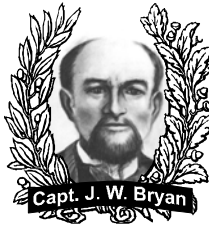


# THE CALCASIEU GREYS



Capt. James W. Bryan  
Camp 1390  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Lake Charles, Louisiana



Lt. Isaac Ryan  
Chapter 205  
Military Order of the  
Stars and Bars



**March 2005**

*Winner of the 1992-95 Dr. Paul Jon Miller National Newsletter Award*  
*Winner of the 1997 Harvey Hutchinson State Newsletter Award*  
<http://www.geocities.com/scv1390>

## **Cmdr. Sweeney Reinstated: Coup D'etat Attempt Fails**

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — Denne Sweeney, the duly elected commander-in-chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, was reinstated by Judge Robert Jones in Maury County Chancery Court March 9, thus overturning an attempt to oust the head of the organization.

Jones said the telephone conference call meeting Feb. 16, in which disgruntled members of the governing body of the SCV, the General Executive Council (GEC), tried to remove Sweeney and replace him with Anthony Hodges, was not valid. The disgruntled faction also attempted to fire four of Sweeney's staff members on the board and replace them with their own appointees. They have also been reinstated.

The judge had granted a "Temporary Restraining Order" Feb. 17 against Sweeney, which effectively gave the disgruntled GEC members temporary control over the organization. Both sides got their say at the March 9 hearing.

Jones also ruled that the commander-in-chief does not have the authority to suspend other members of the GEC, either permanently or temporarily.

Sweeney said he would abide by the judges ruling.

Tom Hardin, a Columbia lawyer representing several of the GEC members trying to oust Sweeney, told the court Sweeney suspended five members of the group last December.

"He did that to allow his supporters to have a quorum so that a number of items that he wanted passed could be voted on," Hardin said.

"We would not be here if Mr. Sweeney had not engaged in suspending people. Mr. Sweeney forgot that he works for the board of directors and took powers that he did not have."

The defense argued the GEC members who opposed Sweeney, organized a teleconference meeting Feb. 16 and ousted the commander in chief from office.

According to the SCV's constitution, three members of the GEC can call a meeting of the group, but it is the commander-in-chief who sets the time and place, which Sweeney did not do. The next day the trio filed a lawsuit in Maury County Chancery Court alleging that Sweeney had repeatedly violated the SCV constitution and bylaws.

Defense attorney Thor Y. Urness of Nashville said the meeting violated the group's rules because Sweeney and others were not given adequate notice about the phone session.

With a meeting of the GEC scheduled for three days later, Feb. 19, Urness questioned why the three board members could not wait until then to make their concerns known.

"The only reason they didn't wait for the 19th is they didn't have the votes then. What they did was completely over the top. There's a political process to accomplish what they wanted, but they chose to ignore it," Urness told Jones.

The defense lawyer played a tape of the Feb. 16 GEC meeting, during which it quickly became evident that two members did not know what the session was about and hung up once the group began voting on 13 resolutions, one of which included a motion to remove Sweeney.

The resolutions reportedly were not described, just read out as numbers.

Urness charged that at least two of the GEC members were "tricked into making the call. A quorum achieved by trickery is not valid," the defense attorney said.

However, Hardin, the plaintiff's lawyer, said it was unreasonable for his clients to "expect the commander in chief to call a meeting if he was going to be the subject of the meeting."

In the end, Chancellor Jones, who had taken care during the proceeding to make sure he understood the leadership structure of the SCV and how it had operated in the past, said he could not condone how the Feb. 16 meeting was conducted.

"With considerable sympathy for why the three members of the GEC called the Feb. 16 meeting, this court cannot bless the very restrictive way in which it was done.

"All of us, as human beings, have been tempted at times to make the ends justify the means," he said.

At the same time he restored Sweeney to his post, he revoked the suspensions that Sweeney had arranged in December.

After the hearing, Sweeney shook hands with supporters. About 65 men attended the daylong court session. Most of them were dressed in suits, with lapel stickers that read: "Sweeney is my commander in chief."

Asked if he thought the organization could rebound from its recent division, he was optimistic.

"We're going to make a valiant attempt at it. That's for sure.

We're going to see if we can work a little better together in the future," he said.

"I never had suspensions on the brain. All those suspensions were done for cause. Now the judge says we can't suspend people, and I won't suspend people. It's real simple," Sweeney said.

The first test of the reconciliation will occur April 23, when the GEC has its first meeting since the legal trouble. Tentatively, the meeting will be held in Charlotte, N.C.

## **Camp 1390 Passes Resolution Of Support For Cmdr. Sweeney**

Members of Captain James W. Bryan Camp 1390 at its March 8 meeting, passed a resolution of support for SCV Commander-in-Chief Denne Sweeney.

