



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Notes from the President 1/2017

Happy New Year to the Members of the BCWRT

Historian and re-enactor **Michael Schaffer** will start 2017 on **January 24** when he makes his Power Point based presentation on the significance of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Historian and author **Greg Clemmer** looks into the life of CSA Gen. "Allegany" Johnson on **February 28** and on **March 28**, author **David Craig** will take a different approach to the Civil war as he speaks on his latest book which focuses on vintage postcards from Gettysburg.

Our Annual banquet will occur on **April 25**. The banquet speaker will be announced in the near future. In recent years, the banquet has barely broke even. This should always be a profitable event for our organization. I will be seeking volunteers to work on a banquet committee to achieve this goal. The committee will work with Don Macreadie on ticket sales, publicity, etc.

In November and December, I presented and the body approved initial participation in a project to form, with a few Presidents of other roundtables throughout the country, what is tentatively being called the CWRT Congress. Unfortunately, I had to drop out of the project due to recent health problems that will restrict some of my activities for about six weeks. This will not interfere with any BCWRT plans since we try to plan well ahead of schedule. Don't worry about me. I just won't be making any battlefield charges during the early part of 2017. I will keep you informed of any CWRT Congress plans.

Remember, we are always looking for new members. Invite a friend to our meetings.

R. Ford

Historic Burnside Bridge Restoration Project Completed

NPS Press release December 2016

The Burnside Bridge restoration is complete and the bridge is once again open for visitors to cross. For the last 15 months significant repairs have been made to the historic structure that will insure the iconic bridge's long term structural stability. The bridge was built in 1836 and was made famous during the Battle of Antietam. In January of 2014 a section of the stone wall on the upstream side of the bridge collapsed into Antietam Creek. Temporary repairs were made and an engineering assessment of the entire structure was undertaken. The investigation revealed substantial deterioration of the walls and significant water infiltration contributing to the structural instability of the bridge.

The bridge was closed in October of 2015 for repairs. Phase I of the project focused on the on the in-stream work, repairing and strengthening the stone piers and arches. Portable dams were installed in the creek that diverted the water while this work was completed. During Phase II the bridge walls were selectively dismantled and rebuilt. Every stone was painstakingly mapped, recorded and replaced as close as possible to its original location.

Once the masonry work was complete, the wood coping was completely replaced and the bridge

was resurfaced. The contract was managed by the National Park Service Historic Preservation Training Center (HPTC). The Center was founded in 1977 to meet the growing demand for craft skills development for NPS employees tasked with preserving the thousands of historic structures within the National Park System. HPTC is currently located in Frederick, Maryland within the Monocacy National Battlefield.

\$200,000 anonymous donation to help restore Fort Sumter cannons

By Dave Munday, Charleston Post and Courier, Dec 6, 2016

An anonymous \$200,000 donation will help restore Civil War cannons at one of South Carolina's most prominent visitor attractions.

The gift to the National Park Service's Fort Sumter National Memorial was made in the name of the donor's father, a Citadel graduate, according to the Fort Sumter-Fort Moultrie Historical Trust.

The donor asked not to be identified publicly, trust coordinator Carlin Timmons said Tuesday.

"We were just blown away," Timmons said. "We were hand to mouth, that's really the truth."

The trust has been raising money to restore the cannons at Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island and Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor since 2013. All them at Fort Moultrie and some at Fort Sumter have been restored. The new six-figure donation will help restore the remaining 11 Parrott rifles at Fort Sumter.

The cannons are called rifles because of rifling in the barrels, according to retired Fort Sumter historian Rick Hatcher. They fired



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100-pound elongated projectiles through barrels with a 6.4-inch bore. A big question Hatcher hopes the restoration will help answer is where the cannons were used during the Civil War. They weren't moved to Fort Sumter until 1870, about five years after the war was over, he said.



NPS Photo

As layers of paint are stripped away, information on the barrels reveals where and when the cannons were made. So far, it appears they were cast in 1862 and 1863. Hatcher hopes to take that information to the National Archives to find out where they were used.

"It's a possibility that during the Civil War these cannons were actually on Morris Island shelling Fort Sumter and other places," he said.

Confederate troops captured the fort from the Union in 1861 and repelled numerous attempts to recapture it until 1865.

The trust also noted significant donations for the cannon restoration from the Roanoke Civil War Roundtable and the American Civil War Roundtable UK, as well as federal funds.

