

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Articles Needed!

If the members of the **Colonel E.E. Ellsworth Camp #18** do not want to be inundated with articles that were chosen by the editor (what he wants to see in the newsletter) then they need to start inputting items for inclusion in **The Texas Union Herald**. Tidbits about the Civil War, stories, articles, current news items, photographs, even commentaries are most welcome.

Don't worry if you are not an accomplished author. Get the idea onto paper (computer, etc.) and get it to the editor. He really can edit (rewrite, etc.) and you'll be surprised at just how well you can write!

If you have E-Mail capabilities, you can either include the information in the body of the message or put it in either Word format or ACSII ("txt") format. If, for some reason, you cannot do either, contact the editor to see if your particular word processor format can be handled.

If "hard" copy, make sure the copy is legible (can be read by someone else!). Typewritten, computer printed, even in Crayon on "Big Chief" tablet is acceptable. Just get the information in!

Even small (1 or 2 paragraphs) material, or photographs, can be used. That makes editing and publishing the newsletter easier since "fill" material is available for those little areas that seem to happen whenever an article is included in the publication.

Mailing Address:

Editor
Texas **Union** Herald
410 Lawndale Drive
Richardson, Texas 75080

E-Mail: texasunionherald@sbcglobal.net

Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18 Camp Officers

Commander	John Schneider schneider1@sbcglobal.net
SVC	Rick Erder rerder@verizon.net
JVC	Paul Ridenour paulridenour@tx.rr.com
Secretary	Don Gates d_gates@verizon.net
Treasurer	Don Gates d_gates@verizon.net
Chaplain	Larry Johnson
Patriotic Instructor	Drake Peddie dmpeddie@aol.com
Graves Registration	Open
Historian	Don Gates d_gates@verizon.net
Civil War Memorials	Open
Eagle Scout Coordinator	John Schneider schneider1@sbcglobal.net
Editor	Glen E. Zook gezook@sbcglobal.net texasunionherald@sbcglobal.net

