

# Grey Matter

Newsletter of The Rankin Greys

SCV Camp 2278

August 2017

Volume 1 Issue 4



## IN THIS ISSUE

### Commander's Report

by Commander Billy Bryant

Congratulations are in order for our camp. We have been awarded the Nathan Bedford Forrest award from National. This award is given out to the ONE Camp in the Confederation with the greatest gains in membership over the past year. For a camp that is a little over a year to receive this honor is seldom heard of. We could not have gotten this without your work and dedication.

We have had a busy July. We rode to Memphis to defend General Forrest, we rode as a squad to patch in one of our newest members, and we rode for the wounded warriors. I want to thank the hard working men of 2278 for their support with these events. You truly are living the Charge and answering the Call.

This month we have AOT Commander Larry McCluney who will speak to us on his new book. Please come early as I am sure it will be a packed house once again. Next month the Commander-in-Chief Tom Strain will be visiting. Please bring a guest for both of these men.

Live the Charge,

Billy Bryant  
Commander

### A look at the National Reunion

Pg 3

### Forefathers in Grey

Pg 4

### Pictures from July

Pg 9

# Adjutant's Report

by Camp Adjutant Chris Bryant

## Adjutant's Report

It's been a busy month, while not a lot has changed for us. I've had 2 potential members that I've ran their history down to find an ancestor. We will hopefully be welcoming them into the camp next month. Otherwise it has been business as usual.

The bulk of the camp has paid their dues. Our invoices from the Division were lost in the mail, so we have received a 30 day extension from National thanks to the efforts of our Division Adjutant Dan McCaskill. For those of you that have not paid, you have until September 30. Let's not run to the end of the line before getting this handled. We don't want to lose any of you as members.

We will vote on our camp bylaw amendments at the August meeting. If you haven't reviewed them, please check the Facebook page for the file, or contact me and I will be happy to get a copy to you and review them with you if needed. Your vote counts.

In closing, school has started, fall is coming soon, it's time for football and end of the season motorcycle rides. We've got a flag fight knocking on our door again and things are going to be very busy for everyone. In the immortal words of Jefferson Davis, "Stand Fast, Mississippians!"

Your humble servant,

Chris Bryant  
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*This publication is dedicated to the honor  
and the memory of the brave men of  
Company I 6<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Infantry*

*Lest We Forget.*

# National Reunion

by George Conor Bond

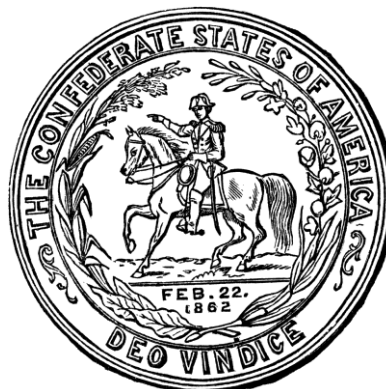
Our four-day convention started, for some of us, on Wednesday with the pre-GEC meeting; followed by a meeting of the Division Commanders of the Confederation. The GEC meeting was mainly dealing with the resolutions and amendments to the Constitution and Standing Orders. The meeting with the Division Commanders was about a new offer from National. Over the past 2 years, purchasing Confederate flags has become a tremendously hard task. As a result, the national organization is offering to sell flags in bulk to the Divisions to sell to the camps. This is a great idea! We have the potential to start our own MS Division Mega Flag fund, and soon we can start raising flags across the state! The flags produced for the National organization are well made and historically correct. These flags range in size from the small stick flags that can be given out as a recruiting tool to the mega-flags.

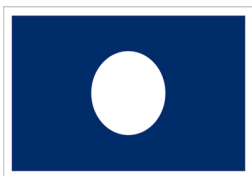
Thursday was reserved for the opening ceremonies which started off with a bang; literally. The commander of the host camp withdrew a revolver and shot it into the air. After the prayer, pledge, and salute there were opening remarks from several dignitaries from other organizations and remarks from General Forrest. That day's business session was reserved for the adoption of the National Budget for this upcoming fiscal year, the report from the Executive Director, and the report on the new Confederate Museum at Elm Springs. Following this was the Heritage Luncheon.