Donations also helped 4,000 students from schools that serve low-income populations visit Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie and the Charles Pinckney historic site this year. The trust noted grants from the National Park Foundation, Wells Fargo Bank, Wal-Mart and Firefly Sunset Resort.

Contributions also made possible events that celebrated the park service's 100th birthday this year, including a spring concert at Fort Moultrie, a summer evening at Fort Sumter, and the U.S. Mint's fall release of a quarter honoring Sergeant Jasper. The trust noted sponsorships from First Citizens, SouthState, Production Design Associates, Fort Sumter Tours and Eastern National, as well as individual contributions.

'The Fighting Lady': James Longstreet's remarkable second wife

By John Banks, January 7, 2017

Nearly eight years after his first wife, Mary Louisa, died, the man who once played matchmaker for Ulysses Grant was eager again for steady female companionship. "Old men get lonely," 76-year-old James Longstreet told a newspaper reporter in late summer 1897, "and must have company." Vilified throughout much of the South after the Civil War, Robert E. Lee's "Old War Horse" led an almost solitary existence in his mansion set among an extensive vineyard in Gainesville, Ga. The former Confederate lieutenant general's sons left after their mother's death, and his daughter later married a local school teacher, leaving Longstreet in the house with only the company of a servant.

In late July 1897, Longstreet became smitten with Helen Dortch -- his daughter's college roommate and 42 years his junior -- whom he had met in Lithia Springs, Ga. Soon, the press caught wind of rumors that the well-known ladies' man might take another bride. Longstreet played coy with a persistent New York reporter before he finally confirmed the news. "The General crossed his legs,

looked out over the fields again, and replied: 'Oh, pshaw! Well, I suppose I might as well give in,' " the *New York Times* reported. "I am to be married to Miss Dortch at noon on Wednesday in the Governor's residence in Atlanta. The honeymoon is to be spent in Porter Springs, where I hope you newspaper men will leave an old man to the happiness he has acquired."

On Sept. 8, 1897, Longstreet and Dortch -- described as "pretty, piquant and sympathetic," with blue eyes, blond hair and fair skin -- exchanged vows in the parlor at the governor's executive mansion. Among those in attendance were the Gainesville mayor, a large group of Longstreet's friends and the general's four sons and daughter. "They all warmly congratulated their new stepmother," an account noted, "which should dispose of the story that there was any friction because of the marriage." Dortch picked the wedding date as homage to her husband, who, as an officer 50 years earlier, had heroically led his regiment at Molina Del Rey during the Mexican War.

Governor William Atkinson served as best man for Longstreet, who had converted from Episcopalian to Catholic in 1877. "When the officiating priest, after having asked the groom the question of assent, turned to Miss Dortch to know if she would take James as her husband," a newspaper reported, "it carried the suggestion to the groom's heart that he was a boy again, paddling in the Savannah River."

Newspapers were quick to point out the disparity in ages between the former general and the accomplished young woman, characterizing it as a "May and December" union. A Louisiana newspaper noted that



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although Longstreet was "a gallant and distinguished Confederate officer during the war ... his apostasy since has lost him the respect and esteem of the Southern people." (Few Southerners forgave Longstreet for becoming a Republican and taking a position in Grant's administration, among other "sins.")



Helen Dortch Longstreet

Another publication mentioned the general's varied interests, and believed that his new bride, "a bright young woman," could help manage

them. In addition to a large hotel in Gainesville, Longstreet owned a vineyard and winery, raised sheep and turkeys and had authored two books. And President William McKinley, himself a Civil War veteran, had recently called on Longstreet to head the U.S. Commissioner of Railroads.

From their wedding in 1897 until well after Longstreet's death at 82 in 1904, Helen would do much more than help "manage" her husband's interests. Fiercely protective of James Longstreet's reputation, she defended his memory the rest of her life -- especially against critics who argued he failed to do his duty at Gettysburg. And the woman nicknamed "The Fighting Lady" led a remarkable life herself, living well into the 20th century. Born April 20, 1863 -- less than five months before Longstreet led a Rebel army at Chickamauga -- Helen Dortch was a woman years ahead of her time. In an account of her wedding to Longstreet, she was described as "one of the most conspicuous among the progressive women of the new south."

