

James Harvey Swan E Co. 19th Infantry Regiment

Family Civil War Stories

Swan Family of Campbell Station

Rena Belle Swan Standifer, the oldest child of Joseph Leomer Swan and Adelia Watt Swan, told the family stories.

Leomer Swan's father, George Nathaniel Swan, (Nathaniel George Swan) who fought on the Union side in the Civil War, died March 22, 1873, when Leomer was barely two years old (born 2-1871). Leomer probably heard the stories from his mother, Rebecca Craig Swan, who remained a widow for over four years until she married Matthew Frank Walker (11-15-1877). Leomer had a younger sister, Mamie. (Also in records as Mary I.). Rebecca and Matthew Frank Walker had several children.

Leomer did not get along with this step-father and lived until he was 16 with his maternal grandparents, Hugh and Mary Ann Craig. Before he married in 1893 he went to Wellington, Kansas, to visit his uncle, John Marion Swan, who had been his guardian before moving west in the 1880's.

In 1974 Harvey Swan from Wellington, Kansas, visited me and related the version of the story he heard from his grandfather, John Marion Swan, and his great uncles who participated in the Civil War. I have collected factual information from census records, deed books, county court minutes, and etc. to support the stories.

The Swan home stood on the hill where the original Farragut High School was located on the southeast corner of Concord Road and Kingston Pike. James Denny Swan, grandfather of Leomer, bought 253 acres on the East Fork of Turkey Creek and a two-acre tract from Alexander Thomas in October 1840. William McClung described the location in a letter written in 1954.

When I was a small child I visited several times the Swan home at Campbell's Station in Knox County, Tennessee. I will describe the home as I remember it. The home was on Kingston Pike. This pike extended west from Knoxville to Kingston in Rhone County. The Swan home was about fifteen or twenty miles west of Knoxville. The pike runs through one of the nicest valleys of East Tennessee. The pike is very straight. I don't recall seeing even a slight crook in it. As you go west all at once you are on a high hill. The road goes down that hill about 150 or 200 feet. At the top of the hill on the south side of the pike stood the Swan home. At the bottom of the hill and on the north side of the pike was a fine spring of water. I went down the pike in July 1940 and as I

approached that hill I looked eagerly to see the Swan home and that big spring. After I had passed where the house and spring should be I discovered that when the survey was made for a new concrete auto road instead of going down that steep hill they had surveyed the new road slightly to the north of the hill and by a more gradual descent. [sic] I was disappointed in not seeing the house and spring as they were in my childhood days.

One event I remember quite well that happened at the Swan home in my childhood days. I was about four or five years old. A big turkey gobbler was in the yard. I chased him but all at once he turned, spread his feathers, said gobble, gobble and chased me into the house. The family had the laugh on me.

William McClung does not describe the house but the stories refer to it as a log home, probably similar in construction to several other log houses, which were still being lived in as late as the 1960s. The 1850 Census lists James D. Swan as a farmer with property valued at \$2500, which was above the average for the community. Since the Swan house was built before the Civil War it possibly was a two-story, double-pen log structure, two rooms wide and one room deep. The house would have had side-facing gables, an exterior gable-end stone chimney, and a roof ridge parallel to the front of the house.

The log dwelling was built one to two feet above ground on stone piers and had wooden floors. Chink wall construction was typical, in which logs of the front and rear walls were placed in layers alternating with logs of the sidewalls to leave spaces between the logs. The chinks or spaces between the logs were usually filled with small pieces of wood daubed with mud or mortar. There were front and rear doors near the center and two or more windows. Wooden boards or split shingles fastened to supporting rafters covered the roof. A rear addition contained the kitchen and cooking fireplace, separated from the main structure by an open porch as a method of fire prevention.

There would have been a log barn, a log crib for corn, log or stone springhouse and other log out buildings. The story refers to a "cave" in which food was stored. It is difficult to place a true cave near this location. Perhaps the "cave" was a cellar dug in the side of the hill and supported by logs in which to store vegetables and meat for the winter.

