

Texas Historical Commission Staff (DKU), 12/5/79

Official Texas Historical Grave Marker
Jefferson County (Order #5750)

Location: Broussard Cemetery, SH 124, 3 miles south of Fannett

LEO EDWARD CRAIGEN*
(1845-1910)***

DURING THE CIVIL WAR, LEO EDWARD
CRAIGEN JOINED THE CONFEDERATE
ARMY OF THE MISSISSIPPI AND WAS
WOUNDED AT SHILOH. FOLLOWING
SURGERY TO REMOVE HIS LEG, HE
SERVED WITH THE CAVALRY UNTIL THE
END OF THE WAR. IN 1879 HE BECAME
A TEACHER AT TAYLOR'S BAYOU
SCHOOL NEAR HAMSHIRE. ONE YEAR
LATER HE MARRIED ELLEN AURELIA
SCHNEIDER, ONE OF HIS STUDENTS.
FROM 1895 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1910,
CRAIGEN SERVED AS RURAL MAIL
CARRIER FOR THE FANNETT AREA. **

RECORDED - 1980***

*1/2 inch lettering
**3/8 inch lettering
***1/4 inch lettering

APPROVED
Truett Latimer

Lyndine Reed 1-17-80

APPLICATION FORM FOR OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
P. O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711

A written history, signed by the author, must accompany this form before it will be accepted.

5750

Jefferson
County

October 10, 1979
Date

1. Leo Edward Craigen (Grave Marker)

Title of marker

2. Broussard Cemetery

Name of building, cemetery, public square, park, archeological site, etc., where marker is to be placed.

3. Broussard Cemetery Road

Marker site (street address or highway number)

4. Cemetery is one-half mile off Wilber Road, about 2 1/2 miles from Fannett

City or nearest city. If marker is to be placed on a highway or in a small community, you must briefly explain how to get there from nearest town shown on a Texas Highway Department road map. For example, "Marker will be in Bastrop Beach, which is 6 miles south-east of Angleton on FM 523."

5. Marker will be placed on grave site in Broussard Cemetery

Distance (miles, yards, feet) and direction (north, south, east, west) of subject from marker site. For example, "Subject is 1/2 mile southwest of marker site."

6. Broussard Cemetery Association, a community cemetery.

Owner of marker site

Address

City

7. Descendants of Leo Edward Craigen, Rt. 2, Box F-75, Beaumont, Tex. 77705

Sponsor of marker

Address

City

8. Clare Benckenstein 1005 Twenty-third St., Beaumont, Tex. 77706

County chairman

Address

City

"I have reviewed the narrative for this marker and attest to its accuracy."

9. Lorene Warner, Route 2, Box F-75, Beaumont, Tex. 77705 (Craigen Road)

Person to whom marker is to be shipped

Street Address

City

Note: If marker is to be placed on a highway right-of-way, it will automatically be shipped to your district highway engineer.

10. Granite

Surface to which marker will be attached (i.e., wood, brick, stucco over stone) if not on post.

ORDER FORM

Please consult page 7 for specifications of the markers available. Check the items desired below. Then mail this application and narrative history, together with a check made payable to the Texas Historical Foundation, to the address above. No applications will be accepted unless payment is included.

If marker application is cancelled after the inscription is written, the Texas Historical Foundation will deduct the cost of writing the inscription from the refund.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

- 16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) \$175
- 16" x 12" building marker with post \$150
- 16" x 12" building marker without post \$125
- National Register plaque \$ 25
- 27" x 42" subject marker with post \$475
- 27" x 42" subject marker without post \$435
- 18" x 28" subject marker with post \$250
- 18" x 28" subject marker without post \$220

REPLACEMENT MARKERS

- Bronze plate \$300
- Bronze seal \$245
- Bronze wreath \$115
- 16" x 12" building plaque only \$ 75
- 14" medallion only \$ 50

HIGHWAY DIRECTIONAL SIGN

- Please indicate quantity desired and location:
- 24" x 24" Historical Markers In City sign \$ 50
 - Black and white (for farm-to-market roads, state and U.S. highways)
 - Green and white (for interstate highways)
 - 18" x 22" Historic Route Sign (in black and white only) \$ 50
 - with arrow pointing straight ahead
 - with arrow pointing left
 - with arrow pointing right

MARKER REPLICA PAPERWEIGHT

This item should be ordered at the same time marker is ordered. Indicate quantity desired. Allow six months from completion of marker for receipt of paperweight.

