



The Tyrants' Foe

Newsletter of the Texas Rifles



Volume XXVIII, Number 3

SEPTEMBER 25, 2011



The Captain's Dispatch



The 150th anniversary national events have officially begun for the Texas Rifles with our recent participation in the Battle of Wilson's Creek. Thanks to everyone that attended for making the event a success. Like any event, things were not perfect, but overall the event was a lot of fun. Those of us in the Houston van also had a great time on the trip up and back from Missouri.

Unfortunately, Wilson's Creek was VERY farby for a national event (worse than Liendo). We had to deal with the heat, the wagoneers (don't even get me started), cars in camp, 2 early battles that were lame, and the long walk to the sutlers. At least the bugs (especially chiggers) were not as bad as expected. The battles also improved throughout the weekend. It was disappointing that all the battles occurred on the same field, but at least it was a large area and they started us in different locations for each battle which helped to keep it interesting.

There were a few very interesting moments during Wilson's Creek that stand out in my mind. 1st was the opportunity to ford Wilson's Creek on the way to the Friday morning battle. Unlike some other units which hesitated upon reaching the edge of the creek, I was proud to see that none of the Texas Rifles balked at having to cross the creek in knee-deep water. That is a moment I'll remember, along with spending the rest of the day trying to get my socks dry. My second memory is not as auspicious and involved a dastardly plot against the company commander. I'm sure more than a few of you have smiles on your faces while reminiscing about the company taking an unexpected canister hit in the Saturday morning battle (unexpected by the Captain at least). We went from a decent size company to three Rifles and the Captain in the blink of an eye. While I mourned the loss of so many brave men, then (as now) I am afraid that revenge comes more to mind!

Our next big event will be the 150th of Shiloh March 29-April 1, 2012. Based on the information that is trickling down from Battalion, the event is shaping up to be something special. Colonel Yokubatis is directly involved with the event organizers of the Blue-Grey Alliance in setting up the scenarios, so we should have some great experiences. Fred is also pushing for a Friday morning battle (that was not originally planned) in which we would storm and take the Federal camp during breakfast. Wilson's Creek was not sponsored by a reenacting organization which led to a lot of the Farby of the event. This is not supposed to be the case at Shiloh.

We will be attending the Shiloh event as campaigners, so no ice chests and limited shelter. If you can't carry it, don't bring it because we are supposed to be moving around throughout the event. The Red River Battalion is also planning on portraying a specific unit at Shiloh, including at least one battle with predetermined destinies. This will be similar to what we did at Franklin years back, with casualties and prisoners separated from survivors for at least one evening. This was very eerie at Franklin for the survivors and was a lot of fun. Start planning now to attend the event. Hopefully, those of us in the Houston region can do another van rental for the trip to Tennessee.

Next up is the Battle for Boerne October 15-16th. This is being hosted by our pards from San Antonio and it looks like it should be a fun event. We will be attending as Federal and I believe the consensus is that we will go campaign style. It is possible that we will be sleeping in the breastworks. Following that, we will have TMD and Liendo.

As a final note, we will be visiting Pioneer Farms in Austin this weekend (September 17th) to determine it's suitability for Civilian events and the annual meeting. Hopefully the site is willing to allow us to hold these events in the coming year. Otherwise, some drastic measures are going to have to be taken to locate a site for the meeting. We will update the yahoo group with what we find.

Your Servant,
Don L. Tucker
Captain, Texas Rifles

Lieutenant's Inkwell



Just One Thing

Over the course of my time in this hobby, I have been fortunate to be able to learn from the experiences of others. I'd like to take this opportunity to pass along one of the ideas I found from another group – before an event, do just one thing to create a better impression of a 19th century person in the circumstances you will portray. That “just one thing”, need not be a major item of clothing. In fact, the more effective impressions are often a composition of a number of small details, the combination which leads to the overall effect.

With this in mind, here are some suggestions for “just one thing” to consider changing about your impression, which need not take too much time and resource to accomplish.

Buttons: The buttons on a garment form part of the look, which on an outer garment really are a mark of distinction, and on undergarments, are frequently done on the cheap by well meaning, but uninformed sutlers. Changing the buttons on undergarments to a more correct bone or glass of the correct diameter (typically 3/8 inch for shirts), or the 5/8 or at most 3/4 inch for drawers, will give the garment a more proper character. On men's shirts, the buttons are not a major element of the design, and the larger buttons usually found on most sutler purchased shirts, detract from the pattern of the fabric. When replacing the buttons, the thread is usually sewn to form a X when viewed looking at the button, and 5 loops on each leg of the X is usually good enough to keep the button on the garment. It may be necessary to sew closed, a part of the now too large button hole. This may be start of your ability to patch, and repair tears in your clothing

Games: Dice and cards are lightweight and do not take much space in the haversack or knapsack. A popular mid 19th Century card game was Whist. The rules can be found with a search for “The laws of whist” Even if you do not play the game, being familiar with such games would be common with almost all of the people we portray. Whist rules: <http://www.playcardgames.org/whist/>

Faro: The most popular game of chance from the late 17th Century until World War I. Faro rules: <http://www.bicyclecards.com/card-games/rule/faro>

Checkers: A board can be drawn on a groundcloth and stones or cartridges used for playing pieces.