At 15, she became a newspaper reporter and editor at the weekly *Carnesville (Ga.) Tribune* -- employment that was almost exclusively limited to men at the time. "Her early journalistic experiences were not pleasant," an account noted, "but she pluckily went forward ..." She later became editor and publisher of the *Milledgeville (Ga.) Daily Chronicle*. A champion for women's rights, Longstreet led an effort to open the Normal Industrial Training School for girls in Georgia. In 1894, she became the first woman to hold office in Georgia when she was appointed assistant state librarian.

"I had to get the legislature to change the law before I could assume office," she said of the so-called "Dortch Bill." "A hundred thousand women signed petition that the law be repealed so I could be appointed." Shortly after her husband's death, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Longstreet postmaster of Gainesville, a big-time position during the era. "It is safe to say," the *Atlanta Constitution* reported, "President Roosevelt could have made no appointment that would have proved as universally popular."

Throughout her life, Longstreet was active in environmental and political causes big and small. In 1910, she was founder of a movement to erect a monument to the slaves of the Confederacy -- a long-shot effort if there ever was one. In an eloquent speech, she said:

"I shall pray that I may live to see a monument at every capital in the south to the slaves of the confederacy. They wrote a story of devotion and loyalty that has no parallel in the history of man. While their masters were engaged in that struggle, the results of which would leave a helpless race free or in shackles, they worked for, guarded and defended the children of the confederacy with a fidelity that should be recorded letters of gold across the bosom of stars."

Not surprisingly, the monuments were never built.

For years after her husband's death, Longstreet also backed efforts to have a monument placed in her husband's honor in Gettysburg. That effort, too, failed during her lifetime. During the height of World War II in 1943, Longstreet took a job as a riveter in a B-29 aircraft factory in Marietta, Ga. Described as "frail but vivacious," she was 80 at the time.



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"This is the most horrible war of them all," she told a reporter. "It makes General Sherman look like a piker. I want to get it over with. I want to build bombers to bomb Hitler." She refused to give her age to the reporter, only saying she was "older than 50." "Never mind my age. I can handle that riveting thing as well as anyone," Longstreet said. "I'm intending to complete in five weeks three courses which normally take three weeks." She lived in a trailer camp near the factory and spent long hours in training to learn her craft. "I could stay out of this war," she said. "It's not the soldiers fighting soldiers like it used to be. It's a war on helpless civilians, on children and the infirm. They are the ones who suffer. "Lee, my husband, and many another southerner proved that Americans surrender only to Americans, so we are bound to come out victorious." Her work was praised by plant officials, but a union, with which she had some difficulty, called her a "very old lady" and accused the company of hiring her as a publicity stunt. Nevertheless, Longstreet stuck it out for nearly two years, and a foreman said her work ranked among the best done at the plant.

A tad eccentric, Longstreet touted the benefits of eating the residue of bee hives to live longer. In 1946, she tried to persuade a Confederate veteran who had recently celebrated his 100th birthday to eat the odd food. (No word if the old soldier lived until he was 150.)

After the war, Longstreet was also a vocal supporter of civil rights for blacks, and, in 1950, she ran for governor of Georgia as a write-in candidate. In challenging incumbent Herman Talmadge, the "scrappy widow" vowed to stand up for blacks

and "unhood the ruffians" of the Ku Klux Klan.

"I'll make this state a place where the humblest Negro can go to sleep at night," the 87-year-old candidate said, "and be assured of waking up in the morning, unless the Almighty calls." Naturally, Longstreet ran as an independent, but she lost badly. Talmadge won the election with 98.44 percent of the vote.

In the last 10 years of her life, Longstreet's health gradually declined, and by her early 90s, she was completely deaf. After a visit to a relative in Georgia in 1956, she took a bus trip back to a health resort in Danville, N.Y., where she often lived. During a stopover in Pottsville, Pa., she told stories of "her husband's exploits and was given a big hand when she left." Donning her best hat, she posed for photographers. "I'm just 39," she said as she departed, "... still a young belle." Probably suffering from dementia, Longstreet was removed from the bus in Elmira, N.Y., after the driver told authorities she was annoying passengers. Taken in by the Travelers Aid Society, she wandered away and later was taken into custody by police for her own protection. A city health officer said Longstreet seemed "irrational and incoherent." She was hospitalized in New York and sent back to Atlanta. Six years later, on May 3, 1962, Helen Dortch Longstreet died in Milledgeville (Ga.) State Hospital. According to doctors there, she seemed "perfectly happy." The woman who defied convention and never liked to talk about her age was 99.