- 3" x 4" plastic paperweight with replica of marker inside . . \$ 50

RECEIVED
OCT 19 1979

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

LEO EDWARD CRAIGEN

Confederate soldier, early-day teacher and rural mail rider
in the Taylor's Bayou area

Submitted by Gwendolyn Wingate

October 15, 1979

For a Texas Historical Grave Marker for Craigen's Grave

RECEIVED
OCT 19 1979

FIELD SERVICES DEPARTMENT

LEO EDWARD CRAIGEN

By Gwendolyn Wingate

Leo Edward Craigen, Confederate war veteran who lost a leg in the bloody carnage of the Battle of Shiloh but survived to ride with the daring cavalry of General Nathan Bedford Forrest, was an early Taylor's Bayou schoolmaster and mail rider.

Craigen was born in 1845 at New Orleans, La. He ran away from college at 17 to enlist in Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston's Army of the Mississippi, following his brothers Charley and Alec, who had already joined.¹

The green recruit, little more than a boy, received his baptism in blood April, 1862, when the Confederates met General Ulysses Grant's northern troops near the little Shiloh Methodist Church in Tennessee.

In the first day's fighting the southerners pushed the Union Army back to the Tennessee River, and the stream ran red with the blood of the dead and wounded. General Johnston himself was killed.

But the second day reinforcements under General D. C. Buell drove the Confederates back to Corinth, leaving the Union Army too mauled to pursue. When the battle was over, 13,000 Union soldiers and 10,000 southerners lay dead in the shattered woods and fields of Shiloh.

"Papa's brother Charley was killed there," said Lee Craigen, son of Edward. "He was crossing a stream when he was shot, and my father caught the flag from his hands as he fell."²

"That's where Papa lost his leg," said the late Roy Craigen in a June 19, 1973 interview. "He told me he lay on the battlefield

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two days. Finally an old lady searching among the dead and wounded for her son brought him water and sent somebody to pick him up. They had to take his leg off below the knee."³

But that was not the end of the war for Edward Craigen. He was fitted with an artificial leg and reenlisted with General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry outfit. Almost always with inferior numbers, Forrest's cavalry carried out daring hit and run raids, striking deep into enemy territory to harass the northern troops and delay their advance into the South.⁴

Craigen probably fought with Forrest in his lightning raids in western Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama. He was wounded again in one of those battles when a bullet knocked out two ~~front~~ teeth, exiting through the side of his face.

When Forrest and his men laid down their arms in surrender at Gainesville, Ala., Craigen and his fellow soldiers went home. But the war had claimed his two brothers' lives, and New Orleans swarmed with northern troops, carpetbaggers and freedmen, and the Craigen family was bitter over its losses.

In the early 1870's Edward's parents, James and Mary Ann, with two sisters, Mamie and Eliza, and perhaps a younger brother, James, moved to Galveston, Tex. The city directory there lists their address as between 14th and 15 th on Water Street in 1874-75.

In 1881 Mary Ann Craigen, by then a widow, was living in the home of her daughter Mamie, who had married John J. Delany, chief inspector at the U. S. customhouse office at Brick Wharf,⁵

Edward Craigen may have worked there too for a time before 1879. In that year he began teaching in the little Taylor's Bayou schoolhouse near the Arceneaux pens. Built by Moise Broussard in 1869, the little structure later became the Hamshire School.⁶

This little building was one of the first schoolhouses in the Hamshire and Fannett area, and at times it also served as a church for the travelling saddlebag priests who held mass there.