Friday, was reports of the Army Commanders and other officers from the Confederation. Following this was the National Awards Luncheon. It was at this Luncheon where we were awarded the Nathan Bedford Forrest Award. Friday night was reserved for the John C. Calhoun oratory contest, and Florida Division soiree. I came in 4<sup>th</sup> place in the oratory, and what happens at the soiree stays at the soiree.

Saturday Morning was the Army of Tennessee meeting where the nine divisions that make up the Army of Tennessee meet and discuss what is going on in their Divisions. This year it was dedicated to the Heritage Protection Acts. The Alabama Division Commander addressed issues on what to do to get it passed, and a representative from the Florida Division discussed the problems that they were having. After these meetings, the general convention reconvened for reports of the Deputy Chiefs of Heritage Promotion and Heritage Defense, the Lt. Commander in Chief, and the Commander in Chief. The amendments to the Standing Orders and Constitution were voted on. Following that we passed several resolutions, and after a rousing yet slightly off key and out of tempo rendition of Dixie, the convention stood adjourned. Later that evening the Grand Banquet and Ball where the two highest awards for the Confederation were presented.

It was an honor to be our first delegate to the National Reunion. The National Convention in Memphis was a blast. Great BBQ, great fellowship with compatriots from across the Confederation, and good weather made for a good time. Next year the Convention will be held in Franklin, TN. We will be opening the new Confederate Museum then. I hope that everyone can try to make it.





# Forefathers in Grey



He is known as “the smiling lion” and “the brains of the Confederacy”. He served 3 governments in his life. He held 3 major cabinet positions in the confederate government, and was one of the most trusted advisors to Jefferson Davis. He was a statesman in the truest sense of the word who broke barriers, but is little remembered by history. The man that I am speaking of is Judah P. Benjamin.

Judah Philip Benjamin was born a British subject in the Danish-West Indies, now the US Virgin Island on August 11, 1811. At the time, the Danish West Indies was a colony being occupied by the British during the Napoleonic Wars. His parents were Sephardic Jews. That means that they were Jews of Spanish descent. In fact, Judah’s mother Rebecca came from a family that was prominent in Spain before being forced to leave under the Expulsion Edict of 1492. The family moved there from London in search of a better life.

Judah was the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 7 children. The family encountered hard times in the Danish West Indies. In 1813 the family moved to Fayetteville, North Carolina, and the family would move again in 1821 to Charleston, SC. Charleston held the largest Jewish population before the war, and was known for its religious tolerance. In fact, it was the first community in the United States to grant Jews the right to vote and to hold any trade they wanted. Judah was a remarkable student, so much so that a Charlestonian offered to finance his education.

At the age of 14, in 1825, Benjamin entered Yale College. He was the only Jew in his class in a time when anti-Semitism ran rampant. Judah was expelled from Yale for “ungentlemanly conduct” in 1827. Rumor has it that it was over a game of cards. Judah would not return to Charleston, probably out of shame. He would go to New Orleans. It is said that when Judah arrived in New Orleans at the age of 18 he only had five dollars in his pocket. Benjamin worked odd jobs, as a teacher, processing accounts in a mercantile house, and finally as a law clerk. He constantly read all the law books he could get his hands on and soon mastered the complex Napoleonic Code which required mastery of French Language. A wealthy Creole official asked Benjamin to teach English to his daughter, Natalie. He agreed to this arrangement under the condition that she would teach him French while he taught her English. Benjamin was 21 and Natalie was 16. The tutoring lessons soon evolved into a courtship.

