

TEXAS RANGER MASON'S HONOR RESTORED

Marshall J. Doke, Jr.

A recent history collaboration resulted in a correction of 1868 Masonic records and restoring the Masonic honor of Texas Ranger Hall of Fame member of Benjamin McCulloch.

McCulloch fought with General Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto commanding one of the famous Twin Sisters cannons and won a battlefield commission to first lieutenant from Houston. He was elected to the Republic of Texas House of Representatives in 1839 and again in 1845 as a member of the First Legislature of the State of Texas.

He fought with legendary Texas Ranger John Coffee Hays in numerous fights with Indians, including the Battle of

Plum Creek in 1840, and he became General Zachery Taylor's chief of scouts in the Mexican War.

McCulloch was a Confederate Brigadier General in the Civil War and worked with the famous Scottish Rite Mason, Albert Pike, in establishing alliances with peaceful Indians in eastern Oklahoma. He was killed by a Union sniper on March 7, 1862, at the Battle of Pea Ridge. In his will, McCulloch wrote, "I leave my soul to God who gave it, and my body to the State of Texas." He eventually was buried in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.

The cooperative historical efforts began when Marshall Doke, Chairman of the Texas Scottish Rite History Committee, inquired if the former Texas Ranger was a Mason. Ms. Barbara Mechell, Librarian/Curator of the Masonic Grand Lodge Library and Museum of Texas, responded that the Grand Lodge had a "BW" but not a Ben McCulloch in its membership list. Doke then found a reference to Benjamin McCulloch being a Mason in *The Texas Mason*, (Vol. X. No. 2, Spring 2001, p. 4).

With the additional information, Ms. Mechell found Benjamin McCulloch through James D. Carter's book, *Masonry in Texas*, as a member of Masonic Lodge Guadalupe No. 109 located in Sequin, Texas. Ms. Mechell located the Guadalupe Lodge's 1869 Annual Returns to the Grand Lodge which stated that McCulloch was listed as "suspended, N.P.D. [Non-Payment of Dues] 7-6-68."

The suspension for non-payment of dues is a serious matter in Masonry, and it has the same effect as for "un-Masonic conduct," except that the Mason's payment of all dues will result in reinstatement. Some have made the "NPD" suspension analogous to the military "dishonorable discharge." A suspended Mason is not eligible for a Masonic funeral.

Doke reported to Ms. Mechell that the Guadalupe Lodge's 1868 suspension of McCulloch had to be an error in view of his death in 1862, as reported in numerous histories. Ms. Mechell

notified the Secretary of the Guadalupe Lodge, Michael McCleary, who became another collaborator. He did the “down and dirty” work (his words) digging into the lodge’s storage shed to find 1860s’ minutes. He located the lodge original minutes for January 5, 1863, reflecting that the lodge remitted the quarterly dues of all members who “have been, are now, or may hereafter go into the army” during the Civil War. McCleary also located the original lodge minutes for July 6, 1868, listing McCulloch as suspended for “non-payment of dues.”

Secretary McCleary suggested that the lodge adopt a resolution to “correct the record” and forward it to the Grand Lodge. Grand Secretary Orville O’Neal said that would be an ideal way to note the change. At its stated meeting on August 10, 2017, Guadalupe Lodge 109 in Sequin, Texas adopted a resolution to acknowledge and confirm the “Restoration of Member in Good Standing for our honorable and distinguished Brother Ben McCulloch.” After receiving this information, the Grand Lodge of Texas corrected the record, and honor, of the great Texas Ranger, Benjamin McCulloch.

Why would anyone care about this after all these years? Virtue and honor are among the ideals of Freemasonry. The commitment and efforts of the collaborators in this matter to restore the honor of a Masonic brother who has been dead for 155 years reflect the importance of these ideals to Masonry.



