

Pvt. Thomas N. Alexander – Co. I, 37th N. Carolina Infantry
Pvt. Sampson S. Simmons – Co. E, 8th Virginia Cavalry

We previously honored these soldiers in 2010 and 2009 respectively. Thomas enlisted in 1864 and served in A. P. Hill's 3rd Corp in the Army of Northern Virginia. He was seriously wounded in August, 1864 at the battle of Weldon Railroad and spent the remainder of the war recovering from his wound. Sampson served three years as a courier and a cavalymen in SW Virginia and West Virginia operations and spent the final year of the conflict in prison camps in Wheeling, WV; Columbus, OH; and Point Lookout, MD.

Postwar, these two men performed a far greater service to Confederate history, in the 1930s.

In 1935 Thomas appeared as a guest on WBT radio in Charlotte, NC, and recorded the 'Rebel Yell' of a former private serving with General A. P. Hill near Petersburg, VA. Here is his yell. (track 3)

Also in the mid 1930s, in California, at a recording studio, Sampson recorded the 'Rebel Yell' of a mountain cavalryman on an Edison disc. His daughter donated this disc to the United Daughters of the Confederacy library in Richmond. The disc waited in their archives for 70 years. The Museum of the Confederacy convinced the ladies at the UDC to allow them to try to retrieve Sampson's yell from the disc. The winning argument was that if it was not tried we would never know if their 'Rebel Yells' were the same. Here is his yell. (track 5)

The results are remarkable, two soldiers, different states, one infantry and one cavalry, one serving with Lee and one in the mountains of SW Virginia and West Virginia . . . they are the same. The sound sends chills up your spine. It sounds like the demons of the earth have been released.

With advent of modern sound mixing technology the MOC was able to turn these two voices into a Company of 80 men and a Regiment of 500. (track 7 and track 9)

We thank them both for their service and we thank them both for leaving a remarkable gift for their descendants.

("The Rebel Yell Lives" CD, MOC, 2008. Honoring our Ancestors service record of Pvt. S. S. Simmons from July, 2009, and of Pvt. Thomas N. Alexander from October, 2010, from the Camp website at www.jamescitycavalry.org)