How Do You Memorialize a Mob?

Gainesville, Texas, is a patriotic small town. It's also the site of one of the nation's worst acts of mob violence—a history some citizens would like to forget.

By Abby Rapoport, Texas Observer, November 17, 2016

On the gray, rainy morning of Oct. 1, 1862, about 70 men were roused from their homes in Gainesville and corralled inside a vacant store, under arrest on suspicion of treason. Within 13 days, approximately 80 more men had been captured. The town's citizen's court, made up of prominent community leaders, immediately found seven men guilty by majority vote and promptly hanged them from an old tree. As tensions mounted, a mob grew angrier outside the store, worried that the remaining men were not just seditious but bandits, John Brown supporters, or friendly to the Indian tribes that frequently attacked the area.

Within a little over a week, 40 men had been hanged and another two shot trying to escape the rope. The Great Hanging of Gainesville entered history as the largest act of mob violence in American history.

Memories of the event almost immediately began to fade. Families of the men who'd been hanged moved away or stopped talking about it. Newcomers flooded the town, which grew from 250 residents during the Civil War to more than 12,000 by the turn of the century. While two men—one a member of the jury and the other with full access to court records—wrote accounts of the hanging in the 1870s and 1880s, neither account was publicly available until the 1960s. Court records of the trial were lost by the 1920s. Around the 100th anniversary of the Civil War,



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in 1964, the Texas Historical Commission erected a pink granite marker conveying an account sympathetic to the mob, based on what is now known to be incomplete information. Over time the marker has become largely illegible.

Nathaniel Clark, one of the men killed in the Great Hanging, is buried in Gainesville's Clark Cemetery. His tombstone notes that he was "murdered by a mob."

Gainesville, meanwhile, has chugged along as a charming small Texas town. In 2012 Rand McNally named Gainesville the "Most Patriotic Small Town in America." Each year the town invites some 30 Medal of Honor recipients on an expense-paid trip to Gainesville, allowing the town to call itself the nation's only Medal of Honor Host City. There's a historical marker to honor the pioneers who first brought cattle to the area and established the town, and the old State Theater movie house still stands on East California Street, though it no longer shows movies. Leonard Park features baseball diamonds, a pool with water slides and a small zoo that grew out of a volunteer community circus. A Confederate memorial greets visitors at the entrance. Downtown, the Cooke County Courthouse boasts memorials to Confederate soldiers and to veterans of World War II.

On Oct. 18 this year, 152 years after the Great Hanging, a new memorial was dedicated just a few feet from where the original incident took place: two gray granite slabs, each 5 feet high and 6 feet wide. One slab offers a new account of the Great Hanging. The other shows the names of the 42 men who died. Unveiling day began with a luncheon at North Central Texas College and included a performance by actors

playing the men involved in the hanging. Finally, at 3 p.m., everyone arrived at the new memorial for the dedication.

As imposing as the memorial looks, it's impossible to miss the shabbiness of the park's surroundings. The tree where 40 men met their deaths has long since been cut down or burned down (accounts differ). The parcel borders an auto repair shop, and when facing the memorial, you also face the shop's aluminum sheds with "Eddie Dulock Paint and Body Shop" painted in red. The few trees fail to block the sight of traffic traversing one of Gainesville's pretty new yellow-and-brick-red bridges. There's no designated parking, no fence, and just the memorial to distinguish the park from a vacant lot.

Among the crowd were descendants of eight men who died in Gainesville's Great Hanging, as well as descendants of the earliest advocates for memorializing them. To them, this park marks the end of a long struggle and, if not closure exactly, at least a promise finally kept.

Gainesville hadn't been around long when the Civil War came to Texas. The area had initially been a pit stop for travelers on their way to California, and by 1850 it boasted a smattering of homes, a dry goods store and a saloon. In 1858, the Butterfield Overland Mail, a semi-weekly service for passenger stagecoaches and mail, arrived. Immigrants began flooding the area (and the state). By 1860, two-thirds of Texans had been born in another state. In North Texas, near Gainesville, most immigrants came from "Upper South" states including Tennessee, Missouri and Kentucky and "Deep South" states including Mississippi and Georgia. Only about 11 percent of the area's households

owned slaves, according to Richard McCaslin, chair of the history department at the University of North Texas and author of 1994's *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas, 1862*, the first comprehensive study of the incident.