Chess: Same as checkers, substituting writing the color and name of the piece on the cartridge.

Songs: Singing was a popular form of entertainment, and composing new lyrics to well known tunes, was a common occurrence. Yankee Doodle was a tune which was used for numerous lyrics during the war.

An Example – The Valiant Conscript:

**How are you, boys? I'm just from camp and feel as brave as Caesar
The sound of bugle drum and fife has raised my Ebenezer.
I'm full of fight, odds shot and shell, I'll leap into the saddle
And when the Yankees see me come, Lord how they will skedaddle!**

**cho: Hold your head up, Shanghai Shanks,
Don't shake your knees and blink so;
It is no time to dodge the act
Brave comrades, don't you think so?**

**I was a ploughboy in the field, a gawky lazy didger,
When came the conscript officer and took me for a sodger.
He put a musket in my hand and showed me how to fire it,
I marched and counter-marched all day. Lord, how I did admire it!**

**With corn and hog fat for my food, and digging, guarding, drilling,
I got as thin as twice-skimmed milk and was scarcely worth the killing.
And now I'm used to homely fare, my skin as tough as leather,
I do guard duty cheerfully in any kind of weather.**

**I'm brimful of fight, my boys, I would not give a "Thank 'ee"
For all the smiles the girls can give until I've killed a Yankee.
High private is a glorious rank, there's wide room for promotion;
I'll get a corporal's stripes some day when fortune's in the notion.**

**"tis true I have not seen a fight nor have I smelt gunpowder,
But then the way I'll pepper them will be a sin to chowder.
A sergeant's stripes I now will sport, perhaps be colour-bearer,
And then a captain--good for me, I'll be a regular tearer.**

**I'll then begin to wear the stars and then the wreaths of glory,
Until the army I command, and poets sing my story.
Our Congress will pass votes of thanks to him that rose from zero;
The people in a mass will shout, "Hurrah! Behold the hero!"**

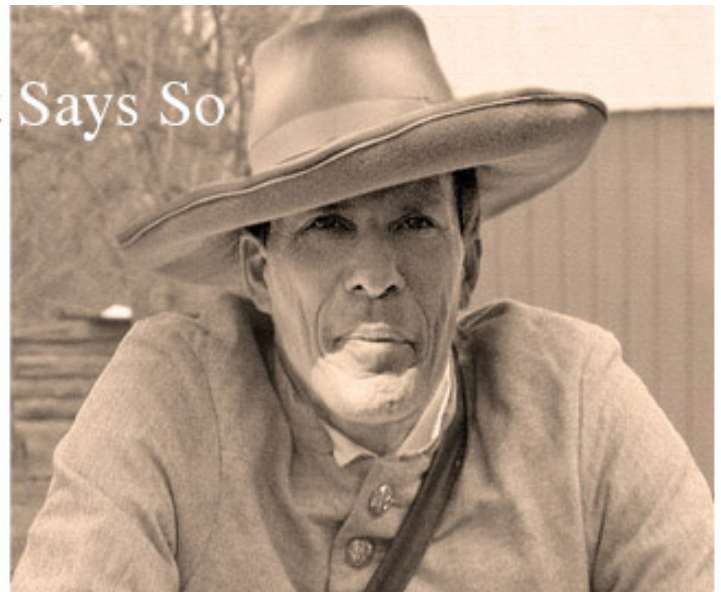
(he fires his gun by accident)

**What's that? Oh dear! A boiler's burst! A gaspipe has exploded!
Maybe the Yankees are hard by with muskets ready loaded.
Oh gallant soldiers, beat 'em back. I'll join you in the frolic
But I've a chill from head to foot, and symptoms of the colic.**

Money & Stamps: There are now reproductions of these items to be had, and using stamps as small change adds to the character on an impression.

The cravat: A basic cravat is nothing more than a folded triangle of cloth. Tied in various styles, this is a quick and easy way to give an impression a different character. Guide to tying cravats here: <http://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2009/03/21/the-art-of-tying-the-cravat/>
Before the next big event, why not do just one thing to build a better impression?

Because the Sergeant Says So



Shhh! The Sergeant is resting up from his Wilson's Creek experience and is asleep for this issue. He'll have *lots* to say next issue.



