

Ride With Generals: Friends of Raymond

A Founder's Monument, featuring the names of those who joined Friends of Raymond with the rank of General, will be placed near the entrance of the Raymond Military Park.

by Rebecca Blackwell Drake

From 1999-2001, devoted town citizens enlisted to Ride with Generals by contributing \$5,000 or more toward the purchase and development of Raymond's Civil War battlefield. Many of the generalships have been donated to family members who have deep roots in Raymond. Others enlisted because of their love for Raymond and their desire to preserve its historic past.

James and Rebecca Drake became Generals in September of 1999 after donating the books, *The Battle of Raymond and Other Collected Stories to Friends of Raymond* and *In Their Own Words: Soldiers Tell the Story of the Battle of Raymond*. Also the Drake's have reprinted *A Soldier's Story of the Siege of Vicksburg*, the Civil War diary of Osborn H. I. Oldroyd. All proceeds from the sale of these books have been designated to go toward the preservation of Raymond's Civil War Battlefield.

David and Traci McCain, residents of Bolton, joined as Generals in October of 1999. David is President of the Board of Directors for Friends of Raymond. David and Traci are helping to lead the fight to preserve Raymond's historic past.

Isla Tullos and Robert Ogden joined as Generals in October of 1999. Isla and her brother, Robert, dedicated their generalship to the memory of their great-grandfather, Thomas R. McCormick, a Confederate soldier from Jasper County. Thomas McCormick enlisted as a private in Company H, 27th Mississippi Regiment of Walthall's Brigade.

Dr. Lester Senter, a graduate of the University of Texas and one of Jackson's leading concert artists, was awarded an honorary generalship for in May of 2000 after donating her Civil War album, *"Somebody's Darling,"* to Friends of Raymond. All proceeds from the sale of this CD will go toward the development and preservation of the battlefield.

Mary Ann Keith, owner and publisher of the Hinds County Gazette, was awarded an honorary Generalship in May of 2000. The Keith family and the Hinds County Gazette have been a vital part of the town's history since 1926. The Gazette is the oldest business in Raymond and one of the oldest businesses in Hinds County. Mary Ann's Generalship will be dedicated to the Keith Family and the Hinds County Gazette.

Charles and Kathy Pittman joined as Generals in May of 2000 after moving to Raymond. Charles, a former Mississippi senator, donated his generalship to a great ancestor, Captain Samuel Jones Ridley, a hero during the Battle of Champion Hill. Ridley was also Mississippi's First Recipient of the Confederate Medal of Honor. Charles and Kathy are devoted to historic preservation.

Oliver Vassar Shearer and Mary Dee Shearer are from Vienna, Virginia. Oliver Vassar Shearer, a descendant of one of the oldest families in Raymond, joined as a General in July of 2000. "My Shearer family roots in Raymond go back to 1835," states Oliver Shearer, "when my great grandfather, Oliver V. Shearer arrived from South Carolina. He was a planter and a successful merchant - the oldest Raymond citizen when he died." Since Oliver Vassar Shearer is retired with the U. S. States Navy, he joined Friends of Raymond with the rank of Commodore.

Drs. Clarke Stewart and Paula Stewart Strange joined as Generals in October of 2000. Clarke and Paula, natives of Raymond, donated their generalship to their father, the former Roger Stewart, and to their mother, Carolyn Clarke Stewart, a life-long resident of Raymond. "I challenge all the people with deep roots and a 'sense of place' to give to the battlefield projects," Stewart commented. "After all, it's our heritage."

Dr. Mary Collins Landin, a resident of Utica, joined as a General in 2000. Dr. Collins is well known for her book, *Cemeteries of Hinds County*. She is also president of the Utica Heritage Society. Dr. Landin works tirelessly to help preserve the history of Hinds County.

Mrs. Mary Gillespie Adams joined as a General in December of 2000. Mary's generalship was dedicated to the memory of her parents, Hugh B. Gillespie and Mary White Gillespie, prominent turn-of-the-century citizens of Raymond. Hugh Gillespie

was a judge and, at one time, mayor of Raymond. Mary White Gillespie, was an avid historian, writing one of the earliest histories of Raymond.

Mary Adams Kuhn, Pattie Adams Snowball and Hermon Adams, joined as Generals in December of 2000. Mary, Pattie, and Hermon grew up in the beautiful family home located directly across the street from St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Their family history in Raymond runs deep. They have dedicated their generalship in loving memory of their parents, James Hermon Adams and Mary Gillespie Adams.

Frances Graham McCain, a resident of Bolton and part owner of Gaddis Farms, along with her children, Laurie McCain George, Patty McCain Long and David H. McCain, joined as generals in January of 2001. Their generalship is in loving memory of H. Pat McCain.

Martha Gillespie Ferguson and Mrs. Bessie Gillespie Long joined as Generals in December of 2001 and have dedicated their generalship to Martha's grandparents, Cade Drew Gillespie, Sr. and his wife, Carrie Johnson Gillespie. Cade Gillespie, a lawyer in Raymond, fought with the Raymond Fencibles during the Civil War. Following his death, his wife, Carrie, worked to identify and honor the Confederate dead in the Raymond Confederate Cemetery.

David Barton, Dick Kilby, Jack Moss, The Gaddis Farms Incorporated, and Stanford's Mississippi Battery are also among the Generals who are working to preserve the battlefield.

A large granite Founder's Monument is planned for the entrance of the Raymond Military Park. The monument, set in the midst of a garden, will feature the names of all who have signed on as Generals and helped in the initial stage to preserve the historic battlefield. Friends of Raymond hopes to double the number of Generals by the end of this year. A person may become a General by donating \$5,000 or more either in a lump sum contribution or in five years \$1,000 contributions. Friends of Raymond is a non-profit charitable organization so all contributions are tax deductible Anyone interested in becoming a General should contact David McCain at Merchant and Planters Bank in Raymond.

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