



FORWARD

The following short article was presented to the Young-Sanders Center by Mr. Jerry Mason, a member of our Friends of the Young-Sanders Center. Mr. Jerry Mason was so proud of his great, great uncle, J.W. Allen, that he shared his uncle's story about a bible that saved his life during the War Between the States with us. He gave us permission to share his story with our readers. His story is not only remarkable but also somewhat sad. J.W. Allen's endeavor to sell the bible that saved his very life demonstrated how difficult it was for Confederate Veterans to survive financially after the war. J.W. Allen's financial difficulties after the war was common place for most veterans returning home. A short version of the article below was originally published in "The Confederate Veterans Magazine," Volume VI, January 1898-December 1898, page 154 by J.W. Allen. It is apparent he had no response from anyone to purchase his bible for the bible remains with his family today. We thank Mr. Jerry Mason for sharing his article and photographs of the bible with a mini ball embedded within the bible.

Roland R. Stansbury, Director
Young-Sanders Center

THE STORY OF JAMES W. ALLEN'S BIBLE

J. W. Allen, First Sergeant of Company H, Nineteenth Louisiana Volunteers, now of

Mansfield, Louisiana, has a testament with a history. This testament was on the person of J. W. Allen, Company H, 19th Louisiana Volunteers, of Gibson's Brigade. It was struck by a bullet in the Battle of Chickamauga on the 20th of September 1863. It was the means of saving his life.

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE IN HIS OWN WORDS AS QUOTED FROM THE ORIGINAL

This little testament was presented to me in November 1861 at Camp Moore, Louisiana by Captain John H. Sutherlin.

My Company, called the creoles, belonged to General R. L. Gibson's Brigade, General H. D. Clayton's Division. I participated in all the battles and skirmishes in which the Regiment was engaged, from the great battle of Shiloh Tenn. April 6th and 7th 1862, to that at Jonesboro, Georgia, August 31st 1864.

In the battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 20th, 1863, the first attack made in the morning was repulsed. I stepped to a stump a little in advance of the line and was trying to unseat a mounted officer and did not hear any order to retire, and on looking around I saw my Brigade two or three hundred yards away in full retreat, myself the only rebel left in front of the United States Regulars, to hold the line or follow suit, and I followed suit in a "Turkey Trot" for twenty or thirty yards, when the music of so much lead caused me to take a tree, but not to climb it, as the boys in blue were eyeing me from their line of battle. After resting a few moments I decided to make my escape, even at the risk of my life, on leaving the tree it seemed that they fired a peck of bullets at me, at the same time ordering me to halt.

Only one bullet struck my knap-sack on my back, passing through my blanket many times, through two company books, clothing and entering my testament, breaking it through the back and mashing it nearly flat. It is in the book now, just where it struck forty two years ago. My compliments to the "Boys in Blue" for their extra marksmanship.

I passed through the battle of Missionary Ridge with the book on my person, and very near being captured. I sent the book from Dalton, Ga. On the 13th of February 1864 to Dr. J. S. Thomas of Tuskegee, Ala. For him to keep until I called for it; and in case I never called I requested him to send it to the only sister I had, a resident of North Louisiana. On my way home in 1866, I called on the Doctor in Montgomery, Ala. and received my book, which had been in his care for two years; reached home minus a leg, which I left on the battlefield of Jonesboro, Ga. August 31, 1864. I would not care to sell this Testament now, were it not for my needy circumstances,

J.W. Allen
Mansfield, Louisiana

J. W. Allen was unable to sell his bible. Times were hard on everyone after the war and everyone throughout the country had their own civil war momentous.

J. W. Allen was the uncle of Florance Allen Mason of Mansfield, Louisiana 1875–1939. She received the bible after the death of her aunt, the sister of J. W. Allen. Today the bible is in the possession of her granddaughter, Dixie Mason Callender, who still lives in Mansfield, Louisiana.

Jerry Mason

The Young–Sanders Center for the Study of the War Between the States in Louisiana will present Dr. Donald S. Frazier as speaker on Saturday August 9, 2008 in Franklin, La. Frazier will speak on the Texans who served in the Confederate States of America, Department of the Trans–Mississippi, defending the citizens of Louisiana during the War Between the States. He will also speak on the Corps d’Afrique, first under the command of Major General Benjamin “Beast” Butler, then Major General Nathaniel P. Banks. Frazier will speak on the use of black troops by the Union Army.

Donald S. Frazier is a professor of history at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas. He is the award–winning author of three books on the Civil War including *BLOOD AND TREASURE*, *COTTONCLADS*, and *FIRE IN THE CANE FIELD*. His other work includes serving as co–author of *FRONTIER TEXAS*, *HISTORIC ABILENE*, and *THE TEXAS YOU EXPECT*, and well as general editor of *THE U.S. AND MEXICO AT WAR*.

In addition to his teaching duties, Frazier has been very involved in a variety of heritage and cultural tourism projects, including consulting on the development of three museums, two research centers, a Mexican War battlefield, work on Civil War and frontier heritage trails in Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana, and work on historical projects in Europe and Mexico.

Dr. Frazier has received accolades and honors for his contributions to the historical dialogue in the United States. He was chosen for a military history fellowship at the United States Military Academy at West Point, a fellowship at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and is in high demand as a thinker, consultant, and speaker. Frazier is also an elected member of the prestigious Philosophical Society of Texas, the oldest learned organization in the state, as well as the Texas Historical Foundation.

The Young-Sanders Center is located at 701 Teche Drive, Franklin, La. Dr. Frazier's lecture will begin at 1:30, Saturday August 9, 2008. The general public is invited to hear Dr. Frazier speak. There is no admission charge. For further information contact Roland R. Stansbury, Director at (337) 413-1861.