From the Home Front

To keep you all up to date Don, Kevin, Rick, Frank and myself went to Pioneer Farms on Saturday to meet with Ms. Rhonda Leggett and tour the site. We will be holding our annual meeting there the weekend of January 21 & 22, 2012. We will also begin planning our own civilian event for fall 2012. For those who have not been to Pioneer Farms, trust me you will love it. If you have any questions please let me know.

HolliBeth Marek
Texas Rifles Civilian Coordinator

Houston area report



"Rain, Rain, where for art thou Rain?!keep the corn bubblin' and your shoes well oiled!"

- Frank

Edited and ran again because of the continuing drought. Ok Frank? I know you got that corn bubblin'

-Editor



When in Rome...

By John Keahey

The United States culture combines many underlying contributing sub-cultures or themes. These are the ways of seeing ourselves and doing things that define us as a people. In general, these themes are so internalized that we follow them without conscious thought (and no, I am not thinking about Davis family members on Saturday night type of unconscious thought). One

of the many underlying themes which contribute to the culture of the United States is its identification with ancient Rome. And no, I didn't get newsletters confused; this article is intended for the Texas Rifles Civil War era group.

When European settlers began to immigrate to the New World in the late 1500's and early 1600's, they were entering into an experience without example in recent history. The European settlers were entering a largely untouched unexploited land that was thinly inhabited by nomadic Stone Age peoples. One similar situation with which they were familiar was detailed in the Bible. The Exodus portion of the Old Testament related stories from the conquest of Canaan by the Jewish tribes after their escape from the slavery of Egypt. This familiar scenario justified the New World practice of entering the Promised Land, killing those non-believers who were there first (in our case the Indians) and seizing the land.

The new colonists quickly learned that they must shed many of the old ways of European culture. When you lived in a frontier environment, you didn't live long unless you adapted to it. Once having made this adaptation, colonists could control interference in their lives simply by moving west beyond the reach of whatever authority from which they wished to be free. Until the late 1800's the United States always had a chronic labor shortage. Why? Because it was so easy for those who were dissatisfied to simply leave and move west if conditions did not suit him/her.

Once our country was established as an independent nation, we still wanted a model to follow which was not British. The one chosen was... Rome. The Roman Empire was, of course the greatest empire in European history. Most Europeans immigrating to the new world came from what used to be the old Roman Empire. What were the ancient Romans like? They were practical; they adopted what worked no matter the source. Not philosophers, Romans were a hard working, but not a particularly deep thinking group. They were inclusive; a huge variety of peoples lived under the empire and was accepted as part of it. They tolerated many religions. Citizenship was available to any free person willing to work for it. They loved sports; the rougher the better. They built the world's greatest network of roads. They built grandiose buildings. Romans were keen on personal hygiene and regularly bathed, that was unusual in their day. They loved public spectacles. They loved theater. They had a Senate and they elected many officials. They had a food distribution system so that the urban poor would not starve. Any Roman town with any significance had a public water supply and sewage system. The City of Rome had a police and fire departments. Romans lived under the rule of law and actually wrote their laws down so that everyone could know them. They believed that they were uniquely blessed by God(s). They added to their empire by violence and conquest, often conquering the lands of less "civilized" peoples. Their capital city was renowned around the world (stop me when any of this is beginning to remind you of the United States).

Still think I am writing for the wrong newsletter? After the American Revolution the new country quickly adopted a new furniture and interior decorating style now named the Federalist style. It quickly replaced European decors in popularity and was based upon; you guessed it, classical Greek and Roman styles. When the officers of the American Revolutionary Army formed a post-war fraternal group, they named it the Society of the Cincinnati after an ancient Roman heroic family.

Our national motto is, "E Pluribus Unum." This translates to, "out of many one". It is written in Latin, the language of the Romans. It is on the great seal of the United States and every piece of paper currency. The motto of the Marine Corps (Latin) is "Semper Fidelis," translated as "always true."

Take a stroll down the mall in Washington, D.C. and you will travel through time to ancient Rome. The Mall is a Roman forum. The National Gallery of Art, the White House, the Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials and many other buildings are all built in the classical style. The Washington Monument is a giant obelisk, similar in shape to the one taken from ancient Egypt and erected in the City of Rome. Statues of heroes and important people are everywhere in Washington, as it was in Rome. The first public statue erected to honor George Washington depicted him seated, bare-chested and wearing a toga (it since has been removed to the Capitol basement). Behind the chair of the Speaker of the House are engraved two large fasces. They are cylinders of wooden rods tied together with protruding ax heads. They symbolized the power of high office and to raise armies; these symbols were borrowed directly from Rome.

