

## RECAP OF THE 34TH ANNUAL OLD CLINTON WAR DAYS EVENT

Near Gray, GA

May 2nd & 3rd, 2015

The Camp of The Unknown Soldier # 2218 of Old Clinton, Jones County, Georgia co-hosted the 34th annual Old Clinton War Days event (near Gray, GA) with the 16th Georgia Volunteer Infantry, Co. G re-enactment company, "The Jackson Rifles" and The Old Clinton Historical Society. Also supporting this event were the Lt. James T. Woodward SCV Camp # 1399, The Logan E. Bleckley SCV Camp #1998 of Cochran, GA and The General Edward Dorr Tracy SCV Camp #18 of Macon, GA as well as numerous other SCV, UDC and historical organizations. The main



activities occurred with the re-enacted battles of Sunshine Church on Saturday, May 2 and The Battle of Griswoldville on Sunday, May 3. However, Camp 2218 had much to do in preparation for the event as well as hosting two days (April 30 - May 1) of living history programs for Jones County school students. Camp 2218 Commander J.C. Nobles (pictured, above right) speaks to a group of Jones County students about a display of war implements and weapons.

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It seems an odd sight perhaps (left); a company of Yankee soldiers positioned in front of an SCV recruitment sign. However, rest assured these are all good southern boys from Camps 2218, 1399 and 1998 who find it necessary to portray Union troops at as much as 50% of the events they participate in. We realize this sometimes causes a degree of consternation within SCV ranks but we are not concerned with that. As living historians our job is to do whatever we must to tell the story. Our Confederate ancestors faced the most powerful army of the world at the time

and gave them good as they sent for more than four years. We tell that story. This is not our hobby - it is our chosen lifestyle, our vocation and craft. One event participant, Andy Carson, explained, "We'd rather pretend to be a Yankee than bring real ones down here." Commander Tim Hawkins, SCV Camp 1399, Warner Robins, GA assessed "I was amazed again during the 2015 weekend at Old Clinton. The 16th GA even when fighting in the "wrong uniform"...served with honor and respect. Every year I learn something new at Old Clinton. -



The event opened on Saturday morning with the colors being raised. Camp 2218 2nd Lt. Commander Earl Colvin and Adjutant Wayne Dobson (left) hoisted aloft our battle flag.

2:05pm arrived on Saturday, May 2 and Steven L. Smith, Sr. of Byron, GA (right) began his typically eloquent narration of The Battle of Sunshine Church that was to be re-enacted. Steve is a past Commander of the Lt. James T. Woodward Camp 1399, former Colonel of the Georgia Volunteer Battalion and long-time commander of the 16th GA Infantry, "The Jackson Rifles."



Again, doing their part in the blue uniform, raiding the town are (left to right: 2nd Lt. Commander Earl Colvin, Adjutant Wayne Dobson and 1st Lt. Commander Charles Whitehead; all members of Camp 2218. Below, Confederate forces surround and capture much of Union General George Stoneman's command at Sunshine Church.





As late Saturday evening approached, troops assembled for one of the most important parts of the whole weekend of endeavors. Scheduled for 8:05pm was our annual two-night memorial service. This year it featured the dedication of more than 30 Southern Crosses of Honor, recently installed by Camp 2218. At the left the honor guard assembles to march to the Old Clinton Methodist Church Cemetery. After a short march, the long column arrived (below, right) at the

church as 2nd Lt. Commander (Camp 2218) Earl Colvin (below left) greeted guests.



Chaplain Joel Whitehead (Camp 2218) brought the invocation, the traditional musical ensemble, "Simple Heritage" provided the song, "Southern Birthright"; Mrs. Amy Colvin Thompson read the poem "My Name" (written by Compatriot Lee Murdock of Camp 2218) and Reverend Joey Young brought a tremendously inspiring keynote address.



Next came the dedication of The Southern Crosses of Honor, which was beautifully done by Ms. Sherrie' Raleigh, President of The Sidney Lanier Chapter 25 UDC of Macon, GA and Chapter 25 Chaplain Mrs. Cheryl Aultman (upper left). At this time, the name of each Confederate veteran buried in this cemetery (including famous Confederate pistol maker Sam Griswold) was called. A lantern bearing soldier by each grave reverently replied to this roll of honor with "Present in Spirit, Sir." A three-volley rifle salute followed - dramatic in the darkness.



Compatriot Al McGalliard, (below, left) Treasurer of Camp 2218, played "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes before the column marched out, returning to the town of Old Clinton amid the rousing strains of "Dixie", lead by "Simple Heritage; " and concluding the service.....





Sunday morning, May 3, 2015 dawned and the perfect weather continued. The 16th GA / 51th PVV assembled at first light with near full strength as preparations were made for the final day. In this group are three past SCV Commanders and two current ones representing three camps.



Church call came at 11am and services were conducted by Chaplain Joel Whitehead (Camp 2218) and Reverend Joey Young. "Simple Heritage" and 16th GA provided music.



The 16th GA Co. G, "The Jackson Rifles", and The Camp of the Unknown Soldier # 2218 are family-oriented organizations. Pictured at War Days are the family of (left to right) Will Butler (Camp 2218 Historian), Mrs. Dixie Curtis, young Miss Ragan Curtis and Lee Curtis (Camp 2218 Quartermaster).



The re-created (November 22, 1864) Battle of Griswoldville opened at 2:05pm on May 3, 2015 with Union forces holding the high ground against seven Confederate assaults. Portraying Georgia Militia Colonel Abner Redding (KIA) is J.C. Nobles (16th GA / Commander of Camp 2218) as he rallies his men for the final charge.



This concluded Old Clinton War Days 2015 - one of the most enjoyable and successful on record. Funds raised are used to maintain and restore the Old Clinton Historical District. Thanks to all who attended and those who have made this possible for nearly 3-1/2 decades.