It was noted that Sweeney was allegedly removed by disgruntled members of the General Executive Council at a meeting that had been declared illegal by the Judge Advocate-in-Chief Samuel Currin. The resolution called for the reinstatement of Sweeney and his appointed officers that had been removed by the disgruntled faction.

## **Dick Dowling Statue, First Public Monument in Houston, Turns 100 Years Old on St. Patrick's Day**

HOUSTON, Texas — On March 17, 2005, the Dick Dowling Statue in Hermann Park will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its unveiling on St. Patrick's Day in 1905. It was Houston's first public monument, coming even before the statue of Sam Houston for whom the city was named. Standing today on a triangle near the intersection of Hermann Park Loop, Holcombe, and North MacGregor, the monument consists of an eight-foot statue made of Italian marble sitting atop a twenty-foot granite base. The creator of the monument was German sculptor Frank Teich, who sculpted the statue at his studio near Llano.

Richard "Dick" Dowling was one of the most interesting figures in Houston and Texas history. Dowling Street was named in his honor, as was Tuam Avenue, the place in County Galway, Ireland, near which he was born in 1837.

Because of the Great Famine in Ireland, Dowling and his family came to America some time after 1846 and eventually settled in Houston.

Dowling made his name and fortune in a number of saloon businesses. The most notable of these establishments was the "Bank of Bacchus," which he shrewdly located across the street from Houston's courthouse. "The Bank," as Dowling's bar was fondly known, became an immediate success, making its owner one of the most prominent Irishmen in Houston.



Dowling was a man of great compassion and vision. He was the first person in Houston to install gas lighting at his business. He also became one of the founding members of Houston Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, the predecessor of Houston's fire department. Finally, Dowling and his associates bought some of the earliest oil and gas leases in Texas, foreseeing the great oil boom that would eventually begin to change the world at the turn of the century.

Although his business and civic accomplishments are impressive, Dowling is remembered today primarily for his role in leading a group of unruly Irish dockworkers to one of the greatest upsets in military history at the Civil War Battle of Sabine Pass. Dick Dowling was the 26-year-old lieutenant in charge of a Confederate fort (Fort Griffin) at Sabine Pass on September 8, 1863, when a Union invasion fleet of 27 ships and almost 6,000 men attempted to capture the fort as part of a planned invasion of Texas.

In a battle that took less than an hour, Dowling and his fewer than fifty men repelled the invasion, capturing two Union gunboats and winning a victory that Jefferson Davis later called the most amazing feat in military history.

The names of Dowling's small artillery company (the Davis Guard) are inscribed on the side of the Dowling monument.

Not long after Dowling's death in 1867 from yellow fever, the Dick Dowling Camp of the United Confederate

Veterans decided to begin raising money to build a statue of Dowling in Houston. A number of Irish societies such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians wanted to participate in the project so the Dowling Monument Association was created to coordinate and lead the effort. After a lengthy period of planning, design, and construction the statue was finally finished in early 1905. It was placed originally at City Hall on Market Square. In 1939, it was moved to Sam Houston Park. In 1958 the Dowling monument was relocated to its present location near Hermann Park.

The Dowling statue shows the mustached lieutenant with his binoculars in one hand and a sword in the other. The sword has caused problems though the years. By 1958, a Houston newspaper reported that "Dick Dowling's sword is missing again. [Nobody] has the faintest idea where it went. Five times now swords have vanished from the cupped left hand of Dowling's statue."

Speculating that leprechauns might have a stash of the rusted swords somewhere in Ireland, the reporter noted that in some ways the missing sword was an improvement since Dowling did not actually own a sword at the time of his famous battle.

Because of the Irish heritage of Dowling and most of his men it was decided to formally dedicate the statue on St. Patrick's Day, 1905.

One of the largest crowds in Houston history participated in a parade and a large ceremony to dedicate the monument. When the parade finally reached the statue about 3 p.m., bands played "God Save Ireland" and "Dixie."

After a series of speeches, Mrs. W. F. "Annie" Robertson, Dowling's daughter, pulled the silken cord to remove the canvas from the statue of her father amid deafening cheers from the massive crowd of dignitaries, Confederate veterans, school children, and interested citizens.

Edward T. Cotham, Jr., author of *Sabine Pass; The Confederacy's Thermopylae*, a book recently published about Dowling and his famous battle, explained the reason that the people of Houston found it appropriate to so enthusiastically dedicate such a large monument to Dowling and his men. "The Union invasion thwarted at Sabine Pass was not actually aimed at that part of Texas. Sabine Pass was merely planned to be the initial landing point for a Union invasion that would have rapidly marched west with the intention of capturing Houston and Galveston. The people of Houston knew that by stopping that invasion before it even landed Dowling and his men had saved their city from occupation and possible destruction. To express their gratitude, Houstonians shortly after the battle raised funds to issue a special silver medal for Dowling and each of his men. This medal (extremely rare today) is sometimes said to have been the Confederate equivalent of the Medal of Honor that was awarded to Union heroes. After the war, the people of Houston banded together to build a statue of Dick Dowling and thus permanently honor a man who had meant so much to the city and its early history."