So, the conscious and subconscious desire existed in the United States to become the new Rome. The worst (printable) thing you could call a politician in early American politics was, "tyrant." Tyrant is a Greek word, but like many Greek terms was incorporated into the Latin language. When the Civil War happened, the Southerners saw themselves as revolting against a Federal tyranny. When John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln, he jumped down to center stage at Ford's Theater and shouted (in Latin) to the audience, "Sic Semper Tyrannis;" Ever Thus to Tyrants, the state motto of Virginia. No one had to translate this remark; every American understood what he said. It is not that everyone spoke Latin, although a large portion of the educated population did speak it, it is that they were familiar with frequently used Latin phrases. History and those witnesses may not have agreed with Booth, but they understood. After all, the United States was the new Rome.

There is a high quality Civil War living history group located in Texas whose motto (in English) is, "To Tyrants Never Yield." The Texas Rifles motto is an unconscious example of America culture following the Roman pathway.

John Keahey, 8/30/2011

Meanwhile.....



...back in camp...

It is the editor's understanding that the 28th of September is Hiram's birthday! He is O-L-D so let's show him the affection and respect he deserves by wishing him well and throwing him a birthday bash!

Please note, because of the drought and resulting burn ban extra caution is needed in presenting his cake.

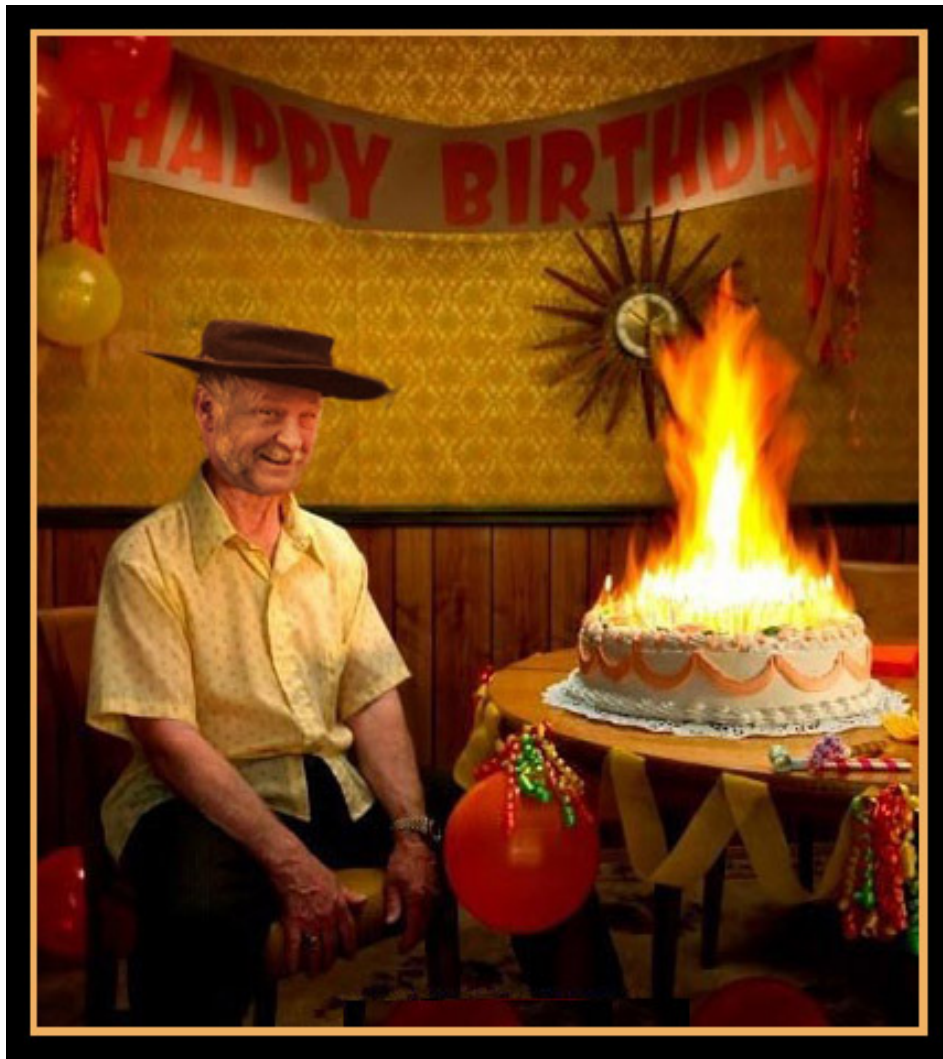


Photo Section on Our New
Meetin' and Rompin' Home

PIONEER FARMS









The deadline for submission of articles for the next Tyrants' Foe is December 9, 2011



.....To Tyrants Never Yield!