Within months of his admission to the bar, Judah argued his first case before the Supreme court of Louisiana. He helped write a book called the *Digest of the Reported Decisions of the Superior Court of the Late Territory of Orleans and the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana* in 1834, which required the analysis of 6,000 cases. The book was an immediate success and helped launch Benjamin's career. Benjamin soon became one of the best lawyers in New Orleans and one of its wealthiest citizens. Benjamin was a specialist in commercial law with an expertise at appeals. In 1842 Benjamin was elected to the Louisiana legislature as a Whig. In 1844, the legislature voted to hold a constitutional convention, and Benjamin was chosen as a delegate from New Orleans. Because of his knowledge of Spanish, the Federal government sent him to California to help settle land disputes after the United States got control of California following the Mexican War. In 1848, Benjamin was a Whig member of the Electoral College; he voted for fellow Louisiana planter, General Zachary Taylor, who was elected U.S. President. He and



other Louisianans accompanied President-elect Taylor to Washington for his inauguration. In 1850, Millard Fillmore, who succeeded Taylor after his death earlier that year, appointed Benjamin as judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. He was confirmed by the Senate, but he declined the appointment as the salary of \$3,500 was too small. Benjamin spent the summer of 1851 abroad, including a visit to Paris to see Natalie and Ninette. He was still away in October 1851, when the Whigs nominated him for the state Senate. Despite his absence, he was easily elected. In January 1852, Benjamin emerged as one of the leading Whig candidates for election to the U.S. Senate seat that would become vacant on March 4, 1853. Benjamin won the seat. Judah P. Benjamin became the 1<sup>st</sup> member of the United States Senate who was openly Jewish. On the U.S. Senate floor, Benjamin flourished as an orator of the Southern cause, a master of the secessionist rhetoric. In 1853, Benjamin was offered nomination to fill a Supreme Court vacancy; the new president, Franklin Pierce, a Democrat, also offered Benjamin a place on the Supreme Court. Benjamin declined though. He liked the idea of active politics a lot more. While in Washington at a state dinner given by Pierce, Benjamin first met Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, whose wife Varina described the Louisiana senator as having "rather the air of a witty bon vivant than of a great senator". The two men, both ambitious for leadership in the South and the nation, formed a relationship that has been described as "respectful but wary". The two had occasional differences; when in 1858, Davis, by then a Mississippi senator, was irritated by Benjamin's questioning him on a military bill and suggested that Benjamin was acting as a paid attorney, the Louisianan challenged him to a duel. Davis apologized.

Let's fast forward to December of 1860. Southern opinion was turning to favor secession. South Carolina had seceded. Benjamin said in what would be known as his farewell: "What may be the fate of this horrible contest, no man can tell...but this much, I will say: the fortunes of war may be adverse to our arms, you may carry desolation into our peaceful land, and with torch and fire you may set our cities in flame...you may, under the protection of your advancing armies, give shelter to the furious fanatics who desire, and profess to desire, nothing more than to add all the horrors of a servile insurrection to the calamities of civil war; you may do all this--and more too, if more there be--but you never can subjugate us; you never convert the free sons of the soil into vassals, paying tribute to your power; and you never, never can degrade them to the level of an inferior and servile race. Never! Never." Benjamin resigned from the U.S. Senate on February 4, 1861, nine days after their state voted to secede from the Union. That same day, the Provisional Confederate Congress gathered in Montgomery, Alabama and elected Jefferson Davis as provisional president. On February 4, Davis appointed Benjamin as attorney general and was approved immediately and unanimously by the congress. Judah P. Benjamin then became the first Cabinet appointee to be Jewish in North America. Davis, in his memoirs, remarked that he chose Benjamin because he "had a very high reputation as a lawyer, and my acquaintance with him in the Senate had impressed me with the lucidity of his intellect, his systematic habits, and capacity for labor".

Benjamin had little of nothing to do as Attorney General, and was soon moved to the office of Secretary of War. That was not a good fit for Benjamin. In March of 1862 Benjamin was appointed to Secretary of State. As secretary of state, Benjamin worked with president Davis in an attempt to gain official recognition for the Confederacy by France and the UK. In her autobiography, Jefferson Davis's wife, Varina, informs us that Benjamin spent twelve hours each day at her husband's side, tirelessly shaping every important Confederate strategy and tactic. In October of 1862, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, William E. Gladstone, expressed confidence in Confederate victory, stating in Newcastle, "There is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army. They are making, it appears, a navy, and they have made what is more than either — they have made a nation.

Later that month, Napoleon proposed to the British and Russians (a U.S. ally) that they combine to require a six months' armistice for mediation, and an end to the blockade; if they did so, it would likely lead to Southern independence. Although proponents of intervention were prepared to await another opportunity, growing realization among the British public that the Emancipation Proclamation meant that Union victory would be slavery's end made succoring the South politically infeasible.