TEXAS RANGER HALL OF FAME - STATE DESIGNATED MEMORIAL

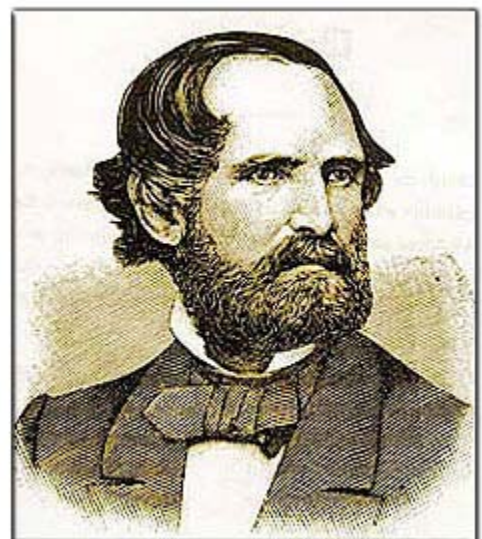


The HALL OF FAME is the State designated memorial of the Texas Ranger service, commemorating the service and sacrifices of 30 Texas Rangers who gave their lives in the line of duty or made significant contributions to development of the service.



Benjamin McCulloch 1811-1862

Benjamin McCulloch was born November 11, 1811 in Rutherford County, Tennessee. The family moved often living in North Carolina, Alabama and Tennessee during the years 1812 -1830. Late in 1835 he and his brother Henry, made their way to Texas. Arriving after the fall of the Alamo, Ben joined the Texan army. At San Jacinto he manned one of the cannon known as the "twin sisters." He won praise and a battlefield promotion from Sam Houston and a poem was written about his exploits, "Ben McCulloch at San Jacinto."



He soon left the army and settled at Gonzales, working as a surveyor. While here he met up with and joined Jack Hays' company of Rangers. He was involved in many fights with the Indians including the battle of Plum Creek in 1840, and in the expedition against the Indians located along the tributaries of the Guadalupe river in 1841. In 1842 he was elected as 1st Lieutenant in Jack Hays' company of Rangers.

At the outbreak of the Mexican War McCulloch raised a command that became Company A of Col. Jack Hays' First Regiment, Texas Mounted volunteers. Showing great skill in tracking and scouting, he was named Gen. Zachary Taylor's chief of scouts. He and his men rendered invaluable service to the U. S. Army at the battles of Monterey and Buena Vista. He ended the war with the rank of major.

Returning to Texas at the end of the war, McCulloch resumed his business of surveying. Catching the "gold fever" he traveled to Sacramento, California in 1849 where he served as sheriff. In 1852 he returned to Texas and was appointed U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Texas. In 1857 he was appointed as one of the commissioners charged with investigating the Mormon troubles in Utah.

At the outbreak of the Civil War he offered his services to the Confederacy and was commissioned a brigadier-general in May 1861 and ordered to Fort Smith, Arkansas. McCulloch, commanding the Confederate right wing in the Battle of Pea Ridge, March 7, 1862, overran and drove the Union forces from their position. Riding through the undergrowth to ascertain the new Union position, McCulloch was shot and killed.

McCulloch was originally buried on the field, but later moved to the cemetery at Little Rock, Arkansas and finally to the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, Texas.

Suggestions for further reading:

- McCulloch Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin, Texas
- Rossiter Johnson, *The twentieth century dictionary of notable Americans*, Boston: The Biographical Society, 1904, vol. VII
- *The new handbook of Texas*, Austin: The Texas State Historical Commission, 1996, vol. 4
- Amelia Williams and Eugene Barker, *The writings of Sam Houston*, Austin: Pemeberton Press, 1970, vol. V
- Thomas W. Cutter, *Ben McCulloch and the frontier military tradition*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993
- Vertical file, Texas Ranger Research Collection, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco, Texas



Some Other Prominent Masons Who Served as Texas Rangers

Waco Masonic Lodge #92, A.F. & A.M. &
Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum

Lawrence Sullivan “Sul” Ross



Lawrence Sullivan Ross was born in 1838 at Bentonsport in Iowa Territory. In 1839 his family migrated to Texas, first settling in Milam County. By 1849 the family had settled at Waco. Sul Ross attended Baylor University at Independence, Texas and graduated from Wesleyan University, Florence, Alabama in 1859.