Edward T. Cotham, Jr., former President of the Houston Civil War Round Table, is the author of *Sabine Pass: The Confederacy's Thermopylae* (University of Texas Press, 2004).

## **Civil War Preservation Trust Unveils Most Endangered Battlefields List**

(Washington, D.C.) - A pastoral Tennessee battlefield that witnessed 9,000 casualties in just five hours, the remains of a South Carolina fort where a legendary African-American regiment found glory, and a sacred Civil War battle site just 30 miles from the nation's capital are among America's most endangered battlefields, it was announced today.

At a news conference Feb. 24, the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) unveiled its annual report on the status of the nation's historic battlegrounds. The report, entitled *History Under Siege: A Guide to America's Most Endangered Civil War Battlefields*, identifies the most threatened Civil War sites in the United States and what can be done to rescue them.

"America's Civil War history is under siege," warned CWPT President James Lighthizer during the news conference. "Nearly 20 percent of America's Civil War battlefields have already been destroyed – denied forever to future generations. Across the country, hallowed ground, where more than 600,000 Americans gave their lives, is being paved over for shopping malls and housing tracts. Without swift and decisive action, many of the sites listed in this year's report will soon be little more than a memory."

Fought on November 30, 1864, the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, was one of the most agonizing defeats suffered by the South during the Civil War.

After years of neglect, the city of Franklin has pledged a \$2.5 million challenge grant toward preservation of a critical section of the battlefield. The preservation community is working hard to meet that challenge by raising an additional \$2.5 million.

Located just outside Charleston Harbor, Morris Island, South Carolina, was the scene of brutal fighting during the bitter siege of Charleston. It was here that the 54th Massachusetts, the famed African-American regiment, fought nobly, a story immortalized in the 1990 film *Glory*. Last year, a developer applied for a permit to build 20 homes on Morris Island – ten times the density allowed under current zoning.

Virginia's Manassas Battlefield, less than one hour outside the nation's capital, was the site of two crucial Civil War battles fought during the summers of 1861 and 1862. Today, the battlefield is surrounded by sprawl.

Commuter traffic through the battlefield threatens to turn the national park into a vast parking lot.

Also participating in the news conference was Libby O'Connell, Ph.D., chief historian of The History Channel. O'Connell, who developed and oversees *Save Our History*, The History Channel's campaign for historic preservation and history education, is also a trustee of

CWPT, a member of the Mt. Vernon Scholars Committee and one of the Board of Advisors of the National Council for History Education.

History Under Siege is comprised of two parts: the first section cites the 10 most endangered battlefields in the nation, with a brief description of their history and preservation status; the second section lists 15 additional "at risk" sites that round out the top 25 endangered battlefields in the country.

The sites mentioned in the report range from the famous to the nearly forgotten. However, all have a critical feature in common — each one or part of one is in danger of being lost forever. The battlefields were chosen based on geographic location, military significance, and the immediacy of current threats.

In addition to Franklin, Morris Island and Manassas, History Under Siege includes:

Bermuda Hundred, Virginia. This peninsula jutting into the James River was expected to be the starting point for a victorious Union attack on Richmond. Unfortunately for the Union cause, the campaign was reduced to a series of bloody and inconclusive battles. Today, only a small percentage of the Bermuda Hundred battlefields are preserved.

Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia. Union General William T. Sherman suffered one of his few defeats at Kennesaw Mountain in June 1864. Today, picturesque Kennesaw Mountain is surrounded by sprawl. The park service estimates that an astounding 160,000 vehicles travel through the battlefield each day.

Knoxville, Tennessee. Fought during November and early December 1864, the battles for Knoxville were among the most brutal of the Civil War. Little remains of the fortifications that once surrounded the city. Local preservationists are trying to save Fort Higley, one of the two remaining forts, from being bulldozed to make way for a 250-condominium project.

Mansfield, Louisiana. The battle of Mansfield was one of the bloodiest battles fought west of the Mississippi River. Today, only 237 acres of the battlefield are protected from development. A lignite mining operation has already destroyed part of the battlefield and threatens to devour even more.

Raymond, Mississippi. Raymond was a major turning point in Union General Ulysses S. Grant's brilliant Vicksburg Campaign. Today, only 65 acres of the 1,000-acre battlefield are protected. Development pressure along State Highway 18 remains the principal threat.

Spotsylvania County, Virginia. Situated midway between the opposing capitals of Washington and Richmond, Spotsylvania County was the site of four of the bloodiest battles of the war. Today, as one of the fastest-developing counties in the nation, Spotsylvania is ground zero in the fight to save America's remaining Civil War battlefields.

Wilson's Creek, Missouri. The rolling hills of Wilson's Creek provided the backdrop for the first major battle of the Civil War fought west of the Mississippi River. Today, a proposed 1,500-house development

threatens to destroy key parcels west of the battlefield and become a magnet for irreversible sprawl.