Despite the boom, Gainesville was still close to the frontier during the Civil War, and fear for safety and security ran high. As McCaslin explains in *Tainted Breeze*, raids by nearby Comanche and Kiowa were frequent, and there was enormous fear of Kansas' radical abolitionists, particularly John Brown, who infamously went on to attack Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859.

"These are good people. They want their town to look good. You want to live in a town you're proud of. That's not a bad thing. Where does the Great Hanging fit into that? The town killed 42 people. It's kind of a clunker."

While there was widespread disagreement on the question of secession, most town leaders were slaveholders and residents generally had little regard for the anti-slavery movement. Those living in the area often relied on vigilantism to keep the peace and force out troublemakers and dissidents. Mob hangings became increasingly common as talk of war continued. A Northern Methodist Episcopal elder was lynched based on a forged pro-abolition letter in 1860, and a series of fires around the state over the summer had only ratcheted up anxieties, as many blamed abolitionists.

When Texas held a vote on the Ordinance of Secession in 1861, Cooke County, along with several nearby counties, voted against leaving the Union, though Gainesville's slaveholding elite were



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divided. James Bourland, a former state senator, was a proponent of secession, while the more conservative William C. Young, a former U.S. marshal and the largest slaveholder in the county, opposed it. (Together, Bourland and Young owned close to a quarter of the slaves in Cooke County.)

Once the state voted to secede, however, most citizens fell in line. Young and Bourland both took up military posts. Young carefully kept his recruits—mostly North Texas farmers who were ambivalent about the Confederate cause—focused on preventing Indian raids.

But when the Conscription Act was passed in 1862, anger began to swell among the farmers of Cooke County. The Confederate army's fortunes had begun to decline and troops were desperately needed. The act authorized the drafting of white men age 18 to 35. There were new taxes and the threat of impressments. Young's troops, which had been fighting Native Americans close to home, were sent east to join other Confederate campaigns. Many simply went home instead.

McCaslin describes the situation as "a pressure cooker."

"You're scared of Indians, you're scared of abolitionists, you've been attacked by Indians, you've had a big set of fires that summer that you're convinced was John Brown and his buddies," he says. "And suddenly someone says we've got a problem here amongst us."

The formation of a Peace Party came at the same time that 30 men allegedly signed a petition against the Conscription Act. Bourland, a hotheaded leader, got word from a man who'd been approached by two brothers named Ephraim and Henry

Chiles about efforts to attack militia arsenals. Bourland sent a spy to join the effort and learn more, and the two brothers opened up about plans to mount an armed insurrection.

Bourland organized mass arrests on Oct. 1, targeting not only the men implicated by the spy, but others who'd failed to respond to a call for Confederate troops to muster. While a few got away—two, notably, carrying mattresses on their backs, ostensibly to protect them from bullets—the rest prepared to stand trial. Neighboring counties sent similarly suspected men to Confederate courts, but Gainesville's leadership, headed by Young, decided to form a citizen's court. A majority of the jury was composed of slaveholders, and the citizen's court required only a majority to convict. Outside, the mob was ready to hang all the prisoners.

After hearing evidence, the jury initially convicted seven men who were hanged over the course of the next week. To placate two of its members, the jury decided it would henceforth require a two-thirds majority to convict, and acquitted the rest of the group. But outside, tension was rising. Two leaders—one of whom McCaslin thinks was likely Bourland—demanded 20 more prisoners. A member of the jury handed over the list, from which 14 names were chosen. They, too, were hanged over the next two days.

The rest of the prisoners were to be confined for the week, with the jury hoping the mob might calm down in the meantime. A few days later, however, William C. Young was killed while investigating a murder. The culprits were likely deserters, but the mob worried they might be abolitionists. When the jury reconvened the following week,

several members didn't show up. The missing men were replaced with hardline Confederates. With no new evidence considered, 19 more men were hanged, one and two at a time. Two others were shot and killed trying to escape.

"I think where the story goes terribly wrong is the decision not to turn them over to the legal courts," McCaslin says.

"There's a national message to what happened here," he says. "People need to know what the Civil War was really like. It wasn't *Gone with the Wind*. We were just as ugly to each other as other countries that get pulled apart in civil wars. It's part of us, it's part of who we are, and we need to think about that and make damn sure it doesn't happen again."