In his first year as schoolmaster Edward Craigen has as a student Ellen Aurelia Schneider, one of two daughters of Confederate soldier Joseph Schneider, who died February, 1864 at Sabine Pass of an infection. The schoolmaster and his pupil fell in love, and they were married Jan. 31, 1880 by Justice of the Peace Emile H. Andrus of Jefferson County Precinct 4.⁷

Although Craigen had a smattering of college work and was better educated than some schoolmasters of that day, he was paid a bare pittance, like most teachers ~~of that~~ then, and it was a ceaseless struggle for the couple to survive.

They supplemented his meager income with farming highland crops and the wool from about 200 sheep, from which his wife, Nellie, made saddle pads, quilts and mattresses.

In 1884 Craigen purchased 100 acres of land in the William H. Smith League from George Wilkinson for \$400.⁸ They raised sugar cane, and they made syrup for their own use and their neighbors'.

At various times Craigen taught at other community schools at LaBelle, Burrell cove, the Ed Carruthers home at Hamshire, the Willie Hebert home near Hillebrandt Bayou, Sabine Pass and Big Hill.⁹

Some time before 1895, the aging Craigen became the rural mail rider for the Fannett and LaBelle area along the bayou. Two men, Charley Barton and Raymond Taylor, brought the mail in their saddlebags from Beaumont to the Taylor's Bayou post office, then at the 'oe Dugat place near Fannett, and Craigen picked it up there

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in his one-horse, two-wheeled gig and took it on to LaBelle. ¹⁰

When the Gulf and Interstate Railway was finished in 1895, the post office was moved to the Fannett place on what is now State Highway 124 in Fannett, and later to the Bergdorff store there.

Craigen continued to carry the mail until he died April 23, 1910. That same month the Beaumont Enterprise announced the reunion of the United Confederate Veterans in Mobile, Alabama. From Craigen's old organization, the Albert Sidney Johnston Camp in Beaumont, 26 of the old soldiers were provided a private railway car for their trip to the reunion. The old men in gray elected Craigen's former leader, General Forrest of Memphis, Tenn. their adjutant-general. ¹¹

But Craigen was not there. He had died a few days earlier, and he is buried in the tree-shaded Broussard Cemetery a few miles from his old home place. ¹²

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Interview with Roy Craigen, son of Leo Edward Craigen, on June 19, 1973. Roy, now deceased, had a medal showing his father was a member of the Albert Sidney Johnston Chapter of United Confederate Veterans.
- 2 Interview on June 19, 1973, with H. L. Craigen, another son of Leo Edward. Interviews were for a Beaumont Enterprise-Journal feature story which appeared July 29, 1973, p. 4-C.
- 3 June 19, 1973, interview with Roy Craigen.
- 4 June 19, 1973, interview with Roy Craigen.
- 5 Hellers Galveston Directory, 1874-75, p. 30, and 1878-79, p. 52, and 1881-82, pp. 137, 172, 160.
- 6 Interview with Mrs. Leo Craigen, wife of Leo Edward's son, on May 6, 1963, on early day school houses and locations where saddlebag priests celebrated the mass.
- 7 Jefferson County Marriage Records. The Craigen couple had nine children, Mary, 1880; Joseph J., 1882; Alice Ellen, 1884; Leeora, 1886; Isaac, 1890; Leo, 1894; Lee, 1896; Lena, 1899; and Roy, 1903. Only Lee (H. L.) survives, along with numerous other descendants.
- 8 Jefferson County Deed Records, Vol. Y, p. 157.
- 9 Interview with Clair Burrell, now deceased, on May 17, 1965, to pinpoint early-day schools, mail routes and other history of the Fannett-Hamshire area.
- 10 May 17, 1965, interview with Clair Burrell.
- 11 Beaumont Enterprise news story on April 27, 1910, on reunion of United Confederate Veterans.
- 12 Interviews with the Craigen sons and other family members.