The Census for Knox County lists the Swan family:

Swan, James D. (Denny) age 44 in 1850, age 54 in 1870, not included in 1870 and 1880

Isabella G. (Gillespie Hood) age 44 in 1850, age 54 in 1860, age 63 in 1870, age 74 and living with John M. in District 10 in 1880

Joseph N. (Nelson) age 20 in 1850, age 30 in 1860, not included in 1870 and 1880

Elizabeth A. age 19 in 1850 and not included in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Nathaniel G. (George) age 17 in 1850, age 27 in 1860 and not included in 1870 and 1880

John Marion age 16 in 1850 and not included in 1860, 1870 and 1880

Hannah E. age 14 in 1850 and not included on 1860, 1870 and 1880

James H. (Harvey) age 11 in 1850, age 21 in 1860 and not included in 1870 and 1880

Andrew Hart age 8 in 1850, age 18 in 1860 and not included in 1870 and 1880

Daniel Park 4/12 [sic] in 1850, 10 in 1860 and not included in 1870 and 1880

The 1850 Census lists James D. Swan as a farmer with property valued at \$2500.

John Marion Swan apparently did not serve in the War but the story relates that he “worked in the salt peter mines” in Tennessee and North Carolina. A cave above the Tennessee River, now covered by the Fort Loudon Lake, was a source of saltpeter.

His father, James D. Swan, died on September 4, 1862, almost a year before the Battle of Campbell Station, leaving his wife, Isabella, and youngest son, James Park Swan, age 13, at the home place at Campbell’s Station.

The Union Army led by Burnside and the Confederate Army led by Longstreet were rushing northward toward Knoxville. Both armies sent advance parties to try to hold Campbell’s Station. The Union force reached Campbell’s Station around noon on November 16, 1863, a few minutes before the Confederates. The Union army set up defenses on the Swan farm at the corner of Concord Road and the Kingston Road. During the ensuing battle a “cannon ball” went through the Swan’s log house. The Swan family in Kansas has kept a gallon bucket of miniballs [sic] collected after the battle. The house was “almost completely destroyed”. Bedding was used for bandages, dishes were broken, feather beds and pillows destroyed.

The following stories were told as having taken place at the Swan home in Campbell’s Station. If so, John Marion Swan’s wife would have been living there with his recently widowed mother and youngest brother, Daniel Park Swan. (But it could also have happened at the John Marion Swan farm in Ebenezer.)

Raiding for Provisions

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Many years later when Daniel Park Swan was county treasurer in Sumner County, Kansas, (Wellington), he and Johnny Millard were sitting on the courthouse steps talking about the Civil War. Johnny was telling about raiding this farm in Tennessee where only “an old lady and a little boy were left”. Park asked him how the meat and molasses tasted. Park had been the little boy with his mother, Isabella, when the soldiers, one of whom was Johnny Millard, raided the “cave” where the Swans kept their meat and other provisions.

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The Bay Horse

Another story was told about a beautiful bay horse owned by John Marion Swan. A raiding party came to the Swan home and was going to take the horse. Mary Walker Swan confronted the men with a pitchfork but was unsuccessful in keeping the horse. After the War John Marion Swan saw a former Union officer riding his horse down Gay Street. The story tells that John was unable to get his horse but “went to court and spent all his money trying to get his horse back”.

This story is substantiated by a document in the records of the Circuit Court of Knox County, the June Term, 1865: John M. Swan vs. A.S. Hudiburg.

A.S. Hudiberg the defendant in the above entitled cause having been duly sworn according to law [missing] and says that he cannot safely proceed in the trial of said cause at this present term of said court on account of the absence of four material witnesses for and on the part of this defendant: viz Captain Calvin Cook Ferdinand Ruyle Robert Web and Alfred Sharpe. That he expects to prove and is informed and believe he can prove by each of said witnesses that the property in question is the property of this defendant and never was the property of said plaintiff. That this said Captain Cook has been duly subpoenaed to be and appear at this term of this court as a witness for this defendant that said Cook is in the military service of the United States and is now stationed at Greenville Tenn [sic] where he now is and that it is impossible for the defendant to procure his attendance at this term of the court.