The new Great Hanging memorial in Gainesville comprises two granite slabs. One is engraved with an account of the 1862 incident, the other with the names of the 42 victims.

Lynette Pettigrew is a fourth-generation Gainesville resident. Her family arrived in the 1880s and has been here ever since. "I just love this community," she says. "I'm the sort of person that likes to go to the store and run into people I know. I like for people to honk and wave as they go by. ... If you don't want people to know your business, then you shouldn't live in a small town."

Pettigrew is the executive director of the town's Chamber of Commerce, and spends her days trying to support local business and increase tourism.

She and her husband are most famous for spearheading Gainesville's Medal of Honor program. It's the only program of its kind in the country, and it generates enormous town pride. Businesses advertise the program in windows and on walls.



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"We're very patriotic and we're a very proud community. We take care of our own and we take care of our nation's heroes," Pettigrew says.

The Medal of Honor program helped Gainesville get nominated—and then win—Rand McNally's 2012 competition for "Most Patriotic Small Town in America," a designation the town's mayor, Jim Goldsworthy, loves to mention.

Colleen Clark Carri was 15, playing the domino game Texas 42 in her grandparents' old farmhouse with cousins, when someone mentioned that his great-great-grandfather had been hanged by a mob.

Around the time the town won the Rand McNally award, the Morton Museum of Cooke County leased a billboard to advertise a 150th anniversary: "October's Reign of Terror, Commemorating the Great Hanging of 1862." Within days, the city's mayor pro tem, Ray Nichols, had voiced his disapproval. "Gainesville was voted most patriotic city in America this year, and we are very excited about it and our Medal of Honor Host City program. I think those are important. That other thing? I don't think that's important to anybody," Nichols told the *Austin American-Statesman* at the time.

Though no explicit demands were made, the Cooke County Heritage Society pulled its sponsorship of the anniversary event, according to former Heritage Society President Steve Gordon, for fear that city officials' anger might mean funding cuts to the town's history museum. Gordon, an Oklahoma native and engineer who retired to Gainesville, was livid. "This story's got to come up," he says. "A lot of these people's [families] weren't even here in 1862. Why are they so upset?"

"These are good people," McCaslin says. "They want their town to look good. You want to live in a town you're proud of. That's not a bad thing. Where does the Great Hanging fit into that? The town killed 42 people. It's kind of a clunker."

Goldsworthy and Pettigrew both say that while history is important, mass mob murder is not what they want their town to be known for. Neither sees the Great Hanging as a tourism opportunity. "We're not running from our history, but I would rather Gainesville be portrayed in the light of the Medal of Honor city and most patriotic city, which are the accolades it deserves today in modern-day times," Goldsworthy says. "The commercialization of a horrific wartime event is not one that I would want Gainesville to build tourism on." In fact there's little around town to inform anyone of the Great Hanging. The town's tourism brochures don't mention the incident (though it does get a paragraph in the "History" section of the town's website). If the history hasn't been buried, exactly, it certainly isn't shared broadly.

Leon Russell was in his mid-70s before he even heard about it. Russell grew up in Woodbine, an even smaller town close to Gainesville, and now lives in Keller, closer to Dallas. Russell first heard about the hangings from a Civil War buff friend in New York. "I felt like it had always been this really terrible injustice that the town had turned its back on. Forty-two widows and about 300 children," he says. "I had wished that I could do something, at least letting it be known."

In 2007, Russell and his family bought wooden stakes at Home Depot and set to creating 42 white crosses, one for each man killed. The City Council gave Russell permission

to place the crosses in the park where the Great Hanging occurred. Working with the Heritage Society's Steve Gordon and descendants of victims, Russell held a ceremony where all 42 names were read and a bell was rung.

It was the first public commemoration of the Great Hanging in modern times, and has been an annual occurrence since. "You could not have found three people in Gainesville who'd heard of [the Great Hanging] before we did that," Russell says.

The push to commemorate the Great Hanging more permanently has been ongoing for more than two decades. In 1993, the estate of Georgia Davis Bass gifted the city the land where the Great Hanging had taken place. The city's beloved mayor, Margaret Parx Hays, whose great-grandfather Wiley Jones had been on the citizen's court jury, planned to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for a memorial, but passed away before the ambition could come to fruition. The effort stalled after her death, and at one point the city used the park to store construction supplies.