In the summer of 1858, Ross signed on with the U. S. Army as the leader of a band of Indian auxiliaries from the Brazos Indian Reservation. His skill and courage were noted by the regular army officers, but he nearly lost his life in October 1858 during a battle with Comanches at the Wichita Village near Rush Springs, Oklahoma. Recovering from his wounds, he returned to college and graduated the next spring.

Ross joined the Texas Rangers in 1860, first serving as a lieutenant and later as a captain. He was empowered by Sam Houston to raise a company of men to serve in Young County and the surrounding area. He showed the same skill and courage as a Ranger captain as he had shown earlier with the army. In December of 1860 he and his company pursued a Comanche raiding party that ended in the battle of Pease River in which Cynthia Ann Parker, who had been captured by the Comanche some 20 years earlier, was rescued. Ross resigned from the Rangers at the beginning of the Civil War.

Ross became a Master Mason at Waco 92 shortly before he enlisted in the Confederate Army in 1861. He was soon promoted to the rank of major of the 6th Texas Calvary, and in May 1862 he was promoted to colonel. He was promoted to brigadier-general as a reward for his skill in covering the retreat of Gen. Earl Van Dorn from Corinth, Mississippi in 1863. He commanded a brigade in Wheeler's cavalry, Army of Tennessee, and later was in command of the Texas Calvary, Army of the West.

Returning to Texas after the war, he took up farming. He served as sheriff of McLennan County from 1873 - 1875, He was a member of the 1875 state constitutional convention, served as a state senator from 1881 – 1886. and as governor of Texas from 1887 - 1891. It was during his term in office that the new state capitol building was completed. Following his last term in office he was appointed president of the struggling Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (now Texas A & M University), an office he held until his death on January 3, 1898, in College Station.

George Barnard



George Barnard was born in Connecticut and educated at Harvard. He moved to Galveston in 1838. Barnard participated in Thomas Torrey's Santa Fe Expedition and captured by Mexican forces. The prisoners were force-marched to Vera Cruz. During the ordeal, Barnard's leg was shackled to that of another man who was suffering from small pox. The experience left him with a permanent limp and he used a cane for the rest of his life.

As the Santa Fe campaign crossed through central Texas both Torrey and Barnard recognized potential in the area. Later on, Torrey employed Barnard in setting up trading posts along the Brazos. One was southwest of the current location of Fort Worth. A town grew up around the post, which Barnard named George's Creek. Barnard owed his success as a trader to his empathetic relationship with the local Indian tribes.

George and his brother Charles opened a trading post on Tehuacana Creek. The post overlooked the creek on a site that natives traditionally used for council meetings, about eight miles from present-day downtown Waco. The Barnard brothers traded in fur as well as gunpowder, lead, bullet molds, hatchets, and colored beads, blankets, cloth, dress combs, bear's oil, tobacco and whiskey. The trading post was also used as the location for treaty negotiations between then President Sam Houston, Comanche natives, and various other groups of Native Americans.

George Erath



George Erath was the epitome of the Renaissance man. In his life he was a surveyor, rancher, soldier, engineer/architect and legislator. As a young man he attended the Vienna Polytechnic Institute where he studied Italian, French, English and Spanish. George Erath immigrated from Austria to New Orleans during the summer of 1832. He arrived in Texas in March 1833, purchasing land in Robertson's Colony.

Erath served as a Texas Ranger in John H. Moore's Company in 1834 and 1835. During the Texas Revolution of 1836 he served in the Texas Army and fought in the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21 of that year. Once the Revolution was over, Erath joined Thomas Barron's Company of Texas Rangers and was with them when they established Fort Fisher on the Brazos River. In 1842 George Erath was elected to the Congress of the Republic of Texas. After Texas joined the United States, he was elected to several terms in the State Senate. Resuming his work as a surveyor, in 1849 he laid the original plats for the City of Waco near the site of Fort Fisher. He also laid out the towns of Stephenville and Caldwell.