This affidavit [sic] also further states that he has only been informed of the [missing] [missing] within the knowledge of the said Ferdinand Ruyle Robert Webb and Alfred Sharpe since commencement of this term of this court and that he will be unable to procure their attendance at this time the defendant of this affidavit [sic] believes he will be able to procure the attendance of all of said witnesses at the next term of this court wherefore he [missing] [missing] that this [missing] [missing] may be [missing] This application is not made to delay but that justice may be done.

A.S. Hudiburg

Sworn to and subscribed
Before me this the
16th June 1865

S.H. Smith Clerk
By W.S. Hall D C
No. 7170 Filed June 16 1865

While the document refers to "property" I am assuming the property was the horse. I have not found any other court records about this matter.

"The Safeguard"

The Union and Confederate troops sent raiding parties into the countryside for food and horses. The Union troops under command of Brigadier General S.H. Carter were "appropriating" corn from the Swan cornfield. Mary Walker Swan confronted them. The Union soldiers stated that there were two Swans in the Confederate Army (Joe and Harvey) and they would take corn from the rebels. Mary Swan asked if they also knew that there were two Swans in the Union Army (George and Andrew). The union soldiers did not know this. The officer in charge made the soldiers leave the corn and the General wrote out the "safeguard" which states:

Protection is hereby given to the persons and property of John M. Swan a loyal citizen of Knox Co. All officers and soldiers of the U.S. are informed to respect this safeguard.

S.H. Carter
Brig. Gen and M.G.
of E. Tenn.

Two of the Swan brothers fought for the North and two fought for the South. The Swan family was an example of "Divided Loyalty" which occurred in many East Tennessee families.

The oldest child of James D. Swan and Isabella Gillespie Hood Swan, Joseph Nelson Swan, "served in the War of Secession as a first lieutenant in the Forty-ninth Alabama Regiment, Hood's Brigade from 1862-1864, when he was discharged, because of the loss of a leg, which resulted from being wounded at the Battle of Chickamauga."

He was educated at the Presbyterian Academy at Pleasant Forest. A Presbyterian Church known as the Lower Grassy Valley Presbyterian Church stood in the grove of trees at the rear of the present-day Pleasant Forest Cemetery. It was first a log structure, then replaced by a brick building to house both the school and church. During the Civil War occupying Union forces tore it down to build fireplaces for the winter encampment. This academy was located on Concord Road a short distance from the Swan home.

Joseph Nelson Swan later attended the Holston College in Blount County, which was located across the Tennessee River (then named the Holston River) at Lewisville in Blount County. The Lowe's Ferry provided regular passage across the river.

Joseph Nelson Swan began teaching in Blount County, taught for some time in Tennessee, and then moved to Spring Garden, Alabama, where he taught for 20 years.

Joseph Nelson Swan married Mary Francis Montgomery on October 2, 1861, at Spring Garden, Alabama. He joined the Confederate Army the next year in Alabama.

After the Civil War Joseph Nelson Swan returned to Alabama to teach. He represented Cherokee County in the legislature from 1882-83 and was a member of the constitutional convention in 1875. He was a Democrat and an elder in the Presbyterian Church.

The second son, George Nathaniel Swan, joined the Union Army as a private in D Company of the 3rd Infantry Five years after the War on September 22, 1870, in Knox County, he married Rebecca Craig, daughter of Hugh and Mary Ann Campbell Craig. Two years and four months later he died at the age of 40 leaving a young wife and two small children, Joseph Leomer Swan and "Mamie".

The story was told that he died of pneumonia from swimming the Ohio River to join the Union forces. However, this is not as likely as the story told by his brothers in Wellington, Kansas. That story relates that George had a bet with someone about swimming a river and as a result got pneumonia and died.