Photo Pamela Henderson

The new Great Hanging memorial in Gainesville comprises two granite slabs. One is engraved with an account of the 1862 incident, the other with the names of the 42 victims.



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But after the 2012 billboard debacle, more information about the city's obligations regarding the land came to light. When Gordon and others presented plans for the new memorial featuring a history-based account of what happened, with all funds raised privately, the City Council approved the effort unanimously.

Now, Gordon and other memorial advocates are looking toward next steps. Gordon imagines planting crape myrtles around the park, and money for a parking lot. But for now, he says, "You don't know what a thrill it is to get those 42 names down there."

McCaslin says with or without the memorial, memories of the Great Hanging would never fully disappear. He compares the incident to the massacre at Glen Coe in Scotland, or the massacre at the Rock of Cashel in Ireland. "Ask the Irish if they'll ever forget who burned the Rock of Cashel. They'll never rebuild that. The wind moans and you think, 'This is a haunted place.'"

"Grief fades," he says. "Memory abides."

Colleen Clark Carri still remembers when she first heard about the Great Hanging. She was 15, playing the domino game Texas 42 in her grandparents' old farmhouse with cousins when someone mentioned that his great-great-grandfather had been hanged by a mob.

"I was like, 'What are y'all talking about? We've never talked about that,'" Carri says. "People were always like, 'Pappy still gets upset so let's not talk about this right now.'"

Nathaniel Clark settled in Cooke County with his wife and sons around 1857. He came from Missouri, where support for secession was tepid at best, and never owned slaves. His eldest child, James Lemuel Clark,

was 19 at the start of the war, and Clark hoped to keep him out of it. But aside from his opposition to secession, there's nothing in the historical record to suggest that Clark was seditious. Nonetheless, he was one of the 14 men handed over to the mob. "It's the way Nathaniel did not have a trial that has always been a burr under my saddle," Carri says.

Unlike many families of the hanged men, Clark's family stayed in Cooke County. Nathaniel's portrait hangs in Carri's home, which is on Clark Road, near the family cemetery where her great-great-grandfather is buried. According to his tombstone, his last words were, "Prepare yourself to live and die. I hope to meet you all in a future world. God bless you all."

More is known about the Clark family than any other involved in the Great Hanging. James Lemuel Clark wrote his recollections, and his grandson L.D. Clark—Carri's uncle—edited them. L.D., an English professor at the University of Arizona, also wrote a novel and a screenplay about Nathaniel Clark. Carri can recite from memory parts of the letter that James Lemuel wrote to his mother when he got word of his father's death. "It begins, 'Dearest mother, oh the horrors of my heart, no tongue can tell upon learning of my father's death.' It's poetry. It's just pure poetry," she says.

Carri and her husband retired to Gainesville in 2008. In 2009 she moved L.D. to town to be closer. They both became outspoken advocates for a new memorial.

I felt like it had always been this really terrible injustice that the town had turned its back on. Forty-two widows and about 300 children."

In 2012, when the Cooke County Heritage Society withdrew its sponsorship of the 150th anniversary

event, it was the Clark family that came to the rescue, holding their family reunion at the same time and sponsoring a luncheon in remembrance of the Great Hanging. "I told the family at the family reunion, 'All right, the last thing I'm going to ever beg you for is to attend this memorial,'" Carri says. "After this I'm just going to show up at the Clark reunions and bring a baked pie and sit my little bottom down."

L.D. and Carri were sitting side by side in the audience when the City Council voted unanimously to approve the memorial on Dec. 3, 2013. Weeks later, L.D., who was 91 years old, fell, and his health declined quickly. He died in March.

"I'm just grateful he was with me on Dec. 3 at the City Council, and he knew it was going to happen," Carri says, tearing up. "But oh my. Not to have him here in October."

Carri misses her more distant ancestors almost as much as she misses her uncle. "They both had such amazing roles," she says of James Lemuel and Nathaniel. "They were amazing men and they were patriots as far as I'm concerned."

Supporters purchased paving stones for a path leading to the memorial, many with inscriptions.

My marker says 'On Hallowed Ground,'" Carri says. "Because I feel that's what this is. It's almost like a cemetery to me."

