

Picture of Major Rice E. Graves (1838-1863) Is Misidentified

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky.

One of the pictures in the Owensboro Messenger & Inquirer's special edition (5 September 1964, p4B) on the dedication of the new Daviess County Courthouse is misidentified. The portrait identified as Judge John P. Devereux is actually Major Rice E. Graves (1838-1863).



JOHN P. DEVEREUX
May 19, 1851 to June 7, 1851
From Messenger-Inquirer
5 September 1964, p4B

Major Graves was a noted Daviess Countian who gave his life for the Lost Cause during the Civil War. His portrait appears in two books by Ed Porter Thompson, History of the First Kentucky Brigade (1868, p361) and History of the Orphan Brigade (1898, p455); also see Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 22 September 2000, p1C. The portrait of Major Graves had been hung in the Circuit Court room of the old Daviess County Courthouse in June 1898. The following notice appeared in the Owensboro Messenger of 19 June 1898 (p4):

Picture of Rice E. Graves - The large picture of Rice E. Graves, for whom the local Confederate camp was named, which was ordered made by Chief of Police Pierce for presentation to the camp, has been completed and hangs now in the county clerk's office. It is a nice piece of work and shows the dead hero as he appeared in uniform in 1863.

In the 2 September 1919 issue of the Owensboro Messenger (p2) it was noted that the portrait of Gerald S. Clements had been added to the portrait gallery in the Circuit Court room. The article states that Judge L. P. Little

“was the originator of the idea of hanging the pictures of the circuit judges on the walls of the court room. The hanging of the picture of Gerald Clements in the circuit court room, is the second exception to the rule that only the pictures of circuit judges are to be hung in the court room. Like Rice E. Graves, for whom the first exception was made. Mr. Clements was a soldier and died in the service.”



MAJ. RICE E. GRAVES.
Portrait from Ed Porter Thompson's books,
History of the First Kentucky Brigade (1868, p361)
and History of the Orphan Brigade (1898, p455)

Somehow the portrait of Major Graves was misidentified for the 1964 newspaper article. The portrait of Rice E. Graves is no longer hanging in the Daviess County Circuit Court room. Judge Robert M. Short in an interview with this writer on 28 February 1990 stated that during the construction of the new Courthouse the portraits hanging in the Circuit Court room were taken to various individual homes for safekeeping. No inventory of who took what was kept. Of the 17 known portraits hanging there only four were returned after the completion of the new building. The portraits of John Calhoun, James Stuart, T. F. Birkhead and Gerald Clements were returned and are still hanging in the Circuit Court room, now located in the Judicial Center two blocks east of the Courthouse, where they were moved upon the completion of the new facility in 1990. The following portraits were never returned upon the completion of the new courthouse – Henry P. Brodnax, Alney McLean, Jesse W. Kincheloe, James L. Johnson, George W. Williams, Martin H. Cofer, Lucius P. Little, W. T. Owen, R. W. Slack, George S. Wilson, Sidney B. Neal and Major Rice E. Graves. In recent years Judge Robert M. Short has done portraits for most of the missing pictures of the Circuit Court Judges.

.....



Major Rice E. Graves Portrait, 1862

Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia:

Rice Evan Graves, Jr. (June 23, 1838 – September 20, 1863) was an artillery officer in the Confederate States Army during the American Civil War. He was killed in the Battle of Chickamauga.

Graves was born in Rockbridge, Virginia but grew up near Yelvington, Daviess County, Kentucky (12 miles east of Owensboro, Kentucky) after a near tragedy in 1844 interrupted his family's planned move to St. Louis. His parents, wealthy planter Rice E. Graves, Sr. and his wife Amelia Rucker Gregory (widowed daughter of American Revolutionary War Patriot Cpt. Jesee Richeson), had booked passage on the riverboat "Star of the West". With their family and all their worldly possessions on board, they began the journey down the Ohio River to Missouri and a new life. Just below Breckinridge County, Kentucky, the "Star of the West" collided with the "Hark-Away" and sank. The frantic parents saved themselves and their eight children. However, everything they owned was lost. They decided to remain in Cloverport, where the father rented a farm.[1]

When they were financially able, the family moved to Daviess County where they to purchased land and improved it. By that time, the number of children in the household had increased to eleven and with so large a family, education opportunities were limited. All of the children were expected to help out with the farm work, so their schooling was done locally. The young Graves spent three semesters at the Owensboro Academy.