The third son, John Marion Swan, married in Knox County on December 24, 1856, to Mary Anne Walker, daughter of William Walker and Margaret Seaton Walker. John Marion bought 106 acres in the 11th District of Knox County (Ebenezer area) from [his grandfather is crossed out] Hugh M. Craig, on October 1, 1859.

Fourth son, James Harvey Swan, served in the Confederate Army as a Private in E Co 19th Infantry and was killed in the War. I have not found where he died but Harvey Swan of Kansas said he heard that he was killed at Murfreesboro. He is not buried in the Swan plot at Pleasant Forest and is not the James Z. Swan buried in the Old Ebenezer cemetery.

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Fifth son, Andrew Hart Swan, served as a Private in D Co 3rd Infantry, the same company as his brother George. He was shot off of his horse at Gettysburg and carried the scar the rest of his life. He went to Wellington, Kansas, in 1874, married Nancy Jane Bain in 1879.

Sixth son, Daniel Park Swan, was age 13 during the Battle of Campbell Station, and was living with his widowed mother, Isabella. He was a witness to the raiding stories and the Battle of Campbell Station. He and other Civil War veterans sat on the courthouse steps in Wellington, Kansas, discussing their war experiences.

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Their mother, Isabella Gillespie Hood Swan continued to live in the Campbell Station log home after the War. (See 1870 census) On August 9, 1882, John Marion Swan and Mary sold their 106-1/2 acres at Ebenezer (district 11) and moved to Wellington, Kansas. Later, Isabella went to Kansas to visit her sons, became sick, and died April 4, 1886. She was buried in Prairie Lawn Cemetery in Wellington, Kansas. The Swan home place (listed as J. D. Swan Estate, 114 1/2 acres, District 10, Kingston Pike) at Campbell's Station was sold October 30, 1889, to J. W. Anderson. Later it became the site for the original Farragut School.

Russell and Everett Civil War Stories in the Union Community

James Everett and wife, Ellen (Taylor), lived on Everett Road near the intersection with Union Road. They had two children: Sarah Elizabeth, born September 21, 1842, and Elijah Richard, born July 05, 1845. Sarah was 21 and living at home during the Civil War. She told a story of climbing to the top of a high hill and watching a battle. The hill on the northeast side of Everett Road, behind Fox Den Subdivision, was high enough to see the intersection of Old Stage Road and McFee Road where the skirmish possibly took place.

After the battle was over she went to the battlefield and brought home a bayonet and other items. The bayonet was used as a poker for the fire in the fireplace and the ramming rod was made into the handle of a shovel. These tools were used in the fireplace until the 1960s.

Sarah Elizabeth Everett married Matthew Hamilton Russell on January 3, 1872. Sarah died at the age of 93.

The Russell home was about a mile west of the Everett home on Union Road. The site of the log house is at the entrance to Sedge Field Subdivision on what is known today as Fleenor Road, off of North Hobbs Road. The Russell log home was lived in by four generations until it was torn down in the late 1960s.

John Patterson Russell bought 165 acres from Edwin W. Haun, February 12, 1863, in the 10th District, Turkey Creek. Two of their children were living with them as listed in the 1860 Census: Eliza Jane, 23, and Matthew Hamilton, 15. During the Civil War Matthew, age 18, was a cobbler by trade. The story was that the soldiers (probably Union soldiers since Knoxville was occupied by the Union troops) came to the house. Matthew was afraid he would be forced into service in the army and hid from them.

The log home had a kitchen separate from the house. In the middle of the kitchen plank floor was a trapdoor giving access to the cellar underneath. Matthew crawled into the cellar and his parents covered the trap door with a rug. The soldiers did not find him and left. Later, to keep from being conscripted he made a deal with the army that he would make shoes for the soldiers if they would not press him into the military.

When the Russell house was torn down in the 1960s, the interior wall covering was removed back to the original logs. The interior side of the logs had been covered with newspapers published during the Civil War.