"Ready for Mischief" Dr. Mary Walker and her Service during the Civil War

By Maureen Lavelle, National Civil War Medicine Museum, December 12th, 2016

At the outbreak of the American Civil War, men across the country stepped forward to serve in the military and



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were celebrated by their communities for demonstrating their bravery. Though the majority of men who served had no training or fighting experience, they were enlisted without question by grateful governments and marked as heroes for their selflessness. Unfortunately, women who stepped forward to serve and support the military were not so lucky in their reception.

Many women were eager to work as nurses and caretakers during the war, but endured opposition from male leaders and scorn from their communities. However, faced with persistent lobbying and intensifying bloodshed, military leaders soon allowed women to serve as nurses. Though they were allowed to serve, female nurses were still expected to live by traditional gender norms of the nineteenth century. While most women navigated the war effort and found gender-appropriate work for themselves, Dr. Mary E. Walker of New York embarked on a crusade to become a surgeon in the Union Army. Dr. Walker was twenty-eight years old at the outbreak of Civil War and an accomplished doctor. She was the second woman in the country to have earned her medical degree and operated her own practice in Rome, New York. In October 1861 Dr. Walker made her way to Washington D.C. in search of work in one of the many hospitals there. She found work as an assistant surgeon at a hospital inside the US Patent Office, but she was never formally hired or paid. Though she took satisfaction with her work, Dr. Walker was unable to support herself without a wage and left Washington in early 1862.

By November 1862, Dr. Walker was ready to head back to Washington. When she heard the army was camped in Warrenton, Virginia, Dr.

Walker bypassed the Capitol and traveled directly to the front. She arrived in the midst of a severe typhoid epidemic and immediately set to work caring for the men. Soldiers noted her tireless efforts to treat the men, as well as her unusual appearance. Dr. Walker had taken to wearing trousers and a military jacket for practicality and comfort. Her startling appearance left a lasting impression on the soldiers she treated. She would continue to wear "man's" clothing for the rest of her life. Dr. Walker was put in charge of transporting men back to Washington and ensuring they received treatment upon their arrival. She was praised for her compassionate care and started garnering interest among leaders in Washington for her skill as a surgeon.

Almost immediately after Dr. Walker moved soldiers to Washington, the Union Army began the fateful Fredericksburg Campaign, which culminated in the bloody and mismatched fight on December 13th, 1862. Dr. Walker quickly traveled to the battlefield and set to work triaging and treating the wounded retreating across the Rappahannock River.

Treating soldiers in the aftermath of the battle of Fredericksburg was the first time Dr. Walker worked on the front lines. If the shrieking, groaning, bleeding and dying men unnerved her, Dr. Walker did not reveal this in her writings of the day. Though her written recollections of Fredericksburg are brief, they are incredibly vivid.

Dr. Walker worked somewhere on the grounds of the Lacy House (today known as Chatham), likely close to Union pontoon river crossing just north of the house. She examined soldiers, noting which ones should be sent to Washington and which should

be treated immediately on-site. She gave orders to stretcher-bearers on how soldiers should be handled in order to prevent pain and discomfort. She spoke with such authority that her commands were obeyed.

During her brief time in Union Army hospitals, Dr. Walker had seen serious wounds and illnesses, but her time on the front lines in Fredericksburg exposed her to horrific injuries. She noted one particular case of a soldier with a grievous head injury:

"...a shell had taken part of his skull away, about as large a piece as a dollar...I could see the pulsation of the brain, and when he talked I could see a movement of the same, slight though it was. He was perfectly sensible, and although I never saw him after he was taken to Washington, I learned that he lived several days."



Dr. Mary Walker – wearing her Medal of Honor

Dr. Walker's exposure to battle at Fredericksburg did nothing to dissuade her from working for the Union Army; rather it fueled her



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ambition to receive an official commission as a US Army surgeon. She lobbied generals and politicians persistently, and her efforts were rewarded in 1864, when she was commissioned and assigned to the Army of the Cumberland.

Despite this achievement, Dr. Walker faced obstacles and harassment at every turn. Generals and doctors refused to work with her. Rumors were spread that she was a prostitute. She was captured while in Georgia and sent to a prison in Richmond. Adding insult to injury, Confederate newspapers reported rumors that she took prison guards as lovers until her release in August 1864.

After the war ended, Dr. Mary Walker was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for her services to the US Army. Unfortunately in 1917, her award was rescinded, but Dr. Walker refused to return the medal and wore it proudly until her death in 1919. Dr. Walker's medal was posthumously restored. She remains the only woman to have earned this prestigious decoration.