During 1863-1864 Benjamin worked with the Confederate Secret Service to undermine Abraham Lincoln politically. The idea was that if the peace democrats could take control of Congress and the White House, then peace could be brokered between the North and the South. The two most famous being the St. Albans raid, and an attempt to burn New York City. In 1863, Benjamin was approached by a relative of a former law partner who suggested that the Confederate Army arm slaves for a chance for freedom. In January of 1864 General Patrick Cleburne proposed the same thing. Benjamin privately persuaded Robert E. Lee and other Confederate military leaders that the South's best chance was to emancipate any slave who volunteered to fight for the Confederacy. Benjamin urged Davis to send the secretary's fellow Louisianan, Duncan Kenner, to Paris and London, with an offer of emancipation in exchange for recognition. Davis was only willing to offer gradual emancipation, and both Napoleon and the United Kingdom rejected the proposal. A bill eventually emerged from the Confederate Congress in March of 1865, but it had many restrictions, and it was too late to affect the outcome of the war. By March 1865, the Confederate military situation was desperate. Most major population centers had fallen, and General Lee's defense of Richmond was faltering against massive Union forces.

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Capitol fell and the government was forced to flee. For a week, Danville served as capital of the Confederacy, until word came of Lee's surrender. With no army to shield the Confederate government, it would be captured by Union forces within days, so Davis and his Cabinet, including Benjamin, fled south to Greensboro, North Carolina. The Cabinet met in Greensboro, and Generals Beauregard and Joseph E. Johnston sketched the bleak military situation. Davis, backed as usual by Benjamin, was determined to continue to fight. The refugee government moved south on April 15. . Davis hoped to reach Texas, where rumor had it large Confederate forces remained active. May 2, and Benjamin told Davis that he wanted to separate from the presidential party temporarily, and go to the Bahamas to be able to send instructions to foreign agents before rejoining Davis in Texas. Davis was eventually Captured and Benjamin was forced to flee. But why? When John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln in 1865, Davis and Benjamin were suspected of having plotted the event and, as the martyred Lincoln was compared to Christ in the Northern press, Benjamin was pilloried as Judas. When the South was defeated, Benjamin -feared that he could never receive a fair trial if charged with Lincoln's murder. When asked where he would go he said "To the farthest place from the United States, if it takes me to the middle of China."

On August 30, 1865, Judah Benjamin arrived at Southampton, in Britain. There he would repeat the process he learned in Louisiana. He helped settle the affairs of the Confederate government while learning English law. He would soon become a barrister. He would become a member of the Queen's council which to my understanding is the top of tier of lawyers in the United Kingdom. He retired at the top of his profession in 1883, and died a year later in Paris.

## MINUTES

07/08/2017 (location Los Cazadores, 2855 Hwy 49 S. Florence, MS 39073)

7:00 pm start

Prayer – Tommy Symon

Pledges – Ian McKay

Billy - Welcome guests (AOT Commander Larry McCluney & wife, Nat'l 1st LT CIC Paul Gramling & wife, MS Division Commander Jeff Barnes, MS Div 1st Lt Commander Conor Bond, MS Div 2nd Lt Commander Carl Ford & wife, MS Div 4th Brigade Commander Bill Hinson, Tommy Symon & wife, East MS Greys Commander Bruce Warren & wife)

Reading of The Charge – Conor Bond

Billy:

- Awards, Promotions, and new members:
  - Young Compatriot of the Year to Ian McKay, Presented by Paul Gramling
  - Ryan Griffin promoted to Assistant Color Sergeant
  - Marty McAlilly promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Commander
  - Phillip Griffin promoted to 3<sup>rd</sup> Lt Commander
  - Owen McDowell promoted to Judge Advocate, presented Life Member Certificate
  - New members – Robert Pursley, and Paul Hisaw accepted for Kristian and Kane Hisaw

Owen:

- Beauvoir tornado damage, lost 16 oaks, damage to gates and fence. Received volunteer assistance on cleanup (Commanders Barnes, Sanford, Warren and Jason Smith) and grants plus used a gofundme for financial assistance. No significant damage to mansion.