Rice E. Graves was a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York through a scholarship presented by Congressman Samuel O. Peyton representing the second Congressional district of Kentucky. A member of the class of 1863; he resigned his Presidential appointment in 1861 to join the Confederate States of America Army.[2][3][4] The two years he spent in West Point set the standard for his later military career.

Graves enlistment in the 2nd Kentucky Infantry at Camp Boone, Tennessee, quickly becoming the Regimental Adjutant. In November 1861 he was promoted to

Captain and appointed to command Graves' Battery, an artillery unit attached to the regiment. Gaining a reputation as skillful artillery leader he was promoted to the rank of Major in October 1862. He served as the divisional Chief of Artillery under the command of General John C. Breckinridge.[5][6][7][8][9] Graves served in many civil war battles and campaigns to include the battle at Fort Donelson, TN, Battle of Shiloh; Siege of Vicksburg; Battle of Stones River at Murfreesboro, TN (where he was twice wounded)[10] and the Battle of Jackson, MS.

Graves was mortally wounded in action at the Battle of Chickamauga on September 20, 1863. Little was recorded of Maj. Graves after the first night at the field hospital, but it is thought that he lived longer than hours after his wounding. Apparently he was still alive when Breckinridge's troops left the area or else his body would have been transported along with Gen. Helm to Atlanta for burial. There were several hospitals set up in the nearby town, Ringgold, and he most likely perished in one of them a day or two later. He was buried in the Citizen's Cemetery in Ringgold. Sadly, the exact burial location of Maj. Graves was lost through the years.

General John C. Breckinridge wrote of Major Graves in his official report of the battle: "One member of my staff I cannot thank; Major Rice Graves received a mortal wound on the (Sunday morning)(September) 20th (1863). Although a very young man he gave promise of the highest distinction. A truer friend, a purer patriot, a better soldier, never lived".[11][12][13][14]

References

1. History of the First Kentucky Brigade, By Ed Porter Thompson, Cincinnati, 1868, pp.462–468.
2. Rice E. Graves, CSR, RG 109, NA; Owensboro (KY) Messenger, November 29, 1877.
3. Edwin P. Thompson, History of the First Kentucky Brigade (Cincinnati, 1868), 462, 860.
4. "Memories of Major Rice E. Graves, C.S.A." Daviess County (Owensboro, KY) Historical Quarterly, III (1985) pp. 3–13.
5. Rice E. Graves, CSR, RG 109, NA;
6. Owensboro (KY) Messenger, November 29, 1877
7. Glenn Hodges, "An Officer and a Gentleman," Owensboro (KY) Messenger-Inquirer, May 14, 1996.
8. Edwin P. Thompson, History of the First Kentucky Brigade (Cincinnati, 1868), pp. 462,860.
9. The Pride of the Confederacy- The Washington Artillery in the Army of Tennessee by Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., ISBN 0-8071-2187-8 Published By Louisiana State University Press, first printing 1997; pages 79–83, 87–88, 90–95, 105,113–116, 120–121, 124–125, 133, 135, 137–139.
10. The Lost Cause, The Journal of the Kentucky Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, April 1, 2009, By Joey Oller.
11. New Orleans Times-Democrat, May 29, 1883;
12. OR, Vol. XXX, Pt. 2, pp. 201,218, 229; Chalaron, "Vivid Experiences at Chickamauga," 279;

13. Davis, Breckenridge, 377; Chalaron, "Memories of Rice Graves," 13;
14. Glenn Hodges, "An Officer and a Gentleman", Owensboro (KY) Messenger-Inquirer, May 14, 1996.

Also see: "The Civil War Adventures of Rice E. Graves of Daviess County, and Graves' Battery, C.S.A." by Mike Hudson The Daviess County Historical Quarterly, (Volume I, No.2, April 1983, Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society, pp.26-37) and "The Graves Family In Daviess County", by Daisy Graves Elliott (The Daviess County Historical Quarterly, (Volume I, No.2, April 1983, Owensboro, KY: Daviess County Historical Society, p38).

.....



Ringgold Citizens Cemetery,
Ringgold, Catoosa County, Georgia
(exact location of grave is unknown)