George Erath died peacefully in his sleep on May 13. Erath County, Texas, is named in his honor. An obituary at the time of his death summed up his life and impact:

He was a soldier, a scholar, a gentleman and a good citizen; full of honor, brave as Caesar, gentle as a woman, bright, gifted, his like will never be found again. There is no page too bright for Major Erath's name. He is a subject for the sculptor, and a proper hero for the song.

John Hogue Pierson

John H. Pierson was born on the 17th of April in Kentucky in 1817. His parents brought him to Texas when he was still a baby. The family moved to Nacogdoches when he was 13 after living several years along the Red River. They joined Stephen F. Austin's Colony in 1831.

On February 25, 1835, John Hogue Pierson joined Robertson's Colony and was granted 1,107 acres of land. In the fall of that year Pierson joined the Texas Rangers where he served with twenty-four others charged with protecting settlers near the Brazos as far north as the native village of Ouchaco (later Anglicized to Waco).

In 1836, during the Texas Revolution, Pierson served as a sergeant in his father's cavalry company. The fighting with the Comanche and other tribes continued after the Revolution ended in April 1836 and Pierson rejoined the Rangers who were facing the threat. On August 22, 1836, he was severely wounded in the Battle of Coleto Creek near Victoria. He received 4,280 acres of land in May of 1838 from the Republic of Texas in recognition of his service.

Old injuries did not prevent him from volunteering for the Mexican-American War in 1846 when he served in Company B of Colonel John C. Hays' regiment of Texas Mounted Riflemen. In 1851, he relocated his family from East Texas to Falls County where he and his father had acquired land. He opened a general store for many years and was elected county commissioner in 1852. On April 9, 1853, he was appointed as the acting attorney on behalf of the people in applying for 640 acres to establish the town of Marlin.

When the Masonic charter for Lodge 92 was granted in 1852 Pierson was among the original members. Later, on April 25, 1854, Pierson and six other Brothers received the charter for Lodge #152 in his hometown of Marlin.

In September of 1861, Brother Pierson enlisted in the Confederate Army's 8th Texas Cavalry, better known as Terry's Texas Rangers. Half a year later, the Cavalry was in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Battle fatigue and lasting effects of Pierson's earlier injuries caused his captain, Rufus Y. King, to release him from duty.

In February of 1867 Pierson moved his family to some land he had purchased in Hamilton County along the Leon River. He died there on June 9 of the same year after a short illness. He was fifty years old.

Fourteen years later, his widow received over a thousand acres from the State in gratitude for Pierson's service in establishing Texas as a Mexican colony, as an independent Republic, and as a new state. Today, there is a street in Hamilton which bears his name.

Shapley Prince Ross



Shapley Ross was born January 18, 1811 in Jefferson County, Kentucky. When he was still a boy, the Rosses moved to Lincoln County in 1823. When he was twenty-three, he and his wife settled in Indian Territory where he had been trading with local tribes since he was a teenager. A small community known as the Ross settlement grew around this location. Shapley's son, Lawrence "Sul" Sullivan, was born there.

In 1839 Ross, his wife, and their rapidly growing family moved to Texas and settled at Nashville in Milam County. His oath to the Republic of Texas was administered by Neil McLennan. Shapley also purchased land in what would become McLennan and Burleson Counties. In 1842, he served on a committee charged with selecting a seat for Milam County. He joined Capt. Hay's rangers that same year and went on the Snively expedition of 1843.

In 1845, Ross relocated to Austin where he was elected captain of a Ranger company whose task was to protect settlers on the frontier around the Waco area. Recruited to Bell's Ranger battalion, Ross was made commander of a company formed in April 1847. Ross moved to Waco in 1849, where he built the first hotel and was selected as the village's first postmaster. Ross operated a ferry across the Brazos which was the only method of crossing for several years.

He was appointed as a delegate of Indian relations from 1855 to 1858. As a Democrat, he opposed joining the Confederacy but was in favor of secession. In 1885, Shapley Ross was a representative at the cornerstone ceremony for the State Capitol building in Austin.

When he died September 17, 1889, his funeral was said to stretch two miles and all the businesses were closed, "even the saloons."