Kathy:

- Update on Wounded Warrior ride, need volunteers

Gramling:

- Update on NOLA and speech on Are We Committed?

Billy:

- Memphis Gen Forrest Birthday Celebration, group meets @ Love's at 0800 July 9, 2017
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Picnic @ Grand Gulf July 15
- National Convention in Memphis July 19-22
- 1G Trace Ride July 23
- Wounded Warrior Ride July 29
- Ben & Robert's patch ins TBD
- Review by-laws on FB page for upcoming vote
- Vicksburg water situation, Billy and Ben delivered water to Vicksburg camp during outage on behalf of camp
- Dues are due Aug 31 Final
- Let adjutant know of address changes
- Website stats: 50 unique visitors, 128 page views
- Suggestions and requests for speakers to Owen McDowell

McCluney:

- August presentation will be PowerPoint on his book

Billy:

- Update on Mateo, camp donations totaled \$260 to ship his body home
- See Camp Quartermaster Phillip Griffin about shirts/hats/patches

Closing Prayer – T. Symon

Meeting ended – 8:45 pm

## AGENDA

- Opening prayer
- Pledges and Salutes
- Reading of the Charge
- Welcome
- Introduction of guests
- **Speaker: Larry McCluney**

### Old/Unfinished Business

- New member certificates
- Vote on Camp by-law amendments
- Mega Flag Update
- Beauvoir news
- Richland Hwy 49 Fest update
- Shiloh Cemetery updates
- Jamie Knight Memorial Membership update
- Kroger Rewards - have submitted, no response from Kroger yet
- Kathy for any OCR news, Wounded Warrior Ride update

### New Business

- August events
  - TBD Ben Edwards MC patch in at Philadelphia
  - TBD Robert Pursley MC patch in, location TBD
  - Bike Night - 26<sup>th</sup>, Little Willie's BBQ in Pearl at 06:00PM (recurring monthly on 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday at same location/time
  - Law Enforcement Appreciation Day - 18<sup>th</sup> by General Order from Nat'l
- Dunking booth during Fall Muster (Oct 20-22)
- Mech Cav Raffle Tickets
- DUES ARE DUE, \$50 by 08/31, Suspension on 09/01, extended to 09/30
- If your mailing address has changed since becoming a member, please notify the adjutant so that it can be changed with the Division and with National
- Website stats: 79 unique visitors, 110 page views
- Requests for speakers, suggestions to Owen McDowell
- See Camp Quarter Master Phillip Griffin for Shirts (\$20) and Hats (\$15)
- See Chris for applications
- Open discussion



# Pictures From July



Lt. Commander-in-Chief Paul Gramling presented Camp Color Sergeant Ian McKay with is  
*Walter X. Broome Young Compatriot of the Year Award*



Camp Quartermaster and newly sworn in 3<sup>rd</sup> Lt. Commander Phillip Griffin presenting Lt. Commander-in-Chief Paul Gramling with his own Rankin Greys Patch



Lt. Commander-in-Chief Paul Gramling giving his talk on what we can and should do to protect our heritage. Camp 2278 would like to express our deepest gratitude to Commander and Mrs. Gramling for their visit.





Members of the Rankin Greys and the Central Squad pose for a picture at the Nathan Bedford Forrest Equestrian Statue and grave site at the Forrest birthday celebration.





Commanders Bryant and McAlilly share a laugh as a protestor is being arrested by Memphis PD.



Lt. Commander-in-Chief Paul “the gent” Gramling was seen sporting his Rankin Greys patch on his Mechanized Cavalry Cut. Lookin’ good Commander!



Some of the motorcycles and vehicles that were part of the Roses for the Warriors Run. Thanks to all who helped make this event possible!





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Compatriots,

I hope that you have enjoyed this issue of *Grey Matter*. If anyone would like to submit an article for publication please do! Also, remember that we are taking donations to be used to help with printing the newsletter. Business that wish to donate will receive a spot in our newsletter.

Forward the Colors,

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